

CHAPTER XI.

ADOPTION AND THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

I.—What is adoption?

"Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby, upon the forgiveness of sins, we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 5; Eph. i. 5).

"It is used by St. Paul to express the privileges to which regeneration under the new covenant introduces believers, as they are the children of God."¹

II.—In what respect does it differ from pardon and justification?

The terms refer to one and the same act of the Divine mind, though they place that act under different aspects. *Pardon* leads us to think of God simply as our *Sovereign*, remitting all our past transgressions. *Justification* embraces an allusion to his character as the righteous yet merciful Judge, who, even in the act of remitting the penalty of sin to the believer in Jesus, maintains the principles of His just and holy government. But "Adoption is an act of God, viewed as our compassionate Father, by which He accepts the returning prodigal, admits him to filial communion, and reinstates him in the possession of all the privileges of his house and family."²

III.—What are the special privileges belonging to this state?

Freedom from a servile spirit (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 7); the guidance of the Holy Ghost (Rom. viii. 14); filial confidence in God (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 6); a propriety in all He has and is (1 Cor. iii. 21-23); and a right and title to eternal life (Rom. viii. 17; Gal. iv. 7; 1 John iii. 2).

IV.—Is it possible that the believer can be assured of his adoption?

1. *The practical importance of such assurance is presumptive evidence that he may.* If left in darkness as to his acceptance,

¹ Wesleyan Catechism (old ed.).

² Dr. Pope.

³ Dr. Hannah.

his mind would be a prey to endless anxieties. No emotions of ardent gratitude and filial joy would spring up within him. He could not pray in full assurance of faith, nor joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, nor rejoice in hope of the glory of God. All the love, and joy, and peace of a Christian heart spring from a "knowledge of salvation." It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that the God who pardons iniquity, and receives the penitent to favour, would, by some means, attest the fact in man's own heart, and not leave it to conjecture, or assumption, or inductive reasoning.

2. *The Scriptures everywhere assert that such assurance is attainable.* They abound with examples of those who have lived in the enjoyment of it. Under the patriarchal dispensation there was Abel (Heb. xi. 4); Enoch (Heb. xi. 5); and Job (chap. xix. 25). Under the Jewish dispensation there was David (Psalm xxxii. 5, ciii. 1, 3, 12); Hezekiah (Isa. xxxviii. 17); Isaiah (chap. vi. 7); and Daniel (chap. ix. 23). And in the dispensation of the Gospel, "the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins" is one of the distinguishing features of the new life. Our Lord was anointed "to comfort all that mourn" (Isa. lxi. 1-3). He continually honoured the faith of the humble by an assurance of forgiving mercy (Matt. ix. 2; Luke vii. 47, 48, x. 20). He has provided for His Church "another Comforter," Whose perpetual work it is to testify to the adoption of His believing people (Rom. viii. 15). The converts in Apostolic times showed by the gladness they felt that they knew they were of God. See the Pentecostal believers (Acts ii. 46); the Ethiopian (Acts viii. 39); the jailer (Acts xvi. 34). And St. Paul always assumes that those to whom he wrote knew themselves to be forgiven; otherwise his descriptions of their character would be false (Rom. v. 11; 1 Peter i. 8), and his admonitions altogether inapplicable (2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. iii. 1, iv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 16-18).

V.—By what means is this assurance of our spiritual sonship attained?

There is a twofold "witness" granted (Rom. viii. 16): First, that of "the Spirit itself," or rather *the same* Spirit (*auto to pneuma*) of which the Apostle had spoken in the foregoing verses; "the Spirit of Christ," "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of adoption." Secondly, that of "our spirit"—our true self, the spiritual, intelligent, accountable, and deathless part of our nature. There is a *conjoint* testimony of these two witnesses. "The Spirit itself" is a *fellow-witness* "with our spirit." Such is the import of the Greek word *summarturei*, which is employed here. Now, although the witness of God's Spirit comes first in the order of thought and in point of fact, it will be advantageous to consider, at once, the nature of the other witness.

VI.—What is the witness of our own spirit?

It consists in our individual consciousness that we possess the

character of the children of God, as that character is portrayed in God's Word. In the language of Dr. Hannah, it is "that rational inference which, proceeding from a careful examination of the scriptural marks of the children of God, and a satisfactory persuasion that these marks are produced in us by the presence and agency of the Holy Spirit, confirms us in the grateful conclusion that we are the children of God." And in the language of Mr. Wesley, "it is nearly, if not exactly, the same with the testimony of a good conscience towards God; and is the result of reason and reflection on what we feel in our own souls. Strictly speaking, it is a conclusion drawn partly from the Word of God and partly from our own experience. The Word of God says every one who has the fruit of the Spirit is a child of God; experience or inward consciousness tells me that I have the fruit of the Spirit; and hence I rationally conclude, therefore I am a child of God." The following scriptures appear to refer to the subject:—2 Cor. i. 12; 1 John iii. 14, 18, 19, v. 10. Now, as this witness proceeds from the Spirit of God, and is grounded on what He works in us, it is sometimes called the Spirit's *indirect* witness, to distinguish it from the other testimony, which is properly direct. "The testimony of our conscience" is, however, a phrase on every account preferable to this.

VII.—What is the witness of the Divine Spirit?

It consists in a communication made by the Holy Ghost to the believer's mind of the fact that his sins are forgiven, that he is reconciled to God, and that the filial relation, which was destroyed by disobedience, is now restored by grace through faith. Mr. Wesley's definition is very clear and full: "By the testimony of the Spirit, I mean an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God, that Jesus Christ hath loved me and given Himself for me, that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."¹ In accordance with this are the words of Dr. Hannah: "The witness of the Holy Spirit is that which directly ascertains to us the blessing of our acceptance with God, and which, impressing on our hearts a sense of His paternal love towards us in Christ Jesus, creates within us that great element and principle of the new nature—love to Him in return." The following scriptures refer to this subject:—Rom. viii. 15, 16; Gal. iv. 6; 1 Cor. ii. 12; 1 John iv. 13. And the doctrine is clearly implied in such passages as these:—Rom. v. 1, 5, viii. 1; Isa. xii. 1, 2.

VIII.—By what arguments is it proved that this testimony is direct and immediate?

1. *It is proved by the meaning of the word that is employed.*

¹ Sermon xi.

² Sermons x., xi.

"The Spirit beareth *witness*." Now, a witness is not an inferential deduction, however logical in its process; not a conjecture, however well founded. It is a direct, implicit testimony, given with the greatest care and distinctness.

2. *It is proved by the subject matter of the testimony.* The witness is to our adoption, to the forgiveness of sin, the blotting out of the handwriting that was against us. Now, this is not anything that takes place within us, it is not anything perceptible to the evidence of our senses. It is an act of God, a mighty secret buried in the recesses of our Father's heart, locked up more closely than the most hidden of human thoughts, one of "the deep things of God," which can be known to us on earth only by a supernatural communication (see 1 Cor. ii. 11). Unless, therefore, the Holy Ghost will tell us what has taken place in the mind of God, whether He has pardoned our sins and written our name in the Book of Life, we must live in sorrow and in gloom all the days of our life. But the arrangement is made; and what we could not know by the use of our reason or the evidence of our senses, "God hath revealed unto us by His Spirit." Essentially Divine, that Spirit "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." He knows the moment when adopting His love welcomes home the prodigal, and away He hastens on His dove-like message to reveal the glorious fact to the anxious soul, thus becoming to that soul "the Spirit of adoption," whereby He cries, "Abba, Father."

3. *It is proved by the experience of the children of God.* Dr. Chalmers says that he could not, without making his doctrine out-strip his own experience, vouch for any other intimation of the Spirit of God than that which He gives in the act of making the word of God and the state of our own hearts clear to us.¹ And that might be true in regard to *his* experience. Dr. Watts gives, as the result of *his* experience, a very different view. Says he, "There is an extraordinary witness of the Spirit, when, in an immediate and powerful manner, He impresses the soul with an assurance of Divine love, and gives the heart of the saint a full discovery of his adoption, without the more slow and argumentative method of comparing the dispositions of their souls with some special characters of the children of God in Scripture." And we could bring forward a great multitude, far inferior, perhaps, to these men in learning and genius, but well instructed in the deep things of God, and they can tell by experience how the Holy Ghost wrought in their soul when first they believed. They were not conscious of any of the fruits of the Spirit. In fact, all their thoughts and reflections were turned from themselves to the cross. But there was a secret consciousness, a testimony mysteriously sent into the soul, the whisper of a voice which could not be heard beyond the confines of the soul, but which there spoke thrillingly and impressively, "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee."

¹ Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans.

At once they felt the joy of salvation, and exclaimed in full assurance of faith, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine."

4. *It is proved by the fact that nothing but this can make our happiness coeval with our adoption.* "If left to infer that we are pardoned from our principles, and that we are adopted from the reality of the change we have undergone, some portion of time must necessarily elapse, that temptation may test, and opportunities may develop, the graces that are within, before we can decide on their genuineness. And the length of time that will transpire will be very much proportioned to a man's natural temperament. Those who are constitutionally depressed and melancholy will be for a long season in gloom, slow and cautious in admitting anything that tends to their comfort; and only the sanguine will enter speedily into liberty, and rejoice in the Lord. And in the very best case the decision will be pronounced in heaven, that the heir of hell is received among the faithful, while he himself is groaning, 'O that I knew where I might find Him!' Surely, there is nothing in the Gospel to warrant such a belief as this. No; as soon as the three thousand gladly received the word, as soon as the Ethiopian embraced Him of Whom the Prophet spake, as soon as the jailer believed in the Lord Jesus, the Comforter sped away with the tidings of their pardon. And in the very same moment in which it is pronounced in the courts above, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' there is the echo in the believing heart, 'Go in peace.'" And this can arise from nothing else than the direct and immediate testimony of the Holy Ghost.

IX.—How is it proved that this testimony of the Spirit of God must be antecedent to the testimony of our own spirit?

From this single consideration, we must be holy in heart, and holy in life, before we can be conscious that we are so, before we can have the testimony of our spirit that we are inwardly and outwardly holy. But we must love God before we can be holy at all, this being the root of all holiness. Now, we cannot love God till we know He loves us. "We love Him *because* He first loved us." And we cannot know His pardoning love to us till His Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. "Since, therefore, this testimony of His Spirit must precede the love of God and all holiness, of consequence it must precede our inward consciousness thereof, or the testimony of our spirit concerning them."¹ Thus, also, the point is stated by Mr. Watson: "These fruits (love, joy, and peace) cannot result from anything but manifested pardon; they cannot themselves manifest our pardon, for they cannot exist till it is manifested. God, conceived of as angry, cannot be the object of filial love; pardon unfelt supposes guilt and fear still to burden the mind; and guilt, and 'joy,' and 'peace' cannot co-exist."² The relation in which these "fruits of the Spirit" stand to "the witness of the Spirit" is that of the effect to its cause.

¹ Wesley's "Sermons," No. x.

² "Institutes," p. li., chap. xxiv.

X.—How may this testimony of God's Spirit be distinguished from the impressions of an excited imagination, and from the delusion of the Devil?

There are certain marks by which it may be known.

1. *The testimony of the Holy Ghost is always preceded by hearty, genuine repentance.* Its consolations are unknown till the spirit has been humbled and is contrite; till iniquity has been abandoned, and the cry extorted, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." But with this deep and penitent humiliation of heart presumption is unacquainted. And we therefore press this inquiry upon all who think they have the Spirit of God, have you felt a godly sorrow for sin—sorrow that has led you to hate it as the worst of evils, and to put forth every power in forsaking its practice? If the believer has, the Spirit Who is leading him will not suffer him to be deceived: but if he have not, the cry of Abba, Father, is from no Divine testimony. He is saying peace, where there is no peace.

2. *Where the Holy Ghost bears His witness, He invariably produces a holy character.* The inward testimony causes to spring forth that beautiful cluster of Christian graces which the Apostle calls "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 22, 23). Fruits like these are never produced by a phantasy or a delusion. They grow nowhere but in a heart that has undergone the great regenerating change. Where they are found, the witness from above, and the witness from within, bear a united testimony, which may be received without suspicion and without fear.

XI.—Is this witness of the Spirit the common privilege of believers?

Many regard it as the privilege only of a highly-favoured few of saints of the first order, and not even to be granted to them till just at the close of life. But this notion has not even a pretext of scriptural footing. In Gal. iv. 6 St. Paul makes it a part of "the common salvation," as truly as adoption itself. "Because ye are sons"—not because you are singularly holy, or have come to hoary hairs, or are on the verge of the grave, but—"because ye are sons God hath sent forth His Son . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons." It is not a good-service reward, but a birthright; not a crown of distinction, but a joy of adoption. And every part of the New Testament makes the sense of adoption a near, present good, which babes in Christ may grasp and the meekest of the earth may feel, which is offered to the prodigal when He returns from his wanderings, and to the publican when first justified from his sins. Let the following passages, which were addressed to believers of every age and rank, be duly pondered:—Rom. v. 1-5, viii. 15, 16; 1 Peter i. 8, 9. Besides these there is an almost endless variety of texts holding out to believers the promise of rest and peace (Matt. xi. 28; John xv. 26, 27; Rom. xiv. 17, etc.). And can the enjoyment of rest and peace, such as that which is here described, co-exist with doubt and misgiving as to our acceptance

in the Beloved? No; it can arise from no influence but that of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, Who reveals to us the mercy of God in Christ. If these things are so, the sense of adoption is not a privilege of such high and transcendent saintliness as to be attainable only by the few. It is a common privilege of our common faith. In the heart now throbbing for the first time under the inspirations of spiritual life, there is the same cry as in the heart of the aged saint on whose face is falling the light of a brighter world than this. Each can say, "Abba Father; my Lord and my God."¹

XII.—Can this witness of the Spirit be held in uninterrupted enjoyment?

Certain it is that it may be lost. And unless we learn to live by the faith of the Son of God, and maintain diligence in Christian duty, it is impossible to retain it. Besides this, there may be times of very severe and heavy trial; the mind may be depressed through bodily disorders, or be in heaviness through manifold temptations; and the great adversary may use all his skill to inject unbelieving thoughts. In such circumstances it may be very difficult to retain the full assurance of faith, especially for one who is naturally of a melancholy temperament. But it may be done. It is obviously God's will that His children should "*abide*" in His love (John xv. 9, 10); should "*rejoice in the Lord always*" (Phil. iv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 16); should "*wait in the light*" (Isa. ii. 5; 1 John i. 6, 7); and should "*joy in the God of salvation,*" even in seasons of greatest providential darkness (2 Cor. vi. 10; Hab. iii. 17, 18). But are there not what are called *sovereign* hidings of God's countenance? that is, does not God withdraw the witness from His children in the mere exercise of His sovereign pleasure? We often meet with this idea in certain Calvinistic writers; but we venture to affirm that it is totally groundless, without one prop in Scripture. God is faithful, unchangeable to His covenant engagements, and never leaves His people, even for a moment, while they are faithful to His grace. The withdrawal of His favour and peace is the chastisement for disobedience (Isa. lix. 2).

XIII.—What is to be said of persons, humble, prayerful, consistent, who are evidently brought into darkness through constitutional depression?

"We reply, constitutional depression may prevent the soul from exercising faith in Christ; and as faith is the instrument by which we receive the Spirit's witness, the absence of that instrument, through depression, will, of course, be the occasion of our being destitute of the Spirit's witness. As mental depression affects our perceptions generally, it will doubtless affect and distort our

¹ See Arthur's "Tongue of Fire," chap. v.

religious perceptions; and, in instances deeply exacerbated, may so fix and concentrate the soul's attention on what is gloomy, as to create for itself a region of darkness in which it cannot see the benign features of God's character, or the mercy so brightly revealed in the Gospel. Thus, through a mental infirmity obscuring our views, our confidence fails; and our confidence failing, our evidence fails too. Such cases, however, are to be regarded as evidences of mental disease, and not to be regarded as a standard for others whose minds are in a healthy state."¹

In reviewing the whole subject, we may say, in the words of Mr. Wesley, "Let none ever presume to rest in any supposed testimony of the Spirit which is separate from the fruit of it. And let none rest in any supposed fruit of the Spirit without the witness." "In our being favoured with a two-fold testimony there is evidently great practical utility, as it is a protection against presumption on the one hand, and despondency on the other. Our Maker has placed a double guard around our spiritual and eternal interests. As He has provided that where one bodily sense mistakes an object, another sense may correct it; so in reference to the important subject of saving religion—its evidence is placed both in our consciousness of the Spirit's witness, and the conviction of our own judgment." The one is the echo of the other, responding to the same blessed testimony. "What 'the Spirit itself' makes evident to our *consciousness*, 'our spirit' makes evident to our *reason*. What the former reveals by an immediate impression, the latter demonstrates by inference and argument; both unite in declaring that now are we the sons of God."

¹ On this subject Mr. Wesley's sermon on the wilderness state should be carefully read.

CHAPTER XII.

REGENERATION; OR, THE NEW BIRTH.

I.—In what different senses is the word regeneration employed in Scripture?

The Greek word *palingenesia*, which strictly signifies a new birth, and is rendered "regeneration," occurs but twice in the New Testament. In Matt. xix. 28 it appears to refer to the final renovation of all things, when all the children of God shall, as it were, be born anew from their graves, and the Son of man, presiding over that august assembly, shall sit on the throne of His glory, and both judge and reward every man according to his works.¹ In Titus iii. 5 the word is used in a moral sense to express the renovation of the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is in this latter sense that we use the word in this chapter.

II.—What is the proper nature of regeneration, or the new birth?

From the many different phrases which are employed to set it forth, we conclude that it is a spiritual change of a remarkably decided nature. It is mentioned as a being "born again" (John iii. 3); being made "a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15); as a passing "from death unto life" (John v. 24; 1 John iii. 14); as a being "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29); as a translation from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son² (Col. i. 13); and as a putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. iv. 24). Our leading divines, catching the spirit of these texts, have embodied them in formal definitions. Thus Wesley: The new birth "is that great change which God works in the soul when He brings it into life; when He raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the Almighty Spirit of God, when it is created anew in Christ Jesus; when it is renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness."³ Thus Watson: "Regeneration is

¹ This is the view of Wesley, Doddridge, and many others.

² Of the Son of His love.—Revised Version.

³ Sermon on "The New Birth."

that mighty change in man, wrought by the Holy Spirit, by which the dominion which sin had over him in his natural state, and which he deplores and struggles against in his penitent state, is broken and abolished; so that with full choice of will and the energy of right affections, he serves God freely, and runs in the way of His commandments."¹ Thus Dr. Hannah: "Regeneration is that spiritual change which is wrought in believing man by the Holy Spirit of God, and which, though it may be mysterious and inexplicable in its process, is sufficiently plain and obvious in its effects."² Thus John Angell James: "It is that entire change of our moral nature, which is effected by the Spirit of God, through the word received by faith, when the corrupt and fallen nature which we inherit from Adam is taken away, and the holy and spiritual nature which we receive from Christ is imparted."

III.—What are the scriptural evidences of the new birth?

Some of them are distinctly specified.

1. Victory over the world. (1 John v. 4). The disciples of Christ are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world (John xvii. 16); they are expressly told "that the friendship of the world is enmity with God" (James iv. 4); one essential feature of their religion is to keep themselves unspotted from the world (James i. 27); and the faith by which the new life is sustained gives them the victory over the world (1 John v. 4, 5). They neither seek the company, nor fear the frowns, nor conform to the practices, nor delight in the pleasures, nor adopt the maxims of the world. In their new nature there is a spirit of perfect antagonism with "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John ii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 14-16). They cannot be received as the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty except as they come out from among them and be separate (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18). Any other course is an unmistakable indication that the love of the Father is not in them (1 John ii. 15).

2. Dominion over sin. Read that solemn passage in 1 John iii. 8, 9. Sin is the abominable thing which God hateth; and as they are now brought under the dominion of His grace, the body of sin is destroyed; they are freed from sin; they reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin (Rom. vi.); and they cannot sin, because they are born of God. There is that light in their minds which shows them the evil and malignity of sin; there is that bias upon their hearts that disposes them to loathe and hate sin. There is that spiritual seminal principle or disposition which breaks the force and power of sin. There is that love to God which makes them delight to do His will, so that it is contrary to the nature of their new-born soul to commit sin. And whenever temptation is presented, instead of yielding to the suggestions of the enemy, as the ungodly

¹ Theological Institutes.

² MS. Theological Lectures.

habitually do, they repel the tempter, exclaiming, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"¹

3. Love to the saints (1 John iii. 14; iv. 7, 8). This is not that natural affection or denominational affection which often binds in the sweetest and closest union those who are of the same family, or of the same Church, or of the same taste. It is a love that overleaps the barriers of sect and party, and Church and nation, and fixes its regards on every one that loves God and bears His image. Such an one is hailed as a brother in Christ, and an heir of heaven, and is the object of a warm, hallowing, operative affection, which is cherished for the Master's sake, while it constitutes a valid evidence of Christian character.

4. The practice of universal righteousness (1 John ii. 29; iii. 7). Regenerating grace has fixed a principle within, which prompts and constrains to the observance of "whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report." There is such a clear conviction of the rectitude of God's claims, and such delight in doing His commandments, and such a view of personal obligations to God for His unbounded love, as prompts the eager inquiry, "How shall I please the Lord, and promote His glory?" It is his meat and drink to do the will of God; and, like his Master, Whose image he bears, the one great concern of life is "to fulfil all righteousness."

IV.—Whence arises the necessity for this great change?

Our Saviour teaches that it arises—

1. *From the deep depravity of our nature* (John iii. 6). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." It is carnal, corrupt, depraved, and sinful; for in this sense the term "flesh," as it is opposed to "spirit," is to be interpreted in God's word (see Rom. viii. 5-8; Gal. v. 17). The understanding is darkened (1 Cor. ii. 14; Eph. iv. 18); the heart is at enmity (Rom. viii. 7); the will is perverse (John v. 40; Matt. xxiii. 37); the affections are earthly (Rom. viii. 5); and the whole deportment is regulated by Satan, the great enemy (Eph. ii. 2, 3). In this sad state we are born—flesh of flesh, the depraved offspring of depraved parents; and having been "born in sin," we must be "born again;" the fleshly principle must die; and born from above, spirit of Spirit, the spiritual principle will be restored to its proper supremacy and power, thus allying us to God, and enrolling us among the subjects of a spiritual kingdom.

2. *From the purity of heaven, of its society, enjoyments, and exercises.* They are so unsuitable to us in our natural state, that, without the change which Divine grace effects, we cannot see, much less enter, the kingdom (John iii. 3, 5; Matt. v. 8; Heb. xii. 14; Rev. xxi. 27). If an unregenerate soul could be admitted there, it could realise no enjoyment, because it could feel no sympathy with the objects that would surround it, and the company with which it must mingle. All things would be alien to it, and it would be alien to them. But

¹ Read on this subject Mr. Wesley's Sermons on John iii. 8, and 1 John iii. 9.

admission is impossible. The word has gone forth that there shall in nowise enter anything that defileth. And before the gates of the city can be opened for us, we must be thoroughly renewed, having all our sympathies, tastes, pursuits, and affections directed and governed by "holiness to the Lord."

V.—By what agency is the work of regeneration produced ?

The intrinsic nature of the change is sufficient to prove that neither education, nor example, nor any mode of instrumentality which could be performed by mere mortal influence, will accomplish it. The testimony of Scripture is that the Holy Spirit of God is alone the Author of the new creation (John iii. 5, 6; 2 Cor. iii. 18; Titus iii. 5). This does not imply, however, that the sinner himself is reduced to a machine in the hands of God. God neither forces the human will, nor saves man without his concurrence and co-operation. There is a sense in which he is to work out his own salvation (Phil. ii. 12), to make himself a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek. xviii 31). What is Divinely commanded must be possible. A certain power of compliance is put within every one of us. "At the same time, if man were not favoured with the enlightening and renovating power of the Holy Ghost, all forms of instrumentality and personal efforts would be in vain ; or rather, no personal efforts would be made. God the Spirit imparts a measure of light, invites to salvation, and excites spiritual desires. Then, if His gracious influences are yielded to, He bestows them more abundantly—gives grace for grace. If still obeyed, He imparts further help ; and on the penitent fully resigning himself to Christ by faith, takes up His abode in his heart, sheds His love abroad therein, and thus the soul is regenerated."¹

VI.—What is the instrumental means by which the Holy Spirit operates in effecting this life-giving change ?

Some divines have contended that His influences are exerted *directly* upon the affections and the will, without any instrumental means whatever. But the Scriptures teach most explicitly that He works upon the heart through the medium of "the truth"—that word of Divine truth contained in the Gospel (James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23; 1 Cor. iv. 15; Rom. x. 17; Eph. v. 26). And probably there never will occur one instance of regeneration in which the word of God, in one form of administration or another, will not be the instrument employed. What a mighty force is thus thrown into the exhortation of St. James, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word," etc. (James i. 21).

VII.—Although we believe that justification, the witness of the Spirit, and regeneration, are co-existent (that is, they are bestowed upon us in the same moment of time), is there not, in the order of

¹ Dr. W. Cooke.

thinking, a succession of one to the other ? and between the two latter is there not a relation resembling that of cause and effect ?

There is. The succession in the order of thought is this. In the first instance, justification, or the relative change, is obtained with an immediate adoption into the family of God. The Spirit is then given to bear His witness to the heart that sin is forgiven and the prodigal welcomed to his Father's house. And from that witness, and the consciousness of Divine love which it awakens, there springs up in the heart that love to God which is the great principle in our regeneration (1 John iv. 19). This is the order of our spiritual recovery, and hence we see the harmony which exists between the blessings ; the witness of the Spirit being the keystone—or the link which binds together the relative with the real change.

VIII.—How is regeneration distinguished from repentance, justification, and entire sanctification ?

In repentance a man undergoes a great change, for he ceases to do evil, and learns to do well ; but he is still painfully conscious of being in a state of spiritual bondage, "carnal, sold under sin" (see Rom. vii.). In regeneration the soul is delivered both from the guilt and power of sin, and exults in conscious liberty (see Rom. viii. 1, 2). In other words, repentance is a condition of bondage, the other of freedom ; the one of union with the body of death, the other of deliverance from it through Christ. The one is accompanied by a sense of wrath, the other by a consciousness of favour. Justification and the new birth are distinguished thus : "Justification implies only a relative, the new birth a real change. God, in justifying us, does something for us ; in begetting us again, He does the work in us. The former changes our outward relation to God, so that of enemies we become children, by the latter our inmost souls are changed, so that of sinners we become saints. The one restores us to the favour, the other to the image of God. The one is the taking away the guilt, the other taking away the power of sin ; so that though they are joined together in point of time, yet are they of wholly distinct natures."¹

Regeneration and entire sanctification are distinguished thus : The one is infant life—the life of a new-born babe (1 Peter ii. 2) ; the other is natural life—the life of "a perfect man" who has attained "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13). In regeneration the power of sin is broken ; in entire sanctification the soul is "cleansed from all unrighteousness." In the former the love of God is shed abroad in the heart ; in the latter the soul "is made perfect in love."

IX.—What is the doctrine of baptismal regeneration ? and by what arguments is it disproved ?

The doctrine is that baptism, when administered by a certain

¹ Wesley's Sermons, No. xix.

privileged order, and after a certain prescribed form, communicates to the individuals all the blessings that are comprehended in the new birth. This is the avowed doctrine of the Romish Church. It is warmly supported by the followers of the "Tractarian heresy;" and, unhappily, the whole office for the baptism of infants in the Liturgy of the Church of England proceeds upon the supposition that this doctrine is true.

Now, it may be safely admitted, that if baptism be rightly administered, and received by faith as God's appointed sign of the washing away of sin, and as His pledge and seal of His faithfulness in imparting covenant mercies, He will honour His own institution, and make it a channel through which to communicate His spiritual grace. Hence, Acts ii. 38; Mark xvi. 16. But that baptism and regeneration are *necessarily* linked together is an idea for which there is no foundation in the Word of God.

1. *It is disproved by the Apostle Peter* when he tells us that "baptism saves us" (1 Peter iii. 21), but is careful at once to announce that he does not mean baptism as an outward ordinance, but as "the answer of a good conscience towards God." What is the meaning of this distinction? If the saving influence of the Holy Ghost always accompanied the washing of the flesh, why distinguish between them? There was no danger of mistaking the one for the other. The only conceivable supposition which gives meaning to these words, is that which admits the possibility of this fleshly washing to take place without its being efficient to save.¹

2. *It is disproved by the corresponding rite of circumcision.* This rite was appointed for the admission of members to the Jewish Church. It was "a seal of the righteousness of faith" (Rom. iv. 11), a sign of inward purity (Rom. ii. 29; Deut. xxx. 6); and, like all Divine ordinances, was profitable if a man kept the law (Rom. ii. 25). But as a mere outward ceremony, however correctly administered, it was totally inoperative (see Rom. ii. 25-29). Now, baptism holds the same place in the Christian economy as circumcision did in the Jewish dispensation, and the very same observation that St. Paul made concerning the one ordinance holds with regard to the other. The outward sign is not inseparably connected with the inward grace; and if the latter be absent, the former will avail us nothing.

3. *It is disproved by Scripture facts.* First, there are instances of persons being regenerated who had not been baptized—the thief on the cross (Luke xxiii. 42, 43); Cornelius (Acts x. 44-48). Secondly, there are instances of persons being baptized who were not regenerated. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v. 1-11); Simon Magus (Acts viii. 13-23).

4. *It is disproved by the conduct of St. Paul.* Were baptism identified with regeneration, would he, while glorying in preaching,

¹ Dr. G. Smith's "Perilous Times," p. 307.

have spoken of baptism as an inferior ordinance? And yet he does so, declaring with manifest satisfaction that he had not been sent to baptize, but to preach; and leaving the administration of the rite to inferiors, he even thanked God that he had baptized none of them (1 Cor. i. 14-17).

5. *It is disproved by the character of many baptized persons.* If the sacrament does really secure regenerating grace, should it not be followed by some moral and religious results in the outward character? But have the most discerning and anxious parents, on their return from the sanctuary, discovered any accession of new and holy qualities in the baptized child, or have they missed any evil tempers which the child previously developed? Universal experience gives a negative reply. And is it not an undeniable and melancholy fact, that the lives of thousands who have risen into life demonstrate but too clearly that many who are baptized with water have never been baptized with the Holy Ghost?

6. *While the doctrine is thus disproved, there are no texts which, rightly interpreted, can be adduced to sustain it.* Those which are generally put forward with this view are the following:—

(1) John iii. 5.—“There is no conclusive evidence that our Lord referred to baptism at all in this passage. Though water is mentioned, it seems to be figuratively for the Holy Spirit itself, which is immediately introduced as the object intended. Nor does this involve an offensive tautology, or a departure from the *usus loquendi* of the sacred writers. On the contrary, nothing is more common than for the inspired writers to employ, first a *figure*, and then, in the same sentence to introduce exegetically the object itself; or, *vice versa*, first to mention the object itself, and then, in the same sentence to introduce a striking figure of the same; yet, no one in such cases supposes that *two* Divine subjects are intended. Take, for example, Matt. iii. 11; Isa. i. 16, xlv. 3. Now, apply this principle of interpretation to John iii. 5, and we reach the conclusion that only *one* thing is intended—one regeneration, and that by the Holy Ghost, of whose cleansing influences water is an expressive emblem.”¹ Thus, the

¹ Dr. W. Cooke. This explanation of the text is not the only one that has the authority of great names for its support. The following, for which we are indebted to the learned John Howe and others, is worthy of attention. “Nicodemus knew of a birth, or being born again, by water, because the thing in his day was quite common; for whenever a Gentile was proselyted to the Jewish faith he was baptized; and the learned men of the nation were accustomed to say of him that he was ‘new born’ or ‘born again;’ meaning that he was now introduced into a new world, having new relations, prospects, connections, etc. Now, our Lord intended to sanction this rite (for it was beautifully emblematical), and adopt it for His own. And to warn and instruct Nicodemus, He seems to say, ‘There has been a birth by water before, according to your own mode of speaking and practice; let the water remain, and be introduced by it to the kingdom that I will set up. But there must be another birth, of which the Spirit is the Author; a man must be born of God—born spirit of Spirit, before he can be a spiritual member of a spiritual kingdom.’” “The two operations of water and the Spirit are thus associated and spoken of not as one is conducive to the other, nor as both are equally indispensable to the same result, but as one is the public recognition of ostensible con-

passage affords no sanction to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

(2) Titus iii. 5.—“This passage furnishes another instance of the custom of giving in the same sentence, first, a figurative, and then a literal and exegetical representation of the same subject. The subject represented is the great spiritual change experienced by every believer. This is first termed, figuratively, ‘regeneration;’ then, literally, a ‘renewing;’ and is first ascribed, figuratively, to a ‘washing’ or to the *laver*; then, literally, to the ‘Holy Ghost.’ Thus, the second member of the sentence is simply exegetical, or explanatory of the first.”¹ Let this view of these two passages be received, reading them, “Except a man be born of water, *even* (kai) of the Spirit,” etc., and “the washing of regeneration *even* (kai) the renewing of the Holy Ghost,”—then we allow the Spirit to interpret His own meaning, and all is clear and harmonious, and in perfect agreement with every other scripture.

If it be asked, in conclusion, *What is the difference between baptism and regeneration?* we reply in the words of Mr. Wesley: “The one is an external, the other an internal work. The one is a visible, the other an invisible thing. The one is the act of man purifying the body, the other a change wrought by God in the soul; so that the former is just as distinguishable from the latter, as the soul from the body, or water from the Holy Ghost.”²

nection with the kingdom of God, and the other is the proof and means to the individual of actual admission into it; as one is the outward and visible sign, and the other is the inward and spiritual grace. . . . To be a member of this kingdom in the fullest sense, ostensibly and really, by the recognition of the Church and the approval of God, two operations are required—baptism by water, and sanctification by the Spirit.”—*Rev. J. Stacey.*

¹ Dr. W. Cooke.

² Sermon, No. xlv.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION; OR, ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

I.—Is perfection of some sort held out in the Bible as an attainable state?

No one who reads his Bible with attention will give a negative answer to this question. Perfection is enjoined (Gen. xvii. 1; Matt. v. 48; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Heb. vi. 1): it is exemplified (Gen. vi. 9; Job i. 8; Psalm xxxvii. 37; 1 John iv. 17); it is prayed for (2 Cor. xiii. 9, 11; Heb. xiii. 20, 21; 1 Peter v. 10); and it is presented as the great object of the Gospel ministry (Col. i. 28; Eph. iv. 11-13). Let any one take his concordance, and he will be surprised at the multitude of instances in which, under all dispensations, this word is sanctioned by Scripture use. And it is important to note this, because even many serious and intelligent Christians are startled whenever the word is employed in relation to religious experience, supposing that it savours of pride and presumption. But we must take heed how we stagger at any word of God. "The words which the Holy Ghost teacheth" are right words, and words of wisdom; and the wisest course is to study them till we understand their full import, and never, under any circumstances, to discard them, lest we incur the guilt of them who are "ashamed of Christ and His words."

II.—Can we suppose that the perfection so held out is of the same nature and degree as may be predicated of God, of angels, or of Adam as he came fresh from his Creator's hand?

This we never assert. *The perfection of God* is absolute, and can neither be augmented nor diminished. Such a state belongs to no created being, either in earth or heaven, in time or in eternity. It is the privilege of all rational creatures to be eternally progressing, and yet they must ever remain at an infinite distance from the perfection of the Creator. Nor can we in our probationary state attain *angelic perfection*. Angels have capabilities far greater than ever fell to the lot of man, and are in circumstances far more favourable to the growth and development of all moral excellence; and with their higher powers, and their residence in a region of spotless purity, they have duties and re-

sponsibilities that can never belong to us, and are distinguished by moral qualities that can never be known among men. *Adamic perfection* occupies a lower rank still. But it involved a freedom from every defect either in the understanding or in the affections. The body of the new-made man was "no clog to his mind; it did not hinder his apprehending all things clearly, judging truly concerning them, and reasoning justly, if he reasoned at all. Consequently, the law, proportioned to his original powers, required that he should always think, always speak, and always act precisely right, in every point whatever. He was well able to do so; and God could not but require the service he was able to pay."¹ But by our degeneracy both body and mind have become impaired and enfeebled. We can neither, "at all times, apprehend clearly, nor judge truly, nor reason justly; therefore it is as natural for a man to mistake as to breathe; he can no more live without the one than without the other;" consequently, the perfection of Adam can never be realised in us. The perfection enjoined in the Bible is limited by the capacities and susceptibilities of fallen human nature. It does not, therefore, raise man to the perfection of the Godhead, nor of angels, nor of Adam.

III.—What, then, is the perfection of which the Gospel speaks as the present privilege of the saints?

We call it *Christian perfection* to distinguish it from the perfection of angels, and from the perfection of Adam in his unfallen state. Let us see how it is defined by two or three of our theologians: "What is Christian perfection?" says Mr. Wesley. "The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love."² Says Mr. Fletcher, "By Christian perfection we mean nothing but the cluster and maturity of the graces which compose the Christian character in the Church militant. In other words, Christian perfection is a spiritual constellation made up of these gracious stars—perfect repentance, perfect faith, perfect humility, perfect meekness, perfect self-denial, perfect resignation, perfect hope, perfect charity for our visible enemies as well as for our earthly relations; and, above all, perfect love for our invisible God, through the explicit knowledge of our Mediator, Jesus Christ. And, as this last star is always accompanied by all the others, as Jupiter is by his satellites, we frequently use the phrase 'perfect love' instead of the word perfection, understanding by it the pure love of God shed abroad in the hearts of established believers by the Holy Ghost, which is abundantly given them under the fulness of the Christian dispensation."³ Says Dr. A. Clarke, "That observation of a learned civilian is at once both correct and illustrative; namely, 'We count those things

¹ Wesley's "Plain Account of Christian Perfection."

² *Ibid.*

³ Fletcher's "Last Check."

perfect which want nothing requisite for the end whereto they were instituted.' Accordingly, a man may be said to be perfect who answers the end for which God made him; and as God requires every man to love Him with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbour as himself, then he is a perfect man that does so—he answers the end for which God made him. And this is more evident from the nature of that love which fills his heart; for, as love is the principle of obedience, so he that loves his God with all his powers will obey Him with all his powers; and he who loves his neighbour as himself will not only do no injury to him, but on the contrary, labour to promote his best interests. Why the doctrine which enjoins such a state of perfection as this should be dreaded, ridiculed, or despised, is a most strange thing."

From the above definitions and explanations it appears that Christian perfection is the maturity of grace and holiness which established adult believers attain to under the Christian dispensation; but is especially to be regarded as a maturity of holy love, love which counteracts and expels all antagonistic influences, and moulds the soul into the image of God; for "God is love."

IV.—The same maturity of grace is often spoken of as "entire sanctification." Does that phrase suggest any other views of this state of holiness?

The verb "to sanctify," in its etymological meaning, signifies to separate from a common and profane use to an appropriate and special service. In this sense it is applied to the Sabbath (Gen. ii. 3); to the Jewish tabernacle and temple and the utensils of the Divine service (see Exod. xxx.); and to Aaron and his sons and their successors in office.

The term, thus used in a ceremonial sense, is applied in a high spiritual sense to all justified and regenerate men (1 Cor. i. 2, and other places); denoting their separation from sin, and their dedication to the service of God. And from this it is easy to see what is involved in that matured and perfected degree of the Spirit's work, which St. Paul calls a being sanctified "wholly" (1 Thess. v. 23). It consists in an entire separation from sin, and an entire dedication to God.

1. *Entire separation from sin*, by which we mean, first, from all outward sin, all violations of the law of love which relate to our outward conduct; and, secondly, from all inward sin, all violations of the law of love which relate to the intellect, sensibilities, and the will. And is not the absolute necessity and easy possibility of this entire separation from sin most clearly insisted upon throughout the Revelation of God? Let the following passages be duly pondered:—Psalm cxxx. 5, 6; Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27; Rom. vi. 6-11; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Eph. v. 25-27; 1 John i. 7, 9, iii. 8. It must be observed, however, that if sin were defined in its most absolute and strict sense as including, not only every transgression of the Divine law, but every defect by which we come short of its requirements, "there is no

John 3.
10:27

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man that sinneth not." But defect and infirmity—which are, in a sense, transgressions of the perfect law, and from which no one is clear till he lays down this corruptible body—are not charged upon the conscience and imputed as sin in the case of a man whose heart is clean, and whose intentions, affections, and principles are swayed by love; for "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10).

2. *Entire dedication to God*, by which we mean a complete acquiescence in His will and reference to His glory; using and enjoying all as He wills we should, disclaiming any rights that conflict with His rights; pursuing such business and in such measure as from our best light we believe He approves; loving only those objects which He loves, and in that degree which He allows; and discharging every duty, in the world or in the Church, at home or abroad, in willing and acknowledged reference to the honour of His name. This is entire consecration. And who will say that by the grace of God it is not possible? It is enjoined, Rom. i. 1, xii. 1, 2; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; and it is exemplified, Rom. xiv. 6-8; Gal. ii. 20.

The man who is thus entirely cleansed and entirely dedicated has that mind in him which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. ii. 5); he is filled with the fruits of righteousness (Phil. i. 11); his speech will be alway with grace, seasoned with salt (Col. iv. 6); he will set no wicked thing before his eyes (Psalm ci. 3); his bodily appetites will be used only for the purposes for which they were designed (1 Cor. ix. 27); he rejoices evermore, prays without ceasing, and in everything gives thanks (1 Thess. v. 16-18); the law of love, as described in 1 Cor. xiii., is written on his heart; and he moves amidst the scenes of life blameless and harmless, the son of God without rebuke (Phil. ii. 15). Such an one can say, in some humble and distant sense, what his Divine Master said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me;" and when God comes to inspect the soul, He finds all that it possesses to be in harmony with Himself—a throne on which He reigns without a rival, an empire wherein He exercises undisputed dominion. This is entire sanctification—this is Christian perfection. And we may sum up the whole in the words of Dr. Hannah: "It denotes the extirpation of our remaining sin, and the mature growth of regenerate life; or, in other words, that pure and perfect love of God, and of all others for His sake, which is now attainable through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and which is strictly consistent with the acknowledged infirmities of our present mortal condition." And this suggests another inquiry:—

V.—What limits or qualifications are we to assign to this state of grace?

1. *Does it include infallibility, exemption from errors of judgment, or intellectual perfection of any kind?* No; while we remain in the body we are liable to be imposed upon by deceptive appearances, to arrive at false conclusions; to be misled by unfaithful memory, illusory observations, erratic imaginations; to form unauthorised surmises and suspicions; to entertain incorrect opinions about many

things. This is a natural consequence of the soul's dwelling in flesh and blood. But a man may be filled with pure love, and yet be subject to ignorance and mistake.

2. *Does it suppose that the conduct and feelings will be always free from improprieties and irregularities?* No; from imperfect knowledge or mistake in judgment there may frequently result an improper conduct and feeling. For instance: Wrong information concerning an upright and honest neighbour may lead me to regard and to treat him as a vile and disreputable man. The prejudice of education may induce me to flagellate the body, or to confine myself to the cloisters of a monastery. "And a thousand such instances there may be, even in those who are in the highest state of grace. Yet, where every word and action spring from love, such a mistake is not properly a sin."¹

3. *Does it imply freedom from temptation?* No; a state of temptation is compatible with the highest state of holiness; for Adam, in his primeval innocence, was tempted; and the Saviour, Who knew no sin, was tempted in all points like as we are; and, so long as our probation lasts, we shall be liable to temptation from a variety of sources. But so long as it is promptly, and with the full and hearty concurrence of the soul, repelled, there is no indication of inward sympathy, and there is no sin.

4. *Does it imply an exemption from the danger of falling away?* No; the most holy Christians are not in this respect above Adam in Paradise, or above angels in heaven. The one fell into sin from the summit of his paradisiacal excellence, and the others from the height of their celestial perfection; so may those believers whose hearts have been purified by faith gradually depart from the faith, and even fall so low as to count the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing.²

5. *Does it preclude the possibility of further advancement?* No; the word "perfection" indicates that the graces of the Spirit exist in the sanctified soul without alloy, without mixture—that there is nothing within contrary to them—that they exist in measure corresponding with the present capacity of the soul possessing them; but it does not indicate an attainment beyond which there is no progress. As the defects and infirmities of this mortal state are overcome or removed, as the capacities continue ever and endlessly to enlarge, as the mind expands and unfolds its energies, so will the sublimities of its moral perfection wax brighter and brighter. Through time and throughout eternity the soul will continue to receive fresh supplies from the fulness of its glorified Lord, "changed from glory into glory."

VI.—Is this state of Christian perfection attained when the believer is justified? In other words, is regeneration identical with entire sanctification?

This opinion was strenuously advocated, more than a century ago,

¹ Wesley's "Plain Account of Christian Perfection."

² Fletcher's "Last Check."

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by the celebrated Count Zinzendorf, and many of our countrymen imbibed it from him. And still there are a few—a very few—who contend, that at the moment of regeneration the believer is completely and thoroughly sanctified ; and that if he should afterwards be conscious of inbred corruption, he has, in a measure, fallen from grace. It may be conceded, first, that in very exceptional cases, especially in the cases of those who are saved just at the close of life, the work is “cut short ;” and the penitent believer is at once forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness : secondly, that in the holy transports of his first love, the justified man *imagines* that all sin is gone—“he feels no sin, and therefore fancies he has none ; it does not stir, therefore it does not exist ; it has no motion, therefore it has no being :” thirdly, that the regenerate man “is delivered from the dominion of outward sin, and, at the same time, the power of inward sin is so broken that he need no longer follow or be led by it. But it is by no means true that inward sin is then totally destroyed ; that the root of pride, self-will, anger, love of the world, is then taken out of the heart ; or that the carnal mind, and the heart bent to backsliding, are entirely extirpated. These, to some extent, remain under the control of a stronger gracious power implanted, but still making resistance, and indicating the need of a further work. Take the following Scripture proofs that there is sin still existing in the heart of the justified believer. 1 Cor. iii. 1-3.—The persons here addressed were “babes in Christ,” and were, therefore, born again of the Spirit, they were Christian “brethren,” “sanctified in Christ Jesus” (chap. i. 2) ; and yet they were in a measure “carnal,” of which there were tokens enough to disturb the peace, and prevent the prosperity of the Church. 2 Cor. vii. 1.—This exhortation plainly teaches that the believers to whom it was addressed were still the subjects of spiritual pollution, from which the soul must be cleansed before they could answer the great purposes of their Christian calling. Gal. v. 17.—The Apostle directly affirms that the “flesh,” the evil nature, opposes the Spirit, even in believers ; that even in the regenerate there are two principles “contrary the one to the other.” 1 John i. 7.—In this passage we are supposed to be “in the light,” but not yet cleansed from sin ; this entire cleansing is still held out as an object to be aimed at in all the holy exercises of the soul. And the whole tenor of New Testament teaching leads to the same conclusion, “that there are two contrary principles in believers, nature and grace, the flesh and the Spirit. Almost all the directions and exhortations in St. Paul’s epistles are founded on this supposition ; pointing at wrong tempers or practices in those who are, notwithstanding, acknowledged by the inspired writers to be believers. And they are continually exhorted to fight with and conquer these, by the power of the faith which was in them.”¹

What, then, is the difference between regeneration and entire sanctification ? Regeneration is the beginning of purification ;

¹ See Wesley’s Sermon on “Sin in Believers,” where this subject is treated at length.

entire sanctification is the finishing of that work. A regenerate man is kept from voluntarily committing known sin; which is what is commonly meant in the New Testament by 'committing sin.' But he yet finds in himself the remains of inbred corruption or original sin; such as pride, anger, envy, etc. The person fully sanctified is cleansed from all these inward involuntary sins. He may be tempted by Satan, by men, and by his own bodily appetites, to commit sin; but his heart is free from those inward fires, which, before his full sanctification, were ready to fall in with temptation, and lead him into transgression. The Holy Ghost has cleansed him from all these pollutions of his nature."

VII.—If Christian perfection is thus a distinct work from regeneration, is it to be attained gradually or instantaneously?

That there is to be a gradual growth to the maturity of the Christian life is plain. Hence the commands, 2 Peter iii. 18, and the figures by which the work of grace is illustrated: it is leaven (Matt. xiii. 33); it is the mortification of sin (Col. iii. 5); it is the rising from infancy to manhood (1 John ii. 12, 13); and it is a race, "a going on" (Heb. vi. 1, xii. 1). But though there is a progress towards perfection in every justified believer, yet its attainment is not a mere ripeness, insured by natural growth, but is instantaneously wrought in the soul by the direct agency of the Holy Ghost. It is by faith (Acts xv. 9), and, therefore, at any time when the requisite faith is exercised, the reward will be granted. Mr. Wesley illustrates the subject thus: "A man may be dying for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, die, till the instant the soul is separated from the body; and in that instant he lives the life of eternity. In like manner, he may be dying to sin for some time; yet he is not dead to sin till sin is separated from his soul; and in that instant he lives the full life of love. Yet he still grows in grace, in the knowledge of Christ, and in the witness of the renewal." But as it is often difficult to perceive the instant when life ceases, so a man may be "dead indeed unto sin," but know nothing of the instant when "the old man" expired. While in other cases the time, place, and circumstances may be as plain and unmistakable as any event in the natural world.

VIII.—What is the Scripture proof that this state of moral and spiritual excellence is attainable?

1. *It is proved from the fact that God commands it* (Deut. vi. 5, compared with Luke x. 27; Matt. v. 48; Rom. vi. 11; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Heb. vi. 1, xii. 14; James i. 4; 1 Peter i. 15, 16). If it is not attainable, then God has issued a command which it is impossible should be obeyed—made a requirement of His creatures which they have no power to perform. Who is prepared for this conclusion?

¹ Bishop Hedding, of the M. E. Church of America.

also see
mat 17.21-
-23.

2. *It is proved from the fact that God promises it* (Deut. xxx. 6; Ezek. xxxvi. 25-29; Matt. v. 6; 1 Thess. v. 23, 24; 1 John i. 7-9). If it is not attainable, then God's promise will fail; but "He is not a man that He should lie."

3. *It is proved from the fact that holy and inspired men prayed for it in behalf of the Church* (John xvii. 20-23; Eph. iii. 14-21; Col. iv. 12; 1 Thess. v. 23; Heb. xiii. 20, 21; 1 Peter v. 10). If it is not attainable, the men who offered these prayers were deluded by the Holy Ghost, and inspiration is not to be trusted!

4. *It is proved from the fact that the Bible points to it as the great object of all God's dealings with men.* It is the object of Christ's mediatorial work (Luke i. 68-75; 1 John iii. 8; Eph. v. 25-27; Titus ii. 14); of the institution of the Christian ministry (Eph. iv. 11-13; Col. i. 28); of the promise of the Gospel (2 Peter i. 4); and of the afflictions of life (Heb. xii. 10). To suppose that it is not attainable is to cast contempt on the provisions of grace, and, above all, to dishonour the meritorious sacrifice of Christ.

5. *It is proved from the fact that the Scriptures present us with examples of those who have realised it.* Enoch (Gen. v. 24); Noah (Gen. vi. 9); the disciples on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 4); Barnabas (xi. 24); St. John (1 John iv. 17); the apostles who laboured among the Thessalonians (1 Thess. ii. 10); and St. Paul (Phil. iii. 15).¹ Now, if an instance can be found in the Bible of one individual who, at any period of his life, was "perfect," "blameless," free from sin, or entirely sanctified, the attainableness of such a state is clearly proved. And it would make nothing against this doctrine if a charge of moral delinquency could be afterwards proved against him; because, as we have already shown, Christian perfection does not imply impeccability, or certain perseverance in that state to the close of life.

IX.—If the blessing of "perfect love" is thus proved to be attainable, may we look for it in the full vigour of life?

The general opinion of Calvinistic divines is that it cannot be attained until death. The great and good Matthew Henry teaches this doctrine; and Dr. Dodd says, in his note on Rom. vi. 7, "The body of sin in believers is, indeed, an enfeebled, conquered, and deposed tyrant, and the stroke of death finishes its destruction." We, on the contrary, believe that the entire sanctification of our nature may take place long before death, and be exemplified in

¹ The words of Paul, in hil. Piii. 12-14, have often been adduced as his own acknowledgment that he was not wholly sanctified. But the context shows that the perfection of which he was speaking in verse 12 consists in the obtaining of the reward to which, as a Christian racer, he was aspiring. He was looking for the crown of martyrdom and the resurrection to eternal life, and was led to view everything as imperfect or unfinished till these were attained. And he calls upon all who, like himself, were "perfect," in the sense of being cleansed from indwelling sin, to "be like-minded" in pressing forward to the goal.

whatever position Providence may place us. Our reasons for this conclusion are—

1. We find no intimation in the Bible that we cannot be cleansed from sin while in life and health; and in no one passage is it hinted that the glorious transformation must be postponed to the end of our career. All the commands and promises that relate to this subject are so worded as to convey the idea of a *present* application.

2. We are nowhere taught that the soul's connection with the body is a necessary obstacle to its entire sanctification. Indeed, it is explicitly declared that the body, with all its appetites, powers, and members, is to be sanctified to God (Rom. vi. 13; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11; 1 Thess. v. 23; Heb. x. 22).

3. It is the blood of Christ, and not "the last enemy," that cleanseth from all sin (1 John i. 7; Rev. i. 5); and it would be an insult to Christ and to His "precious blood" to suppose that He cannot save His people from their sins while soul and body are united.

4. "The Scriptures connect our entire sanctification with subsequent habits and acts to be exhibited in the conduct of believers before death" (Rom. vi. 6, 19, 22; 2 Cor. vii. 1; 1 Thess. v. 23).

5. The Scriptures, also, "require us to bring forth the graces and virtues which are usually called the fruits of the Spirit. That these are to be produced during the life, and to be displayed in our spirit and conduct, cannot be doubted; and we may then ask whether they are required of us in perfection and maturity? If so, in this degree of perfection and maturity, they necessarily suppose the entire sanctification of the soul from the opposite and antagonist evils."¹

We conclude, therefore, as to the time of our complete sanctification, that "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

X.—By what evidence is the attainment of this great blessing verified?

It is evidenced indirectly by its fruits. There will be an inward consciousness that the body of sin is destroyed, a deep and constant current of love flowing out towards God and all mankind, a perfect submission to the will of God, a life of faith in the Son of God, and intimate fellowship with God. Indeed, the one undivided "fruit of the Spirit" described in Gal. v. 22, 23, will be gloriously displayed to the honour of God and the edification of man. But, still, "*none ought to believe that the work is done, till there is added the testimony of the Spirit witnessing his entire sanctification as clearly as his justification.*" "But what need is there of this, seeing sanctification is a real change, not a relative one only, like justification?" Ans.—"But is the new birth a relative change

¹ Watson's "Institutes."

only? is not this a real change? Therefore, if we need no witness of our sanctification because it is a real change, for the same reason we should need none that we are born of or are the children of God." "But does not sanctification shine by its own light?"

Ans.—"And does not the new birth too? Sometimes it does; and so does sanctification: at others it does not. In the hour of temptation Satan clouds the work of God, and injects various doubts and reasonings, especially in those who have very weak or very strong understandings. At such times there is absolute need of that witness; without which the work of sanctification not only could not be discerned, but could no longer subsist. Were it not for this, the soul could not then abide in the love of God; much less could it rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks. In these circumstances, therefore, a direct testimony that we are sanctified is necessary in the highest degree." "But what scripture makes mention of any such thing, or gives any reason to expect it?" Ans.—"That scripture, 'Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God' (1 Cor. ii. 12). Now, surely, sanctification is one of 'the things which are freely given us of God.' And no possible reason can be assigned why this should be excepted, when the Apostle says, 'we receive the Spirit' for this very end, 'that we may know the things which are' thus 'freely given us.' Consider, likewise, 1 John v. 19, 20: 'We know that we are of God.' How? 'By the Spirit that He hath given us.' Nay, 'hereby we know that He abideth in us.' And what ground have we, either from Scripture or reason, to exclude the witness, any more than the fruit, of the Spirit, from being here intended? By this, then, also 'we know that we are of God,' and in what sense we are so; whether we are babes, young men, or fathers, we know in the same manner. Not that I affirm that all young men, or even fathers, have this testimony every moment. There may be intermissions of the direct testimony that they are thus born of God; but those intermissions are fewer and shorter as they grow up in Christ; and some have the testimony both of their justification and sanctification, without any intermission at all; which I presume more might have, did they walk humbly and closely with God."¹

XI.—What are the leading objections raised against the doctrine of Christian perfection?

Obj. 1. The doctrine cannot be true, because many Christians, and even many learned and pious divines, do not receive it! To this we reply, that although it be true that great names in vast numbers might be arrayed in opposition to the doctrine, as above stated, yet other names equally distinguished for learning and excellence can be arrayed as its zealous defenders. This, however, does not

¹ Wesley's "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," pp. 48, 71, 72.

settle the difficulty. The question is not dependent on human opinions, however respectable and worthy of attention. "To the law and to the testimony." One "thus saith the Lord" is more conclusive than all the opinions of all the great and learned men the world ever contained. If the doctrine is in the Bible, let us embrace it, whoever may oppose; if it is not, let us reject it whoever may be its defender.

Obj. 2. The doctrine cannot be true, because there are no examples of it. If the fact asserted in this objection were conceded, the attainableness of perfection might still be maintained. What God wills us to be can never be inferred from what we are. Let us mournfully confess that every Christian, since the world began, had lived beneath the privileges of his vocation, rather than charge God with requiring anything from us that we cannot perform, or promising anything to us which He will not bestow. But we cannot concede that the universal experience of the Church is against the doctrine. How many, in modern times, have humbly but confidently affirmed that they could "reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ." And those who lived in closest communion with them have told "how holily and justly and unblamably they behaved themselves." Read the memoirs of Fletcher, Bramwell, Carvosso, Mrs. Fletcher, Mrs. Rogers, Lady Maxwell, etc. Was there anything in their experience contrary to the Word of God? Did they not understand the character of their experience? Did they in the general movements of life give any signs of mental aberration, from which we might conclude that they were self-deceived? But the Holy Scriptures, as we have already shown, present us with examples of those who have realised this full salvation. Enoch and Elijah must have enjoyed it; they loved God with all their heart, and lived in full preparation for their translation to glory. The disciples, after the baptism of Pentecost, must have enjoyed it. They were so "filled with the Holy Ghost," that love reigned alone, to the extinction of every antagonist principle and affection, rendering life itself one continued sacrifice of praise. Stephen must have enjoyed it. The benignity, the tenderness, the boldness, the spirituality of that man of God, as he stands before the council, and his Christ-like regard for his murderers as he sinks to rest, show that his soul was filled with love to God and man. The Apostle John must have enjoyed it. His epistles are the breathings forth of that "perfect love" of which he so sweetly writes. And St. Paul must have enjoyed it. See how he loved his hostile countrymen (Rom. ix. 1-3); how he realised the efficacy of the Saviour's death (Gal. vi. 14); how he esteemed all worldly things, that Christ might be all in all (Phil. iii. 8, 9); how contentedly he submitted to the will of God in every dispensation of His providence (Phil. iv. 11-13); how fully he discharged the duties of his calling (Acts xx. 20, 21, 26); how pure and single was his aim (Acts xx. 24); how blameless his deportment (1 Thess.

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ii. 10); how strong his faith (2 Tim. i. 12); and how perfect his meetness for the heavenly inheritance (Col i. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 5-8). Is not this the experience of one who stands "perfect and complete in all the will of God"? And if ministers, instead of advocating the cause of imperfection, were to display more fully before their people the beauties of holiness, the infinite efficacy of the precious blood, and the duty of being filled with the fulness of God, can we doubt that there would be many living witnesses in all our Churches that Christ our Saviour is able to save to the uttermost?

Obj. 3. The doctrine cannot be true, because it is promotive of pride and self-righteousness. Strange mistake! He who is cleansed from all unrighteousness is, above all others, "clothed with humility." He has become a willing and ready disciple of Him Who was "meek and lowly in heart;" and whatever good thing he enjoys he ascribes to the free, unmerited grace of God in Christ Jesus. Holiness and pride are far as the poles asunder.

Obj. 4. The doctrine cannot be true, because it would exclude the necessity of a Mediator. Far from it. The abundant blessings which a holy man has received from the mediation of the Saviour invests that mediation with all possible attractiveness. His life of holiness is a "life of faith in the Son of God." And all his fruits of holiness flourish only as he abides in the Vine. He rejoices in Christ Jesus (Phil. iii. 3); he walks in Him (Col. ii. 6); he glories in His cross (Gal. vi. 14); whatsoever he does, he does all in His name (Col. iii. 17); he looks with ardent longing for His glorious appearing (Titus ii. 13); and never does he so fully apprehend the preciousness of Jesus as when he has put away the evil and bitter thing which Christ hateth.

Obj. 5. The doctrine cannot be true, because the Scriptures explicitly and pointedly assert the necessary existence of sin within us to the close of life. Let us examine the passages referred to:—

1. 1 Kings viii. 46; 2 Chron. vi. 36.—These passages, taken in the fullest sense of which they are capable, only assert that there is no man who is not a sinner. If they were intended to assert—as our opponents imagine—that there is no man who does not, and cannot, live without committing sin, then why say, "If they sin against Thee"? The true meaning, however, is that no man is placed beyond the possibility of sinning. "The Hebrew has no mood to express words in the permissive or optative way; but to express this sense it uses the future tense." And hence the text should be translated: "Should they sin against Thee, for there is no man that may not sin"—no man who is impeccable, none infallible, none that is not liable to transgress.¹ The same remarks will apply to Eccles. vii. 20, where the verb *to sin* is in the future, and is properly rendered subjunctively, with the negative particle, "There is not a righteous man upon earth who does good, and may not sin." Dr. Peck says: "The rule of Hebrew syntax authorising

¹ For a learned examination of this point, see Dr. Peck on "Christian Perfection." See Dr. Clarke's Note *in loco*.

this rendering may be found in all good Hebrew grammars ; and in the application of the rule to the passages under consideration we are supported by some of the best critics—Romish, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Arminian.

2. Prov. xxiv. 16 is often adduced. But this passage is totally irrelevant ; for there is here no mention of sinning, and no reference to sin. Read the context, and it will soon appear that Solomon is speaking of the adversities into which a good man may fall, but from which God delivereth him.

3. Prov. xx. 9.—Shall we conclude from this question that God cannot make our hearts clean ? Would not this be a direct contradiction to such passages as Psalm li. 7-10 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26 ; 1 John i. 7 ? The passage is simply an affirmation that all have sinned ; that no man can with truth say, with respect to his past life, I am guiltless, my heart is clean, I have not sinned.

4. James iii. 2.—The force of the objection, arising from this text, lies in the supposition that James is speaking personally, including himself with those whom he was addressing ; but it is a well-known custom for speakers to use the pronoun *we* in statements where the including of themselves would involve the most preposterous consequences. If James must be supposed to refer to himself always when he uses the word "*we*," it must be granted that he was exposed to the greater condemnation (ver. 1) ; that he was a horsebreaker (ver. 3) ; that his tongue was set on fire of hell (ver. 6) ; that he was a common swearer (ver. 9, etc.). But this supposition is too gross to be admitted : yet is just the principle on which men allege the former passage against the doctrine of entire sanctification. But even if St. James *had* designed to include himself in that statement, the utmost it could prove would be that he and those whom he addressed were imperfect ; but no number of cases of unfaithfulness on the part of men could disprove that the privilege of perfect holiness was placed before them. James was a full believer in the doctrine of Christian perfection, as is evident from the subsequent part of the verse, and from chap. i. ver. 4 ; and what he intends by the statement, "in many things we offend all," is, that the "many masters" or teachers who thrust themselves into the office, affecting that for which they are not qualified, are causes of offence and stumbling to all, and shall receive greater condemnation. Therefore, "be not many teachers, let no more of you take this upon you than God thrusts out ; seeing it is so hard not to offend in speaking much."

5. 1 John i. 8.—Dr. Wardlaw asks, "Is not the plain meaning, that if at any time we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves ?" We reply, certainly not. The passage explains itself. Read verses 8, 9, 10, where the meaning evidently is : "I have before affirmed that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. And no man can say, I need it not ; I have no sin to be cleansed

from. If we say that we have no sin, *i.e.*, that we have not sinned (ver. 10), we are under the most dreadful of all deceptions, and the truth of the Gospel is not in us, the whole of which is founded on this most awful truth, that all have sinned. But if we confess our sins, from a deep sense of their guilt and demerit, He is faithful and just, not only to forgive the sin, but to purify the heart, that we may go and sin no more."¹ There is nothing in this text, therefore, to favour the necessary existence of sin. It is rather one of the strongholds of those who contend for the entire cleansing of the soul by the precious blood of Christ.

6. Rom. vii. 14-25.—No passage has been more usually resorted to, as furnishing proof of the necessary continuance of indwelling sin, than this. It is argued, "If the great Apostle was 'carnal, sold under sin,' how can any one expect to reach a state of freedom from its guilt and power?" But it remains to be proved that St. Paul, in this chapter, is describing his character and feelings as a regenerate man. To us this notion appears perfectly untenable, because neither his own experience, nor that of any regenerate person, can be reconciled with the description here given. A regenerate man yields his members as instruments of righteousness unto God (vi. 13); but this man with his flesh obeys the law of sin (ver. 25). A regenerate man does not commit sin (1 John iii. 9); but this man is sold under sin (ver. 14). A regenerate man is spiritual (vi. 4); but this man is carnal (ver. 14). A regenerate man has his fruits unto holiness (vi. 22); but this man brings forth fruit unto death (ver. 5). A regenerate man exults in his liberty (viii. 2); but this man groans by reason of his bondage (ver. 24). So that there is no agreement or resemblance at all between the regenerate man and those described in this chapter.

If it be asked, whom, then, does the Apostle describe? we reply, he is either personating a Jew who is struggling with sin, but, through resting in the law, is unable to conquer; or he is showing what his own state was when his conscience was awakened, but knowing nothing of a Saviour, he found himself enslaved to the practice of sin which he abhorred. Convinced by many unavailing efforts that he could never extricate himself from his bondage by the deeds of the law, he cries out from the depths of his wretchedness for a deliverer, whom at length he found in the person of "Jesus Christ our Lord."

The chief reason why St. Paul is supposed to speak of himself as a regenerate man is, that he uses the first person and the present tense throughout the passage. But it should be recollected how common it is with the inspired writers to speak as if they included themselves, when in reality they did not intend it. Thus Hosea (chap. xii. 4) says, "There (*viz.*, in Bethel) God spake with *us*," whereas he was not in existence when God spake with Jacob there. The Psalmist, speaking of the dividing of the Red Sea, says, "There did *we* rejoice in Him;" and yet he was not present when that

¹ See Wesley and Clarke.

event occurred. Instances of the same thing occur in Paul's writings (Rom. iii. 7; Gal. ii. 18; 1 Thess. iv. 17). It was a method of avoiding, as much as possible, the giving offence to the Jews, when dwelling on subjects concerning which they would be peculiarly sensitive. And "that St. Paul does not speak these words of himself, but, under his own borrowed person, describes the state of a carnal, unregenerate person, was the opinion expressed by St. Irenæus and Origen, by Tertullian and St. Basil; by Theodoret and Chrysostom; by St. Jerome, and sometimes by St. Augustine; by St. Ambrose and St. Cyril; by Macarius and Theophylact."¹ The same sentiment is held, "as far as we know, by all the evangelical commentators of the present time on the continent of Europe; most of the English Episcopal Church, also, for many years; and not a few of the Scotch, Dutch, and English Presbyterian and Congregational divines have adopted the same interpretation." And "it is difficult to conceive how the opinion could have crept into the Church, or prevailed there, that the Apostle speaks here of his regenerate state; and that what was, in such a state, true of himself must be true of all others in the same state."² No, there is nothing in the whole of this chapter, when rightly interpreted and applied, that is inconsistent with the scriptural doctrine of Christian perfection.

Obj. 6. The doctrine cannot be true, because the Scriptures uniformly speak of believers as fighting a good fight; whereas, if inbred sin is destroyed, the conflict is finished. This idea is not less absurd than to suppose that, because civil dissension has no existence in a besieged city, therefore the inhabitants may sit secure, though the enemy is at their gates, attacking their outworks, and striving to make a breach in the walls. Has not the most perfect Christian an unfailing adversary in the devil, who goeth about as a roaring lion? (1 Peter v. 8, 9.) Are not principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, engaged for his destruction? (Eph. vi. 11, 12.) And is not the world, in which he sojourns, full of temptations? Surely, then, there can be warfare, fierce and dreadful enough, without the remains of sin in the heart. Was not the blessed Saviour free from sin? And yet he maintained a conflict with the devil for forty days in the wilderness. The disciple is not above his Master.

Obj. 7. The doctrine cannot be true, because the Saviour has taught us to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses;" whereas, if we live without sin, that prayer has neither use nor meaning. It may be sufficient to reply that the same prayer teaches us, in two of its petitions, to ask for ourselves and others an entire deliverance from sin. What else can be the meaning of "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" and "deliver us from evil"? Besides, it should not be forgotten that, though we do not sin according to the evangelical sense of that term, but fulfil the law by pure love to God

¹ Dr. Jeremy Taylor, "Sermon on Rom. vii. 19."

² Dr. Bloomfield.

³ Dr. A. Clarke's Note on Rom. vii. 4.

and man (Rom. xiii. 10), there are many involuntary improprieties of speech and behaviour into which we may be drawn through ignorance, mistake, or infirmity. These may be regarded as "trespasses," though not charged upon the conscience and imputed as sin; and of them we should ask the forgiveness of our Father in heaven. Moreover, in the Lord's Prayer we are regarded as being linked in the bonds of brotherhood with the sinners of our race; and not for ourselves only, but for them, do we pray, when we say, "Forgive *us our* trespasses." But take what view we will of the meaning of the petition, would it not be a strange and sorry argument that we must continue in sin, because, being sinners by nature, we are taught to ask for pardon?

XII.—If the doctrine of Christian perfection be true, are the offspring of sanctified parents holy from the birth?

It has been said, "Like produces like. If the nature of original corruption is totally destroyed in parents, it is impossible but that their children must be also perfectly pure."¹ Whatever support such a sentiment might be supposed to derive from philosophy, it certainly has none in the Bible. "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin." The relation of the entire race to fallen Adam—a fact on which the great argument in Rom. v. rests—is independent of all intermediate descent. Moreover, the holiest of parents are not now in the condition of our unfallen ancestor. The whole nature—bodily, mental, and moral—is deteriorated by the fall; and sanctification by the Holy Spirit does not restore these powers to a state of Adamic perfection even in the parent himself who enjoys this sanctification; and if the parent himself is not thus restored, how can he transmit that perfection to his posterity? Besides this, the maxim that "like produces like" is true of *nature* and *capacity*, but not true in any sense of *acquired* endowments, of *superinduced* qualities. The sons of an astronomer have no innate knowledge of the stars; and Milton's daughters added no books to his immortal epic. And as the acquirements of the intellect cannot be transmitted from sire to son, so neither can the piety of the heart. This has been obtained by grace, through faith in Christ Jesus; and can only be obtained by the successive generations of men, however holy their immediate parentage may be, as the result of the same personal repentance and faith. Hence it is said, "Except a man"—the phrase is as general as can be found, "a man," of whatever lineage, or rank, or training, or education—"except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

XIII.—On a review of the whole subject, how do the Wesleyan teachings on Christian perfection differ from those of others who have promulgated the same doctrine?

1. *There was the perfection of the Mystics.* This was taught by

¹ This subject is argued elaborately in a work, entitled "Man Primeval." By Rev. Nathan Rouse.

Thomas à Kempis, Macarius, Fenelon, Lucas, Law, Madame de Guyon, and other writers, Protestant and papal. Their opinions glowed with the very sanctity of the Gospel. They presented in their writings such a portraiture of the perfect Christian as would awaken the noblest aspirations of a regenerate heart; but they taught that the perfect love of God would raise a man above those mental infirmities which are inseparable from our present state; and that these lofty attainments were to be reached by seclusion from the world, ascetic self-abnegation, and works of charity and benevolence. Wesley's statement of the doctrine differed from theirs as being far more clear, more consistent with our present state of infirmity and ignorance, and more readily attainable by present faith in a perfect Saviour. In a letter to one of his correspondents he says: "I want you to be *all love*. This is the perfection I believe and teach; and this perfection is consistent with a thousand nervous disorders which that high-strained perfection is not. Indeed, my judgment is that (in this case particularly) to overdo is to undo; and that to set perfection too high is the most effectual way of driving it out of the world." Moreover, he had no sympathy with the notion that the perfection of the Gospel could be reached by seclusion from the world and a long series of self-denying works. His words are: "As to the manner, I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul by faith, by a simple act of faith; consequently, in an instant. But I believe a gradual work, both preceding and following that instant."

2. *There was the perfection of Pelagianism.* It has been said that Wesley adopted the Pelagian scheme, but no statement can be farther from the truth. Pelagianism presents a strictly *legal* perfection—perfect conformity to the law. But, denying the doctrine of man's depravity and of the direct influences of the Spirit, it holds that perfection may be attained through the efforts of mere natural ability. Wesley, on the other hand, set forth an *evangelical* perfection—perfect conformity to the terms of the Gospel. But, strenuously maintaining the doctrine of hereditary depravity and of the Spirit's influence, he held that this exalted state could only be attained through the merits of the Saviour's death, and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

3. *There is the perfection of the Oberlin School*, as represented chiefly by Professors Mahan and Finney. In some respects their phraseology comes very near the Wesleyan view; and the illustrations of the doctrine, and the arguments employed to prove it, are generally the same as are employed by us. But, like the Pelagians, they make the original moral law of God the standard of perfection. Says Finney, "Nothing more nor less can possibly be perfection or entire sanctification than obedience to the law." It is difficult to say precisely what he means by this language; but this is the point at which it is understood the Oberlin theory diverges from the Wesleyan view. Wesley and Fletcher were always careful to announce that the perfection to which we are called "is not perfection according

to the absolute moral law ; it is perfection according to the special remedial economy introduced by the atonement, in which the heart, being sanctified, fulfils the law by love (Rom. xiii. 8, 10) ; and its involuntary imperfections, which are, in a sense, transgressions of the perfect law, are provided for by that economy, without the imputation of guilt." When Mr. Wesley thus explained his opinions to Bishop Gibson, that prelate exclaimed, "Why, Mr. Wesley, if this is what you mean by perfection, who can be against it?"

There are various works on this subject, which may be studied with advantage :—Mr. Wesley's "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," and sermon on "Christian Perfection ;" Fletcher's "Last Check," which relates entirely to this subject, and is one of the finest examples of logical argumentation and of Christian temper in the English language ; Mr. Treffry's Treatise on "Christian Perfection ;" Mr. Benson's "Three Sermons on Sanctification ;" Watson's "Institutes," part ii., chap. xxix. ; Mr. D. Walton's volume, entitled "The Mature Christian ;" Hunt's "Letters on Entire Sanctification ;" and "Thoughts on Holiness" by Rev. Mark G. Pearce. The American Press has issued many works on the subject that are well worth reading, among which may be mentioned prominently, Dr. G. Peck's "Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection ;" Dr. Jesse's Peck's "Central Idea of Christianity ;" and Dr. Foster on "Christian Purity."

* Dr. Abel Stevens.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

I.—What are the two views that are held upon this subject?

1. *The Calvinistic view*—namely, that all who have received the grace of God, being born again of the Spirit, shall certainly persevere to the end, and be eternally saved. In other words, they shall never fall either totally or finally from a state of grace. This doctrine follows, as a necessary sequence, from the doctrine of personal election.

2. *The Arminian or Wesleyan view*—namely, that those who were once justified and regenerated, may, by grieving the Spirit of God, fall away and perish everlastingly. In other words, their perseverance in the ways of righteousness, and their glorification in heaven, are strictly conditional.

II.—By what arguments do we sustain the view that a Christian may deeply and finally fall?

1. *It is clearly implied in the solemn injunctions which the Bible contains to a faithful perseverance in the ways of God* (Matt. xxiv. 13, xxvi. 41; John xv. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 24, x. 12; Col. i. 22, 23; Heb. iii. 14, iv. 1; 1 Peter v. 8, 9; 2 Peter i. 10, 11; Rev. ii. 10). It will be seen that many of these texts expressly connect our future blessedness with the faithful observance of the conditional precept. The end can only be secured as the means are observed. But this can be true only on the principle that we are still in a probationary state, and that our eternal happiness, so far from being fixed by an irrevocable decree, is contingent on our faithfulness to God.

2. *It is proved by the repeated warnings of the Bible against apostasy from God, such apostasy, with its general consequences, being announced as fearfully possible* (Ezek. xviii. 24-26; Matt. v. 13; John xv. 2, 6; Rom. xi. 19-22; 1 Cor. x. 3-12; Heb. x. 38; 2 John 8; Rev. iii. 11). In full accordance with these passages is St. Paul's language, descriptive of his own conduct and fear (1 Cor. ix. 27). All these texts would be without meaning if our admission to heaven were unalterably secured.

3. *It is proved by the affecting descriptions and examples of*

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apostasy which the Bible presents as monitory signs and beacons of the people of God (Matt. xii. 43-45; 1 Tim. i. 18, 19; 2 Peter ii. 20-22; Heb. vi. 4-6, x. 26-29). No terms could be found which more clearly describe and designate a state of salvation than those employed in these texts, as descriptive of the former condition of these apostates. The unclean spirit had gone out of them; they had faith and a good conscience; they had escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord; they were enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; and yet so total is their fall, that their hearts become again the dwelling-place of wicked spirits; they make shipwreck of faith; they are again entangled in, and overcome by, the pollutions of the world; they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, even counting the blood wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing; and on this account their final doom is the "fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." Surely, here is proof enough that no man, however deep his piety, is the subject of an unconditional or absolute appointment to eternal life. While in this world, he is in a state of probation which implies danger, and can only obtain the recompense of the reward, "if he continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel."

III.—What are the leading arguments adduced in opposition to this doctrine?

1. *It is alleged that there are "promises and declarations insuring or implying the communication of grace to the end;"* e.g., John iv. 14, vi. 39, 40; Heb. xiii. 5, and many others. True, and God is faithful; He cannot deny Himself. But all these promises directly express or clearly imply some condition, the violation of which, on man's part, will sacrifice the promised good. For example, the first of these passages expresses the permanence of the gift, but it is only to him that "drinketh of the water." Let him wander from the fountain, and cease to drink, and the living water will no longer refresh his soul. As to the second, it is a clear expression of "the Father's will." But is that will never frustrated by the sin of man? (See Matt. xxiii. 37, and 1 Tim. ii. 4, compared with John v. 40.) And was it not directly frustrated by the sin of Judas? He, like the rest, was given to Christ, but was "lost" to Christ and heaven (see John xvii. 12). As to the third, while God promises His abiding presence with His saints, other scriptures teach that that presence will be withdrawn from the disobedient and unfaithful (2 Chron. xv. 2, xxiv. 20). And so every promise of grace is contingent upon the faith and obedience of them to whom it is given.

2. *It is alleged that there are texts in which "the strongest confidence is expressed as to the certainty of final salvation, and that these would be the utterance of foolhardy assurance were the*

Arminian doctrine true;" e.g., Rom. viii. 35-39; 2 Cor. v. 1; Phil. i. 6; 1 Peter i. 4, 5. We reply, that it is the privilege of every Christian to live in "full assurance of hope" (Heb. vi. 11). The heaven is prepared for him (Matt. xxv. 34; John xiv. 2); Divine grace is "sufficient" to meet the exigencies of his condition (2 Cor. xii. 9); God has promised to supply his need through all the changes of his life (Phil. iv. 19); he has in the graces of the Spirit an earnest of the inheritance (2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 14); and God is faithful, Who will not suffer him to be tempted above that he is able (1 Cor. x. 13). Hence he has reason enough to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v. 2); and in proportion as he advances in holiness will he "abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 13). But let hope be as confident as it may, it is still *but* hope, and cannot have all the absolute certainty of possession. The latter leaves no room for fear; the former may. And in our probationary state, though "begotten again to a lively hope," we are to "pass the time of our sojourning here in fear" (1 Peter i. 17); a fear such as that which existed in Paul (1 Cor. ix. 27); and which, from a due apprehension of danger, will prompt to the mortification of the flesh (1 Cor. ix. 27), to incessant watchfulness and prayer (Matt. xxvi. 41), and to holy diligence (2 Peter i. 10, iii. 14). It is, therefore, neither presumption nor "foolhardy assurance" to "hope to the end." This is, indeed, enjoined as a duty. "But while "rejoicing in hope," "let us also fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. iv. 1).

3. *It is alleged that there are texts which contain affirmations still more direct that the righteous shall finally obtain eternal life; e.g., Rom. viii. 28-30; John x. 28, xi. 25, 26, etc.* The first of these texts is supposed to be the stronghold of the Calvinistic doctrine. But does the Apostle mean that the blessings there mentioned invariably and unavoidably follow each other, so that no person who receives the first blessing ever fails to receive the second, the third, etc.? He cannot mean that. The statement of our Lord, in Matt. xxii. 14, proves that many have been "called," who were never "justified;" and the awful instances of apostasy named in Heb. vi. 4-8, and 2 Peter ii. 20-22, prove that there have been men who were once "justified," and yet were never "glorified." The Apostle, in enumerating these Christian privileges, and marking their sequence, is speaking of the gracious "purpose" of God in its gradual development and its ultimate consummation. These successive blessings are designed for Jews and Gentiles; they constitute so many steps from a state of nature to eternal glory. All who are glorified in heaven have advanced by these steps. Being "foreknown" as true believers, they were "predestinated"—predestined (so the word *proórizo* in this text means)—to be conformed to the image of Jesus, in the holiness of their present character, and in their final glorification. This was the great blessing that God marked out for them as believers. They were,

therefore, "called"—invited—by the Gospel to this state and benefit. The calling being obeyed, they were "justified;" and being justified, and continuing in that state of grace, they were "glorified;" for "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. xxiv. 13). This is the plain and obvious course of the amplification pursued by the Apostle. Except in direct opposition to other parts of Scripture, it cannot be designed to teach that these privileges follow each other with absolute and never-failing certainty in the experience of every one who is called by the Gospel.

The great mistake with regard to this text, and the others referred to, viz., John x. 28—"My sheep shall never perish;" and John xi. 26—"Whosoever liveth, and believeth in Me, shall never die," arises from supposing that they relate to a certain number of persons as *men*, whereas they relate to persons as existing under some particular *characters*. To such characters the promises are sure. Let the character be sacrificed, and the promise is made void. God Himself has made this point plain in Ezek. xxxiii. 13, to which, as furnishing a key to many texts of Scripture, I must specially refer the reader: "When I shall say to the righteous that he shall surely live," I speak to him as a righteous man, and the promise depends on his retaining his righteous character; for "if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it." Here you discover the principle that runs through the whole of Scripture: "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

4. *It is alleged that the Arminian doctrine makes God changeable.* By no means. With Him is no variableness. A change of character would be a cessation of Divinity. "But this" (as Dr. Wardlaw, when writing on another subject, observes) "is quite consistent with changes in the relation in which His moral and accountable creatures stand to Him, and in the consequent state of His mind towards them. Surely no one will imagine that when man from being loyal becomes rebellious, the relation between him and God can continue the same as before, or that the state of the Divine mind remains unchanged towards him." It is evident that complacency must come to an end when men "turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." And as a Governor, He Who "is angry with the wicked every day" cannot retain the same relative position to man in his guilt that He had sustained to him as His "willing and obedient" child. But a change in the relations between the creature and the Creator is not, properly speaking, a change in the Creator Himself. Indeed, the very change in the judicial relation arises from the unchangeableness of God and the mutability of man. The change comes upon man. He "draws back" from God, to Whom he has pledged his devotion; and if God is unchangeably true, his "soul shall have no pleasure in Him;" if He is unchangeably pure, "the foolish shall not stand in His

sight ; " if He is unchangeably just, He will reward the man according to his works. It is, therefore, because He retains all the unsullied purity of His holiness ; because He retains all His truth and righteousness, as the principles of His moral administrations, that He can no longer " hold him guiltless " that sins wilfully after he has received the knowledge of the truth. And we throw back the charge of imputing changeableness to God upon those who hold the doctrine which we oppose.

5. *It is alleged that the Arminian doctrine is destructive of spiritual comfort repressing all the buoyancy of generous and confiding love.* This view is certainly not in harmony with experience. The Christian's comfort arises from his conscious interest in Christ, from the unfailing efficacy of the atonement and intercession of his Lord, and from his hope of the heavenly inheritance. And that comfort can never be destroyed while he cleaves to the Lord with purpose of heart. The thought that he may " fall away," and that his " latter end " may be " worse than the beginning," is repressing to all the buoyancy of presumption, but is one of the most powerful motives to filial duty. And if, under the impulse of salutary fear, he " gives diligence to make his calling and his election sure," he will realise the happiness of him that feareth alway (Prov. xxviii. 14) ; " the joy of the Lord will be his strength ; " he will never fall : " For so an entrance shall be ministered unto him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER XV.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

THIS is a subject which, in some of its leading points, is at present dividing the opinions of Christians, and exciting a growing interest; rousing in some of God's servants all the ardour of prophetic vehemence, and engaging the calmer, but not less deeply serious and devout, investigation of others. The discussion of the subject will bring us into communion with some of the sublimest portions of the prophetic Scriptures, which we must be careful to interpret with sobriety of judgment, and in strict consistency with other portions of the Word that are more plain and specific in their meaning.

I.—In what sense are we to understand the phrase—"The coming of the Lord"?

1. According to the Jewish mode of speaking, God is said to "visit" or "come to" places and persons where His providence particularly operates in regard to them. Joseph said, "God will surely visit you," etc. (Gen. i. 24); the Psalmist, "O when wilt Thou come unto me?" (Psalm ci. 2); Isaiah, "O that Thou wouldst . . . come down!" (Isa. lxiv. 1.) And thus judgments foretold by ancient prophets concerning Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, and Jerusalem, were prefaced with, "Behold, the Lord cometh;" "behold, the day of the Lord cometh," etc. (Isa. xiii. 9, xxvi. 21, xxx. 27; Joel ii. 30, 31; Micah i. 3-5). And since such language was rendered familiar to the Jewish mind, we cannot be surprised that in foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, our Lord should employ similar language, especially as that event was connected so intimately with the full establishment of the new dispensation, which constituted Messiah's kingdom on earth (see Matt. x. 23, xvi. 28, xxvi. 64); Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27. Even so, in foretelling the overthrow of the Man of Sin, St. Paul employs the like metaphorical phraseology: "Whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. ii. 8).

2. The phrase marks out an actual personal manifestation of Christ. The several terms by which this is referred to are—*Apokalypsis*, revelation; *Parousia*, presence, advent; *Epiphaneia*, appearing, manifestation. And it is brought to view in connection

with almost every doctrine, every duty, every privilege which the Gospel reveals. It is employed as a warning to careless sinners and to lax professors (2 Peter iii. 9, 10; 1 Cor. iii. 13; Jude 14, 15; Rev. i. 7). It is employed to stimulate believers to universal duty; to fearless testimony for Christ (Luke xii. 8, 9); to patient suffering (1 Peter iv. 12, 13); to vigilant activity (1 Peter i. 13; Luke xii. 35-37); to holy constancy (1 John ii. 28); heavenly-mindedness (Col. iii. 1-4; 1 John iii. 2, 3; Phil. iii. 20). It is employed as the goal to which all attention is directed (Luke xix. 13; Phil. i. 6, 9, 10; 1 Cor. xi. 26). And it is presented as the great object of Christian expectation and hope (1 Thess. i. 10; 1 Cor. i. 7, 8; Titus ii. 13; Rev. xxii. 20).

II.—What are the leading circumstances connected with Christ's second advent?

1. Immediately upon His coming, all the dead saints will be raised to life, and all the living saints will be transformed (John vi. 39, 40; 1 Thess. iv. 13-18, compared with 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52).

2. Not less immediately connected with His coming will be the public final judgment of all mankind, the vindication and acceptance of the righteous, and the accomplishment of God's sentence upon the wicked (Matt. xxv. 31-46; 2 Thess. i. 6-10; 2 Tim. iv. 1).

3. The earth we now inhabit will then be renewed and transformed, and will be thenceforth occupied by the Saviour and His perfected Church as their everlasting abode¹ (2 Peter iii. 7-14, compared with Psalm xxxvii. 9-11, and Matt. v. 5). All the saints at the resurrection will be "caught up in the clouds," that they may be beyond the range of this mundane system while the renovating process is going on; but no sooner is it complete than they will return with their Divine Head to perpetuate their fellowship with Him, on the then perfected world, for ever. Does not this explain Rev. xxi. 1-5, 10, 11?

III.—At what period may the second advent of our Lord be expected to occur?

Those who look for it before the time of the Millennium think that it may occur in our own day, and even immediately. These views they gather from those passages in the New Testament which seem to intimate that the great event was near, and that it might take

¹ "The object of the administrations we sit under is to extirpate sin, but it is not to sweep away materialism. By the convulsions of the last day it may be shaken and broken down from its present arrangements and thrown into such fitful agitations, as that the whole of its existing framework shall fall to pieces, and with a heat so fervent as to melt its most solid elements may it be utterly dissolved. And thus may the earth again become 'without form and void;' but without a particle of its substance going into annihilation. Out of the ruins of this second chaos may another heaven and another earth be made to arise, and a new materialism, with other aspects of magnificence and beauty, emerge from the wreck of this mighty transformation, and the world be peopled as before with the varieties of material loveliness, and space be again lighted up into a firmament of material splendour."—*Dr. Chalmers*.

place almost at the time when the admonitions were given. Some of those admonitions, however, must probably be explained of our Lord's coming in His providence to overthrow Jerusalem; as, e.g., James v. 1-8; Heb. x. 37; John xxi. 22. Still, there are passages which appear to imply that the second advent was not distant; and on this point two facts of great importance must be noted. First, the exact period must be perfectly known of God. Secondly, as more than eighteen hundred years have elapsed since those passages were uttered, the proximity intended must be one that comports with the intervention of so long a period. Hence, we consider—either the proximity in question must be understood of the event as it appears in *His* sight “with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day”—or that nearness is affirmed according to faith's estimate, which judges of all things temporal by comparing them with things eternal,—or that the reference in the passages referred to is, not to Christ's second advent, but to His providential coming at death to usher souls to bliss or woe. Perhaps some of the texts in question will class with the first of these ideas, others with the second, others with the third. But as the admonitions themselves *must* allow of the event being eighteen centuries distant when they were delivered, they *may*, for anything in themselves to the contrary, allow of there being an equal length of time yet to transpire before the event occurs.

It is also worthy of remark that *the only errors mentioned in the New Testament respecting the time of our Lord's coming, all consist in dating it too early.* See (1) Luke xii. 45, 46. Here, the case supposed is that of a servant who had taken up a wrong impression as to the time when his lord should come; and that erroneous anticipation having been disappointed, he immediately fell into the opposite error, and concluded that his master would not come at all, an error which proved fatal. This parable has often been realised in the transition from overweening credulity to open infidelity and reckless immorality. (2) Luke xix. 11-27. Here is a parable uttered for the very purpose of correcting the error of those who supposed “that the kingdom of God would immediately appear.” And the corresponding parable of the talents shows that the looked-for period was far distant; “*after a long time* the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them” (Matt. xxv. 19). (3) 2 Thess. ii. 1, 2. Here it is manifest, that if the Thessalonians had understood expressions in the former epistle (chap. v. 1-3) as intimating that the event was near, they would seriously err; and from the earnest and solemn style of this address it was evidently, in the Apostle's judgment and in the judgment of the Holy Spirit, a matter of high importance that the mistake should be guarded against, if it had not yet been imbibed, and corrected if it had. (4) 2 Peter iii. 3, 4. Here we have it distinctly declared, that, so long a time should elapse before the Lord comes, that unbelieving men would look upon the expectation of that event as groundless, would contemptuously fling the “promise” in the face of the waiting Church as a manifest decep-

tion, and give themselves up to riot at will in impiety and vice. We come back, then, to the question, when may the second advent of our Lord be expected to occur?

1. *It will not take place until the very close of the Gospel Dispensation.* We infer this from 1 Cor. xi. 26, according to which, while the observance of the Lord's Supper is to be kept up in the Church "until He come," when He does come, its observance is altogether to cease. From which it follows, that the whole system of worship, instruction, and Church order with which it is connected, will then terminate too. The connection between the institution and the evangelical economy is taught in the very words used by the Saviour when He appointed it: "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood" (1 Cor. xi. 25); *i.e.*, it is the symbol of the blood by which the Gospel covenant is ratified and confirmed; consequently, the duration of the ordinance is coeval with the duration of the Covenant; when the former ceases, the latter expires. And because the ordinance ends with the coming of our Lord, so also will the Covenant. Hence it follows that, as the Lord's Supper, and the economy of which it is a part, are to cease with the coming of Christ, any interpretation of Scripture which implies a continuance of either, after that event, must be erroneous.

2. *It will not take place until the period expires for which Christ, as the Word Incarnate, is made the Head of the universe.* His government of His Church will be everlasting. (Luke i. 33.) But His government of the *universe*, in His capacity as Messiah, referred to in Matt. xxviii. 18, is only for a limited term; namely, until the end for which it was delegated to Him is attained. That end is the subjugation of all His enemies (Psalm cx. 1; Matt. xxii. 44); the giving of repentance and remission of sins (Acts v. 31); and, as we learn from many Scriptures, the control of all events in subserviency to the interests and completion of the Church. And nothing can, we think, be more plainly taught than that He is to remain enthroned over the universe in the heaven of heavens "until" all these purposes have been answered. Consequently, to look for His future advent before His enemies are subdued, and the nations converted to the Gospel, is in direct opposition to the Divine arrangements. But when the objects of His mediatorial reign have been accomplished, His death on earth and His life in heaven having fully effected their respective ends, then will He close His administration by the last judgment, and the final separation of the righteous and the wicked, and give back the sceptre to Him by whom it was put into His hands, and the Divine administration of the universe shall go on as before. (See 1 Cor. xv. 22-28.)

3. *It will not take place until the last in the whole series of Old Testament prophecies is to be fulfilled.* This position we found upon Acts iii. 20, 21. Here the question arises, what is meant by "the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the Prophets"?

* The Revised Version reads "restoration" instead of "restitution."

The obscurity resting on such phraseology is removed by rendering the word "completion" or "accomplishment"—a change of rendering fully admissible, according to the term used in the original:¹ so that the meaning of the text will be "until all things are accomplished which the Prophets have foretold." We are hence taught that the Lord Jesus will, as to His humanity, remain in heaven during the whole time that the Old Testament prophecies are being fulfilled. Whatever is foretold concerning the Jews or Gentiles, concerning the Messiah's reign, the prosperity of the Church, and the desolation of kingdoms hostile to Christ, *all* is to be verified by fact before He comes. If it be objected that the resurrection of the dead, and the new heavens and new earth are among the things foretold, but will not take place till after our Lord has come, my reply is, partly, that both events will occur *at the very time* when the second advent takes place: further, that although Christ will be "revealed" before the renovation of the globe is perfected, He will but appear "in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 17), and not until the new heavens and the new earth are perfected will the glorious Saviour, with His people, come and take possession of this globe as their heritage and habitation.

4. It will not take place until all opportunities of salvation granted to mankind will for ever close. This follows from what has been proved already. But consider, especially, 2 Peter iii. 8, 9, where the Apostle assigns, as a reason for the delay of Christ's coming, the patience of the Deity, and His great willingness to give mankind the longest opportunity He could, consistently with His honour, for obtaining part in the great salvation. This reason, however, is plainly dependent on the fact that the coming of Christ will render the further conversion and salvation of men impossible. Were it not so, the circumstance of God being "not willing that any should perish" affords no obstruction to the immediate manifestation of Emmanuel. To teach, therefore, that any portions of mankind are to be evangelised by the Saviour's advent, or after it has occurred, contradicts the mind of the Spirit, and is at variance with the Divine arrangements.

5. It will not occur until the time arrives for the resurrection and general judgment of mankind, the glorification of the saints, the punishment of the wicked, and the final renovation of the mundane system. Read (1) Matt. xxiv. 37-51, and xxv. 31-46. No representations could more distinctly teach that when Christ comes, judgment will *at once* begin, and that the faithful and unfaithful will then forthwith have their respective awards pronounced. (2) 2 Peter iii. 3-11. The "scoffers," in their taunt, intimate that, according to their view, the Gospel warrants our expecting the renovation of the earth to begin at once upon the Saviour's advent. And the Apostle tacitly concurs in that opinion, teaching that when Christ comes according to the promise, then comes "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," and then comes "the day of the Lord,

¹ This view is sustained by Dr. Wardlaw. See "Miscellaneous Discourses," No. xvii.

restoration of the world.

in which the heavens shall pass away," etc. Consequently, any doctrine which dates the second advent prior to the time for these events is contrary to the true meaning of "the promise."

While, then, we are "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God," let us cultivate "the patience of hope," or that "patient waiting for Christ" which St. Paul recommended. For, as it has been well said by Augustine, "he who loves our Lord's coming is not he who asserts that it is near, or he who asserts that it is far off; but rather he who, whether it be near or distant, waits for Him with sincerity of faith, steadfastness of hope, and fervour of charity."

IV.—What are the principal events that may be expected to occur previously to our Saviour's coming?

1. *The conversion of the Gentile nations to the faith and worship of the Gospel.* It was promised to Abraham "In thy seed"—"which is Christ"—"shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii. 18). And the nature and results of that blessing are foretold in such passages as these: Psalm xxii. 27; Isa. ii. 17, 18, xlix. 6; Mal. i. 11.

2. *As matters are advancing to this consummation there will be a gradual decay and ultimate extinction of the present great doctrinal and ecclesiastical apostasy from Christianity.* (2 Thess. ii. 1-12.) What answers to the object here portrayed have been for ages standing out before Europe and the world in the system of Popery! In her unscriptural dogmas "the mystery of iniquity" is exhibited in fearful contrast to the "great mystery of godliness." She is organised under a visible head, who sets himself above all authority whatsoever upon earth, showing himself to be in the place of God. And she is supported and propagated by means of the frauds she has practised, and the false miracles she has wrought—her adherents never hesitating to forward their designs "after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders." But that system shall gradually waste away under the influence of Divine truth, signified by "the spirit of Christ's mouth," till at length comes the time of the "judgment of the great whore" (Rev. xvii.), when the giant apostasy, which for centuries has been the dread and the curse of Christendom, shall be engulfed in utter destruction.

3. *During the decline of that apostasy, and perhaps not very long before its complete overthrow, determined and partially successful efforts will be made to crush the Gospel within the pale of its influence, to be quickly followed by signal success in the cause of truth.* This opinion is founded chiefly upon Rev. xi. 1-10. No interpretation which explains these statements as relating to matters past, appears to be at all satisfactory. Whether we take the two witnesses as intending the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and which, from the "power" ascribed to them, is perhaps the correct view; or whether we take them as intending the faithful in

general bearing testimony for God and for truth, understanding the number "two" as indicating the *sufficiency* of the testimony borne; or whether we take them as intending the two Churches of the Waldenses and Albigenses—an idea in which we find great difficulty in concurring—whatever may be intended by the "witnesses, they are undeniably yet prophesying in sackcloth, so that the 1,260 years, at the close of which they are to be slain, have not yet expired. Desperate, however, and deadly as is the persecution to which they will be subjected, it is of short duration. The witnesses are soon to live again, and acquire ascendancy unknown before; dismay is to seize their enemies, and convulsion desolate the mystic city in the street of which their bodies had lain unburied (verses 11-13).

4. *As these events are progressing, the long-prevailing Oriental imposture will disappear under the influence of Providence, without any movement of external violence.* We refer to the religion which the Prophet of Mecca broached 1,200 years ago, and which upwards of 1,000 years before that date had been described by Daniel (chap. viii.). He first tells us of the rise of the joint empire of the Medes and Persians, and of the junior portion of the monarchy becoming the ascendant, and pushing its conquest at will (verses 3, 4-20). Then we have Alexander the Great utterly demolishing the Medo-Persian power, and himself cut off in the zenith of his glory, his dominions being divided after his death into four sovereignties (verses 5-8, 21, 22). Then follows a description of the rise, progress, and end of Mohammedanism (verses 9-12, 23-25). Mohammed could not be more aptly described than as "a king of fierce countenance." His religion is one of "dark sentences." He arose and broached it in the eastern of the four kingdoms alluded to, "in the latter time of their kingdom," 1,000 years after Alexander's death; and "when transgressions were come to the full," just at the time when the Bishop of Rome attained the long-struggled-for ecclesiastical ascendancy. History and the present state of the world tell how great he became; but he was raised to his greatness by the arms of the Saracens, and "not by his own power." He was permitted to set himself against the Christianity which then prevailed by reason of the corruptions that abounded, or, as the prophecy expresses it, "a host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression." Whether by "peace" he has destroyed many, let the influence of sensuality tolerated by his system testify. And whether he has not "stood up against the Prince of princes," his rivalry of the Saviour in the regard of mankind will at once determine. But one brief sentence records his doom: "He shall be broken without hand;" a statement which seems to indicate that the destruction of the Oriental imposture will be the effect of no martial assault, but will rather be the special doing of Providence; perhaps by means of principles and habits infused among its votaries, and working unobserved till they have sapped its foundations and killed its very core.

5. *About the time when Babylon-Ecclesiastical falls, awful pro-*

vidential judgments will convulse and overturn the political governments that have been confederate with her. The symbols of the fifth seal, representing the martyrs pleading for vengeance on the persecuting powers (Rev. vi. 9, 10), is, at present, and has been for centuries past, in course of fulfilment. Judgment deserved, though apparently long delayed, will ultimately come, and the awful symbolic imagery of the first section of the sixth seal shall have its counterpart in all the dread reality of answering events. (Rev. vi. 12-17.) This prediction we regard as identical in its application with the vision recorded in Rev. xix. 11-21. A comparison of the chief symbolic personage in this vision, with the symbolic personage in the first seal (Rev. vi. 1, 2), will be sufficient to show that both intend a movement of the Saviour in His providence, the one for purposes of judgment, and the other for purposes of grace. It is, however, manifest that the nations of Europe will witness and experience upturnings and revolutions which, for extent and magnitude, have seldom, if ever, been equalled. But whether those changes will be brought about by the working of principles, or by violence in the way of invasion from without, or by a combination of both agencies, we undertake not to give an opinion.

6. *While these events are occurring, or immediately after they have taken place, the Jews, wherever scattered, will be converted to the Christian faith, and reincorporated with the visible Church.* Whether Israel as a nation will be restored to Palestine or not, it is certain that they are to be the subjects of another restoration—a restoration to the faith of the Gospel. (See Hosea iii. 4, 5; Rom. xi. 23-27.) The prophecy quoted in the latter passage is taken from Isa. lix. 20, 21; and if the Apostle has given the meaning of the Hebrew text, we have an unequivocal instance in which the term "Zion," as used in the Old Testament, signifies the Gospel Church, and as unequivocal an evidence that the conversion of the Jews is to be effected, not by the personal advent of Christ, but by His mystical going forth from that Church in the agency of His providence and grace. Concerning this great event, the following particulars are clearly taught:—

(1) That whatever shall prove to be the case with regard to the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, their conversion to the faith of the Gospel will take place in their dispersion among the Gentiles. This is implied in Hosea iii. 3, 4. Other statements countenancing the same idea are found in Hosea ii. 14-20.

(2) The conversion of the Jews will be accomplished through the instrumentality of Gentile Christians (Rom. xi. 30, 31).

(3) The conversion of the Jews will not take place until the generality of the Gentiles have been evangelised (Rom. xi. 25, 26). This "coming of the fulness of the Gentiles" we take to correspond with the "fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles" (Luke xxi. 24), until which "Jerusalem," or the Jewish people, is to be "trodden down of the Gentiles."

(4) The conversion of the Jews will be the occasion of an as-

tonishing revival of religion throughout the churches of the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 11, 12-15).

(5) The converted Jews will blend with converted Gentiles in the common fellowship of Christianity. (Eph. iii. 4-6; Rom. x. 12, 13; Gal. iii. 26-29, vi. 15, 16). "The Israel of God," in this passage, being reckoned according to the inspired decision in Rom. ii. 28, 29.

7. *Immediately upon the ingathering of the Jews will commence a long period of unexampled prosperity in the Christian Church, during which the operation of evil agency will be greatly restrained, and eminent piety, with all its concomitant blessings, will prevail throughout the world* (Dan. ii. 44, 45; vii. 19-27.) "The fourth beast" was the Roman Empire; "the ten horns" are the various States into which that empire was broken up; and what is the "little horn," that sprang up among the ten of the Roman beast, but the papacy? Every sentence of verses 24, 25 applies most emphatically to that iniquitous system; but the hour when "the judgment shall sit," and "take away his dominion," shall arrive, and not less surely shall "the people of the saints of the Most High" be established in ascendancy all over the world. (See also Rev. vii. 1-4.) The third verse tells us of a restraint put upon destructive influences until a great work of mercy is accomplished; viz., the "sealing" of the servants of God. The fourth verse sets forth the vast multitude of Jews on whom this gracious work shall be effected. But in whatever way we explain these particulars of the vision, there exists little room for doubting that the vision points forward to a time during which the operation of agencies that might obstruct the going forward of the "sealing" shall be suspended, and throughout which the Holy Spirit will be poured out in remarkably abundant measures, and on a scale of previously unequalled extent, for the accomplishment of that great work. (See also Rev. xx. 1-6.) The first three verses foretell the restraining of Satanic agency; that agency which is now at work in all directions, perverting the Gospel, prompting to evil, etc., will, to a great extent, if not altogether, cease to operate. This, however, will be but for a limited period. Satan will be loosed again, and will return to the earth to do as he did before, and perhaps worse. The fourth verse tells of two classes, usually distinguished by the names of "martyrs" and "confessors," who "lived and reigned with Christ" for the same term as that for which Satan is bound. This is called "the first resurrection." We think we shall be able to show, hereafter,¹ that this passage cannot be understood of a literal resurrection, without the most preposterous conclusions. It is a beautiful vision, designed to show that, in the days of millennial glory, when Satan's power on the earth shall be divinely and effectively restrained, and Christ is reigning on the earth in all the glories of His spiritual character, then the *spirit* of noble and martyred men—that self-sacrificing spirit of earnest devotion—which, in times of the Church's depres-

¹ See chapter on "The Resurrection of the Body" pp. 268-271.

sion, had been so long dead, shall be revived in their successors; souls will be seen coming up—everywhere coming up—"in the spirit and power" of the ancient witnesses for the truth, adorning the Church with the ardour of their devotion, enjoying unwonted fellowship with their exalted Saviour, co-operating with His designs of mercy, and holding the ascendancy among the children of men. In this way, "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," and which had had no alliance with anti-Christian powers, will show themselves again, not in their own persons by literally rising from the dead, but in the uprising of a *race* of men like them in principles and deeds of devotion to Jesus and His cause.

This, then, will be the Millennium—that long period of prosperity in the Christian Church, when a restraint will be put upon all the powers of evil, and the kingdom of Christ shall have its fullest development upon earth. And the distinguishing features of that period are to be learned from Holy Scripture:—

(1) It will be characterised by the universal diffusion of revealed truth. (Isa. xi. 9, xxv. 7, Dan. vii. 14).

(2) It will be marked by the universal reception of the true religion, and unlimited subjection to the sceptre of Christ. (Psalm ii. 6-8, xxii. 27-29, lxxii. 8-11; Isa. ii. 2, 3, lxvi. 23; Zech. ix. 10, Zech. xiv. 9; Matt. xiii. 31, 32; Rev. xi. 15).

(3) It will be a time of undisturbed harmony and peace. (Isa. ii. 4, xi. 6-9; Micah iv. 3).

(4) It will be a time in which kings and governments will be Christian, and will consecrate their influence to Christ and His Church. (Psalm lxxii. 10, 11; Isa. xlix. 23, lx. 16).

(5) It will be a time in which all classes will come into the fellowship of the Church, and give whatever influence they can command for its increase and well-being. (Isa. lx. 5-14).

(6) It will be a time of great temporal prosperity. (Isa. xxx. 23, 24; Jer. xxxi. 12; Ezek. xxxiv. 26, 27, xxxvi. 29-38).

(7) It will be a time of glory sufficiently long to secure the great objects of redeeming mercy. The Scriptures speak of a thousand years. But whether this is to be literally understood, or whether a round number is designed to indicate a long and indefinite period, or whether, according to prophetic usage, a day is put for a year, and so the period comprises three hundred and sixty-five thousand years, are questions in which great and good men have differed. Enough for us to know that the happy period is no short and transient age. Generation after generation, in long and unbroken series, shall see the glory of the Redeemer, and bask in His favour, and exult in His triumphs, singing in strains of delightful harmony: "The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ."

8. *At the expiration of the period called a thousand years, the restraint which had been put upon evil agency will be removed, a general apostasy from the true faith and worship of God will occur, the saints will be exposed to severe persecution, unparalleled violence*

and ungodliness in its worst forms will everywhere prevail, in the very height of which degeneracy the Saviour will appear. Many passages relating to the second advent intimate that it will take place at a time of abounding depravity, when religion is at a low ebb, and when worldliness, infidelity, and hostility to God are rampant. (Luke xviii. 8; Matt. xxiv. 7, compared with Gen. vi. 11; Luke xvii. 26-30.) But especially consider Rev. xx. 7, 8. With the expiration of the period signified by the thousand years, the martyrs and confessors cease to live and reign; *i.e.*, the practice and profession of pure Christianity rapidly decline. "The rest of the dead" live again; *i.e.*, characters such as abounded in the ages before the Millennium—infidels, liars, robbers, murderers, profligates, worldlings, and the like—will abound in all directions. Then forth comes the giant fiend, prepared and maddened to do his worst, surpassing, if possible, in malice, subtlety, and power, all that he had been or done before. Those will be fearful days to live in. The Holy Spirit will almost entirely suspend His influence in quickening men, and the devil will all but universally and totally possess them; for "he shall go out to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth." Moreover, the vision seems to indicate that the *whole mass* of unbelievers will be joined together in one common league against God and His Church, comparatively carrying all before them (ver. 8, 9). And now, the cause of wickedness has gained all but a complete triumph, and the cause of righteousness, once everywhere predominant, has become all but extinct. And, in that very moment of last extremity, the day of redemption to the righteous, and of final doom to the ungodly, blazes forth upon the world. Just as the devil's unbattled legions "compassed the camp of the saints," fire from heaven devoured them, the devil is cast into the lake of fire, the great white throne is set, and the scenes of eternity are ushered in (ver. 9-15).

This we conceive to be the doctrine of the New Testament as to the time and circumstances of our Lord's second advent. But, as this subject seems periodically to agitate the Church, it will be needful to propose for consideration one or two other inquiries.

V.—What are the views of pre-millennarians on the subjects which have been now discussed?

Their views cannot be so clearly and intelligibly stated as they might be if the advocates of them did not differ so widely among themselves. In general terms, however, they affirm that the second advent of Christ will take place before or at the commencement of the Millennium; that at that period He will descend from heaven to reign personally upon the earth¹—that he will have a central

¹ It would be interesting, if our space would allow, to trace the history of the controversy concerning the personal reign of Christ on the earth. Very soon after the time of the apostles, the doctrine was earnestly maintained by some in the Church. It was a delightful solace to believers, in those dark and evil days, to regard Christ as being about to come in person to overthrow His enemies, and exalt His people to a position of security and triumph in the earth. And

place of power and authority, probably Jerusalem—that the righteous dead will then be raised in such bodies as are to be immortal—that they will be His attendants, and will participate with Him in the government of the world—that this will continue during the period of a thousand years—that the world will be subdued and converted during this period, not by moral means, but by “a new dispensation”—by the power of the Son of God—and that at the close of this period all the remaining dead will be raised, and the affairs of the earth will be consummated.¹ This is *pre-millennarianism*, or, as the early Fathers, and after them the Reformers and our elder divines, termed it—*Chiliasm*, from the Greek word *chilioi*, “a thousand.” In the above statement we have expressed only the fundamental principles of the system, to which nearly all the modern pre-millennialists would subscribe, keeping clear of the points on which they are divided.

VI.—What are the leading objections to these views?

1. *Our first objection is, that they are based upon a rigidly literal interpretation of the Scriptures, than which nothing can be more preposterous.* We acknowledge how difficult it is sometimes to decide whether language is to be taken in its literal or in its figurative reference. But to affirm, as many do, that, whenever the literal interpretation will comport with sense, it should be adopted, would frequently lead to absurdities in interpretation which are alike repugnant to Scripture and to common sense. Take, for example, Rev. xx. 1-4, the great bulwark of the pre-millennial theory of the first resurrection; if a literal interpretation of the fourth verse be insisted on, then the entire passage must be understood literally; and we shall have Satan literally bound with a literal chain, his dungeon a literal bottomless pit, which is opened and shut with a literal key, and sealed with a literal seal. The representation which speaks of “all nations flowing to Mount Zion” (Isa. ii. 2), which speaks of God’s “gathering all nations and tongues,” and of their “coming and seeing His glory” in Jerusalem (Isa. lxvi. 18), if construed literally, would predict what is simply impossible, because all nations never can go up to Jerusalem. And if, to meet this

Papias, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian were among the orthodox Fathers who gave in their adhesion to these views. In the third century the controversy waxed hot, and Origen stood forth prominently in the number of opponents, after which the millennarian views (so called) began to decline. Shortly after the Reformation a set of troublemakers arose, who arrogated to themselves the authority of prophets of God, and agitated the populace by fictitious visions as to the speedy advent of our Lord. And during the interregnum in England, another set of enthusiasts sprang up, sometimes called Millennarians, but more frequently Fifth Monarchy Men, who aimed at the subversion of all human government, proclaiming that Christ would immediately appear to establish His kingdom, and that they, as His deputies, were to govern all things under Him. Since that time the advocates of the personal reign have not formed a distinct sect from others, but have been found, in greater or less numbers, among most of the denominations into which the Christian world is divided.

¹ Barnes’s note on Rev. xx. See also pp. 269, 270.

difficulty, it is conceded that all nations will thus worship at Jerusalem only by some selected representation, the theory of literal construction is at once abandoned. There are prophecies which speak of priests and Levites, and of the offering of sacrifices, as under the law (Ezek. xl. to xlv. ; Jer. xvii. 25, 26). To follow the literal mode of interpretation would be to affirm that the Levitical code is to be re-established as the law of the latter days ; whereas, Peter told the Christian Jews that it was "a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear" (Acts xv. 10). St. James opposed the imposition of it on the Gentile converts as an error, fraught with danger to the interests of Christianity and the souls of men (Acts xv. 19, 29). St. Paul characterised it as the mere discipline of minors, and as a bondage unsuited to the liberty of Christ's freemen (Gal. iv.) ; and apostolic authority declares its abrogation for ever to have been a prominent object and achievement of Messiah's first coming (Heb. vii. 12-18, viii. 7-13). There are also prophecies which speak of David as again reigning over Israel (Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, xxxvii. 24, 25). In order to be consistent, those who contend for a rigid literal interpretation must maintain that King David literally shall reign again over the twelve tribes in Judea ; whereas, themselves acknowledge that in these passages the word "David" means "the King of the Jews, of the seed of David, Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, surely, if we may say that when David is mentioned, it is not David himself that is intended, but another personage whom David prefigured, we may also say, that when "Israel," "Zion," etc., are mentioned, it is not Israel, Zion, etc., literally that are intended, but the then future and greater realities which "Israel," "Zion," etc., prefigured. We do not contend that language of this kind must *always* be thus understood. But it should not be forgotten that such phraseology is frequently thus employed in the New Testament. Take, for example, Heb. xii. 22, 23. Will any one contend for the literal interpretation of these statements ? They are only true when considered figuratively and spiritually. These Christians, instead of living under the Mosaic, enjoyed the *Christian* dispensation ; instead of belonging to the earthly, they were initiated into the citizenship of the spiritual Jerusalem—the only Zion and Jerusalem that will ever in any religious sense exist on earth ; they belonged to the same society with angels and all holy men living and dead ; were one with them, under the same Prince and Head whose blood of sprinkling had purchased for them these rights and this denizenship, and to whom they were all joined in one spirit.

Language of the same kind, and applied in the same way, occurs in Gal. iv. 21-26, where there is express mention made of two Jerusalems—the one connected with the law, the other with the Gospel—the one below, the other above—the one geographical, the other mystical—the one which was the centre of union and the place of sovereignty to those who were federally connected with the abrogated Sinaitic polity, the other which is the centre of association

and the abode of government to those who are federally connected with the new and abiding evangelical economy.

St. James also sets an example of interpreting prophecy, not in a literal, but a figurative sense. See Acts xv. 15-17, where he quotes from Amos ix. 11, 12. "The building up of the tabernacle of David," etc., most naturally means re-establishing the house of David in royal power. But we are taught by an inspired Apostle to understand the prophecy, not of the political dominion of an earthly prince, but of religious authority possessed by the Messiah as the Divine moral Ruler of the Church.

Now, terms and modes of speech being thus, according to the New Testament, susceptible of a two-fold explanation, it often becomes a question, in studying the prophecies, in which of the two senses they are to be understood. And to ascertain this, due consideration must be given to the nature of the subject, the object of the sacred writers, their consistency with themselves, and the analogy of faith. For our part, we think that, in the two prophecies so often quoted (Isa. ii. 2, and Micah iv. 1, 2), the language of the *seers* must be understood in that application in which similar phraseology is used by the *Apostle*. Accordingly, we explain "the mountains of the Lord's house being established in the top of the mountains," and people flowing into it, as foretelling the pre-eminence which the Christian Church is to acquire over all other religious systems. And we understand "all nations going up from year to year to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zech. xiv. 16), as meaning that the inhabitants of the world in general are regularly to do homage to Jehovah under the Gospel dispensation, according to the ritual of the Church in its present state of sojourn through the wilderness. To affirm a literal construction of these and other passages, which are found in the most figurative and symbolical books of the Scriptures, would go far towards destroying all the fixed laws of sound interpretation. To interpret such passages as one would interpret a law, a deed, or a contract, would be an outrage upon common sense and common honesty. And this we conceive to be the ground of many of the errors by which the pre-millennial theories are characterised.

2. *Our second objection to these views is, that they obscure the spirituality of Christ's kingdom.* Jesus Christ has now a kingdom on the earth—"a kingdom which cannot be moved," which shall "stand for ever." The great characteristic of this kingdom is, that it is a *spiritual*, in distinction from a temporal and visible reign. Read such passages as the following:—John iv. 20-24, xviii. 36; Luke xvii. 20, 21. These and other scriptures assert and illustrate the same great and important thought; viz., the holy and Divine spirituality of Christ's kingdom; and this truth must therefore be carried into all our interpretations of those scriptures which speak of His kingdom, whether now existing on the earth, or existing during the Millennium. To do this would at once overthrow the theory of Christ's pre-millennial advent and personal reign. It would be seen to have nothing to support it but a vain imagination, that congratu-

lates itself in an empire decked with all the gorgeous royalty of this world, rather than one which "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

3. *A third objection to these views is, that they do not assign a proper place in the conversion of the world to the agencies which already exist, and which God Himself has appointed.* When the Son of God ascended up on high, He bequeathed to His Church all the agencies that are required for the extension and final triumph of His spiritual kingdom. These are the truths of His Gospel and the omnipotent power of His Spirit. Just in the measure in which these are enjoyed will men return from the error of their ways. And the views in question appear highly derogatory to the present economy as the dispensation of the Spirit, and to the ordinance of preaching as the medium of His operation. Glorious things are spoken in prophecy of the results which should signalise the impartation of the Spirit. If Isaiah be asked how long the spiritual destitution of his people will continue, he replies, "Until the Spirit be poured upon us," etc. (chap. xxxii. 15; see also Zech. iv. 6). If we inquire of the Lord by what agency the Jews are to be finally converted, and made eminent in the earth, the reply is substantially the same (Ezek. xxxix. 29). In the prophecy of Joel, the promise of the Spirit takes a still wider range (chap. ii. 28, as quoted, Acts ii. 17); Gentiles as well as Jews are included in its comprehensive embrace, as St. Paul shows when quoting a part of the prediction (Rom. x. 12, 13). Here, then, is a series of predictions, importing that during the last days spiritual transformations, of the most glorious and comprehensive nature, shall result from the impartation of the Holy Spirit. From the day of Pentecost down to the present, the Spirit has effected these transformations chiefly through the preaching of the Gospel, whence we may infer that in all subsequent times, whatever miraculous means may be subordinately employed, His renewing influence will be exerted principally through the same instrumentality. And as the Church has not yet witnessed anything answering to the fulfilment of these predictions, we are to conclude that, great as the triumphs of the Gospel at times have been already, a period is impending when we shall see greater things than these. So that any views which cast but a passing shade on that happy prospect, or which transfer the honour of effecting them to any other department of the Divine government, must be regarded as disparaging to the dispensation of the Spirit, and the Divine appointment of the diffusion of the Gospel as the medium of His influence.¹

4. *A fourth objection to these views is, that they are inconsistent with the scriptural narrative of those events which are to take place between the Millennium and the end of the world.* Read the brief but comprehensive narrative found in Rev. xx. 7-12. There are several things here that are absolutely fatal to the hypothesis of the pre-millennial advent. It speaks of events that are to

¹Harris's "Great Commission."

take place *on this earth*, and affirms that the thousand years of the Saviour's reign upon it are *to have an end*. This, the Millennarians deny. It affirms that the judgment will not take place until the *close* of the thousand years. This, also, they deny; affirming the judgment to consist in the personal rule and authority of Christ during the thousand years. It speaks of a great and final conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, which is to take place between the close of the millennial reign and the subsequent and second coming of Christ. This, also, they deny; and affirm that the final battle is to take place long before, and when Christ comes in person to introduce the millennial reign and to establish His kingdom. Will they explain these incoherences in their theory? Will they inform us how it is, upon their hypothesis, that the spirit of Antichrist is to rise again in the earth after the thousand years are expired? Will they inform us how it is that the great and final conflict which they assign to a period previous to the Millennium, John speaks of as after the Millennium?

These are a few of the objections to the hypothesis of the pre-millennial advent.

VII.—But are there not passages which connect the second advent of our Lord with events that are to occur before the Millennium? and how are they to be explained?

A few of the passages that are often referred to by pre-millennarian writers as unanswerably supporting their teachings shall be considered.

1. 2 Thess. ii. 8.—The argument drawn from this text is that “the coming of Christ is expressly said to be for the destruction of Antichrist; and as that is confessedly pre-millennial, so must the coming of Christ be.” We take “the man of sin,” here described, to be *a specific apostasy*; and are constrained, by all the laws of exact interpretation, to describe “the coming of the Lord” for its destruction—whether personal or figurative—to be a *pre-millennial* coming. But, as we have already shown, the *temporal* judgment of any wicked community by the *agency of second causes*, is, in prophetic language, described as “the coming of the Lord,” and as “the day of judgment,” to that community. (See Isa. xiii. 6, 9, 13, 19, xix. 1, xxx. 27, 28, 30, 33; Micah i. 3-5; Matt. x. 23; Rev. iii. 3.) From these examples it is evident that a figurative coming of the Lord for purposes of judgment was a familiar idea in prophetic phraseology; and, as St. Paul was profoundly read in the Scriptures, and deeply imbued with their spirit and style, it cannot be thought strange if he should fall in with it in this respect, by speaking of a bright coming of Christ to destroy the anti-Christian power, meaning only a figurative advent, and not His second personal coming. It should also be noted that what is here ascribed to “the brightness of Christ’s coming,” is, in Dan. ii. 44, ascribed to the Church itself, as the instrument of Antichrist’s destruction, a fact which shows the extreme improbability of the “coming” here men-

tioned being Christ's personal advent. And as there is nothing in the text or context which requires us to take this "brightness of His coming" to be the same with that personal coming, the error about which had been already corrected, we have no hesitation in adopting the idea that the man of sin will be destroyed by Christ, as coming in the interposition of His providence and the workings of His truth, to prepare the way for the universal spread of righteousness and peace.

2. Matt. xxiv. 29-31, compared with Luke xxi. 24-27. It is said that "the coming of the Lord in this passage can be no other than His personal coming; and as it is to occur when 'the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled,' *i.e.*, at the fall of Antichrist, and immediately before the Millennium, it follows that this is the time of the second advent." Let it be admitted that these words point *ultimately* to the personal advent of Christ and the final judgment, still the *direct* and *primary* reference of the prophecy is to Christ's coming in judgment against Jerusalem, to destroy it and its temple, and with them the standing and privileges of the Jews as the visible Church of God, and to set up the Gospel kingdom in a manner more palpable and free than could be done while Jerusalem was yet standing. Our Lord settles this point in Matt. xxiv. 34, and there is nothing in the mere grandeur and strength of the language employed to prevent us taking that view; for, in other prophecies, which we have inspired authority for applying to the destruction of Jerusalem, the same prophetic style is employed as in this prophecy. (See Joel ii. 28-32, compared with Acts ii. 17-20.) Peter expressly declares that the *first* and *last* parts of this passage were fulfilled at the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit. Evident, therefore, it is that "the great and terrible day of the Lord"—bound up with these events as part of the same great chapter of Church history—is no other than the day of Jerusalem's judicial destruction. See also Mal. iii. 1, 2, iv. 5, 6—passages which we are expressly taught in the New Testament to apply to Christ's first coming; "the great and dreadful day of the Lord," as connected with that coming, can, therefore, be no other than what Joel describes in identical terms, *viz.*, the destruction of the Jewish nation and Church for rejecting Him, through the instrumentality of the Romans. We might also refer to Matt. x. 22, 23, xvi. 28; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27, the plain meaning of which is, that the establishment of "the kingdom," meaning the Gospel kingdom, would be witnessed by those of Christ's auditors who should survive the overthrow of Jerusalem—at that time the chief obstacle to its manifestation. We have thus seen that a figurative advent of our Lord to the judgment of any wicked community is a familiar idea in prophetic style; and that this very event of the destruction of Jerusalem is so described in several prophecies, for the application of which we have inspired authority; so that when our Lord assures us that that coming of His, and the judgments announced by Him, would be witnessed by the generation then living, we are prepared by Scripture itself to

acquiesce in this as just one of the many examples of a *figurative advent of Christ to judgment*, expressed in all the grandeur usually employed to describe His personal advent and the final judgment. Here, again, then, as in the former passage, we demur to apply this text to the second personal coming of our Lord.

3. Rev. xix. 11-16, 19-21.—The statement of the pre-millennialists is, that we have in this text "a full and distinct narrative of the Lord's appearing from heaven just before the Millennium; and that as the prophecy says nothing of such an advent *after* the Millennium, the testimony of the vision to the pre-millennial advent is decisive and complete." It appears very difficult to understand this as a vision of the second advent. Will Christ personally and visibly fight against "the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies," personally and visibly gathered together against Him? We know the overwhelming effects produced by the manifestation of His glory upon those who beheld it. (See Dan. x. 6-8; Luke ix. 32-34; Acts ix. 2-7; Rev. i. 17.) And can we conceive that when He comes in His own glory, and in that of His Father, with all His holy angels, any created being will either dare or be able to make war against Him in His person? The very absurdity involved in this idea would, of itself, prove that the event foretold cannot be the second or any personal coming of Christ. But, it is objected, if this be not the second advent, where does it occur in the Apocalypse *after this*? We reply in Rev. xx. 11, compared with 2 Peter iii. 10. Here, we see the Lord personally present on His throne of judgment in the one passage, while the other informs us that He has *only then* come; and with this agree the words of our Lord: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, . . . *then* shall He sit upon the throne of His glory" (Matt. xxv. 31).

VIII.—Is there any canon for determining whether the "advent" and "judgment" announced in any prophecy is to be understood literally or figuratively?

Mr. Faber replies to this question as follows: "When the judgment of some wicked *empire* or *community* is described as being affected by the coming of the great day of retribution and by the advent of the Lord with the clouds of heaven, then the temporal judgment of that particular empire or community is alone intended, and the language in which it is set forth must be understood *figuratively*, not literally. But when the judgment of no empire or community is described, then the coming of the great day of retribution, and the advent of the Lord with the clouds of heaven being mentioned generally with reference to the whole world, and not particularly with reference to some special body politic, must be understood *literally*, not figuratively." This canon, founded upon a distinction which pervades the whole language of Scripture, will commend itself, we believe, to the judgment of every dispassionate student of the Bible, in proportion as it is closely tested.

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IX.—What, then, is the sum of Bible teaching concerning the glorious appearing of our Lord?

It is this: that Christ, having ascended up on high, is appointed King of the Universe—"a Priest upon His throne," whence, after a season, "He will appear the second time," and become once more as really visible to the inhabitants of earth as He was in His former manifestation; that, previously to this, the Gentiles will be converted to the faith of Christ; Popery, which has sat like an incubus upon Christendom for ages, shall be swept away; the Mohammedan imposture, by which millions have been enslaved, will be brought to an end; the political governments which have confederated with the great apostasy, will be overturned; the seed of Abraham will be visited in mercy, will acknowledge Jesus as their own Messiah and Saviour, and will unite with the converted Gentiles in honouring Him by the zealous diffusion of the knowledge of His name; and, at length, by means of Gospel truth and the outpouring of the Spirit, the period of millennial glory and joy will be granted to the Church: then shall the power of the Redeemer's enemies, and especially of the arch-adversary of God and man, be held under Divine and salutary restraint; truth, righteousness, and peace will everywhere prevail; and all classes of men will yield a willing subjection to the Prince of Peace. Afterwards, for a little season, Satan will be loosed, and make a final and desperate effort against the Lord, His Christ, and His people; another general apostasy will be developed, and the Church of the Redeemer will experience trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy. Then in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, will the heavens burst asunder, and make way for a descending Saviour. The work of conversion will be carried on no more. "All that are in the graves shall come forth," and before the "great white throne" shall "be gathered all nations" for judgment. And when the wicked are driven away, Christ's ransomed and glorified ones will come and take possession of the renovated earth,¹ which, possibly, will be rendered capacious enough for

¹ I hold strongly to the view on this subject that is advocated in this chapter; namely (in the words of Dr. Urwick), that "the Lord mighty in battle, who on the Cross 'spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly,' and who, age after age, is breaking the yoke of the oppressor, and emancipating human souls, will not stay in His career of illustrious achievement till He wrests the very earth itself from the grasp of its usurper, recreating it in unrivalled purity and glory, and taking possession of it with His people for immortality as peculiarly His own domain." It does not seem easy to give a fair and natural interpretation of the celebrated prediction of Peter (2 Peter iii. 10-13) "otherwise than as intimating that 'the new heavens and the new earth,' physically considered, will be the same which God originally created for the abode of men, when it shall have undergone an igneous, as it has already undergone an aqueous, transformation."—*Dr. D. Brown*. This view, as thus stated by Dr. Urwick and Dr. Brown, is held by Wesley, Clarke, Benson, Macknight, Chalmers, Bloomfield, and many others, both among the pre-millennialists and their opponents.

At the same time, the reader must be informed that there are men of equal eminence and sobriety of judgment (amongst whom we may mention the late Dr. Waldegrave, Bishop of Carlisle, author of "New Testament Millenarianism"), who avow themselves unconvinced by the arguments alleged in support of this

the multitudes of the saved, or which may be only *one* of the "many mansions" which are to be fitted up for them; and there will they dwell for ever, where no sin can pollute, no sorrow darken, and no change occur. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Amen.

The writer is principally indebted for the contents of this chapter to Dr. W. Urwick's Lectures on "the Second Advent of Christ;" Dr. David Brown's "Christ's Second Coming;" Dr. G. Spring's "Glory of Christ;" and Rev. J. W. Thomas's essay on "The Millennium," in the *Wesleyan Magazine*, 1861.

view. Some of them contend that the text in Peter refers to the latter-day glory. The Apostle's "nevertheless" is thus made to express, not the hope of what is to follow the second coming of the Lord, with a view to cheer and animate believers in their anticipations of the final conflagration, but the assurance of something which was to precede it; introduced for the purpose of clearing away an objection to what he had before said of the speedy approach of the day of God. Others of them argue that, if it were certain that the passage does relate to the habitation of the righteous after the resurrection and the general conflagration, it is not necessary that the terms of it should be interpreted literally, that is, as meaning a heaven and earth resembling the present; but that the language may be merely borrowed, in the way of figure, from "the heavens and the earth which are now," of which he had been speaking, and mean no more than the certainty of a future glorious, holy, and blessed abode, fitted for the inhabitants as they shall then be, as thoroughly as the present is for men as they now are. The subject has its importance; for whatever view we take of it will necessarily give its hue to all other statements of Scripture regarding the earth. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

I.—What are the essential characters and properties of a true resurrection?

"The proper notion of the resurrection consists in this, that it is a substantial change by which that which was before, and was corrupted, is reproduced the same thing again." It is a *change*, as distinguished from a second or new creation; a *substantial* change, as distinguished from all accidental alterations—a change of *that which was and hath been corrupted*, because things immaterial and incorruptible cannot be said to rise again—and a *reproduction of the same thing again*, as distinguished from the production of something else, out of the same matter.¹

II.—Was the resurrection of the dead a doctrine of the Old Testament revelation?

The most satisfactory way to answer this question is by the citation of a few Scripture texts, such as, in their general import, cannot be mistaken, and of which our interpretation is sanctioned by different passages in the New Testament:—Job xiv. 12-15, xix. 25-27;² Psalm xvii. 15; Isa. xxv. 8, compared with 1 Cor. xv. 54; Dan. xii. 2, 13; Hosea xiii. 14. And not only have we these distinct announcements of the doctrine in the Old Testament, but nothing is more common than for deliverance from great calamities to be compared to reviving, a resurrection, and life; *e.g.*, Isa. xxvi. 19, etc.; particularly the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon is largely expressed by this very similitude, Ezek. xxxvii. 11, etc. "It appears from hence that the doctrine of the resurrection was at that time a popular and common doctrine; for an image which is assumed in order to express or represent anything in the way of allegory or metaphor, whether poetical or prophetic, must be an image commonly known and understood,

¹ Pearson "On the Creed," art v. "The Doctrine of a Future State, as contained in the Old Testament Scriptures," by the Rev. J. D. Geden, D.D.

² For the proofs that this text refers to the resurrection of the body, and not merely to the restoration of Job to his former temporal condition, see Pearson "On the Creed," art. xi.; Wardlaw's "Systematic Theology," vol. iii., chap. xxxi.

otherwise it will not answer the purpose for which it is assumed."¹ And from the following passages in the New Testament we have the clearest assurance that the belief of a general resurrection was the belief of the Old Testament Church, both under the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations:—Matt. xxii. 30-32;² Acts xxiii. 6-8, xxiv. 14, 15, xxvi. 6, 7; Heb. xi. 35.

III.—What are the principal passages in which the doctrine is taught in the New Testament?

Matt. v. 29, x. 28; John v. 28, 29, vi. 39, 40, 44, 54; Rom. viii. 11, 22, 23; 1 Cor. xv. 1; Phil. iii. 11, 20, 21; 1 Thess. iv. 13-17.

IV.—At what time will the resurrection occur?

At the second advent of our Lord, and immediately preparatory to the general judgment. (John vi. 39; 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24; Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17; Rev. xx. 11-13.)

V.—Will the good and the wicked dead rise simultaneously?

The millenarian view is that the resurrection of the righteous will occur at the commencement, and that of the wicked at the close, of the thousand years of millennial glory. The teachings of Scripture appear to us to be very decisive that they will all be raised *at once*. It is true that in those well-known passages in 1 Cor. xv. and 1 Thess. iv., we read only of the resurrection of *believers*, as taking place when "the Lord Himself shall descend with a shout;" the exclusive subject of discourse there being "the resurrection of life." But in the Gospel of John (chap. v. 25, 28, 29) we are taught that the "shout," or "voice of the Son of God," shall bring back to life "*all* that are in the graves." It is the same "voice" at the same "hour" which all are to hear. And at the one utterance of that voice "shall all be made alive," though in two classes, and with destinies in prospect—how fearfully contrasted! In the account of the final judgment in Rev. xx. 12, 13, the resurrection of *all the dead*, without distinction, is represented as taking place simultaneously, immediately before it, and in order to it. And in 2 Thess. i. 7-10 we have a most explicit announcement of Christ as being revealed from heaven with the two great designs of taking vengeance on the ungodly, and of being glorified in His

¹ Bishop Lowth.

² Some argue from this passage that the term "resurrection" is used as signifying "the separate state," as it is called. It is evident, however, that the Sadducean question to which our Lord was replying had reference to the resurrection of the dead. When the seven husbands and the woman should reappear in corporeal life, whose wife should she be? And the force of our Lord's argument in reply should be considered as arising from the fact, that in the creed of the Sadducees the denial of the resurrection was associated with a denial of a life after death altogether. The two together formed one negative belief. Whatever, therefore, shook their faith as to the non-existence of the separate spirits of the dead, was fitted to shake their unbelief as to the resurrection of the body. The latter, as our Lord knew, would depend upon the former, and would follow in their minds as a sequence or inference from it. It was thus far a kind of *argumentum ad hominem*. Prove a future state, and on their principles, and according to the lurking idea in their minds you make a good resurrection.—*Dr. Wardlaw*.

saints. Who would ever, on reading this passage, be led to fancy that the time of His "coming" to be glorified in His saints was to be earlier by a thousand years than the time of His being "revealed" to take vengeance on His enemies?

VI.—If the resurrection be certain and simultaneous to the righteous and the wicked, why should St. Paul say, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"?

The simple answer is, it was not the general resurrection He was striving to attain to—not a resurrection common to both classes. It was a resurrection peculiar to believers—a resurrection exclusively theirs; exclusively, however, not in the time of it, but in its nature, its accompaniments, and its issues. As Bishop Pearson says, "He meant that resurrection which followeth upon the being 'made conformable to Christ's death,' which is a resurrection in conformity to the resurrection of Christ." This is put beyond doubt in the two last verses of the chapter, where all its peculiarity, all that for which it is desired, is made to lie in the thing itself, and not in the time of it. He who sees the glory of that resurrection, which will be granted to those whose "conversation is in heaven," will not be surprised that St. Paul should regard that as the goal of the race set before him.¹

VII.—Is not the view of a simultaneous resurrection for all men contradicted by Rev. xx. 4-6, which speaks of a "first resurrection"?

The bearing of this passage upon the point in dispute depends greatly on the question whether it ought to be interpreted literally or figuratively. We are perfectly satisfied that the literal exposition is not at all defensible.

First, it should be recollected that the passage forms part of a prophetic book—a book that is constructed on the very principle of symbol, and figurative almost throughout. Indeed, the whole of the very vision where the text lies is symbolical; and on what principle are we at once to make a transition from the symbolical to the literal, from the obscure and figurative to the direct and simple, from the style of prophecy to the style of history? Secondly, John is here said to have seen "*the souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus." The word *souls* is often used to signify *persons*; and if John had said, "I saw the souls that were beheaded," we should have understood him to mean persons. But he says "*the souls of them*," *i.e.*, of those persons that had been thus martyred; he must, therefore, be understood as meaning, not the entire person, but the soul as distinguished from the body. On this principle, we cannot but consider the vision of "*the souls*" as a circumstance strongly in support of the figurative or spiritual interpretation.²

¹ Dr. D. Brown.

² See also Rev. vi. 9-11, where similar language is used, but which must necessarily be symbolical, not literal. (See also p. 258.)

What, then, on this principle, did the vision signify? What was the meaning of the symbol? We answer, *it signifies a glorious revival and extensive prevalence of the spirit and character of the ancient martyrs*. These martyrs, according to prophetic figure, rise, and live, and reign, when a race of successors appears, signally animated by their spirit, and pursuing their glorious career, and when their principles become predominant and extensively influential. And, let it be observed, that the figure of a *resurrection*, to signify a remarkable revival of the Church, a period of new life and spiritual activity, is not only in itself natural, but it is to be found in other parts of Scripture. It is the very figure used by Ezekiel in the vision of the valley of dry bones (see chap. xxxvii. 1-14,) where he portrays the resuscitation that was to come upon his peeled and scattered countrymen as a coming up out of their graves. The same kind of figure is used in reference to the conversion of sinners. Their natural character is a state of death, and the spiritual change effected in their conversion is represented as a resurrection from the dead. (John v. 21; Eph. ii. 1, 5.) And to use an illustration directly in point: the prophecy that Elias should come was fulfilled, not by the resurrection of Elias himself from the dead, but by the coming of John the Baptist "in the spirit and power of Elias." What, then, more natural, as a prophetic symbol, than a resurrection of the martyrs to signify the unexampled revival and prevalence of "the spirit and power" of the martyrs? To any one at all acquainted with the symbolical language of prophecy, such an explanation, so far from appearing strained and unnatural, will recommend itself by its appropriateness and simplicity.

But if the principle of literal interpretation were conceded to the Millennarians, it would not bear them out. They argue from the passage for a *general* resurrection of the righteous at the commencement of the supposed millennial reign of Christ. But the persons here said to live and reign with Christ a thousand years are *not* the righteous dead in general, but the martyrs only (ver. 4); and to make so particular a description comprehend and include all classes of the righteous dead is singularly inconsistent in those who plead for a rigid literality.

The Millennarians ask, "What, then, will you make of the phrase, 'The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished'?" We take this to be symbolical, and symbolical on the same principle as the former; signifying *the reappearance of the spirit and character of the hostile opponents of Christ and His cause*, in accordance with the prophecy found in Rev. xx. 7, 8.

If, then, the text we have considered does not affirm a literal resurrection of the righteous as separate and distinct from that of the wicked, the theory must be abandoned; for there is no other text in the Bible which can, with any show of reason, be made to bear upon this subject. It is true that 1 Thess. iv. 16 has sometimes been adduced. But it requires only the reading of the entire passage to satisfy any candid mind that there is in it no reference

to the resurrection of the wicked at all. The Apostle is speaking of the dead and the living: "We who are alive shall not prevent," *i.e.*, shall not anticipate, or take precedence, or get the start of "them that are asleep." Those who shall die before our Lord's coming, and those who shall then be alive, will find themselves quite upon an even footing. Such is the Apostle's own explanation of his own language.¹

VIII.—Will the bodies raised be identical with those committed to the grave?

They will; for (1) all the passages of Scripture which treat of the subject plainly imply, if they do not even directly express, the resurrection of the same body. "*In my flesh shall I see God*" (Job xix. 26). "They that are *in the graves* shall come forth" (John v. 28). "He shall quicken *our mortal bodies*" (Rom. viii. 11). "*This corruptible shall put on incorruption*," etc. (1 Cor. xv. 53, 54). "The sea shall give up *the dead* that are in it" (Rev. xx. 13). (2) The very term resurrection implies this identity; that which has been laid down must be taken up; for God to give us a new body, one which the spirit never inhabited, would not be a resurrection, but a creation. (3) The design of the resurrection requires it; the purposes of justice demand that the beings who shall then appear in judgment should be the identical beings who have been here on probation; and that the same body which was the associate of the soul, and the instrument of carrying into effect its good and evil volitions, should partake with it in the joy or the sorrow, the happiness or the misery, of the future state. (4) This identity will be manifest in the saints who are alive at the second coming of our Lord. Their bodies will be *changed* (1 Cor. xv. 51; Phil. iii. 21); but that very word proves that they will be composed of the same materials of which they shall consist when the change takes place. And if this shall be the case with them, is it not reasonable to conclude that so also will it be with the bodies of the dead? (5) The examples which we have had of a resurrection from the dead, prove that the same body which died shall rise again. For, whether we look upon the three examples of the Old Testament, or those of the New, they all rose in the same body before it was dissolved. "The bodies of saints," which came out of their graves upon our Saviour's death, were certainly the same bodies that were laid in (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53). And Christ Himself, when He reappeared among men, declared the body with which He was clothed to be the same body which was crucified (Luke xxiv. 39). And seeing that He "shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. iii. 21), it follows

¹ This section is extracted principally from Dr. Wardlaw's "Miscellaneous Discourses," ser. xvii. But I must refer the reader also to Dr. Urwick on the "Second Advent;" Dr. D. Brown on "Christ's Second Coming;" Barnes's Notes on Rev. xx. 1-6; and *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 1859, art. "The first Resurrection."

that we shall rise in the same bodies, and that every particular person at the resurrection may speak the words which Christ then spake, "Behold, it is I Myself" (Luke xxiv. 39).¹ The subject is encompassed with difficulties, but no difficulties should be placed against the express revelation of the Word of God.

IX.—What are the leading objections that have been started to this view of the identity of our present and our future bodies?

1. *The objection arising from the succession of bodies we may be said to inhabit.* "The body is throughout life incessantly changing, both acquiring new materials and parting with old; so that in the course of a long life it is conceived to undergo, more than once or twice, alterations of its entire mass; there not being an atom of the body of the infant in that of the youth, or of the youth in that of the old man." This fact, it is said, renders the identity for which we contend inconceivable. But do these changes that are constantly going on in our present bodies destroy their identity? "Would any one think of asserting that he himself is not now the identical individual he was at the time of his birth? that the decrepit body of the aged debauchee is suffering unjustly for the intemperance of his youthful frame? that it would be unrighteous to punish the murderer for a crime which he perpetrated when the body was composed of other particles? or, that he himself, in consequence of a similar change, has no title to property left him a few years ago? His common sense protects him from such absurdities in the affairs of this life; and we will leave him to assign to himself a reason, if he can, why it should desert him only in the province of religion."² If we are sure of our identity through all the changes we undergo in life, we surely need not stumble at the difficulties attending the identity of our present with our resurrection bodies.

2. *The objection arising from what has been termed the germ theory*—viz., that there may be in the human frame some germ, or some original and unchangeable *stamen*, which will unfold into the resurrection body. The idea seems founded on a misapprehension of St. Paul's meaning in 1 Cor. xv. 36-38; and is advocated from a desire to render the doctrine of a resurrection less difficult to conceive, and more acceptable to philosophic minds. But let it be observed:—

(1) That the existence of any such germ or elementary *stamen* is matter of the merest conjecture. It has never yet been discovered by the most skilful dissector or the profoundest physiologist. There is nothing whatever in the shape of fact to give it the least support, even to the extent of giving it probability.

(2) "That the theory involves this absurdity, that the body is not entirely dead, that there is a part of it, however small, in which

¹ See Pearson "On the Creed," art. xi.

² Harris's "Great Teacher." And yet Professor Tyndal publicly declared that it would be wrong to punish a man for a crime which he had committed seven years before, because he had completely changed physically.

life remains; for a dead germ or seed could not reproduce: and how there can be life in any part of it, after the vital principle has forsaken it, we leave the authors of this hypothesis to explain."¹

(3) That the theory is not compatible with the teaching of Scripture; for it sets aside the doctrine of a resurrection of the body entirely. "If the preserved part be a *germ*, and the analogy of germination be adopted, then we have no longer a resurrection from death, but a vegetation from a suspended principle of secret life. If the *stamina* of Leibnitz be contended for, then the body, into which the soul enters at the last day, with the exception of these minute stamina, is provided for it, by the addition and aggregation of new matter, and we have a creation, not a resurrection."²

(4) "If bodies, in either of these modes, are to be framed for the soul, by the addition of a large mass of new matter, the resurrection is made substantially the same with the pagan notion of the metempsychosis; and if St. Paul, at Athens, preached not 'Jesus and the resurrection,' but Jesus and a transmigration into a new body, it will be difficult to account for his hearers scoffing at a doctrine which had received the sanction of several of their own philosophic authorities."³

(5) In the case of our Lord, who has "become the firstfruits" of the great resurrection harvest, the body was altogether removed from the grave; no invisible germ was subtracted while the rest was allowed to moulder into dust.

For these reasons, the germ theory, although advocated by some divines of eminence, must be abandoned as untenable. It obviously affords no relief to the only real difficulty involved in the doctrine of the resurrection.

3. *The objection arising from the mixture of the particles of matter, by assimilation or otherwise, with other bodies.* It is argued that "the bodies of the dead, when decayed and mouldered into dust, become the food of plants and vegetables; these plants and vegetables become the food of animals; and these animals the food of living men. Drowned men are devoured by fishes; these fishes, it may be, by other fishes; and some of these by men. In certain savage countries cannibalism prevails; men devour one another. In these and other ways the same particles of matter come to form part of different human bodies." Hence, it is said, "A literal and bodily resurrection of the dead is a thing impossible. The doctrine is a palpable absurdity; for how can any power extricate and bring into form the identical bodily frame that once belonged to each one of the human race?" In all such difficulties as this objection specifies, we take refuge in the infinite power and wisdom of God. "He knoweth all the men which ever lived since the foundation, or shall live unto the dissolution, of the world; He knoweth whereof all things were made, from what dust we came,

¹ Dick's "Theology."

² Watson's "Institutes."

³ *Ibid.*

and into what dust we shall return (Psalm cxxxix. 15, 16). And as His wisdom is infinite, so His power is unlimited. There is no atom of the dust or ashes but must be where it pleaseth Him, and be applied and make up what and how it seemeth good to Him."¹ And when He appoints that the parts which are essential to the identity of the body shall be re-collected, will He allow any operation of nature to frustrate His purpose? Can He be inattentive to His own designs? Or, "hath He said, and shall He not do it? hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Let Him but speak, and "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," all the particles of human dust, that may be necessary to reconstruct the body, howsoever they may be scattered, or wheresoever lodged, will be obedient to His high behest, and body and soul, once more united, shall stand forth as the monument of His power, who "spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast."

X.—But does this identity of the resurrection body with that committed to the grave exclude all idea of change in its structure and organisation?

By no means; St. Paul argues this point at length (1 Cor. xv.) in answer to the question, what sort of bodies are the saints hereafter to receive? Are their bodies, when they are raised, to be the same sort of bodies that they were when earth claimed them as its own? And he shows "it no more follows that what is raised from the grave is to have the same structure and organisation, the same properties and attributes, with what is laid in the grave, than it follows that what comes up from the spot where a seed has been dropped, must possess the same bodily form and character as the seed. The fact, on the other hand, that what springs up from the 'bare grain' that is sown, is so very different from the 'bare grain' itself, affords a strong presumption that what is to be raised from the tomb may differ still more widely from what is lying there now. The 'bare grain' is a body adapted to the place which it is to occupy, and the function which it is to serve, underground. But it comes up, having a body suited to the place now to be occupied, and the function now to be served, in the bright and warm light of day. So these material frames of ours, as they are now compacted and organised, are admirably adapted to the place they have to occupy, and the function they have to serve, in this lower world. But if they were to rise just exactly as they are now, they might be ill adapted to the sunshine of that higher heavenly region into which they are to pass. The presumption, therefore, is, that He who brings up the 'bare grain' that is sown, not 'bare grain' still, but that graceful stem of ripe and yellow corn, will bring up the body that is now mouldering in the dust, not such as it is now, but such as will suit that brighter and

¹ Pearson "On the Creed," art. xi.

glorious sphere where all dissolution and decay are unknown."¹ The particulars are specified in respect of which the resurrection body may be expected to differ from the present body. "In the stead of corruption it shall be inaccessible to decay, for 'neither can they die any more.' In the stead of dishonour it will be raised in glory, radiating a splendour which shall eclipse all sublunary glory. In the place of weakness, it shall be clothed with vigour of immortal youth, asking no relaxation or repose, the wings of the soul accompanying and aiding it in all its untiring flights. In the place of a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body; the original grossness of its materiality shall be purged away; it shall be refined and etherealised into spirit—a robe of light rivalling the invisible essence of the soul itself; while each of its senses shall form an inlet to floods of enjoyment, and each of its organs be instinct and emulous with zeal for the Divine glory."² Still there is real identity. Every seed is to have "*its own body*." We shall rise from the dead, purified, indeed, and brilliant, and indestructible; but, nevertheless, each retaining so much of his own peculiar lineaments, that we shall not be a new rank of creatures, but strictly the old—remodelled, and yet the same; transformed, but not losing identity; the parent still recognised by the child, and the child still recognised by the parent.

XI.—In what, then, does the identity of the human body consist?

This is a very difficult question to answer; and our profoundest theologians acknowledge that it is impossible to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion on the subject. We must, therefore, content ourselves with what we have already stated, "that God will give a body to every man at the resurrection, such as to ensure his being himself conscious that he is the same man; and such, at the same time, as shall be recognised by others, so as to make him the same man to them as well as to himself."³ "It may be changed from what it was when the tomb received it,—weak, wasted, worn. It may wear the bloom of summer life, instead of the cold, bleak deadness of the 'bare grain.' It will not, however, be so changed but that the instinct of conscience will feel it to be the body in which the deeds of this life were done. It will not be so changed but that the eye of affection will perceive it to be the very form, on whose clay-cold lips, years or ages ago, it imprinted the last long kiss of fondness. Yes, I am to rise again in my body; different, but yet the same; with such difference as it may seem good to God to make; with such sameness as shall identify me personally, in body and soul, to myself and to all my friends."⁴

XII.—What are the principal heresies that have been propagated with regard to the resurrection of the body?

I. *That of the Pharisees*, the principal sect, in our Lord's time,

¹ Dr. Candlish's "Life in a Risen Saviour."
² *Ibid.*

³ Dr. Wardlaw.
⁴ Dr. Candlish.

among the Jews, who taught that the resurrection would be partial, being confined to the bodies of the just, according to that ancient saying accepted amongst them, that "the sending of the rain is on the just and the unjust, but the resurrection of the dead is of the just alone."¹ In direct opposition to this view, we are taught that the resurrection of the dead belongs not to the just alone, but to the unjust also. (See Dan. xii. 2; Acts xxiv. 15; Matt. xxv. 34, 41.) We are also taught that as no kind of men, so no person, shall be excluded. (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22; John v. 28, 29; Matt. xxv. 32; Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10.)

2. *That of the Gnostics*, or knowing ones, who, in the apostles' time, marred the simple Gospel by the introduction of Oriental subtleties. The favourite dogma of these Gnostics was that matter is in itself essentially and incurably corrupt, and is the cause of all corruption. Hence, they denied the possibility of a literal bodily resurrection. Nothing but a spiritual resurrection could find a place in their creed; the soul, renovated by faith, is *raised* to newness of life; and no other resurrection is to be anticipated. This error cuts up by the very roots the hope of those who have believed in Christ, for, "if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen." He is still under the power of death. We have no evidence of the sufficiency of His atoning sacrifice; our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins (1 Cor. xv. 13-17). This error also flatly contradicts the many passages which assure us of a resurrection *at the last day*, for it maintains that, in the case of believers, that spiritual resurrection is "past already" (2 Tim. ii. 16-18), leaving nothing to hope for but the casting off of this mortal body, and the soaring of the spirit in unending life and liberty. Very different is the doctrine taught in such texts as these: John xi. 24, vi. 39; Matt. xiii. 39; 1 Cor. xv. 52-54.

3. *That of Baron Swedenborg*, who flourished during the first half of the eighteenth century. In the year 1743 he began to promulgate his novel dogmas, affirming that the Lord Himself appeared to him, and honoured him with a Divine mission to men. He totally denied the resurrection of the material body, teaching, like the Gnostics, that it perishes at death; but he maintained that the soul, immediately after death, *rises* into the spirit-world in a spiritual body which was enclosed in the material body; and that in this spiritual body he lives as a man through eternity, either in heaven or hell, according to the quality of his past life. It is easy to see that such views as these can never be made to accord with the sublime doctrine of the resurrection of "all that are in the graves" and in the "sea," which is to occur when "the trumpet shall sound," at the coming of the Lord.

¹ I do not know the authority for this opinion of Mr. Field, for it does not seem warranted by the language of Josephus—"They say that every soul is in perishable, but the soul of good men only passes over into another body, while the soul of bad men is chastened by eternal punishment,"—when compared with St. Paul's utterance in Acts xxiii. 6, and xxvi. 6-9.—*Editor.*

CHAPTER XVII.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

I.—How do we argue the certainty of a judgment to come?

1. *It is argued from the anomalies that pervade the entire system of God's providential government.* There is no doubt that we live under a retributive government, and that cognizance is taken of our actions by an ever-present Being, who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. And yet, in all ages, there has been a manifest disagreement between the conduct and condition of men. Vice has often had the upper hand, while righteousness has been depressed and overwhelmed. The wicked have prospered, having even more than heart can wish. The righteous have been the victims of severe and diversified sufferings. This fact is often referred to in the Scriptures. (Psalm lxxiii. 1-13; Eccles. viii. 14; Jer. xii. 1-4.) And there is no way of reconciling these apparent contradictions except by supposing that in another yet unknown state, vice would receive its due meed of punishment, and righteousness its reward; for, either the idea is erroneous of our living under a moral government at all, or that moral government must have another scene of display, where its impartiality shall be vindicated, and every discrepancy removed. So that it is a truth forced on our attention by what is passing in the world, that men shall be reckoned with in another state for their actions, and receive distributions of happiness or misery proportioned accurately to the things done on the earth. There is no alternative, if we hold not the truth of a judgment to come, but the holding that this creation is not under a moral government.

2. *It is argued from the positive statements of Holy Scripture.* It was a subject of Old Testament revelation. (Jude 14, 15; Eccles. xii. 13, 14.) But in the New Testament it is revealed in clearer and fuller lustre. (See, amongst other passages, Matt. xxv. 31-46; Acts xvii. 31, 32, xxiv. 25; Rom. xiv. 12; 2 Cor. v. 10; Heb. ix. 27; Rev. xx. 11-15.)

II.—For what purpose may we suppose the judgment to be appointed?

The day of judgment is not to make God Himself better acquainted with the character of men, but to make both men and

angels better acquainted with the character of God. Not to add to God's knowledge, for that is infinite, but to add to the knowledge of His creatures. The day of judgment, indeed, is another grand dispensation, when there will be a further display of the glory and character of God. The character of God has already been displayed in creation and redemption, and partly in providence; but it will then be displayed in the development of His government. In this world the moral government of God is the most obscure of any of His dispensations; but at the day of judgment His moral government will be so openly manifested that the justice, the faithfulness, the holiness, and goodness of God will be gloriously displayed in the presence of an assembled universe, to the confusion of the wicked and the admiration and joy of the righteous.¹ Thus viewed, although some would think it a process almost superfluous, considered with regard to men alone, it may, and doubtless will, have a most important influence upon the interests of God's moral empire in general.

III.—Will the one judgment include all the race?

By some of the leaders of modern Millenarianism it is supposed that the judgment, properly so called, will be confined to the wicked. But nothing, surely, can be more contrary than this to the plainest and most explicit intimations of holy writ. (See especially Matt. xxv. 31-46; 2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Thess. i. 7-10; Rev. xx. 11, 12, 15.) It is impossible to explain these passages on any other supposition than that the righteous and the wicked will be judged together, and both at the coming of Christ. "When His people are crowned, He would not have one of their enemies absent; and when the ungodly are doomed, He would not have one of the righteous absent."

IV.—Who is to be the Judge?

The throne of judgment is to be occupied by the Lord Jesus. (Matt. xxv. 31, 32; John v. 22, 27; Acts x. 42, xvii. 31; Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Thess. i. 7, 10; 2 Tim. iv. 1; Rev. i. 7.) From these passages we perceive that it is in His capacity as *Mediator* that all judgment is committed to the Son. Observe the combined wisdom and mercy of the appointment. *He is God*, and therefore must know every particular of character, every action, every motive, every thought, every word, so that there cannot rest any suspicion on any of His decisions. He cannot be imposed upon by any show of piety; He cannot overlook it when real. But then, *He is also "the Son of man,"* He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; and therefore will He put Himself in the position of those who are brought to His bar. He will know exactly what they have had to contend with, and will be able to adjust each sentence to the opportunities and capacities of the being on whom

¹ Dr. W. Cooke's "Explanation of Scripture Difficulties."

It is passed. It is one of the most beautiful of the arrangements of redemption, that the offices of Redeemer and Judge meet in the same person, and that person Divine. It secures towards us tenderness as well as equity; the sympathy of a friend, as well as the disinterestedness of a righteous arbiter.

V.—In what sense are we to understand the promise that the saints shall judge the world?

See Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 29, 30; 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. Expositors are not agreed as to the nature of the promise, or the time of its fulfilment; but it is generally understood to refer to the day of judgment, and to imply that "the saints, after being judged themselves, shall be assessors with Christ in the judgment wherein He shall condemn all the wicked, as well angels as men."¹

VI.—What will be the attendant circumstances of the general judgment?

They will combine every element of greatness, beauty, and terror, which will be worthy the unparalleled occasion. The Judge "shall come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64; Rev. i. 7); the flaming fire, unfolded in the cloudy darkness, and flashing forth as the emblem of the purity, and the power, and the consuming jealousy of the Holy One and the Just; "and all His holy angels with Him" (Matt. xxv. 31; 2 Thess. i. 7); forsaking their sublime occupations, and descending from their lofty seats, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands shall encircle His throne and swell His triumphs. "The trumpet shall sound" (Matt. xxiv. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thess. iv. 16); it is the voice of the Judge calling for the sleeping dead—calling with a voice which is instantly heard, understood, and obeyed; for they that are in the graves come forth. Then shall ensue the conflagration of the globe (2 Peter iii. 7, 10-12); forsaken of its inhabitants, all its stores of fire shall be unmasked, every mountain shall be a Sinai, and the flame universal; yet who shall heed the sight? for the great assize will have begun. The books will be opened (Rev. xx. 12); first, the book of remembrance; for an exact account is kept of the life of every individual, so that when he is arraigned, all the particulars of his conduct will be produced, and made to determine the tenor of his sentence; secondly, the books of the law and the Gospel, which contain the rule whereby all are to be judged; and lastly, "another book is opened, which is the book of life," in which are registered the names of all those happy persons who, according to the arrangements of Divine mercy, are entitled to the privileges of a citizenship in heaven. And now the judgment will proceed; actions, words, thoughts, even "every idle word" and "every secret thing" (Matt. xii. 36; Eccles. xii. 14), all entering into the decisions of that

¹ Wesley's Notes.

day. How long the judgment will occupy, and where it will be held, and how it will be conducted, are questions which no one can answer. But the results by which it will be followed are clearly revealed. A public and visible separation will be made between the two classes that are gathered before the throne (Matt. xxv. 32, 33); and the whole will be closed in the solemn, final, immutable settlement of the destinies of all who, from the beginning to the end of time, shall have lived upon the earth.

VII.—What are the principles on which the judgment will be conducted?

The unvarying statement is, that men shall be judged "according to their works" (Rev. xx. 12, ii. 23, xxii. 12). If men have believed in Christ—and this is the only appointed method of salvation—the sincerity of their faith will be proved by their works; for "faith worketh by love," and love will prompt to all those acts of holy obedience which are enjoined in the Bible. And if they have not believed with the heart unto righteousness, their want of faith will be evidenced by their works of disobedience to the great law of their being. "Their works" will, therefore, constitute the great subjects of inquest; and the formula of final sentence will run thus: "Inasmuch as ye *did* it; and inasmuch as ye *did it not*." But, in guiding the decision of the last day by "works" alone, the business will be so conducted as to produce in every mind a full conviction of the consummate rectitude of the Divine government (Gen. xviii. 25; Acts xvii. 31). Every man shall be dealt with in conformity with that rule, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required" (Luke xii. 48). The heathen shall have *his* standard of trial, and the Christian *his* (Rom. ii. 12-16);¹ while among all those who have been privileged with the Gospel, exact reckoning will be made of the talents of each, and the opportunities and privileges of each (Matt. xxv. 14-30); and the measure of punishment accurately adjusted to every measure of guilt (Luke xii. 47, 48; Matt. xi. 20-24). Actions will be estimated by their motives and by their intrinsic worth—not by their pomp and their showiness; and the cup of cold water, the prison visit, and the pious wish shall not lose their reward (Matt. x. 42, xxv. 35, 36).

VIII.—When it is said that in the judgment day cognisance will be taken of every act, are we to anticipate an exposure of all those sins which have been repented of and forgiven?

¹ "That sentence, 'He that believeth not shall be damned,' is spoken of them to whom the Gospel is preached. Others it does not concern; and we are not required to determine anything touching their final state. How it will please God, the Judge of all, to deal with *them*, we may leave to God Himself. But this we know, that He is not the God of the Christians only, but the God of the heathens also; that He is rich in mercy to all that call upon Him according to the light they have; and that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him."—*Wesley's Sermons*, xci.; see also Sermon cxxv. Also Revised Version Mark xvi. 16.

There are two classes of passages, between which, at first sight, there appears some discrepancy. The first class teaches that *nothing* will be overlooked—every work, with every secret thing, whether good or evil, will be brought into the open court (Eccles. xii. 14; Matt. x. 26). The language of other passages represents Divine forgiveness as so complete that the sin is “blotted out,” not to be mentioned, not remembered, cast into the depths of the sea (Isa. xliii. 25, xlv. 22; Jer. xxxi. 34; Ezek. xviii. 22; Micah vii. 18, 19). It becomes us not to dogmatise on a point like this; but we incline to the notion that the blotting out of the sins of the pardoned, their not being remembered, etc., are merely to be regarded as strong expressions to signify the abundant pardon granted to penitent faith. Their sins shall not be mentioned or even remembered *against them* for ever. At the same time, it is certain that the saints in their holiest transports are not ashamed to refer to the sins which are washed away (Rev. i. 5, 6); and it may be that the universal exposure of all past sin at the judgment day may promote the glory of God, by magnifying the riches of His grace in the forgiveness of it—and the glory of Christ, by showing forth the infinite efficacy of the blood which cleanseth—and the glory of the Spirit, by illustrating the power of His saving grace. And certain it is that, if an increasing revenue of praise is brought to the Triune God, there is not a redeemed spirit that will shrink from the disclosure of the very worst acts of his former life; rather, will not each one give utterance to more rapturous adoration and thanksgiving for the great salvation, which sets him down among the living in the new Jerusalem, after all that he has done?

IX. What will be the results of the great assize?

1. *There will be the division of the whole family of man into two classes*—the good and the bad. (Matt. xxv. 32, 33.) No other orders of men will be seen or recognised there. All earthly distinctions of rank, honour, attainment, and privilege, will have passed away. “They that have done good, and they that have done evil,” will be the sole remaining distinction; and with one or the other of these classes each individual shall find a place. What separations will then take place—pastors from people, teachers from scholars, husbands from wives, parents from children, friends from friends—each assigned a place far from the other; and the separation will be irreversible, and known by those who undergo it to be irreversible. It will be the scene and the season of everlasting separation.

2. *Immediately consequent on this separation will be the final award* (Matt. xxv. 34-46). “Then,”—when the universe is assembled, and all are intensely bending to hear, “then shall the King say to them on His right hand, *Come*”—a word which will collect around Him all the loyal and the sanctified in the creation—“*Come, ye blessed of My Father.*” How comprehensive the title!

reaching through eternity; causing everything in the universe to cast a benignant aspect upon them; appointing them heirs of blessedness. "Come, inherit the kingdom." *A kingdom* is yours—freedom and dominion not to be questioned, royalty shared with the King of kings. A kingdom *prepared*, adapted in all its arrangements to your renewed natures; a state in which your lofty aspirations and desires have been amply and expressly provided for. "Prepared for you," in the covenant of redeeming love, "before the foundation of the world." Oh, what a welcome this! What ravishing accents to those addressed! Then will they rise and rise, until, in one long and triumphant procession, they enter on their inheritance; and then, in immaculate holiness, in supreme honour, and in ecstatic bliss, they begin their immortality.

"Then shall He say to them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared," not for you, except as the result of your own sin, but for others with whom you have chosen to mingle, even "the devil and his angels." It is a sentence in which are gathered up, and compressed into one, all the curses of God, requiring an eternity to comprehend and exhaust them. Now shall the wicked pass away, driven by angel spirits, the ministers of the great King (Matt. xxii. 13), to the prison-house of devils, where the remembrance of the past, the consciousness of the present, and the anticipation of the future, all combine to infix an incessant agony of woe.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENTS.

I.—What are the views on this subject which have been held in opposition to the general opinions of the Church?

1. *The annihilation theory*, one of whose most influential and learned advocates was Archbishop Whately. It is argued that immortality was not one of the original attributes of human nature, but is secured for us through the atonement of Christ. All, therefore, who fail to accept the blessings of that atonement finally perish in annihilation. And to support this view, the Scripture terms "to perish," "to be destroyed," "to die," when applied to the future state of the wicked, are interpreted as meaning the total extinction of being. It may suffice to reply, that if there are some texts in which certain words are used, which, *taken by themselves*, are capable of such a meaning, there are others, many others, in which both the future existence and the eternal punishment of the wicked are most plainly declared. And while the death, loss, destruction, and perishing of the soul are quite susceptible of a meaning in harmony with eternal existence and suffering, the latter cannot possibly be made to bear a meaning in harmony with the future annihilation of being. Let any one carefully note the passages that will be adduced in the course of this chapter, and he will find this statement abundantly verified.¹

2. *The restoration theory*, the substance of which is, that "bad men, after enduring punishment in various degrees, according to their respective measures of evil desert, and being corrected and reformed by the punishment, shall all finally be delivered, and brought to the possession of happiness." This view was advocated in the third century by Origen, and is now held by Socinians, Unitarians, and Universalists, while it is almost universally opposed by those who hold the Divinity of Christ and the atonement by His death—a circumstance which awakens the suspicion that, in some way, it springs from the same inadequate estimate of the evil of sin and of the justice of God, as does the denial of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. In dealing with this theory our one appeal is to

¹ Many object to the term annihilation, who hold the opinions here stated under the term "Conditional Immortality."

the Word of God. "And we require to be on our guard against interpreting its phraseology under any predisposing bias, even should it wear the aspect of both piety and benevolence; seeing that the piety and benevolence alike may be mistaken and false, founded in erroneous and partial conceptions."¹

II.—In what way is it proved from Scripture that future punishment is changeless and eternal?

1. *The terms employed to describe that punishment, when honestly interpreted, can signify nothing short of proper eternity.*

First, we have the word *aionios*, which strictly and properly signifies eternal, ever existent,² and, throughout the New Testament, is applied indiscriminately to the duration of future woe as well as of future blessedness. Thus we have "everlasting fire" (Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 41); "everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv. 46); "everlasting destruction" (2 Thess. i. 9); "eternal damnation" (Mark iii. 29); "eternal fire" (Jude 7); "everlasting life" (Matt. xix. 29; John iii. 16); "eternal life" (Luke x. 25; John iii. 15); "everlasting habitations" (Luke xvi. 9); "eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1); and many other instances.³ Now, surely, it is natural and fair to understand the term, in each occurrence of it, as having the same extent of meaning; and far from fair to take it as meaning strict and proper eternity when applied to heaven, and as meaning only an indefinite period of time when applied to hell. Besides, in one passage (Matt. xxv. 46), there is an evident and pointed antithesis between life and punishment, and of both it is affirmed that they are everlasting, the same Greek word being used in both cases, though improperly varied by our translators.⁴ Ought not this one passage to be enough to decide the point? Who that heard the "Faithful Witness" use one word on both sides of the alternative could hesitate about his meaning by it the same thing?

Secondly, we have the words *eis ton aïōna*, "for ever," applied to future punishment; "the mist of darkness is reserved for ever" (2 Peter ii. 17); "the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13). And that this signifies nothing less than eternal duration is evident from the use of the same term in other places: "Christ abideth for ever" (John xii. 34); "God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5); "His righteousness remaineth for ever" (2 Cor. ix. 9); "shall live for ever" (John vi. 58).

Thirdly, we have the phrase *eis tous aïōnas ton aïōnon*, which is generally translated "for ever and ever," and might, perhaps, be rendered, "through the durations of durations." This form of speech is very intelligible, and may be properly called the super-

¹ Dr. Wardlaw.

² Dr. Wardlaw's "Systematic Theology," vol. iii., p. 730.

³ The Revised Version in all these passages renders "eternal" instead of "everlasting."

⁴ The variation is removed in the Revised Version.

⁵ The words "for ever" are omitted in the Revised Version.

lative. What is "the holy of holies" but the most holy? or "the heaven of heavens," but the highest heaven? And what are "the durations of durations" but that duration which is the greatest of all—that is, proper eternity? "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever" (Rev. xiv. 11, xix. 3); "tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. xx. 10). Nothing can be more evident than that this is used to indicate an unlimited duration; for it is employed: (1) To point out the eternity of the Most High (Rev. iv. 9, 10, x. 6, xv. 7). (2) To indicate the everlasting praise which shall be rendered to Him (Rev. v. 13, vii. 12). (3) To mark the endless duration of His government (Rom. xi. 36). (4) To describe the endless duration of the blessedness of the righteous (Rev. xxii. 5). And it is for Socinians and other objectors to show where the apostles have used this phrase in a sense manifestly limited.

The fact is, the word *aion* is composed of two words, *aei on*, which signify "always being." It denotes strictly and properly the whole duration of that being to which it is applied. When used concerning present things—such as the hills or mountains (Hab. iii. 6), an age (Eph. iii. 21), the life of man (1 Cor. viii. 13), etc., it comprehends the whole of their present existence; and when used concerning future things, it comprehends the whole of their future existence. On this subject our best lexicographers are agreed, and in accordance with this view the words are uniformly used in the Scriptures.¹

2. According to the uniform tenor of Scripture, the present life is the time of probation, and the only opportunity for seeking a meetness for heaven. Let the following passages be pondered:—Prov. i. 24-28; Luke xiii. 24-29; Isa. lv. 6; Eccles. ix. 10; Matt. xxv. 10-12; Rev. xxii. 11. No hint is anywhere to be found that the accepted time, and the day of salvation, shall extend beyond the present state—not one hint in all the Bible of any offer of grace beyond the limits of the present state.

3. In the current language of Scripture, the states of men beyond death are represented as final, and no intimation is ever held out of any subsequent change. Job xxxvi. 18; Prov. xxix. 1; Eccles. ix. 10; John iii. 36; Matt. xxvi. 24; Mark iii. 29; Luke xvi. 26.

4. The descriptions which are given of the punishment of the wicked are altogether inconsistent with their final restoration to virtue and happiness. It is described (1) as a burning (Matt. iii. 12, xiii. 30; Heb. vi. 8); (2) as destruction (Matt. vii. 13; Rom. ix. 22; 2 Thess. i. 9); (3) as perdition (John xvii. 12); (4) as the loss of the soul (Matt. xvi. 26); (5) as death (Rom. i. 32, vi. 23) (James i. 15, v. 20). Take what view we will of these representations of the nature and design of future punishment, it is impossible to reconcile them with a final restoration to glory; because to be burned in hell is not to be blessed in heaven; destruction is not

¹ Hare's "Preservative;" and Dr. A. Clarke's Note on Matt. xxv. 31, and Gen. xxi. 33.

restoration; perdition is not salvation; the loss of the soul is not its recovery; and death is not everlasting life.

5. *Nor must it be forgotten that the state of future punishment is a state of constant and perpetual sin* (Mark iii. 29, Revised Version); *and the constant recurrence of sin must, of necessity, from the principles of the Divine government, be connected with the constant recurrence of punishment.* All the springs of holy influence are dried up; every agency for conversion is gone; "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin;" all the elements of evil are collected and combined to intensify the enmity of the lost spirit towards God and His eternal Son. And hence "the punished sinner of this life becomes progressively, unceasingly, the everlasting sinner of the life that succeeds it. In this way of conceiving them, the *punishments* of hell are but the perpetual vengeance that accompanies the *sins* of hell. An eternity of wickedness brings with it an eternity of woe. The sinner is to suffer for everlasting, but it is because the sin itself is as everlasting as the suffering. This is so far from requiring proof, that proof would really be required to establish the contrary. They who start at the disproportions of an eternal punishment to a temporary sin, cannot deny the proportion when the sin and the punishment are alike eternal—when the surrender of the soul to the moral evil it has chosen (a principle universally recognised in Scripture) is made the direct punishment of its earthly choice, and all else follows in the way of exact and proportioned penalty."¹

III.—What are the leading objections which have been urged against this doctrine?

1. *There are certain texts which are alleged to assert the future restoration of all rational creatures to holiness and happiness.* Let us examine them:—

Rom. v. 20, 21.—"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,"—a beautiful passage, showing that the grace of the Gospel was designed to be as extensive and complete as the guilt and contamination of sin. But this design can only be secured "through righteousness;" that is, as stated in the 17th verse, by those who "receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness." And what does this prove concerning those who "receive the grace of God in vain," and who have "not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God"?

Rom. viii. 21.—"The creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." This is the "hope" of *ee ktisis*, "the creature." And it should undoubtedly be connected with the preceding verses, thus: "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God (for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the

¹ Rev. W. Archer Butler, Professor of Moral Philosophy, Dublin.

same), in hope *that (hoti)* the creature itself also shall be delivered,"¹ etc. What a strained interpretation must be put upon these words "before the bondage of corruption" could be made to signify "the everlasting chains under darkness" in which the lost are held! And how vain to represent the lost as living and "waiting" "in hope" and "earnest expectation" of deliverance, when a voice from heaven announces, "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed," etc. (Luke xvi. 26). The passage does not and cannot refer to them, otherwise there can be no truth in these words, "They shall not see life, but the wrath of God *abideth* on them" (John iii. 36).

1 Cor. xv. 22.—"For as in Adam all die, even so also in Christ shall all be made alive." Strange that such a passage can be imported into this controversy, when the most cursory glance of the context shows that the exclusive reference is to the resurrection at the last day, when "all shall be made alive," "some to everlasting life, and some to shame and *everlasting contempt*" (Dan. xii. 2).

1 Tim. iv. 10.—"Who is the Saviour of all men, specially those that believe." How can He be "the Saviour of all men," it is asked, unless He delivers all from the torments of hell? In a very important sense He is "the Saviour of all men." He has provided salvation for all, and He has actually saved all from that "judgment which came upon all men" through "the offence" of Adam; so that none are finally lost as the result of Adam's sin. But He is the Saviour "specially of those that believe;" *i.e.*, who have reached moral accountability, and have then personally sinned, for "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," while "he that believeth not shall be damned."

1 Tim. ii. iv.—"Who will have all men to be saved." The meaning of the Greek word *thelei* is that God *wills*, desires the salvation of all. It is the same glorious truth that is announced in Ezek. xxxiii. 11; 2 Peter iii. 9; but there is nothing here to warrant the notion that they who "will not come to Him that they might have life" shall be rescued from the "everlasting punishment" to which the great Judge will doom them.

These are the principal passages that have been adduced in support of the restoration theory. And one is amazed at the theological trifling which could seek to screw such a theory out of such texts as these.

2. It is alleged that the future punishment of the wicked is intended for their correction, and that they will ultimately be subdued by it to allegiance and loyalty, and thus be prepared for the happiness of heaven. This is one of the strongholds of the universal restorationists, but it is altogether destitute of proof. Many of the afflictions of *this* life are the chastisements of parental love, intended for the amendment of those that are exercised thereby (Heb. xii. 6-11; Prov. iii. 11, 12); and hence "happy is the man whom God

¹ See Beet on Rom. viii. 18-27.

correcteth" (Job v. 17; Psalm xciv. 12, 13). But we look in vain for a single text to prove that correction is the end of those judicial punishments which are inflicted on the incorrigible; and equally in vain for a text that pronounces the man "happy" upon whom God poureth forth "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." Besides, how inconsistent with the whole system of the Gospel to trace the salvation of man to any other cause than the atonement and mediation of Christ! Those who are reformed by their punitive sufferings would pass into another state, acknowledging no debt of obligation to the precious blood of Christ. It is the purgatorial fire to which they owe their happy change, and no song would ever escape their lips in adoring gratitude to the Lamb that was slain. To such fearful issues are we driven by overlooking the distinction between the wholesome chastisement of a Father and the judicial punishment of a righteous Judge. God is not a governor who merely gives rules of conduct to His subjects, and chastises the transgressors for their amendment; but who maintains His authority by declaring Himself that "one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy" (James iv. 12). The penalties by which His laws are enforced are capital punishments, which will be so inflicted upon the finally impenitent as to make it manifest that "He that made them will not have mercy on them, and He that formed them will show them no favour" (Isa. xxvii. 11).

3. *It is alleged that there is no proportion between the duration of the sin committed and the duration of punishment inflicted; and that it would be most unjust in God to visit with endless infliction crimes committed in time so limited.* This objection is based on the assumption that the demerit of sin is to be estimated by the time occupied in the perpetration of it. Was such a principle ever recognised in our criminal courts? Is it deemed unjust to inflict a seven years' punishment on one who has robbed his neighbour in seven minutes? or to cut off *for ever* from human society one who *in a moment* has stabbed his neighbour to the heart? The turpitude and desert of sin are to be calculated on far higher grounds—on the dignity and authority of the Lawgiver—the reasonableness, justice, and goodness of His laws—the adaptation of those laws to the prosperity and happiness of the subjects—the extent of the obligation to be obedient—the nature and effects of the crime committed—the degree of dishonour and injury done to the Lawgiver—and the consequences, near or remote, of a breach of social order. Now, are we, with our very limited powers and narrow views, competent to enter upon a calculation of such vast extent? Should we be, even supposing we were innocent and pure? Still further can we ever be, whatever our powers, seeing that we are parties in the cause, deeply interested, and necessarily partial and biased in our views? Is a guilty party in a human court ever suffered to be his own judge and jury, and to fix the measure of his own desert? And, surely, nothing can be more presumptuous than for finite, guilty men to pronounce on what it is right and just for the great

God to do, and that in regard to the punishment of their own sins committed against Himself. No one in existence, save that infinite Being Himself, is capable of forming anything like a fully adequate conception of sins exceeding sinfulness, or of its penal desert. His word declares that "*it is a righteous thing* with God to recompense tribulation" to sinners, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven for the purpose of "taking vengeance on them." And if He sentence them to be "punished with everlasting destruction from His presence" (2 Thess. i. 6-9), who are we that we should withstand God? Rather let us bow in humble submission, saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments" (Rev. xvi. 7).

4. *It is alleged to be inconsistent with the infinite benevolence of God to subject His creatures, for any degree of guilt, to unending punishment.* "The question is, in what sense do we speak of God as the possessor of such an attribute? If it be meant to imply that benevolence is the absolute and permanent rule of moral government, unregulated in its exercise by any law of rectitude, not qualified by any considerations of truth or wisdom, but overruling the whole constitution and course of nature so as to bestow happiness, we have a right to ask, where have we the proof of such benevolence as the rule of Divine actings? Where find we any trace of this exclusively benevolent God? The depth, heaving with volcanic fires, says, 'It is not in me.' The sea, mingling its roar with the cries of the drowning, says, 'It is not in me.' 'Not in me,' says history, as she shows on her every page some record of misery and triumphant wrong. 'And not in me,' says Revelation, who knows of no God but one—one of whom it is said, 'All His ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He' (Deut. xxxii. 4). No; we know nothing of the goodness of God except it is exhibited in harmony with His other attributes—guided and controlled by the conditions of infinite righteousness. We dare not set God against Himself, or attribute against attribute. We claim for Him infinite benevolence, as much as our objectors do; but it is in a higher and worthier sense, namely, as the benevolence of eternal rectitude, as the benevolence which, while it has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and delighteth in mercy, 'will by no means clear the guilty'—a benevolence which, instead of making for itself a throne on the ruin of other perfections, combines with and magnifies them all. 'Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.'"

5. *It is alleged that if future punishment be not remedial, no end can be answered by its continued infliction.* Is any mortal man in a position to pronounce on such a question? Surely the subject is one far beyond our reach, quite out of our province. For aught we know, the existence of eternal misery may hereafter be shown to be essential to a perfect government, and necessary to the highest ends of purity, and righteousness, and truth. It may be that the entire universe of rational beings, over which the govern-

ment of God extends, is interested in, and benefited by, the eternal perdition of ungodly men. But this is one of those "matters" of which God has given no "account" to His creatures on earth; and it is most unseemly and inconsistent with our character and condition to attempt, with our limited knowledge and capacity, to pry into the secret.

Thus we see that the clear statements of the Word of God are not in any way shaken by the theories and objections of men. The doctrine of eternal punishment stands firm in the overwhelming terrors of its truth. While the glories of heaven are changeless and interminable, so are the miseries of hell. He who sinks into Tophet rises not for ever. His groans are for ever; his curses are for ever; his blasphemies are for ever. All for ever—emphatically and purely for ever!

IV.—Does the eternal duration of future punishment imply in every instance equality of degree?

This has sometimes been assumed, and then urged as an objection to the doctrine. But, it is very plain, that sufferings may be at once infinite in duration, and various as to degree. And that there will be great diversity in the degree of penalty in the bottomless pit is most clearly taught. (See Matt. xi. 20-24; Luke xii. 47, 48; Rom. ii. 11, 12.) We know not in what manner this variety will be produced, but we may rest assured, that all will be regulated by a principle of unimpeachable equity. This, however, we must never forget: that the lightest of punishments that shall come upon the lost will be sufficiently severe to produce "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." Even the "few stripes" that will be inflicted on the least guilty of them "that did commit things worthy of stripes," will prove that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The subject of this chapter has (recently) evoked much discussion. The Rev. Samuel Cox, in "Salvator Mundi; or, Is Christ the Saviour of all Men?" the Rev. Andrew Jukes, in "The Second Death and the Restitution of all Things," and others, advocate the doctrine of Universal Restoration. The Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, in "The Doctrine of Annihilation in the Light of the Gospel of Love," the Rev. Edward White, in "Life in Christ; or, Immortality Peculiar to the Regenerate," hold what is termed conditional immortality. The Rev. F. D. Maurice taught that we know nothing as to the duration of future punishment, and that *æon* does not mean endless, but age-long, and that the English equivalent, *eternal*, does not mean everlasting; but he denies that he is a Universalist. The Rev. Canon Farrar, in his sermons on "Eternal Hope," expresses his belief that "God's mercy may extend beyond the grave, that 'the ways of God's salvation do not necessarily terminate with earthly life.'" He, however, holds "the possibility of even *endless misery*

for those who abide in the determined impenitence of final and wilful sin." Dorner and Martensen believe the period between death and the resurrection to be a period of probation for those who did not embrace the Gospel in this life, particularly those who were incapable of embracing it, such as the heathen.

On the other side of the question we may mention "Everlasting Punishment," lectures by Dean Goulburn. "The Scripture Doctrine concerning the Duration of Eternal Punishment," by Matthew Horbery, B.D., with Preface by Dr. Osborn. "An Examination of the Doctrines of Conditional Immortality and Universalism," by the Rev. J. R. Gregory. "For Ever: an Essay on Eternal Punishment," by the Rev. M. Randles, third edition. "The Future Life: a Defence of the Orthodox View," by the most eminent American scholars, second edition. The last three works cover all the ground of the discussion, and very ably defend the views maintained in this chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

I.—What are the leading theories that have been advocated with regard to the Sabbath?

1. That the Sabbath was not instituted at the creation, but was first ordained during the sojourning of the Jews in the wilderness (Exod. xvi. 22-30); and that when Moses connected the Sabbath with his account of creation in Gen. ii. he spoke *proleptically*, or by anticipation, not designing to assert that God *then* blessed and sanctified the seventh day, but that when, 2,500 years afterwards, He appointed a Sabbath, it was for the reason there given, that "God rested on the seventh day from all His work." The inference from this theory is, that the Sabbath is purely a Jewish institution, and is continued under the Christian dispensation for the sake of the beneficial purposes which the public and regular observance of it promotes, rather than from any direct and positive declaration of the will of God. This view was advocated by some of the ancient Fathers, and in modern times by Dr. Paley, in his "Moral and Political Philosophy." And it is probable that this work has done more in fostering lax notions concerning the Sabbath than any other work that has issued from the press.

2. A second theory has prevailed to a considerable extent among the Lutheran and Reformed Churches on the Continent, and is in substance adopted by the Society of Friends; viz., that the Sabbath was given to the Jews as a figure of that spiritual rest which was to be enjoyed by the faithful under the Gospel; that, with the other types and shadows, it was abolished by the coming of Christ, so that there is now no peculiar sanctity of one day above another, and no *Divine* authority for the observance of a Sabbath. Yet, on account of its necessity and utility, its use has been retained, and the first day of the week set apart by *civil* and *ecclesiastical* authority.¹

3. A very popular theory of the present day, and which differs little from the above, has found some warm and learned advocates in high places. It is thus expressed by Robertson, of Brighton: "I am certain that the Sabbath is not a perpetual obligation; that

¹ Rev. J. W. Thomas on "The Lord's Day."

it was Jewish, and that it passed away with Christianity, which made all days and places holy. Nevertheless, I am more and more sure, by experience, that the reason for the observance of the Sabbath lies deep in the everlasting necessities of human nature, and that, as long as man is man, the blessedness of keeping it, not as a day of rest only, but as a day of spiritual rest, will never be annulled."

4. A fourth theory, which is by far the most daring, is the offspring of German Rationalism, and has been advocated by Rev. Baden Powell, M.A., late Savilian Professor of Geometry in the University of Oxford: that the account of the six days' work with the seventh day's rest is not to be regarded as an historical narrative, but as a poetical fancy; that the precepts of the Decalogue were addressed only to the Jews, and were never designed for Christians; that under the Gospel one day is not more holy than another; and that the introduction of the Sabbath is a corruption of Christianity, inconsistent with the spiritual service which it requires.

These various theories are all designed to denude the Sabbath of its high authority as a positive and permanent institution of the living God. And if the day be not "sanctified" by God Himself, it is vain to talk of "the everlasting necessities of human nature," or of "civil and ecclesiastical authority," or of "beneficial purposes;" it will soon cease to exert any influence on the hearts and consciences of men, and will be hailed merely as a day of recreation and amusement.

II.—How is it proved that the Sabbath is an original institution, coeval with the existence of man, and not a mere festival of the Jewish Church?

1. *By the plain meaning of the words in Gen. ii. 1-3.* The statement that the Mosaic account of creation is merely a poetical fancy, "the adaptation of a poetical cosmogony already familiar to the Israelites," is perfectly gratuitous. The language is that of history—a plain and unvarnished record of facts. And what the historian relates about the seventh day, he relates as *done at the time*, with the very same simplicity with which he relates the associated transactions of creation as done at the time. There is nothing whatever indicative of its being a mere allusion to something that took place at a future age; and the idea could never have been entertained, except for the purpose of supporting a preconceived theory.

2. *By the nature of the thing, which is all in favour of the simplest interpretation.* If, as is admitted, the Sabbath was a commemoration of God's work of creation, why should not the commemoration commence from the time the work to be commemorated was completed? Was it not so with all other commemorative institutions—such as the Passover, the Lord's Supper, etc.? and why not thus with the Sabbath?

3. *By the division of time into weeks.* This division existed amongst the Patriarchs, as we learn from Gen. viii. 10, 12, and Gen.

xxix. 27,¹ and among all nations, from the earliest periods to which history and tradition reach. However remote from each other in local situation, and however dissimilar in national manners, customs, and institutions, an extraordinary concurrence is discovered in the use of this arbitrary method of dividing time. "The division of the year into months is very old, and almost universal; but the period of seven days is by far the most permanent division of time. It was used by the Brahmins in India with the same denomination employed by us, and was alike found in the calendars of the Jews, Egyptians, Arabs, and Assyrians;² it has survived the fall of empires, and has existed among all successive generations."³ And not only have all the nations of the East made use of a week consisting of seven days, but the same custom prevailed amongst the ancient Romans, Gauls, Britons, Germans, the nations of the North, and of America. As far, in short, as any information is preserved to us of times and nations so remote, it authorises the conclusion that all mankind, as if by common consent, adopted from the first the hebdomadal division of time. Now, such a concurrence in the apprehensions and usages of mankind on the subject can never be resolved into mere accident. Nor are there, as in the other principal modes of computing time, astronomical phenomena to suggest the weekly notation.⁴ Neither can it arise from any arithmetical reason; for all nations compute other things by tens, not by sevens. We are therefore shut up to the conclusion that it originated in some positive appointment, or some tradition anterior to the dispersion of mankind, which cannot well be any other than the memory of the creation and primeval blessing of the seventh day. Noah and his family would bring the knowledge of it over the Flood, and from them it descended to their posterity, who, in their dispersions, carried it with them into all parts of the world. This is the key to the otherwise inexplicable enigma.

4. *By the traces of the Sabbath, which are found to have existed among the pagan nations of antiquity.* We do not mean to assert that it was recognised by all, or properly observed by any. But that any remains of the Sabbatic institution, or traces of its existence, should be found in the midst of that moral and spiritual degeneracy, may justly be regarded as a striking testimony to the truth of that primitive religion, of which the sanctification of the seventh day was

¹ "Fulfil her week." The week here mentioned is that of the marriage feast and did not relate to the years which Jacob afterwards served.—Scott *in loco*. For confirmation of this view, see the account of the marriage of Samson, Judges xiv. 12, 17, 18.

² Mr. George Smith found among the Assyrian tablets a calendar which divided the months into weeks, the seventh days being marked as days in which no work was to be done.

³ Mrs. Somerville's "Connection of the Physical Sciences."

⁴ It has been asserted that "the week is a most natural and nearly an exact quadripartition of the month, so that the quarters of the moon may have suggested it." But the fact is that a lunar month is really (say) twenty-nine and a half days, and seven is no natural division; ten would be the nearest, and as other calculations are made by tens, it would doubtless have been adopted but for some special reason; such reason, we contend, is the primeval Sabbath.

an important part. It is evident that some of the traces, to which we refer, could not have been derived from the writings of Moses, but must have descended from a more ancient and primitive source. Thus Linus, who is mentioned by Eusebius as among the poets that flourished before the time of Moses, speaks of the seventh day as observed among pious persons; and Homer, who lived nearly a thousand years before the Christian era; Hesiod whom some suppose to have been contemporary with Homer; Callimachus who flourished about B.C. 230; and many others, make direct and pointed reference to the seventh as a sacred day. Now, we say of this, as of the former subject, such a concurrence of sentiment could not have been the effect of chance. These traditions all point to a common source, and can only be accounted for by the existence of some ancient law or custom in the family of Noah, recognising the sanctity of the seventh day before the separation and dispersion of mankind.¹

5. *By the very terms in which the Sabbath is introduced in Exodus xvi.*, where we find the first mention of the Sabbath in the history of Israel. Have we here anything of the style of legislative enactment, or the first introduction of an unknown ordinance? The people are commanded to gather a double portion of manna on the sixth day, but no reason is assigned (see verse 5); an omission that is perfectly unaccountable on the supposition of no Sabbatical rest having previously existed, but perfectly natural on the contrary supposition. And when the rulers of the people reported to Moses the fact of this double gathering, he alleges the sanctity of the Sabbath as accounting for the extraordinary supply, and as the reason for preparing a double portion on the sixth day (verses 22, 23); but there is no hint that the Sabbath was a new and unknown institution; he simply alludes to it as an existing institution, with which they were already acquainted. Had it been new, it would have been enjoined in a positive and particular manner, and the nature of it laid open and explained, otherwise the term would have conveyed no meaning.

6. *By the terms in which the reason of the ordinance is assigned in Exodus xx. 11.* "Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and set it apart;" that is the true import of the words 'hallowed it.' These words express a past time. It is not said, therefore the Lord now blesses the seventh day, and sets it apart, but therefore He *did* bless it, and set it apart in time past; and He now requires that you, His chosen people, should be observant of that ancient institution."

7. *By the terms of the fourth commandment (Exod. xx. 8-11).* "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." The expression obviously implies the pre-existence of the institution, and their previous knowledge of it. And if it existed before their time, when was it instituted, unless at the period of creation? If not then, there is no formal institution of it anywhere to be found.

¹ "The Lord's Day," Rev. J. W. Thomas, chap. vi.

* Bishop Horsley.

III.—What are the principal objections to this view of the primeval origin of the Sabbath?

1. *It is objected that if the Sabbath had been instituted at the time of the creation, we should have had some notice of it in the inspired account of the antediluvian and the patriarchal ages.* But no conclusion can be drawn from a consideration so purely negative. Excepting Jacob's supplication at Bethel, scarcely a single allusion to *prayer* is to be found in all the Pentateuch, yet who can doubt that prayer formed part of the daily exercises of every saint? No particular instance of *circumcision* is recorded from the time that the Israelites settled in Caanan till the birth of Christ; but can we suppose that it was neglected? No express mention of the Sabbath occurs in the Books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the First and Second of Samuel, or the First of Kings; but no one questions that it was regularly observed all the time included in these histories. And why should we marvel if the mention of the Sabbath is omitted in the very brief and compendious history of the Patriarchs, even though it may have been devoutly observed by them all?

2. *It is objected that the expression of Moses, "The Lord hath given you the Sabbath" (Exod. xvi. 29), proves it to have been first instituted in the wilderness.* But that this kind of phraseology proves nothing against the antiquity of any precept is most obvious. Our Lord said to the Jews, "Moses gave unto you circumcision;" but that this did not mean *original institution* He at once asserts, "not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers," etc. (John vii. 22). And God is said to have *given* His statutes and judgments, as well as His Sabbaths, in the wilderness (Ezek. xx. 10-12). But is it to be inferred from this that there were no Divine laws "given" to men prior to the time of the exodus? Previously existing institutes and laws may be represented as "given" to a particular people, when, in a systematic and embodied form, they are delivered from heaven to that people.

3. *It is objected that the Sabbath is spoken of as "a sign" between Jehovah and the people of Israel (Exod. xxxi. 13, 16, 17; Ezek. xx. 12, 19, 20), and therefore it must have been peculiar to that people.* But the same thing is true of the whole law, not the ceremonial code merely, but the moral (Deut. vi. 8); and yet no one will say that the precepts of the moral law were exclusively Jewish. The truth is, whatever formed a distinction between the Israelites and other nations was a "sign;" such a sign was the giving of the law and the possession of it, and all the institutions for the promotion of godliness—the Sabbath among the rest. But that this proves nothing against the original institution is plain; for when the Sabbath is spoken of as a sign, the reason assigned for its observance is not at all a reason peculiarly Jewish, but simply the great original reason that God rested on the seventh day (Exod. xxxi. 16, 17).

Thus, none of the objections adduced can be made in the least degree to invalidate the testimony concerning the primeval origin of

the Sabbath. He who questions this original may, with equal justice, question the truth of any of the acts recorded as having been done on the six preceding days.

IV.—By what arguments do we prove that the Sabbath is of universal and perpetual obligation?

1. *By the fact already proved, that it was instituted at the creation.* Dr. Paley himself admits that "if the Divine command was actually delivered at the creation, it was addressed, no doubt, to the whole human species alike; and continues, unless repealed by some subsequent revelation, binding upon all who come to the knowledge of it." The inference is irresistible. And here we take our stand. The Sabbath was appointed at the creation of the world. It is therefore cut off and severed from the ceremonial law of the Jews. To no dispensation does it owe its existence, or authority, or right. It is from the beginning. It is the parent of dispensations. It is the root of religions. And the abrogation of the Jewish law no more releases the worshippers of God from a religious observance of it, than it cancels the injunction of filial piety, or the prohibition of theft and murder.

2. *By the fact that it is incorporated in the moral law.* The code of the Jewish law may be divided into three parts; the Levitical, or what related to the religious ceremonies of that dispensation; the civil, or what referred to national politics and jurisprudence; and the moral, or what related to moral duties. The two former were, in their nature, limited and temporary. But moral duties belonged to the Jews in common with all mankind—they were of universal and perpetual obligation. Now, the law of the Sabbath holds its place among the moral precepts. It is found in the Decalogue, the doctrine of which our Lord sums up in the moral duties of loving God and our neighbour. That law is our law as well as the law of the Jews. Our Lord upheld its authority, announcing it as God's testimony to the end of time (Matt. v. 17, 18); and it is established and confirmed by the Gospel, as the rule of all inward and outward holiness (Rom. iii. 31). It belongs, therefore, to no one age or nation. Wherever there is a moral and responsible being, the moral law, of which the Decalogue is a clear and comprehensive summary, is binding on his conscience, and with it the day of consecrated rest. The position taken by some writers on this subject is, that, whilst all the other commandments belong to essential morality, and are of lasting obligation, the fourth is an exception. "It is not easy to imagine a more incredible paradox than this:—that one commandment, of a merely national scope and temporary obligation, should have been associated, in a summary of moral duty, with nine others of perpetual obligation; that it should have been placed in the very central niche of all the commandments, as on one side directly touching the honour and worship of God, and on the other the rights and well-being of man; that equally with all the other commandments it should have been spoken by the voice of the Most High, and written by the Divine finger on one

of the tables of stone ; and yet that this one 'word' alone of all the ten should be merely ceremonial and temporary, the rest being all of a moral nature and of permanent obligation. Surely, it must be felt as if no arguments could establish such a paradox as this."¹

3. *By the obvious universality of the design for which the Sabbath was instituted.* It was given as a memorial of the creation. And is it not as much the duty of Christians to retain a devout remembrance of the power, and wisdom, and goodness of the great Creator, as it was of Adam, of the family of Abraham, or of the Jewish Church ? It was given as a season of rest ; and human nature stands as much in need of a weekly rest as it ever did. It was instituted as a day of blessing and sanctity. And from what people, or nation, or kindred would God withhold a boon so identified with their spiritual interests ? In fine, the indispensable necessity and important subserviency of this institution to the physical, moral, and religious welfare of mankind, prove that it could have no local or temporary design, but must be intended for every part of the universal family over which our Father in heaven presides.

4. *By the words of our Lord, "The Sabbath was made for man,"* for universal man, without any restriction to age or place. In this respect it is broadly distinguished from any institution of a merely ceremonial kind. Circumcision was for the seed of Abraham alone. The Levitical law was for the Hebrew nation alone. But the Sabbath is for man—for man, whether in innocence or guilt, of Jewish or of Gentile origin. No particular family or nation can monopolise its privileges. They belong to every one who was represented in the person of our Federal Head. Our Lord's own practice was the best comment on His testimony. "It is monstrous to pretend that He who 'was made under the law,' and who came to 'fulfil the law,' and to 'fulfil all righteousness,' even legal righteousness, violated the law of the Sabbath. He observed it most strictly. He vindicated it in its true sense, as it had been from the beginning, and in its benignant purpose. At the same time He added to it a lustre of blessing by His deeds of mercy, and spiritual glory by His Sabbath teachings, such as it had never known before. His miracles in no sense violated the rest of the Sabbath. He did no servile work in performing them; they involved no toil or fatigue; they were not done for wages; they were not what Isaiah denounces as 'doing one's own work,' but they *were* refreshment. So far from being opposed to rest, they were in harmony with it in its deepest and richest sense. They sent healing and refreshment home to the secret springs of body and soul; they filled the spirit with a well-spring of gladness. They brightened the Sabbath with the heavenly glory; they made it indeed a rest and a refreshing. They beautified the Sabbath-day both to the healer and the healed."²

• Dr. J. Rigg, *Sunday Magazine*, 1866.

• *Ibid.*

V.—But are there not certain scriptures which seem plainly to announce the entire abolition of the Sabbath under the Christian dispensation?

Two such scriptures have been urged with much confidence: *Rom. xiv. 5, 6.*—In reference to this text, we observe: (1) The word "alike" is not in the original, and ought not to be inserted, as it is calculated to convey an idea never intended by the Holy Spirit. (2) The Apostle does not mention the word Sabbath in this passage, nor is there any evidence that he is making any allusion to it. But (3) there were many *festive* days among the Jews; and the Apostle was probably referring to these as being no longer obligatory, for the whole Jewish ritual was done away by the fulness of the Gospel dispensation.¹ If, however, the allusion is to the Sabbath, the dispute concerning it, which the Apostle would silence, related, not to the permanent obligation of a day of rest, but to the seventh-day Sabbath of the Jews. "There were, doubtless, Jewish Christians out of Palestine, who, before the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth, learnt, in the spirit of St. Paul, to understand that the glory had passed from the Jewish seventh day, and had settled on the Christian first day; as, on the contrary, there were Gentile converts, and converted Jewish proselytes, who, out of respect for the Jewish law and the letter of the Old Testament, not only celebrated the Lord's day after a Christian sort, but strictly kept the Jewish Sabbath. In regard to all such, the great Apostle of liberty and of tolerance taught, in his large-hearted way, that 'he that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.'"² Whichever view we adopt, the permanence of the Sabbatic institution is not in the least degree affected.

Col. ii. 16, 17.—From this text no less a man than Calvin drew the conclusion that the sanctification of the seventh day is no indispensable duty in the Christian Church. The truth, however, is, that in the apostolic age the first day of the week, though it was observed with great reverence, was not called the Sabbath-day, but the Lord's-day. It was so called that the separation of the Christian Church from the Jewish communion might be marked by the name as well as by the day of their weekly festival: and the name of the "Sabbath-days" was appropriated to the Saturdays and certain days in the Jewish Church which were likewise called Sabbaths in the law, because they were observed with no less sanctity. Of these, St Paul in this passage speaks. The Judaizing heretics were strenuous advocates for the observance of these Jewish festivals in the Christian Church: and St. Paul's admonition to the Colossians is, that they should not be disturbed by the censures of those who reproached them for neglecting these Jewish Sabbaths. The first day of the week was now their holy

¹ Dr. W. Cooke.

² Dr. J. Rigg, *Sunday Magazine*, 1866.

day; but the Sabbaths of the Jewish Church were abolished, nor was the Christian, in the observance of his own day of rest, to conduct himself by the rules of the old pharisaical superstition.*

VI.—Have we sufficient authority for the transference of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week?

Let it be premised that the institution may remain intact, though the day be varied. The essence of Sabbath law is that one day in seven, the seventh day after six days of labour, should be appropriated to sacred uses. Accordingly, we find that, in the original institution, it is stated in general terms that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, which must, undoubtedly, imply the sanctity of every seventh day, at whatever given time the cycle may commence. In the Decalogue it is also mentioned in the same indefinite manner with respect to time, nothing more being expressly required than to observe a day of sacred rest after every six days of toil; the seventh day is to be kept holy, but not a word is said as to what epoch the commencement of the series is to be referred. It is the seventh simply in reference to the six before mentioned. We mention this because some have asserted that if we are bound by the moral law, we must observe the seventh day, reckoning from Saturday as the Sabbath. For this notion we conceive there is no ground whatever. The day may be changed, while all that is essential to the Sabbatic institution is retained, provided the alteration be made on a just occasion, and by competent authority. Now observe,—

1. It could never have been designed that the seventh day, commencing the series from the cessation of creation, should for all time be the Sabbath; because (a) The confusion of tongues, the flood, the bondage in Egypt,—not to speak of the miracle on the recovery of Hezekiah (2 Kings xx. 9-11),—must have so interfered with the exact keeping of time, as to render it absolutely impossible to ascertain with any degree of correctness which was the seventh day of the week from the creation. Our own change of style, and adoption of the Gregorian Calendar in 1751, will help to illustrate this difficulty. (b) It is impossible to keep the same Sabbath day throughout the world, because it is night in some parts while it is day in others. (c) God never commands us to do that which is either morally or physically impossible; but it is physically impossible to keep the Sabbath the same day in all parts of the world; therefore His command is that one-seventh part of our time be set apart as a Sabbath, and not the seventh, or any specific day, counting from a particular commencing point. This is precisely in keeping with the fourth commandment—viz., to keep holy “the Sabbath day”—not the “seventh day.” The command then proceeds to say—work six days, and rest and keep holy the seventh, without any indication when the series commences.

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2. Our Saviour asserts His dominion over the Sabbath. "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark ii. 28). Claiming a rightful jurisdiction over it, He takes it under His protection, and speaks of it with the authority of a legislator who has a right to explain, defend, regulate, or change His own institution. And it seems not unlikely that He spoke thus in anticipation of that change of the day which was afterwards to be effected by His own resurrection, and in commemoration of it.

3. If God appointed the first Sabbath to commemorate the finishing of creation; and if, when the law of the Sabbath was enjoined upon the Jews, an additional reason arising out of their own circumstances supervened upon the former (as see Deut. v. 12-15), is there not presumptive evidence that in accomplishing a work greater than that of creation or of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, He would associate the commemoration of it with that seventh portion of man's time which He peculiarly claims for Himself?

4. In that work of redemption which was completed when our Lord arose from the dead, the character of God was displayed with a lustre which threw the glories of creation and of every other Divine operation into the shade. It was the grand manifestation of God's moral attributes, the grand source of man's eternal blessedness. If, therefore, this should be associated with the Sabbath as a memorial, it must have the chief place. It must take precedence even of creation, and be *first* in man's grateful and reverential commemoration. How, then, shall this priority be marked? how shall the superior importance of redemption be recognised and testified in the celebration? Why, the day shall be changed. Creation had the day before; redemption shall have it now. As from the time of the first promise God was worshipped as Creator and Redeemer, so from the time of the fulfilment of the promise by the finished work of Christ, He shall be worshipped as Redeemer and Creator. Such an arrangement recommends itself to our minds as reasonable and right. It is no more than we might have been prepared to expect.¹

5. Accordingly, although our Lord had kept the seventh-day rest, according to the law, as soon as He had risen from the dead we lose sight of the seventh day as the interval of rest, and find substituted for it the first day, upon which the Master was careful to put special honour. (1) Having risen from the tomb on the first day of the week, He gave a marked preference to that day for regular and repeated visitations to His assembled disciples. (See Luke xxiv. 36; John xx. 19, 26.) And if He meant thereby to encourage them to separate themselves from the ceremonial worship of the Jews, to commemorate His resurrection by a weekly Sabbath, and also to assure them of His presence and blessing while they did so, His conduct was wise, gracious, and intelligible. (2) It was on the

¹ This change of day (1) marked the end of the old and the beginning of the new dispensation. (2) It is a perpetual and world-wide monument of the resurrection of Christ, and a memento of completed redemption. (3) A remembrance to us of our expected resurrection.

first day of the week, the disciples being "with one accord in one place," that the Holy Spirit descended in the plentiful effusions of His grace, and opened the promised kingdom of heaven among men (Acts ii. 1-4). (3) It was on the first day of the week that the Christian Church, under the direction of the Apostles, met together to unite in peaceful worship, to hear the word of God, to partake of the Lord's Supper, and to lay up in store for the assistance of others (Acts xx. 6, 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2). And it is fairly presumable that such a custom, so sanctioned, is equivalent to a Divine precept. (4) It was on the first day of the week that St. John, being in the isle of Patmos, was in the Spirit, and was favoured with a glorious manifestation of his Lord's presence—another appearance of Jesus on the first day of the week—immediately followed by the most sublime discoveries of things in heaven and in earth. (5) And it was the first day of the week which received in that age, and has ever since retained, the distinctive appellation of "the Lord's day" (Rev. i. 10), a name implying all the sacredness of a Sabbath, with the still higher claim of a day consecrated to the memory of redemption. And its being so called by one who, at the time he wrote, was under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost, is sufficient to prove that the day was chosen and hallowed by Him whose royal name it bears.

Now, reviewing all these facts, we say that, though there is not on record any Divine command to change the Sabbath from the day on which it was held by the Jews, there is what is equivalent. There is the fact that our risen Lord again and again selected "the first day of the week" for His solemn visits to the disciples. There is the fact that the first day of the week was crowned by the descent of the Spirit and the formation of the Christian Church. There is the fact that the appointed rulers of the Church of Christ, whose business it was "to set all things in order" which pertained to its worship and moral government, sanctioned the change of the day, and the permanence of the institute. There is the fact that ere the last survivor of the Apostles died, the change had become universal, and the first day of the week was so solemnly consecrated to Christ as to receive, among Christians, the designation of "the Lord's day." And from all these facts the fair inference is, that the change of the day was made by Divine direction, that during those forty days in which the Saviour spake to His disciples of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," He announced His will that this institution of His Church should be observed on the first day of the week, and thus be a permanent memorial at once of the creation and redemption of the world.¹

VII.—What is the bearing of Heb. iv. 9 upon this question?

Dr. Wardlaw and others regard it as direct inspired authority for

¹ See on this subject "Watson's Institutes;" Dr. Wardlaw's "Discourses on the Sabbath;" M'OWAN on "The Sabbath;" Rev. J. W. Thomas on "The Lord's Day."

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the appointment of the first day of the week as the Sabbath of the Christian Church. Observe, the word *rest* in this verse is not the same in the original Greek with that which is so rendered throughout the chapter.¹ The Apostle is writing to Hebrews ; and reasonably might it be expected that amongst the topics to which he adverts connected with ancient observances and the changes made under the new economy, the Sabbath should not be without notice. Here, as we believe, the notice is. Read the 9th and 10th verses, and the striking analogy between the reason assigned for the new Sabbatic day, and that originally assigned for the old will be seen. Just suppose Christ to be meant by "He that is entered into His rest," and the analogy is perfect. As when God ceased from His work of creation, the day of His resting was hallowed as a Sabbathism, or a day of commemorative rest and religious celebration, so when Jesus finished *His* work, and rested from it in His resurrection and ascension, that blessed day was in all time coming to be the day of Sabbatical rest and celebration. According to the ordinary interpretation of this passage, the tenth verse neither assigns a reason nor adduces a proof of what is affirmed in the ninth. Whereas, on the view now given, the analogy between God ceasing from the work of creation, and the Son of God ceasing from the work of redemption, is beautiful and striking ; and the reason thence arising for a new "Sabbatism to the people of God" is pertinent and satisfactory.²

VIII.—In what manner should the day be celebrated ?

1. *In seeking for Scriptural directions for the observance of the Sabbath, we must distinguish carefully between the commandments of the moral law, and those of the political and ceremonial law of the Jews.* What was moral was perpetual, what was ceremonial was temporary, and is done away in Christ.

2. *From the teachings of our Lord we learn that works of piety, necessity, and mercy are perfectly compatible with the due observance of the day ; e.g., the labours of the priest in the temple (Matt. xii. 5) ; the leading of cattle from the stall to watering (Matt. xii. 11 ; Luke xiii. 15, xiv. 5) ; the circumcising of a man child, and a fortiori, the healing of the sick and infirm among men (John vii. 22-24) ; the doing of good (Matt. xii. 12) ; and the satisfying of hunger (Luke vi. 1-5).* These are obviously specimens, rather than a perfect catalogue, of permitted works.

3. *But the Sabbath is a day of sanctity.* "God blessed it and sanctified it" (Gen. ii. 3) ; pronounced it holy, set it apart for Himself ; and dedicated it to holy purposes. *There must, therefore, be the laying aside of everything that may impede the spiritual observance :* (1) All secular business and toil (Exod. xx. 8-11), from which the servant-man is to abstain as well as the master-man, the maid

¹ "There remaineth therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God."—*Revised Version.*

² Dr. Wardlaw's "Discourses on the Sabbath."

as well as her mistress (Deut. v. 14). Except the works of necessity and mercy, there should be one unbroken and universal repose. (2) Frivolities and amusements (Isa. lviii. 13). (3) Conversation upon subjects that are unconnected with and opposed to spirituality of thought. (Isa. lviii. 13). *And there must be the observance of whatever would promote the highest interests of our being:* (a) Attendance on the public worship of God (Heb. x. 25), which must be regular, punctual, and devout; for it is a day of "holy convocation." (b) Performance of the relative and private duties of religion. In this way "call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable."

CHAPTER XX.

THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

SECTION I.

I.—What is the meaning of the word sacrament?

The word is derived from *sacramentum*, a term which the ancient Romans used to signify (1) A deposit which was placed in the hands of a Pontifex, or superior priest, by every one who commenced a suit against another in a court of law, and was regarded as a pledge that he considered his cause to be good and valid; (2) The oath taken by the Roman soldiers, binding them to be faithful to their commanders and the commonwealth; (3) A bond, or covenant, by which parties bound themselves to the performance of specified conditions; and (4) By the Fathers of the Latin Church it was used as the translation of the Greek word *mysterion*, "mystery," both the words, in this connection, meaning a secret, and denoting the hidden or spiritual signification of an external type, symbol, or representation. It is therefore clear that the word *sacramentum* denotes something that is eminently and especially sacred. We have adopted the word from the early Latin Fathers as the most usual designation of "the Christian mysteries." And because of the peculiar sacredness which it denoted, and the military oath of fidelity which it expressed, we say that Christian sacraments are "*sacred appointments or ordinances, in which, while we receive blessings from God, we deliberately bind ourselves to Him in covenant engagements.*"¹

II.—What are the three leading views of the sacraments of the Church?

I. *That of the Church of Rome*, which makes the sacrament little better than a charm or incantation. According to this view "the matter of the sacrament derives from the action of the priest, in pronouncing certain words, a Divine virtue, provided it be the intention of the priest to give to that matter such a Divine virtue, and this grace is conveyed to the soul of every person who receives it, except when opposed by the obstacle of a mortal sin."²

¹ Dr. Hannah's MS. Lectures.

² Watson's "Institutes."

2. *That of the Socinian heresy*, which runs to the opposite extreme, and regards the sacraments as mere ceremonies, sustaining an emblematic character. Their sole use, therefore, is to cherish pious sentiments in the individual who observes them, and to be the badges of a Christian profession before the world.

3. *That of the great body of professing Christians*, who, following an expression of Paul (Rom. iv. 11), when he is speaking of circumcision, consider the sacraments as *signs and seals of the covenant of grace*.¹ As "*signs*," they exhibit to the senses, under appropriate emblems, the same benefits as are exhibited under another form in the doctrines and promises of the Word of God, so that the eye may affect and instruct the heart. And they are not signs merely of the grace of God to us, but of our obligations to Him—obligations, however, still flowing from the same grace. As "*seals*," they are a Divine pledge or security that God will give unto the receiver all the grace of the covenant to which it refers, according to His obedience to its proposed terms. And they are our seals or pledges that we consent to the conditions of the covenant, and engage ourselves to the performance of them. The sacraments, therefore, are not charms, nor are they mere remembrancers; they are federal, or covenant acts, in which the persons who receive them with proper dispositions solemnly engage to fulfil their part of the covenant, and God confirms His promise to them in a sensible manner. "According to this account of the sacraments, *the express institution of God is essentially requisite to constitute their nature*. No rite which is not ordained by God can be conceived to be a seal of His promise, or the pledge of any event that depends upon His good pleasure; hence, that any rite may come up to our idea of a sacrament, we require words of institution, and a promise by which the two are connected together."²

III.—How many sacraments are there ?

The Romanists plead for seven. Peter Lombard, who lived about 1140 years after Christ, was the first who dared to elevate to the same rank of sacredness and importance as Baptism and the Lord's Supper five other ceremonies. But they are superstitious additions. "They have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God," and they stand in no direct connection with any covenant engagement entered into by Him with His creatures. *Confirmation* rests on no

¹ The following definitions express the views of three great representatives of Protestant Christianity:—"The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals, appointed by God for this end, that by the use thereof He may the more fully declare and seal unto us the promise of the Gospel, viz., that He grants us freely the remission of sin and life eternal for the sake of that one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross."—*Heidelberg Catechism*.

"A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers."—*Westminster Shorter Catechism*.

"A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ as a means whereby we receive the same, and as a pledge to assure us thereof."—*Catechism of the Church of England*.

² Watson's "Dictionary," art. *Sacrament*.

scriptural authority at all.¹ *Penance*, if it mean anything more than repentance, is equally unsanctioned by Scripture; and if it mean "repentance toward God," it is no more a Sacrament than faith. *Orders*, or the ordination of ministers, is an apostolic command, but has in it no greater indication of a sacramental act than any other such command—say, the excommunication of obstinate sinners from the Church. *Matrimony*—which probably was called a sacrament at first, from a misapprehension of Eph. v. 32—is no pledge and seal of the evangelical covenant, nor was it instituted for any such purpose. And *Extreme Unction*—the ceremony of anointing a dying person, when all hope of recovery is gone—is a mere human ordinance,² and has nothing in it of a sacramental character. Those who take the Scripture as their sole authoritative guide restrict the term sacrament to those signs and seals of the evangelical covenant which are expressly recognised as such in the sacred book. In consequence, they know of no other sacraments, or, in other words, of no other emblematic institutions, which are at the same time enjoined means of grace, than Baptism and the Lord's Supper. All persons who invest other ceremonies of religion with this sacramental character incur the guilt of adding to the words of God.

IV.—Are the sacraments of perpetual obligation in the Church?

On this point orthodox Christians in general are at issue with the Quakers, who contend that the sacraments were only intended to remain during the infancy of the Christian Church. In opposition to this view, we remark:—(1) The Christian sacraments were instituted by Christ as the Mediatorial Ruler and Judge of men, and that in the most express and unequivocal manner (Matt. xxvi. 26-28, xxviii. 18-20; Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 23-26). (2) These institutions were never withdrawn by our Lord, nor is any intimation given in Scripture that they were intended only for a time. (3) The reasons for the original institution of the sacraments apply as forcibly now as at the first. Men are as unapt to apprehend spiritual truths, and therefore need those Divine symbols to help their conception. They are as prone to unbelief, and need these seals and pledges of their Father's love. But if the law of the sacraments answered no other purpose than that of testing our obedience, it would be worthy of God to give, and it would be our duty and interest to obey.³

¹ There is no reason to suppose that the confirmation mentioned (Acts xv. 42), consisted in anything more than a faithful exposition of the Gospel, with encouragement to live in the belief and practice of it; for it is added (Acts xvi. 5), "So were the Churches established in the faith." Revised Version "strengthened in the faith."

² The plea urged in defence of it is James v. 14, 15. "But the anointing there prescribed was for the sick, that they might recover. This, I think, referred to the administration of proper medical aid, while fervent prayer was also to be offered up for the recovery of the sick. Extreme unction is administered only when all hope of life is gone," and in order to convey grace to the patient, of which there is not one word in the sacred text.

³ Rev. T. Jackson's MS. Lectures

SECTION II.

BAPTISM.

I.—What is the nature of baptism?

It is the initiatory rite into the New Testament Church, and is a sign and seal of that spiritual covenant to which aforetime circumcision had stood thus related. As a *sign*, it represents the poured out and cleansing influences of the Holy Ghost, which constitute the great promise of the Christian dispensation. And as a *seal*, it is on God's part a visible assurance of His faithfulness to His covenant stipulations; and on our part a pledge by which we make ourselves parties to the covenant, promising to fulfil its conditions, and claiming our right of inheritance in its truth, mercies, and hopes.

II.—Who are the proper subjects of baptism?

It is clear from the whole of the New Testament, and is not disputed, that Christian baptism, when administered to adults, ought to follow their repentance and confession of faith. Such is now the practice of all sections of the Christian Church in non-Christian lands, where persons are in the position of the first converts. Upon their professing Christ and becoming Christians, now, as in the days of the Apostles, we say, "Believe, and be baptised." We believe that the children of Christian parents are also entitled to this sacrament, and that those thus baptised in infancy should not again be baptised when they become adults. A summary of the arguments upon which the justification of infant baptism rests shall be adduced.

1. *The covenant which God made with Abraham was the covenant of grace.* Of this covenant we have an account in Gen. xvii. 1-14; and that it was not wholly, or even chiefly, a political and national covenant, but the general covenant of grace, is obvious from the character of the blessing it promised. First—"I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee"—a promise which includes the highest spiritual blessings, and that has ever been acknowledged and felt by God's people as the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; in evidence of which, see Jer. xxxi. 33, xxxii. 38-40; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 25, 30, 31, xxxvi. 25-28, xxxvii. 26, 27; Heb. viii. 10; 2 Cor. vi. 16-18. This promise is given to Abraham personally, and to his seed after him; *i.e.*, all the persons who should imitate his faith (Gal. iii. 7, 9, 29). Secondly—"Thou shalt be a father of many nations," which we are taught by St. Paul to interpret more with reference to his spiritual seed, the followers of that faith whereof cometh justification, than to his natural descendants (Rom. iv. 16-18). Thirdly—"I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger," the temporal promise being but a type of the higher promise of a heavenly inheritance (Heb. xi. 9, 10, 13). Fourthly—"In thee shall all nations be blessed;" and this blessing, we are expressly taught, was nothing less than the justification of

all nations, that is, of all believers in all nations, by faith in Christ (Gal. iii. 8, 9, 14, 16). Consider, then, the blessings here promised in the light of the texts referred to from St. Paul, and it must be evident that the covenant made with Abraham was the Gospel covenant. Indeed, it is expressly called "the Gospel" (Gal. iii. 8).

2. *The covenant which God made with Abraham is still in force, and will be till the end of time.* This is plainly asserted in Gal. iii. 17, and Rom. iv. 16. It had no connection with "the law," or Sinaitic covenant; for it existed four hundred and thirty years before it, and was not at all disannulled or set aside by it; and believers in Christ, under the New Testament dispensation, are "heirs according to the promise." Heirs of what? Of the blessedness promised in the covenant to Abraham and his seed. Thus it was "an everlasting covenant," intended to continue while a believer is found upon the earth.

3. *From the commencement of the Abrahamic covenant to the subversion of the Jewish nation, infants, by the appointment of God, were admitted to a share in its benefits, and therefore received circumcision as its sacramental sign and seal (Gen. xvii. 10-13).* Being thus circumcised, they were placed under covenant with God, and at its frequent renewal were openly acknowledged as under the bond, and entitled to the privileges of the covenant (Deut. xxix. 10-13; Josh. viii. 35; 2 Chron. xx. 13). They were made, and acknowledged to be, part of the Church of God, the children of God by adoption, and graciously entitled to take God as their God.

4. *The children of Christian believers were never cut off from this privilege when their fathers were received into the Church, whether they were Jews or Gentiles by birth.* Explicit authority for relinquishing a practice is quite as indispensable as explicit authority for commencing one. And had there been a design to exclude children from the covenant of grace, it would without doubt have been denoted in the inauguration of the Gospel economy. But no change or limitation is intimated, either by special instruction or implication. On the contrary, the sign and seal of the covenant is authorised to be imparted with a universality commensurate with the commission

"The objection alleged against this view by our Antipædobaptist brethren is, that the covenant with Abraham included temporal blessings, such as the possession of the land of Canaan for an inheritance; and, therefore, circumcision on his children was the sign and seal of the covenant, merely in reference to the promise of temporal and national blessings. But this objection is overthrown by the fact that the same rite was enjoined and performed on those who had no share whatever in the temporal part of the Abrahamic covenant. Thus it was performed by Divine command on all the male servants of Abraham's household and their children; also on Ishmael and on Esau and their children, who diverged into distinct nations, and had, therefore, no share in the temporal promises of the covenant; yet it was said to be the sign of God's covenant to them, even as it was to Isaac and Jacob. But if a sign of God's covenant to them, who had no share in the temporal promises, of what part of the covenant was it a sign to them? Plainly, of the spiritual part—the promises of redemption, which had no restriction or limitation to race or nation, but included Ishmael and Esau, as well as Isaac and Jacob, Gentile as well as Jew, bond as well as free; and the sign and seal of God's covenant on the children of such, was God's open and public attestation of their salvation and their title to eternal life, and, by consequence, of their real membership in His true spiritual Church."—Dr. W. Cooke.

to make disciples and to teach (Matt. xxviii. 19). We therefore conclude, on the surest grounds, that the children of God's people still stand in a covenant relation to Him, and have a right to the initiatory ordinance of that covenant.

5. *Baptism is now, by Divine authority, substituted for circumcision as the initiatory sign and seal of God's covenant of grace.* That circumcision as a sacrament is abolished, St. Paul must strenuously maintained. And that baptism has taken the place of the Abrahamic rite is manifest: (1) From the initiatory character of the two rites. In the words of the great commission (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15, 16), baptism was expressly made the initiatory rite by which believers of all nations were to be introduced into the Church and covenant of grace, just as circumcision had formerly been. And if baptism do not sustain this character, the new covenant has no such initiatory rite or sacrament at all. (2) It is manifest from the following scriptures:—Col. ii. 10, 12, where baptism is expressly called "the circumcision of Christ"—the phrase being put out of the reach of frivolous criticism by the exegetical addition "buried with Him by baptism." And the only reason for which He can call baptism "the circumcision of Christ," or Christian circumcision, is that it has taken the place of the Abrahamic circumcision, and fulfils the same office of introducing believing men into God's covenant; and entitling them to the enjoyment of spiritual blessings. Gal. iii. 27, 29, may be adduced to the same effect: "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. . . . And if ye be Christ's" (by being thus baptised and putting on Christ), "then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Just as circumcision, believingly submitted to, was the means by which Jews and strangers became the spiritual seed of Abraham, and the heirs of spiritual and heavenly promises, so baptism, when believingly submitted to, is followed by the same blessed results. The conclusion is therefore inevitable, that baptism has precisely the same federal character as circumcision, and that it was instituted for the same ends, and in its place.

Now, as the infants of believers were, in former ages, taken, together with their parents, into covenant with God, by the sacramental seal of that covenant,—as the same covenant, under a fuller, clearer, and simpler discovery of it, forms now the basis of the Christian Church,—and as the privilege of bringing our infant offspring for admission into the covenant, and of having its token applied to them, has never been repealed, it necessarily follows that they have a right to Christian baptism; for baptism is now the only appointed token or ceremony of admission.¹

6. *There is abundant evidence that the children of converts to the*

¹ Nor is this view of the subject weakened by repentance and faith being required as antecedent qualifications for baptism, in such passages as Acts ii. 38; Mark xvi. 16; for all such passages were addressed to *adults* from whom repentance and faith were required as conditions of salvation. A like profession of faith was required by Jewish proselytes prior to their circumcision. And not

*faith of the Gospel were actually baptised along with their parents, in the time of the apostles and the apostolic churches.*¹ If the previous state of things were really inconsistent with the spiritual nature of the new dispensation, and were therefore to be discontinued, it seems not unreasonable to expect that the language on this point should be plain and decisive. Instead of this, we meet with language in perfect accordance with the previous state of things, precisely such as writers whose minds are habituated to it would naturally use, and such as readers in similar circumstances could not understand in any other way than one. In Mark x. 13-16, our Lord explicitly declares young children (*brepchoi*, infants) to be subjects of His kingdom—partakers of its privileges and blessings; and are we to believe that He, at the same time, cuts off all such from any external sign of connection with the kingdom He was establishing? that He declares them partakers of the blessings of the promise, and yet forbids the outward token of such participation to be any longer administered to them? In Acts xvi. 15, 31, 33, 1 Cor. i. 16, we are taught that the Apostles baptised “households” or families; and a man’s house (*oikos*) most properly means his children, his offspring, his descendants, and is generally used to denote these even exclusively. (See Ruth iv. 12; 1 Kings xiv. 10-14, xvi. 3, xxi. 22; 1 Tim. iii. 4, etc.) It should be noticed, too, that the baptism of families is mentioned in a way that indicates its being no extraordinary occurrence, but a thing of course. We are warranted, therefore, to assume that such was the usual practice, unless it can be shown that these cases are not fair specimens of what was customary.

7. *Let it be further considered that we have no recorded instance of the baptism of any person grown to manhood that had been born of Jewish converts, or of Gentile proselytes, to the faith of Christ;*¹ nor have we, in any of the apostolic epistles, the remotest allusion to the reception of such children, by baptism, into the Christian Church. And the simplest explanation, and one in every respect sufficient and satisfactory, of the total absence of everything of the sort, is the supposition that the children of the converts who composed the Churches had been baptised with their parents, on these parents entering into the fellowship of the Church.

only a profession of faith, but actual faith was required from Abraham before he was circumcised; for before he was circumcised he believed God, and it was counted unto Him for righteousness; and thus “he received the sign of circumcision,” etc. (Rom. iv. 11). Yet, notwithstanding this requirement of faith from him as an adult before he was circumcised, his progeny were required to be circumcised before they could either repent or believe. The truth is, that both baptism and circumcision presuppose a state of grace, which adults, being sinners, cannot have without repentance and faith. But infant children require no repentance, having committed no actual sin; and they require no faith because, as their fallen state is involuntary, and brought upon them by another, so is their salvation involuntary and absolute, through the undertaking of Christ; and being already in a state of grace, and in God’s covenant, baptism does but recognise in infants already the same state of grace as that into which adult believers are brought by repentance and faith.—Dr. W. Cooke, “Infant Baptism Defended.”

¹ Dr. Wardlaw on “Infant Baptism.”

8. *Nor should it be overlooked that infant baptism has, with very few exceptions, been practised in the Church from the apostolic times.* Tertullian, who lived about 200 years after Christ, was the first opponent of infant baptism of whom we have any account; and he opposed it, not as an innovation or departure from apostolic practice, but as being inconsistent with certain superstitious notions of which he had become the advocate. His opposition proves that the baptism of infants was the general practice of the Church in his time; for he never pretends to say that any part of the Church had held or acted upon his opinion. Origen, who was contemporary with Tertullian, expressly declares infant baptism to have been the constant usage of the Church from the Apostles. Cyprian, who wrote about 150 years after the apostles, gives fuller testimony to the fact. Nor is the slightest vestige to be found by which the practice can be traced to any origin on this side of the apostolic age.¹

Now, let all these things be taken together, and the conclusion will be forced upon us, that the children of converts to the faith of the Gospel are the legitimate subjects of Christian baptism. To the very common demand of our Baptist brethren,—“Produce an express precept authorising the baptism of children,” we retort the demand,—“Produce an express precept repealing and setting aside the ancient injunction and practice which existed under the same covenant of promise with that which constitutes the ground of fellowship in the Christian Church.” And as to the objection that infants ought not to be baptised, because they cannot understand the nature and design of that sacrament, it applies with equal force against the circumcision of Abraham’s male descendants. If infants cannot understand the nature of the sacrament, the parents can, and ought in the use of it to dedicate their offspring to God, claiming for them the grace which that sacrament symbolises, and which God pledges Himself by that sacrament to impart.

III.—What are the uses of infant baptism?

It is reasonable to expect that there should be some uses apparent of whatever the God of wisdom enjoins; and on this subject we feel no difficulty in meeting the inquiry.

1. *Infant baptism is a memorial of fundamental truths.* It emblematically reminds all who witness it of the inherent corruption of our nature, and of its consequent need of the washing of regeneration. And it brings before our minds the truth that little children are subjects of the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, and partakers of its blessings. The second Man, the Lord from heaven, has cancelled the great original offence, and has so far removed its existence and its effects, that “the free gift has come

¹ Dr. Wardlaw on “Infant Baptism.” For proof of the uninterrupted practice of infant baptism from apostolic times, read Wall’s “History of Infant Baptism,” and his “Defence” of it against the “Reflections” of Dr. Gale.

upon all men unto justification of life." The whole case of the child has been thus met and provided for by these redemptory arrangements. And baptism seems to signify and commemorate this glorious fact. It is the sign and the seal of the covenant of grace which secures and ratifies this provision. On this ground we have far better reasons for the baptism of an infant than we can possibly have for the baptism of an adult. Baptism is administered to an adult because he professes to be a believer in Christ, and to have an interest in His redemption. But we can have no infallible certainty that such is really the case. In an infant there is no possibility of mistake. As certainly as it is a sharer in "the offence" and "condemnation" of "the first man," so certainly is it a sharer in "the free gift" and the glorious "righteousness" of "the second man." The irresponsibility of the child, so far from invalidating its baptism, is the very thing that invests it with certainty.¹

2. *Infant baptism is a remembrancer of important duties, and an encouragement to their performance.*

(1) *The ordinance is inseparably connected—and all Christian parents ought so to regard it—with the incumbent duty of bringing up their children for God.* For what does the very institution of infant consecration, whether by circumcision or by baptism, prove? It proves that we are not left to choose whether our children shall be religious or not. That they are to be so is a ruled case; since, in their earliest days, the Triune God claims their services, and in token thereof puts the sacred mark of His covenant upon them. When the child arrives at years of discretion, the very first thing in which it should be instructed is the duty and privilege connected with this covenant transaction. It should be taught the knowledge of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in whose undivided name it has been baptised; and every means should be taken to persuade the child to become intelligently and voluntarily a party to its own baptism.²

(2) *The ordinance is inseparably connected with an obligation imposed upon the Church of caring for those who are thus brought within its pale.* If baptism has really initiated them into the visible Church, and if this relation to the Church is not nominal, but real—not a thing mystical, airy, intangible; but a blessed verity—surely, they are entitled to the offices and assistances of the Church, to official instruction and oversight, until they are fitted, by personal repentance and faith, for the privileges of its full and complete membership. The young ought thus to grow up within the precincts of the Church, under her protecting and sheltering wing. It has been decided in heaven and upon earth,—decided by their merciful God, by their parents, and by the Church,—decided, so far as it can be without their own voluntary consent, that they are to be the consecrated servants of God. And a very serious

¹ Wardlaw on "Infant Baptism;" and Rev. John Baker, *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 1859. ² *Ibid.*

obligation now devolves upon the Church, as well as upon the parents, to give fulfilment and consummation to the design thus commenced in baptism, by bringing the children to a sincere and intelligent consecration of their service to the Lord.¹

IV.—What is the proper mode of Christian baptism?

It has been successfully shown by a detail of learned criticism that the words *bapto* and *baptizo* may signify either sprinkling, pouring or immersion. But even were it to be admitted that *immersion* is the primary import of the word *baptism*, yet every one at all versant in languages is aware that it is not by tracing back a word to its earliest etymology that its actual meaning is to be ascertained, in particular applications of it, at subsequent periods. Even in our own language we should run ourselves into innumerable mistakes and absurdities, by the adoption of such a test of the import of terms. The sole inquiry ought to be, what is the sense in which it is used by the Scripture writers? And it appears to us that there is enough to satisfy any candid man that *sprinkling* and *pouring* have the full approval of these writers in their use of the term.² Observe the following facts:—

1. *Baptism was a frequent practice among the Jews, under the Old Testament dispensation; but it was performed by ablution and sprinkling, and not by immersion.* St. Paul speaks of "divers washings" (Greek, *divers baptismois*) as constituting part of the service of the tabernacle (Heb. ix. 10): *e.g.*, there was the washing of the priests, preparatory to their entrance on the duties of their office (Exod. xxix. 4); and whenever they went into the tabernacle (Exod. xxx. 17-21). And there were the washings of the people when they had contracted any ceremonial uncleanness (Numb. xix. 13, 17-20); and of leprous persons, when they obtained a cure (Lev. xiv. 7-9). Now, these were cases of purification, and in them *sprinkling* is prominently mentioned as one of the appointed forms (Numb. viii. 5-7, xix. 13, etc.); and yet the Apostle calls them "*divers baptisms.*" To say, therefore, that baptism is nothing but the immersion of the whole body is to contradict the language of the Holy Ghost.

That the Jews in the days of Christ attached the idea of purification to the term *baptism*, and that they performed the rite by sprinkling and ablution, appears from the fact that they applied the term to their manner of purifying various domestic utensils; "as the washing" (Greek, *baptismous*) "of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables" (Mark vii. 4). "The word *baptismos* applied to all these, properly and strictly is not to be taken of dipping or plunging, but in respect of some things of washing only, and in respect of others of sprinkling only."³ "At any rate, whatever be supposed as to

¹ Wardlaw on "Infant Baptism;" and Rev. John Baker, *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, 1859.

² Wardlaw on "Infant Baptism."

³ Dr. Lightfoot, "Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations," Mark vii. 4.

the 'pots and cups,' it surely requires the prejudice of system to fancy the immersion of the beds or couches, which are meant by the word rendered improperly, in this verse, *tables*."¹

We are led to the same conclusion respecting the meaning of the word baptism by the accounts which the Evangelists give of the manner in which the Jews purified themselves, in order to their preservation from ceremonial pollution. In Luke xi. 37, 38, and Mark vii. 4, the word rendered "wash" is, in Greek, *baptised*. Now, what kind of washing or baptism was that which they practised? No one can suppose that before every meal, all the family, and every stranger who visited them, plunged their whole bodies under water. It consisted particularly in washing the hands: "Except they wash their hands oft, they eat not." Margin, "Except they wash diligently;" in the original, "with the fist;" Theophylact, "up to the elbow." With this view the context agrees, Mark vii. 2, and Matt. xv. 1, 2. And let it not be said that the Jews immersed their hands, and that therefore the term baptism is applied; for the Oriental mode of washing the hands was by pouring water on the hands (see 2 Kings iii. 11); a practice which is continued to this day. Here, then, is conclusive proof that the term *baptism* is used in Scripture to denote sprinkling and ablution in general, and is not at all confined to immersion.²

2. According to the Scriptural account, it is much more probable that John baptised by sprinkling or pouring than by immersion. For (1) His baptism gave no offence as containing anything new or strange, which we cannot conceive would have been the case had its mode of administration materially differed from that to which they had been accustomed. (2) The number of the people who attended John's baptism was such, that it appears impossible he should have immersed them all. It seems, from Matt. iii. 5, 6, that a large majority of the adult population came to be baptised. Now, John's ministry did not continue much longer than one year, and the greater part of his baptisms were performed during the first half of this period; for from that time Jesus began to preach and baptise, and John's influence declined (John iv. 1, 2, iii. 26, 30, v. 35). Then we must recollect that John was a preacher (John i. 23; Matt. iii. 1), and much of his time would be occupied in addressing the successive companies who came to him. "Now, it may be safely asserted that it is impossible for one man—for the people were all baptised by *him*—to immerse in the waters of a river so many as 200 persons in one day, or 1,000 in a week, or 30,000 in a year. If, instead of being engaged in teaching the people, he had stood in the water for nine or ten hours of every day, he could not have immersed during the few months of his ministry more than a few thousand persons. Josephus estimates

¹ Dr. Wardlaw on "Infant Baptism." It should be observed, however, that the word "*tables*" is omitted in the Revised Version, with a marginal reading—"many ancient authorities add, and couches."

² Rev. T. Jackson's MS. Lectures.

the number of persons present in Jerusalem at the Passover at 2,700,000. If we take only one-third, 900,000, as being inhabitants of Judea, Jerusalem, and the vicinity of Jordan, and if we suppose that one-third of these might be designated the whole population, we shall have the number of 300,000 who were baptised by John. Such a work could not have been accomplished in less than ten or twelve years, supposing him to have been engaged every day in his laborious occupation."¹ (3) The difficulties and inconvenience which would have attended the immersion of so many people render it absolutely incredible that they were baptised in this manner. If they were baptised naked, John's baptism was one of the greatest outrages upon public decency; if with their clothes on, a change of raiment was necessary; and where could all these people retire, in that open and uncultivated country, for that change? "It seems, therefore, that they stood in ranks on the edge of the river, and that John, passing along before them, cast water on their heads or faces, by which means he might baptise many thousands in a day; and this way most naturally signified Christ's baptising them 'with the Holy Ghost and with fire.'"² (4) The texts of Scripture which are adduced to prove that John immersed contain no such proof. John baptised "*in* Jordan" (Matt. iii. 6; Mark i. 5); but the Greek word *ἐν* might with equal propriety be rendered "*at* the Jordan," for it is so rendered more than a hundred times in the New Testament.³ But if we take the text as it stands in our version, immersion does not necessarily follow; for "had John stood in the water, however shallow, or had he stood in the bed of the river at the water's edge, and poured the water on those who came to him, the historian not only might have used the same expression with propriety, but could hardly have used another."⁴ But it is said that John iii. 23 certainly proves immersion. We answer that the words rendered "much water" are literally "many waters," or streams of water, which, considering the crowds who came to John, was of great importance even for drink and cleanliness. On all these grounds we maintain that there is no proof that John baptised by immersion, but there is strong presumptive evidence that he administered the ordinance by sprinkling or pouring.⁵

3. *The evidence of the New Testament is in favour of the administration of Christian baptism by sprinkling or effusion, and not by immersion.* (1) On the day of Pentecost it seems that about three thousand were baptised in Jerusalem (Acts ii. 41). Now, a considerable part of the day was occupied in preaching; and is it likely that, at the close of the day, so great a number could have been provided with change of raiment, and then separately immersed, even if all the male disciples had been employed in the service? Besides, where could the service have taken place? There was no

¹ Godwin's "Christian Baptism."

² Wesley's Note on Matt. iii. 6.

³ Mark i. 4. It is said John did baptise *in* the wilderness, which could not mean in the wilderness itself.

⁴ Dr. Wardlaw on "Infant Baptism."

⁵ Rev. T. Jackson's MS. Lectures.

river in Jerusalem or its neighbourhood, and it is not likely that they would be allowed to pollute the public tanks or reservoirs. (2) In the case of the Ethiopian (Acts viii. 38, 39), perhaps a nice criticism might show that the Greek means no more than going "to the water," and coming "from the water." But, taking the passage as in our Authorised Version, "it does not follow that he was baptised by immersion. The text neither affirms nor intimates anything concerning it."¹ Indeed, nothing can be clearer than this, that the act of baptising is something quite distinct from either the *going down* into the water, or the *coming up* out of it. Read the words again, and it will be seen that if the two phrases had any reference at all to the *mode* of baptism, it would follow that Philip was immersed under the water, and emerged out of it, as well as the eunuch, which no one supposes.² (3) The most natural interpretation of the narrative of the baptism of Saul (Acts ix. 17-19, xxii. 16), and that of Cornelius and his family (Acts x. 46-48), is that it took place in the house, or even in the room where they were. (4) Lydia and her family were most probably baptised in the *proseucha*, where she received the truth. The place was by a river, but no intimation is given that any of them were immersed in its water, or taken within its banks. (5) The improbability that the jailer and his family were immersed is very striking (Acts xvi. 33). It was night; there was no time to travel to any distant place in quest of a river; nor were Paul and Silas, lacerated by the scourge, in a fit state to descend into one; nor is it likely that the family, in their circumstances, and charged with the care of the prison, would have gone abroad at that unreasonable hour; still less likely that they would have been plunged into a reservoir in the house, where water was kept for culinary purposes. Upon all these cases observe two facts: first, the rite was of easy observance, inasmuch as we never find any delay in the administration of it, whatever the time, the place, or the subjects; secondly, in no case do we find the people removing to any particular place for baptism. We conclude that it could not have been administered by immersion, which in some places was impossible, at some seasons would be dangerous, and to some people destructive of life and health.³

4. *Sprinkling or effusion is more in accordance with the genius and spirit of Christianity than immersion.* For (1) it most correctly represents the spiritual influence which baptism symbolises. Though that influence is called baptism (Matt. iii. 11), it is never spoken of as an immersion, but often as a sprinkling or pouring (Isa. xlv. 3; Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Acts ii. 32, 33, x. 44-48). (2) It accords the most fully with the universal character of Christianity. Some nations inhabit regions of ice and snow, where immersion, during the greater part of the year, is impracticable, especially in the case of delicate persons. Will it be said, let such persons defer their baptism till summer? This is not in the record. With the apostles,

¹ Wesley's Note *in loco*.

² Wardlaw on "Infant Baptism."

³ Rev. T. Jackson's MS. Sermons.

no ordinance of Christ is impracticable at any time. Besides, life is short; and are men who desire to comply with the Lord's will to die in the neglect of a sacrament, by which their right to salvation is recognised, because it cannot be administered with safety? Such consequences are not connected with the practice of sprinkling. (3) It is, beyond comparison, the best adapted to that calm and collected state of mind in which an adult person should receive this holy sacrament. It is a covenanting ordinance; and when an adult person receives it, there should be a believing apprehension of Christ and of salvation, with an entire surrender to God. In order to this, the man should be in full possession of his mental faculties, and free from distraction; but the act of immersion, especially in some cases, produces excitement, agitation, and tremor, which are totally destructive of mental recollection. The administration of the rite by sprinkling obviates this inconvenience. And the mode which conduces most to edification is in fullest accordance with the spirit of the Gospel, and therefore is to be preferred. (4) There is nothing in any Scripture allusion that leads to a contrary result. Two texts are often adduced as containing an undoubted allusion to immersion (Rom. vi. 3, 4; Col. ii. 11, 12).¹ "And the mind may easily habituate itself to the idea of likeness between being let down under the *earth* and raised out of it, and being let down under *water* and raised out of it. But where is the likeness between the latter of these and the carrying of a body by a lateral door into a cavern hewn out of a rock, and that body reviving, and coming forth by the same door? which were the real circumstances of the burial and resurrection of the Saviour. I confess this resemblance has always appeared to me but a far-fetched fancy."² What, then, does St. Paul mean by "buried with Him in baptism"? He intimates that there is in all believers a mystical conformity to Christ. He died for sin; they die *to* sin (1 Peter iv. 1, 2; Rom. vi. 8, 11). He died by crucifixion; they have crucified the flesh, and are crucified to the world (Gal. v. 24, vi. 14). He was buried, concealed from the view of man, and removed from all intercourse with the world; they are buried with Him in the sense of being separated from the spirit and example of the world and their former corrupt practices. He was raised; they are risen with Him, risen from the death of sin, having, as it were, left their former selves and character in the grave (Col. iii. 1). He is alive for evermore; they live a life, spiritual, divine, heavenly (Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 3). He is seated at the right hand

¹ Mr. Wesley, in his notes on these texts, says that "the ancient manner of baptising by immersion is manifestly alluded to here." Yet in other places he denies that there is any proof that either John or the apostles ever immersed; and in a treatise on baptism which he abridged from a volume that his father published, he declares that nothing can be inferred in favour of immersion from these passages, and adds, "there is no clear proof of dipping in Scripture." (See Wesley's "Works," vol. x., p. 189.) The fact is, this concession in favour of immersion is an inadvertency, directly opposite to his opinions recorded in other places.—*Rev. T. Jackson.*

² Dr. Wardlaw on "Infant Baptism."

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of God in heavenly places, and they are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph. i. 3, 20). Now, when baptism is rightly received, it is the entrance upon the Christian life in which all this mystical conformity to Christ is realised; for under the term baptism he comprehends all that baptism signifies, just as Peter does (1 Peter iii. 21), where he shows that it is not the outward washing that saves us, but such a change in our state and character as produces "the answer of a good conscience towards God."

This is an outline of the evidence in favour of baptism by sprinkling or pouring: and when Christian baptism is administered thus, it answers to the national baptism which the Israelites received, administered by God Himself (1 Cor. x. 1, 2). They were not immersed in the cloud, for it was above them; nor in the sea, for the ground was dry under their feet: baptism, therefore, in their case was administered by sprinkling. And when men pass from the Egypt of their fallen state, they should be baptised in the same ancient and significant manner.¹

We sum up the whole of what has now been advanced in the words of Dr. W. Cooke:—

1. That any one of the three modes of administering the rite of baptism is lawful.
2. That sprinkling or pouring has the sanction of scriptural authority, as a mode under which the Holy Spirit represents His holy influences on the soul: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you."
3. That this mode of applying water baptism answers the instructive purposes for which the ordinance was appointed.
4. That this mode is adapted to all ages, all countries, and all circumstances.
5. That probably this was the most frequent mode in which baptism was administered in apostolic times, especially when the great multitudes were baptised by John, by the Saviour, and by the apostles on the day of Pentecost.
6. That, seeing several modes of baptism are lawful, the choice may be left to expediency or propriety, and that, therefore, all angry controversy on such a question should for ever cease.²

SECTION III.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I.—What is the nature and design of the Lord's Supper?

"It is a commemorative sign and seal of the covenant of our redemption."³ In other words, "it is both a sign and a seal of the grace of the new covenant, which is offered to us, and confirmed to us, in every celebration; and when we communicate in faith, we

¹ Rev. T. Jackson's MS. Lectures.

² "Infant Baptism Defended." On this subject the reader would peruse with great advantage, in addition to the works previously named, Hibbard on "Christian Baptism," and Watson's "Institutes."

become anew parties to this covenant, and its grace stands afresh confirmed to us."¹ That the Lord's Supper is a covenant or sacramental rite may be deduced from the words, "This is My body; this is My blood"—the elements being a *sign* or representation of the sacrificial offering of the body and blood of Christ as the price of our redemption; and from the words, "This is My blood of the new testament," or covenant, "which is shed for many," etc. The covenant itself was ratified by the blood of Christ, which is therefore called "the blood of the everlasting covenant;" and "the cup" is a visible *sign* that this covenant exists in full undiminished force from age to age, and a visible *pledge* that the God of the covenant will give to the receiver all the promised grace of the covenant on the appointed terms. And the believing communicant, as he takes the elements into his hands, gives a public and visible indication that he consents to become a party to the covenant, and binds himself to fulfil all its conditions.

II.—What is the relation of the Lord's Supper—or Eucharist—to the Jewish Passover?

It was instituted in place of the Passover, as baptism was substituted for circumcision; and there are many resembling circumstances between the two ordinances: 1. The Passover was of Divine appointment, so was the Eucharist. 2. The Passover was a sacrament, so is the Eucharist. 3. The Passover was a memorial of a great deliverance from temporal bondage; the Eucharist is a memorial of a greater deliverance from spiritual bondage. 4. The Passover prefigured the death of Christ *before* it was accomplished; the Eucharist represents, or figures out, that death now *past*. 5. The Passover was a kind of federal rite between God and man; so is the Eucharist, as it points out the blood of the sacrifice offered for the ratification of the covenant between God and man. 6. As no person could partake of the paschal lamb before he was circumcised (Exod. xii. 43-48); so no person should come to the Eucharist till he has been baptised. 7. As the Jews were obliged to come to the Passover free from all defilement; so, in the eating of this bread, is the Christian to purge out the leaven of malice and wickedness. (1 Cor. v. 7, 8; xi. 27-29). 8. As the Passover was to continue as long as the Jewish law was in force, so is the Eucharist to continue till Christ shall come (1 Cor. xi. 26). The many resembling circumstances abundantly show that this holy Eucharist was in great measure copied from the paschal feast, and was intended to supply its place, only heightening the design, and improving the application.²

III.—What is the meaning of the different epithets that are given to this sacred ordinance?

The most ancient, and perhaps the most universal, name by which

¹ Watson's "Conversations for the Young."

² Dr. A. Clarke's "Discourse on the Eucharist"

the rite has been distinguished is that of the *Eucharist*, from a Greek verb, which signifies "to give thanks" (Matt. xxvi. 27; 1 Cor. xi. 24); because it is a thankful remembrance of Christ's death. It is called the *Communion*, from 1 Cor. x. 16, because the faithful partakers of it have therein communion with the Lord Jesus, being made partakers of the benefits of His death, and communion with each other at this family feast of love. It is called the *Sacrament* in reference to the *sacramentum*, or military oath, because in it the disciples take the vows of the Lord upon them, and ratify the covenant engagements which they made at their baptism. It is called the *Lord's Supper*; but as our Lord instituted this sacred rite *after* supper, it seems to be improper to give it this name. In very early times the Christians, in imitation of our Lord, held a supper before the Eucharist, and thus they became confounded. By the Greek Fathers of the Church it is called a *mystery*, because it represented spiritual things in emblem or sign.

IV.—Is this institution to be a standing rite in the Church?

It is; as we learn from 1 Cor. xi. 23-26, a passage evidently designed to teach the perpetuity of this ordinance in the visible Church—its continuance as long as there should be a Church upon earth in which to show it forth. "Show the Lord's death till He come"—till the affecting be turned into a joyous scene—till the grace ye draw from His first shall merge into the glory ye receive at His second coming—till He whose table ye bedew with tears, in "fellowship with His sufferings and conformity to His death," shall interrupt your communion, and break in upon you with His glory.¹

V.—What are the leading errors that have been propagated concerning this holy institution?

I. *That of the Romish Church*, which is as follows: "In the Lord's Supper Christ is really, truly, and substantially contained; God-man, body and blood, bones and nerves, under the appearance of bread and wine." They attempt to prove it thus: "Our Lord Himself says, 'This is My body.' Therefore, upon consecration, there is a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the whole substance of Christ's body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood; and this we term *transubstantiation*. Yet we must not suppose that Christ is broken, when the host or consecrated bread is broken; because there is whole and entire Christ under the species of every particle of bread, and under the species of every drop of wine." This absurd dogma, for denying which rivers of righteous blood have been shed by state persecutions and by religious wars, springs entirely from overlooking the simple fact that there is scarcely a more common form of speech, either in Scripture or in any language on the earth, than "*this is*," for this *represents* or *signifies*. We say of the busts in a museum, "This is

¹ Dr. Brown's "Christ's Second Coming."

Socrates;" "that is Homer," etc.; while everybody knows that the busts are only representations of those persons in sculpture. And instances of the same thing are found in every part of Scripture. (See Gen. xli. 26, 27; Dan. vii. 17, 24; Matt. xiii. 38, 39; Luke viii. 11; 1 Cor. x. 4; Gal. iv. 24, 25.) And after such unequivocal testimony from the sacred writings, can any person doubt that "this is My body" has any other meaning than "this represents My body"?

2. *That of the Lutheran Church.* "Luther denied that the elements were changed after consecration, and therefore taught that the bread and wine indeed remain, but that together with them there is present the substance of the body of Christ, which is literally received by communicants. As in red-hot iron it may be said two distinct substances, iron and fire, are united, so is the body of Christ joined with the bread."¹ This theory was designated by the term *consubstantiation*, and was adopted probably in deference to what was conceived to be the literal meaning of the words of Christ when the Lord's Supper was instituted. But as the Consubstantialists neither regard the consecrated elements as a sacrifice, nor attribute to them any physical virtue, nor render them objects of adoration, their errors may be considered rather of a speculative than of a practical nature.²

3. *That of Socinus and his followers.* They think that this solemn rite is not essentially distinct from any other ceremony. It consists of a symbolical action in which something external and material is employed to represent what is spiritual and invisible, and may therefore be of use in reviving the remembrance of past events, and in cherishing pious sentiments; but that its effect is purely moral, and that it contributes to the improvement of the individual in the same manner with reading the Scriptures and many other exercises of religion. This doctrine, like all other parts of the Socinian system, represents religion in the simple view of being a lesson of righteousness, and loses sight of that character of the Gospel which is meant to be implied in calling it a covenant of grace.³

VI.—Who are the persons that may spiritually be partakers of this solemn ordinance?

1. Every believer in the Lord Jesus, who is saved from his sins, has a *right* to come. Such are of the family of God; and this bread belongs to the children. 2. Every genuine penitent is invited to come, and consequently has a right, because he needs the atoning blood, which by this ordinance is "evidently set forth" before the

¹ At the celebration of the Passover, the master of the house at a certain part of the service takes a piece of the Passover cake, and addressing those assembled says, "Lo! this is the bread of affliction which our fathers did eat in the land of Egypt," etc. Instead of this, our Saviour said, "Take, eat, this is My body." The Jews understood the words to mean, this *represents* the bread eaten by our fathers; Christ conveyed the same meaning—"this *represents* My body."

² Watson's "Dictionary."

³ Watson's "Institutes."

⁴ Watson's "Dictionary," art. *Sacrament*.

eye of his faith. But all open unbelievers, who reject the doctrine of the atonement made by the vicarious death of Christ; and all profane and careless persons, who refuse salvation according to the terms of the Gospel; and all uncharitable persons, whose bosoms are the seat of bitterness, wrath, anger, or malice, are excluded by the very nature of the ordinance from participating in it, and ought to be repelled by ministers, whenever, from compliance with custom or other motives, they would approach it.

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