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DOCTRINAL ASPECTS  
OF  
CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THE reader will find but little in the following pages that has not been previously said in substance, by the author or by some one else. The topics are familiar because fundamental. The ground has been traversed again and again, and yet the work is as nearly original as is possible, in the absence of novel theories or questionable methods.

The design has been to group the substantial doctrines of Christianity with reference to Christian experience in such a way as to give to each its appropriate place and importance, without exalting one at the expense of another.

It has been a gratification to the writer to find so little necessity for criticism, or for resort to strange constructions of the language

of the Scriptures. His first thought was to elaborate some points more fully than he has done, particularly those relating to the higher attainments, but it soon became obvious that to indulge his inclination in that direction would swell the volume beyond the size intended. Had the work been a treatise on a single phase of experience, such as Holiness or Perfection, careful labor would have been bestowed upon passages scarcely mentioned, and many features of the subject would have been dwelt upon with interest which are passed over with brief remark. The doctrine itself would have been supported with formal arguments, and guarded against the most formidable objections. Whether the course pursued was best or not, it seemed necessary in presenting so many aspects of experience in reasonable space. If the foundation of Christian character be laid in a genuine conversion, resulting in the possession of the Spirit of adoption, the path of duty with

reference to future experiences will be easily found.

It is, perhaps, needless to say that the book is intended for the ordinary Christian reader. It is hoped that ministers and theological students will find in it some profitable suggestions and food for thought, but its chief aim is to help those who are untrained in abstruse studies to a knowledge of the grounds of our faith, and to assist them in distinguishing between the true and the false in those things which pertain immediately to salvation from sin. If it shall prove helpful to inquirers in conquering doubts, and useful in leading to a clearer understanding of God's method of dealing with sinners in their restoration to the divine favor—and especially if it shall guide any to higher attainments in holiness, and to broader views of the love of Christ in redemption—the object of the writer will be met and his labor rewarded.

S. M. M.

CHICAGO, January, 1882.



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ASPECTS  
OF  
CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

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CHAPTER I.

DEPRAVITY.

CHRISTIAN experience is understood to include the process of the soul's emergence from its natural state, into the condition of acceptance with God, and fitness for the kingdom of heaven, with the emotions of peace and joy, and hope and fear, which are incident to the great transformation.

Salvation is deliverance from sin and its results; and this deliverance has its methods, its conditions, its stages, and its consummation. All these enter into the topic of Experience. It is therefore evident that the first thing to be done, as preparatory to the study of the process of salvation, is to obtain a clear view of the state of the soul as

to its moral condition and relations prior to the beginning of the work of grace. This does not necessarily require a minute examination of the representations of the origin of sin and its nature, and of its effects upon the soul and the body, and its entailment on the race, which are found in systematic theology; but it is important to take into the account so much of the Scriptural statements as will show what human nature now is, and what it needs in order to bring it into the likeness of God, which is the only fitness for heaven.

It is assumed, of course, that the Bible is supreme authority upon all questions involved, and the only source of information in regard to the creation of man, the introduction of sin into the world, and the mind and will of God with reference to duty and destiny. Revelation is the high court of appeals to whose decisions we bow in silence.

Men exist. They began to exist. There was, therefore, a first man. He did not create himself. He did not spring from reptiles, birds, or beasts. He was created, and, therefore, he was formed and fashioned after the mind of the Creator. If we had power to

look into the first man, and trace the mysteries of his being, and mark the tendencies of all his faculties, and weigh his capacities and his adaptations, we might learn much of the divine thought and purpose in giving existence to such a being. But this ability is denied to us, and we can only catch the dim outlines of the soul and its powers as we look into ourselves, and as we observe the manifestations of its mental and moral qualities in actual life. The truths gathered thus are exceedingly unsatisfactory till the light of revelation falls upon them, when at once their feeble gleams flash into the broad beams of noonday, showing what we are, whence we came, why we live, and what calamities have overtaken us since the first man breathed the atmosphere of heaven, bearing the impress and image of God. That revelation comes in brief narrative, telling the story of the creation, the fall, the ruin, and the provisional recovery of the race; and brief as is the record, it contains all we know, while the accumulated wisdom of the ages has failed to add a single fact to the original account, or to mar a sentence of the inspired Word.

In this brief record we learn that God created man in his own image, endowed him with fitness to govern, and made him ruler over this world. In this holy estate man was also placed on trial. The high trust committed to him was to be maintained and confirmed by fidelity; and his fidelity was tested by a simple restraint or interdiction. This was probation. He kept it not. He fell, and in the fall he lost his dominion and the image of God, wherein he was created. That image was "righteousness and true holiness." With this loss came spiritual death, and the forfeiture of all life, and all good. The penalty of sin was death. Fully executed, that penalty would have ended the history of the race. But God purposed redemption. He therefore, by an act of sovereign grace, suspended the penalty, renewed the probation, spared the offender, and sent him out in his fallen condition to people the world. Adam begat a son in his own likeness. That son inherited a degenerate nature, and every child of the race bears the impress of the first sin, in being born in the image of Adam, and not in the image of God. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners."

What, then, is the condition in which we are born? If we trace our lineage to Adam, and consider our inheritance from him alone, we shall find nothing but impaired physical, mental, and moral powers, with the germ of sin and death within, turning our whole being into the way of unholiness. This is our state by nature. It is not as God made us, but as the transgression of Adam caused us to become. We are not personally responsible for that sin, but we are affected by it, and the elements which it brings into our nature and condition have to do with the character of our probation, and touch our destiny indirectly through our own responsible activity. That first sin is a tremendous fact in the history of mankind. Its streams of influence run through all the races and generations of men. "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." "In Adam all die." "By man came death." These are divine postulates. They point to the entrance, and enthronement, and reign of sin and death in this world, through the one offense of the first man. From Adam we inherit death. From him we also inherit "the seed of sin," the germ of

evil, the bent of our natures to the wrong. This comes from the absence of spiritual life. It is our depravity. Call it what you may, original sin, birth sin, carnality, or any thing else, it is something that is born in us, and grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength, till it produces alienation from God, and rebellion against his authority. We call it depravity. It results from the deprivation of holiness, which comes to all the seed of Adam, in consequence of his primary separation from the source of life and holiness in fellowship with God: and if that separation was complete, and that privation utter, then the loss of holiness through the line of nature is complete, and the depravity total. We inherit no spark of spiritual life from Adam, and not the least element of holiness.

“But there is in all of us, as a matter of fact, something that is good.” Yes, but it does not come from Adam. The redemption that is in Christ took hold of Adam in his fall, and averted the penalty that would have cut him down without offspring, and secured the development of creation in the existence of his posterity; and the redemption which

secured our being and our probation, secured also the incipient workings of grace in the soul, placing every child of the fallen race in a justified state, in the kingdom of God, and in possession of the germ of life. This is the source of the good that is in us all. It comes not from Adam, but from Christ; it is not of nature, but of grace.

In theology, we encounter two opposite statements, which differ from this representation of the natural condition of the race, and deserve a passing notice. The first denies the federal character of Adam, and the fall in him, and repudiates the thought that sin and death come to us as our heritage through the first transgression. It holds that human nature is in us as it was in the first man from the beginning; that we are not corrupt, but only weak; that we are not perverse, but only ignorant. This theory, of course, charges the existing imperfections of our nature upon the Creator, who fixed the standard of morality as it is found in our constitution, and fails to give any explanation of the dominion of sin and death, except by placing it to the account of the laws of our being, as chosen and ordained for

us in the counsels of the Eternal Mind. Such a view by no means accords with the Scriptural account, as we have seen it; nor can it explain the divine postulates we have cited from the apostle on this subject. It also fails quite as glaringly to account for numerous facts of consciousness in our struggles with the evil within, and for the universal prevalence of wickedness in the world. We can not accept its glowing descriptions of the natural dignity, and purity, and excellence of man, without at once sacrificing our intelligence, and disregarding the testimony of Holy Writ.

On the other hand, we encounter an extreme theory, which, with some tinges of truth, combines radical error. It is affirmed that Adam was the federal head and representative of the race, in such way as to involve all of human nature in the guilt of his sin; that in him the whole human family passed a probation, and fell; that the penalty was executed in full weight and measure upon him and his offspring; that the condition of the race in this world is strictly penal; and that all are born, not only corrupt, but under condemnation, and personally liable to eternal

death, on account of Adam's sin. Unfortunately, this extreme and untenable position is too often taken as the common doctrine of the evangelical Churches in relation to the fall of Adam, and the descent of the taint of sin through all the lines of his posterity. It assumes far too much in asserting the guilt of the race in the first sin, either in the realistic sense of responsible participation in their seminal existence in Adam, or in the fictitious imputation of the act or guilt of the progenitor to his children. The consequences come down to us under the law of entailment; but the guilt, the responsibility, the penalty, the punishment by judicial infliction, not at all. In this hypothesis the new probation is unknown, and all the immediate benefits of the purposed redemption are left out of the account. It sees humanity as related to Adam, and argues from his desert to the state of all his children as it might be supposed to be under a strictly legal administration; but it fails to see the race as it is under the economy of grace, by virtue of the remedial scheme which lifts it to a new relation under a dispensation of mercy, and secures to all in

responsible life a probation which involves the principles of equity and righteousness. It is therefore a sadly imperfect and distorted representation of the facts of our natural state.

Then, turning from these extremes, we find the ground taken above to be firm and tenable. It enables us to explain the Scriptures, to account for the evil in our natures and in the world around us, and also for the good. It accepts the fact of depravity, and obviates the objections so often urged against extreme statements of the doctrine. It finds that, so far as our "flesh"—our own nature—is concerned, "there is no good in us;" and yet, in our relation to the second Adam, it reveals the elements of good, graciously imparted. Does this doctrine dishonor God? Does it contradict fact? Does it excuse wickedness, or destroy accountability?

In view of this statement it is not to be supposed that God made man weak, erring, wayward, and unholy. He made him upright, in his own image, and with capacity to keep his holy estate. Man fell into depravity by disobedience. Nor is it to be said that men are as bad by nature as they become by practice. The doctrine of total depravity does not mean

any such thing. When properly defined as the heritage of the race from Adam, it does not imply personal guilt at all. It is a condition, a weakness, a moral paralysis, a spiritual death; and under the dispensation of God's grace, with each soul born in this condition there comes some counteracting influence. But the supervening grace neither changes the primary fact of the fall, nor abolishes the law of propagation under which the first sinner transmitted his sinful nature to his offspring. The depravity which the Scriptures teach, consists not in positive guilt and wickedness, but in the utter loss of original righteousness, the destitution of the soul by natural inheritance of the spiritual life and holiness which Adam forfeited. The loss of that holiness is depravity, and the utter loss of it is what is meant by total depravity. In asserting this doctrine, we say nothing about the gracious state of men, as that does not belong to the line of nature; neither do we mention their personal guiltiness, which comes only with responsible action, nor the diversities of character which manifest themselves as the result of their natural and gracious state. Indeed, this is the

only doctrine which finds room for all the facts in the moral history of the race, and accounts for them without laying the responsibility upon God as the author of human nature as it now appears.

Finally, we do not deem it proper to say that we are born sinners. If this expression be used it must be explained. Sinners commit sin. They transgress the law. We are not born *sinner*s. Nor dare we claim to be born *sinless*. This implies such purity and freedom from depravity as belong to none who are the offspring of fallen Adam. We are therefore not sinners, by nature, nor sinless, but *sinful*. By this we mean that our nature is perverted by sin, and tends to sin, before we commit sin. In other words, we are affected by sin, and inherit the germ of evil, which develops into such a bent to sin, that none successfully resist it of themselves. This is our depravity. We are "born after the flesh," and must be "born again." We are not born in the image of God. That comes in the "new creation." Depravity is not an accretion, gathered about the soul by contact with the world. It comes not from

without, through bad education or bad examples. It is a disease of our natures—a “leprosy within”—a moral malady whose poison permeates the fibers of our spiritual being, and sends the chill of death through all the hidden chambers of the soul, and touches with its blight the fountain of the sensibilities and the passions.

Starting in life with this natural inclination to evil, it is not wonderful that the whole race is practically estranged from God. Without considering the question as to the possibility of exceptionally well-favored persons, under Christian influences, so far escaping the natural disposition to do wrong, as to retain the primal justification, till the traditional faith of childhood passes into the personal confidence which secures the standing of active discipleship, we find that in Old Testament times, when the Lord looked down from heaven to see if there were any that were not corrupted, he declared, “They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” In Paul’s day the facts were no better. He repeated the words just quoted, and affirmed with emphasis

that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Practically, then, the whole world is guilty before God. Therefore we accept the proposition that men are sinful by nature, and naturally become sinners in practice. They are "aliens" from God, and "enemies;" they are "without strength;" they are "carnal, sold under sin;" they are "dead in trespasses and in sins;" they are "lost;" they are "by nature the children of wrath;" they are "the children of the devil." They are "condemned" under the law of God, and "blinded," and "led captive by the devil at his will." Such is the nature, and such the condition of men, when the Gospel comes with its offer of pardon, life, purity, blessedness, and triumph. In accepting the Gospel, and verifying its truth, and rising out of the "horrible pit," and passing into the "image of God," and into the life of faith, and the obedience of love, and the fellowship of the holy, there is a deep and joyful experience placed before every one which is too mighty in its inception, and progress, and results, to pass upon us, and transform and save us, without our consciousness of its presence. It

is to some of the aspects of this experience we shall direct attention, considering not merely the emotional elements therein, but also the conditions and doctrinal relations implied, as these are unfolded in the Holy Scriptures.

## CHAPTER II.

## REPENTANCE.

FIRST among the terms which the attentive reader of the Scriptures encounters, relating to the spiritual exercises of the soul in its struggles with sin, is the word Repentance.

This word, in some respects, resembles the word "conversion," as it signifies a turn round in life, the forsaking of former ways, and the adoption of new principles of action. It is not, however, the full equivalent for the word "conversion," as it is not so intimately related to the spiritual life which follows regeneration. Yet if we analyze its meaning, and study its use in the Scriptures, we shall find that it describes a very important feature of experience. It expresses a twofold idea—the proper inward feeling of the soul in regard to sin when its true nature is apprehended, and the act of turning away from sin in obedience to that inward feeling.

Repentance implies a conviction of the fact

and of the evil of sin. This conviction is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. In performing this office the Spirit may or may not employ outward instrumentalities, but ordinarily something external to the sinner is used to draw his attention, and to excite thoughtfulness. Conviction, however produced, is not properly regarded as a part of repentance, but as an antecedent to repentance, and as necessary to it. We do not repent of sin till we feel its burden, and discover its nature; but when the law of God in its purity and spirituality is applied to the conscience, it reveals the presence of sin, and shows its guilt, and declares its ill-desert. This far the Spirit goes in its work without our consent or cooperation; but when conviction is produced, and we see our sins and feel conscious of guilt and danger, then we are called upon to become active in the matter of repentance; and unless we become active, the work will not proceed, but the conviction will abate and die out, and increased insensibility will ensue. Many in whose heart the Spirit works, resist its warn-

ings, its illuminations, and its drawings, and never advance a step in the real work of repentance.

In connection with conviction, there springs up in the soul a desire to escape the consequences of sin, and if the work of the Spirit is not resisted, this feeling will take the form of an earnest desire to obtain deliverance from sin itself. This is incipient repentance. When indulged or cherished, it will lead to the first active step in repentance, which is the confession of sin.

Confession is first made to ourselves. This is a great victory. When we become so penetrated with the sense of our sinfulness as to be willing to own to ourselves the vileness of our hearts, and the wickedness of our deeds before the Lord, and our liability to the wrath which we feel to be impending, we have started in the way of repentance. Then confession is made to God. The folly of hiding sin in our hearts is manifest in our consciences. We feel as never before that the eye of God is upon us; that the whole of our outer and inner life is naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do; and then we

go to him in penitence and confess our sins. Following this, if we have wronged or injured our fellows, we find something within prompting us to acknowledge our fault to the injured party, and to seek forgiveness. This is real progress. The work of repentance is begun. By this time we are ready to confess to all around us our unworthiness, our weakness, and our great need of pardoning mercy; and if we have sinned publicly so as to injure the cause of God in the community, we are led to make our confession as public as our wickedness had been.

By this time the feeling of deep regret that we have wasted time, and strength, and abused the mercies of God, becomes paramount in the soul. This is sorrow for sin. It is the essence of repentance. It arises from the view we have gained of the evil of sin, of the holiness of God, and of his goodness to us. We dread the punishment of sin, but we deplore the sin itself. The ingratitude of our hearts fills us with dismay. We bewail our guilt; we loathe our past lives; we reproach ourselves for blindness and stupidity, and tremble before the God of righteousness.

Moving on in the way of repentance, we "cease to do evil, and learn to do well." The pleasures of sin have vanished. We hate what we loved. We break off from sin without regret. Prayer is now our refuge. "God be merciful to me, a sinner," wells up from the soul, and breaks from the lips. No other sentence is so appropriate as this! Mercy is our plea. Then we learn of Christ. His life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension, bear new lessons to our hearts. He is no longer a name, a historical personage, a mere person; he becomes a living reality, a Savior. With heart and soul and voice we turn to him. This is indeed repentance. It is "godly sorrow" that worketh repentance unto salvation "not to be repented of." It is too high a step in the direction of deliverance to be taken without divine aid. God is surely working in the soul, and it is already not far from the kingdom.

Some degree of faith must attend every step in the process of repentance. He who begins to repent believes in God, and in his Word. He accepts the light as it comes. He acknowledges the divine authority. But as

yet his faith has not reached the point that justifies. He has not cast himself wholly on the Son of God, and trusted for acceptance. Faith takes this form, and this degree, only when repentance becomes so deep as to cut off the last particle of confidence in self. None but the self-despairing can trust in Christ alone.

Mistakes are sometimes made in regard to the work repentance does for the sinner. It is claimed that it prepares the penitent for pardon, and entitles him to receive it. This statement contains some truth, and some serious error. Repentance prepares the man for pardon; it brings him into the right disposition to receive and appreciate the blessing; but we dare not say that it gives him a title to it, or in any sense becomes the ground or reason for forgiveness. The ground of pardon is not in the person receiving it, but in Christ. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." That is a false view of repentance which makes it the consideration in the divine mind on which alone the blessing may be bestowed. Repentance

does not expiate guilt. It does not satisfy the requirement of the broken law. There is nothing in it tending to uphold the authority of government in the administration of clemency. As between men who are equals, repentance for a wrong done may open the way for forgiveness, and make the exercise of clemency right and duty; but in matters of government, where not only private wrong has been done, but the public law violated, the private party injured may acquit the offender, on repentance, so far as his personal feelings and relations are involved, but he has no right to adjust the claims of the law in the case. God is offended by the sins of men, and his law is transgressed. He is the moral ruler of the universe. His law is for the protection of myriads of intelligent beings whose loyalty is complete, and whose happiness depends on the maintenance of authority, and the unbending assertion of righteousness. The interests of the moral government require the enforcement of the law. If clemency be exercised, it must be in harmony with the rights of the government, and in such way as to display the righteousness as well as the mercy

of the sovereign. Herein is found the necessity of the atonement—the propitiation in the blood of Christ. Repentance does not atone. It affects the person of the penitent; it marks an era in the history of his transgressions; it starts him into a new and better life; but it makes no amends for the past. The record of his sins stands against him, and nothing but the blood of atonement, appropriated by faith, can blot out the record or cancel the account.

If forgiveness were simply a matter of prerogative, the sovereign might impose the condition of repentance, and treat it as a sufficient reason for forgiveness; but it is not a mere matter of prerogative. It is a governmental action. The Supreme Ruler can not separate himself from his universe, and act in an arbitrary way. The attributes of his being govern his administration. His holiness restrains him from being indifferent to sin, and his justice impels him to regard the rights of his law, as his goodness inclines him to seek the happiness of his creatures. In his dealings with the subjects of his law every attribute of his nature must concur, and every right of his government must be maintained. Then, if he

should forgive sins by mere prerogative, what would become of the justice and law that affix penalty to transgression? If in this way he should forgive some and not others, what would become of his equity, his impartiality? If he should forgive all, what would become of his opposition to sin? How would he vindicate his authority? how manifest his holiness? The truth is, arbitrary action is not government. The Supreme Ruler of the universe is himself governed by the law of his being, and that same law determines the character of his government over his creatures. God can not act contrary to his own nature. He must act by rule, by the law of his perfect selfhood. Therefore, he can not act arbitrarily. He can not change. He can not do and not do. Therefore, he can not enforce his law and set it aside. He can not denounce sin under penalty, and without consideration set aside the penalty. His own nature, and his relation to his law and to the universe, alike proclaim the absurdity and the impossibility of the forgiveness of sin by mere prerogative; and if not by prerogative, it can not be upon any condition that does not satisfy

the claim of justice and maintain the authority of law. The repentance of the sinner does not do this ; but the sacrificial death of Christ is the provisional satisfaction, rendered available to the penitent upon personal trust in Christ. Hence, repentance and forgiveness are preached in his name.

The thought here occurs that possibly the duty of repentance is not insisted upon in the preaching of the times, as in former years. John the Baptist opened his mission by preaching repentance and exhorting men to flee the wrath to come. The Savior himself began his public ministry by calling upon the people to repent and believe the Gospel. When he sent out his disciples to preach the kingdom of God at hand, he directed them to preach repentance. On the day of pentecost, when the first sermon was preached under the new commission, and the multitude, cut to the heart, inquired what they should do, Peter told them to repent. God now commands all men everywhere to repent. To every class of sinners the evangelist is authorized to say, " Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." This is, indeed, the minister's primary

work. His business is to call sinners to repentance. Every thing else must bend to this duty, and in some way contribute to this end. Yet he need not be narrow. The call to repentance is not best enforced by always dwelling on this theme to the neglect of others. Living issues must be met; the strongholds of infidelity must be assailed and captured; the hiding-places of heresy must be searched; the darkest habitations of superstition must be explored, and all the enemies of God and truth must be brought under the flash and glare of the divine Word—a work which will require time, thought, study, prayer, and earnest working. But there are multitudes in the busy world around us who care little for our profoundest investigations. These must not be neglected. They have no patience with metaphysics, no taste for logic, and little regard for displays of learning. If brought to repentance, it must be by appeals to their hearts. The law of God must be laid upon their souls; the love of God, in melting strains, must thrill their sensibilities; and the minister of God may assume that the stirring truths of salvation, gushing from hearts moved

with sympathy for the perishing, and pressed with the vehemence of honest zeal, will awaken in them a desire to know God and the power of his grace. Such appeals must be made, and in this work of calling men to Christ, "repentance towards God" will find its appropriate place in every theme.

Say not that the subject itself is narrow, or commonplace, or stale. In preaching repentance, definitions, expositions, arguments, and illustrations may all be employed; descriptions picturing sin, folly, ruin, and death, with all the enormity of guilt and the fearfulness of retribution, will be required; and so will descriptions of virtue and holiness and heaven give scope to the finest powers of the mind. Motives appealing to reason, gratitude, hope, and fear may be dwelt upon with a fervency that knows no weariness. No: the theme is not trite nor narrow. It calls for intellect, heart, and soul; it affords room for every phase of oratory. There must be sternness to arouse, vividness to portray, and pathos to melt and invite and draw to Christ. In this work the minister must have faith—faith in the Gospel as the power of God and

the wisdom of God, and faith in his own mission as the servant of Christ. And if he be truly called of God, may he not have this faith? He has the promise of God's presence and help; he has the whole Gospel, with its provisions, authority, and grace; he has the experience of the Church in all the past, with its ample testimonies to the efficiency of the Word of truth and the instrumentalities employed. Then, what more is needed to stimulate him to emulate the zeal of those heralds of the cross whose ministry gathered multitudes into the fold in other days? It is well to edify the Church, to instruct the intellectual and cultured, to afford entertainment to lovers of literature and science; but it is the first duty of the preacher to reprove sin and warn the impenitent of coming wrath. As Mr. Wesley says, "Learning is good, but saving souls is better."

Repentance is the initial step in the way of life. It means to turn round, to turn away from sin; and it is, indeed, the turning point in the history of the soul. If the repentance be superficial, the whole experience will lack fervor and depth and clearness. It lies at the

foundation of all that makes up the life of faith. The superstructure can not be permanent unless the foundation is solid. The faith that saves partakes of the character of the repentance that accompanies it. Let there be no mistake in the groundwork of the experience of salvation.

## CHAPTER III.

## FAITH.

THAT faith is enjoined as a duty, and unbelief condemned as sinful, is not questioned by any student of the Scriptures. It is, therefore, possible for men to believe if they will; for it is a cardinal principle that where a duty is enjoined, the power to perform that duty is implied. If that power does not exist inherently in the person commanded, it is supposed to be imparted to him, or in some way made available by gracious influences, so that the thing required is as practicable as if the power were an actual and original possession. Hence the guilt of unbelief.

In almost all the reasonings on this subject which have fallen under our notice the main factor, the co-operating power of the Spirit of God as a present and always available helper, has been overlooked. The faculties of the mind have been studied, the power of the passions, and the influence of apprehended

truth on the understanding, together with effect of motives near and remote, have all received attention in the discussion, while the fact that "God works in us, to will and to do of his good pleasure," has been left out of the account, as something to be considered only after the whole system of Christian doctrine has been proven and the reasonableness of faith demonstrated. But this fact is one of the essential elements in the premises of evangelical teaching—an ingredient that can not be omitted without vitiating the whole compound; and, therefore, every fair-minded person proposing to decide upon the merits of the system will study it with this allegation included, and investigate its claims as represented by its friends.

We know that philosophical questions as to man's responsibility for his beliefs have arisen, and perplexed and bewildered many honest people, and possibly have induced much of the indifference which prevails in regard to the doctrinal system of Christianity. We would neither ignore the fact nor undervalue the importance of the issues involved; but we would, if possible, avoid false issues,

and keep the mind upon the real points in discussion, and upon all the material facts necessary to the right conclusion. The supposition that the nature and ground and objects of belief must be clearly understood, and the faculties exercised with perfect freedom toward all the aspects of faith, before it can become an element of personal character, is erroneous and deeply injurious wherever it is indulged. In fact, the mental processes of faith to which these questions relate, and from which springs the doubt of personal responsibility for our beliefs, are scarcely recognized in Scripture, and certainly no great account is taken of them. They must, of course, take place; and there is no doubt that they may be studied profitably under proper conditions, when one is qualified for the investigation; but it can not be that the ordinary seeker after salvation will find it necessary to enter upon this line of thought, and solve the problems presented, before he can intelligently apprehend Jesus Christ as his Savior. It is not so much an exercise of the intellect, in harmony with the comprehended laws of mental action, that is required, as it is a right disposition of mind

and heart with reference to divine authority. When the disposition is right, God's Spirit, through the instrumentality of the truth, will lead the inquirer into the way of life. On this ground the assertion is justifiable that infidelity is more of the heart than of the head. Men disbelieve because they desire not to believe; and their desire is begotten and controlled by passions and inclinations the subjugation of which is required by the plainest principles of morality and virtue.

We, therefore, insist that in determining this question of responsibility, and in deciding whether men can believe in Christ if they will, and whether the requirement of faith as a duty is reasonable, the fact be recognized that, in all cases of earnest seeking for the truth, the Spirit of God is promised to help our infirmities and to guide us to safe conclusions. Faith, in the evangelical sense, is to this extent the product of a gracious power, or, if it be preferred, of a supernatural agency. It is the fruit of the Spirit. Its absence argues a wrong disposition of the heart, the blindness and stubbornness of the will, by which the light of the Spirit is shut out. On this account

unbelief brings condemnation. Light is come into the world, but men love darkness. They prefer not to be led out into the clear visions of truth and spiritual blessedness, and, in his inscrutable wisdom, God sees fit to allow them to follow their own ways.

There are, then, certain moral conditions of faith, which are even more important to be considered than any thing we can know concerning the intellectual processes, or mental states required. The whole scheme of salvation assumes that men are lost, that they are perverted by sin, and blinded so as to be unwilling to be saved in God's way, till they are sought and drawn and enlightened from on high. The work of actual deliverance, as well as the provision for it, and the appointment of the instrumentalities for its accomplishment, originates with God, and comes to man graciously as an expression of the divine solicitude. God seeks the sinner, awakens him, and urges him to be saved. The first motions, therefore, of the soul toward the Savior, and all its anxiety and sorrow and seeking, are from God, the product of grace. Granting to men the intellectual and moral

faculties to be employed in believing, yet if these are all bent in another direction, and if they can not be recalled or rescued from the thralldom of their wayward inclinations without such discoveries of guilt and danger upon the one hand, and of the truth and an offered Savior upon the other, as the Spirit of God alone can effect, it follows that there is as much dependence upon the Spirit for faith as if the natural faculties were lacking and could only be supplied by the Spirit's agency.

The faith which identifies the believer with Christ, and appropriates the efficacy of his blood to the justification of the soul, is not and can not be the spontaneous outgrowth of the native energies. The condition in which sin involves the transgressor forbids the supposition that there is any possibility of developing from the wreck of human powers so excellent a virtue. The lapse of human nature in the federal head is not a figure of speech. Its helplessness is patent to the consciousness. Its utter ruin through the dominion of sin is a stubborn fact, the denial of which renders meaningless the grandest mani-

festations of divine love, and leaves the mysteries of life, with its ills and evils, not only inexplicable, but irreconcilable with the wisdom, justice, and holiness of God. Before we can grasp the great thought of revelation concerning redemption, or form any satisfactory conception of the infinite wisdom displayed in God's method of our recovery from depravity and death, we must get from under the shadow of worldly wisdom and away from the suggestions of self-righteousness, and be willing to accept the concurrent testimony of the Bible and consciousness with reference to the reality of our vileness. How blindly perverse is human nature at this point! With what relentless tenacity do men cleave to the delusion that there is something good and virtuous and strong within them—some latent energy hidden away in their natures, that will prove sufficiently recuperative to work out in some way their deliverance from sin, without submitting to the humiliation the Gospel requires! Hence the stubbornness of their struggles against conviction, and the sense of wounded pride that creeps over them when first the persuasion comes that in them there

is no good thing. Every awakened sinner knows something of this inward conflict, and every converted man knows how the joy of pardon is enhanced by the memory of his previous failures, and of the extremity of the conscious ruin out of which his deliverance brought him. It is only by considering this fearful prostration of our natural powers that we are able to see the extreme measure of our dependence on the Holy Spirit for the dispositions necessary to the faith that saves.

It should be added that this faith, wrought by the Spirit, beginning with the first gleam of conviction, and growing up into active confidence in Christ, always implies repentance. It is needless to speculate as to which comes first in the order of time, repentance or faith, for the two are so related and interdependent in their different stages of development that we dare not affirm that one is present where the other is not. Repentance is not merely an act; it is an inward state, a disposition of the soul that should be permanent or continuous in the Christian life. The views of the ill-desert of sin which it implies are to be cherished in all stages of spiritual advancement;

and although the consciousness of guilt that gives pungency to conviction and intensity to godly sorrow will pass away with the coming of the evidence of pardon, the feeling of heart with reference to sin which constitutes the essence of true repentance will abide without abatement through life. This disposition of the mind toward sin, or, in other words, true penitence, is so essential to the exercise of faith that we see no good reason why it may not be called a condition of faith; for the faith that apprehends Christ and justifies the sinner springs only from a heart that is contrite. Ungodly men believe intellectually. They assent to the historical truths of Christianity, and also to its doctrines and ethics. So, also, do the devils believe and tremble. But their faith is defective because of the absence of moral qualities. It implies no penitence, no self-abasement, no longing desire for immediate deliverance from sin. It is only to the broken-hearted and the contrite in spirit that the Savior promises to come, and to bring his Father to make his abode with them.

But this dependence upon the Spirit for a disposition to seek the Lord and to exercise

faith can not be pleaded as an excuse for the absence of faith. God has left every man without excuse in this matter, inasmuch as he gives to every one a sufficiency of the Spirit's influence to make his ability equal to his duty. This point is familiar in theology—it is the old doctrine of preventing graee, or grace before conversion—but it is seldom made sufficiently prominent in connection with its bearing on the subject of personal responsibility. As salvation originates in God, and its beginning is manifested in the divine effort to seek the lost, and is shown in all the Spirit's striving to recover men from their sins, we may infer that the work is not deferred till long habits of sin have obstructed the Spirit's approach, and deadened the susceptibility of the soul to gracious influences. It is rather to be assumed that the Spirit begins to strive with the dawning of moral agency, and continues till crowned with success in the soul's conversion, or driven away by persistent rejections resulting in obduracy.

Faith is not formally defined in the Scriptures. Its office and work are given ; its necessity and results are set forth, and the fearful

consequences of unbelief are most impressively declared; but the properties or constituent elements of faith are not described. The Bible is not a book of definitions. Not one of the writers of the New Testament has turned aside to define the terms used in his statement of facts or doctrine. Yet technicalities abound. Use determines their meaning, so that they do not mislead. It would, indeed, seem next to impossible to give the full import of Scriptural terms, especially those that relate to the process of salvation, in the form of definitions. What definition of the word regeneration, for instance, would convey an adequate idea of the doctrine of the new birth? What definition of the word repentance would indicate the requirement of Scripture with reference to godly sorrow for sin, and the condition of mind necessary to the reception of the spiritual blessings promised to the penitent? So we ask, what definition of the word "faith" could any one give that would set forth the full import of faith as an exercise of the heart? No doubt these terms are used in their proper signification, so that no new or forced definitions are either

required or allowable ; yet after exhausting the fullest and truest definitions of the words, we are obliged to come back to the use and application made of them in the Scriptures before we can grasp the length and breadth of their meaning. Faith indicates an exercise of the entire spiritual nature, a moving of the whole soul toward the invisible, under the guidance of the Word and Spirit of God, in a way not comprehensible as to its mode, much less described in the lexicons. It is at once the fruit of the Spirit and the act of man. It rests upon testimony received and understood, and yet it is a divine conviction, inwrought and sustained by spiritual power. It is the eye of the soul, looking out into the realm of the invisible, and discerning objects unseen by the material sense, and giving the realities of the world to come a veritable subsistence in the experience of the inner life. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

To many minds the language just quoted will appear as an exception to the statement made in regard to definitions. They have been accustomed to regard it as a definition

of faith, and will not readily accept a contrary statement. It has been by assuming that the apostle was here defining faith as to its constituent elements, that critics have uniformly found difficulty in explaining this verse; and so long as that idea rules, difficulties will exist. In reality there is nothing in the passage like a definition of the word faith. It is rather a description of what faith is to him who has it—a declaration of its office and service—and not an indication of its elements or properties. Faith is indeed to him who possesses it, and uses it aright, “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The eye is the guide to the footsteps. It serves the purpose well, but “guide to the footsteps” is not a definition of the word eye. “Love is the fulfilling of the law,” but the predicate in this sentence is not the definition of the word love. In the same way it is said that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” In the light of this application of these words, we see how pertinently the achievements of faith in the patriarchs were detailed as illustrations of the sentiment declared. A

living faith in the soul is indeed the base or foundation of the hope that apprehends all spiritual good, and the discovery of the invisible things of God. By it we have a present realization of the blessedness awaiting us in the immortal state. This service it renders, as love serves to fulfill the law, and as the eye serves to guide the footsteps. Such service it rendered to the ancient worthies, who by it "obtained a good report," and whose deeds of renown have become the inspiration of succeeding generations, and whose example will be the heritage of the Church till the end of time.

This view of the office of faith implies that there is in it somewhat that is divine. No unaided human intellection can give subsistence within to the good that awaits us in heaven; no mere act of the mind can apprehend the spiritual realities of the invisible world. The best performances of reason result in probabilities. Socrates thought on immortality, and felt, and hoped, but could not assert its reality. Philosophers in all the ages have striven to lift the veil that hides the unseen, but in vain. Life and immortality are brought

to light in the Gospel; and this revelation comes to the soul as a veritable demonstration, only in the light of the faith which stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Faith is the eye, and revelation the window, through which the soul looks up to God, and out into heaven, and scans the boundless realm of eternity. Divine truth is to faith what the atmosphere is to the natural sight. It is the medium of its activity and the guide of all its energies. It gives shape and color to all its discoveries and vividness to its visions. Within its scope faith walks with steady step, and soars with tireless wing, and stands fast in the wisdom of God; but when in our impulsiveness we seek to push faith beyond the boundaries of revelation, it loses its divine support, and weakens and falters as other human powers.

The divine element in faith is both subjective and objective. God gives the faculties of faith, the powers of mind, and heart, and will, to be employed in studying and believing 'his Word. He awakens in the soul the sense of guilt, and the consciousness of peril, necessary to start inquiry with reference to salvation, and he undoubtedly works with every impulse

that leads toward the acceptance of Christ ; but he does not displace human agency by himself believing for us, or by mechanically moving our minds into fixed grooves of thought. He works in us that we may have a good will, and with us when we have a good will. So, also, he gives the truth to be believed, the Savior to be trusted, the heaven to be gained. He gives all the materials of faith, and the motives necessary to command its exercise and render it reasonable, and then he leaves the responsibility with ourselves.

This doctrine concerning faith has its important uses in practical life. It admonishes the careless that they can not select their own time to repent and believe the Gospel. If it be true that faith is dependent on moral conditions which the Holy Spirit must bring about in the soul, the folly of grieving the Spirit by neglect or resistance is manifest ; for the absence of the Spirit leaves an utter indisposition to repent, and therefore an incapability of exercising the faith that saves. Many are fatally deluded at this point. With the vague expectation of turning to God in time to escape perdition, forgetting their dependence on the

Holy Spirit for the power to repent and believe, they venture to the perilous verge, and even cross the line of probation, wrapt in the flattering deception that they can at will break off their sins by righteousness, and their iniquities by turning to the Lord, and awake from the soothing dream amid devouring fires. Forgetting the moral conditions of faith, they shut their eyes to the stealthy growth of obduracy, until, through the deceitfulness of sin, the incrustation upon their spiritual sensibilities becomes impervious to the power of truth, and then, blinded and stupefied, they rush onward in the way of destruction, vainly imagining that at some future time they will break the fetters that bind them, and return in penitence, and ask God's mercy and be saved. Presumptuous thought! God commands faith. He affords all needed helps. He makes it duty and privilege, and upon it depend interests vast as eternity. For faith is the channel through which life from God flows to the soul. It is the mystic tie that binds the heart to Christ. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not

see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

This faith is personal. It arises from a heart enlightened, and penetrated with a consciousness of its need of salvation, and it lays hold on Christ as its only refuge. It trusts Christ; it holds him fast, and looks to him as the risen, exalted, and living Redeemer, able to save. It is more than a faith *about* Christ; it is faith *in him*. It places in his hands every interest of the soul, with implicit confidence, expecting from him the fulfillment of every promise.

## CHAPTER IV.

## FAITH IMPUTED.

IT is somewhat difficult, even for Christians, to form a proper estimate of the value of faith, in the Gospel method of saving sinners. It is the one grand condition of acceptance with God, the receiving or appropriating cause of justification, the channel of grace, and the foundation of all the virtues of the Christian character. Without faith it is impossible to please God. It is not strange, therefore, that it should be a theme of anxious thought with Christian, Jew, and heathen; with the learned and the unlearned; the philosopher, the artisan, and the peasant. It is found interwoven with the prophecies and promises and types of the Scriptures, and mingling with the hopes and joys and privileges of the people of God, and has to do with the condition of the soul in time and in eternity.

All the special blessings of the Gospel are ascribed to faith; if men are justified, it is by

faith; if they are born of God, it is by faith; if they are sanctified, it is by faith; if they overcome the world, it is by faith; and if they are finally saved, they "receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls." It is by faith they live, by faith they stand, and by faith they walk. Faith makes prayer effectual, and gives character to every act of obedience, to every deed of service and charity, and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Among the many wonderful things predicated of faith in the Scriptures, is the fact that it is "imputed for righteousness." This word "imputed," though left out of the revised New Testament, is a good one, and its meaning easily understood when the word is properly applied. The word substituted in the new version is of like import, and faith "reckoned for righteousness" is precisely the same as faith imputed. We retain the old word, which is familiar to all students, and yet without preference, so far as any shadow of meaning is concerned.

But little is said of the "imputation of faith for righteousness" in the standards of the Church, or in the current theology of the

times, and it is doubtful whether the grand idea of the inspired writers in relation to it is as fully comprehended, or as forcibly grasped as might be profitable. Perhaps the failure at this point, if failure it be, is owing to the old abuse of the word "impute," which has had such wide influence in shaping the terminology of the Churches. So much has been said about the imputation of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness, in a sense not warranted by the Scriptures, that many hesitate to use the word, even in its proper connection, lest it be misunderstood. In the pulpit, and in devotional exercises, we may hear the unscriptural phrase, "the imputed righteousness of Christ," a hundred times, where we will not hear an allusion to the imputation of "faith for righteousness" at all, unless the passages of Scripture be used in which the language is found. It must be that the mind of the Church has wandered in some way from the real idea of the apostles in regard to "imputation."

All of God's imputations are according to truth. He never imputes actions, good or bad, to any except the persons who performed

them. He imputes guilt to the guilty, and innocence to the innocent. There is really no comprehensible sense in which Adam's sin is imputed to his posterity, although the consequences of it are entailed upon the race, and may be seen affecting every human soul, and prostrating every human body to the dust of death. Neither is there any sense which ordinary mortals can understand in which the personal obedience of Christ is imputed to the believer for justification, or imputed to him at all. It may be that those who speak flippantly of the "imputed righteousness of Christ" intend to be Scriptural in language, and doubtless they have in mind a vague notion of something they intend to express; but certainly they forget the Antinomian origin and bearing of the phraseology, and fail to get hold of the apostolical idea of imputation. They probably intend only to speak of their dependence on Christ, and to exclude the merit of their own works as the ground of acceptance; and if the language could be divorced from its history, and mean nothing more than is intended by many who use it, there might be no great impropriety in em-

ploying it. It is evidently because of this modern and comparatively harmless use of the phrase that it has been suffered to pass unchallenged to so great an extent. But still there always has been coupled with it, in the books, if not in the minds of the people, an unscriptural notion of the fall and of the evangelical process of justification. In spite of good intentions, the language conveys the idea that God accounts us guilty of Adam's sin, and that Christ's active obedience to the law is accounted ours, or imputed to us, as if we had in his person obeyed by proxy; and we do not think it possible to free the Church from this unscriptural doctrine so long as the language which teaches it is retained in the formularies of denominational faith.

Of course, our reference is to the Churches known as Calvinistic; for the language in question belongs to their standards. There is no difficulty in understanding the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, so far as their essential teachings are concerned. With admirable clearness they assert the federal character of Adam, the fall of the race in him, the universal corruption of human nature, and

the dominion of death in the world in consequence of the first transgression; and so far they substantially set forth the truth. But when they attempt to explain the methods and reasons of the divine procedure in dealing with men, they not only diverge from the line of Scriptural teaching, but they invent unsupported hypotheses, misapply the terms of the Bible, and cast a deep shadow upon the administration of the Almighty, which no human ingenuity can remove, and no human credulity can sustain.

It is, perhaps, unfortunate for the evangelical faith that the old controversies between Calvinists and Methodists subsided before a complete understanding of each other was reached in regard to the entailment of Adam's sin and the ground of justification in the merits of Christ's death. It is evident that while there is apparent agreement upon the general statement of these points, there is much disagreement as to the details of the doctrines involved. The early Methodist writers assailed the doctrines of unconditional election and reprobation and unavoidable perseverance with sufficient courage and zeal, but

seemed inclined to avoid collision, as far as possible, with the incidental statements and details of the system, which were not then deemed fundamental. They were anxious to maintain friendly relations with their Calvinistic neighbors, because of their agreement upon the great truths of the Gospel, and because of the common spirit of evangelism that pervaded their ranks; and, therefore, in many instances they accepted Calvinistic statements with reference to the penalty of the law, and the imputation of sin and righteousness, to such an extent as to involve themselves in some of the difficulties that beset that system. Mr. Wesley made a special effort to agree with Calvinists on "imputation," and went so far as to adopt their language, for the sake of peace, when he was compelled to dissent from the ideas they attached to it. Mr. Watson used their technicalities, though in a modified sense, and by his leaning in that direction went to the border of self-contradiction. He distinguished between the imputation of guilt and the imputation of the legal results of guilt; but the distinction is exceedingly fine. Far better to

have abandoned the unscriptural language, and to have made more prominent the essential doctrine of the "imputation of faith for righteousness." Mr. Fletcher consistently adhered to his own interpretation of the relation of the race to the first sin, and kept clear of Calvinistic refinements and embarrassments; and students of the present day will find themselves gainers by a profound study of the "Checks" before accepting any hypothesis in conflict with the views of their distinguished author.

Calvinists themselves are not in harmony with reference to the interpretation of their own "standards" on the subject of imputation. The more conservative, or those known as of the Princeton school, hold that the sin of Adam is imputed directly and immediately to his offspring, so that they are individually punished for that sin. Another class, whose inspiration probably comes from New Haven, seek to soften the doctrine by recognizing the ground of the imputation in the natural relation of the race to the first sinner, and thus devise a "mediate imputation," less repugnant to the instinctive sense of justice than the other. Dr. Schaff, in his exposition of the

fifth of Romans, supports the latter view, and Dr. Hodge, in his "Systematic Theology," elaborately defends the higher ground of immediate imputation. The tendency is strong, especially among the New England divines, to revolt against the old fashion of teaching the imputation and punishment of the sin of Adam in his descendants, in infinite multiples, to the last generation, and many struggle manfully to make such statements as will free themselves from the intuitive sense of wrong which this doctrine begets in reasoning minds; but the "standards" thrust themselves in the way of their independent investigations, and by force of authority exclude the light that would lead them out of their bewilderment. We shall not trace further the points of agreement and difference between these two classes of Calvinistic writers, which would doubtless be interesting to many, but direct attention to a few points in regard to which we deem the whole system at fault, the "standards" and all.

The first grand misconception of the whole subject, both at Princeton and New Haven, is with reference to the actual infliction of the

penalty incurred by the first sin. Not one of either class of Calvinistic writers appears to question the assumed fact that the penalty was executed upon the race so as to produce its natural results in the souls and bodies of men. Hence, they all make the capital mistake of attempting to interpret the penalty of the first sin by what really occurred after the transgression in the experience of Adam and his descendants. Their position is that the penalty was literally executed, and that it falls alike upon Adam and his posterity. Dr. Hodge remarks concerning the latter, "The full penalty threatened against Adam has been inflicted upon them." Another says, "What the threatened death meant is made clear in the evils actually inflicted for the first transgression." Now, we hold that this assumption that the penalty was actually inflicted, and brought forth its results so as to be interpreted by the experience of Adam and his posterity, is utterly unwarranted, and is the source of some of the most serious errors that afflict the Church, the consequences of which can not be estimated. It entirely overlooks the transition of the fallen pair from under the

broken covenant of works to the covenant of grace ; it ignores the intervention of the redemptive scheme in time to avert the impending danger ; and it knows nothing of the first effects of the remedial agency in arresting the penalty incurred, and in securing to the guilty ones a new probation. In all our reading of Calvinistic authors, we have not found one who escapes the error against which we protest, or finds room for the new probation, unless we can conceive of a probation under penal conditions induced by the failure of a former trial, and which penal state is in the nature of things a finality. We readily concede that if the penalty had been executed literally, the experiences of those on whom it fell would have made clear the nature of the death threatened ; but if, instead of being literally executed, it was arrested in its course by the intervention of the "seed of the woman," so as to make way for another covenant and another probation, then the subsequent condition and experiences of the transgressors must be accounted for by the new order of things, in part at least, and by their relation to the promised deliverer.

The great trouble with all classes of Calvinistic writers is to account for the entailment of depravity and death upon the race in consequence of the first sin. They labor to harmonize the stern fact of this entailment with the righteousness of the divine administration—a most laudable undertaking. They agree that the suffering and death of little children is in punishment for sin; that in some way sin in them deserves punishment, and is punished with death; that mere sinfulness without guilt does not deserve punishment; and that, therefore, since guilt must be imputed to all that are punished, and since infants have no guilt of their own, the sin of Adam must be “imputed” to them. But to impute sin where it does not belong is simply falsehood, while God’s imputations are always truthful. This doctrine of the “immediate imputation” of guilt to the innocent is monstrous; and the “realistic” idea of the participation of the race in the sin of Adam, by reason of natural relation, and the softened doctrine of the “mediate imputationists” affords little relief.

The great fact remains that depravity and

death are entailed on the race because of the sin of Adam. This we assert as broadly as do others, and we are not less interested in the solution of the problem. But no light comes from imputation. Depravity and death flow from the same fountain, and reach all the race in the same way. It can not be, therefore, that death is the punishment for native depravity; nor can it be that death comes as a penalty, in the proper sense of that word, for the first sin, unless depravity comes in the same way, and bears the same penal character. But who can believe that the offspring of Adam are punished for his sin by having moral depravity judicially inflicted upon them? We do not believe it, and doubt whether our Calvinistic brethren would accept such a statement, although they affirm premises which involve that conclusion. It is better to distinguish between the penalty and consequence of sin. The one is a positive judicial infliction; the other is the natural outflow from the act, or from the condition to which the act inevitably leads. The law inflicts the penalty of imprisonment for drunkenness; but the effects of drunkenness are impaired health, pov-

erty, and disgrace. These are consequences, but the penalty is imprisonment. The penalty may be arrested, suspended, modified, or canceled; but the consequences remain. The penalty of the first sin was contravened by the institution of the new probation; but the consequences were entailed upon the race by an invariable law of propagation. Adam begat a son in his own likeness. This tells the whole story. Suffering and death ensue as results of the loss of the divine image, and of the loss of the right of access to the tree of life. Our condition in this world is not altogether penal. Depravity is our heritage, but not our punishment. The penal state is beyond probation.

In carrying out their views of "imputation," Calvinistic writers not only assume that the penalty of the first sin was executed, and interpret it by the actual experiences of Adam and the race, but they further assume that the posterity of Adam would have been brought into conscious being under the penalty if there had been no redemption. To us this seems an error of unspeakable enormity. It destroys all possibility of interpreting the pen-

alty in harmony with the ideas which Calvinists themselves attach to it in its application to sinners upon whom it falls after rejecting the provisional redemption ; and it leaves the reconciliation of the divine procedure with the common instincts of justice entirely out of the question. They will never escape bewilderment till they recognize the fact that the penalty executed would have cut off the first offenders without offspring, making the only conscious sinners the only conscious sufferers. Then they will discover that the new probation of Adam arrested the penalty ; that the race owes its present probational existence to Christ ; that all the evils of this life are not penal ; that both depravity and death come upon the race through the sin of Adam, as effects of the fall and not as judicial inflictions, and that these evils are permitted in view of the compensatory benefits which come through grace, in this life and in the life to come.

Then, since we find nothing in the Scriptures requiring the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, and no ground for the assumption of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers in justification, we come

back to ascertain the meaning of the Scriptural doctrine of the "imputation of faith for righteousness." We can neither understand the office of faith nor the evangelical method of justification without studying this point. The first justification of Abraham, which occurred before the birth of Isaac, is the great illustration of God's way of justifying sinners; and strict adherence to the teaching of that striking example will save us from the numerous errors which are prevalent on the subject. The Apostle Paul makes much of this example, and so should we. "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." There is nothing here about the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, although this is given by the apostle for the purpose of showing how it is that God justifies the ungodly, and imputes to them righteous-

ness without works. It is impossible to conceive of a more appropriate place or occasion for the introduction of that thought, if it had been any part of the scheme of justification under consideration. The omission is remarkable and very suggestive. It can not be explained except on the supposition that the idea of imputing Christ's righteousness to the believer had never gained possession of the apostle's mind, and we hazard nothing in assuming that Paul had never encountered either the language or the sentiment. The only imputation he knew any thing about in connection with the doctrine of justification was the "imputation of faith for righteousness." Hence, after enlarging on the justification of Abraham, and showing how he became the friend of God, and was constituted "the father of all them that believe," he returned to his great thought which contains the germ of the evangelical scheme, apparently for the purpose of emphasizing the importance of the imputation of the believer's own faith for righteousness, and making this particular item in Abraham's experience the example for all men and for all time: "He staggered not at

the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us, also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification."

Now, what is the meaning of all this? It does not mean that faith is made the ground of acceptance. The only ground of acceptance is the sacrificial death of Christ. Nor does it mean that the active obedience of Christ is made over to the believer. His active obedience was necessary to the completeness of his personal character, and to his fitness for the sacrifice he was to make for sins ; but it was never accounted our obedience, and never can be, for the reason that it was not ours in fact. Neither can it mean that there is intrinsic merit in the act of faith that becomes an equivalent or substitute for righteousness. It can only mean that, in some way, faith

identifies the believer with the merits of Christ's death, so that in consideration of that death alone, he who is not righteous in fact is treated as a righteous man, and is brought into such relation to God as on the score of justice belongs only to the righteous. In other words, it means that faith in Christ is accepted, and answers the purpose and secures the benefits that personal righteousness would answer and secure if that were now a possibility. Abraham's faith secured exoneration from liability to punishment on account of his past sins; and our faith averts the penalty of transgression, and brings the favor of God, which comes not through the merit of faith, but through the merit of the Redeemer's blood, and through faith as the appointed channel or instrumentality. God's law, broken by every sinner, demands perfect obedience; but that can not now be rendered, and instead of requiring the impossible, the atonement comes in and sets before the sinner a new condition of acceptance, which is graciously made possible, and through which all the real benefits of righteousness come to us in Christ by faith. Faith unites the believer to Christ, and secures acceptance

as perfectly as it ever could have been secured by obedience. Perfect righteousness would have resulted in justification; faith accounted for righteousness does the same thing. There is in this no fictitious imputation of what does not belong to us, but simply the acceptance of faith in the atonement as the condition of pardon and the recognition of its office as the receiving cause of justification. It is a very simple thing when properly understood, but in it is found the wisdom of God, and the most wonderful display of his boundless grace.

## CHAPTER V.

## PARDON—FORGIVENESS.

THE first blessing offered the penitent is pardon, or the forgiveness of his sins. It is first because it is most needed, and in the nature of things precedes all other benefits and privileges. It comes just in time to meet the want of the struggling soul, and to remove all hindrances to the free and triumphant flow of divine grace which supplies all spiritual necessities.

There are times when the doctrine of pardon, or forgiveness through the blood of Christ, possesses but little charm for the human heart. While the flow of life is undisturbed by any convictions of sin; while worldliness prevails, and the whisperings of conscience are unheard; while the spiritual senses sleep, and all goes smoothly on in fancied security, this whole subject of forgiving grace seems dry and speculative, and fails to excite feeling or call forth any earnest attention. But there are

other times when the fact that "with God there is forgiveness," becomes the most precious truth that can reach the heart. When the slumber of the soul is broken, and under the influence of God's Word and Spirit the sinner becomes aware of his lost condition, and feels the pressure of the burden of guilt, nothing is so much desired as assurance that God can forgive sin through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

Pardon is so related to justification by faith that the fuller treatment will be under that heading: in this chapter brief and general statements must suffice. Pardon is purely a doctrine of revelation. Some things might be learned of God without the Bible, but not the fact that he will forgive sins. His being, his power and wisdom shine through all his works, so that reasoning minds can look through nature up to nature's God, and learn something of his greatness; but there is not a voice in all the realm of nature to whisper of pardon to the penitent heart. Without the manifestations of mercy that come to us through the Scriptures, we could not so much as know that God is kind and benevolent, much less that

his compassion extends to the guilty and rebellious. In the disorders of the world the evidences of sin may be seen, and especially can its presence and power be found in the disclosures of the individual consciousness, but that its guilt may be canceled, its power broken, and its results so turned aside as to admit the light of the divine countenance into the soul, can be known only through the revelation in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pardon is God's own act. There was pertinence in the inquiry of the Jews, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Sin is an offense against God, a transgression of his law, a denial of his authority, and he only can forgive. The act takes place in the divine mind, and can not, therefore, be performed by any other than God himself. Through whatever agency or instrumentality the evidence of pardon is communicated to the recipient, or by whatever means it is symbolized or sealed, the act itself is God's act. The right to perform it has not been given to any other. No higher arrogance can be imagined than for men to assume to dispense pardons for offenses committed against the Most High.

As the right to forgive belongs to God alone, and as the act is his, so also is it his prerogative to fix the terms of pardon. This he has done, according to the riches of his grace, connecting it with the name of Jesus Christ, with faith as its essential condition. If it had been made to depend on ourselves alone, or on our fellow men, or on the ordinances of the Church, the prospect of success in gaining this inestimable blessing would be greatly lessened; but the name of Jesus is the amplest guarantee that there need be no failure. His merit is equal to the sternest necessities, and his name may be pleaded with the highest confidence, as it is always accessible and ever available. Well for us that pardon is through him.

Pardon implies the removal of guilt. It differs from acquittal. The latter term is applied where guilt is charged, but not established. The innocent man, when found to be innocent, is acquitted. He is not pardoned, but justified as an innocent man. In such case there is no forgiveness. But the sinner is not innocent. The dreadful fact of his guilt is established, and can not be ignored.

If he be delivered from guilt it must be by cancellation—by blotting out the record of the guilt—a work which God only can perform. Hence pardon is not an act of acquittal, but the reversal or revocation of the condemnatory sentence of the law. This act takes away the guilt of sin by expiation, and removes its legal results, including the penalty, so that the sinner escapes from punishment as effectually as by acquittal. The sacrifice of Christ expiates the guilt provisionally, and faith in Christ makes the expiation actual, and delivers from condemnation. The relation of the atonement to pardon is one of the great questions in theology. God has determined that relation in infinite wisdom, and has been graciously pleased to reveal to us the fact and result, without gratifying our curiosity by telling us all we would like to know about the reasons and the processes involved. It pertains to our probation to accept gratefully the revelation as made, to rejoice in the assurance of pardon through the sacrificial blood, and await the disclosures of eternity for the solution of the mysteries which now surround the subject.

Pardon is never alone. It implies the antecedent grace of penitence, and regeneration always accompanies the revelation of pardon in the heart. The Spirit of God alone, that searcheth all things and knoweth all things, even the deep things of God, knows when the act of pardon passes in the divine mind, and that Spirit alone can make known the fact to our souls. The Spirit doubtless begins the revelation as soon as the act occurs, but our dullness sometimes delays the full satisfaction which the evidence of pardon brings. We falter when the evidence is presented, and often only by degrees, almost imperceptible, do we rise to the full confidence of faith. Pardon itself is a single act; but the realization of it in the heart by faith, through the evidences which the Spirit gives, admits of a great variety of experiences, and in many instances the evidences are so gradually perceived that the consciousness fails to fix the date of the full persuasion of personal acceptance in Christ.

Pardon is perfect in itself. Perhaps this idea will be as well conveyed if we say the act of pardon is comprehensive, and covers

all our sins. As we do not in repentance recount all our sinful acts, and could not if we would, nor repent of them separately with all the circumstances of each offense, so we are not pardoned in detail. The penitent heart, with all it contains, is accepted; the person is forgiven, and all—yes, all—his sins are blotted out when the condemnation of the law is removed. God does not pardon some sins and leave others unforgiven. The new-born babe in Christ is justified freely from all things which the law of Moses could never remove; he is personally accepted, and his whole life of sin is cast into the deep. Every child of God, however slow to apprehend the astounding fact, is free from guilt, free from condemnation, and therefore dead to all past sins. If the results of old biases and habits and passions remain, and consequent evil tendencies spring up to prove that the carnal nature is not wholly destroyed, at least all that pollutes or condemns from the former life is taken away. The Spirit of adoption that ensues bears witness to a new creation in which old things have passed away and all things have become new. And this one comprehensive act of

pardon needs not to be repeated. It takes the soul into the divine favor, where it may abide and grow and abound in all spiritual graces, and where it may continually rest on the merits of Christ, finding acceptance in him, and may enjoy a continuous appropriation of his blood to the exclusion of the imputation of guilt. This is our high calling in Christ. Alas! how few verify its blessedness in actual experience! The imperfections in our services, the errors and wrong actions incident to our condition in life—even though our abiding in Christ prevent the imputation of guilt—will ever require us to pray, “Forgive us our trespasses.” God be praised that this habitual prayer may be habitually answered!

Pardon may be forfeited. This fact gives emphasis to the blessedness of the man whose sins are forgiven, whose guilt is canceled, and to the assurance given to the faithful that their sins, which have been blotted out, shall be “remembered against them no more forever.” Pardon stands as security for all the past, so long as the persons forgiven stand fast in their integrity. If they abide in Christ, and sin not, the work of grace begun in them will be

carried on to completion ; but if they forsake him and betray their trust, they sever their connection with him, and throw themselves back upon the legal economy, to stand before God on their deserts, with their pardon forfeited and their whole record of sin against them. What else means the Almighty, when he says by Ezekiel, "When I shall say to the righteous that he shall surely live ; 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?" And what else means the Savior's parable of the lord and his servants, wherein he describes a servant as obtaining the forgiveness of a large debt which he owed his lord, and afterward as being cast into prison till he should pay it all, even the last farthing, because of his severity in dealing with his fellow-servant ? If this parable mean any thing, it means that the servant forfeited his pardon after obtaining it, by his subsequent ungrateful conduct. This forfeiture brought with it liability for the old debt. The thought is amazing and fearful. If we apostatize from Christ we forfeit our pardon,

lose our interest in his blood, have our names blotted from the book of life, and our old sins rise up again, and our guilt remains, enhanced by the special grace abused.

Evangelical Christianity alone offers a free and full pardon of sins to all that come to God with sincere repentance and hearty faith in Jesus Christ. Romanism offers salvation by penance and sacrifices and the merit of human works, joined to sacramental rites dependent on the will of fallible priests. Liberalism offers the forgiveness of sins after their ill-deserts have all been endured, holding to no expiation but in personal suffering, and knowing nothing of a pardon that releases from liability to punishment. It claims its moral power in the certainty and unavoidability of penalty, which no pardon can obviate and no mercy mitigate, but seeks to soften its rigorous tones by holding that all penalty is reformatory and beneficial. Higher than these false systems, and better for all the race, because truer to God's Word and to the wants of men, is the primal fact that repentance and forgiveness of sins are preached to all men in the name of Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER VI.

## JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

THE doctrine of justification by faith occupies a controlling position in the system of Christian theology. So long as individuals or Churches hold with firm grasp the plain testimony of the Scriptures on this subject, other doctrines, including some that appear only remotely connected with this, and scarcely at all dependent upon it, will readily adjust themselves to the Gospel standard, and give harmony and symmetry to the evangelical scheme of saving sinners. It is not improbable that too little attention has been paid to the relations of the doctrines to each other, as well as to the practical purposes of life. Those truths which are essential to the integrity of the plan of salvation are not so independent of each other as to permit us to embrace some and reject others without detriment. They are not pedestals, each standing alone upon its own base, but rather links in a

chain firmly connected, and forming in their union a perfect whole, but powerless and valueless when dissevered.

Justification by faith is that particular link which connects the soul with Christ, and brings him into saving relations with men on earth. Here his life and spirit and power come into efficient contact with awakened consciences and penitent hearts, bringing the throbs of a new life and the gleams of a new day to the soul lost in darkness and dead in sin. Destroy this link of the chain and the whole is useless. The name of Christ, if retained, will have lost its charm. His blood will be robbed of its meritorious efficacy, and his Spirit will be reduced to a sentiment or a temper, with no power to quicken the soul into the life of righteousness. Along with this displacement of Christ will come an undue exaltation of human virtues and the diminution of the turpitude of sin, till the presence of guilt shall cease to alarm and the need of humiliation become a dream. Then the pomp of worship will take the place of an inward groaning for salvation, and the services of the sanctuary will be required to charm the senses, to min-

ister to æsthetic tastes, and to nourish the vanity of the heart, without disturbing the emotions or stirring the depths of the soul with longings after God and purity.

The prominence given to this doctrine in the pulpit, and the fidelity with which its proper relation to other truths is maintained, may be safely accepted as indicating the spirituality of the Church. Not that justification should be taken as the highest possible attainment, for it is not. To make the experience of this blessing the summit of the Christian life, would dishonor it, and rob it of its power. It is not the summit, but it is the ground of all genuine experience. It is the first real blessing—the first power over sin—offered to the penitent on coming to Christ; the first he realizes in the warm glow of his trusting heart as he takes hold of the sacrificial death by faith, and finds made over to him the efficacy of the atoning blood; for then, and never till then, he finds within himself the consciousness of the new life in Christ. And as this blessing is the first, so also is it the ground on which must rest all other experiences—the foundation that must support

the whole superstructure of attainment, and enjoyment, and character. Take away this gracious privilege—this divine acceptance—this union of the soul with Christ—and spiritual disaster ensues. Put out the light of this grace, and you will look in vain for the “fruit of the Spirit.” Obscure the evidence of it, and peace is destroyed; distort and pervert it, and the darkness of night prevails; push it out of its relations, and the mists of uncertainty and the gloom of doubt will overspread the spiritual sky, blighting the fairest hope that springs from desire.

But so long as this doctrine is clearly apprehended in the pulpit and in the pews, and its experience verified, with its evidences and concomitants, there is not the slightest danger that the Church will rest in a merely justified state. The pathway to higher attainments will appear so plain that the humblest disciple, standing in the light of God’s justifying grace, will long to go up and possess the land of holiness. To grow in grace, to the believer thus situated, is natural and easy. Helps spring up on every side. There are conflicts, to be sure, and will be, but the fiercer ones are

on the lower level. The hardest-fought battles of the Christian life are for the indisputable evidences of justifying love. Hold that citadel, and the enemy is powerless. Keep that sky clear, and no cloud shall obscure the Sun of righteousness. Temptations will assail, but they shall not harm. "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" Justifying faith gives us the vantage ground in every spiritual battle, and assures us victory over every spiritual foe. Nor is it possible to gain the higher ground of complete holiness, without the distinct consciousness of justifying faith. Paul made this the starting-point of all subsequent attainments: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." The act of justification removes all legal obstructions out of the way of further advancement, and faith conquers self, and begets a hungering and thirsting after righteousness which refuses to be satisfied with less than the fullness of God. In this respect it does what nothing else can do, and that which

is indispensable to the favor of God and the life of holiness. It brings the soul into the necessary relations with the Holy Spirit, and furnishes it with the armor required in the warfare against sin. From lower experiences than justifying grace, glimpses of the higher life may be caught, like gleams of sunlight from the distant mountain tops, but the ascent can never be made without first planting the feet firmly upon this solid ground.

What made Paul the hero that he was? What gave him the courage to dare the perils of the land and sea; to face the hate and malice of men and devils; to suffer hunger and nakedness, imprisonment and death? What was the inspiration of his zeal, the support of his peerless life? "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Such words unlock the mystery of his consecration, and reveal the secret of his power with God and men. What lifted Luther out of the dull formalities of cloister-life, and sent him out to grapple with the intrenched forces of superstition, backed as they were by the

powers of the world? It was nothing other than the discovery of the long-neglected truth, that the sinner is justified before God only through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for his own works and deservings. This was the key-note of the Reformation. Before it the Romish hierarchy trembled and quaked. John Calvin, too, with all his dark speculations on fate, foreknowledge, and stern decrees, saw clearly this one precious truth, and in its light was emboldened to stand up for Christ and the rights of conscience. John Wesley studied much and labored long to find rest before he was able to lay hold of Christ by simple faith; but this point gained, and his "heart strangely warmed," then the path of duty, no less toilsome than before, was all radiant with the light of heaven; and then began that marvelous career which culminated in the triumphant shout from the bed of death, "The best of all is, God is with us!"

Others have essayed to effect reformations and have failed. But a few years ago the eyes of Christian people were turned to Hyacinthe, and many trusted that he was provi-

dentially called to bring light and liberty to the spiritually enthralled people of France; for he had seen the errors of Romanism in its ecclesiastical rule, and had felt its power, and dared to brave its wrath; but why has he not risen in the might of the greatness he possesses and shaken the pillars of the papacy? Alas! he has not learned that faith in Christ justifies the soul. His lurking reliance on sacramental grace is his weakness. Until he breaks this bond he must continue a brilliant failure, weak and helpless as other men. And there is the old German scholar and thinker, Döllinger, professor in one of the largest universities, who has demonstrated the fallibility of the pope, thrown off his yoke, and shown learning enough to confound every Jesuitical opponent that dared encounter his logic and facts; and yet, venerable and learned and earnest as has been this champion of "Old Catholicism," he too must stand feeble as a child before the superstitions he detests, till he learns that Jesus Christ is the only priest of the Christian dispensation, and that faith in his blood, without the deeds of the law or the sacraments of the Church, justifies the un-

godly, and brings upon the soul the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost.

There is power in this doctrine. It reveals to men's consciousness the utter worthlessness of human virtues and of mere ceremonies, as the ground of acceptance, and leads to the abandonment of all confidence in self, as nothing else can do. In the light of it men readily see the sinfulness of the unrenewed heart, and cease to stumble at the terrible fact of the corruption of human nature. They stand aghast before the disclosures of their inner lives, and tremble to know that God is just, his law holy, and his testimonies sure; but they find in the riches of grace in Jesus Christ the foundation of a good hope, and the strong consolation their souls need. It is by thus showing to men their own hearts, and their pressing needs, and the rich provisions of grace, that this fundamental truth, clearly apprehended, holds so many other truths in proper relation. Such virulent depravity as it reveals demands a radical cure. None but a divine Redeemer can deliver from such imminent peril; none but a divine Spirit can quicken a soul so truly dead in sins. It shows

our dependence on Christ. Without him we can do nothing. He is the only mediator. We need no other. All human merits would fail to enhance the value of his if they could be added thereto. His one offering for sin perfected forever all who by faith avail themselves of his sacrifice. We need no priestly office on earth since he ascended into heaven. False and pretentious are all earthly priesthoods since his one offering for sin. The way into the holiest is now manifest by his death. The throne of grace is accessible through his blood. The holiest men that live find Christ their only refuge in the last hour. His blood alone cleanses. His Spirit alone quickens the soul. From his death springs every hope that cheers life's toil, or blooms around the solitude of the grave. Have we peace? It is from Christ in justification. He is our peace. Have we joy? It flows from his love. Have we strength? It is by his Spirit dwelling in us. Have we light? It is his smile. Have we fellowship one with another? It is he who raises us up and makes us sit together in heavenly places. In him we have all things, for he is all and in all to us. And in all Christ

is to us there is nothing we do not need. Not one jot or title of his work was superfluous. In becoming the author of salvation it behooved him to be made perfect through suffering. It was necessary that he should suffer and die and rise and ascend. No needless grace is given. The righteous are "scarcely saved." The best have nothing to spare; the holiest have nought whereof to boast. Without Christ we are poor and blind and miserable and lost. With natures corrupt, and lives unrestrained and selfish and sensual, our very sorrow is sin and death. Yes, we need Christ; we need his redeeming grace, his pardoning love; we need it without our merit, and without our works; we need it just as the Gospel offers it, without money or price, as the gift of God through faith. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." This is the good news to the perishing, the Gospel needed by all mankind. Let it be more than a dogma in the Church.

This doctrine is the power of God and the wisdom of God. When accepted as from

God, and taken up into the spiritual nature, and allowed to become a veritable part of the inner life, it vitalizes and consecrates the energies of redeemed manhood, and sends men out upon their mission in life, moved by an impulse which they themselves can not understand, and often makes moral heroes of those who least expected to become such. It is the life of God in the soul.

## CHAPTER VII.

## JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ONLY.

IT is well, even while studying the doctrine of justification as a question of experience, to take a little closer view of its theological aspects.

The word justification has several applications. It is used of the man who is just and righteous, against whom no accusation can be brought. It is used, also, of the man against whom accusation is made, and not sustained. He defends himself and is acquitted. He is justified, not condemned. The apostles use it in an additional sense. The man is accused, is guilty, condemned; he is not innocent, and can not be pronounced innocent; then in what sense can he be justified? In the sense of pardon. By the act of God his guilt is canceled; its legal results are remitted. The condemnatory sentence of the law is revoked. He who was not righteous is treated as righteous; and this not by

a legal fiction, but by faithful judicial action, made possible and righteous by the redemption that is in Christ. This is the justification of the sinner, the topic in hand.

The authoritative statement of this doctrine is in the Ninth Article of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as follows: "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings; wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." This, in the Church of England, and in the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, is the Eleventh Article. The Westminster "Confession of Faith" is distinct enough in ascribing justification to faith as the only receiving or instrumental cause, but so encumbers the subject with limitations to the elect, with imputed righteousness, and with dependence on effectual calling and eternal decrees, as greatly to hinder the proper conception of its simplicity and evangelical character.

The most formal Scriptural statement of the doctrine is the following: "Being jus-

tified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The analysis of this passage in the original, and as given in the New Version, as well as above, will bring out several points: 1. That justification is used so as to include the idea of pardon. 2. That it is a forensic term, pointing to a judicial action which occurs in the divine mind. 3. That it is an act of righteousness as well as of grace or clemency. 4. That the redeeming act of Christ renders the clemency possible and consistent with justice and good government. 5. That faith is as indispensable to the justification as is the propitiation. 6. That the whole benefit comes freely to us, without price and without merit on our part. There are also three causes of justification distinctly marked—the originating cause, the procuring cause, and the receiving cause. The first is

“grace;” the second is the “propitiation,” the blood of Christ; the third is “faith.” These points cover the whole ground.

Upon the first point it is only necessary to remark that the whole of salvation, including every aspect of blessing and of the saving process, comes from the grace of God as its source or fountain. God was offended, his law broken, his government despised, his authority set at naught, by human transgression. As the righteous ruler, he could have enforced his law to the execution of the penalty upon the first offenders, which would have cut them down without posterity, and in their persons have ended the history of their race; but, instead of this rigorous administration, he was moved with compassion, and instituted the scheme of redemption, which stayed the penalty, renewed the probation of Adam, and placed the whole of his posterity under a dispensation of mercy. Hence, life and probation, and every blessing and every influence that tends to uplift humanity and bring the soul into fellowship with God, is of grace. Grace devised the scheme of redemption; grace provided the ransom; grace touches the

soul with resuscitating influence, producing its first longings for the divine life; and grace works within by the Holy Spirit, giving power to repent and believe and turn to God. "By grace are ye saved."

The second point, which affirms that the blood of Christ is the meritorious cause of justification, is not less important. We are justified "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This is equivalent to the assertion in the Article of Faith which says, "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." His sacrificial death is the "propitiation," and upon that ground alone could God be just and the justifier of him which believeth. This proposition is amply sustained by the following additional Scriptures: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." "Thus it is writ-

ten, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." From these and kindred passages it appears, first, that the death of Christ was necessary in order to procure salvation; secondly, that his death did in fact provide salvation; thirdly, that to him belongs all the glory of salvation: therefore, first, in him is all the merit; and, secondly, the merit of our own works and deservings, even if they could have any merit, is excluded. If we are justified and saved

only for the merit of Christ, our song in heaven will be, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." But if we are justified and saved by the merit of our own works and deservings, we shall sing, "Mine own arm hath gotten me the victory!"

The third point in our statement affirms that faith is the receiving cause of our justification. This means that faith is the condition, the appropriating cause, or the instrumentality through which justification comes to us. The phrase instrumental cause is not so good, since the instrument is something external to us. As the receiving cause, faith is the hand by which we reach out and take the proffered blessing and make it our own. By this act of faith we are justified. In the Article of Religion this fact is recognized, and faith is declared the "only" condition. "We are justified by faith *only*." This last assertion has excited much controversy and strong opposition. We must, therefore, look into it a little more carefully.

The fact that faith is the condition of personal acceptance requires no additional proof. But what is meant by "faith only?" The

word only is an exclusive term ; but what does it exclude ? Those who object to its use press it to extremes. For instance, we have been told that “faith only” is faith without grace, without the blood of Christ, without the truth, and without obedience. Plainly this is absurd, and the language in question means nothing of the kind. “Faith only” does not exclude the grace of God from its place in justification, but recognizes it, and receives and appropriates it. It does not exclude the blood of Christ ; for the faith that justifies takes hold of the blood as the meritorious ground of the blessing. It does not exclude the truth ; for it is supported and directed to its object and end by the truth. It does not exclude obedience, but produces obedience, and evidences itself as genuine and living by obedience. The faith which is the “only” receiving cause of justification is not alone. It is not a dead faith. But while it is in fact not alone, it is only the faith, and not its accompaniments, that reaches forth and takes the blessing ; it is only the faith that unites the soul to Christ and appropriates his merits.

We are justified by grace ; and in the sphere

of grace, or in the particular respect in which grace operates, it is by grace only. Grace is the only originating cause of justification. We are justified by the blood of Christ; and in the sphere of the blood—that is, so far as the ground or the meritorious cause is concerned—it is by his blood only. There is no other ground of justification, no other merit, no other price; nothing is added to the blood to aid it in the work of redemption. It is, therefore, by the blood of Christ “only.” Let it, then, be understood that it is in this sense that we are “justified by faith only;” that nothing else comes into the sphere of faith, or acts as the condition or receiving cause of justification. In one aspect, it is by grace only; in another aspect, it is by blood only; and in still another aspect, it is by faith only. “It is of faith, that it might be by grace.” Grace and faith, each in its sphere, looks to the same end, and that is the end for which the blood of Christ was shed. Grace furnished the sacrifice, and faith accepts and trusts in it, and justification results.

The apostle presents the subject in this light, in the following: “Now to him that

worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." It is evident that the "imputation of faith for righteousness," the imputation of "righteousness without works," the "forgiveness," the "covering of sin," and the "non-imputation of sin," are all equivalent to justification, and the justification is that of the "ungodly," who "worketh not, but believeth." It is, in other words, a justification by "faith only"—by faith without works, or sacraments, or ceremonies, or any other thing as conditions or receiving causes. It is precisely the justification which the Article of Religion pronounces a "most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort."

Since the justification is by "faith only," and yet the faith is not alone, perhaps an illustration will aid in understanding it. Suppose the

government should issue a proclamation to the effect that a quarter section of land should be given to each married man of the freedmen of the South, on the sole condition that he record his name, with his own hand, in a book provided for the purpose in the city of Washington. Here is one condition, and one only; but that one condition implies several things. He who would avail himself of it must, of course, be a freedman and be married; he must know how to write his name, and he must go to Washington, and there he must write his name. The learning to write, and the going to Washington, are incidents, necessary in order to meet the condition, but they are not the condition. So conviction of sin, godly sorrow, and all that makes up repentance, and prayer, and consecration, and the study of the Scriptures, may precede the act of faith, and may be necessary to it; but not one of these things is the condition—not one nor all can do what faith does. It is only faith that justifies.

It is sometimes objected that the works excluded are the "works of the law," the ceremonial services of the Jewish dispensation,

and that works of piety and charity are plainly rewardable, and therefore must have some influence in our justification before God.

This brings up the whole question of works, and their relation to justification. In considering this subject we must remember that there are several distinct justifications taught in the Scriptures. The first is the "free gift," which, through the righteousness of one, "came upon all men unto justification of life." This is generally called the initial or the infantile justification, as it includes the entire human family, placing them in a state of freedom from condemnation, and starting them in life exempt from liability to punishment, either for the sin of Adam or for their own inherited evil nature. The second is the justification of the sinner, in the sense of pardon and personal acceptance. This is the justification in question, which is by faith only. The third is the justification of the righteous, in the sense of approval. This is by works, or obedience as the result of a living faith. The fourth has respect to the transactions of the day of judgment. At that time men will be justified or condemned according to their

works. The reason of this final justification of the righteous will not be found in themselves, but in the Savior as its source; nevertheless, the decision will be according to the deeds done in the body, or upon the testimony of works as the fruit of faith.

Our present discussion relates to the second justification, that of the sinner, in the sense of pardon. This, as we have seen, is the theme of the apostle in the epistle to the Romans; this is the justification which is by faith, without works. It is the justification of the "ungodly." It has been thought that the Apostle James, in his General Epistle, alleges that men are justified by works, in such way as to contradict our Article of Faith, and even to antagonize the doctrine of Paul. It is known that Luther was at one time inclined to reject the Epistle of James, because it seemed to conflict with the teaching of Paul; but, upon further study, he discovered that there was no want of harmony between these writers. There are passages in the Epistle to the Romans and in the Epistle of James, which, when placed together, appear at variance, and need to be properly applied, in order

that we may understand them and discover their true harmony. This, however, is all secured by considering that the two apostles were not speaking of justification in the same sense, or of the same justification. It is perfectly plain that if they spoke of the same kind of justification, they disagreed in regard to it; for one affirmed that men are justified "without works," and the other affirmed as positively that men are "justified by works." The only question is, Did they both speak of the same justification? We have seen that Paul spoke of that justification which takes place when the sinner comes to God, and first seeks and finds acceptance. But James was speaking of another justification—of the third specified above, which is the justification of the righteous, in the sense of approval, by receiving tokens of the divine favor.

Let us confirm this statement by quoting the passage from James, which is supposed to contradict the Article of Religion, and the doctrine of Paul: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute

of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead,

so faith without works is dead also." In all this it is clear that the apostle was insisting upon the worthlessness of an inoperative or dead faith, and showing that the best proof of a living, justifying faith is found in the good works that it produces. He was showing those who had professed faith how to exhibit and demonstrate it, and also how to maintain it. He was addressing believers in regard to their duty after their first profession of justifying faith. This comes out in his allusion to the time when Abraham was justified by works. He was justified by faith when he believed God, and his faith was imputed unto him for righteousness. He then became the friend of God. That was before Isaac was born. It was when God made covenant with him, and promised him a seed as numerous as the stars of heaven; it was even prior to the time when Abraham was ninety-nine years old, and God renewed the covenant, and gave the ordinance of circumcision, and made specific promise that Sarah should have a son. It is, therefore, plain that Abraham was justified by faith many years before the time he was justified by works. When was

this last justification? It was when Abraham "had offered Isaac his son upon the altar." When was that? We may not tell the number of years that intervened between the time when Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness, and the time when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar; but it is quite safe to assume that more than a score elapsed after his first justification and before the event occurred to which James alludes. The first was before Isaac was born; the second was when Isaac was somewhere from twenty to thirty years old. Sarah, his mother, was ninety years old when the angel assured Abraham that she should have a son; and Isaac was born in about a year after that assurance. According to the record she died very soon after Isaac had been offered upon the altar; we can not tell how soon, but most probably within the year; and she was one hundred and twenty-seven years old when she died. With these facts before us, the conclusion is inevitable that James spoke of the justification of a righteous man in the sense of approval; a man who had been previously justified by faith,

and whose faith was not dead, but active. Therefore he and Paul were not discussing the same kind of justification, and there is no conflict between them. Abraham was justified by faith, and not only so, but by works also; and it is right to insist with James that all who are justified by faith, as Paul taught, shall also make good their subsequent justification by works of obedience, love, and charity.

The "works" which James insists upon as the fruit and proof of faith are not the "works of the law" in the technical sense; but they are deeds of kindness and liberality. They are not what some have distinguished from the "deeds of the law," by calling them "Gospel works," such as repentance, confession, prayer, baptism, searching the Scriptures, and attending upon the outward means of grace. These are all important in their places; but they are not the works which evidence faith, and react upon it, so as to strengthen and confirm it. James points to the works to be insisted upon when he speaks of the brother or sister that is suffering for clothing and daily food. Active Christian beneficence clothes the naked, feeds the hun-

gry, instructs the ignorant, lifts up the bowed down, and does good to the souls and bodies of men. Such works attest a lively faith, and bring down the testimonies of divine approval. The works demanded are such as tell upon the condition of society, as support the institutions of Christian philanthropy, and sustain the agencies of evangelization — works that mean self-denial, consecration, love to God and man, and command the blessings of heaven and the approval of all the good.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## REGENERATION.

THE word regeneration occupies a much larger place in theology, relatively speaking, than it does in the New Testament. It has come to convey to most minds a very positive idea with reference to personal experience, and is so used as to indicate, though somewhat vaguely, or at least in a very general way, the whole fact of deliverance from sin and acceptance in Christ. Its common use is sufficiently in accord with the Scriptures to avoid serious error, and yet it will be profitable to look more narrowly into its import, and ascertain from its use by the inspired writers its exact signification.

But few use this word without implying a change in the heart and life, and the commencement of a new course of spiritual development, which looks to the entire renewal of the soul in righteousness. In this general signification of the word, as familiarly used

among evangelical Christians, we find nothing calling for criticism, since nothing heretical or of evil tendency is involved; and yet a careful study of its Scriptural use will reveal the fact that it has gained some important additions to its primary meaning since the days of our Savior. Some of its incidents, its concomitants and results have been incorporated into its radical meaning by popular usage and the popular apprehension.

It occurs twice in the New Testament, and in neither instance does it necessarily convey the idea which the Church almost universally attaches to it. The first passage in which it is found, and the only one in which it is recorded as falling from the lips of the Master, is Matt. xix, 28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The sense of this whole passage is confessedly obscure, and particularly with reference to the distinction assigned to the twelve apostles in their relation to the twelve tribes of Israel;

but it is evident that the condition or experience called "the regeneration" is connected with the coming of Christ in his glory, and does not relate to the experience in this life which we call regeneration. The radical idea of the word is reproduction. It carries this meaning always, whether applied to material or spiritual things. In the passage before us it evidently relates to the reproduction or renovation of the material world, an event which is to follow the second coming of our Lord, and which marks the completion of his mediatorial work, and introduces the final glorious dispensation, in which the redeemed shall reign with Christ and share his glory. It occurs when he that sitteth upon the throne shall say, "Behold, I make all things new." In the discourse which Peter delivered in Solomon's porch, after healing the lame man, allusion is made to the same consummation in the following words: "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (Acts iii,

20, 21.) The "restitution of all things" will include the "regeneration" or reproduction of the world in which we now live; and this synchronizes with the coming of the Son of man in glory, and also with the judgment of the great day, when the apostles are described as sharing in the glory of Christ, and sitting with him as associates in the work of judgment.

The other passage in which "regeneration" occurs, is Titus iii, 5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing of regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." Here the work of regeneration, as embraced in the popular conception, and expressed by the common use of this word is expressed by the phrase "renewing of the Holy Ghost;" and this phrase is subjoined to the "washing of regeneration," to indicate its spiritual import, and to emphasize that which is most important in the transaction. The "washing" or laver of regeneration is the outward act, the religious-use of water in baptism, by which

the real renewing by the Holy Ghost is emblematically set forth ; and as this use of water symbolizes the work of the Spirit, the phrase "which he shed on us abundantly" relates both to the descent of the water in baptism and to the descent of the Holy Ghost in its renewing and life-giving power. Both were "shed on us;" both fell upon the subjects of salvation, as rain falls upon the earth. The outward and the inward washing and renewal are joined together, because the one is the ordained symbol of the other, and in this representation of the divine order the apostle assumed that the outward was not an empty and meaningless ceremony, but a true baptism, marking and signifying an inward work of grace, the "renewing of the Holy Ghost," which is the real regeneration. The word regeneration holds its radical meaning. It is a reproduction of divine life in the soul. The outward act of baptism, though emblematic, pledged the recipient to a new life of faith and obedience ; and, therefore, the whole transaction formed an era, a new departure, wherein the old life of sin was renounced and the new life of holiness was begun ; and the

inward principle of the new life was from the Holy Ghost. Thus we are brought, in the study of this word, to recognize the true spiritual regeneration, which has become the most prominent thought in connection with the term, and we see how nearly justified is this popular usage and sentiment.

There is another word in the original which is nearly allied to the one rendered "regeneration" in the above passages, and which, coming from the same root, may be regarded as its equivalent. It is found in 1 Peter i, 3, in the phrase "hath begotten us again," and signifies the production of a new element of life, which life is the inward basis of our hope of a blessed immortality. So nearly is this word like the other that no violence would be done to the meaning of the apostle if we should read the passage, "hath *regenerated* us unto a lively hope." The allusion is to the original production of life in the soul, which act needs to be repeated by reason of the forfeiture and destitution of life caused by sin. It is a second touching or inspiration of the soul by the life-giving energy of God. It is a quickening, a regeneration, a passing from death unto life.

Expressed actively, so as to represent the agency that is efficient in this work, this is God's own act. In the twenty-third verse of this same chapter this word occurs again, and is rendered "being born again," relating, as it always does, in the passive voice, to the reception of the living principle imparted by the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of the Gospel. It expresses the effect wrought in the soul by the reproduction of life, and gives the precise idea of regeneration as an experience. This word, properly rendered "born again," has the same force as that used by our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus, where he employs the term which means "born" literally, with the adverb attached which means "again," thus expressing the idea of a repeated or second birth. Whenever either of these words occurs with reference to spiritual things, there is always a metaphor in the mind, the basis of which is the analogy between the literal birth and the spiritual result contemplated; and the ruling point in the analogy is determinative of the meaning of the metaphor. In this instance the ruling point in the analogy is suggested by the rad-

ical idea contained in the word "born." It means beginning to live. It always points to the life element, and has no place where there is no life. There is, therefore, no regeneration without the production of a new life; and the only subject of regenerating grace is a soul devoid of life—dead in sin, and so separated from God as to be incapable of union with him without his quickening power. Upon such a soul the Spirit breathes, and the power of death is broken. The new animating principle, directly from God, takes possession, and the soul is lifted at once out of the death of sin into the life of righteousness. It is born—born of the Spirit—born in the moment that the new life banishes its deadness and revivifies its energies. In that moment it begins to live.

This inward change, considered as the experience of the soul receiving the new life, is expressed passively as the new birth; and, considered as the work wrought within by divine agency, it is expressed actively as a regeneration. In either case the efficient agent is the Holy Spirit; and it is remarkable with what precision the inspired writers select terms to make known at once the nature of the

work, the energy by which it is effected, and its thoroughness as the work of God. It is a "regeneration," a "renewal," a "transformation," a "creation," a "resurrection," or a passing "from death unto life."

A thorough discussion of the nature of regeneration would require a psychological study of the operations of sin and of grace in all their manifold movements in the subjugation and corruption of the soul, and in the liberation of its faculties, the restoration of its forfeited life, and even a careful examination of the essence of the soul itself. A purely scientific treatment of the subject would lead to a line of thought covering these points; but ours is a Scriptural and experimental study, and the interpretation of the inspired Word is our aim, rather than a comprehension of the underlying philosophy of the doctrine set forth. Yet there is a psychological view of the subject which we can not afford to disregard. The Scriptures indicate that all the powers of our being—body, soul, and spirit—have been affected by sin, and must also be sharers in the salvation the Gospel brings.

Leaving, for the time being, the body out of the inquiry, we must look at the terms "soul" and "spirit," and learn, if possible, how to distinguish them, and ascertain the effect of sin upon each, so as to gather the true position and relation of one and the other in the process of salvation from sin, which we now call regeneration. Without giving reasons for rejecting the common distinction or difference between "soul" and "spirit," which makes the "soul" represent the animal sensations and affections, while the "spirit" is the substratum or essence of the immaterial or immortal part of our nature, we shall give a different statement and a more accurate and Scriptural representation of the import of these terms.

We assume the unity of our spiritual nature. By this we mean the oneness of our essential selfhood. That isolated individuality which each man recognizes as himself, the *ego* in which consciousness inheres, which is the real being, is not the aggregation of distinct substances or entities, but is in itself a complete, uncompounded, simple essence or substance. Its numerous faculties have no

separate existence, no varied nature, no properties or qualities not common to the indivisible essence. We recognize in it memory, will, understanding, imagination, and speak of each as if it were separate, having a nature and essence and being of its own, and yet all these are one in essence, and one essence, not parts of an essence or entity. It is the person, the *ego*, the essence invested with consciousness, that remembers, wills, understands, imagines. We call this entity the soul, and then it is the soul that remembers and wills and imagines. It is the soul acting in different directions, or exercising its different powers. Thus all the natural faculties, attributes, or powers of the soul, have a common nature, essence, and being.

Now it is possible for us, in the exercise of the imagination, to conceive of the soul or personality as existing, with all its natural attributes of memory, will, understanding, and imagination, and yet as destitute of any moral character or spiritual affinity or inclination whatsoever. The soul does not so exist in fact, but we can conceive of such an existence; and when we so conceive, by abstract-

ing or eliminating in our mind every thing from the soul that gives it character, leaving it possessed only of its natural attributes, we leave it in possession of all that the word "soul" expresses, when that word is used in connection with the word "spirit," so as to require a distinction in thought between soul and spirit. But since the soul does not exist without something to give it character, we must recognize as belonging to it a different set of powers or attributes, distinct, and yet not separate, in quality and manifestation. These additional attributes are moral, and determine character, because they give the bent or inclination to all the powers of the soul, and determine the life and conduct of the person with reference to goodness and badness. They are qualities in the natural faculties, giving them tone, inclination, impulse, and affinity. They are to the soul what temper is to the steel, or fragrance to the flower, or heat to the sunlight. We describe them as passions, impulses, desires, affections. They are not the soul, but its vesture, its tone, its character. Any change in them is a change in the soul, for they are

the soul's properties. As distinct from the soul, they are the "spirit."

Do the Scriptures sustain this distinction? When the word "soul" occurs in the Bible without the word "spirit," or any other term joined with it requiring a limitation of its meaning to its exact import, it expresses all that belongs to our spiritual nature, including the natural attributes and the moral qualities and dispositions. So also, when the word "spirit" occurs alone, or unconnected with soul, or any other word that suggests or requires its limitation to its more specific meaning, it expresses all that is included in soul and spirit both. It then denotes all our nature that is not material, expressed by the word body. Thus soul and body express the whole man, and body and spirit do the same thing. But when the two words soul and spirit are joined together in the same sentence, each has its own meaning, and must be restricted to its specific import. Then the "soul" means the conscious self, the substratum of being, including the natural attributes; and the "spirit" means the tone or disposition of the soul, with its leanings, aversions, and affin-

ities, with reference to the eternal law of righteousness.

The use of the words "mind" and "heart" will illustrate the point in hand, and shed light on the whole subject. These are often joined together, as are soul and spirit. The word "mind," when used alone, very often represents not merely the intellectual powers, but the entire immaterial part of our nature; and the word "heart" sometimes does the same, though it relates more directly to the moral and passional elements within us. But when they are united, or used in the same sentence, so that each must have its specific application, the word "mind" stands for the intellectual faculties, much as does the word soul; and then the word "heart" represents the emotions and affections, as does the word "spirit." Morally speaking, as is the heart, so is the man. The heart indicates character. If it be right, and pure, and good, the man is just and true. His judgment, and will, and affections respond to his emotional and affectional nature, and his life flows in the channel of love, and answers to the calls of duty. Hence we read of a good heart and a wicked heart,

of a hard heart and a tender heart. In the same way we speak of a right spirit and of a wrong spirit, of a good spirit and a bad spirit. These terms which denote moral qualities, and represent character, are applied properly to the "heart" and the "spirit," but only by way of accommodation to the mind and soul. The character of the soul is in the spirit, as the moral state or bent of the mind is in the heart.

This view will enable us to understand certain passages in the Old Testament, which convey the idea of regeneration without using the New Testament terms. Of this class is the prayer of the Psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Thus also the exhortation of Ezekiel, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" And likewise the promise of God through the same prophet: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and

a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." In all these passages the "heart" and the "spirit" appear as the subjects of washing, cleansing, renewal, and change. The soul, with its natural attributes, remains the same through all the experiences of sin and pardon, of pollution and washing, of death and of life, retaining its identity and its essential aptitudes and powers ; but the spirit, the seat and sphere of depravity, and of renewing and sanctifying influences, passes through these changes of character and condition, determining always the moral state of the man. A new soul is impossible, but a new heart and a new spirit are plainly promised, and graciously realized.

The old heart or spirit, which is carnal, perverse, and needs to be changed, is called in the epistles of Paul, the "old man," "the body of sin," "the body of the sins of the flesh." In regeneration this "old man" is crucified, put to death, and "put off;" and

the "new man," which is the new heart, the new spirit, is "put on;" and this change is expressed by the apostle when he says, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." The transaction brings about so radical a change that the subject of it becomes a "new creature." Old things pass away and all things become new; yet he is the same person, with the same consciousness, will, memory, imagination—the same soul, with its moral properties all changed. The change is in his heart. A new spirit is given. A new life animates the soul, and gives new tone and direction to all its powers. New affections spring into activity, and new motives govern the life. This transition is the "new birth." It is the beginning of a new life, the soul's emergence into a new world.

Theories of regeneration are numerous, differing mainly as they emphasize one or another of the features of this wonderful experience. The essential fact is the production of new life in the soul that was dead; but this fact has its conditions, its implications, its manifestations and results. It does not occur without the conviction of sin, the sense of con-

demnation, and such a turning away from sin in godly sorrow as constitutes genuine repentance. It never occurs without the exercise of faith—the faith of the heart that apprehends Christ as the living Redeemer, the sufficient Savior, the only refuge of the sinner. It, therefore, always implies the occurrence of justification, which is the removal of guilt and condemnation by a gracious pardon of past sins. Justification changes the relation of the sinner to the divine law, and regeneration changes his inward nature so as to conform it to the divine will. These blessings are concomitants. They come as gifts of the same fatherly love, through the same sacrificial death and mediatorial intercession, and in answer to the same faith. In the order of thought, justification is antecedent; in the order of time the distinction is inappreciable.

The manifestation of regeneration is in its evidences. These are inward and outward. The inward evidences affect the consciousness. They come necessarily from the Holy Spirit, with immediate impressions and mediaté disclosures. Every soul has the ability largely to read itself, to apprehend as knowledge the

working of its own powers, and to compare and reason upon the facts of its interior life. God speaks to the soul by an inward voice, heard only in the silent chambers of the individual consciousness, and reveals himself by the filial spirit which he bestows. He also confirms this inward witness by the fruits of the Spirit in the heart and life. Hence, the outward evidences and the results of regeneration are nearly allied. These are adoption and its proofs in all that makes up the life of faith and obedience. The new heart becomes the fountain of new and holy affections and emotions. It pours forth a copious stream of love, joy, peace, gentleness, and all the graces against which there is no law, refreshing and beautifying the life, and declaring the praises of God. The mind observes these fruits, and traces them to their source, and rationally infers the change wrought, aided therein by the memory of former states and of the old governing passions.

This change is radical. It touches the foundations of character. The life it brings gives vitality to the sensibilities, quickens the emotions, and refines the very texture of the

soul. It turns the current of our affections from sin to holiness. It delivers us from the power of darkness, and translates us into the kingdom of God's dear Son. It plants within us the germ of the divine life, and readjusts and harmonizes our passions, and energizes the essential attributes of our being, so as to turn every faculty into the line of obedience, and to cast upon our whole pathway the blessed radiance of purity, and peace, and love. Regeneration is therefore the fundamental fact of life, because it breaks the reigning power of sin, makes us the children of God, and gives us power to walk in the light of holiness.

There is a doctrine of regeneration which fails to give such deep significance to this experience. It is represented as effecting a change in the tendencies, inclinations, activities, and strength of the faculties, without any change in the essence of the soul itself. This latter is supposed to be left for a subsequent work of sanctification. But this doctrine assumes what does not exist. There is no such distinction or difference between the essence of the soul and its faculties, as is implied. The soul and its faculties are one

essence. The moral faculties possess no tendencies, activities, or forces not found in the soul itself, as the soul is moved by the impulses and drawings of the spirit, which is its own essential character. In other words, as before stated, the faculties are not distinct entities. They have no essence or substratum apart from the soul; and as the soul is a unit, or a simple spiritual essence, uncompounded and indivisible, it follows that its faculties are only modes of its own activities. Hence, if God give new energy to the faculties in regeneration, he gives it to the soul; if he change the character and activity of the faculties, he changes the character and activity of the soul, and turns its powers into new methods of development, as well as into new forms of action in the presence of external motives. Whatever produces essential changes in the moral faculties touches the substratum of their being, the soul. The life that vivifies the faculties animates the underlying essence. It is not conceivable that the Holy Ghost should come with quickening power into the sphere of the sensibilities, and breathe a divine life into the faculties, and impart to them new

vigor and tendencies, putting new tenderness into the conscience, and new fervor into the affections, and new energy into the will, without a direct and powerful renovation of the soul's essential moral qualities. Regeneration is, therefore, something more than a readjustment of the faculties, or a fixing up of their impaired forces. It is the act of God which gives new life to the soul, and creates in the deepest recess of the spiritual nature a new spring of holy impulses, and directs into new channels the whole current of the emotions, making the man a "new creature," and his life an expression of the vitalizing energy of the indwelling Spirit.

Yet regeneration is not the completion of the divine work in the soul. There is much beyond regeneration. Though complete in itself as regeneration, it is not complete in respect to the development of the character it creates. It is only the beginning of the new life. He who is "born of God" is yet a "babe in Christ." The elements of character in his new life are germinal. His first need is spiritual nurture, including restraint, discipline, and sustenance, as well as instruc-

tion and guidance. He must have spiritual food, such as the sincere milk of the Word affords. So also must he practice self-denial. The old nature—the unrenewed spirit—which, before regeneration, bent the faculties of his soul to evil, has left its impress upon every power of his mind, so that the force of habit will revive, and the inclination to return to old ways will assert itself. The tinge of carnality lingers in the essence of the soul. This remaining power of evil habit must be conquered, and the dregs of depravity must be eradicated. Persistent self-denial, renewed consecration, and unceasing watchfulness, together with the continuous application of the atoning blood of Christ through an abiding faith, become at once both duty and privilege, and will bring all needed help, and purity, and triumph.

## CHAPTER IX.

## ADOPTION.

THE result of regeneration is adoption into the family of God. "Adoption, in the theological sense, is that act of God's free grace by which, upon our being justified by faith in Christ, we are received into the family of God, and entitled to the inheritance in heaven."

As a matter of experience it is so identified with regeneration that we do not conceive of it separately, and can scarcely assign it a place as a distinct blessing in the process of conscious salvation. Yet it is distinct in its relations, and must have consideration in the list of concomitants of the justifying act.

Among most of the ancient nations there were provisions made in law by which a person could be taken into a family to which he did not belong, and be clothed with all the rights of a child, and be constituted a legal heir, the same as a son born in the family.

The word adoption expresses this transaction, and, applied as it is to spiritual things, denotes the act of God in receiving aliens and strangers, and conferring upon them the privileges of heirship. The person adopted into another family under the law of the commonwealth, was legally and ceremonially born into the new life and relations he assumed; and when the sinner is adopted as a child of God, he too is born again—born of God, and into the family of God. His relation to God is changed. It takes not merely new aspects, but it becomes thoroughly a new relation.

There is no question in which we are more deeply interested than that which concerns our relation to God; and yet there is no little vagueness in the ideas we cherish in this direction. One thing, however, is clear. God is our creator. He gave us our being, and we depend upon him for daily life. In him we live, and move, and have our being. He is also our preserver and benefactor; for all good things descend to us from him. All this is plain enough—but are we therefore his children? We dare not so affirm. Perhaps if sin had never separated between man and God,

the fact that we are "his offspring," in the sense of having our existence from him, would have been sufficient ground for the relation of children; but now something different from this is needed. The Scriptures keep up a marked distinction between the relations of Creator and creature on the one hand, and Father and child on the other. In other words, the relation of children in the divine family is not predicated of the fact of creation, but always of redemption and adoption. If we are God's children by creation, where is the necessity for the new creation? If we are brought into the divine family by the natural birth, why do we need the Spiritual birth? If we are children and heirs of God by reason of our natural relation to Adam, what need have we of a spiritual relation to the second Adam, gained through regeneration? What can be the force and meaning of adoption, if we are children and heirs without it?

When Adam was first created in the image of God, he was placed in the relation of a son, and bore that relation as long as he retained his innocence and the divine likeness. Hence one of the evangelists, in his genealogical table,

says, "which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God." This natural relation of sonship was lost with the loss of the divine image, and was never transmitted by natural generation to any of his offspring, and can not now be pleaded as the ground of heirship. That God has fatherly dispositions towards the entire race can not admit of question; and that he seeks the lost, and stands ready to receive the alienated, and confer upon them the forfeited relation and privileges, as the father of the repenting prodigal received the returning wanderer gladly, there can not be the slightest doubt; but this restoring act is indispensable. It is the adoption. Without it the relation of child is impossible.

The claim sometimes set up that ungodly men are God's children because they are his creatures is utterly fallacious. It overlooks the nature of the relationship as well as its foundation. To be a child of God is to partake of the life of God. It is to possess the moral qualities which spring from his nature, and which affiliate the recipient to him in spiritual fellowship. Hence, to the alienated there must be reconciliation, and to the spir-

itually dead there must be the impartation of new life. The fallacy of the claim that unregenerate men are the children of God by creation is seen in the Savior's language to unbelievers in his day. God made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, yet to some Christ said, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." They were God's creatures, but the devil's children. To the same class he said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" God made them, but they were not his children. They were spiritually affiliated to the wicked one. The same fact is taught in the parable of the tares in the field. "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one." There is nothing more clearly taught in the Scriptures than that the wicked are the children of the devil, not of God. God made them, it is true, but he also made the beasts, birds, and fishes. These are all his creatures, but not his children.

The fatherhood of God is a most precious fact when rightly understood and applied, but

it has been greatly distorted in the popular conception. God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in a peculiar sense. He is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The only true revelation of the divine fatherhood is in him and through him. He is the firstborn of the family of God, and in him is laid the foundation for the relation of children, which relation requires vital union with him, and participation in his life and Spirit. Let this point be clearly apprehended. The incarnation of the Son of God is the only basis of our sonship. We become children of God only as we are united to Christ. He came into the world not only to declare the fatherhood of God, to reveal God as Father, but to lay the foundation on which our filial relation might be builded. Hence the language of Paul, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Adoption is thus founded in redemption, not in creation, as it is never predicated of creation in all the Bible. Christ is divine and human, and his complex nature bridges the chasm between the creature

and the Creator, making adoption and sonship possible. The mysterious connection of the believer with Christ is vital—it is the source of life, of purity, of sonship and heirship. On it depends all that is meant by adoption, and all that can be meant to us by the fatherhood of God. God is our Father in Christ, and he is the Father of all that sustain the vital union with Christ. Our heirship is a joint-heirship with the only begotten Son of God. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life—shall not see life—but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The language of the following Scripture is perhaps as clear and comprehensive as any that has been given by inspiration: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” “To become sons of God!” Then they were not such before. They were creatures, but not children. By receiving Christ, they receive

power—liberty, ability—to become what they are not by nature, and can not be without Christ, and the new birth into the family of God, which is founded in Christ and built up in him. They become sons of God by being born of God. This is the adoption. It is not a mere ceremonial adoption, but one that is real—one that brings a new life and a new nature, as well as a new relation. The negative side of this statement is very explicit, and full of meaning. They become sons by the new birth, which is “not of blood.” It does not in any wise depend on blood, lineage, or descent. It is not a national privilege, blessing, or ceremony. “Not of blood.” “Nor of the will of the flesh.” It might in that case be a purely natural or human work. The will of the flesh is the human will in the carnal state, governed by the motions of the flesh. There is much power in the fleshly will, but none that can produce the new birth or bring the new life. “Nor of the will of man.” This is the noblest power of the soul, the free, unconstrained, volitional power—the ground and measure of personal responsibility. It is indeed invincible in its sphere. But it is

powerless to bring the new life. It is not the source nor the agency of the new birth. Then this brings us back to the great thought—that we become sons of God by being born of God. We are not sons by creation, but by the “new creation.” We become sons not by the natural birth, but by the Spiritual birth; not by generation, but by regeneration; not by being born, but by being born again—“born from above”—“born of the Spirit”—“born of God.” This is the adoption. It has redemption beneath it, and divine life in it.

This subject has important bearings on questions connected with “Liberal Christianity.” “The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man” is a form of words possessing peculiar attractions for those who deny the essential corruption of human nature and the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, and who scoff at a future judgment and eternal retributions as exploded superstitions. The jingle of the words seems to them like music from the eternal harmonies. But the fatherhood of God is an evangelical doctrine in the purest sense. God is the Father of all who are vitally united to his only begotten Son; and to others the

language has no application. The interest "Liberalists" find in it is all in its false interpretation. They assume that God is the Father of all men because he is their Creator. They find neither room nor need for "adoption" in their system; and their notion of the "brotherhood of men" is as loose and unmeaning. Their conception of the human brotherhood rests upon the assumption that all men have one Father who created them. This, again, has truth in it, but is false in application and conclusion. God made all men, and all beasts and birds; but this is not the ground of the brotherhood in question. Men are not brothers simply because one God created them, but because "he made them of one blood." They all descend from Adam, and are brothers in Adam, which is a brotherhood in sin and death—a relation that brings no spiritual advantages with it. What is needed is a brotherhood in Christ. God's family is made up of a spiritual seed, born not after the flesh merely, but of the Spirit; it is a family whose headship is not in Adam, but in Christ. This false view of the "fatherhood" and of the "brotherhood" has gone

out beyond its origin and proper home in "liberalism," so called, and is found figuring in general literature and in political ethics, and occasionally cropping out in the sermons and lectures of evangelical divines. Its tendency is evil, and only evil. It strikes at the foundation of the Gospel by building up a false notion of the divine family, and removing the necessity of the new birth. It says to all men, of all classes and all spiritual states, "Ye are all the children of God by creation." But the inspired apostle says, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." It says, "Ye are by nature the children of God;" but the apostle says, "Ye are by nature the children of wrath." In a word, it promises to men, through their natural relation to Adam, all that the Scriptures promise through regeneration and adoption. It takes away the meaning and the power of the Savior's most emphatic declaration, "Except a man be born again [or from above] he can not see the kingdom of God."

After this brief digression, let us consider the benefits of adoption. By it we become children of God. This brings us directly

under the paternal government, which is in itself an unspeakable privilege. All men are, under God's moral government, held by the strong arm of power to ultimate accountability, to be dealt with according to unbending righteousness in the adjustment of rewards and punishments to individual deserts; but, beyond this, and in modification of it under the economy of grace, there is a peculiar dispensation for the children of God—a family government, whose aim is the correction and spiritual discipline necessary to the growth and perfection of those who are the heirs of salvation. That such a paternal government exists is plainly taught in the Scriptures. The mistake in regard to it is the habit of “liberalists” of applying its gracious principles to the moral government of God over the rebellious, and claiming for all men, upon the ground of natural relationship, the rights, immunities, and spiritual advantages which belong to the children in the household of faith. It is thus assumed that God's government is all paternal; that he deals with all sinners as a loving father deals with his erring children; that he punishes them only for correction;

and that he never can disown them as children or disinherit them.

This mistake we hesitate not to pronounce one of the most stupendous and ruinous that has ever been made in the interpretation of God's administration over men. It is sheer assumption, and nothing else; yet its influence in misleading men is incalculable. There is scarcely an ungodly person in any Christian country who does not resort to it for self-encouragement, when, pressed by the consciousness of sinfulness, he finds it desirable to allay guilty fears and gloomy forebodings. When, in spite of self, his thoughts run to the future, and the inward voice whispers, "For all these things God will bring thee into judgment," he reasons: "God made me; he gave me my passions, my ambitions, my tempers; he knows my weaknesses: and if this is wrong, why am I made thus? Moreover, he is a Father; he gave me my being; he loves his children; he will not cast me off forever. He punishes me only for my good, to bring me to repentance; and surely I intend to repent, and, therefore, there can be no great danger in this indulgence. Although a

prodigal, I am still his child." Now, if the relations to God of creature and child are the same; if the fatherhood of God rests on creation, and not on redemption; if membership in the divine family is through the natural and not through the Spiritual birth; and if the paternal government extends to all the race, and is God's only government over the world of the ungodly,—then this carnal reasoning is not only safe, but sound and truly rational. But if there be truth in God's Word; if there was any occasion for the redeeming work which the Messiah undertook, and any necessity for the Spiritual birth of the soul unto newness of life in Christ,—then all this leaning upon the paternal government by unregenerate sinners is an infatuation as cruel as it is deceptive. It is the masterpiece of Satan.

The truth respecting the paternal government under which we come by adoption is found in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews. The language is addressed to "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling:" "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint

when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." In this passage the apostle was instructing believers in relation to the fact and proofs of their sonship, and guarding them against the supposition that their sufferings in this world proved the absence of the divine favor. In it, as all through the Scriptures, the contrast is sharp between those who are the children of God and those who are

not. If all are children, why this distinction? If all are under the paternal government, and dealt with as sons, why this particular illustration of family government for those who are received as sons? If there are none who are "bastards, and not sons," why this specification of such a class? Why are proofs needed of God's dealing with men "as with sons," if there are none with whom he deals otherwise?

God's government over his own family is truly paternal, and the chastisements which he inflicts upon his children are indeed corrective. He deals with them faithfully, lovingly, tenderly. His administration of discipline is wholesome, and every affliction is sent in kindness, and should be gratefully received, as from a father's hand. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." It is, therefore, a high privilege to come under the paternal government—a privilege secured by the precious blood of Christ, and realized by faith in him. It is the result of adoption. The fallacy to be deprecated is in claiming for "bastards," "aliens," "strangers," "foreigners," and "enemies,"

the rights of children. God pities all these, and seeks their salvation. They are his creatures, capable of spiritual relationship in his family through regeneration; but they are not children till "born again." They are under God's government, but not under that peculiar form of it which is paternal. God loves them with compassion, not with approval; his heart yearns over them, but not with delight. Christ died for them; but they are not redeemed by power till they yield to his call. The Holy Spirit strives with them; but the divine sternness against sin is not turned away till they repent. While out of Christ, unrec- onciled, unpardoned, and impenitent, they are under the law and under its curse, and he is no friend of sinners who deceives them with misinterpreted truth, which is the worst of falsehoods, into the belief that they are God's children without being "born of God."

Adoption not only makes us children, but heirs of God. "If children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." This heirship is not to limited blessings, not even to heaven; but it includes all blessings, for it is a joint heirship with Christ. To be heirs

of God is to receive the pledge of all the fullness of God's love and all the resources of the divine nature and possessions, in order to our happiness. There is nothing that is really good or desirable that is not included in this heirship. It means all needed guidance, protection, nourishment, strength, instruction, and help in this life, and all the blessedness of immortality in the world to come. It means, also, the Spirit of adoption, or the divine testimony to this heirship, which will form the subject of another chapter.

In the foregoing we see the value of accuracy in the statement of religious doctrines, and a verification of the saying that the most dangerous error is that which appears most like the truth, just as the most dangerous counterfeits are those which most nearly resemble the genuine. The fatherhood of God, when rightly applied, and the paternal government, are the genuine gold of the kingdom. But the assumption that all the race are God's children and under the paternal government is the base coin of the prince of darkness. This spurious issue wears the color and gives forth the ring of the precious metal,

but in quality and weight is sadly deficient. In other words, the "liberalist" interpretation of the fatherhood of God puts on the garb and adopts the language of the truth, and so closely blends itself with wholesome doctrines that its terribleness evades detection by the busy multitudes; but the devil transformed into an angel of light can not keep up the deception forever. God's truth shines through all masks, and searches out the stealthiest steps of error; and in its steady light the thoughts of the heart are revealed, and the secret things of darkness brought to the light of day. "The entrance of thy word giveth light." Here is our only safety, and here we learn that God's paternal government embraces all the household of faith, and includes in its benign operations all the subjects of the spiritual kingdom. On this ground the Church of God is immovably fixed. Infidels may scoff and free religionists may sneer, and "liberal Christians," with spite intensified by proximity to the truth, may continue their denunciations of bigotry and "effete orthodoxy," but here stands our faith upon the Rock of everlasting truth.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

NEXT to the fact of adoption, in point of interest to the believer, is the assurance given in the divine Word that it is possible to receive from God a direct testimony to his acceptance as a child; and this is scarcely inferior as a privilege to the adoption itself in its tendency to bring comfort to the soul and strength to battle against unbelief. Indeed, adoption would lose much of its power as a doctrine if its consummation as an experience were left to doubtful conjecture. The relation we sustain to God is something we need to know, and the consciousness of need in this respect creates the presumption that provision is made to meet it somewhere in the economy of grace, since every real want is anticipated in God's wonderful scheme of saving mercy. This provision is found in the office and work of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit works within, finding its sphere

in the heart, the seat of the sensibilities, the emotions, and the passions. Christ died for us, and rose again, redeeming us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; but the Spirit did not redeem us, and does not perform any priestly function in our behalf. The work of the Spirit is thus distinct from that of the Son of God. The work of Christ relates to the law and to our condition under the law; hence, nearly all the terms employed to express his official work are forensic. But the Spirit's work is within us, and relates to our moral condition, our internal state, and has to do with our personal qualities as moral beings. It touches the elements of character, the springs of thought, the sources of sensibility, and the foundations of the will. There is nothing in us too deep or dark to be penetrated by the Spirit, nothing so occult as to evade its presence or escape its scrutiny. It mingles with the first dawnings of intelligence, and moves onward with the flow of the passions and emotions. As in the beginning it brooded over chaos, and brought light and order and harmony out of darkness and disorder, so now it comes to the soul in its ruin,

and begins and carries forward the work of the new creation.

In some sense, the work of the Spirit was a necessity before the coming of Christ, and it was accomplished then as surely as now, up to the measure of what that dispensation required. It enlightened the understanding, quickened the energies, purified the affections, and renovated the powers which had been overborne by sin, then as now; for this work is vital, as without it death reigns and spiritual life is impossible. The necessity of this lies in the corruption of nature by the first transgression, and is, therefore, as universal as the taint of depravity. All that is essential to the renewal of the soul must have been anticipated and made available from the beginning. The Spirit did "strive with man" before the flood. David prayed, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." It was given to the prophets in a special manner; but it also wrought in the heart where the spirit of prophecy was not given. As there never was a time when men were not dependent on the Spirit, there never was a time when it was not present to do its essential work. As it is the only agency

capable of renewing the soul, it has been available to this end ever since there was necessity for the renewal. Yet it is written that while Christ was on earth "the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." He also said himself, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come." There was, therefore, to be a new dispensation of the Spirit—one of greater richness and power than had ever been enjoyed, and which would stand related to the resurrection and ascension of Christ, so as to witness to the reality of his Messiahship and the efficiency of his mediation. It was to supply the place of Christ's bodily presence with his disciples, and prove equally convincing, to all who received it, of his triumph over death and of their personal acceptance in him. The Spirit thus given, in a higher sense than ever before, was to be the Comforter, the guide, the constant helper and companion of the disciples, and in this fullness of power and grace it was to abide with the Church forever. This rich effusion of the Spirit was to be a baptism, an endowment of power, a revelation of the Father and of the Son; it was to come in answer to Christ's

personal intercession, and constitute the highest privilege of believers, and crown their holiest experiences. It was to be a witnessing Spirit, banishing darkness, delivering from doubt, and leading the believer into all truth.

Herein we see the superiority of the dispensation which began with the celebrated Pentecost. Before that the Spirit quickened the soul and renewed it in righteousness, doing all that was essential to salvation; but since then the office of Comforter is fulfilled, and the gracious endowment of power is the exalted privilege of God's people. Now, unless our faith is imperfect or uninstructed, we no longer receive the Spirit of bondage unto fear, but we receive the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. This is the gift of the Holy Ghost, the promised baptism. It is given to believers because they are the sons of God, not to make them such. It attests their sonship after they are born of the Spirit. Thus the witness of the Spirit is distinct from the work of the Spirit in regeneration. It is something which is added to that work to make known in the heart the fact of its presence and its genuineness. It is the approving

“seal” which God places on his own; the “earnest” he gives them pledging the fulfillment of his covenant stipulations; the blessing of Abraham realized by faith; and so comprehensive is this blessing that we hesitate not to speak of it as the highest privilege possible to the regenerated this side of the resurrection of the dead.

The gift of the Holy Ghost, which the apostles experienced, was the objective point in all the instructions of the day of Pentecost. When, under the preaching of the Gospel, the multitudes were cut to the heart, and said, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” the answer given them was, “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” This “gift” follows the “remission of sins,” and attests the fact of adoption which attends regeneration; but it never precedes pardon. The baptism enjoined—that is, the baptism by water—may either go before “the remission of sins” or follow after it, as there are examples of baptism before and after the gift of the Spirit; and whenever baptism is administered

to real penitents, as on the day of Pentecost, it is "for the remission of sins;" and such baptism is a means of pardon, so far as it helps to lead the inquirer to Christ in order that he may be justified by faith. But when baptism is not administered till after the gift of the Spirit, as in the house of Cornelius, and in the case of Saul in the house of Judas, then it is not "for the remission of sins," because, being after the gift of the Spirit, it is also after pardon. But the gift of the Spirit, symbolized in baptism, is not variable in its relation to forgiveness. The outward sign varies, but the inward grace never. The "gift" can never be obtained till after pardon. Yet some of the influences of the Spirit are found in the heart before pardon and before repentance. Its convincing and illuminating power precedes the first motions of the soul towards God, leading to repentance; and its life-giving power accompanies the remission of sins, regenerating the soul; but that "gift" which is the "unction," the "witness," the "seal," the "earnest," is the heritage of justified believers only. It is the endowment of power which follows and bears witness to regeneration and

adoption. The disciples had some faith in Christ before the day of Pentecost; and, no doubt, such faith as secured personal acceptance, which included the remission of sins, and the renewal of their hearts by the Holy Spirit, bringing them up to the full measure of privilege under the former dispensation, and securing all that was essential to salvation at that time; but they were yet without the "gift." What they lacked was not pardon, nor the new birth, but the seal of the Holy Spirit, the abiding presence of the Comforter, the Spirit of adoption. They were doubtless enjoying the blessings common to the old dispensation, with additional advantages from personal fellowship with Christ, and needed only the effusion of Pentecost to advance them to the higher plane of spirituality which belongs to the Gospel day. They had lived as minor heirs, under tutors and governors, differing nothing in spiritual attainments from servants; but under this baptism they obtained the freedom of children, and went out from bondage with the mark of God's approval and the seal of his love upon them.

Our Savior himself, with all his purity and

perfection as a man, received the gift of the Holy Ghost. It came to him not in regenerating power, nor for inward cleansing, but to abide with him; it came to attest his purity, his Sonship, and the approval of his Father; and thus it comes to all whose faith apprehends him so clearly as to claim the Spirit of adoption. In addition to its inward working in the process of salvation, it comes to abide, and to bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. This abiding presence of the Spirit as comforter, guide, and witness, is that which makes us one with the Lord, and may be accepted as the crowning glory of the Gospel dispensation. Under this gift every attainment promised may be realized, every victory over sin may be achieved, and every power of the soul brought into fellowship with God, while all spiritual graces are matured and ripened into Christian perfection.

At this point the subject needs to be guarded. It is known that the disciples wrought miracles by the aid of the Holy Ghost before and after the day of Pentecost, and it has been claimed that the "gift" of which we have been speaking was the gift of miracles, and that

it was peculiar to the age of miracles, and was no proof of acceptance with God. Those who so teach hold that the Holy Spirit was given in its miracle-working power to men who were unregenerate and even wicked, and that the presence or absence of the "gift" has nothing to do with the gracious state of any one. This strange notion is necessary to certain doctrines which have gained no little popularity, and it has been advanced, inconsiderately, no doubt, by some who have no dogma to support that requires it. To our view it appears out of harmony with fact, inconsistent with reason and Scripture, and subversive of Christian faith.

It is true, however, that the miracle-working power of the Spirit attended the ministry of the apostles, both before and after the memorable Pentecost. When they were sent out, two and two, into every place whither the Master himself would come, they received power to cure diseases, to cast out devils, and even to repel the influence of deadly poison from their own persons; this was the power of the Holy Spirit which was to accompany them. On the day of Pentecost, those who were

“filled with the Holy Ghost,” spoke with other tongues “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Some received the gift of tongues, some the gift of healing, and others the gift of prophecy. How long these gifts remained with the Church is a question of history not easily determined; and whether they might or might not have continued longer than they did, and whether they may or may not be restored to the Church, are questions not immediately within the range of our present inquiry. But we must look at the suggestion that these gifts were bestowed upon unpardoned sinners; for we can not reconcile such an assumption with our understanding of the design of miracles.

The reason usually assigned for believing that unpardoned persons received the Holy Ghost in its miracle-working power, is found in some Scriptural expressions, which we can not avoid believing are misunderstood and wrongly applied. The Savior spoke of some who will set up this claim in the day of judgment, but it should be observed that they utterly fail to have it acknowledged: “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have

we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." In this we have only the false assertion of hypocritical pretenders, that they had wrought miracles in the name of Christ, while against it is the denial of our Savior himself, in the emphatic words, "I never knew you!" Another passage sometimes adduced as proof of this strange notion, is in Paul's discourse on charity or love, in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." Here, in order to exalt our conception of charity, the apostle presents a hypothetical case. He does not affirm that any such case ever existed; nor does he imply that any person ever had, or ever could have, any one or all of these ex-

cellent gifts, and yet be without charity. He simply supposes the case for the sake of the argument. In the entire discourse, there is not a syllable of proof that any miraculous gift was ever bestowed upon an unpardoned sinner.

Quite preferable to this notion is the logic of the man who was born blind, whose eyes Jesus anointed with clay, and who, at the Master's bidding, went to the pool of Siloam and washed, and came seeing. When pressed with inquiries, and left by his parents to bear his cross-examination alone, and when derided for his adherence to his benefactor with the sneer, "As for this fellow, we know not from whence he is," he made the following masterly speech, which was never answered, and we venture to say never will be answered: "Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God he could do nothing." This argument needs no

amplification. Miracles are wrought only by men of God. And not less pertinent is the following: "And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name and he followeth not us, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part." Miracles are the best proofs of the divine mission of prophets and apostles; but if the gift of the Holy Ghost, in its miracle-working power, has been given to the unregenerate and unpardoned, then the very foundation of our faith is overturned; the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures by miracles is impossible; and the distinction between the wonderful works of the men of God, and the lying juggleries of deceivers, instigated by Beelzebub, is broken down. We can not afford, as defenders of the good name of Christ's chosen servants, to admit that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were ever given where they did not attest the acceptance of the person receiving them, and therefore we dare not believe that they ever went before

pardon and regeneration. These gifts were special endowments, superadded to converting grace, and wherever they were found, there was proof of the divine favor and love.

Then, we return to the fact that the Holy Ghost, given on the day of pentecost, bating the incidental miraculous powers attending it, was to be the heritage of the Church throughout the dispensation. This will appear by considering more fully the words of Peter to those who cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" After the instruction to "repent and be baptized," and the declaration, "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," he added, "For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The "promise" is that made in the Abrahamic covenant, in the words, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." That this promise of blessing includes the gift of the Spirit, as the permanent privilege of the Church under the Gospel, is evident from Paul's application of this same "promise" in his Epistle to the Galatians: "Christ hath redeemed us from the

curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." The "blessing of Abraham" is the blessing promised him and his seed, and through his seed to all nations; and to "receive the promise of the Spirit" is to receive the Spirit which was promised; and that Spirit is indeed the blessing of Abraham. It is the Spirit which is to abide with the Church, to witness the verity of Christ's teachings, to guide the disciples into all truth, and to be in their hearts the spirit of adoption, crying, Abba, Father. The great fact in this connection is that the Spirit thus promised and given is not the Spirit in regeneration merely, nor the miraculous gifts which attended its manifestation in the primitive Church, but the Spirit which follows adoption and witness to the fact, and makes known the Father and the Son. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The presence of this Spirit in the soul, manifesting itself in the consciousness, is proof of the filial rela-

tion, and may be accepted as the divine testimony to adoption, even if no voice is heard and no revelation of the process is made. The conscious presence of the Spirit is the voice of God, and that voice comes only to bear witness to our acceptance; so that we need not wait for words or revelations before we can know that God owns us as his. "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 to us of God."

Beyond all this is the question, "How does the Spirit bear witness with our spirits?" This relates to the mode of the Spirit's work, and can never be answered. It is not for us to know how it is, and it is useless to form any conjectures concerning the mode of any movement of the Spirit within us. But the fact that the Spirit does bear witness with our spirits is not to be questioned on account of our necessary ignorance of its manner of doing the work. We treat the mysteries of the Spirit's methods just as we do any other mysteries. We accept the fact on competent testimony, and leave the mystery of the mode

where it belongs—outside the range of our thoughts.

The fact is declared to us in the Word of God, and our faith rests in that testimony; so far as the common privilege of all believers is concerned; and the fact as an item in our personal experience is attested by our personal consciousness, by which we discern the Spirit's presence, and distinguish it from our own spirit and from every other spirit. It comes according to the divine Word, on the condition therein prescribed, and impresses our spirit so that we realize its presence, and so clearly apprehend it that its indwelling becomes knowledge, acquired without the media of the senses, by direct impression on our inward sensibilities. We may not give the philosophy of this contact of Spirit with spirit, nor tell the reason why it is hidden from our bodily senses, but we can know the fact as surely as we know any thing that discloses itself within our consciousness. But this ought to be added: When the consciousness of the Holy Spirit's presence is found within we do not depend entirely upon an impression for our knowledge of the fact. The impres-

sion is a factor, and one of great importance, but it is not the only one. The conditions under which the impression comes, its accordance with the promise, its relation to faith, and its tendency to lift the soul into holier exercises, are all to be considered; and, then, the "fruit of the Spirit" comes in to corroborate the impression, and give unmistakable confirmation to the testimony which was primary and direct. In this way the "witness of the Spirit" becomes a living truth, tested and verified, on which we can depend without fanaticism and without deception.

Two mistakes are sometimes made in regard to this experience. Some find too much in it. They evidently accept as divine some things which originate in their own imaginations. They hear the voice of God in detail, or suppose they do. They claim to be taught by the Spirit to do and to say this and that in regard to daily living, in a way that indicates great familiarity with the Deity, and represents him as making revelations to them about themselves and others, outside of the matter of their personal relation to the divine family. They also speak with authority from

their inward illumination in regard to doctrines connected with the various phases of experience, so that the suggestion that they are possibly incorrect is taken as opposition to the Gospel itself. That this is an abuse needs scarcely be pointed out. The Spirit attests its own work and helps us to understand the Sacred Word ; but it does not teach us outside of the Scriptures, except as to our personal standing before the Lord. The other mistake is nearly allied to this one, although the effect is widely different. It arises from slowness to believe on sufficient testimony, as the one just considered comes from a readiness to believe on insufficient grounds. Some form such an idea of the Spirit's voice within that they are unable to perceive its presence, because it does not come up to their expectation, or satisfy the tests which they voluntarily establish. They look for inward voices and words, saying of each blessing, "This is justification," "This is regeneration;" and of each process, this, and that, and the other thing; so that they are never satisfied, and never find the real witness, which they might enjoy. The truth is, we ought not to expect the witness to

come so that we can find it without searching. Self-examination is a duty, and it is by thoroughly studying our hearts we are to "prove our own selves." This implies that a little time should be taken, and that Scriptural tests should be applied, so as to assure ourselves of the Spirit's presence; and that then we should accept the evidence gratefully, not seeking for signs and wonders, and not fixing imaginary standards of our own devising. The first mistake leads to fanaticism, the second to doubtfulness and indecision. In many instances the second is caused by the boldness and indiscreet language of those who have fallen into the first error. The reaction from overdoing is disastrous. The effect upon some minds is open disgust and disbelief; and upon others, discouragement.

The witness of the Spirit is sacred to the person who enjoys it. It is the most precious jewel of the heart. It is the "hidden treasure," "the pearl of great price." It is the "secret of the Lord," committed to the believer in trust, not to be despised, nor to be treated as a common thing. It is, therefore, to be spoken of with carefulness in the pres-

ence of those who appreciate it, and not boastingly before the multitude. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." It is given for his own comfort and confirmation in the faith. Let it be shown by its fruits. It is a light that will shine. Well for us if we learn to expect neither too much nor too little from this blessing! Well if we endeavor to make neither too much nor too little out of it! "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

## CHAPTER XI.

## REGENERATION AND SANCTIFICATION.

MUCH is to be learned by studying the words of the Bible. The sacred writers declared the Gospel in words, and in words which the Holy Ghost suggested or approved, and it is fair to assume that the words employed by them should be taken in their most obvious sense, as determined by the scope and design of the writers. Sometimes when we consider the simplicity of the words of inspiration, and then remember how the Churches and the ministry have wandered from the original sense of those words, and how the simplest terms of the Bible have grown into mysterious technicalities, producing almost endless disputations, we are astonished that so much of the essence of Christianity has been preserved, and that the truth is still ours, substantially as it was first delivered to the Church. We ascribe this largely to the fact that the Word is written, and that it was originally written,

in a tongue which soon after the writing ceased to be liable to the changes incident to a living language. This is the only solution of the problem, and indicates providential care in providing the truth for us, and in securing the purity of the sacred record.

Having in a previous chapter spoken of the Scriptural use of the word Regeneration, we now join to it another term, which has occasioned no little dispute and perplexity—the word Sanctification. These terms are properly associated, because they relate to the same general experience, expressing not the same thought, but each pointing to a distinct phase of the work of grace—a work which is essentially one, though embracing several particulars. Our purpose is to go back of all theories and theorizing in regard to these terms, and get at their import as used separately and together in the Scriptures. Etymologically considered, they have no necessary connection, but they are so intimately related in use that it is difficult to consider them separately. At least, while each expresses a distinct idea concerning salvation from sin and death, both are needed to describe the experience con-

templated in its completeness, although each is sometimes used so as to imply what the other means.

These words are not synonymous. The ideas they contain are not the same, nor are they similar. But, as before said, they pertain to a work of grace which, while it presents several aspects, is essentially one work, as it belongs to the same person, is all provided for in the same way and by the same sacrifice, and is experienced on the same condition, in response to the same faith, and substantially at the same time. This work as a whole is salvation; but salvation is a generic word, which includes the process and results of deliverance from sin, and being so comprehensive, if not complex, it can not be expressed by any specific term which has reference to its process, mode, agency, or any of its distinctive features or results. Salvation includes pardon, regeneration, sanctification, adoption, and whatever is implied in either or all of these specific terms, and all these are necessary to give the full meaning of the word as it relates to personal experience. Pardon, however, has to do with the legal

aspect of this work, and takes place in the mind of God, and is not, therefore, usually regarded as a constituent part of the inward experience, whose process and aspects we are seeking to understand. But regeneration and sanctification are wrought in the soul by the agency of the Holy Ghost, and are thus more intimately related to each other, and come more directly under the cognizance of the individual consciousness.

As is more than implied in the foregoing, there are two leading aspects of the inward work of salvation, and both are indicated by the moral condition of the sinner. He is "dead," and he is spiritually "unclean." He must therefore be brought to "life," and he must be "washed." Here are two processes, distinct and unlike, yet equally necessary, and never to be separated in the work of salvation. The first is a "quickening," and necessarily belongs to the life element in salvation. This is regeneration. The other is a "washing,"—a putting away of the "filthiness" or pollution of sin,—and this as distinctly relates to the element of holiness or purity, and is properly known as sanctification.

The first process, taken in its fullest scope, includes the necessary antecedent repentance, and all that looks toward the development of the new life, in its inception and progress, till the death of sin is removed, and the life of faith established. It does not, however, comprehend the other process, although it implies it. That takes place at the same time, and on the same terms, and includes personal consecration and the appropriation of the cleansing blood, and all that makes up the holiness element in salvation. Thus these two aspects are parts of a whole, each implying, but not including, the other, and it is not strange that they have been at times confounded, or that some difficulty has been experienced in conceiving of them separately.

As these two branches or aspects of experience are so closely related, springing as they do from the moral necessities of the soul, all questions as to their correspondence and mutual dependence are answered sufficiently for practical purposes when we reach the true ideas of their intrinsic nature and co-existence. The regenerate soul is sanctified, and yet regeneration is not sanctification, and *vice versa*.

And as one is not the other, so it is only by accommodation, in view of the implication of the presence of sanctification where regeneration is predicated, that we are taught in our theological standards to say that regeneration is sanctification begun. This language is theologically true; for where one is, there is the other; and sanctification is wider in its scope than regeneration. Their distinctness in nature is unquestionable, since one brings *life*, and the other *purity*; but this neither separates them in relation to time, nor makes either independent of the other. Where regeneration is, sanctification is begun; and, hence, when persons are said to be sanctified, their regeneration is implied, just as justification implies regeneration and sanctification as concomitants.

Attention to the foregoing statements will show why it is that "babes in Christ" are spoken of in the Epistles as being "sanctified in Christ." They are not "babes" till they are "born of God;" then, being "born of God," they are "new creatures," for they are "in Christ;" and, being "babes," "new creatures," "born again," they are justified,

washed, "sanctified" by the Spirit of God. But is the work of grace described by these terms so complete in "babes in Christ" that there is nothing more to be sought or expected? Not by any means. Regeneration produces the new life, but does not complete it. The life element is imparted; but it is not developed, and has not reached its perfect manifestation. It is a germ which is to grow and expand, and ultimately bring forth the fruit of righteousness. Growth follows life; but the growth is not in the process of regeneration. That process is complete when the life is imparted; but the life itself is not complete in the sense of development or maturity, and the growth is of the life which regeneration produces. That "life" comes from God; it comes in the new birth, which is the beginning of life; and all its subsequent developments, under the quickening Spirit that gave it, must be in the line of its own functions and activities. It is the life of God in man, the vital principle that displaces spiritual death, and links the soul to God. This growth of life may be said to begin with regeneration; but it is not included in regeneration, nor can

it be limited to regeneration. So, also, is it with sanctification. It accompanies regeneration, but it does not stop with regeneration. It washes away the defilements of sin, and removes the obstructions to the expansion of the inward life, rendering growth possible. It is not growth; but it is an accompaniment of growth, and an accessory to growth. Hence, in its fullest signification, sanctification relates to a process of cleansing which begins with regeneration, and goes on and on through all the experiences of growth, maturity, and perfection. Thus it appears that regeneration and sanctification are branches of one experience, constituents of one salvation, co-existing, working together, each in its own line, and revealing the extent and unity and symmetry of the work of grace, and destroying sin in all its phases and results.

It is, therefore, proper to use the word sanctification as expressive of the state of grace attained at the time of regeneration, and to apply it to all who are truly born of God. This is in accordance with Scripture usage, and quite consistent with the facts of Christian experience and with the doctrine of the

Church concerning Christian perfection and entire sanctification. It is well known that our best writers on these subjects have always held that the word sanctification does not of itself express the idea of that thorough cleansing which is the privilege of believers, but that an auxiliary, such as "wholly" or "entire," must be employed to that end. The most thorough examination substantiates the correctness of this position, and proves the accuracy of Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors in the development of this theme.

There is, however, one point that needs to be guarded. It is not uncommon with believers, in relating their experience, to recur to the period of their conversion, and say at such a time, and under such and such circumstances, "I was born of God." But it is not often that we hear them say, with reference to the same experience, that at such a time "I was sanctified." Strictly speaking, the words being understood as above explained, this latter statement would be as true as the other. And yet it is well that the habit has grown up in the Church of speaking of regeneration rather than sanctification as taking place at a

definite time in the past; for regeneration is a definite experience, which has a definite period or date, and is to the believer, in the strictest sense, a past event. But sanctification is not so positively a past event. It is a continuous process. It began with regeneration, but it was not then completed. It is something that never becomes a past experience. In this respect it is like faith. By faith we are born of God: but the faith abides and supports the life which regeneration brings. So by faith the cleansing process goes on, washing away the defilements that otherwise would gather upon the soul, and purging the corruptions that survive the beginnings of the new life. The appropriate utterance of the soul after regeneration is:

“Every moment, Lord, I need  
The merit of thy death.”

There is no state attainable in this life when this language will not be in place. The utmost that can be gained—and it answers fully to this constant sense of need—is the privilege of responding in the fullest faith:

“Every moment, Lord, I have  
The virtue of the grace.”

This continuous appropriation of the merit of Christ's death is the sanctification which takes place first in regeneration, and continues right along through all the processes of growth, development, maturity, and final triumph over sin and death, and ceases not so long as there is a lingering need in the soul. Of course, a work so continuous will of necessity have its stages or degrees; it will be modified by the moods and frames of the subject of it, by the activity and ardor and clearness of the faith he exercises, and by his sluggishness and falterings. The real point to be observed is, that sanctification is a work wrought by the Holy Spirit—a cleansing work, a washing—and that it is simply the appropriation of the merit of the atoning blood of Christ by a constant, living faith. This idea is brought out beautifully in a single stanza of one of our standard hymns:

“My dying Savior, and my God,  
 Fountain for guilt and sin,  
 Sprinkle me ever with thy blood,  
 And cleanse and keep me clean.”

The “guilt” is canceled in pardon; the death of sin is removed, and its reigning

power broken, in regeneration; and its stain and pollution are washed away in sanctification. But the purity which the washing brings will not remain, unless the atoning blood continues to avail. Hence the prayer, "Sprinkle me *ever*"—every hour, every moment—"with thy blood." Hence, also, the contemplated result of this continuous sprinkling, "and *cleanse* and keep me clean." In the light of this manifest need of a continued cleansing and of the ample provision for its realization, it is plainly unwise to speak of sanctification as a past experience. Some particular results of it are past, and the work itself, as connected with earlier experiences, may in fact be a past work; but as a work of grace having to do with our religious state, our advancement in the divine life, and our fitness for the kingdom of God, it should always be recognized as present and continuous.

Let this point be clearly understood. Sanctification is neither identical with regeneration nor Christian perfection, while it accompanies both and has specific relation to each. It is concurrent with regeneration; but, being a distinctive work, and not implanting any liv-

ing principle in the soul, as does regeneration, it is not restricted to the hour of the new birth, is not subject to the laws of growth, does not result from growth, and is not of the nature of the new birth or the growth which follows. It is the cleansing act, including the dedication of the soul as the temple of God, preparatory to the Spirit's occupancy as the Spirit of adoption; and every subsequent act of purification by which hereditary or contracted stains are removed is an act of sanctification. It is a work to be repeated, and which is repeated again and again during probational life, and as each succeeding sanctification brings the soul into nearer fellowship with the all-cleansing blood, the experience of sanctification is justly regarded as progressive. Being continuous and uninterrupted, the words of the apostle are verified, "Who-soever is born of God doth not commit sin." Upheld by the Spirit of God, and aiming at uprightness, his mistakes and infirmities are forgiven, and the cleansing blood abides. Sanctification is complete when all the powers of the soul are purified and the heart is clean. This is the only standard known in the Scrip-

tures. In the primal act of sanctification, at the time of the new birth, the heart is washed from the defilements of old sins; but neither Scripture nor experience will justify the assertion that all the impurities of thought and the evil tendencies of nature, which are impurities in God's sight, are entirely purged till the new life has expanded and the indwelling Spirit has revealed to the enlightened conscience the enormity of inbred depravity. The filthiness of the flesh and spirit must be felt and loathed before it can be washed away. Hence, the general experience is that the full cleansing follows a season of deep self-abasement. The provision for this entire sanctification is ample, and the Spirit of God is always ready to respond to the longing desire, so that as soon as the soul feels its need of this great deliverance, and takes hold of the atonement as efficacious to this end, the merit of the cleansing blood is applied, and the Spirit reveals the result as suddenly or as gradually as faith will apprehend the evidence given. But the fact should not be overlooked that the work and the evidence of it are distinct. The work itself may be instantaneous, and the evidence

gradually unfolded and received. The evidence of regeneration is the witness of the Spirit. This is the direct and all-commanding evidence. There are other incidental and confirmatory evidences ; but this stands out in the Scriptures as most prominent and altogether the highest and best. It is the Spirit of adoption. The question arises, Does the Spirit bear direct witness to the work of sanctification, as well as regeneration? The answer is, The Spirit declares the result, not the process. It attests our filial relation. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." It is not necessary that the Spirit should catalogue every influence it exerts and every impression it makes, so as to detail to our consciousness all its movements and methods, in a way to enable us to label and name every distinct blessing received and mark all its relations and results. It does not deal with the incidents of the great transaction. But still it comes into the heart as a "Spirit of revelation," enlightening the understanding, assisting

our apprehension of truth, and so guiding our minds and showing us the things of Christ that we may "know the things which we have of God." Under its gracious teachings much of the mystery of the divine procedure is made plain, and the blindness of our own hearts passes away as the clouds, while the Sun of righteousness pours refulgence upon the pathway of duty and privilege. There is such a thing as being "led by the Spirit." But we must not expect new revelations, or truths not found in the Scriptures; nor need we look for direct communications from heaven concerning the trivial things of life, or even with reference to religious duty. It is enough that the Spirit assure us of our adoption, and clear our spiritual vision so that, in studying and weighing the inspired Word, we may apprehend its spiritual import, and gather from it the entire will of God touching our obligations and calling. To go beyond this is to enter the borders of fanaticism.

"The Spirit bears witness with our spirit," and in receiving and interpreting its testimony it is of the first importance that we discern its voice, and distinguish it from all other

voices, and from the utterances of our own spirit, and from the flashings of an excited fancy. Here is the point of danger. The dividing line between the real and the imaginary is not easily traced. Ardent temperaments are particularly liable to pass over it. Self-examination is requisite. Scriptural tests must be employed. With these, delusions may be detected, and the "witness of the Spirit" may be found where its voice is both still and small, and where the emotions are not clamorous and the imagination is quiet and regulated. It is not strange that this inward voice should be heard only by silencing other voices; that this divine testimony should be found only by searching. God speaks, but in no audible tones; he testifies, but not by signs and wonders. He comes into the sphere of our consciousness, and tells us of our acceptance, and diffuses his love, without disturbing the laws that rule the realm of our spiritual natures. His voice is spiritual and spiritually discerned. It speaks of our relation as children. It reveals the love of the Father; but it does not name every phase of the great salvation. The particulars are

all comprehended in the adoption. The divine life within proves the regeneration, and this implies the sanctification. With the fact of adoption attested, our rational inferences as to the processes and implications are both Scriptural and satisfactory. We need not worry because the Spirit does not particularize, and say to every believer, with reference to every detail of the work of grace, "This is regeneration;" "That is sanctification;" "This is reconciliation;" "That is adoption." Such is not the divine economy; and by insisting that it is, some are betrayed into hurtful extravagances, and others are discouraged and fail to accept the testimony which God gives. The direct witness is to adoption, and upon this strong foundation our enlightened understanding will build the superstructure of assurances with reference to all the processes of the great work of deliverance from the guilt, the death, the power, and the pollution of sin.

In each of these terms there is a metaphor, and the basis of the metaphor is the correspondence between the material and the spiritual. The literal production of life, the physical generation, is made to represent the

production of spiritual life in the soul; and the physical cleansing of the body represents the cleansing of the soul. The regeneration is the production of life, and the sanctification is the cleansing. This is natural, easily understood, and beautifully impressive. Thus the more closely we examine the terms in which the Scriptures reveal the experiences resulting from faith in Christ the more we discover of the infinite wisdom of God disclosed therein; and by comparing these terms with each other, and tracing their use, and carrying them back to their primary import and metaphorical allusions, we gather an idea of the unity and simplicity and grandeur of Gospel salvation. The result is, that the evidence of personal salvation is proof of all its necessary processes and details. When the Spirit declares our sonship, we need not look up and ask whether God has washed our hearts. With the indubitable evidence of adoption within, we need not question the fact of regeneration; and with the peace of God ruling in our hearts, there is no reason for stumbling because all the lines of distinction drawn in theology are not clearly traceable in our souls.

## CHAPTER XII.

## GROWTH IN GRACE.

FROM what has been said of regeneration and sanctification as distinct features of a common experience, it is not to be inferred that, beyond the first realization of this salvation from sin, there is nothing more to be expected. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to repeat this; and yet it is safe to remind the reader that thus far we have only intended to represent the work of grace as wrought in answer to the first enlightened exercise of saving faith—an experience which belongs to the time the sinner is delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. There is much beyond this—much that is expressed by the word "growth," and much that is not. There is a sanctification which is beyond the primary sanctification experienced in connection with regeneration; but since that is not a "growth" it will not be specifically treated in this

chapter. We shall see more of that hereafter ; but for the present we shall trace the growth in grace, which relates to the development of the life produced in regeneration, and is at once both duty and delight.

Growth is always a process of life. Whatever the nature of the vital force may be, it manifests itself in growth ; and the phenomena of growth, however diversified, most rigidly adhere to the orderly unfolding of the vital power within the sphere of the organism, which is the subject of growth ; or, in other words, they are restricted to the functional development of life. There is no real growth where there is no life ; nor can the growth extend to any power or faculty that is not the product of the vital principle. Illustrations of this fact abound in the physical world. In the vegetable kingdom, whatever grows is pervaded, to the remotest particle of incorporated matter, by that indescribable and subtle power which we call vegetable life. In the animal kingdom, the vital force sends out its mysterious influence to every atom of the living body, and not the slightest element can become a part of the body without its quick-

ening touch. So, also, in the department of spiritual existences. The soul has life, and in it the law of growth prevails. We find this true, at least, so far as we are able to trace the analogy, and that probably exists much farther than we can follow it. Then, if this law of growth, as a function of life, obtains in the nature of spiritual beings, are we not bound to recognize its supremacy in the kingdom of grace—a kingdom whose sphere is in the spirit realm? And if so, is not the idea of “growth in grace” simplified, and its line of development identified, so that it can be distinguished from other lines of progress in the experience of salvation?

Sometimes, however, the word growth is used metaphorically to denote progress of any kind. Thus a country, or a city, or a Church, grows as it increases in numbers. A building grows as it advances toward completion. The Word of God grows as it multiplies converts. Growth, in the metaphorical sense, signifies advancement, prosperity, success. In this respect there is growth in every department of Christian life and work; and in this sense the advancement may go on, reaching higher in attain-

ments, and sweeping wider in the range of its influence, so long as life lasts, and possibly while immortality endures. This growth applies to faith and obedience; to prayer and consecration; to sanctification and fellowship. It is the normal state of the living Christian. But it is not the growth in grace which is a distinctive feature of the experience or process of salvation. The real growth is not metaphorical. There is in every child of God a new life which is not figurative; a new nature which contains the vital principle implanted in regeneration; a new heart which comprises the elements of a new character, in which are found the germs, the laws, and all the phenomena of growth, in the strictest sense. This new nature is the "new creation"—"the new man." It stands out in the Scriptures as the opposite of the "old man," which is corrupt, and must be "put off." The "old man" is the embodiment of the carnal nature, the "body of the sins of the flesh." It is to be "crucified," put to death, and "buried" into the death of Christ. The "new man" is the embodiment, so to speak, of the new life, the beginning of which is the new birth. Like

all other life, its beginning is germinal, and its advancement toward maturity is of the nature of growth, always within the limits of its own powers, and in harmony with the laws of its own development. Then, it will be seen, that whatever element of character, or whatever virtue or grace, is an attribute of the new nature born in regeneration, is the product of the Holy Ghost, imbued with the divine life, and is, therefore, the subject of a veritable growth.

This new nature in its feebleness, while undeveloped and immature, is complete in itself, possessing all the essentials of perfect manhood, as the "new-born babe" is endowed with the attributes of the future man. The new life is there, and the primal sanctification has been wrought. The next thing is growth. The new life is to be expanded. The new powers are to be unfolded. The new energies are all to find appropriate activity. The babe in Christ is to become a man. This is the growth in grace, and in the knowledge of God, about which we speak, and which is distinct in its nature from regeneration and sanctification, having its own laws, its own marks, and its own fruits.

Growth, as well as life, has its limitations. It is limited as to extension. It is a function of life, and therefore it reaches only as far as the vital force sends its assimilating power, which is not beyond the organism or the entity it pervades. Hence growth in this new nature, which is the sphere of the life of faith, is limited to the "new man," and to the virtues necessary to the new character to be developed. These powers and virtues are the product of the Holy Spirit, and all the graces of the Spirit are included. Faith, love, meekness, humility, and all the graces, have first an embryotic existence in the new nature, and consequently the growth of that nature is manifested in the unfolding of these powers, and in their progress toward stability and maturity. As the new life increases in vigor, and the process of growth advances, faith enlarges its scope, and increases in activity and power; love abounds more and more toward God and men, while meekness and humility, with all the passive virtues, shine out with increasing luster. All this is growth—the orderly expansion of the interior life; the unfolding of the vital power implanted by

the divine Spirit at the birth of the soul into the family of God.

This growth is likewise limited as to the degree of its development. It aims not at infinity, but maturity. It is subjective, and therefore restricted to its sphere; it is dependent, and therefore bound by its conditions; it is functional, and therefore held firmly within the scope of the powers which are animated by the life that produces and governs it. The process is complete when maturity is gained. Beyond that, growth is by accretion or acquisition, if it proceed at all. This is true, at least, in the physical world, and in the world of mind and spirit, so far as we are able to get hold of the fact; then why is it not equally true in the kingdom of grace? When the physical stature of manhood is reached, physical growth ceases. There may still be an increase of the strength of the muscles, a hardening of the sinews and bones, and a succession of healthful and unhealthful secretions and assimilations, variously affecting the proportions of the body; but growth of the body after maturity is out of the question. So also is it with the mind. It grows until

maturity is gained, and then it grows no more. Under favorable conditions the mind reaches its maximum of strength in about double the time required to complete the growth of the body. After that it may acquire additional knowledge and skill, and exhibit increasing activity, and reveal powers that had lain dormant, but its intrinsic capabilities do not increase. It does not grow. After maturity it ripens, and gains steadiness, and bears fruit, but it makes no increase of intrinsic energy or capacity. And is it not so in spiritual things—in the new creation? Is there not a maturity, a perfect manhood—"the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"—to which the new man may come, and beyond which it can only ripen, and use its completed powers, and enjoy with undiminishing zest the perpetual unfolding of divine truth and love? Reasoning from analogy, and remembering the laws and limitations of finite existences, this conclusion seems inevitable. For surely, when every power of the soul is pervaded by the life of God, and every virtue of the Christian character is matured,—when the "old man" is dead and buried, and the "new man"

is put on—when “Christ dwells in the heart by faith,” and the full stature of a perfect manhood in Christ is attained, this is nothing less than to be “filled with all the fullness of God.”

The attainment of such a state must form an epoch in the experience of the Christian believer. In looking upon him, shall we hesitate to say, “Mark the perfect man?” His whole spiritual being bears the impress of the Holy Spirit, whereby he is “sealed unto the day of redemption.” The life of faith pervades all his powers. In him the graces of the Spirit—love, joy, faith, meekness, patience, and the whole constellation of Christian virtues—have acquired their full measure of strength, and on his heart rests the image of the Son of God. Is not this Christian perfection?

This state of maturity is reached by growth in grace, or by the orderly unfolding of the life obtained in the new birth. It is the result of the growth which has its limitations and conditions. What are its conditions?

These we shall find in considering its nature. It is the manifestation of an inward life, whose source is in the Spirit of God, and

whose nature is incomprehensible, yet unquestionably one with the life of God. Too little has been made of this life-element in connection with the doctrines relating to Christian experience. It is the central power which directs and controls all the forces arrayed in the battle against sin; the vital energy given in the new birth which invigorates the faculties, and sets them in harmonious relations, and gives them victory over the carnality that once held them in bondage, and still strives to regain its lost ascendancy. As the divine life increases, the carnal qualities and tendencies of the soul die out, leaving additional scope for the exercise of the new powers born in regeneration; and since this life comes from the Holy Spirit, it is sustained in the soul by the abiding presence of the Spirit. It therefore follows that the conditions of growth in the divine life are identical with the conditions of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Then, on what conditions will the Holy Spirit abide in the heart? It must be remembered that the Spirit works with men prior to their conversion. It strives with sinners, and draws and urges them to turn to God, and

leads them to repentance. When they yield, and accept Christ, it regenerates them, gives them the new life, and makes them new creatures in Christ; and then, in addition to all this, and in a distinct sense, it comes to dwell with them as the Comforter, and abides with them as the Spirit of adoption. This is the gift of the Holy Ghost. It follows justification and regeneration, and witnesses to the believer, assuring him of his acceptance and of his filial relation. This gift is the presence of Christ in the soul. He is "formed within, the hope of glory." He dwells in the heart by faith—not in his bodily presence, but by his Spirit, the Holy Ghost. "He that hath the Son of God hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." "He that believeth on the Son shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." Hence, wherever the Holy Spirit abides, there is life, and there is the manifested presence of Christ. Then, in order to the abiding of the Holy Spirit, it is safe to say that there must be the continuance of the conditions on which the "gift" was first received. There must be the absence of guilt and condemnation.

Justification takes away the guilt of all past offenses, and reverses the condemnatory sentence of the law, so that "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ." This act removes all legal obstructions, and secures to the believer such relations with the law and the rectoral justice of God and such vital union with the Mediator of the new covenant that the Holy Spirit can come in with all the plenitude of his grace, and make known the Father and the Son.

This gracious state, itself a most exalted privilege, is the essential condition of growth, and the conditions of its existence and continuance are the same that secured the new birth. Preparatory to the new birth, and necessary to its occurrence, was repentance. This word represents a process in which there is an outward expression of an inward feeling. The outward expression may vary according to the temperament and surroundings of the individual and the peculiar character of his sins; but the inward feeling, however diversified in its emotional elements, must be substantially the same in all persons and in all stages of the religious life. It is a godly sor-

row for sin, well expressed by the word penitence. It is a loathing of sin, an inexpressible sense of its odiousness, arising from a discovery of its nature, in connection with a distinct apprehension of the holiness of God and his law. This frame of mind is not peculiar to the period of seeking the Lord before pardon. It belongs to that period, and exists in connection with a sense of guilt and fear and shame. Pardon takes away the sense of guilt, and the fear and the shame, but the aversion to sin remains. Penitence becomes the permanent habit of the soul; at least, it should, and does in all who retain the justified state. Indeed, it is included or implied in the exercise of faith in Christ, not only at the time of justification, but continuously thereafter; for saving faith can only arise out of a penitent heart. There is, therefore, repentance after justification—repentance in believers—and this is as indispensable in the child of God in order to growth as it is to the seeker in order to obtain pardon. It is an accompaniment of saving faith through all degrees of the divine life. Here, then, is the first condition of growth in grace. It is the

continuance of that spirit of penitence and of faith in Christ which will hold fast the justified state, and secure the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

Another thing is necessary in order to the indwelling of the Spirit. The soul in which it dwells is the temple of God, and, therefore, it must be holy. Sin, as we have so often seen, brings not only guilt and condemnation, but pollution. Justification removes the guilt and the condemnation, but not the pollution. The removal of pollution is a moral work, wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit. It is sanctification. We ascribe it to the blood of Christ, as nothing else can wash away the stain of sin. But the washing is not physical, and, therefore, there is no application of the physical blood. It is a spiritual washing, wherein not the literal blood itself, but the merit of that blood is made over to the soul by faith, and the real purifying act is performed by the Holy Spirit. We, therefore, find in the Scriptures that sanctification is ascribed both to the blood of Christ and to the agency of the Spirit. The one does it meritoriously and the other efficiently. This

work of cleansing the soul that it may become the temple of the Holy Ghost is necessarily antecedent, in the order of thought at least, to the occupancy of the temple by the abiding guest. It is a preparation for the indwelling of the Spirit, and, therefore, a condition of growth in grace and of that maturity of the Christian virtues which is the result of growth, and constitutes the perfection of Christian character.

It is erroneous to assume that sanctification is the result of growth. It is an act, a work, a process, but not a growth. It accompanies regeneration, for the primal cleansing then occurs; it accompanies growth, for the continued cleansing is indispensable to growth; and it accompanies maturity, for the completed cleansing is necessary to the maturity of the fruit of the Spirit. As justification removes the legal obstructions out of the way of the Spirit's indwelling, so sanctification removes the moral obstructions. The way being thus opened by the concurrent acts of justification, regeneration, and sanctification, issuing in the new life, God himself, by the Holy Ghost, takes up his abode in the

heart, and sheds abroad his love ; and the new creature thus endowed, though a babe in Christ, starts out in the career of Christian living, and, being led by the Spirit, walks in all the will of God, growing up into Christ, the living head, and bringing forth fruit unto perfection.

Since growth is a process of life, and is predicated primarily of the life element in the soul, which is the product of the Spirit in regeneration, it is well to remember that life and growth require not only the atmosphere of purity as the condition of development, but suitable nourishment as well. The body can not grow without food ; neither can the intellect. Why, then, should we expect growth in grace without spiritual nourishment? We dare not. " Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." But his flesh and blood, given for the life of the world, are received after a spiritual manner. " The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." " He that receiveth my word, receiveth me." Thus spake the Master. His Word is the bread of life, which nourishes the

faith by which we live and stand and walk. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." The sacred oracles furnish the "sincere milk of the word" for babes in Christ, and also the "strong meat that belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." As bread is to the body, such is the truth of God to the soul.

Exercise is essential to growth. The graces given in regeneration are active powers. As the members of the body gain strength in use, so do these which belong to the new nature. The child of God must employ the strength he has, and appropriate the nourishment the truth affords, by activity in Christian work. The apostle says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with pure hearts

ferently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." Active obedience to the truth brings increasing purity, power, and life; and it secures increased facility in work and keener relish for the things of God. All the duties and trials that make up our discipline in spiritual things, the temptations that assail, the obligations to be met and burdens to be borne, require activity, and without it there is neither growth nor steadfastness.

Such are the conditions of growth; and this growth, as before stated, aims at maturity, at Christian manhood—perfection. Maturity and Christian perfection may not be separated. They are the result of the same divine agency and the same conditions. But sanctification is different. It is a divine work and tends to purity, to holiness. We first find it in regeneration—not included in that work, but accompanying it as its complement and concomitant. It is next seen as a progressive work, accompanying growth, though itself not a growth, but the continuous appropriation of the blood of Christ, through an

abiding faith. And, finally, we see it complete in the ripened experience of the mature Christian, when the entire man—body, soul, and spirit—is sanctified wholly, and when its office is to preserve the subject of its purifying power blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. But while it is true that sanctification is not the outcome of growth, but its condition and helper, Christian perfection is the result of the expansion of the inward life of the soul—a result reached when the “new man” attains the full measure of its functional development within the limitations imposed by its finite nature. This maturity of grace, this perfection of spiritual manhood—the product of the vital energy received in regeneration, and unfolded and enlarged in the process of spiritual growth—we repeat, implies, but does not include, the beginning and continuance of sanctification. The latter is not an indwelling principle, but a work; it is an active and continuous work, in which the Holy Spirit is the agent, the Word of God the instrument, faith the condition, and the quickened soul the subject. Hence, he is right who insists that regenera-

tion and sanctification are distinct, and that the latter is not the result of growth from the former. Sanctification, in all its stages, is distinct in nature from the life element produced in regeneration, and from the act of regeneration itself; but, being the act of the same Holy Spirit, and suspended on the same condition, and appropriated by the faith that brings and sustains the life of God in the soul, it is never absent from the man whose life is hid with Christ in God. Being God's own work, it does not fail when the conditions exist. Every Christian man is, therefore, a sanctified man to the extent to which the work of purification has been carried on within him; and we can not conceive of one born of God, and maintaining his acceptance, without having at least the defilement of his actual sins washed away. Hence, while growth is not purity, every step of advancement in the divine life brings more purity, and lifts the soul nearer to the sublime height of complete holiness. The growing Christian is increasing in holiness. The conditions of growth are the conditions of sanctification. Therefore, it is perfectly legitimate for the growing Christian to assume

that he is growing into higher degrees of holiness, and "going on unto perfection."

Occasionally we meet with fallacious reasoning on this point. Assuming that there is a difference between purity and maturity, and that growth aims at maturity, and not at purity, we are gravely informed that we can not grow into the grace of Christian purity. There is both truth and error in this statement. Look at the illustrations usually employed: "You can swim in water, but you can not lie on the dry ground and swim into the water; you can dream in sleep, but you can not dream yourself into sleep; you can breathe in this world, but you can not breathe yourself into this world." This means, "You can grow in grace, but you can not grow into grace." Very well; but, being in grace, you can grow into more grace. You can grow into higher degrees of life, into stronger faith, and into deeper and broader love. Growth is predicated only of the regenerate, of such as are born of God. No one expects that any one shall grow in grace before he is in grace. But the regenerated man is in grace. He does not "lie on the dry ground" and try to

swim ; for he is already in the water of salvation, and can swim into the deeper water, even out into the profoundest depths of the ocean of love. Illustrations mislead when misapplied. While growth is in the direction of maturity, the very conditions that secure the growth will secure also the attendant cleansing power ; so that the living, growing Christian is as certainly advancing in the path way of holiness as he is growing up into Christ. His growth toward maturity is the highest proof of increasing purity.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## CHRISTIAN PERFECTION IDENTIFIED.

METHODISM teaches the doctrine of Christian perfection, and attaches importance to it as a distinctive feature to be insisted upon in public and private, and because of this peculiarity she has encountered no little opposition, and has been compelled to vindicate her faith by earnest and continued discussions. Some progress has been made in the work of impressing her views upon the minds of other Christian people, so that but few of the old forms of disputation are required; but the time has not yet come for silence, for many yet fail to appreciate the ground she occupies, or the spirit in which this faith is held. In former years, more than now, when the high privileges of faith were held up to the people, the charge of heresy was freely thrust into the faces of her preachers, while "perfectionist" was an epithet of reproach about equivalent to enthusiast or

fanatic. In those days it was necessary to explain the doctrine, to define the terms used in connection with it, to guard it against abuse, and to maintain it as consistent with the Scriptures, with experience, and with the conditions of spiritual life on earth. The literature thus produced is exceedingly rich, and in it are found ample vindications of the doctrine, and clear and worthy representations of every aspect of the experience, so that, so far as the people become familiar with what has been written, there is little need of further expositions. But many leave the older books unread, and since all clamor against the teaching of the Church has not ceased, there is call for "line upon line."

This, however, is to be said: The advocates of Christian perfection are not all Methodists. They are found in all the evangelical Churches, and their numbers in other communions are rapidly increasing. The doctrine is being widely diffused. Old prejudices against it are dying out. Greater candor is evinced in the study of it by those who have not embraced it. The outlook is therefore hopeful for its still wider prevalence among the people of God.

It is also true that multitudes teach it without being really conscious of the fact. They do not adopt it in form, nor do they use the same language in relation to it that its advocates employ, but in their own way and in their own language, in pointing to the possibilities of grace in the soul, they describe substantially what is really meant by Christian perfection. In this way the Churches are drawing nearer together, and need only a better acquaintance with each other's real sentiments, and a larger liberality in the use of words, to enable them to see eye to eye, and stand side by side on the common platform of Christian privilege, and work together in the promotion of holiness. The ambiguities of language are great. If we could only push our vision beneath the verbiage that clothes the ideas of our brethren, and see the thoughts they would express as they lie in their minds, we should find them sisters to the thoughts in our own minds, even when our words betray differences, and excite us to opposition and debate. It is thus that many Christians are looking to the same grace, and striving for the same goal, without suspecting the oneness

of aim and meaning that characterizes their efforts. Their different banners alike mean loyalty to Christ, and death to all spiritual foes.

There is substantial unanimity among the advocates of Christian perfection, although apparent disagreements now and then exhibit themselves. Much of this apparent disagreement is chargeable to the ambiguity of language. Some of it should be set to the account of inattention to the whole of the teaching of others. A single feature will strike the mind as incorrect, and at once the conclusion is reached that the brother is in error on the whole subject. Sometimes over-sensitiveness in regard to favorite expressions leads to needless disputations, and creates the impression of greater differences than really exist. It is also true that in most instances where disagreements are found, they relate to the incidental questions which arise in connection with the doctrine, and not to the great fact that men may be made "perfect through the blood of the everlasting covenant." There has been an over-anxious desire with many to make the whole subject too plain to admit of diverse views, and theories have been put

forth explaining the details of the experience, even to the mode of the Spirit's work, and dissent from the preferred theory has been construed into unsoundness in the faith. This is one of the weaknesses of human nature which intense spirituality does not always overcome. We are less tolerant of differences of opinion than of other differences. To question a theory which one has adopted as his own, touches a very sensitive chord in the mental structure. Hence the slightest differences are liable to be magnified, and honest questionings are treated as serious wanderings from the truth. These are some of the reasons why the apparent differences among the friends of this doctrine are greater than the real differences; and to all must be added the fact that spiritual pride and unaccountable sensitiveness and exclusiveness of feeling, bordering on the spirit of bigotry, have sometimes shown themselves in connection with the highest profession of this excellent attainment. It has been the misfortune of this doctrine, as of many others, to have some indiscreet advocates.

There are some things in the subject in

regard to which all who believe in Christian perfection at all must unite. These are largely of a negative character, and will be accepted by nearly all Christians. It will be universally conceded that the perfection attainable in this life is not absolute. That belongs to God alone. His perfection is original, underived, independent, absolute. Ours is finite, derived, dependent, relative. It will also be acknowledged by all that ours is not the perfection of holy angels. They never sinned. They stand before the throne without fault or blemish. Up to the measure of their finite capacities, they are complete in character and perfect in holiness in their own persons, and have never needed redemption. Nor will any fail to find differences between our highest attainments and the perfection of Adam before he sinned. There was no cloud upon his purity, and never had been; and the holiness he possessed was in himself, directly from God, without the aid of remedial agencies. Some hold that redemption will lift us to the height from which he fell; but that consummation will require resurrection power. We shall all agree, further, that the perfection now attain-

able is not equal to that of "the spirits of just men made perfect" after the death of the body; and then, of course, it is not up to the measure of the perfection attained in the resurrection of the dead. To all this may be added that none of us look for "sinless perfection" in this life. We shall not get beyond the power to sin, the touch of sin, nor entirely away from the effect of sin. While we may live in such intimate companionship with the Holy One that we shall not willfully commit sin, we shall be so encompassed with the limitations of our understanding and the infirmities of our being that the word "sinless" will not apply to our highest possible development. This language does not belong to the vocabulary of the wisest friends of Christian perfection.

Nor is this the whole of the negative side of this subject in regard to which there is general agreement. The perfection to which we aspire is not a perfection in *knowledge*. Of course, we can not acquire all knowledge, nor can we be perfect in the knowledge that comes within the range of our powers. We can know Christ, and we can "know that we do

know him ;” but we can not fathom the depths of his being, nor comprehend the mystery of his love. In this life “we know in part.” Much less do we expect a perfection in *wisdom*. Wisdom is knowledge applied ; and while we know so little relatively, we shall not always make the best use of what we have learned. Nor shall we become perfect in *practice*. The imperfections in our knowledge and wisdom will inevitably lead to mistakes in daily life. We have no faith in human infallibility ; not even if the combined wisdom of the Church could be centered in one man would it justify the claim to infallibility. As we know men and things imperfectly, we shall judge of them erroneously ; and wrong judgments will produce wrong sentiments and wrong actions. So long as we live we will be doing things that ought not to be done, and leaving undone things that ought to be done. Nor will all our mistakes be innocent. Many of them will or may be harmful to ourselves and others. In some we shall be blameworthy. More attention, warmer love, less selfishness—all possible—would have saved the wrong inflicted. We shall, therefore, always

need forgiveness. No possible attainment will place us where we can afford to get on without the Lord's prayer. Imperfections will cleave to us till life ends, if our spirit and practice be measured by the perfect law of righteousness. There is no exemption for us from the limitations of our natures, and, therefore, no freedom from liability to do wrong. Hence, as we shall always need to pray, "Forgive us our debts," so shall we always need the merits of the blood of Christ. No past cleansing will keep us clean. A continuous sanctification, in answer to an abiding faith, is all that can meet the requirements of our daily lives. Nor can we get beyond the reach of temptations. There is no promise of exemption from temptations, but a blessing is promised to all who endure them: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life that fadeth not away." Temptation in some form assails the holiest of earth, and he is unwise who speaks lightly of its power. The Son of man himself was tempted, and no servant can be above his Master. The broadest assurance given is in

the words, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Here, then, in this recognition of the limitations of our nature, and of our constant infirmities, and of the unavoidable liabilities to mistakes and misdoings that attend us through life, and in the assumption that we shall always need forgiveness and cleansing through the blood of Christ, there is sufficient allowance for the weaknesses and besetments inseparable from the life in the flesh; so that no believer in Christ need take alarm lest the perfection contended for shall prove fanatical, and overlook the facts of our condition. We neither teach a perfection of knowledge, wisdom, or practice, nor the attainment of infallibility, impeccability, or any state from which there may not be defection.

Then, what is Christian perfection? What idea can be formed of a perfection which admits of so much of imperfection? There are degrees in perfection, undoubtedly, and there is a possibility of being perfect in some re-

spects and not in others, and there is a relative and limited perfection as well as a perfection which is positive and unlimited. The latter is not for us in this life, nor do we expect it in finite existences in heaven. That which is relative and limited belongs to men; and yet, limited as it is, there is enough in it to bring unutterable blessedness, and to command our deepest reverence and gratitude toward Him whose abounding grace has made its realization possible.

In defining Christian perfection as held by the Church, instead of seeking something new or strange, we shall accept the words of Mr. Fletcher, which have been held in high esteem ever since their publication in his last *Check to Antinomianism*, and have largely controlled the thinking on this subject of the ablest and most devout of our ministers and people, through all the ranks and generations of Methodism. Mr. Fletcher says that fruit grown to maturity is in its perfection, and adds: "We use the word perfection exactly in the same sense; giving that name to the maturity of grace peculiar to established believers under their respective dispensations;

and if this be an error, we are led into it by the sacred writers, who use the word perfection as well as we." After this, he amplifies the definition as follows: "We give the name of Christian perfection to that maturity of grace and holiness which established adult believers attain to under the Christian dispensation; and thus we distinguish that maturity of grace, both from the ripeness of grace, which belongs to the dispensation of the Jews below us; and from the ripeness of glory, which belongs to departed saints above us. Hence, it appears that by Christian perfection we mean nothing but the cluster and maturity of the graces which compose the Christian character in the Church militant. In other words, Christian perfection is a spiritual constellation made up of these gracious stars, perfect repentance, perfect faith, perfect humility, perfect meekness, perfect self-denial, perfect resignation, perfect hope, perfect charity for our visible enemies as well as our earthly relations; and, above all, perfect love for our invisible God, through the explicit knowledge of our Mediator, Jesus Christ. And as this last star is always accompanied

by all the others, as Jupiter is by his satellites, we frequently use, as St. John, the phrase 'perfect love,' instead of the word perfection, understanding by it the pure love of God shed abroad in the hearts of established believers by the Holy Ghost, which is abundantly given them under the fullness of the Christian dispensation."

It will be observed that in this definition of Christian perfection there is no distinction whatever made between perfection and maturity; and we call attention to this fact to impress it as of great importance in the present aspect of the discussion; for there are some among us making the subject prominent in their ministrations, who make much of the difference between maturity and purity, but do not recognize any distinction between purity and perfection—thus involving by inadvertence the erroneous conclusions that purity and perfection are one, and that maturity and perfection are not one. The truth requires that this statement be reversed, and the fact clearly apprehended that maturity is perfection, and that purity is not perfection, although it is an accompaniment which is essential to

the attainment of perfection. We seek for purity now, and always, in the blood of Christ, and it comes by faith, preparing the heart for that diffusion of love which the Holy Ghost makes in the believer, according to the measure of his faith and consecration. Purity comes from washing, from sanctification; and maturity, which is the same thing as perfection, comes from that development of the inward life of the soul which the Scriptures call growth.

Mr. Fletcher is also very careful to introduce the word "established" before believer, and in one place inserts the word "adult" as a qualifier in the same connection. This is intended to guard against the notion that inexperienced, impulsive Christian faith, however vigorous for the time, is capable of producing at once the ripened fruit of the Spirit. It is not the warmth of the heart, but its steadiness, its depth, its breadth of love, and its tested resistance to the powers of evil, that distinguishes the "established" believer; as it is through all the experiences of impulse and of emotion and of temptation incident to the Christian life that the settled and unmov-

able faith is acquired, which may be truthfully described as matured and ripened. Christian perfection is, therefore, not a childhood attainment. It belongs to those who have grown upon the sincere milk of the Word till they are able to digest the strong meat of the Gospel, and whose spiritual senses are exercised to discern good and evil. It belongs to adult believers—to those who have become “rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

This description of Christian perfection gives the proper pre-eminence to love, as the master grace, the principal star in the constellation, the central sun around which all others cluster, and whose motions they obey as satellites obey their chief. This agrees with the Scriptures. “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth

is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us.”

Mr. Wesley, not less than Mr. Fletcher, exalts this grace, and finds in it the sum of Christian perfection. He says in his sermon on this topic: “What, then, is the perfection of which man is capable while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is the complying with that kind command, ‘My son, give me thy heart.’ It is the loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind. This is the sum of Christian perfection; it is all comprised in that one word, love. The first branch of it is the love of God; and as he that loves God loves his brother also, it is inseparably connected with the second, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ Thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. ‘On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets;’ these contain the whole of Christian perfection.”

Since “love is the fulfilling of the law,” and the whole of Christian perfection is comprised in love, it will assist us in gaining the right conception of the subject, if we study

the meaning and the scope of that law which requires supreme love to God and equal love to man, and is fulfilled in this love. The standard writers distinguish between the paradisaical law of innocence, under which Adam lived before he sinned, and the evangelical law of love, under which we are placed by the redemption that bought us from the curse of the first, and made the second the rule and measure of our obligations, under the covenant of grace. Of this distinction of law we must speak discriminatingly. The prohibition laid upon Adam was not the essence of the law, but merely an emanation, a formulated requirement, or rule of action, to serve as a test of fidelity to the divine authority. The same is true of the decalogue. The ten commandments are not the law of God as it exists in the divine mind, but only precepts embodying the will of God for the restraint and guidance of human conduct in life. The same remark should be made of the Levitical law, and of all the forms in which the revealed will of God respecting the duty of men is set forth in the Scriptures. Back of all the prohibitions, precepts, prescriptions, and statutes

of the Bible, there is a divine law, of which these prohibitions and commandments are but manifestations or revelations for specific purposes. The law of God in its essence or substance, or in its fundamental principles, has its foundation in the essential attributes of the Deity. It is not an act of legislation passed in the divine mind, which is subject to modification, suspension, or repeal; it is the outgoing of the divine nature; the necessary rule of righteousness; the transcript of the eternal thought; the rule of the divine procedure in the government of the universe. This law is like God himself. It is unoriginated, unchangeable, eternal, universal. It measures the obligations of all the creation of God. If we would understand it, we must study the character of the Almighty. Whatever moral qualities belong to him, belong also to his law. Is God just? His law is just. Is God righteous? His law is righteous. Is God good? His law is good. Is God holy? His law is holy. Is love the sum of all the divine perfections, so that in the pre-eminent sense, "God is love?" The same is true of his law. It is a law of love. "Love is

the fulfilling of the law." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment; and the second is like unto it, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Upon these two hang all the law and the prophets." This is the sum of all obligation, the soul of all the precepts, commandments, statutes, restraints, and prohibitions in the decalogue, and in all other formulated embodiments of the divine will. This conception of the law of love shows the unity of the moral universe, the oneness of law that binds all intelligences to the throne of God, and sets forth the animating principle of all holy obedience and activity throughout the vast domain of the King Eternal. Whether there be angels or archangels, cherubim or seraphim, employed in the mighty sweep of providential agencies,—all fly at the behest of the infinite will; all move in harmony with the infinite heart of love.

The law of paradisaical innocence requiring perfect obedience as a rule of justification, was a manifestation of the law of love suited to a

state of holiness; and the Redeemer's evangelical law of truth and grace is a manifestation of the same law suited to fallen and redeemed humanity, enforcing the ultimate requirement of perfect love, under conditions supplied in the covenant of redemption which render the claim reasonable, and the duty practicable. There has been no repeal or modification of the law,—no lowering of the claim of God,—no readjustment of probational tests that implies a compromise with unrighteousness. The truth and grace in the Mediator of the new covenant attend the evangelical revelation of the law of love, lifting men through regeneration into the light of holiness, where with resuscitated energies they may love God with all their strength, rendering an evangelical obedience as acceptable to God through the atonement as an unsullied life of innocence in the unfallen state could have been. Thus the end of Christ's death is accomplished—"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

This perfection in love is not the sporadic development in unhealthy excess of a single

grace, while the other elements of Christian character, dwarfed and overshadowed, are left to a sickly and uncertain existence. It is not the emotional element in love alone that comes to maturity. Love is a passion, but it is also a principle, a virtue; it is diffusive; it touches all the virtues, and imparts to them its own nature, imbues them with its fragrance, and tinges them with its hues. It flourishes not at the expense of other virtues, but by fostering and building up all that spring from grace, and all that tend to the image of God. Mr. Fletcher's constellation of graces rhetorically expresses the symmetry and order that mark the growth of the Christian life. Each grace is a star; each star moves in its orbit; and while "one star differeth from another star in glory," each has its luster, and fills the measure of its magnitude. Love is the central light; and faith, and meekness, and patience, and humility, and all the kindred graces, shine in the same spiritual firmament, and together shed the mild radiance of purity and peace. This maturity in all the graces is the end for which the Christian ministry is ordained of Christ, as declared by

the apostle: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

## CHAPTER XIV.

## CHRISTIAN PERFECTION ATTAINED.

THE thought will occur to every one that the Christian perfection identified in the preceding chapter is too deep and broad to be the product of an hour or a day of active belief and earnest seeking. There is in it too much of ripeness in the graces of the Spirit to have been acquired without persistent struggles with self and the world, requiring time and patience and study of the Word of God; and yet we dare not fix upon a time in life when its attainment is possible, and assume positively that it is unattainable by younger persons. The student of the Scriptures will have observed, however, that there are some grades of experience suitable to children, some to young men, and some to old men or fathers. The natural conditions of life are not ignored. Whatever grace may do for those who are called out of time, before the fullness of age rounds up the experiences of life, the rule is,

that advancing years lift the believer to heights of holiness not found in childhood or early manhood.

In order to understand this, and make no improper application of a truth so palpable, it is necessary to recur to the distinction so often made between purity and maturity; or, which is the same thing, between sanctification and perfection. Purity through sanctification is always attainable. It is the result of the direct inworking of the Holy Spirit, by which the blood of cleansing is applied, in answer to faith in Christ. This is a present privilege, because it is by faith; but the maturity of grace in the established believer rises out of this, and extends beyond it immeasurably. The state of purity may become a matter of consciousness to the extent that there is no consciousness of remaining sin, while the perfection of Christian character is known by the consciousness of love unalloyed and the exhibition of the fruit of the Spirit.

That some reach the character of established believers earlier in life than others, and with more rapid steps, is not to be questioned.

There are such differences in temperament, in the influences of early habits, training, and examples, that uniformity in experience and equality in progress are not to be expected. Variety characterizes the kingdom of grace as well as the kingdom of nature. It is found in all stages of experience, from the incipient awakening to conversion; and from conversion to the full attainment of perfect love. When a sinner whose life has been spent in wickedness, with few opportunities for religious thought, is converted, the transformation is palpable. His mind is enlightened, his will is subdued, his emotional nature is renovated, and all his spiritual powers are quickened and energized. Under the inspiration of his new experience he sees, feels, and acts as a new creature; he lives a new life, seemingly in a new world. In every turn of spiritual exercise he finds freshness and delight. His testimony is positive, and all his manifestations of experience are prompt, decided, and confident. We are not surprised; for the change wrought in him is wonderful. He sees all his blessings in sharp contrast with his former life and with his ill-deserts. But, then, here is

another, whose earliest life was given to God in the ordinance of the Church, and whose childhood years were spent in a Christian home, where prayer and praise and Christian conversation were always familiar. All his prepossessions were in favor of the Gospel. He never really doubted. As his parents taught him, so he believed; and he believed because his parents did before him; his faith is traditional; but shall we venture to say it is not acceptable to God? We dare not. Time rolls on. This child of traditional faith, advancing to an improvement of his advantages, gradually discovers the grounds of belief in the Savior, and finds growing up in his heart a personal trust in Christ and corresponding love to him and his work; and with this transition from traditional to personal faith he finds an increasing confidence that his soul is made partaker of the saving grace of God. Shall we doubt that he is born again? His conversion is less marked than the other; but shall we regard it as less real?

Temptation sometimes arises from this diversity of experience. This child of prayer, with his orderly Christian life, comes into

contact with the positive, outspoken testimony of the converted sinner, who describes his conviction, his sorrow, his great struggle of soul, and his joyful deliverance,—all so true and vivid to himself that he wonders how any can be satisfied with an experience less positive; and the probability is that he who scarcely ever sinned willfully, or knew the bitterness of repentance, will begin to suspect the genuineness of his own conversion, and possibly, after the lapse of years, he will find trouble in comparing his experience with that of others whose regeneration was accompanied by more impressive demonstrations. There is no way of avoiding the temptations incident to this diversity of experience, but there is compensation in the enlarged views of the abounding grace of God which may result from the study of this variety. The temptation itself may lead to closer examination and to a better grounded faith. But some of the difficulty may be overcome by the constant recognition of the fact that variety of experience is in harmony with the divine order, and by discouraging the practice of making other people's experience the

standard for ourselves, and of holding our own experience as the model or standard for others. No man's experience will exhaust the possibilities of God's grace; and, therefore, no man's experience can become the exponent of the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. Each must learn to examine himself in the light of the Scriptures, and to apply to his own heart the Scriptural tests of a gracious state, and to build upon the sure foundation, without reference to the peculiarities found in other people. In some temperaments powerful emotions inevitably attend conversion, and must be looked for in every step of advancement towards the maturity of grace. In others but little emotion is to be expected. The circumstances of their earlier lives do not warrant the belief that their transition into the kingdom of grace, by personal faith, will produce startling sensations. Their experience grows with the development of their moral agency, and perhaps with as little emotional excitement. The main thing is the Scriptural standard of experience, which is the Spirit of adoption. Whether it come suddenly with the rapturous

joy of conscious pardon, or reveal itself in the soul so quietly and gently as to require inward searching to verify its presence, it must be accepted as God's own testimony and seal, and nothing else should be allowed in its place. The time was in the history of the Church when this point received more attention than now. May it not be that we have erred in not keeping it more prominently before the mind as the real test of Christian life? It is well to make much of the enjoyments found in Christian fellowship, and to speak of the highest possible attainments in the life of faith; but even this should not divert attention from the inestimable privilege of all believers, the true basis of permanent joy in God, which is the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of adoption. All varieties of experience come back to this standard; for in the manifestation of the Spirit of adoption there is variety enough to meet every peculiarity of constitution, temperament, circumstances, and outward condition; and there is flexibility enough in God's plan of dealing with men to adapt his working energy to every particular case; but the standard of

privilege is invariable, as the law of God is unbending and the conditions of salvation are unalterable. The variety has respect to incidentals; but the essential requirement of the new birth, followed by holiness of heart and life, is in all cases imperative.

The bearing of all this on the subject of this chapter is obvious. The same variety in the incidentals of experience which marks the earlier stages of the Christian life, should be expected all along the pathway of attainment till the summit is gained. As all are not awakened alike, and all do not repent alike, and all are not converted alike, so far as outward methods and manifestations are concerned, so all are not sanctified alike, all do not grow in grace precisely alike, and all do not gain Christian perfection in exactly the same way. The essential conditions must be met in every case, but the incidents, the manifestations, the emotional elements, will differ as in repentance and conversion. It is not possible therefore to designate any one type of experience which has in it more promise of Christian perfection than another. The only way to the attainment is in the steady line of

Christian living, each according to his light and surroundings, meeting duty as it comes, and pushing onward, with divine help, "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." But this assurance may be given, that every Christian who maintains a good conscience, and grows in grace, and uses the means of spiritual improvement, is in fact, whether rapidly or tardily, gaining ground, and "going on to perfection."

One of the most serious difficulties in the way of intelligent progress is in the habit of confounding things that differ, and thus keeping one's self in the dark as to attainments secured, and in groundless expectation in regard to the future. Confounding purity and perfection, and being conscious that maturity in grace has not been reached, many fail to realize the presence of the all-cleansing blood, and put off the day of sanctification, as they suppose they must, till they can find within them the evidence of perfection in love. This is a mistake of sad import. Practically, it is like waiting to be made perfect, in order to be sanctified wholly. It reverses the order of the Gospel, and necessarily retards the work both

as to inward cleansing and the development of the graces of the Christian life towards maturity. Others making the same mistake in sentiment, are betrayed into a different error in practice. Seeking earnestly and in faith for a clean heart, and verily believing that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, they confess the purity they seek, and call it Christian perfection—thus prematurely assuming to be “filled with all the fullness of God,” and complete in his will. Subsequently, finding that the graces of the Spirit were not perfect in them—that faith faltered, that love grew cold, that patience did not have its perfect work—they fall into doubt, suppose themselves to have been deceived in regard to the cleansing, or imagine that they have lost the blessing, and are really discouraged and hindered in their honest endeavor to grow up into Christ. That many, without evil intent, profess “perfect love,” and fail to realize its full significance, is true beyond question; and that in the majority of instances, this mistake arises from mistaken views of the nature of the attainment, is just as true as the fact itself; and the false view, which is most fruit-

ful of such practical mistakes, is the one which accepts the absence of the consciousness of sin for the maturity of grace and the completeness of Christian character. There is still need for line upon line in relation to this point; for no one can doubt that such error as leads to wrong professions, is injurious to the persons implicated, injurious to the cause of God, and to the Church at large. The doctrine of Christian perfection has suffered much at the hands of misguided friends.

In order to the attainment of this gracious state, it is important that both the negative and positive sides of the subject be kept in mind. The negative side is the cleansing; yet cleansing is not a negative thing, but a positive work. It is the direct and positive application of the blood of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, to the washing away of all sin—its guilt, its pollution, its very being, so that there is resultant a clean heart; a heart dead to sin, emptied of self, and prepared for the indwelling of the Spirit of God. There is, indeed, much that is positive in this work of preparation for the heavenly guest; and yet, when viewed as an aspect of the completed

work, it is but the negative side of the experience of Christian perfection. It takes away obstructions; it removes old stains and carnal biases, purges the passions and subdues the appetites; but the work of filling the soul with the life and love and image of God is distinct from this, and in the order of thought subsequent to it. The cleansing takes away what was in the heart; but the filling brings into it that which is new and divine. The cleansing may be instantaneous, because it is God's work, and comes in answer to pleading faith; and in most instances it is attended with the profoundest sense of the presence of God, forming an epoch in the life of the soul to be remembered, because it gives new power over sin, and new victory to faith, and brings the much-desired peace of God which passeth all understanding. And it is not to be supposed that God thus comes to the soul, and cleanses it from sin, and leaves it unoccupied by himself. We can not imagine a human heart at once empty of sin and empty of God or of holiness. The Spirit that purges the dross abides to refine. He who prepares the temple occupies it. Yet the maturity of grace

does not necessarily follow the indwelling of God until the guest is fully recognized and welcomed, and his presence cherished and acknowledged. While it is possible, therefore, to fix the time of the cleansing—that is, the period of its consummation—with reasonable accuracy and confidence, it is not so easy a matter to point to a day or hour as the exact time when the fruit of the Spirit reached maturity, or the indwelling love of God touched the line of perfection. Nor is it certain that all the Christian graces reach maturity at the same moment. Some receive more culture than others, and consequently more rapid development. Some lack occasion for exercise; some meet with peculiar trials which may either hinder or hasten their growth, so that the instances are rare in which the whole train of virtues move onward with even pace toward the goal of symmetrical and completed Christian character. There is a time when the youth growing into manhood reaches the measure of his stature, although he is not conscious at the moment when the process of growth is completed; but he afterward realizes the fact, and is as thoroughly sure that he is a

fully grown man as if he could point to the hour when he reached the fullness of his height. It is so in the Christian life. We may not tell when to date the maturity of grace within us, but if love is made perfect, and all grace abounds, so that every power of the soul is subdued to Christ, the consciousness of the fact will come, and we shall know by the Spirit which we have of God, that we dwell in him and he in us.

Nor is it possible to estimate the time that intervenes between the complete cleansing and the perfection of the graces. By the complete cleansing is meant the thorough cleansing that takes away all the stains of sin, not that the process ceases; for in this sense we can not speak of completeness. It goes on and on, and is continuous or unceasing; but it reaches a point of thoroughness when the heart is entirely clean. After this the fullness of love comes in, but how soon is not to be previously known. As before stated, in some the work advances more rapidly than in others. Much depends on the faith, the habits of life, the consecration, and the activity of the person. There is no rule given by which to de-

termine in any case what will be the rate of progress in the divine life. A profound conviction of one's helplessness and need, followed by an unutterable groaning for full redemption, with unreserved consecration, bringing such a baptism of the Spirit as will cut short in righteousness the purifying process, and powerfully invigorate all the spiritual faculties, will undoubtedly facilitate the maturity and perfection of love. Earnestness in seeking will hasten success in finding. A clear understanding and a definite aim will bring victory much sooner than indefinite pursuit, however conscientious. Vagueness is weakness. Concentration of thought helps the steadiness of the will, and improves the vigor and tone of all efforts in drawing near to God. Undoubtedly many live for years in comparatively moderate attainments in religion, who might be ripe in experience, but for the lack of specific instruction in regard to the fullness of Christ, and an intelligent and definite aim in seeking him.

What, then, about the profession? It is plainly the duty of Christians to place themselves on the side of the Lord, to acknowledge

allegiance to Christ, and to bind themselves in all suitable ways to his service, by open committal and profession of faith. They do this in baptism, and in their union with the Church, and should do it by confessing him in word and deed, wherever they find occasion, remembering always that to be ashamed of him is grievously offensive to him. And yet there is no form of words prescribed by divine authority in which this profession is to be made. The Scriptures speak only of confessing Christ, and of the profession of faith in him. An intelligent profession of trust in Christ, and of loyalty to him, covers the whole ground of Christian profession, so far as it needs to be proclaimed to the world, or made openly before the unbelieving. Those who know him not will not appreciate more than this. But there is propriety in entering into the particulars of personal experiences in the presence of willing and serious hearers. In such presence, where there is mutual confidence and sympathy, much greater freedom may be indulged, and there the faithful narration of what God is doing in the soul will minister edification to those who hear. By speaking

modestly of our attainments, and declaring even the great things that God is working in us, we may not only help others, but help ourselves; for the effort to speak will aid in gaining clearer views of our religious lives, and finding others profiting by our testimony will react favorably in settling our own faith and banishing doubts. Here we may pour out our souls in confidence, and own the unspeakable grace. There are some things in every one's experience too sacred to be thrown out to the unbelieving; but there is nothing in all God's dealings with our hearts which we may not profitably open to those who are like-minded with ourselves. In this intimacy of Christian fellowship we can disclose our inward experiences of joy and sorrow, of doubt and faith, of conflict and triumph, not only without fear of casting pearls before swine, but with assurance of both doing and receiving good. Here, too, where kindred spirits mingle in worship, the earnest seeker for the crowning grace will find the most efficient helps in taking hold of the covenant with appropriating faith, and the best surroundings for the final consecration. There is no better

place for approaching near to God than where believers shut themselves in from the world, for the time, and together cast themselves before the mercy-seat. In such conditions wonderful freedom of access is found; and if God come in power, and fill the soul with all the fullness of his presence, even to overflowing, let his name be glorified in declaring the mightiness of his love. As witnesses for Christ, we can not refuse to testify to the world of his power to save, while to the Church we make known the mystery of his grace in the full redemption vouchsafed to us, and in the complete establishment of our souls in righteousness. In this way it is possible to make profession of perfect love without offense; and as this implies the possession of a clean heart, it is right to speak with even greater confidence of the presence and efficacy of the blood which cleanseth from all sin. Such a profession, sanctioned by a life of purity and active Christian work, will find favor with God and prove edifying to his people.

## CHAPTER XV.

## HOLINESS.

**H**OLINESS is the aim of all Christian endeavor, the crown of Christian experience, and the essence of Christian character and enjoyment.

Holiness and spiritual life are joined together, if not identical. They are so related that one does not exist without the other, either in the individual, or in the company of believers which constitutes the Church. Where there is no life from God in the soul, there is no holiness; and, on the other hand, wherever there is spiritual life, there is also the abhorrence of sin, the love of purity, personal consecration—holiness. In measure or degree it will correspond with the life of faith. If the new life be feeble, as in the newly regenerated, the holiness is incipient; and as the life develops, unfolding its powers, and extending its influence in molding and refining the spiritual nature, the holiness intensifies, matures, and strengthens.

Holiness is freedom from sin. In those once subject to sin, and defiled by sin, it implies the destruction of the reigning power of sin, and the washing away of all its pollution. By so much as we conquer sin, we become holy. Just so far as we strive against sin we strive for holiness. Every word, and act, and thought, put forth in opposition to sin, is an advocacy of holiness. All moral reforms tend to the promotion of personal purity. Every revival of religion is a revival of holiness. Whatever weakens the power of Satan upon the soul, and lifts the struggling penitent toward the light of truth, advances the work of Christian holiness. The conversion of a sinner elevates the standard of holiness; and every step of progress in the divine life pushes the standard higher. There is no growth in grace without an increase in holiness. Every victory over temptation, every answer to prayer, every act of communion with God which confirms faith and establishes confidence toward the Lord Jesus Christ, raises the believer into higher experiences of Christian purity.

Holiness means victory over sin itself—not

merely over the forms of sin. Lying, drunkenness, debauchery are forms of sin; so are all acts of cruelty, fraud, and oppression. Sin is embodied in them, and they should be opposed as forms of evil; but this is not enough. Too much of the work of reformers stops just here; and sometimes as Christians we content ourselves with opposition to the forms of sin. Such opposition is largely ineffectual. The Gospel opposes sin itself, not only as manifested in outward forms, but as it exists in the secret chambers of the soul; and our warfare against sin should be directed against its essence or being—against the corruption of nature that induces it. We should consider it in the light of God's purity till it becomes "exceedingly sinful." To "abhor evil" is a divine injunction. The Savior himself looked with anger upon wicked men, "being grieved at the hardness of their hearts." He saw not only the form, the body of sin, but its soul. His eye detected the essence of evil, the inward principle whence the unholy passion came, and his soul loathed it as odious in itself, as hateful to God, and as ruinous in all its tendencies. He knew it as the work of the

devil, which he came to destroy. His sermon on the mount cuts the deadly root. His life was a condemnation of sin in the flesh. He sought to make the tree good, in order that it might bear good fruit; to make the fountain pure, in order that it might send forth a pure stream; and his was the only true philosophy of reform.

Holiness is strength. It is power over sin; and, therefore, it gives advantage in the contests with the devil. Sometimes the thought comes to us that possibly a high state of grace will render us too delicate for the antagonisms of this wicked world; that the more holy we become the more easily will our hearts be injured by the unavoidable frictions of earth. There are fabrics of such fine texture and high polish that a little rude handling will soil and mar them beyond remedy. But holiness is not of this character. It is a shield, a defense, an armor of righteousness; it repels the assaults of wickedness; it gives sternness to courage, and nerves the arm for vigorous warfare. If it consisted merely in emotions and related only to the joys of the heart, it might be compared to the delicate things of

earth—to flowers, or paintings, or polished surfaces, that please the eye, but can not be used ; but this is not the case. It relates to the whole man. It gives clearness to the understanding, steadiness to the conscience, stability to the will, and vigor to every virtuous exercise of the heart. Why, then, should any one be afraid of holiness? It is religion ; we have some, and should have more. It is love ; we have it in some degree—why not desire it in higher degree? It is life ; we have felt its animating throbbings in regenerating grace—why not seek its higher manifestations in communion with Him who is alive from the dead? It is the image of God in the soul, the atmosphere of heaven, the title to the inheritance of the saints in light—why allow it to be obscured with clouds and mists, when the prayer of faith and the Holy Ghost will banish all doubts, and keep the sky clear and serene?

Holiness is related to moral power, perhaps as intimately as to spiritual life. The influence of the individual for good depends more on his personal consecration than on his talents or position in society. If poor and ignorant and obscure, yet devout and humble

and spiritual, his influence will be felt. If his testimony is clear and consistent, and given in the simplicity of obedient faith, it will be heard and accepted by all who observe his walk and spirit, whether it be clothed in appropriate words selected from the living oracles or be uttered in broken sentences and homely phrases. And what is true of the individual is true of the Church. Although the membership be lacking in culture, and all use the simplest forms of speech, yet if they know the power of salvation from sin, and walk in the light of God's commandments, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, they will send forth an influence which will tell upon the community where they live. God's presence with them will supply all their needs, and make them more than all their enemies. The light of a holy Church can not be hid.

This is the unanswerable argument for Christianity. There are other arguments, it is true, but none that equal this in moral force. Some are historical, requiring much general information in order to understand them; and if these only existed, many would

die without the ability to test their validity or sufficiency. Some are founded upon an analysis of the soul and a consideration of its powers, tendencies, needs, and adaptations; but these are beyond the reach of many. The mass of mankind are not impressed with such arguments when brought to their attention; much less could they be expected to pursue the metaphysical reasoning necessary to discover and apply them. Few infidels are ever converted by abstract reasoning, even among those capable of abstruse investigations, and certainly the profane are seldom brought to Christ by arguments addressed merely to the intellect. It is important that all these arguments be made—that the truth of the Gospel be established by patient and laborious inquiry into the evidences of the antiquity, purity, genuineness, and authenticity of the sacred records; but how few, comparatively, have the time or the means of verifying investigations of this sort! Were each individual required to do this before he could trust in Christ and find salvation, the progress of Christianity against the corruptions of the human heart and the powers of

darkness would be slow indeed. The internal evidences of the divinity of our faith are highly satisfactory to the pious and thoughtful; but these are ineffectual in restraining the passions of the wicked, and in arresting the attention of the thoughtless and wayward. Well that we have these evidences! They bring great comfort to the believer, and form around him an impregnable wall of defense, which infidelity assaults in vain. To the believer himself the evidences arising from the experience of saving grace confirm the internal and external proofs of the divine origin of his faith, and give him the fullest triumph over doubt, removing suspense, and staying his soul on the immovable Rock; but these evidences can neither be seen nor felt by the skeptical. The believer has the witness in himself, knows whom he has believed, proves his own standing in the grace of Christ, and knows the doctrine whether it be of God; but something is needed beyond all this to convince others of the trustworthiness of our faith and hope. We want proof that all can see and feel, that the learned and the unlearned can appreciate; that requires no labo-

rious investigation, no careful analysis, no scientific demonstration. We want an argument that any one can use, that all can understand, that is always ready at hand, that reaches the heart, and never fails to carry conviction. We want such an argument to overcome ignorance, to conquer prejudice, to disarm infidelity, and to command the respect of every class of men in every condition of life. Can we have such an argument? Where is it to be found? We have it only in the holy lives of the followers of Christ. They are "the lights of the world," "the salt of the earth," the "living epistles, read and known of all men." They are the witnesses on whom the Savior depends to defend his cause and to put to silence the gainsaying of the wicked. This is the great argument which admits of no dispute and never fears investigation. It reaches the high and the low, the learned and the unlearned. It requires neither time nor skill to comprehend and apply it. It gives the Church her aggressive power, and while armed with this argument there is no weapon formed against her that can prosper. Whether we will or not, the world will

estimate our religion as they see it exemplified in our lives. This standard of judgment can not be revoked. "By their fruits ye shall know them." This had been true if the Savior had not said it. The body of believers are united "to show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Holiness is as closely allied to happiness as to usefulness. Every one concedes this in regard to the future state. None can enter the happy world without holiness. But how slow we are to realize that there is no real happiness in this life without conformity to the will of God! Our hearts deceive us in this. The fascinations of sin allure us into opposite thoughts; but the deeper experiences of life and the more careful reading of the disclosures of consciousness assure us that the measure of real enjoyment depends on the genuineness of our devotion to God and the purity of our lives. If our union with Christ is vital, steady, and unswerving, by a faith constantly apprehending him and continuously appropriating his merits, our joy in God will be deep, pure, and abounding. "If we walk

in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Then the light of God's countenance is to the soul a fountain of life. His love becomes "rivers of pleasures." His manifested presence animates us with a zeal that wearies not and a hope that never falters. In this fellowship with God all duty is light, all service privilege, and disappointments and afflictions come as expressions of a Father's love, freighted with a Father's blessing. And why should not holiness bring happiness? It is the death of sin, the casting out of evil, the washing away of stain; it is the absence of doubt, the presence of God, the sure hope of heaven.

The promotion of holiness is the mission of the Church. This was the life-work of the Son of God, and the design of his death. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." Then, as the work of the Church is to carry out to completion the mission of Christ, its chief calling is to establish holiness

in the earth. This is particularly the providential allotment of Methodism. Mr. Wesley never felt that he was called of God to found a denomination ; but he continually proclaimed that God had thrust him out to raise up a holy people. The Methodist Discipline announces that our calling is to spread "Scriptural holiness over these lands." Every minister ordained in the connection believes in the doctrine, expects to be made perfect in love in this life, groans after full redemption, and pledges fidelity to this calling. How, then, with any consistency, can this topic be made a specialty or an exceptional thing in the Church? It is the common duty and privilege of all the thousands of our Israel, the aim of all our services, the end of all our preaching, praying, singing, and evangelizing. It is too late to say that we are unscriptural. The Gospel is full of the thing we mean. It pervades the law and the prophets, the types and promises, the songs and sermons, the narratives and epistles of the Old and the New Testaments. It thunders from Sinai, and shines from the Mount of Beatitudes. It comes down to us through the ages, attested

by the testimony of martyrs and saints, and we hail it as the heritage of the Church till time shall end. Technicalities are of little value. Freedom from sin is the great thing. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Theorizing is unprofitable; speculations as to the mode of its attainment may bewilder and confound; but earnest striving in the line of duty and trust will bring the light of salvation. Clothed with this experience, the ministers in the Church are armed for their holy warfare. Self-sacrifice becomes easy. Toil yields delight. The burden of souls calls forth their noblest energies. The favor of God gives success. But holiness is needed in the membership as well as in the ministry, in order to accomplish the mission of the Church. All the Lord's people should be holy. God commands it, and the work to be done in the midst of a "crooked and perverse generation" requires that they come up to the highest standard of Gospel experience. Every true pastor, in looking anxiously over his field of labor, feels that this is true, and yearns for

the heavenly baptism that will bring upon his people the increase of life and efficiency. But the people seldom surpass the minister in seeking personal attainments in grace. He who watches over them, and feeds them with the bread of life, must lead the way in personal consecration. His own soul must glow with the sacred fire before he can be instrumental in kindling the flame in others.

Personal holiness is a conservative power in the Church. A high state of experience in salvation implies such self-abasement, such humbleness of mind and spirit, and such acquiescence in the will of God and the order of Providence as precludes that restlessness and ambition which often attend agitations of reform in doctrine and polity, and which sometimes usurp the place of zeal for righteousness. Not that the most advanced Christians are indifferent to the teaching and order of the Church; they are not indifferent to any thing pertaining to the faith and spirituality of God's people; but they are quick to discern and prompt to rebuke the approach of evil, as their "enlightened understandings" enable them to exercise a "godly judgment"

with readiness ; but they do not magnify their own orthodoxy so as to rest in that alone, nor imagine that the Church will die because their wishes are not gratified in all methods of administration. Their charity abounds as their faith enlarges its range of vision, and their spiritual eye takes in the relative value of inward purity and outward forms. There can be little doubt that if the experience of the "fullness of the blessing of the Gospel" were general in the ministry and the membership, the danger of impairing our priceless heritage of doctrines and usages by unwise speculations and needless innovations would be greatly diminished. In the great Reformation Luther failed to lead the people to the highest attainments in Christian privilege because of the necessity that was upon him to contend for the rudiments of evangelical doctrine and for radical innovations upon ecclesiastical practices. Wesley succeeded because he made experience a specialty, and gave prominence to all doctrines bearing upon experience, and held fast to the Church as he found it. He made personal holiness the first and constant aim of his ministry, and allowed forms and

usages to adjust themselves, as of necessity they would, in consonance with the spiritual wants of the people, as these were successively shown in the progress of his unexampled successes. If we mistake not, this was the secret of his power. For the first time since the apostles, he began a reformation in the Church without direct war upon established usages; and, while in looking backward we can see that the erection of a new ecclesiastical economy was inevitable, he persistently refused to consider any theory of Church government as essential to his work only so far as experience and necessity pressed upon him. Had he started out to remodel the government of the Church, or to set up and put in operation a previously conceived plan of discipline, the probability is that his failure would have been so complete that the present generation would scarcely have known of his existence. But no such thought entered his heart, and multitudes of redeemed souls will praise God forever that his sole aim was to spread Scriptural holiness. This thought absorbed him, but it did not contract his powers. Its tendency was to broaden his views, to

extend the horizon of his vision and his faith ; and there is no reason to doubt that a similar spirit will give to all of us a higher appreciation of the evangelical forces at work in the Church, without dimming our perceptions of the right relations of external forms. In all the past, those in the Church most eminent for sanctity, and distinguished for efficiency in promoting vital godliness, have never shown much zeal for innovations or concern about ecclesiastical polities.

An increase of personal holiness is needed to secure steadiness and stability in the Christian life. The fluctuations of zeal on the part of professed Christians is a source of continual anxiety to every godly person. We wish to see the whole membership standing fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the Gospel. How shall this desirable condition of things be brought about? It can not be till crucifixion to the world, a single eye, and a consecrated life, become the rule instead of the exception. It is not the fault of religion that professors are so fickle. The trouble is in human nature, and in the lack of thoroughness in personal experience. The weaknesses

complained of are the results of depravity, not of grace, and they can only be overcome by more grace. The faltering follower of Christ needs to be "rooted and grounded in love;" he needs to be "strengthened with all might by the Spirit in the inner man;" he needs to be "filled with all the fullness of God." When he comes to this standard, and reckons himself indeed dead unto sin, and alive unto God, his stumblings will cease. Habits of duty will be formed and followed, fixedness of mind will prevail, and then the upward path of life, all radiant with the smile of heaven, will be pursued with cheerful joy.

The blessing of holiness is needed to keep alive the aggressive spirit in the Church. The inclination to ease and quiet is natural to the ministry and membership, and as deplorable as natural. This is palpable to every observer. No argument is required to prove it, nor illustration to make it plain. The Church too often sleeps, while the restless activities of sin rush the multitudes to perdition. The tide of intemperance rolls over the land, mocking the Church to her face. The Sabbath, as an institution of God, reels beneath the tread of

the armies of desecration. Sensuality reaps its harvest of ruin from the very doors of the sanctuary. Extravagance and prodigality stare us in the face. Bribery and corruption in high places are alarmingly common. Profanity pollutes the atmosphere we breathe. Under the innocent name of amusements the poison of immorality and death reaches the households of thousands of our people. The popular literature teems with insidious infidelity, while the most valued of our secular papers pour into our families the unblushing iniquities of the dissolute, and the reckless risks of gamblers, with their losses and gains, as coolly and carefully prepared as any news that transpires. The mystery of iniquity works with all diligence. Where shall we find the antidote to the demoralizing tendencies around us? By whom shall the Spirit of the Lord lift up a standard against this flood of evil, if the Church be not girded for the conflict? Who shall beat back the hosts of sin, and gather the outcasts into the fold, if the Church possess not the aggressive spirit? And how shall this spirit be maintained without the baptism of the Holy Ghost upon the ministry and membership?

There is need that the line between the Church and the world be more closely drawn. The friends and enemies of the Gospel should stand face to face. The nations lie at the feet of the Church, and the God of nations bids us rise and occupy all lands. With all the adverse agencies so adroitly mustered into the service of sin, the God of our fathers is working salvation in the earth. Above the storms that rock the civil powers of the world, his voice calls for aggression in his name. The civil commotions of Europe, and Asia, and Africa, relate as much to questions of education and religion as to forms of government and distributions of power. It is indeed impossible to look over the condition of the world, to scan the agitations of society closely enough to catch the under-currents of thought and feeling, without being impressed that God is shaking the nations, and preparing for revelations of his power such as have not been witnessed in our day, and were not seen in the days of our fathers. The wonderful growth of the wealth and power of the Protestant nations, and the increase of facilities for translating and spreading the Word of the Lord,

when considered together, and in connection with the strifes prevailing in Papal, Moham-  
medan, and pagan countries, reveal providen-  
tial interferences for the enlargement of the  
kingdom of heaven, too marked to be mis-  
understood. The subjugation of material na-  
ture to the activities of the age, resulting in  
such astounding progress in the improvement  
of the means of communication with the ends  
of the earth, awakens admiration and wonder,  
and leads to the contemplation of the grand  
moral purpose for which preparation is being  
made. That purpose is readily divined. It  
is the conquest of the world for Christ! Who  
can doubt it? All the successive triumphs of  
science in drawing from nature her secret  
forces—all the tireless energies of commerce  
in joining the nations in closer relationships—  
and all the agitations of the vital questions  
of individual and social rights prevailing in so  
many countries—and all the readjustments of  
the relations of Church and state so marvel-  
ously going on in the Christian world, point  
unerringly to the promised gathering together  
in one of all things in Christ, and the estab-  
lishment of his Church upon the high places

of the earth, where all nations shall flow unto it.

What preparation is the Church making for her high calling in the providential plan? Will she prove equal to the occasion? Will she step into every open door? Not unless her heart is stirred by the inspiration of holiness. The spirit of revival is needed. The aggressive power comes not of wealth, numbers, social position, learning, or refinements; it is the breath of prayer—the spirit of holiness—that gives her strength, and that steadies her steps in the line of battle. Let her ministry have the unction of the Holy One, and her membership the consecration of a living faith, and her power is next to resistless. Her benevolent treasury will not lack; her institutions of learning will not languish; her call for missionaries will not be unheard; her testimony for Christ will not excite derision. When the Church comes back to the simplicity of the Gospel and to the primary purpose of her calling, and puts on the garments of full salvation and the armor of established righteousness, her march to victory will be certain and her triumph glorious. Let

none imagine this impossible. God dwells in Zion. We can not fathom the philosophy of revivals; but they come; and a revival which shall be not merely a quickening of the emotional element in religious services, but an increase of faith and love and zeal—an invigoration of the spiritual life of the Church, attended by an overpowering consciousness of individual responsibility for the salvation of souls—will accomplish wonders.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE TWO AGENCIES.

IN the preceding chapters enough has been said to show that in the experiences of the Christian life we are in one sense passive and in another active. Perhaps the subject is clear enough, and yet there are a few points worthy to be impressed, even by reiteration.

The subject of our powerlessness on the one hand, and of our responsibility on the other, will always be more or less perplexing, and our best reasonings will be inadequate to the removal of the difficulty unless we study the union of the divine and the human agency in the work of salvation from sin. Correct ideas of this union are valuable in the elucidation of the earlier processes or the incipient stages of experience, and they become more and more indispensable as we advance to consider the problems of the higher life of faith and holiness. If it be true that holiness is the result of a sanctification which is

the work of God, it follows that the divine agency has much to do with it; and if perfection results from growth, as holiness from sanctification, the divine agency is necessary in the beginning, the progress, and the completion of the process.

We shall confine our remarks to these higher experiences, although it is not to be forgotten that in all stages, from the incipency to the fullest maturity of grace, as well as in the activities of obedient faith, while we "work out our own salvation," we say truly, "It is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." The work of planting the divine life in the soul is eminently the work of God. He alone can break the reigning power of spiritual death, and awaken the dormant energies of our spiritual natures into the life and activity of personal faith. His Spirit not only imparts life, but does the work of preparation for growth. He removes impurities from the soul, and he re-adjusts its powers and passions, subordinating the animal to the spiritual, and gives such liberty and direction to the vital forces as to create the possibility of advancement towards

maturity. Every virtue is the product of the Spirit's influence, and every step of progress reveals the Spirit's presence. At no period in life do we attain to independence, or reach a position in which or from which advancement can be made, without the active working in us of the divine agency.

This fact is fundamental; and yet all this work of faith, growth, and holy living is recognized in the Scriptures as our own, and the responsibility for failure in it rests upon ourselves. The great truth underlying this mystery is the fact that the divine agency never supersedes the human agency during probation. In every step of advancement we are called to activity, to concurrent action, to hearty co-operation with God working in us. His plan is to work with us and for us for our salvation, but never against us nor without our concurrence. We depend on him always and in every thing, yet he awaits our movement in consenting and working as really as if he were dependent on us. As said the Savior himself, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." There is mystery in this, of course.

We can neither comprehend the manner of the union or working together of the two agencies, nor the reason why it is necessary; but the fact is unquestionable, and because of the fact the duty is upon us to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." However deep the mystery, it is clear that the nearer we approach to God, and the more perfectly we enter into active co-working with him, the more perfect will be the blending of the two agencies in ourselves, and the higher the degree of our freedom, and the more complete our victory over sin. By making the will of God the supreme law of our life and being, we come into higher union with Christ, into fuller communion with the Holy Ghost, and share more largely in the liberty which the Son of God bestows. Our work is most truly our own when it is wrought in God; and when our thoughts and deeds spring from fellowship with Christ and from motives and impulses in accord with the reigning law of love in our souls, they will be not less our own, but more truly divine than is possible in a lower state of grace.

This union or co-working of the divine and

human agencies is not less positive in sanctification than in going on to perfection. The cleansing efficacy is all in the blood of Christ, and the efficient agent in the application of that blood is the Holy Ghost, so that the work is truly divine; yet the appropriation of the cleansing blood by the Holy Ghost is through faith. The heart is purified by faith and in obeying the truth, and through active, earnest self-denial and holy living. This truth stands out upon the face of the Scriptures, that in sanctification, as in all the aspects of the process of salvation, God's work does not supersede our agency, but requires submission to his terms and methods, and the consent of all our active powers to his immediate guidance and control. It is ours to cease to do evil and learn to do well. If we would be sanctified to God, we must, by the exertion of our own powers, quickened and energized by the Holy Spirit, put away from ourselves all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. The command is imperative, "Be ye holy." It comes with the implication of power to obey it. We are called upon to "wash us and

make us clean ;” to “ put away the evil of our doings ;” to “ cast off the unfruitful works of darkness ;” to “ put off the old man,” and to “ put on the new man ;” and the apostle says, “ Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.”

The most perfect realization of the union of the divine and human agencies is in the person of Christ. He was Emmanuel—God with us. In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in him was found every attribute of a perfect manhood; yet there was no conflict of wills nor any suspension of agency. As God and man united in one person, he was the model and the basis of the ultimate union of our wills with God’s will. We can not intelligently read his intercessory prayer without being impressed with this truth. He contemplated nothing less than a perfect union between himself and his followers, by which they should be made perfect in him, and perfect in their fellowship one with another. This consummation is reached when the faculties of the soul are all purified, when the human will is linked to the divine will, and God’s plan of working and saving men is

freely accepted without murmuring or mental reservation, and the human will thus united to the divine asserts its rightful lordship in the empire of the mind and passions. It is unto this height of fellowship we are called.

Why, then, are we not complete in Christ? Why are we not perfect? Why is not holiness the atmosphere in which we live and walk? The lack is not in the cleansing fountain. It is not the fault of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to make holy. The will of God is not at fault; for this is his will, even our sanctification: nor can the failure be charged upon the divine calling; for God hath not appointed us to uncleanness, but to holiness. The divine agency makes no failures, nor does it move tardily when we are ready. The blameworthiness is all our own. We do not allow ourselves to come fully into the cordial sympathy with the divine plan and purpose that is requisite. At some point we falter. It may be through lingering unwillingness to part forever with sin, or that we hesitate in order to comprehend the process or to imagine the emotional results, or, possibly, to settle our mental questionings as to

the nature and degree of evidence to be required as satisfactory; for some reason faith staggers. God calls and urges, the Spirit strives, the Word of God becomes luminous as we read its "exceeding great and precious promises;" and yet we shrink back in doubt. An indefinable fear holds us from venturing out upon the divine Word. The consciousness of every Christian who has tested his heart at this point, whether he has gone up the mountain at the call of God or still lingers tremblingly at its base, will testify that the failure is in the human agency—in the misgivings found within himself. His acquiescence in the will of God is not complete; and, therefore, the full efficacy of the blood of atonement is not apprehended, and its utmost cleansing power is not realized.

If the treatment of the subject were strictly theological, the questions of the synergistic and monergistic controversy would here come in for consideration; but it is beyond our aim to give a scientific or systematic analysis of the doctrines related to the experience of the soul in passing from death unto life. The fundamental facts underlying the monergistic

theory are not inconsistent with the position here assumed, although it is decidedly synergistic. The Augustinian monergism, however, finds nothing for the human agency to do in regeneration or turning to God. Its conception of the utter helplessness of the soul through the sin of Adam, imputed to the race and punished in the succeeding generations, and its exalted notions of the divine sovereignty in applying the benefits of the atonement to chosen individuals of the race, without conditions, necessitates the exclusion of the human agency, not only from the exercise of the power that regenerates and sanctifies, but from the active co-operation with the Holy Ghost in consenting and trusting as conditions to his work. We consent to its allegations of the inherent inability of man to move in the matter of regeneration till touched by a measure of resuscitating power from God ; but we claim that through the unconditional benefits of redemption the touch of life-giving energy comes to every one, so as to secure the conditions of a personal probation, and that without this there is no personal responsibility, and with it there is

gracious ability in the soul to meet the requirements of the Gospel as conditions of personal salvation; and that the Gospel requires the performance of the imposed conditions in order to the exercise of the divine power which regenerates and sanctifies. Theologically, our position is synergistic. The power that saves is divine. God alone can quicken the dead soul. He alone can regenerate. He alone can make the leper clean. But his grace has so arranged that we can co-operate. Our responsibility is real. Our agency is a factor in salvation by divine ordination. We do not regenerate ourselves, but we do perform the antecedent conditions; and God requires this, and will not consummate the work without our consent, rendered or expressed in this performance. The human will is thus invested with power to withstand the infinite love and grace of God—not to say Omnipotence; for Omnipotence, in the sense of force, takes no part in this transaction. It is not a question of force, but of grace—not of coercion, but of moral influence. God works in us that we may have a good will, and with us when we have a good will, and in all his inworking

he respects the nature of the soul, with its attributes of rationality and moral freedom. The divine agency neither overpowers nor violates the human agency.

We can not tell how the two wills combine, nor how the two agencies move together each in its sphere, to the accomplishment of the same end, any more than we can tell how the sunshine and rain unite in fructifying the earth; but that they do work together is as certain as that the farmer works with the sunshine and rain in producing his crops. For us to decline working with God because we can not understand his methods, is as unwise as for the farmer to refuse to sow his seed because he can not tell the reasons for the changing seasons, nor trace the influence of the sunshine as distinct from that of the rain in maturing the grain.

The thought has often occurred to us that we theorize too much in relation to Christian experience—not that we would undervalue truth, but we push our speculations too far. We seek to comprehend the mode of God's work, and the reasons for it, as well as the terms and results. But God does not give

account of himself so far as to explain the reasons of his actions; neither does he declare the mode of the Spirit's work, nor shed much light on the psychological aspects of the processes involved in our transformation into his likeness. The attitude which becomes us most in the presence of his amazing love, is silent reverence. The necessity for the work he proposes in us, the provision for it, and the terms required, are all plain, and this ought to suffice. As remarked in a previous chapter, in the earlier stages of experience there is great dissimilarity in appearances. Some are convicted of sin suddenly, and with overwhelming emotional disturbances, while others awake to thoughtfulness and forsake sin as unreasonable and ruinous, and deliberately respond to the claims of God with little excitement. Some enter the kingdom after violent struggles, and feel unutterable rapture, while others quietly wait and trust, and hail the rising light of peace as calmly as the dawn of the morning. Scarcely can two be found whose experiences agree in detail, while all agree in essentials and results. The one Spirit reveals a wonderful variety in adminis-

tration. From all which the lesson comes that no man's experience is the model or standard for ours. We build only upon the Rock, each for himself, with reference to small attainments and great. There is not a doubt that many fall short of their high calling at this point. They seek according to a standard previously fixed in the mind, which has been determined by the conception gained from the personal testimony of some one who has spoken earnestly of the details of experience, and because they can not find reproduced in themselves all that seemed included in that testimony, they fail to go forward. Let each learn the requirements of the Lord for himself, and trust the infinite sacrifice, and follow the Spirit whithersoever he leadeth, leaving modes and processes, and all details, to the wisdom of God, and a blessed light will shine upon the pathway of experience, leading upward to the refulgence of heaven.













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