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THE GROUNDWORK

OF

A SYSTEM

OF

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
THEOLOGY,

BY

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PREFACE.

THE reader will observe that this Groundwork is designed to be followed by a System of Evangelical Lutheran Theology. It was the object of the writer to contribute to the appropriation anew of the great principle of the Lutheran Reformation, and to the apprehension of the Christian idea of God and the world, of religion and man, with the distinctness which is made practicable only by that great principle; and, thus, to prepare the way for the construction of a true system of Evangelical Lutheran Theology.

It is published in this separate form, because such a work seemed to be very much desired at this time, and because it can be used in the study of any other system. The author wished to call attention to the fact that the Lutheran system admits of modifications in its *forms*, without the sacrifice of its *principle*; that, while in the present transition-state of the Church we should not, and cannot, receive all the old forms of doctrine, we should, and can, *retain and make all the more prominent the spirit of them*; that we can, and should, do this in full confidence that the true *type* of Evangelical Lutheranism is most closely connected with the *principle*, and most nearly *akin to the apostolic spirit and stamp of Christianity*; that true Lutheranism is not a sect, but a bringing back of the Church to primitive Christianity, and to a more vital and complete appropriation of the apostolic spirit and doctrine.

He wished also, on the one hand, to strengthen the active workers in the Church—laymen as well as ministers—in the belief that personal assurance of salvation and efficient labor for the conversion of souls is, in a great measure, independent of the formal creed and of the theological system; that every person—the young child as well as the mature man, the unlearned layman as well as the learned theologian—can savingly accept Christ and effectually testify for Him, can become assured of his own salvation and qualified to be an efficient worker for the conversion of

others, for the edification of the Church, and for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. And he desired, on the other hand, to impress them all the more deeply with an intelligent sense of the *importance* of the *right use of the creed* and of the *proper study of theology*—to make them feel that to imbibe *the true spirit of the creed*, and to cultivate *a true interest* in systematic theology, will contribute greatly to *personal* edification, as well as to the *purification* and *growth* of the Church.

It is hardly necessary for the writer to acknowledge his indebtedness to the great German thinkers in the production of this work. He has had his own idea of the groundwork of an Evangelical Lutheran Theology, and he has tried to exhibit it without much concern about the originality of his materials—*anxious only about their truth and their bearing on his great object in the preparation of the work.* The writer long doubted the propriety of such numerous and large extracts as he has made from Luther's works; but as we are indebted to this hero of the Reformation for the *first* announcement and *clear* illustration of the great principle which it is the object of this work to exhibit and apply, and as his voluminous writings are accessible to but few, it was thought that these copious selections would be acceptable, as well as profitable, to very many of his readers. May the Great Head of the Church own and bless this faint effort to exhibit and enforce the bearings of the great principle of the Lutheran Reformation upon the apprehension and construction of divine truth in an Evangelical Lutheran Theology, to the edification of His people, and the extension of His kingdom in the world.

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THE GROUNDWORK

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EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN THEOLOGY.

INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE entering upon the discussion of the Groundwork of a System of Evangelical Lutheran Theology, we will notice some of the characteristics and relations of systematic theology as one of the theological sciences.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND RELATIONS.

§ I. *Its Relative Position among the Several Branches of Christian Theology.*

As the science of the Christian religion, or the scientific self-consciousness of the Christian Church, Christian theology may be regarded as embracing *exegetical*, *historical*, *systematic*, and *practical* theology. Conscious of her relation to the sacred Scriptures, the Church has developed the different branches of an exegetical theology, which have their culmination in Biblical theology. Conscious of the influence of the past, she has produced the several forms of an historical theology, which have their highest point in the history of doctrine. Conscious of the unity of the doctrines which she professes, she has constructed a systematic theology; and conscious of her functional activities, she has produced a practical theology, comprising homiletics, catechetics, etc.

It is *formally* distinguished from the mere Christian consciousness by the attribute of science; by its clearly defining and

firmly determining its ideas, fully and logically stating its proofs, and by so arranging and uniting its materials that all may be deduced from one principle, or from several principles which reciprocally explain and support one another. It is true, indeed, that a system in which all parts are subordinate to one principle, to which all may be referred and from which all may be derived, is practicable only in the strictly philosophical sciences, and not in a positive science like Christian theology. But in a wider sense, a system may be regarded as a combination of propositions, so arranged that they form a complete whole. In this sense, one of the branches of Christian theology at least, namely, systematic theology, may be considered a science.

It may also be *materially* distinguished from the Christian consciousness by its historical element,—by the exhibition of the various changes which the Christian doctrines have undergone, together with their successive developments, as in historical theology; by its discussing and defining the philosophical and theological principles applicable to the examination of the sources, changes and developments of the doctrines believed, as in Biblical criticism and other branches of exegetical theology, as well as in the several branches of historical and practical theology. Among these several branches of Christian theology, systematic theology occupies a central position. Exegetical and historical theology are its preliminary and auxiliary sciences; and the different forms of practical theology, its result and end.

§ 2. *Its Content.*

As systematic theology is that part of Christian theology which consists in the scientific or systematic exhibition of the Christian doctrines, it embraces both the articles of faith and the principles of Christian morals, that is, both *Dogmatics* and *Ethics*. Christian Dogmatics is the discussion of the dogmas of the church, that is, of religious doctrines as they are believed and professed by the Christian Church. It is the science of dogmas. Christian Ethics, on the other hand, is the science of Christian morals.

In the earlier times, systematic theology was treated as *one science*; but since the days of Calixtus in the Lutheran, and of

Dannaeus in the Reformed church, it has been divided into these two particular branches. This division can be proper only in the scientific discussion of these different elements of divine truth, and must, in every case, be limited to systematic theology. In practical theology—homiletics, catechetics, pastoral theology, etc., the dogmatical and ethical elements of Christianity must never be separated. It is useful for the purposes of the clear distinctions, and the rigid treatment, aimed at in the theological schools; and the separate discussion of these elements of Christianity, or, at least, the notice of the distinct discussion of which they are susceptible, may also prevent some practical evils to which they are exposed under different theological influences and religious tendencies. In the effort of science to attain unity, there is danger, when both are discussed in the same system, of making one element so predominant as almost to exclude the other. Thus, in the rigid orthodox theology, the dogmatical element is likely to become so prominent, that when the articles of faith and the principles of morals are not treated in distinct sciences, but are brought together into one system, the ethical element is in danger of being almost entirely neglected. On the other hand, in rationalistic theological discussions, the ethical elements generally so predominate, as almost to exclude the dogmatical. They may, therefore, be conveniently discussed in distinct and separate sciences. But this should be done in such a way as that they shall be always seen to have reference to each other—dogmatics opening the way for ethics; and ethics looking to dogmatics for light upon its sources and its end, its foundation and its superstructure.

But the spirit and method of the Sacred Scriptures, and especially the great principle of the Reformation, will always urge us to retain as far as possible the old method of the unity of the discussion of the articles of faith and the principles of morals. And while for purposes of extended and exhaustive treatment, and for the sake of contemplating and studying the dogmatic and ethical domain, each in its peculiar relations, dogmatics and ethics may be profitably cultivated as special sciences,—still, the perfection of systematic theology as a science will only be attained when it shall have so clearly apprehended and so prominently exhibited the inner union of the two, as to make the

complete discussion of them, as in organic union, practicable and necessary. The function of the system is to reproduce *scientifically* what has been produced *actually* by Christianity. But Christianity has doctrine and practice in intimate relationship, and requires them to be in inseparable union. Systematic theology should aim to bring into the most clear and complete consciousness the unity into which dogmatic and ethical elements are brought by the method and order of divine revelation as recorded in the Bible. Only when it shall have done this, will it have reproduced *scientifically* the true Christian system of doctrine in its full reality and its completed truth. The best system of systematic theology will be that which *shall seize the point of union between dogmatics and ethics*, and which shall, from this as the central conception, succeed, at last, in the complete treatment of them *in connection with each other*. The most perfect Christian science will be the system which sets forth most fully the Christian doctrines in their relations to life, and the Christian faith as it combines knowledge and action. Systematic theology must, therefore, for the attainment of a clear apprehension, as well as for the cultivation of a deep consciousness of the union of faith and love, treat dogmatics and ethics together. While it resolves all the articles of faith into the revelation of redeeming grace in Christ, and all the principles of morals into the faith that worketh by love, all into the adoration of faith and the devotion of love, it should seize the *point of union of this homage and this devotion*, that is, saving faith as the principle of a new life, and make it the great uniting principle, in the light of which all the elements, both of dogmatics and ethics, should be treated and exhibited. This can be done, as we shall see, just in proportion as we *return to the principle of the Reformation*. In saving faith is to be found the point of union between God and man, religion and morality, knowledge and action, dogmatics and ethics. The great interest of theology is to appropriate now, in the light of centuries of experience in Christian science and life, this great principle of early Lutheranism, and discuss it in all its relations to God and man, and to trace its bearings upon all the doctrines and principles of Christianity. In this will be found the unity of faith and life, of dogmatics and ethics, and, thus, the basis of the perfect system of theology.

§ 3. *Its Relation to the Christian Dogmas.*

As systematic theology is doctrinally the scientific self-consciousness of the Church; it stands in close relation to the Christian dogmas. A dogma is a form or expression of Christian doctrine as it has been settled and fixed by the decision of the Christian Church. Ecclesiastical dogmas are not mere individual opinions, but determinate expressions of the belief of a Christian community. In so far as these dogmas are, thus, the product of Christian experience, the fruit of the inner life of the Church, the result of great and manifest revivals of true Christianity, they should be held in the highest regard by theology. But, as they are a form of Christian doctrine, whose determination has been made partly under influences other than Christian piety, and always by men not inspired by the Holy Ghost, they must be regarded as susceptible of restatement and improvement. And as they are human expressions of divine truth, they must, as subjects of theology, be capable of progressive development under the light of the infallible Word of God.

In reference to the sources of doctrine, these dogmas (called articles in allusion to their relation as joints in the body of divinity) have been divided into *pure* and *mixed* articles. Those which are derived exclusively from revelation were called *pure*; those which were supposed to be derived partly from revelation and partly from reason, that is, those which Christianity has in common with reason, were denominated *mixed*. The propriety of this division may be doubted, unless by *reason* be meant the thinking mind as determined by general revelation in contradistinction to the influence of special or miraculous revelation. In religion reason is receptive, but not productive. Though necessary to the reception of divine knowledge, it is not able to originate it.

The division of doctrines into fundamental and non-fundamental articles is scriptural and proper. But it is applicable rather to the determination of what *is necessary to the preservation and growth of the Church* than, of what *is necessary to the existence of religion and the salvation of the individual*. Saving faith is the belief of a fact revealed, the reception of a person—of God manifested in Christ,—and a matter of personal experience. It may be indirectly promoted, but it is not directly dependent

upon the form of doctrine. But in the discussion concerning the reunion of the churches after the Reformation, and especially of the Lutheran and Reformed churches in the 17th century, the great question was, What doctrines must a man believe in order to be saved? Errors affecting the salvation of the soul were defined as fundamental—a definition generally adopted, at least in substance, by the leading divines of that century. But when this point is thus applied to the question of individual salvation, it is attended by insuperable difficulties. It is impossible to make a practicable application of this definition; for an error, fundamental in the case of one man, may not be such in that of another,—in the case of one in a higher, which would not be in that of one in a lower state of mental development. An error, which, considered in the abstract, would be fundamental, might, through ignorance or wrong education, be entertained without excluding its subject from salvation; and an error, which in one set of doctrines would be fatal, might, in a different connection, be so restrained and counteracted as to prevent its destructive tendencies.

Christianity is a fact, a divine power which produces a new life; and, consequently, salvation depends upon the reception of the principle of this life—upon implicit commitment of one's self to Christ, unconditional faith in His person, and devoted surrender to Him. Jesus Himself makes the belief that He is "the Christ, the son of the living God"—attachment to His person as the Redeemer of the soul—the simple and only condition of salvation. And the revival of evangelical truth and the experience of personal assurance of salvation led the early Reformers to declare that saving faith is faith in the Person of Christ, the belief that God for His sake forgives our sins. Salvation is an individual matter: "Hence," says Martensen, "if we hold fast the truth that salvation is an individual thing, and yet are not satisfied with faith in the Redeemer as the ground of salvation, as a principle of life, either present or not present, then we must either hold that in this matter there is something which in its individual application is indefinable, or we shall be in danger of reposing in a certain set of propositions, trusting that if we only hold to them, we may be indifferent to everything else." Saving faith depends not so much upon the reception of fundamental articles of doctrine, as upon the surrender of one's self

to the personal Saviour—an act of which the young child as well as the mature man, the ignorant peasant as well as the learned theologian, is capable. The works of the intellect can, no more than those of the will of the Church, be regarded as necessary to salvation.

The determination of what are fundamental doctrines belongs more *immediately to the preservation and growth of the Church, and only mediately to the question of personal salvation.* And in this respect the distinction is important and should be maintained. Thus those which have an immediate connection with faith in Christ, the foundation and centre of the system of Christianity, must be regarded as fundamental. Those, again, which are necessarily presupposed by this foundation, may be called antecedent fundamental doctrines, and those which are derived by necessary inference from it, consequent fundamental articles; while the non-fundamental would be those which may be denied without destroying the historical faith or the doctrinal edifice of the Christian Church. And it is a matter of importance to each church to decide, as nearly as possible, which are fundamental articles and which are not, in order that she may effectually guide the people in the ways of truth, and ascertain how far the errors of other churches are fundamental, and how far it is allowable, according to the Sacred Scriptures, to have communion and co-operation with them.

In this doctrinal interest of the Church systematic theology must sympathize. It must, indeed, be Biblical, but not merely Biblical theology. While it has points of similarity to the latter, it can be clearly distinguished from it. The former, like the latter, derives its truths from the Bible. But while the latter simply tells us what are the truths of the Bible, the former treats them in their relations to the human mind. The latter deals only objectively with the revelations of God's Word; the former, also subjectively. The latter shows only what the Scriptures teach; the former, also how these teachings have been apprehended, confessed and developed. The latter presents truth simply as it is given in the Bible; the former, also how it has been appropriated by human beings and manifested in the Christian consciousness. Systematic theology is, therefore, inseparable from the Church; while it is Biblical, it should also be confessional; it should not be a mere progeny of the school, but a true child of

the Church. "Wherever the gospel is preached, there," as Luther says, "will there also be children of God." The Bible also contemplates the existence of a Church which will confess its truths, and it declares that this Church shall always exist somewhere, even unto the end of the world.

It is by this, also, clearly distinguishable from mere philosophy. Systematic theology and speculative philosophy are distinct operations, even when they deal with the same subjects and discuss the same truths. The former is a science of faith, the latter a science purely of knowledge. The latter proposes to start from the mere human consciousness, the former from the Christian consciousness, from the consciousness as it has been religiously affected, divinely modified and determined by a historical fact, by a sacred history, by the belief of the community in a special divine revelation, and by the personal appropriation of that which has been miraculously communicated by divine acts of revelation. It is not only a science of faith, but in faith and from faith. While it expounds faith, it starts from faith, continues in faith, and ends in faith. Philosophy proposes to begin in doubt, and by its own investigations to end in certainty of truth; theology begins with faith, with belief in the truth of Christianity, with the reality of its existence in the Church, *independently of all philosophical speculations*. In common with philosophy, it uses all the intellectual faculties. But while the former proposes to discover truth by its own researches, the latter aims, in all its investigations, only to gain a clearer apprehension of the truth already given, and a firmer hold upon that which has already been accepted as certain, and the certainty of which has been attained, not through philosophical acumen, but by the power of special divine revelation. Its materials are given from above; not evolved out of the human mind, not discovered by human reason. Its truth is not demonstrated truth, but historical fact; truth, consequently, whose universal validity cannot be made apparent by mere logical demonstration, but which authenticates itself to the regenerate mind in a manner perfectly satisfactory. Its truth, though above reason and nature, is not contrary to the fundamental principles of thought, nor in contradiction with the laws of the natural world; and it is so suited to the relations and wants of the soul, in its creatureship and its sinfulness, that it commands its faith. This truth, revealed from heaven and ap-

propriated by men, theology accepts and reproduces in a scientific form for the edification of the individual and the strengthening of the Church. It apprehends *the Christian idea of God and the world*, the Biblical world-view, as the true idea; the Christian philosophy as *the true philosophy*. While it does not leave the material, thus given and apprehended, as it found it, still its reasonings are not merely about the truth, but upon the truth. It stands not above Christianity, but upon its ground; not outside of the Church, but within its precincts. It accepts its material as historical fact, as truth resting on divine testimony, and verified in human experience; and in all its critical and scientific treatment, its object is only to understand it more clearly, to appropriate it more fully, to defend it more successfully, and to proclaim it more powerfully and effectually. While speculative philosophy, though dealing with the same subjects, aims only at promoting the interests of science, systematic theology aims also and mainly to promote the interests of religion. Like all true science, it is objective as well as subjective; not simply the manifestation of the spiritual state of the individual theologian, but the organ of the whole Church of God; not objective, indeed, like the sciences of law and history, in which the science is in a great measure independent of the habitus or character of the subject—in the one case of the lawyer's personal consciousness of the law, and, in the other, of the historian's personal consciousness of the facts. It is more subjective than these; because it is necessarily the scientific form of the theologian's personal consciousness of Christianity. But it is not merely this. It is objective also, in the sense that the theologian's consciousness is determined by Christianity and directed to the glory of God and the triumph of the Church. Its objectivity consists in its being not only the science of the theologian's individual consciousness, but also the science of the general consciousness of the Christian Church.

As revealed truth is not *dependent for its saving power and efficacy* upon the logical form of doctrine; and as dogmas are not *immediately necessary* to personal salvation and the existence of the Church, but only to the edification of the individual, and the preservation and growth of the Church; so theology—the organ of these formulations—is necessary *immediately* only for the enlightenment of believers and for the cultivation and exten-

sion of the Church. These already exist, and will exist, independently of dogmatic forms and scientific labors—exist by the inherent power, the vital energy, the saving efficacy of the truth in its divinely independent character; and, consequently, theology is only *mediately* necessary for the salvation of the soul and the existence of the Church. It should, therefore, have such confidence in the divine foundation of the Church and kingdom of Christ, in the indestructible existence of Christianity as the power of God, in the vital energy of the truth in its relations to man, that it will cheerfully and hopefully cherish the spirit of Christian union and catholicity; while it carefully avoids all unevangelical latitudinarianism, and heartily despises all cold indifference to the saving truths of the Gospel. While it endeavors to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, it must, in order clearly and specifically to profess the name of Christ, and successfully to labor for the promotion of the truth, be associated with the visible Church in some one of the branches into which it is now divided. It must labor in the more immediate service of a particular church, and contemplate the Christian dogmas more especially from some particular ecclesiastical point of view. It should be by all means Christian—first of all Christian in its spirit; then Protestant, in its devotion to the great principle of the Reformation; then Denominational, in the exhibition of that type of Christianity which it believes to be most scriptural in its character and best adapted to the edification of the soul and the growth of the Church. It should take into consideration the confessional differences in the Church at large, and bring to view the peculiarity of the creed to which it belongs. But it should also take notice of the defects and corruptions of its own denomination, and, at the same time, cherish a disposition to acknowledge the truth and recognize the excellencies of many of the peculiarities of other churches, to consider the relations which doctrines of a non-fundamental character entertained by them—the truth of which we cannot perceive—may yet have to the preservation and promotion of elements or interests of Christianity, precious alike to them and to us, but which might not have been so fully preserved and promoted by our system alone. It should thus entertain the motives and study the possible conditions under which a true and permanent reconciliation of the antagonisms

between the churches might be attained, and to cherish the means by which they might be so transcended as to effect that union of Christian professors on scientific and ecclesiastical grounds which has all along been accomplished in spirit by the true children of God all over the world.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELATIONS OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY TO THE SYMBOLS OF OUR CHURCH.

§ I. *The Proper Estimate of Creeds.*

It has been truthfully remarked that "general statements of Christian doctrine satisfy two extremes of religious character. They are sufficient for a warm and glowing piety, which, because it already holds the truth in all its meaning and comprehensiveness within the depths of a believing spirit, can dispense with technical and scientific statements. They are satisfactory to a cold and lifeless religionism, which, because it rejects the essential truths in the depths of an unbelieving spirit, prefers an inexact phraseology, because of the facility with which it may be twisted and tortured to its own real preconceptions and prejudices. The absence of scientific knowledge is characteristic, consequently, either of the most devout or the most rationalistic periods in Church history." It is true, indeed, that as Christianity is a life—"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men"—its saving truth is not dependent for its efficacy upon the formulated statements of the creed. But at the same time it is true, also, that the sincere professor of Christianity will recognize that truth in the forms of the creed when they are presented. As long, indeed, as the particular denominations exist, this will be done in different ways. The belief of the people in each of them, though equally evangelical, will be of a particular type; it will have been moulded in some measure by the peculiarities of its confession and modes of worship. The promotion of piety, therefore, in a denomination, requires theology to have respect for these facts. And as long as the several denominations cannot agree upon a creed sufficiently comprehensive to embrace not only fundamental but other important doctrines, and so detailed and explicit as to express and confess evangelical truth in all its power and fulness, the distinct and definite statements of a particular creed will be acceptable to the sincere lover of Christian truth, and welcome to the spirit of true piety,

as a guard against a dangerous indifference to the truth or falsehood of doctrines. But in doing this we must not disregard the distinction between the saving power and the mere intellectual form of the truth. The gospel, as we shall see, is a revelation of divine realities and divine acts in the work of redemption—of laws of life and movements of spirit—which can never be brought into a comprehensive intellectual apprehension, can never be expressed fully in logical formulas or reduced to a completed system of dogmas. The difference between the Christian consciousness and the logical understanding, between doctrines which are not fundamental and those which are essential to the preservation and growth of the Church, should be carefully observed. These different elements and relations of truth should not be so commingled as to make phases of doctrine and points of difference causes of division, in regard to which a due observance of this distinction would enable us to see that different aspects of opinion might properly be tolerated in the same denomination. This was the idea of Spener; and hence he regarded the symbols of the Church as only relatively and not absolutely necessary, as not of primary but only of secondary importance. Creeds should not, therefore, be neglected or despised, on the one hand, nor should they, on the other, be allowed to have undue weight, or to be unconditionally enforced. Only the substance of the faith, the great system of doctrine, and not the individual clauses and details of the creed, should be made unconditionally binding. When they are enforced beyond this, they drive out many of the best men, and hinder many of the most conscientious from coming in, and thus fill the Church, at last, with bigots on the one hand, who will repress all spiritual life and freedom, and on the other hand, with careless men who are really as indifferent to truth as they are to godliness—men who can subscribe any creed, caring only for the form of religion, while they deny its power. And thus enforced they hinder the preservation and growth of the Church, by preventing the development of the theological apprehension, as well as progress in the practical appropriation of the truth. This progress is practicable and necessary for the Church. Spener, in his modesty, considered himself a pigmy as compared with Luther, but he says: "A pigmy standing upon the shoulders of a giant, can see still farther than a giant, though the

giant still remains a giant, and the pigmy a pigmy." Many of the dogmas of a past age, can now, under the light of centuries of experience, be understood in a wider and fuller sense; and from the more thorough investigations of the Scriptures since made, much may be added to them,—all of which is prevented by a stringent enforcement of the details of creeds. So it hinders unity in the same denomination. Those who attempt it, not only produce division in the Church, but are only the more divided among themselves; soon separating into distinct and antagonistic parties, each denouncing and unchurching the others, and claiming to be the only true confessor of the doctrines of the Church. But as we profess to belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and to labor more particularly in her connection, we should contemplate the Christian dogmas from the standpoint not only of Christianity in general, and of Protestantism at large, but also of our own particular branch of Protestant Christianity. We must therefore pay some attention to the relations of systematic theology to the symbols of our Church. In what relation does this spirit, so devout and churchly, and at the same time so free and progressive, stand to the Lutheran creeds?

§ 2. *The Relation to the Symbols in Germany.*

The Views of the Early Reformers.

For more than a quarter of a century after the beginning of the Reformation, no unconditional subscription to human creeds was required. Only the two great principles of the Reformation were considered binding. At the Diet of Spire (1529), against the requirement of their opponents that they should yield to the majority, the Evangelical Protestants maintained the rights of the individual conscience, declaring, "That in matters concerning the glory of God and the salvation of souls, each of us must stand before God and give account for himself, and that, consequently, in this case, no man can excuse himself upon the ground of what others have done or concluded, whether a minority or a majority." And they also affirm the intelligibility and sufficiency of the sacred Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice, declaring, "That there is no sure doctrine but such as is conformable to the word; that the Lord forbids the teaching of any other doctrine; that each text of the

Holy Scriptures ought to be explained by other and clearer texts; that this Holy Book is, in all things necessary for the Christian, easy of understanding, and calculated to scatter the darkness." Having thus affirmed the self-interpreting character of the sacred Scriptures, they continue: "We are resolved with the grace of God to maintain the pure and exclusive preaching of His only word, such as it is contained in the biblical books of the Old and New Testament, without adding anything thereto that may be contrary to it. This word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, while all human vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God." In the Augsburg Confession, delivered the following year, and signed by the very same persons, this protest made at Spire was explicitly recognized and confirmed. And there does not seem to have been any recognition of human creeds as unconditionally binding, until the conclusion of the religious peace (1555), that is, thirty-eight years after the beginning of the Reformation. From that time, and especially after the introduction of the Formula of Concord (1580), a stringent enforcement of the symbols prevailed in the Fatherland until the days of Spener.

The Tendencies of Pietism.

The pietistic revival of the evangelical spirit of the early period of the Reformation, gave an impulse to true views of this subject which has never yet expended its force. By its strong scriptural tendencies and its high estimation of experimental religion, pietism reduced the obligation of the symbols to a mere *conditional* necessity. Thus, while Spener had no personal difficulty in subscribing the symbols (*quia*) because they are agreeable to the Scriptures, he preferred that others should be allowed to use the term *quatenus* as a qualification of the form of subscription. He says indeed: "We cannot maintain that everything in the symbolical books is so expressed that those who composed them, if they were still alive, and had their attention called to this and that inapt word and expression, would not be ready themselves, as much as they were able, to alter them; and, consequently, they could not have desired that every one should be bound by oath to all their words."

§ 3. *The Position of the Church in this Country.*

The Evangelical Lutheran church in this country is the child of pietism. Its founders, coming, as they did, from that peculiar religious development in Germany—coming, as they did, from Halle, the very centre of this movement—held the views in reference to the symbols common to the Evangelical pietists of that day. For a long time there was only a reference to the symbols as containing the system of doctrine inculcated by the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States was the first Lutheran ecclesiastical body which, in this country, required a distinct recognition of the Augsburg Confession. This it did, after all public recognition of creeds and subscription to them, had been for a long time neglected. And, at first, it required only subscription to the declaration: "That the doctrines of God's Holy Word are set forth in the twenty-one doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession in a manner substantially correct." At present its doctrinal basis is the following: "We receive the Word of God as contained in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the Augsburg Confession as a correct exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the Divine Word and of the faith of our church founded in that Word."

§ 4. *Defence of the Position of the General Synod.*

The Church in this country, as represented by the General Synod, has had its history within in the limits of this relation to the symbols, and it has, on this ground, established its own government and discipline. It has had an independent history, and has its own historical rights independently of the history of other branches of Lutheranism. But as other Lutheran bodies have since been organized on the principle of the most stringent obligation to all of the symbols, regarding them as binding not only in substance but in all their doctrinal forms, requiring them to be understood and received in one and the same sense, and calling in question the rights of all who refuse to comply with this demand, it is desirable to say a word in justification of the attitude of the General Synod in this matter; and

1. She is right in receiving *only the Holy Scriptures* as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and thus implying *the fallibility* of all mere *human* utterances of truth.

As creeds are the expressions of the consciousness of a community of men—even though it be a community of Christians—they necessarily include human elements not guided by divine inspiration, and, consequently, fallible elements. They must, therefore, be subordinate to the authority of the inspired Scriptures, and must be expounded in its light. This is universally acknowledged as a Lutheran principle. The Augsburg Confession itself teaches this. It subordinates itself to the test of the sacred Scriptures as the only criterion of all articles of faith. And it anticipates that this exposition and testing shall be made. It implies a continued discussion of doctrines, and at its close contemplates further utterances as in prospect, should anything be found to have been omitted. Assured of the certainty of saving truth independently of all human formulas, its authors did not need nor desire any unchangeable human creed. They could not, consequently, have regarded their confession as a full and final expression or declaration of all Christian truth, any more than Luther could have so regarded his Schmalcald articles, in the third part of which there is given a list of articles—and some of no small importance—which are left open for discussion. The fact that the Lutheran Protestants were ready to deliver new and additional confessions, shows that they did not regard any of them unalterable or as unconditionally binding on themselves or others. And what is thus implied we have explicitly manifest in the fact that “Seven years after the Augsburg Confession was given, namely, in 1537, the Protestant princes directed their theologians, at the Convention of Torgau, to re-examine the Augsburg Confession by the sacred Scriptures, and to alter whatever might be found in it inconsistent with that infallible rule.”

Indeed, the principle of Lutheran Protestantism, which rejects the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church, necessarily involves the fallibility of all creeds of the Church. It implies not only the possibility but the actuality of error in all confessions, and, consequently, in their own. Having declared the confessional utterances of the Church during hundreds of years of her existence to have been fallible, they could not have put forth their own statements of doctrine as free from all error. They knew that *their principles were infallibly true*, namely, that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that

believeth, that forgiveness of sin, justification unto life, is by faith in Christ alone, and that the Word of God is the infallible and sufficient, the certain and intelligible, guide in the way of salvation. And though they believed that their confession was a faithful and truthful exposition of the doctrines concerning the salvation which is experienced by the believer, yet they did not suspend salvation upon *subscription to this interpretation* of doctrine. They knew that salvation is a personal matter, and that the Word of God is self-interpreting for each individual inquirer after the way of life. They appeal, consequently, to the individual conscience in the light of the Word of God, inviting every man to subject all human forms and expressions of doctrine to the test of the infallible Word of God—to the sacred Scriptures.

So deeply rooted was this principle in the Lutheran church, that fifty years after the giving of the Augsburg Confession, the authors of the Formula of Concord seem to have been as sensible of it as were the confessors at Augsburg. They declare, "That the only rule and standard to which both doctrines and teachers are to be directed, and by which they are to be judged, are solely the prophetic and apostolical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. All other writings, whether of ancient or modern name, must not be held equal to the Holy Scriptures, but must all be subordinated to it, and received in no other way, nor any further than as witnesses in what form and at what places such doctrines of the prophets and apostles were preserved. In this way the difference between the writings of the Old and New Testaments, and all other writings, is preserved, and the sacred Scriptures alone remain, the sole judge, rule and standard according to which, as the sole criterion, all doctrines shall and must be acknowledged and judged, as to whether they be good or bad, right or wrong. But other symbols and writings adduced, are not standards like the Holy Scriptures, but only witnesses and declarations of faith,—how in each period, on controverted articles in the church of God, the sacred Scriptures were understood and interpreted by those then living, and how the doctrines contrary to them were rejected and condemned."

The confessions are human forms of truth, doctrines professed by the Church, and consequently need to be discussed and

established. The Scriptures are objective truth, infallible, and consequently unchangeable; the creed is the subjective apprehension of the truth, and consequently, fallible and changeable. If, as we have seen, even the most rigid Lutheran symbol calls all such formulas, and itself among the rest, only the witness of the Church to the Word of God at that particular time, and declares that their testimony must be tried by the sacred Scriptures—then it follows that the confession as that which is to be judged must be subordinate to the Scriptures which are to judge it; that it is to be received, understood and expounded in the light of the Bible at all times; that this witnessing by confession is continuous; and that, consequently, each generation in the course of the development of the church, should bear a part in the witnessing of those who compose confessions at particular times. The General Synod is right, therefore, in keeping clear, distinct and definite this relation of the confession to the sacred Scriptures; and in thus keeping open the way for the free and full confession of the doctrines of the divine Word, as the church is enabled now to hold them.

2. She is right in receiving *only the Augsburg Confession as in any way binding on us as Lutherans.*

No creed can be obligatory which has not been acknowledged by the Church as a Church. But none of the symbols, except the Augsburg Confession, has ever received such recognition. Therefore it alone is in any way binding on us. In fact the Evangelical Lutheran churches were originally designated and legally recognized as the churches of the Augsburg Confession. The claim, therefore, of any particular congregation, in any age or in any country, to be a legitimate branch of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, depends, so far as symbolical authority and doctrinal confession are concerned, only upon its reception of the Augsburg Confession.

3. She is right in requiring *only a conditional subscription* even to the Augsburg Confession.

She acts in the true spirit of the early Lutheran Reformation, when she distinguishes between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines, and requires only the declaration, that it "is a correct exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the divine Word and of the faith of our Church founded in that Word." She thus appropriates what was *first made practicable by the*

principle of the Reformation, and preserves an essential trait of early and true Lutheranism.

This distinction results necessarily from the great principle of the Reformers—justification by faith in Christ alone. Before the Reformation, and soon after the Apostolic times, men lost sight of this distinction, and overlooking the living power of saving truth—in its essential elements and its inner relations to the sincere soul—they began, in their resistance of incoming heresies, to establish dogmas, simply as drawn from either the oral traditions of the Church or from the sacred Scriptures, irrespective of their vital nature and the degree of their nearness to, or their remoteness from, the great centre of saving truth. They thus failed to apprehend the self-authenticating nature of the plan of salvation to the inquiring soul, to distinguish the great characteristic of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; and resting entirely upon the formal character and external authority of revealed truth, they were necessarily led to consider all doctrines fundamental, all dogmas binding. If men asked for the foundation of the obligation of these dogmas, they were pointed, on the one hand, by the mere ecclesiasticism—represented by the Romanists—to the Church; and on the other, by the mere Biblicists—represented by the opponents of ecclesiastical authority, such as the Waldenses and the Wicklifites—to the sacred Scriptures as a mere external law or rule, separate from, and independent of, the subjective experience of their saving contents as the power of God unto salvation, and as having a vital and inseparable relation to the receptivity and wants of man. Thus was the truth revealed for human salvation not only distinguished from, but separated from, the living power which it exerts upon the soul, from the experience of the subject of it. And as, in the one case, all doctrines were supposed to be decided, settled and fixed by the Church in its visible organism, its hierarchical form; so, in the other, they were regarded as determined by the Scriptures merely in their formal character, as an external rule and authority, independently of all reference to the saving efficacy of their contents. In the estimation of both parties, therefore, all doctrines had to be considered as alike in their binding character; and all deviation from them, irrespective of their relative importance, was deemed fundamental error; all departure from the least, as well

as from the most important, was to be regarded as equally worthy of condemnation.

But the principle of the Reformation exposed the defect and error of these methods of apprehending the doctrines of divine revelation, and made the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines of God's holy word, practicable and necessary. In the light of justification by faith in Christ alone, and of the intelligibility of the Sacred Scriptures in all things pertaining to salvation, in personal assurance of salvation, in sonship with God verified in the believer's experience and confirmed by the witness of the Holy Spirit, there is produced a complete change in the manner of apprehending this subject. In this appropriation of the great characteristic of the new covenant, that "all shall be taught of God," of the fulfillment of the prophecy: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts," Christ is regarded as the substance of the Gospel. Though all doctrines are, indeed, still to be tested by the Word of God, yet all things in the Sacred Scriptures are not to be deemed of equal importance. And even important doctrines, not immediately connected with the exhibition and appropriation of the great scheme of redemption, are to be distinguished from those immediately involved in it. To justifying faith, the Scriptures present Christ as the central point of all revealed truth, and represent the fundamental or non-fundamental character of their doctrines according to their mediate or immediate connection with this central point. They distinguish between foundation and superstructure. They are a united body, but all their parts are not equally important. Their relative importance is determined by their near or distant relation to the great central life of which they are the history and the exhibition. And they make the new man in Christ Jesus—the living faith which they produce by the instrumentality of their saving contents, the "faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," the faith which is the substance of their truth as appropriated by the soul—capable of apprehending the relative importance of the doctrines of which they are composed. According to the principle of the Reformation, dogmatic formulas must not all be placed on the same level; doctrinal propositions must not all be considered equally fundamental, equally necessary to the preservation and growth

of the Church, and, consequently, must not all be made equally binding. Thus, Luther, in the early days of the Reformation, did not deny the right of fraternal recognition to a congregation holding fast this central point, though it lacked the observance of many important doctrines. "A Christian, holy people," he says, "is to be known by this, that it has the Holy Word of God, although this be unequally treated. Some have it entirely pure; some not. Wherever God's Word has free course, there, also, there will always be believers. Further, if I see that they preach and acknowledge Christ as sent of God the Father, that He might, through His death, obtain for us reconciliation and grace with Him, then we are one in substance, and I regard them as dear brethren in Christ, and as members of the Christian Church." This is what Luther and the other early Reformers meant by "the pure gospel," "the pure truth," "the immaculate Word of God," which, and which only, they would make binding on men. And if they did not, at a later day, act in this way, it was the effect, so far, of the influence of pre-Reformation views, and not of the principle of the Reformation. It was only a deviation from this principle, or a failure to apprehend it in all its bearings, and to apply it as they were at first led to do by the spirit of the Reformation; and it only shows that a principle so deep and so far-reaching needs space and time for its practical application, and requires constantly the effort to appropriate it anew.

This distinction, although almost entirely suppressed some time after the Reformation, was still supported from time to time by such men as Spener and the Pietists generally. But it was revived, and for the first time distinctly and fully recognized, clearly and publicly adopted, generally professed and practically carried out, in this country, and that by the General Synod. This she did in the language of her doctrinal basis, by the provisions of her constitution, and by at once extending the hand of Christian fellowship to all believers in the fundamental doctrines of God's Word. And from her has, in a great measure, proceeded that spirit of Christian union which is becoming so prevalent in the best and most promising parts of Christendom. Indeed, to her belongs the immortal honor of having given the first great and decided impulse toward the origination and formation of the Christian World's Evangelical Alliance. She has restored the observance of the distinction between the binding character of funda-

mental doctrines, as distinguished from even important, but not essential, articles. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, namely, Jesus Christ," but men may "build thereon, hay, wood, stubble," as well as "precious stones," and yet be saved. She has practically applied the principle of entrusting the determination of the details of doctrine to the intelligibility of the Scriptures, and the power of the fact of justification by faith in Christ alone. She has, thus, acted in the very spirit of the Confession, which itself tells us that it is to be interpreted in the light of the fact that we are justified by faith in Christ alone; and that all its parts must be regarded as designed to be in accordance with it, as the article by which the Church must stand or fall. She realizes that the time has come when the force of the great life-centres of the system, has made so clear the necessity of the union of faith and the Word, of the inner experience of salvation and the external revelation, of the saving influences of the Spirit and the means of divine grace; and has made so prominent the doctrines of human sinfulness and helplessness, and the freeness and fullness of divine grace for justification and regeneration,—that, beyond this preserving influence, we need no guarantees of the creed as binding on the consciences of ministers and people in the Church. Not for the restriction of the system, but for the increase of its power, does she preserve the freedom of her people. All who hold the vital organs, the head and heart, the great centre of divine truth, though they may have defective or even erroneous views of some of the limbs or members of the doctrinal body, are to be received as members of Christ's Church. Men may be alive without hands or feet, if they only have heads and hearts; and we cannot place the head and heart upon a level with the hands and feet, that is, we must not make all parts of the Confession equally binding as terms of communion.

The entire history of the General Synod shows that this is *practicable*; that it can be done consistently with the most "warm and glowing piety," and in direct opposition to all "cold and lifeless religionism;" that it can be done in the very "depths of a believing spirit." For in no part of the Lutheran Church has there been less of a rationalistic tendency, or more of a deep evangelical spirit. No body of ministers has been more characteristic for the earnest preaching of "Christ and Him

crucified," for insisting upon the necessity of the atonement, upon the guilt of sin, gratuitous justification and spiritual regeneration in the strictest sense of the symbols. And nowhere have the people had a more simple and child-like belief in "Him whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for sin, through faith in His blood." Indeed, if there was any one thing, which, at the time of its origination, characterized more than another the friends and enemies of the General Synod, it was the fact that, as a rule, the former were the more evangelical, the latter the more rationalistic, in their spirit and tendencies.

§ 5. *Difficulties in the Way of Unconditional Subscription.*

The Confession was intended to be not only a creed, but a defence—was, indeed, called, at first, an apology—and, consequently, it contains many arguments and illustrations, citations from patristic writings, and even from decisions of popes, to show that the Evangelical Church teaches nothing inconsistent "with either the Catholic or the Roman Church"—all of which was proper enough in the case of the confessors, and for apologetic and polemical purposes, at that time. But certainly the Evangelical Lutheran Church has long ago ceased to have any such respect for the fathers, or any such deference to the popes, and cannot, consequently, with any propriety, make these parts of the Confession binding on her people.

The same thing may be said of many forms of expression. There is, for example, the inconsistency in its declaring in one part that "Private Confession"—a confessedly human institution—"ought to be retained in the churches;" and, in another place, that "It is not necessary that the same traditions, that is, rites and ceremonies instituted by men, should be everywhere observed." So the language used in regard to the minister's annunciation of the absolution, namely, "That the absolution is to be valued, as being, not the voice or the word of the present (officiating) human being, but the word of God, who pardons sin"....."That God requires us to believe this absolution, just as though His voice resounded from heaven,"—makes an unconditional subscription in the highest degree improper. The same thing is true of its declaration concerning the Sabbath, "That the Holy Scripture has abolished the Sabbath." These expressions may be susceptible of an evangelical explanation, but

this only proves that, in part at least, the *Confession must be interpreted by the Bible*, by that "pure gospel," to which alone the confessors meant that men should be unconditionally bound.

If the Confession were considered binding in all respects, in its theological forms as well as in its doctrinal contents, then, as it acknowledges and adopts the creeds of the old Catholic Church, it would bind us to the letter, as well as the subject-matter, of these symbols. But this would be inconsistent with the true Protestant spirit. For we would then have to receive, for instance, the expression in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," in the sense of the old Catholic Church, namely, in the sense of belief in the visible Church, and of faith in that Church as the Church beyond whose pale there is no salvation. But this is a doctrine which Lutheran Protestantism has, from the beginning, most decidedly repudiated. The idea that salvation is suspended upon faith in doctrinal formulas, as it is expressed in those ancient creeds, is, as we have seen, utterly unevangelical. So the *opus operatum* of the sacraments, having been rejected by the Reformation, the Confession of that Reformation could not have intended to revive it and make it binding on our faith, and, consequently, the authors of it could not have desired or expected an unconditional subscription to every form of expression.

§6. *The Forms of the Confession must be Regarded as Capable of Improvement.*

The fact that the writer of the Confession made changes from time to time in its forms of expression, shows how susceptible they are of improvement. If he felt the desirableness of such modification of forms during the brief period of development of his time, how much more ought we to feel it after centuries of experience. True Lutheran Protestantism cannot design nor allow its creed to be a hindrance to all theological improvement. It can no more subsist than it could originally have been brought into existence without the principle of proving all things. It cannot be satisfied with that which is, without laboring in the light of divine revelation to attain that which has not yet been, but which ought to be, and which it is possible to realize from a constant study of the Bible. "The body of dogmas," says Dr. Shedd, "was by no means fully apprehended by the

ecclesiastical mind in the outset. Its scientific and systematic comprehension is a gradual process; the fuller creed bursts out of the narrower; the expanded treatise swells forth growth-like from the more slender; the work of each generation of the Church joins on upon that of the preceding." There are, indeed, certain great epochs of such speculative apprehension; thus we have, first, that of Theology proper: of God and the Trinity; then, that of Anthropology: of the nature of man and of sin and grace; then Soteriology: of justification by faith. But as in each of the intervals between these great epochs, there was a constantly increasing practicability of appropriating the great dogmas which had been produced; so now, and especially in this age of the dissolution of doctrines, should there be an effort to apprehend anew, and to appropriate more fully than they could ever before be conceived and expressed, the results of the operation of the evangelical spirit in the past. This can and should be done, not in a *spirit inimical to the symbols* of our Church, but with such love of the *great system of evangelical truth which they contain*, that we cannot rest until everything *in the form* which obstructs the manifestation, or hinders the reception of it, be removed. We should cherish freedom, for the purpose of bringing to clearer view the *true Lutheran view* of the word and sacraments, and especially for the promotion of the great doctrines of grace and redemption which constitute the *great substance of the Augsburg Confession*. In this spirit the Reformers themselves labored. The authors of the Confession were themselves the subjects of development and change, theologically and doctrinally. Not to speak of Melancthon's changes, Luther, if even he did not depart from his original stern Augustinianism, in which he taught the doctrine of absolute predestination, at least changed its position from a prominent to a subordinate place in his theological system. And, indeed, the entire Lutheran Church did, at an early day after the Confession was delivered, declare itself against a doctrine—that of unconditional election—which was, at one time, undoubtedly held by all the principal Reformers—although so modified that it did not gain a place in the Confession, yet held even at the time the Confession was given.

We must recognize a relative difference between dogmatic formulas and Scripture doctrines; must acknowledge that our eccle-

siastical system of doctrines, with all its fundamental correctness, has in it a human element, *not guided by inspiration*, and, consequently, a fallible element. If we regarded every part of our Confession, in content and form, as fixed and fundamental, as unconditionally binding, and incapable of all possible change, we should *not have the true type* of Lutheranism; would not have the spirit of the great hero of the Reformation, who made the Scriptures his only guide, and who in all his writings, from the earliest to the latest, calls upon all Christians to try their faith, their confession as well as their life, by the Scriptures, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

§ 7. *This Evangelical Freedom is Necessary to Efficiency in the Ministers of the Word.*

While the Church should require her ministers to be faithful to the great system of doctrine, and to exhibit the fundamental ideas of her symbols; while she should bind them to preach purely, distinctly, and fully the great saving truths of the gospel; she should not suppose that this great purpose can be best accomplished by their confining their thoughts and their preaching entirely to the old forms of the creeds, but she should allow them to communicate these truths in new forms, in forms suitable to the modes of modern thought, and corresponding to the present stage of religious and theological development. "If," says Luther, "it is enough that they (the fathers) have taught, wherefore is it not also enough that they have led a holy life? If one kind of words is sufficient, why is not one kind of works? According to this idea (that all doctrinal forms must be considered unchangeable), we must satisfy ourselves, as with their words, so with their works." If the Church expects to have theological science which shall be progressive and suitable to the demands of the age, if she desires her ministers to defend the Scriptures and to maintain the creed against the attacks of enemies, she must allow them full scope for the free examination of the sources of these objections, and the impartial investigation of the grounds of these doctrines. But this, with sincere and honest men, who must speak as they believe, would be inconsistent with unconditional subscription to all the details of the creed. "How," says Dr. S. S. Schmucker, "can that man be an impartial inquirer after truth, how can he throw open his soul to the full influence

of evidence, who knows that exclusion from his ecclesiastical connections, ejection from his pastoral charge, and exposure of his dependent family to poverty and want, would be the consequence if his investigations should result in the rejection of a single article in his confession of faith?" The Church should indeed expect her ministers to have *an honest preference for her creed*, to manifest sincere attachment to its characteristic excellencies, and to receive it consistently and earnestly as the truest summary of the faith of the gospel among all the creeds of Christendom. But she should at the same time so distinguish between the fundamental aspects of this faith and those which are not essential, that she will expect of her ministers the acceptance of no unconditional human authority. To the Sacred Scriptures there must be required an unconditional subscription. But she should not require an absolute pledge to every part of her system, nor an unconditional reception of the *forms as well as the substance of her doctrines*. This distinction between the letter and the spirit is, indeed, liable to abuse, but this must not prevent its proper use. If she expects her scribes to aim at being well instructed and at becoming qualified to bring forth out of the treasury of the Lord of all, things new as well as old, she must allow them freely to appropriate the results of the centuries of research and experience which have passed since the Confession was first framed and published. She should have sufficient confidence in the power of divine truth, not to be unduly concerned about any *human* guarantees of its purity and preservation. She should be so confident of its *divine* security and final triumph as to be content with a conditional subscription to her creed, and to feel that her life and growth are not only *consistent with* but *inseparable from* the clear consciousness and free acknowledgment of the right of progressive doctrinal development.

§ 8. *The Contrary Method is a Hindrance to the Safety and Progress of the Church.*

If the Church hold all the forms of her Confession to be unconditionally and unchangeably binding, she will be hampered in her members, clogged in her movements, and stunted in her growth. The constant and progressive march to victory over her enemies, requires this freedom in her friends. It is not for the purpose of rejecting, but for that of more completely appre-

hending and more fully appropriating the doctrines of our Church, of bringing more clearly to light and of more firmly establishing them in their fundamental importance, that this position should be maintained. In this freedom is the point of union between the preservation and growth of the Church. And it is the very spirit of Lutheran Protestantism and piety, to recognize this union of true conservatism and genuine progress. Great as may be the noise and tumult raised from time to time, by the convulsive agitations and reactionary movements of a false and fanatical conservatism, they are only the eddies along the shore, while the great stream of truth and life is moving quietly and steadily onward, with irrepressible freedom and irresistible power.

It is only by clearly recognizing her immutable groundwork, and continuing to build upon it—by aiming at developing her peculiar type of doctrine and life into the most perfect evangelical forms, at enlarging and elevating her spirit to the dimensions and position of the most true and complete catholicity—that she will have a healthful life in the present, and a well-grounded hope for the future. If she refuse to tolerate and foster this spirit, she will put the labors of criticism into the hands of unbelief. Hindering the spirit of a believing criticism among her loving children, and yet unable to restrain the spirit of inquiry which is now abroad in the human mind, she will soon suffer the sad effects of a criticism wielded by an infidel and hating world—of a criticism which is ready to conclude that a doctrine is false, just because it is a dogma of the Church. The powers of criticism exercised by the purely secular world, will endeavor to explain away or make incredible whatever is not agreeable to the unregenerate mind, not consonant with the taste of a mere worldly culture, or not congenial to the habits of the times; and the storm of opposition coming unexpectedly upon the Church in her blind security, many of her children being utterly unprepared to meet it will be panic-stricken, and thus be frightened into making undue concessions to radical unbelief, into yielding unnecessarily many important posts to the enemy; while others, not duly recognizing the distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals, and not clearly perceiving the importance of maintaining the great citadel of truth rather than the mere outworks, will be unskillful soldiers of the cross;

while others still, failing to make a new and living appropriation of the saving substance of truth—not appreciating the necessity and force of a clear and decisive confession of fundamentals, of explicit and faithful statement and maintenance of the great distinguishing doctrines of the gospel—will be content with the effort to preserve and establish the old forms of doctrine, by an appeal to ignorance, superstition, or fear, only to be the more shamefully exposed and defeated in the close conflicts of the battle. Thus by neglecting an inward and free, a personal and vital reception of divine truth, by relying upon the *human guarantees* and distrusting the *self-evidencing power* of it, many of her children will be led to abandon the ark of God into the hands of the enemy, when they might have seen that they were almost in sight of the victory—to betray the sacred treasures of the faith, when they could have been most easily and speedily secured.

§9. *The Strength of the Church must be Sought in the Union of Faith and Freedom.*

Firm faith and free criticism are not necessarily in antagonism. True belief and sincere inquiry are natural allies, and their union will be found in the acceptance of the gospel, not as a yoke of bondage imposed by a rigid enforcement of the creed, but as the law of liberty revealed by Him who fully understands the nature and wants of man, and who alone makes free indeed. The strength of the truth lies in its being chosen with that free and joyful conviction and confidence involved in the principle of the Reformation in both its material and its formal phases, in the personal assurance of salvation, the fact of justification by faith in Christ alone as a matter of inner experience, in immediate communion with God in Christ through the Holy Ghost. Let the spirit of a believing criticism as the result of freedom within the fold of the faithful be encouraged, and the power of infidel criticism will be destroyed; and the Lutheran system of doctrine, having been the fruit of a great development in the past history of the Church, will be found adequate to the demands of coming days. It will be found capable of progressive enlargement with perfect safety to its fundamental features. Under the constantly increasing light which is breaking forth from the Sacred Scriptures amid the labors of believing research and interpretation; under the ever clearer apprehension of the true idea of God and

the world revealed in the Bible, and of the true idea of man as manifested in the course of psychological development; in short, under the light which shines in the wake of centuries of experience and observation, the fundamental conception, the essential groundwork of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, will be seen in clearer form and brighter glory. In proportion as men become aware of their nature and wants individually and socially, will they see that it is in this union of abiding faith and mental progress, of fixedness of heart and movement of intellect, of stability and development, that the living power of truth, as well as the security, prosperity and triumph of the Church are found. The conservatism which would keep everything just as it is, however unsuitable to the wants of the age and country, is folly; and the radicalism which would dissolve everything, which has no respect for the historical and positive element in Christianity, is the madness of destruction. True Protestantism is confessional, yet liberal; believing, yet free; conservative, yet progressive; fixed and sure of the great saving truths of the gospel, yet ever actively moving onward in the effort to gain a clearer view and to make a more complete appropriation of the truth as it is in Jesus, in all its relations to the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of spirits. From all this we see the importance of apprehending anew, in all its bearings, the great principle of the Lutheran Reformation, as the groundwork of our theology; and for the investigation of this important subject we are now prepared.

THE GROUNDWORK
OF A SYSTEM OF
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN THEOLOGY.

WITHOUT the principle of the Lutheran Reformation there is no starting point for science in Christianity ; but in it we have a solid basis of systematic theology. All science must begin from some experience in consciousness. The assurance of the faith which rests merely on testimony, without any real or possible experience in consciousness, is, indeed, well founded, if the testimony is infallible ; and it has in it an element of knowledge, but not of knowledge which can be the starting point or the germ of science. But the assurance of salvation involved in the principle of the Reformation, results from a faith which is inseparably connected with experience in consciousness. In it, consequently, is an element of knowledge which is a proper starting point for science in theology. In this case there is as real experience in consciousness as there is in natural science. As compared with natural science, Christian science has not, indeed, as wide a range of experience in consciousness. All the objects of the common consciousness are the subjects of a real or a possible experience, while the objects of the Christian consciousness which can be the subjects of real or possible experience are limited to the realities experienced in justification by faith—personal assurance of salvation, the experience of peace with God and of the hope of His glory, of sonship with God, and of the filial spirit, crying Abba, Father. But the experience in consciousness in the latter case is just as real an experience of the reality of its objects as in the former. As compared with natural philosophy, theology has more certainty of the valid being of the realities of the Christian consciousness than philosophy has for the external existence of the objects of the common consciousness.

Theology being the science of the Christian faith, and resting upon divine revelation, has within the pale of its operations a much *clearer and surer ground of certainty of truth* than is to be found even in the province of natural science. They both have facts of

experience, and both begin with objects of consciousness. But while the former has the certainty of the valid being of its objects, *assured by the certainty and intelligibility of divine revelation*, the latter must submit the question of the reality of the qualities and events and of the substances and causes with which it deals, so far as their existence distinct from the consciousness of them is concerned, to the *doubtful speculations of the human intellect*. In the latter case some, for the certainty of the external reality, throw themselves back upon the dictates of common sense, and regard the belief in consciousness of the real existence of its objects as ultimate; others upon blind, mystical feeling, upon an inner light, which in its indefiniteness is identical with darkness. The idealist denies the reality of the material; the materialist that of the ideal. Absolute idealism makes the idea the only reality; it has no real objects and no real spectator or observer of objects, but only the idea as reality. Absolute nescience denies the reality of the spectator, of the object, and of the idea; it declares that we know neither subject nor object, nor idea of knowledge; that we have neither a knower nor a known, but only the theory of knowledge.

For the better understanding of this whole question concerning the rational ground of the certainty of the knowledge in common consciousness, and to enable us more fully to appreciate the certainty of the objects of the Christian consciousness, and especially of the objects involved in the experience of the saving power of Christianity, it will be interesting and profitable to look at some of the best attempts of philosophy on this subject. "How," says Dr. Hickok, "shall these notions of substance and cause be verified? It is not sufficient that the perception has been plain, nor that we have been careful to secure a broad induction of facts before we have defined the particular things or deduced the general law. Such considerations are important merely in reference to the *modus operandi*, and the determination of the correctness of the process. We need to go back of the process, and examine the conditioning principle. How do we attain the validity of substance and cause? How do we determine their uniformity? By what right do we assume that nature has universal laws? That in a large induction of facts such an order has been found, will not be sufficient ground to conclude, therefore, this order is neces-

sary and and universal—experience has been thus hitherto, therefore it must be such evermore. Experience itself is based upon the connections of substances and causes, inasmuch as without them all perception is only of the isolated and fleeting qualities and events, with nothing to connect such in a unity of nature; and here we have not only assumed them for connecting qualities into things, but also have assumed their uniformity for connecting things in a general law of nature. Have we then a firm ground on which to stand, when we attempt to go beyond the province of sense? The grand question is, How come we by the notions of substances and causes? and, especially, how come we by their perpetual order of connection? The results of reflection; the truth of experience; the validity of all thinking in judgments, and the entire superstructure of inductive science, all rest entirely upon the answer which may be given to such a comprehensive inquiry. If we can find a firm foundation on which to rest an affirmation in this matter, then is a science of experience and nature possible; if not, the most that is within our reach is probability and belief, and the whole region of natural philosophy is open to the skeptic.”

The attempt may then be made, as does this author, to give an a priori rational science of our cognitions in the sense and in the understanding, in such a way that it shall in each case become the basis for a demonstration of the valid being of the objects of our knowledge. This is done by him in a masterly manner. But still, after all such efforts, many will doubt whether we can pass from the thought to the object, from the idea to the reality. Another great philosopher, Ulrici, after having shown the logical necessity that there is in thought, declares, in addition to this, that there is “a necessity which rests upon factors which exist outside of the sphere of thought. Not only is it impossible for me to deny that $A=A$; I cannot deny, and I must assume, that what is perceived exists. The theory of idealism in its most extreme form, or the theory that out of thought nothing whatever exists, can easily be refuted if we hold fast to the theorem that thought is a distinguishing activity; as a thinking being I can think of myself only when I think of something which has not the faculty of thought and from which I thus distinguish myself; the hypothesis of material existence is necessary in thought. In like manner I can think of myself as limited, only when I distin-

guish myself from something which limits me. I am, therefore, compelled to assume that other spirits beside myself exist. Finally, the idea of my own dependence implies the idea of an independent (unconditioned) being, on whom all other things depend; thus the ideas expressed by the words world, spirit, and God, are necessary in me as a thinking being. True, the substance of these three ideas is thus far only negative—not-thinking, not-me, not-dependent. But the positive complement is obtained by us through the positive operation, upon our organs of consciousness, of the objects of these ideas, which objects we are forced to assume as existing by the law of causality; at the same time that it is possible that our ideas only correspond with and are not an absolutely equivalent image of their objects. As the realistic doctrine that our knowledge depends upon the operation of real objects upon us, is necessary to thought, so also is the idealistic doctrine, that our knowing depends upon an activity of our own. If thus realism and idealism equally rest on necessities of thought, and are, therefore, alike philosophically tenable standpoints, this does not mean that philosophy must occupy a standpoint superior to and different from either, but, rather, that the doctrine of the world, the mind, and God, must be developed, on the one hand, altogether realistically up to the point where realism sees herself forced to proceed idealistically (to assume laws hypothetically, and so on), and at the same time and in like manner, on the other hand, altogether idealistically, until a point is reached where it becomes necessary to take refuge in the experimental (the definitely qualitative, etc.).”

Now the realism which the philosopher labors so hard to find in his province, the theologian has secured to him in his sphere, by the divine revelation in the Bible. He has, equally with the philosopher, real personal experience in consciousness; and as long as the facts of the existence of the Church and of the new life in the hearts of believers have not been successfully explained as mere facts of nature, he has equally with the scientist facts of experience in consciousness, extending over a wide field, and affording not only a starting point, but a vast body of materials for an inductive science in theology. As a science of experience it is as really inductive as natural sciences, for it has facts of experience which cannot be denied to be actual; and it has not only real experience, but experience which is possible for all the

subjects of Christendom. As a science of faith, it has for the believer in the facts, *a surer ground of the valid being* of the objects of the Christian consciousness, than the philosopher has for the realities of the objects of the natural consciousness. And I have made these extracts from two great philosophers to enable the reader to appreciate the importance of the idea that all experience involves a *contact of the mind with the objects* of knowledge; that, consequently, the experience in saving faith involves a *contact of divine realities with the soul*; and to lead him, thus, to realize the importance of the *realism of the Bible*—that realism *so much insisted upon by Luther*. “The positive operation, upon our organs of consciousness, of the objects of our knowledge,” which is so difficult to ascertain in the case of the world-consciousness, divine revelation has made clear and certain for the believer, in regard to the God-consciousness, the religious consciousness in general, and especially the Christian consciousness.

It teaches that there is an actual contact of the objects of the consciousness with the human mind. “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them.” “Their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.” “He hath not left himself without witness.” The conscience is a point of contact between God and men—the point of men’s knowing together with God. It is not a faculty for originating the knowledge of God, but a receptivity for the revelation of God, “Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you. God, that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshiped with men’s hands, as though he needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” While without revelation there would be no certainty of the objects of religious faith, with revelation there is to the Christian believer a clearer ground of the valid being of the objects of the

Christian consciousness than there is even for that of those of the natural consciousness. The *specific and precise point* of this certainty in the Christian consciousness, namely, the *fact* of justification by faith, *assurance of salvation*, the *certainty of saving truth*, must be exhibited as *the groundwork* of our theology.

We must distinguish the great *principle* of the Lutheran Reformation, in both its aspects, namely, justification as a *fact of experience*, and the *clearness and certainty* of the Sacred Scriptures *in the experience of the believer*, as the only rule of faith and practice, from the doctrines concerning justification and faith, and from the doctrines concerning the Sacred Scriptures; the *former* belonging to the *groundwork*; the *latter* to the *system*. The former must be treated as the presupposition of the science. This was indicated in the method of the Reformers. They made the fact of justification by faith alone, the experience of the certainty of salvation, the groundwork, and placed it—if not in form, yet in fact—in the forefront of the system of doctrines; while the later theologians treated it simply as a doctrine co-ordinate with other doctrines of the system. It is important, therefore, to discriminate it as a *principle and as a fact* in the Christian life, as a principle independent of science, and as a fact realized in experience and verified to consciousness by the Word of God. We shall thus be led to *treat of saving faith, of this point of certainty* in the Christian consciousness, of personal assurance of salvation through faith in Christ alone, and of the Sacred Scriptures as through *the self-evidencing power of their saving content*, becoming not only the authoritative, but the chosen rule of this faith—as the presupposition of a systematic theology. We shall be led also to notice the *light* which springs from this principle, illuminating the *Christian world-view*, the idea of God and the world, of religion and man, revealed in the Bible and long ago practically appropriated, but the *intellectual* apprehension of which, in all its fullness—as a *necessary* idea in saving faith, an *intuition inseparable from the experience of salvation*, necessarily involved in that experience, and destined sooner or later to be evolved and brought into the light of Christian consciousness—the intellectual apprehension of this in all its fullness was *never made before* the days of Luther—was made *practicable*, indeed, for the *first time by the principle* of the Reformation. This light we

must apply for the elimination of the remains of the heathen world-view, and to the enforcement of the Christian idea in fundamental questions of religion and theology.

We shall thus in a *first part* endeavor to exhibit the *principle* of the Reformation, as the presupposition of the system; and in a *second part* to exhibit the *light* which it sheds upon the entire pathway of theological science. We must use this light, as the principle of the Reformation requires, for the application of the true Christian idea, the Biblical idea of God and the world, of religion and man—the “New Wisdom,” as Luther calls it—to the exclusion from the province of theology of the heathen idea of God and the universe. We must make *first, saving faith, immediate communion with God in Christ as a reality*, a matter of experience, and *the certainty of divine revelation*, as infallibly and intelligibly exhibited in the Sacred Scriptures, as a fact fully verified to justifying faith; and *secondly the light necessarily springing from this union of faith and the Word*—THE GROUNDWORK of our system.

PART I.

*THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION IN BOTH OF ITS
ASPECTS, THE MATERIAL AND THE FORMAL,
AS THE PRESUPPOSITION OF SYS-
TEMATIC THEOLOGY.*

CHAPTER I.

THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS, OR MORE ESPECIALLY SAVING FAITH, IN ITS INDEPENDENCE OF SCIENCE.

ASSURANCE of salvation—faith in God manifested in Christ, the ever-living and ever-present Saviour, the reception of Christianity as the perfect revelation of God, as the power of God unto salvation—is a matter of experience in consciousness, and, therefore, it is independent of science. It is not the faith which rests on *testimony only*, but the faith which, in addition to the assurance produced by testimony, is attended by *actual experience*, and, consequently, by inner certainty of truth. It is the faith which is experienced in consciousness, and, consequently, it has the knowledge which is in experience. It is not superstition, for we know that there has been a contact of its objects with organs of consciousness, call these organs what we will—religious susceptibility, conscience, etc. Like all consciousness, it has in it an element of knowledge, but it is experimental knowledge; it involves knowledge, but not necessarily scientific knowledge. It is experience in consciousness, and so far independent of science that it may exist even when it cannot be scientifically apprehended or demonstrated. As all experience in consciousness has a cognitive aspect, so justifying faith, assurance of salvation, being experienced in consciousness, has in it an element of knowledge. And as conscious experience under impressions made upon the sense, is knowledge, so conscious experience under impressions made upon the religious susceptibility, is knowledge. In the one case, we are impressed by natural objects; in the other, by supernatural objects. In saving faith there is not only the objective testimony of revelation, not only the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the miraculous revelation recorded in the Bible—in which it would be only the persuasion of truth on external testimony—but there is in it the subjective work of grace, the inner witness of the spirit, and, therefore, it has knowledge in it, the knowledge of actual experience. Jesus said: “I am known of mine;” and Paul says: “I know

whom I have believed." "The sheep know the voice of the true shepherd." Like the faith produced by the external world, so the faith effected by the gospel as the power of God unto salvation, has an element of knowledge. In neither case is faith blind; it is knowing, but its knowledge is distinct *from*, may be antecedent *to*, and independent *of*, all mere intellectual investigations of the valid being of its objects. As the natural man, by mere experience without science, knows that fire burns; so the Christian man, from mere experience, knows that Christianity is a special power of God. But as it is by science that the one knows the laws of combustion; so the other learns the science or system of salvation, by scientific investigation of the revelation recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, and by the accurate tracing of the history of it in the experience and doctrinal development of the Church, that is, by the processes of a systematic theology. But as the one can, for all ordinary purposes, enjoy the benefits of fire without understanding the science of it; so can the other, practically, the blessings of salvation without a scientific theology. As justifying faith is thus distinct from science, and independent, for its existence, of scientific knowledge, it is not a mere co-ordinate part of the materials of the theological system; and it is no more to be absorbed or lost in the theological science, than the common consciousness of natural knowledge is absorbed or lost in the natural sciences. Both are a species of faith; and both are intelligent states, including elements of knowledge independently of science. And they include elements other than those of mere intellect, elements which can neither be given by science nor appropriated by it. The elements of knowledge in faith are primitive elements; but they are not lower forms of knowledge. Faith cannot, therefore, be dissipated by the light of science.

As experience in consciousness must precede, and be presupposed in natural science in all its forms and branches, whether it be that of matter or mind, of nature or man; so conscious experience, assurance of salvation, justification by faith as a fact of experience, must precede and be presupposed in theological science. It must stand in the forefront of the system; it must not be treated as a mere doctrine, co-ordinate with other doctrines in the doctrinal superstructure. It is experimental Christianity, a new life; intelligent, indeed, but independent for its existence

upon doctrinal propositions. This experience of justification, this great fact in Luther's life, is the prime origin of the Reformation, and the root from which its theology must spring and be developed. The principle of the Reformation is justification by faith alone, and the Sacred Scriptures, in the self-evidencing power of their saving contents, accepted as the only rule of that faith. The material principle is not the doctrine concerning justification by faith, but the fact of justification by faith—the practical, living experience, the personal assurance of peace with God; and the formal principle, or rather the formal phase of this principle, is not the doctrine concerning the infallibility of the Sacred Scriptures, but the experience of their certainty and clearness, the actual adoption and use of them as the only guide of faith and life, as in their content, the power, and in their intelligibility, the rule of faith. The true theology of the Reformation, therefore, consists in making this principle the groundwork, and then developing the ideas springing from the material aspect of it—the experience of justification by faith—in the light of the formal phase of it, the Sacred Scriptures, as the only infallible source, and the only sure criterion of faith. It must be the exposition of the individual Christian's consciousness, as the starting point, and then also of the consciousness of the Christian Church. But it, must not sever this consciousness from its living connection with the Word of God. It must not be merely subjective; but to be complete it must also be objective, must be the exposition of the truths of salvation as presupposed, indeed, by the Christian consciousness, but not as evolved out of it. But the principle of the Reformation involves the appreciation of Biblical realism. In Christianity, in the saving revelation of God, there is a real contact of God, as a personal, living being, with the human soul, as a personal, living substance. God is a spirit, but also a real existence; the soul is a spirit, but also a real substance. The spirituality of the parties, as it is no hindrance to actual communion, so it does not prevent a real contact. And, consequently, just as in the common consciousness, so in the Christian consciousness, there is an experimental belief in the reality of its objects—a belief which is independent of science. Especially is this true of saving faith. This realism applies to all the various forms and manifestations of consciousness—to the several modifica-

tions of it, as world-consciousness, self-consciousness, moral consciousness, religious consciousness, Christian consciousness. The belief in consciousness is induced and sustained by other than scientific processes. It is, as Oetinger expresses it, not so much *ordo geometricus* as *ordo generativus*, the result not of speculative thought, but of a contact of the realities of this knowledge with organs of consciousness—of a contact not sensuous, indeed, but spiritual, spiritual yet real—the result of a relation of these realities to the susceptibilities and the wants of the soul.

§ 1. *The Belief in the Common Consciousness.*

In the world-consciousness and the self-consciousness, in the first place, faith is independent of science. Science may endeavor to trace the genesis of the consciousness, and to investigate the valid being of its objects. But no matter how great the amount of philosophical effort in searching for the foundations of knowledge, for the ultimate grounds of faith in its reality, the belief itself remains unaffected by the results, so far as its strength is concerned. It may be made clearer or darker, but not stronger or weaker, by this process. The results, if favorable, will be satisfactory; if unfavorable, painful; but it will not be established by the one nor destroyed by the other. To each individual's own consciousness, its objects will be real, whether regarded as existing outside of consciousness or not; and the last step in this philosophical discussion, if satisfactory to men, will rest upon intuitions of the mind inseparable from its experience in consciousness, and which secure belief in its objects independently of all attempts to prove or disprove their existence as external to it.

The speculations of men may lead them to deny the real existence of an external world, and that of an internal world; that of external nature and that of the inner spirit—of their own personal being. But to each individual's own consciousness, both will be real, and, consequently, men will effect nothing by their philosophy. The inner and the outer world will continue to be to them as if they were real, that is, their natural faith will remain. They will be obliged practically to treat them as real. And they will have no rest for their thinking until they receive the testimony of consciousness, and regard that which is neces-

sary to the thought as valid in being; until they rest in the belief of the reality of both the objective and the subjective, of nature and spirit. Natural faith is, thus, like religious faith, produced and sustained by an actual contact of its objects with organs of the mind. All that science can do is to show what is really the testimony of consciousness, and that the belief in the reality of its objects is not inconsistent with reason, but is actually demanded by the laws of thought; and, thus, to distinguish true belief in objects of nature and mind from mere natural superstition, and real phenomena from delusive appearances. If their philosophy make the attempt to demonstrate these things, it will not be lost labor, but it will only have made more clear and satisfactory what was fully believed and entirely credible before, and which was really the subject of belief independently of all scientific research. It will only have shown that this faith is so inseparable from the conditions of mind, that there is no proper beginning or end of thinking without involving its existence. There is but one true standpoint, but one solid resting-place, for speculative thought, and that is the common consciousness. True philosophy recognizes this, joyfully believes, and gladly ends where she began. False thinking is obliged to struggle, in its tendency to ignore all reality, with the necessities of intellect, and the ceaseless protest of the practical principles of our nature; or it must, at last, admit that the objects of consciousness are practically real and true, even when they seem to the speculative apprehension to be mere illusions and phantasms.

§ 2. *The Realities of the Moral Consciousness.*

As with the consciousness in general, so with the *Moral Consciousness*, the belief in moral realities—moral being, personality, freedom and responsibility. Men may follow the track of speculative science in the mere logical understanding until they have bound all things in the chain of material or of ideal necessity; until they have ignored all moral distinctions—the distinction between holiness and sin, virtue and vice—and explained away all the phenomena of moral being as merely natural, physical, the mere result of accident, habit, education. Or they may attempt logically to demonstrate the validity of moral being and of moral distinctions. But in the latter case they will have done

no more than the pointing out of the intuitions and the discovering of the grounds of validity, as they lie in the nature of our being, to be the necessary regulative of all true thought, as distinguishable from delusive and imaginary impressions, and as the only and last grounds of satisfaction to the mind—to be its own moral order. And in the former case they will find that just in proportion as they appear to themselves to have disproved or explained away the facts of moral consciousness, they will have removed every resting-place for their thinking, and deprived themselves of all possible means for the comprehension of the moral phenomena—the moral condition and history of mankind. They will come to no conclusion which shall be practically satisfactory, until they admit the moral intuitions, and are content to ask only what is their relation to reason, that is, until they admit belief in moral realities, as the necessary standpoint in all moral science. Practically this faith will maintain itself, and thus show, that whether so recognized or not, in science, it must be in accordance with reason and truth. No matter how much men may have in common with the brute, they have this prerogative, that they are self-determining and free, and, consequently, moral and responsible beings. No matter how much the impulses of the animal nature in man may have preponderated over conscience in all the course of human history, yet will men, at last, be obliged to recognize the reality of conscience; and the ultimate conclusion of human thought must be that conscience is not only real, but that it is the ruling principle in man's being; and that all his dispositions and actions will in the end be subjected to its power, either in the way of obedience and reward, of peace and blessedness—or of disobedience and punishment, of fear and shame. There is in every sound mind and uncorrupt heart a dissatisfaction with all the conclusions of the skeptic on this subject, which will respond to the indignant utterance of the poet:

“Oh! lives there, heaven, beneath thy vast expanse,
 One hopeless, dark idolater of Chance,
 Content to feed, with pleasures unrefined,
 The luke-warm passions of a lowly mind,
 And mouldering earthward, rest of every trust,
 In joyless union wedded to the dust,
 Can all his parting energies dismiss,
 And count this barren world sufficient bliss?”

§ 3. *The Valid Being of the Objects of the Religious Consciousness.*

The same discovery is sooner or later made in regard to the testimony of the *Religious Consciousness*—the consciousness as determined by forces and facts of religion. Men may attempt to explain the phenomena of religion as the mere results of ignorance, of the superstitious notions arising from an unenlightened imagination, or the stupid fears of men in the infancy of human history, amid the overwhelming forces and the terrifying commotions of nature. But this leaves us without any explanation of the source of the susceptibility to these fears, and it has been found so inconsistent with rational thought that it has few adherents in the present day. Others have adopted a course of reasoning in which, while the subjective validity of religion is admitted, the reality of its objects is denied. While they admit that the religious idea is not the result of ignorance, but of the highest cultivation of the mind; the product, not of an unenlightened imagination, or of ignorant fears, but of the very laws of thinking, of the necessities involved in the full development of thought; while they admit that the mind cannot think satisfactorily, nor the heart rest in peace, without the idea of religion; they still regard the whole matter as only subjective, and receive it only as the regulative of thought and the requirement of feeling, as the necessary moral order of the rational mind, as the inevitable spiritual state of the sincere mind and the earnest heart, without having objective validity, any reality of its objects as existing outside of the consciousness. But just as Atheism in all its forms, so this, and every form of Pantheism, whether Acosmism or Pancosmism, whether ideal or material, spiritual or substantial, will never be practically satisfactory to the human mind in its sober state, and in the consciousness of its real and permanent wants. It can only be held while men are intoxicated with “the glory of the idea,” or reveling in “the emancipation of the flesh”—states of humanity which are neither normal nor abiding. So independent is the belief in religious consciousness of the operations of science for its establishment, that standing upon its own grounds, it will, at last, cause both head and heart to rebel against the system, which admits order in the religious idea, but denies the reality of its objects, as much as they do against the Atheism which leaves the universe “a mighty maze, and all without a plan.” No system, which is

without a comprehensive world-view, and without a spiritual solution of our being and destiny, can be permanently acceptable to sound heads and sincere hearts. At last, men will find that the dictates of the religious consciousness have a rightful claim upon their faith; that they can never be entirely indifferent, and say they do not care what is above them, and beyond their present life; that they can never satisfactorily answer the ever recurring life-questions: What am I? whither am I going? what must I be? and, what should I do? In short, men can never satisfy the wants of their moral being without admitting the validity of their religious nature, and the reality of its objects—God, freedom, responsibility, immortality. It is no doubt true that the ideas of the divine personality, and of the personal immortality of man, have only been brought fully to light by the gospel. But it will not do to say, on this account, that they are now entirely separable from the general religious consciousness. This consciousness has been determined in this way for all who hear the gospel; and men living within the bounds of Christendom cannot be as indifferent to them as the heathen. The ideas are now here, and men can never be entirely at peace while they reject them. No man can, now and here, be a constant and sincere thinker, and yet live satisfactorily, and die happily, without faith in the fundamental facts of religion. Absolute pessimism is the only consistent result of skepticism.

No matter how far men may travel in the way of speculation, whether in physical or metaphysical science, if their journey be successful they will find that the true termination of it will be precisely at the point where religion begins; that they should have begun their course with it; and that the only advantage which they have gained, over the more practical mind which had not stopped to question the validity of these facts, but always acted in the belief of them—that all the compensation for the loss of time and spiritual blessing, consists in some experience—experience always valuable, though bitterly made and dearly bought—experience which they may use for the benefit of others, and as some restitution for the evil which their skepticism has done—happy experience of escape from the dangers of the abnormal journey which begins with doubt instead of faith. Of the multitudes who set out with the determination

to receive these facts, only when they have a scientific basis for them—who act upon the principle that they must either demonstrate or deny them; that they must begin their inquiries here in doubt, in order to end in truth, belief, certainty—few have been successful. The consciousness is religiously determined independently of science; and, consequently, no man proceeds rationally in the discussion of religion who does not begin with faith.

§ 4. *The Christian Consciousness especially is Independent of Science.*

All that we have said of the belief in consciousness as independent of science is true in regard to the Christian consciousness. Indeed, as we have already seen, for the Christian believer and the Christian theologian, it ought to hold in a higher degree. For, while reason finds it so difficult to establish that *ideal realism* which teaches that there is a contact of the objects of our knowledge with the organs of consciousness, the Bible assures us of that *spiritual realism* which teaches that there is an actual contact of the objects of the Christian consciousness with the soul—with our religious susceptibility; and especially that this is the case in assurance of salvation through justification by grace through faith. This Biblical realism is not only important in theology, but its light shines over the field even of natural knowledge, and men are beginning to see how closely the certainty of natural faith is connected with that of the Christian. The day will indeed come when science, having concluded and decided against universal skepticism that there must be some rational ground of this faith, and having discarded Atheism and Pantheism as utterly failing to discover it, will not only, with Des Cartes, find the ground of the certainty of our belief in the real existence of the objects of Consciousness, in the truthfulness of God—in the fact that He makes us by our constitution so to believe, and that He cannot be supposed to deceive us—but will, with the Christian, look upon nature as an actual revelation or manifestation of God, will see that the Creator of the world is actually operating upon us by the same Spirit by whose agency He garnished the heavens in the work of creation; that by that same Spirit He has inspired men in such a way as to give a special revelation, and that in the

regeneration of souls He, by that Spirit, creates men anew in Christ Jesus; and, by Him, bears witness to our spirits. Thus will men see that the second creation is not only consistent with the first, but that it illuminates and completes it; that the eternal Logos, who was made flesh for our spiritual salvation, is the source of all life and light; that "in Him is life, and the life is the light of men;" that they will never be able satisfactorily to explain the first creation until they heartily accept the second; that the redemption of the world involves all the laws of creation and of created existences; and that in religious questions there is really no room for mere rationalistic explanations, for the acceptance of Christianity as a merely natural religion—that there is but the alternative to choose between pure Naturalism and Special Revelation.

The Christian consciousness is the human consciousness as determined by the divine power—the miraculous facts of Christianity, the work of Christ, and the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is produced by a contact with divine revelation—with that gospel which is a vital power, a special power of God unto salvation. The Rationalists, as distinguished from the Atheists and Pantheists, teach the personality of God and the moral and religious nature of man, and the reality of the objects of the moral and religious consciousness. But they deny a miraculous and special revelation, and endeavor to bring Christianity within the category of general revelation; to bring it within the range of natural religion, treating it as only the highest form of God's providential education of men in morality and religion, and that He is thus training them for their immortal destiny. But they deny that there is any miraculous inspiration in the Bible, or any miraculous power in Christianity. Men may satisfy themselves in this way, while they fail to look at the facts of experience; as long as they make religion a mere question of the logical understanding. They may speculatively deny the necessity of the special operation of divine power, and of the miraculous revelation of divine knowledge. They may satisfy themselves with the demonstrations of the understanding and the intuitions of the reason; and, forgetting their indebtedness to special revelation—or as they deny that character to Christianity, to the effect of Christianity upon the mind of Christendom—for the most that they know about morality and religion, they make too

high an estimate of the powers of unassisted reason. They forget that the superiority of their idea of God and the world, of religion and man, over that of the heathen, is due to the Bible. They overlook the fact, that the very impulse by which their rational ideas have been developed to a degree so far transcending those of the heathen nations, was first given by Christianity; that if there "be reason in history, there is also history in reason;" and, consequently, neglecting the very influence by which they were made aware of the intuitions which they so confidently use, they build up a system of rationalism in religion which shall explain all religions, and, of course, Christianity among the rest, as founded, indeed, in truth, but still only natural religion. Thus they may so far ignore special divine revelation as to suppose themselves really to be independent of it, and that they are able to evolve all religious ideas out of the mere moral and religious consciousness, as derived entirely from nature and reason. And, thus, they may mistake their supposed demonstrations of some religious truth for an original discovery of it through reason unassisted by special divine revelations. They do, indeed, regard all the moral precepts and precious promises of the Bible as ideas and expectations originated by reason without miraculous revelation.

But this can never be done when the question of religion comes to be considered in connection with the greatest fact of the Christian consciousness and the most blessed hope of the Christian man. When the sincere man comes to the question of justifying faith, the great centre of the Christian consciousness, of the certainty of saving truth, personal assurance of salvation, he will feel that if the Bible is to give satisfaction it must be regarded as more than the product of human reason; that it must be received as a special revelation of God's will. When men come to ask, in true earnestness and personal anxiety, What am I to expect from God? In what relation do I stand to Him? or rather, in what attitude does He stand toward me? and especially when they come to dwell sincerely upon the requirements of conscience, the reality and consequences of sin—facts which the rationalistic system admits—when they practically ask how a sinner may be forgiven and received into divine favor; how the heart shall be released from the power and freed from the pollution of sin; how it shall be brought under renew-

ing and sanctifying energy, sufficient to raise it above the fascination of earthly objects, the cravings of animal appetites, the impulses of depraved passions, and to fill it with lively aspiration and life-giving hope, with peace and joy in God; in short, when they soberly and coolly contemplate their frailty in life, and their helplessness in death, they will feel that the Christian consciousness of peace with God and rejoicing in hope of His glory—the assurance of salvation—cannot be something that has been evolved out of finite nature and mere human reason.

If they admit that there are men, and always have been persons in Christendom, that actually have personal assurance of salvation, an inner certainty of peace with God, and of the possession of eternal life—then, they must admit that here is a fact which cannot be rationally accounted for, without the supposition of special divine revelation; that it is a fact produced by a power higher than nature and other than man—and a power over and above that which even God exercises in providence generally and ordinarily; that it is by an *extraordinary* manifestation of divine power. They will feel that it must be the product of a contact of the supernatural but condescending love of God, manifested in Christ for salvation, with the soul of man, the result of a special revelation of grace and mercy; that we have this peculiar peace and hope, this “comfort of the Scriptures” because, and only because, they are such a special, miraculous revelation. It is for this reason, and this only, that there is more comfort in a single page of the Bible, more assurance, when we come to actual experience of the realities of life and death, in a single promise of the gospel, than in all the speculations of a rationalistic theology, or in any of the dreams of a mystical philosophy. In short, true peace and hope in religion must rest on special revelation, on a knowledge of God, on a communication of His gracious will, which can never be properly explained as the mere product of a development of reason. And, as we shall see in the proper place, there is *really no room for mere rationalism*, at the present day; that the more complete analysis of thought has shown that the only consistent ground of any intelligent opposition to special or miraculous revelation, is that of pure atheistic naturalism; that in the high stage of thinking to which the human mind has, at last, come, the final choice must be between heathenism and Christianity, down-

right atheism or true theism—the theism which admits the possibility and desirableness of special divine revelation.

§ 5. *Science must first of all Recognize the Christian Consciousness in its Independence.*

As God, through the powers of nature and mind, determines the consciousness sensuously, morally, religiously; so, by supernatural and superhuman power, by special power through the gospel, He makes the consciousness a Christian consciousness. And as the ordinary exercise of His power, the existence of the forces of nature and of mind derived from Him, must first be recognized on the ground of the testimony of consciousness, though its effects, as realized in consciousness, may afterwards be found by science to be in accordance with the laws of the material and mental world, as discovered by its operations; so His supernatural power, through the gospel, must first be recognized by effects as realized in the Christian consciousness—especially in its central point of saving faith—independently of all mere scientific processes of knowledge, though its operations will, on the most thorough investigation, be found to be in accordance with the scheme, plan, or laws of redemption, as they are discovered by the scientific study of the Sacred Scriptures. As the common consciousness and natural science are inseparable, so the Christian consciousness and theology should always go together. The science should always in each case recognize the independence of the consciousness, and never separate itself from its testimony.

While the Christian consciousness may exist independently of theology, the latter cannot exist without the former. The former should be regarded as having priority in point of time, and the dignity of existing for its own sake; while the latter can exist only for the purposes, and as the servant, of the former. Like the natural consciousness, the Christian consciousness possesses a light of faith which is always independent of science. As the former is produced by contact of the mind with natural forces, so is the latter by contact of the soul with supernatural powers. Like the former, the latter is confirmed by the practical principles of our nature and by the actual history of mankind. Like the former, it has its own light in experience—a ray of the highest light antecedently to, and independently of, all science.

It is produced, indeed, through the instrumentality of knowledge, but not necessarily by knowledge in a scientific form. And it has a light which cannot be ignored, indeed, without the denial of all true grounds of science, but a light which need not, and cannot, be demonstrated. Being the light in which all demonstrations are conducted, and which makes all demonstrations clear, it cannot itself be the subject of demonstration. It is only from consciousness that faith can arise; it cannot be derived from logical demonstration; and, consequently, the Christian faith being experienced under the impressions of revealed truth, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, can find itself reflected only in the light of the Bible, and corroborated only by that divine authority. But, thus received, the facts of the Christian consciousness—especially those involved in saving faith—produced as they are by the special divine influence of the historical revelation, and by the operations of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, are as firmly believed as those of the common consciousness. And it is equally enduring and unchangeable: nay, more so. Other things may pass away; the conditions of the relation of objects to the common consciousness might possibly change in the course of human development. “Old things may pass away and all things become new,” in the relation of man to the natural world. But we know that the relation of human wants to the scheme of grace revealed in the Bible will ever remain the same. “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit.” No^o merely natural or human power can qualify the one for peace on earth or happiness in heaven, and *no mere human reasoning can overcome the testimony of the experience of superhuman power in the other.* The concluding words of the revelation of that power will ever be found, to the faith of experience, as true as they are solemn: “I testify, saith the faithful and true witness, unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book: if any man shall add to them, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life, and out of the holy city.”

§ 6. *Science in its True Office and Prospects Favored by the Principle of the Reformation.*

We have thus found the facts of the world-consciousness, the moral consciousness, the religious consciousness, the Christian consciousness, the intuitions of the human mind and the dictates of revelation, to be in vital relation to faith and independent of the processes of science. We have seen that the true position of science is not above, but in the light of these facts. Under the guidance of the intuitions of the mind involved in the experience of the common consciousness, she has a large and fruitful field of operation in philosophy; under that of the dictates of revelation, a wide and rich territory for theology. In the one, she can increase the knowledge and foresight of men in the domain of nature; in the other, she can elevate and enlarge their views, enliven and strengthen their hopes in the sphere of religion, and thus augment their power and extend the range of their influence and activity. There is no limit to her attainments, or end to her progress in the light of the self-evident truths of the soul, and the clear facts of revelation. But it is her business neither to ignore nor to demonstrate the insights of the reason; neither to deny nor to prove the discoveries of revelation; but to test our consciousness by the laws of thought, and thus to find what is the real idea, the actual testimony of consciousness, which will always be found in agreement with the true requirements of the thinking mind. And under this direction and guidance she will find that she is walking in the true light of our being.

The principle of the Reformation which thus makes the Christian consciousness independent of science, is so far from limiting the operations or arresting the progress of the scientific mind in natural or revealed truth, that it has given to this spirit its true starting point and its great impulse. It has given greater power and life to all sciences. "The principle of the Reformation," says Dorner, "opened a new and wide path for science, not simply in a negative way, by breaking the yoke of foreign and external bondage, but also positively by its very spirit and power. Faith, with its certainty, placed in the innermost of man the primitive image, the prototype of the certainty after which science strives—the re-adjustment of knowledge and being, the reception of the latter into the for-

mer and its thorough illumination; the transplanting of the thinking, which still stands outside of the reality, into the sphere of the real. That primitive image of certainty is the more fruitful as faith has become conscious and certain of the great central truth to which all other knowledge adheres; in which, in regard to beginning and end, the entire world of the knowing possesses a permanent illuminating central point, so that from out that, in unity with the highest divine principles, a connected knowledge may be developed." This being the relation of the Christian consciousness to theology, we are at once led to see the importance of the practicability and reality of personal assurance of salvation, and of the conscious certainty of saving faith.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION A REVIVAL OF THE PERSONAL ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.

THE Reformation was a revival of the personal assurance of salvation, produced by the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth. It was a re-assertion of the fact of justification by faith in Christ alone, and of the personal certainty of divine forgiveness through Him. It was the appropriation and enjoyment anew of the free salvation which is announced in the New Testament, and proclaimed by the Apostles as the great characteristic of this dispensation. It was the renewal of the apostolic answer to the great question: What must I do to be saved? How can I be justified in the sight of God? How can I be certain of my salvation?

§ I. *Christianity the Absolutely Perfect Revelation of God's Saving Grace.*

Christianity is immediate communion with God in Christ through faith. Christ is not a mere messenger of God, but God Himself; not a mere symbol of the divine presence, but the divine presence itself, God manifested in the flesh for the salvation of men. All religion implies communion with God through faith. But this is possible only by God's revelation of Himself as personal Creator to us, dependent creatures; as reconciled Father to us, sinful men. Christianity is the completed, the perfect revelation of God. From the beginning of human history God has—in addition to the manifestations of His eternal power and Godhead made in nature and providence—given a special revelation of His nature and relations to men, and especially of His gracious will toward man as a sinner. From the moment of the fall onward, He has—in addition to His general movements in the world of nature and the history of man—carried on a special history, a history of saving acts of revelation. Christ is the fulfillment and completion of this revelation. He is the absolutely perfect revelation of God. All the

elements of divine manifestation culminate in Him—in His person and work. All the discoveries of God made to the heathen world, and even the disclosures in the Old Testament revelation, were only preparations for the full manifestation of redemption and salvation in Him. The law before revealed, was illustrated and magnified, satisfied and fulfilled, in Him and by Him. The prophetic, the kingly, the priestly offices, are all absorbed in His person. The revelation of His eternal priesthood has superseded all other mediations between God and man, and put an end to all sacerdotal functions of men. “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, even Jesus Christ, the righteous.” By the sacrifice of Himself once for all, He has made an end of all propitiatory sacrifices; for He is both priest and sacrifice; and in Him we come at once to God, come into immediate communion with the Father, in the Holy Ghost. The divine necessities in the work of redemption are all met by Him: Deity is reconciled; atonement for the sins of men complete; salvation is full and complete; the offer of it free and gratuitous. No more prophet, for the eternal Word Himself “was made flesh and dwelt among men”—is ever-living and ever-present for them. “He is the way and the truth,” as well as “the life”—“the life which is the light of men,” “the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” the absolutely perfect revelation of divinity to man. No more priest; for the Everlasting Priest, “who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life,” is here. No more king; for He is “the King immortal,” “able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him,” possessed of “all power in heaven and earth,” and destined “to reign until He shall have put all enemies under His feet.”

§ 2. *Access to God is now Immediate.*

Men are now to go directly to God in Christ. In Heathendom there was no conception of a miraculous approach of God to man; in seeking communion with the divine, men tried to attain an apotheosis; man was to become God. In Judaism men had immediate divine revelations; they looked for communion with God, deliverance from sin and the enjoyment of God's gracious presence through His condescending love; they expected God to come *to* man, but not to be manifested *in* humanity. In

Christianity God has become man, is very man as He is very God; through the incarnation of the eternal Logos, He is as truly man as He is eternally God. In Christ there is a real union of divinity and humanity. In heathenism the human heart, yearning for divine communion and longing for rest in God, sought for mediators and expiations. Under the Old Testament dispensation—as a preparation for the advent of Christ—there were divinely-appointed priests and sacrifices; But the “comers thereunto were not made perfect.” Faith was directed to a promised, a coming Saviour. When this Redeemer came, all priestly mediations and expiatory sacrifices were superseded, and access to God became immediate. He was not only the condescending love of God, but the incarnation of the personal divine love—God, divinity in humanity, seeking the communion of men. The Creator becomes the Heavenly Father; the creatures, dear children. The holy God becomes the reconciler of the sinful world, and the vessels of wrath become the organs of glory. He is God manifested in the flesh, to be “seen of angels,” but “believed on of men.” He could say: “He that seeth me hath seen the Father.” “No man, at any time, hath seen God; the only begotten of the Father, who is in the bosom of the Father: He hath revealed Him.” In Him is the personal union of the divine and the human natures; the perfect revelation of divinity and the perfect manifestation of humanity. The chasm between Creatorship and creatureship is filled up; the breach between the holy God and the sinful world is healed. “God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” God is reconciled; and now the call to all, is: “Be ye reconciled to God.” All are to come directly to Christ, and in Him to God. The divine necessity of atonement in the work of reconciliation has been met; the only human necessity in salvation is simple faith. He is the beloved, the beloved whom we are to hear, “the beloved in whom we are accepted” of God—the Heavenly Father—who “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life;” who hath made him “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,” hath “set Him forth to be a propitiation for sin through faith in His blood;” hath made Him to be unto us, “wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.”

Full salvation is provided and freely offered; it is only to be accepted, believed, appropriated in full assurance of its certainty. He is "Immanuel, God with us."

§ 3. *This Communion with God is now Personal—Practicable for each Individual.*

The access to God is immediate, not only for the race, or for the Church as an organism, or as the mystical body of Christ, but personal—practicable for the individual believer. God has not only come to mankind in the Incarnate Word, but through the word of the Incarnate Word, the gospel, and by the influence of the Holy Ghost, He has come to the individual believer. "Ye are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." By faith the individual soul comes directly to God in Christ. It enters into immediate communion with God in the relation of father and child. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, who are born not of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "When the fullness of time was come, 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." "And because ye are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The saved soul knows no mediation of Church or priest, knows "nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." It receives Him as its all in all, exclaiming in His presence: "My Lord and my God!" It declares that "being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access unto that grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." It has salvation as a fact of experience, and hence adds: "and rejoice even in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, for the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." The only human necessity in salvation being faith, the subject of the faith has *personal* assurance of the salvation.

§ 4. *The Revelation in Christ declares not what God requires of us, but what He gives us; and, consequently, is Assurance of Salvation to the Believer.*

The grace revealed by the gospel is prevenient and undeserved; it does not demand holiness before it offers forgiveness of sin, and, consequently, justification is perfectly gratuitous. It requires no mediation of another creature, as an individual priest, or as an ecclesiastical organism, neither does it wait for expiations or preparations of the subject himself. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The pardon is free; it is offered not because of our repentance and good works, but solely out of grace and for the sake of the merits of Christ. The saving revelation declares not *our* righteousness, but "the *righteousness of God*, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all that believe; for there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." Repentance and good works are, indeed, inseparable from this faith, but the justification is solely by grace and for Christ's sake. Forgiveness, eternal life, are all promised, not because we repent and love and do good works, not even because we believe; but that we may repent, love and do good works, nay, *even that we may believe*. "We love Him because He first loved us." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live righteous, sober and godly lives in this world, looking for the great God, even our Saviour, Jesus Christ." The first step now to be taken by us is not something which another creature can do for us, or something which we can ourselves do to commend us to God; but to accept what God has done for us. The first thing to be apprehended in this salvation is not some *new relation or attitude into which we can put ourselves toward God, but the new relation and attitude in which God stands toward us*, the great and glorious characteristic of which is, that "He is just, and the justifier of him that believeth." The result is indeed a new relation

on our part to God; the law, from a mere empty abstraction, becomes the form of love, is written in the heart, incorporated into our life. "The love of Christ constraineth us; for we thus judge that if Christ died for all, then were all dead, and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to Him who loved them and gave Himself for them." But the cause is solely grace through faith; and consequently, *personal* assurance is an element of saving faith.

§ 5. *Personal Assurance of Salvation a Characteristic of the Apostolic Church.*

In this sense of divine forgiveness and personal certainty of acceptance with God, the first Christians lived and rejoiced. Those who had seen the Saviour, declared that they had seen "His glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "That which was from the beginning," they say, "that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And these things we write unto you that your joy may be full." Paul, though he had not seen Him in the flesh, says: "I know whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him unto that day." And Peter could confidently address Christians generally in the declaration, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

§ 6. *Its Decline in the Old Catholic Church.*

Soon after the early days of the Church, this personal assurance of salvation began to decline. In proportion as the Church lost this simplicity of faith, this ardor of love, this joy of hope, and in the midst of the efforts which she properly made to preserve the Christian doctrines against the perversions and delusions coming in from the heathen world, and against the return-

ing errors and corruptions of Judaism, men's minds were turned away from the experience of personal salvation, from the simple reception of the great fact of salvation in Christ, to intellectual questions concerning doctrines, and were directed more to belief in doctrinal propositions than to faith in the personal Saviour. And while the old Catholic Church did great service, intellectually and speculatively, in building up a bulwark against heresies, by her scientific statements of the doctrines concerning God, the trinity of the Godhead, the person of Christ, she was, at the same time, led into an intellectualism which in a great measure neglected the living power of the gospel. She was, thus, led to overlook the self-evidencing character of saving truth in its vital relations to the susceptibilities and wants of the soul; to neglect the practical bearings of the truth upon the consciousness, and to refer the question of the certainty of it entirely to its forms in the understanding; and to suspend salvation upon belief in certain doctrinal propositions. She forgot the personal assurance of the individual, through the gospel as the power of God; the immediate communion of the believer with God, through living faith in the personal, living, present Saviour. She departed from the simplicity of that faith, in its personal, experimental nature; and attached an undue importance to "the pure doctrine," as it is intellectually apprehended and as it is scientifically expressed. In her overweening estimate of the scientific statement, the logical formula, she fell into a one-sided method of presenting Christian truth.

As the question of saving truth had become a purely intellectual one, and the process of the appropriation of it mainly a speculative interest, the determination of the question of the certainty of it soon passed out of the hands of the individual, and there could *no longer be personal assurance of salvation*. Just in proportion as the truth passed from experience in consciousness into the forms of the logical understanding, it was transferred from the determinations and decisions of the Church at large, into the power and control of the more learned representatives of the Church. The decision of the question: What is "pure doctrine?" and what must a man believe in order to gain the great end of religion, namely, the salvation of the soul? was committed entirely to the determination of the bishops; and as individual bishops, yea, even provincial councils, might err, to

the decrees of œcumenical councils as the representatives of the Catholic Church—the Church which was supposed to be secured by divine promise against apostasy from the truth, and, consequently, to be infallible. Assurance of salvation was no longer a personal matter; certainty of truth was no longer expected in the way of personal faith in Christ. It was now to be the result, not of inner personal persuasion and assured belief, but of the external authority of the Church as the infallible interpreter of the truth. *The individual could have no personal certainty of saving truth, but only the assurance of the Councils of the Church.*

§ 7. *Its Destruction in the Roman Catholic Church.*

The logical consequences of this process were fully and practically brought out in the *papal infallibility*. The Roman Catholic Church, more practical in its tendency, occupied more with questions of anthropology than theology, engaged more vigorously in the effort to conquer—in its way—the world for Christ; bent more upon the attempt to subjugate the nations, to bring all mankind under the control of the Church—dealing, consequently more with the will than the intellect—*completed this process of withholding the individual Christian from personal assurance of salvation*. All saving knowledge, all powers of reconciliation with God, as well as of the regeneration and sanctification of the soul, were now supposed to be in the possession of the visible Church. And the hierarchy were distinguished as the Church; the laity, as only the children of the Church; and thus was introduced a priestly mediation between God and the people, between Christ and believers. In the work of reconciliation with God, the entire multitude of the laity were supposed to be without any direct access to God's pardoning grace, or any immediate communion with God in Christ. To the Church, that is, to the clergy, belonged all the powers of salvation. *The individual could expect salvation only in communion with her and in connection with her offices; and, consequently, could have no personal certainty of his being the subject of the divine reconciliation and favor*. Dependent on priestly absolution, yet never certain of the rightful ordination of the confessor, nor of the reality of his intention to absolve; required to repent and confess, yet never sure that his repentance was sufficiently thorough or his confession sufficiently comprehensive; he *could never be assured of his salvation*.

Even the priests had no personal assurance of acceptance with God. As individual persons, they were as destitute as the people of the power of immediate communion with God. Their communion was not personal communion with the personal God, but with impersonal things, with the Church as an organism and her ordinances in their *opus operatum*. Even *holiness was no longer considered a personal quality*, but an attribute of the Church and her orders. As Luther says: "The papists say of the whole body of which they consist that it is holy, while they dare not say this of any individual person." Of this holiness the individual was to become a partaker through the magical influence of her mysteries—the sacraments, and especially the sacrament upon which the validity and efficacy of all others depended, the sacrament of priestly ordination. The certainty of truth was no longer sought in the self-authenticating and saving power of the gospel to souls seeking salvation, but *in the authority of the Church as represented by the papacy*. As individual bishops and even provincial councils might err, were fallible—and as œcumenical councils could not be always in session—there would be periods, such as the intervals between the conventions of œcumenical councils, when there would be no infallible organ of the Church's authority. This authority must, therefore, have a permanent seat and be exercised by a single person. The papacy alone possesses it; in it alone is the infallibility of the Church to have its organ. The pope alone can infallibly know the truth. *To be saved, men must be in obedient connection with the Church under a legitimate pastor, that is, one sanctioned by Rome.*

Thus did Romanism *completely obscure the primitive personal assurance of salvation*. She said: "You must be saved through the mediation of the Church." Whether she spoke of grace or of works, the conclusion was always the same. If she spoke through those of her organs who were of Augustinian tendency, she said: "You must, indeed, be saved by grace, but this grace, this saving grace, is in my hands. God at Pentecost poured out this grace upon me and committed it to my keeping and dispensation. He has endowed me with all the powers of salvation, forgiveness of sin and regenerating grace, to be wielded by me in behalf of men on earth and in purgatory, until He come again to hold the final judgment. I exercise them and dispense their blessings at my will and discretion. You can be saved,

therefore, only if you are in a state of obedience to my dictations; and as you are entirely dependent upon my offices, and that until the end of your life, yea, even in purgatory, you can never in this life be *personally* assured of your salvation."

If she spoke through those of her ministers who were of Pelagian proclivities, she said: "Works are, indeed, necessary and meritorious, and you must be saved in part by human works and human merits. But the human works and merits which make the soul acceptable to God, are not the works and merits of humanity as such, of humanity external to me, but of the humanity that is included in me, of humanity in a state of obedience to me and represented by me. They are my works and merits as the mystical body of Christ—in which each member is dependent on the merits of the whole body. You can be justified only as you share in the merits of the saints on earth and the saints in heaven. And the treasury of these merits is mine, to be dispensed at my discretion; consequently, you can never be *personally* sure that you are *justified*, never *personally* sure of your *individual* acceptance with God, of your *individual* salvation."

§ 8. *The Lutheran Reformation the Revival of this Primitive and Fundamental Feature of True Christianity.*

Now, the Lutheran Reformation was precisely a revival of the *personal* assurance of salvation produced by the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to every one—to each individual person that believeth. With Luther, salvation once more became a matter of *personal* experience, and, together with this, of *personal* certainty. *With this experience and at this point the great Reformation began.* So great was his sense of sin and of the guilt of sin, that he could not be satisfied without *personal* assurance of deliverance from its condemnation and pollution, and this he could not find in the answer which the Church gave to the inquiring soul. He felt the necessity of *immediate* communion with God, and consequently also the necessity of *personal* certainty of the forgiveness of sin. No mediations, directions or exercises of the Church could relieve him of this anxiety. This was his bitter experience after having put forth the greatest efforts, and with the deepest earnestness, in the ways which she had pointed out as the most meritorious and

the most likely to secure the divine favor, to appease the conscience and to give peace to the soul. He could not find it in her public ordinances, nor even in her mystical piety. Although deeply versed in the literature and thoroughly imbued with the spirit of mysticism, and greatly benefited by them; although intimately acquainted with that mystical theology which had all along—in the different ages of the Church, and in the midst of her deepest corruptions and her greatest deviations from the inner life of Christianity—protested in the name of the Spirit against reliance upon the mere outward forms and ceremonies of the Church, and taught the necessity of spiritual and immediate communion with God—yet he could not find in its teachings and experiences *the certainty of justification, the assurance of salvation*. The mystical doctrine of the immediate connection between self-abnegation and union with God could give him no permanent satisfaction. Dreading the divine displeasure at his sins, and destitute of love to God, he felt that he could have no blessed communion with Him. The guilt of past sin would not permit him to ignore this dread of divine punishment, and this lack of love could not be supplied in the presence of this fear. Without the filial fear which results from the union of a reverent love and a confiding fear, he felt that there could be no satisfactory relation between him and God. A mere self-emptying would not be immediately followed by a “being filled with all the fullness of God.” It would be impracticable, indeed; and if even possible, it would not remove the hindrance to divine communion. Grace could neither be the merit nor the effect of his holiness, not even of infused holiness. Love, fear of God, and confidence in Him, could *only be by faith in God's free, unmerited favor*. God is love, but He is also a spirit, and consequently ethical, holy love. Grace must thus be prevenient and be freely offered, or faith cannot apprehend it. He felt with the mystic that he must have God in immediate communion, but he felt also that he could have Him only if He offered Himself, and as He offered Himself; and that he could have assurance of salvation only as God manifested his righteousness through a vicarious satisfaction to justice, only as He revealed Himself in the pardon of sin, in the justification of the sinner *freely and gratuitously*. This revelation of God for the salvation of the soul he found *in* Christ, the historical but ever-

living Saviour, and he could find certainty of salvation only by venturing upon him, by a personal appropriation of his merits by faith. Mysticism regarded justice as absorbed in love; the Church contemplated these attributes alternately; Luther apprehended them in their union in Christ. Only in justification by faith, therefore, only in the *belief that God for Christ's sake had forgiven his sins*, was there for him assurance—personal assurance—of salvation. This faith, this certainty of salvation, he recognized as the work of the Holy Spirit produced through the instrumentality of the Word—the revealed Word—that is, through the contents of the Holy Scriptures. And having rejected the authority of the Church as the ground of certainty, and renounced the mystical notion of immediate inner illumination and access to God, without the special assurance of the revelation of God given in the Bible—he received, at once, and once for all, as the result not only of the historical evidence of their authenticity, but also of the *actual experience of the saving power of their contents, the sacred Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice*. He received as *inseparable the fact of special divine revelation and the fact of personal human experience of the power of God unto salvation*. His constant motto was the *union of the Word and faith*, faith and the Word. He established, for all time to come, the right and duty of *private judgment*; recognized with unchangeable faith, the *sufficiency and intelligibility* of the sacred Scriptures to the *individual* inquirer after the way of life; revived the idea of the *universal priesthood of Christians*, and of the *union of all believers in the invisible Church*—which is universal, the only Catholic Church, embracing all true believers scattered throughout the world—in the *true Church* which is *never perfectly manifested in visible organizations, and never fully and infallibly represented by the visible Church*. As Luther made the first annunciation, and gave the first *clear* apprehension of this principle, let us give attention to his own exposition of it.

CHAPTER III.

LUTHER'S EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION AS INVOLVING PERSONAL ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.

As this is the great thing which is to be the groundwork of our theology, the reader will appreciate the profuseness with which we quote from Luther. This personal assurance was the great theme of his preaching and writings.

§ 1. *The Individual may not rely upon the Assurance of the Visible Church Through any of her Representatives, but he can and must have Personal Certainty for Himself.*

This certainty is an essential element of true Christian faith. "Assurance is *especially necessary in Christian doctrine*. I ought to be certain of that which I hold in regard to God, or rather, of that which He holds respecting me. It was a shocking error of the papal doctrine that they taught the people that they should doubt concerning the forgiveness of sin, and God's grace. 'You are,' said they, 'to acknowledge that you are a sinner, and such a sinner as can by no means be certain of his salvation.' If the papacy had been guilty of no other sin and error, this would have been a sufficiently shocking blindness and delusion, that they said we should constantly go about in doubt, should be wavering and uncertain about our salvation; for such doubt takes away from me my baptism and God's grace (Ps. li. 12; 1 Cor. ix. 26; Heb. xii. 12; 2 Pet. i. 10; Rom. xiv. 2, 3). For we are to know that He is no uncertain, doubtful, changeable God, who has many meanings, and is like an uncertain reed; but that He has only one kind of meaning, and is absolutely certain who says: 'I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; I absolve thee, and declare thee acquitted.'"

In the invisible Church—in all true believers, there is assurance of forgiveness of sin, but it is not to be found in the authority of the visible Church. "Who will assure us wherein the fathers may not have erred—as you yourselves acknowledge that they

have often erred—and that they should not be tested by and judged according to the divine Scriptures! But you say that they have also interpreted the Scriptures. But what if they should have erred in their interpreting as well as in their lives and writings!" (Leipzig Ed., Vol. 18, p. 141.) "They say, 'Whom shall he believe who refuses to believe entire Christendom?' But pray, Magistri Nostri, what is it that you call the Church? The French Sorbonne? But how can that be the Church of Christ which is so far from Christ's word? Christ testifies that His sheep hear His voice, and that he that heareth it not, is not of God" (Melancthon's Answer to the French Sorbonne, translated into German by Luther, Vol. 17, p. 673). "From this it is certain that the saints sometimes err also in faith." . . . "But those perish who receive their error for truth and follow it as an example." "If the saints do not err in the faith and truth, why does Peter teach that we should increase in faith and the knowledge of Christ (2 Pet. v. 11), and Paul that we should not be as children driven about by every wind of doctrine (Ephes. iv. 12, 14)?" (Vol. 18, p. 166). "For you must in this matter, and every other, so build certainly and firmly upon God's Word, that even if I myself should become a fool—which may God forbid—and recant and deny my doctrine, yet you would not, on that account, depart from it, but say, if even Luther himself, or 'an angel from heaven, should preach another gospel, let him be accursed. For you must not be Luther's, but Christ's disciples; and it is not enough that you say Luther, or Peter, or Paul, hath said this, but you must *by yourself and in your conscience feel Christ himself, and unchangeably experience that it is God's Word*, even though all the world should contend against it. As long as you have not with this certainty tasted of the Word of God, and hang with your ear upon a human mouth or pen, and not with the ground of the heart upon the Word of God, you know not yet what that means (Matt. xxiii, 10): Be ye not called masters on earth, for one is your master, Christ. The Master *teaches in the heart*—through the external word of His preachers, indeed, who bring the word into the ear; but *Christ brings it into the heart*. Therefore, consider for yourself. You have persecution and death before you; there I cannot be with you, nor you with me; there each one of us must contend for himself, and overcome the devil, death, and the world. If at that time, you would

look around to see where I stay, or perhaps be agitated, because I, or somebody else, spoke otherwise—you are already lost, and thou hast lost the word out of thy heart; for thou cleavest not to the Word, but to me and to others. There is therefore no help in this" (Vol. 18, p. 190). "Where God's Word and will are clear, we will not wait for the determinations of Councils or Church, but fear God, go forward and do it, without thinking whether there will be a Council or not. For I will not wait to see whether Councils will conclude whether *I shall believe in God, the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son*, etc.; nor what I am to believe in regard to sure and clear parts of Scripture which are necessary and useful to me. For if Councils should delay, and I should, in the meantime, die, what would become of my soul, if it should not know already, but must wait for the Councils to determine what it is to believe while *faith is immediately necessary*?" (Vol. xviii. p. 408.) "When Christ calls upon His people to beware of false prophets, He recognizes not the right of the Pope or the Councils, but that of all Christians, to decide upon doctrine." In answer to the decree of the Pope he exclaims, "Thou, with thy Councils, hast decided; now I also must decide whether I will receive it or not! Why? Because when I come to die thou wilt not stand and answer for me, but I *must myself see to it*, how I stand, and that I am *certain* of my cause" (Vol. vi. p. 182).

"When we attempt to lay a law upon men that they should believe so and so, then certainly God's Word is not there. If God's Word be not there, it is uncertain whether He desires it, for what He does not command, we are not certain whether that pleases Him; yea, we are certain that it does not please God, for He wishes our faith to be grounded entirely upon His Word, as He says: My sheep hear My voice and know Me, but the voice of a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him. "Whosoever believes as right what is wrong or uncertain, denies the truth—which is God Himself—believes in falsehood and error, and holds to be right what is wrong. Therefore it is in the highest sense a foolish thing, when they say we shall believe the Church, the Fathers, the Councils, when there is no Word of God there. They who give such commands are the devil's apostles, and not the Church of Christ. For the Church does not command, unless she is certain that it is God's Word,

as Peter says: Let him that speaketh, speak as the oracles of God. But they are far from showing that the determinations of the Councils are the oracles of God." "No one can command the soul, unless he knows how to direct its way to heaven. This no man can do, but *God alone*. Therefore in matters that concern the salvation of the soul nothing but the Word of God is to be taught and received. Tell me, now, how much wit must that head have, who would propose law at a place where he has no authority? Who would not consider it foolish to command the moon to shine when we please? How would it appear for those at Leipzig to lay a command upon us at Wittenberg, or for us at Wittenberg upon those at Leipzig?" "Therefore, every man believes as *he believes at his own peril, and must see to it that his faith be right*. For as little as another can descend into hell, or ascend into heaven, for me, so little can he believe or not believe for me. And as little as he can lock or unlock heaven for me, so little can he drive me to faith or unbelief." "For it is a free work which concerns faith, to which no man can be forced. Yea, it is a divine work in the soul." "It would be better, though the people should err, to let them err, than to drive them to lie and speak contrary to what is in their heart; for it is not proper to prevent a less evil by a greater" (Vol. xviii. p. 395). "Therefore I have composed very few articles, inasmuch as we have without these so many commands of God to do, in the Church, the government of the family, which we can never fully carry out. Why should we, or of what use would it be, that there might be many decrees and determinations made in regard to it in the Council? especially as we do not regard and keep these capital parts which God has commanded. Just as if He must respect our jugglery so much that we may tread His solemn commandments under foot" (Vol. xxi. p. 206. Anno 1539). "It is, therefore, *impossible to prevent human dogmas from leading men away from the truth*, as Paul says. For one of two things must happen, either that we will despise and reject them when we hear that they do not produce piety and salvation, or that the conscience or judgment will be ensnared and choked if we suppose that they do make pious and must be held. Therefore we must hold to the bare, pure Scripture, which alone teaches Christ" (Vol. xiii. p. 266). "God pours out the Holy Spirit

into the heart who says in the heart that it is in truth no otherwise than it is in the second article; that the Spirit witnesses with our spirit; that a person attains to this, that he *feels it, that it is so; that he has no manner of doubt*, and says he would rather lose body, life, wife, and child, and all earthly possessions. For if the heart did not feel this, it could not bear sufferings and loss for the faith" (Vol. xxi. p. 116. Anno 1539). Assurance is, thus, regarded by Luther an essential element of the Christian faith and spirit.

§ 2. *The True Church Consisting, according to Luther, of all True Believers, receives God's Word, and through its Instrumentality each Individual Attains Personal Assurance of Salvation.*

"What, indeed, is the Church and her authority, of which they rightly and with truth boast that she is governed by the Holy Ghost, yea, of whom Christ said: The Father and the Son dwell with her, and what she says and does, that is said and done through Him; and that every man is bound, at the peril of his salvation, to obey her? For, from this and other promises, we are so far agreed in this, that there is a people on earth which is called the people of God; where He will be the domestic head in His own house, prince in His own castle, God in His church, held so high and dear of God that He does not so much regard the entire heaven above, but that He will come down into this vale of tears to her, and to be with her to the end of the world." "Therefore there is on this point no dispute, namely: That there is a Church on earth, and that we are to obey her as the mistress and empress through whom God speaks and operates. But about this is the dispute: Who and what that Church is? To decide this controversy, it avails nothing, says Augustine, that we are directed to human words and judgment. But in this way we can be certain of the matter if we hear how Christ, the Lord, Himself describes and draws His Church. Now, He baptizes and paints her thus: namely, that she is the congregation who love Christ and keep His Word (for by this we know and feel this love); My Word must be theirs, says He, and kept or held to, else it will accomplish nothing. That Word which is called the Word of Christ must be here the standard and the test whereby we may know and find the Church, and according to which she must direct her-

self." "Christ binds the Church to His Word, and gives it for a certain sign by which we may prove and recognize her." "This rule St. Peter gives when he says (1 Peter iv. 11): That whosoever speaks and does anything in this house—would work, direct, give—he is to remember that he speak and do God's Word and works, or abstain from speaking and working; and, instead of this, speak and govern at home in his own house or kingdom. For, outside of this house, the world has another word and work. Each lord, emperor, prince, father of a family in his government and affairs, where notwithstanding it is so ordered also, when it is rightly governed, that all things should proceed according to the will and mind of the master of the house or country. Although the domestic and court servants are roguish and wicked, still the order and work of the master proceeds as he says and commands. But in this house where *God* is Lord and King, He will also have such speech and action that it can be said that nothing else than His word and work is done, and done by virtue of His command; and that *every man may be certain of this comfort himself and trust himself to it*. This is the beautiful promise to the overwhelming glory of Christians, that God so deeply condescends to them, that nowhere else but in them and through His Word and work, mouth and hand, will He manifest or let Himself be seen or heard. And by this He makes a great difference between them and all other men, so that any one Christian, however lowly he may be, is quite another man, and in the sight of the Lord is held in higher honor than all kings and emperors and princes, and the whole world together, who have and know nothing of this honor and distinction. As Moses also says (Deut. iv. 7), that we may be so pleased with this passage of the word of the gospel, *become so confident and bold, and cling so fast to it, that we would leave every thing in the world for it*" (Vol. xiii. p. 706).

"This is the consolation which we have from the gospel, that we know that comfort is to be found nowhere but in the Scriptures and God's Word. And for this reason God has written it (Rom. xv. 5). Here he says that the Scriptures are comforting, or give patience and comfort. Therefore, nothing else can comfort the soul even in the least temptation. For whatever may be the other thing with which a man may comfort himself, and however great it may be, *it is still all uncertain. The heart will*

always ask: Who knows whether it is right? Ah! If I were certain of it, etc. But if it hangs upon God's Word; this can neither deceive nor fail me. *Of this I am certain.*" "Therefore let us prepare ourselves when they come and pretend that the Christian Church cannot err, that we may refute this, and say, these are not the words of men, but of God; this stands here in the gospel, that Mary was full of the Holy Ghost, and yet erred, and in Acts that there was a Christian congregation of those who believed and had the Holy Ghost, and yet were on the way to error, and would have made an unchristian law if two or three persons had not resisted. Therefore we are to believe no Councils nor saints, except in so far as they agree with the Word of God" (Vol. v., p. 326).

"And again, when Paul calls the gospel an office of the Spirit, he does it to show its power whereby it operates quite otherwise than the law in the human heart, to wit: *it brings with it the Holy Ghost, and makes a new heart*; for when a man driven by the preaching of the law into fear and terror, hears this preaching which does not tell what God *requires of him*, but what He *gives to him*, and points not to his works but those of Christ, and bids him believe and be certain that He will for the sake of His Son forgive his sins and receive him as a child—such preaching, when a person receives and believes it, elevates the heart and *gives it comfort*; so that it no longer flees from God, but turns to Him; and because the man finds and feels such grace and mercy with God, he becomes reconciled to Him, and begins to pray to Him from the heart, and to receive and honor Him as his blessed God. And the more such faith and comfort are strengthened, the more will desire and love for His commandments increase. For this reason, therefore, God will have a word of the gospel *diligently preached*, that the hearts of men may be awakened to know this; and that they may remind themselves of the great grace and mercy of God; *that the Holy Ghost may become more and more powerful*. Behold all this is not the power of the law or of men, but a *new heavenly power of the Holy Ghost which presses Christ and His work into the heart*, and makes a real book of it, which consists not in letters and mere writing, but in true life and reality. This God had promised before to give through the new preaching of the gospel, as Joel (xi. 28) and elsewhere, and afterward proved also in public

examples and experiences in connection with the outward preaching of the gospel, as at Pentecost (Acts viii. 12 and x. 44), which no man had heard or seen before during the entire preaching of the law, showing that this was quite a different preaching which was followed by such power and efficacy" (Vol. xiv., p. 252).

§ 3. *The Gift of the Holy Spirit is not to the Church as an Organism, but to the Congregation of True Believers in Christ scattered throughout the World. As this Invisible Church is produced by the Holy Ghost, He is given to all its Members. There is a Personal Enjoyment of the Gracious Presence of the Holy Spirit, and, consequently, of Personal Assurance of Salvation.*

"Before Christ gave the command to remit sin, He breathed upon them (the disciples), and said: Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted them. Here it is determined that no person can forgive sin unless he have the Holy Spirit. For the words are as clear as light, and cannot give way." "Where then are the keys of the Pope? However reluctant he may be, they must drop from his hands, and it must become known that he carries his flag or ensign without authority. For here it is clearly written that no man has the keys unless he have the Holy Ghost. But if I cannot have forgiveness of sins unless the confessor have the Holy Spirit; and if *no* one can be *certain in regard to another whether he has the Holy Spirit, how can I be certain of the forgiveness of my sins*, of my absolution, and gain a peaceful conscience? The latter would be just as it was before." "I have used this illustration in order that we may see the true ground of this thing. There is no doubt that no man forgives or retains sin except he alone who has the Holy Spirit; so certain is this that you and I know it, as this word of Christ certainly shows. But this is no other than the Christian Church, that is, *the congregation of all believers.*" "Of this Church every man may be certain that she has the Holy Ghost, as Paul, after Christ and all Scripture, abundantly shows, and as it is briefly expressed in the Creed, when we say: I believe in the Holy Christian Church. She is holy on account of the Holy Ghost, which she certainly has." "Hence the Creed is so arranged that the Article, Forgiveness of Sin, must come after the Article, A Holy Christian

Church, and before this: I believe in the Holy Ghost, in order that it may be known that without the Holy Ghost there is no holy Church, and without a holy Church there is no forgiveness of sin" (Vol. xvii., p. 704).

"Now there are in the world various nations, but Christians are a peculiarly designated people. They are called not only *ecclesia*, church or nation, but *sancta catholica Christiana*, that is, a Christian holy people that believe in Christ; and, therefore, they are called a *Christian people and have the Holy Ghost*, who daily sanctifies them not only by the forgiveness of sin.....but also by the laying aside, expelling and destroying of sin; and hence they are called a holy people.....For he that does not believe on Christ is not a Christian, and he that *does not have the Holy Ghost against sin is not holy*.....The Church is to be called the holy Christian people not only in the time of the apostles who are long since dead, but until the end of the world. We are to know that there is *always* on earth in life a Christian *holy people*, in whom Christ lives, operates, governs *per redemptionem*, through grace and forgiveness of sins; and *the Holy Ghost per vivificationem et satisfactionem*, through daily cleansing of sin and renewing; so that we do not remain in sin, but can and shall lead a holy life in all good works, and not live in old wicked works, etc.For the holiness of common Christianity is this: That the Holy Spirit gives the people faith in Christ and sanctifies them thereby (Acts xv. 9), that is, makes a new heart, soul, body, work and being; and writes the law of God not on tables of stone, but in fleshy hearts (2 Cor. iii. 10) This the Holy Ghost effects; it sanctifies and awakens the soul to a new life which will be perfected in that other life, and this is Christian holiness" (Vol. xxi., p. 285. Anno 1539). Thus is the certainty of forgiveness; thus is assurance of salvation not the result of the absolution of the visible Church, but of the gracious presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the invisible Church—in the hearts of all believers.

"That I may briefly speak of it, there are two kinds of clearness and two kinds of obscurity; the one outward and attaches to the Scripture itself. And here there is nothing dark or doubtful, but everything clearly revealed in the light of the whole Word, what principal parts the whole Scripture contains. The other is inward in the heart (1 Cor. ii. 14), that a person *may*

know and understand the spiritual things and realities which the Scriptures exhibit. And if you speak of this, there is no man on earth who *understands a jot or tittle* of the Scriptures, *except those who have the Spirit of God*. For in this respect all men are by nature and disposition blind, have a darkened heart, that although they read and speak much in the Scriptures, they do not observe, see, or know its realities; do not believe earnestly and truly that there is a God, etc. For the Scriptures or even the least part of the Scriptures, no man on earth will understand or know without the Holy Ghost" (Vol. xix., p. 11). "He says, therefore, that the spirits may be tried in two ways whether they be of God. First, through an inner judgment in which each Christian is enlightened by the Holy Spirit and God's grace for himself and his conscience, that he may conclude and judge with the utmost certainty concerning every doctrine. Of this Paul speaks (1 Cor. ii. 15): He that is spiritual judgeth all things. And this *certainly belongs to faith and of necessity to every Christian*, even though he be not a preacher or in a public office. This same we have above called an inner clearness of the Scriptures. This conviction and certainty will, indeed, help none but him who has it, and of this we do not here speak. And I mean that of which no man should doubt, that a *Christian must be certain in regard to his own faith*."

§ 4. *The Holiness Promised to the Church is not an Impersonal, Unethical Quality, not the Holiness of the Church as an Organism, but Personal Holiness—Holiness which must be Professed and Confessed by the Individual Christian; and, consequently, all Believers can have Personal Assurance of Salvation.*

"Here, here, at Jerusalem," they (the Jews) said, "here is the temple of the Lord; here is the gate where men must enter in unto the Lord, offer sacrifice, burn incense, serve God, and become pious." For as he (the Psalmist) does not simply call it gate, but the gate of the Lord, he means the gate of the temple where the Lord specially dwelt as in His castle, His house of state, and where the divine service was mostly exercised, and in the highest degree; but here (in the New Dispensation) is a service transcending temple and incense and sacrifice. Here is the true temple, the true gate, the true divine service, the true sacrifice which is called the thank-offering, of which he speaks

in the next verse, and will hereafter say more. There went in also there many bad men, hypocrites and sinners, to the gate of the temple. But at this gate of the Lord only the righteous and holy go in to serve the Lord. For there is and can be no person in the Christian congregation and a member of the Church, unless he be really a believer, that is, righteous and holy as the Article testifies: I believe in a Holy Christian Church. But he who is not a believer, nor holy and righteous, does not belong to the 'Holy Christian Church,' and cannot enter in at this gate of the Lord, cannot pray, offer thanksgiving, praise or serve God; does not know Him, although he corporeally lives among Christians, even though he holds an office among them, as preacher, bishop, or receives the sacraments outwardly with them, as John says" (1 John iii. 6).

"And this is the article which that lovely Council at Constance condemned, together with this verse and the entire Holy Scripture. For John Huss confessed at that time, and there, that there is a Holy Christian Church; that the Pope, if he was not pious and holy, was not a member, much less the head of the Christian Church, though he did hold the office in it as such. For this Huss had to go to the stake as a heretic, and to be condemned. But much more is Peter condemned (2 Pet. ii. 13); for he calls the unrighteous the 'spots and blemishes' of the Holy Church. If he were yet alive, the devil would try him before these holy murderers. And John freely declares: 'He that sinneth is of the devil.' But they place over against this, the notion that though the popes, bishops, and they all, sin very much, they are not of the devil nor of his synagogue, but are members of Christ and God, members and heads of the Holy Christian Church. Yes, they are members of the Church as spittle — sweat — stench — scabs — diseases are members of the body. These are, indeed, in the body and on the body; yea, they are the spots and blemishes, the filth which the body must carry, with great danger, and labor, and disgust. But every one, I hope, by this time knows that any one who regards himself a Christian must also regard himself as righteous and holy. For a Christian must be righteous and holy, or he is not a Christian, since Christianity is holy, and the entire Scripture calls Christians holy and righteous, as they are in this verse (Ps. xciii. 21), and in Daniel are often so called (Dan. vii. 27);

and this is not pride, but a necessary confession and article of the faith." "But we are to know that in our person as children of Adam, we are, indeed, condemned sinners, and have no righteousness nor holiness of our own. But because we are baptized and believe in Christ, we are holy and righteous in Christ and with Christ, who hath taken our sins from us, and gifted, clothed and adorned us with His holiness. Therefore, the whole Christian Church is holy, not in herself, nor through her own works, but in Christ and through Christ's holiness, as Paul says (Ephes. v.): 'Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.' He, therefore, who is afraid to confess and acknowledge that he is holy and righteous, acts even as if he would say: I am not baptized; I am not a Christian; I believe not in Christ; I believe not that Christ died for me and bore my sins; I believe not that His blood has cleansed me or can cleanse; in short, I believe not a word of what God has testified of Christ and what the entire Scripture says.' What kind of a man is this? What Turk or Jew is such a desperately wicked man?"

"Therefore, in addition to this, He touches all outward appearance of person, that in Christianity no appearance of person holds, but he who believes is righteous, even he goes in at this gate unquestioned; every believer, whether Jew, Greek, man, wife, virgin, married, servant, maid, rich, poor, king, prince, nobleman, strong or weak. For the Jews boasted highly that they were Abraham's seed, as if they were, on that account, the nearest, in like manner as now our priests would be the best, and especially the nuns, the brides of Christ. But it is said the righteous enter in; monks and nuns enter not in, unless they first become righteous and Christian. For the kingdom of Christ consists not in outward things; the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, says Christ; and we must not say: lo! here, or lo! there; it is inward in the heart. But this is difficult to believe, and it is also one of the articles of those condemned as heretics" (Vol. vi., p. 530). "Because we are all sinners and impure in ourselves, therefore must the Holy Spirit perform His work in us. He gives us the Lord's words and baptism, and His power in addition, not only that you may be in holy orders, but also *personally* holy; but in this way, that

you shall say, Not from myself am I holy, but through the blood of Christ, by which I am sprinkled, yea, washed in baptism; also through the gospel which is daily spoken to men" (Vol. x., p. 85).

"This passage (John xiii. 25, 26) is now a very consoling passage; and it is well to mark this, as we heard above, that He will come to you and abide with you forever; that Christendom has the promise that the Holy Spirit will always be with her; and not only this, but will teach and guide her to the last day, as we confess: I believe in the Holy Ghost and in the Holy Christian Church; by which is testified that the Holy Ghost is with Christianity and makes her holy" (Vol. x., p. 84). The Romanists made holiness to be a natural, impersonal quality; but Luther regards it as an ethical, personal attribute—an attribute not of a thing but of a person—not an attribute of the Church as an abstraction or organism, but of the concrete members, of all individual believers. "Behold, in this way we are to regard and honor the Christian Church and remove the filth with which those have bedaubed her who have applied this name only to ranks and orders, while yet they must say in the creed: I believe in a Holy Christian Church, the Communion or Congregation of Saints, etc., and yet, on the other hand, dare not and cannot say this of *any living person!* But if we are to confess the faith rightly: A Holy Church, etc., we must not doubt that we are baptized, and that the blood of Christ is shed for us. If you believe this, you must also confess yourself as holy. For it is, indeed, the Holy Ghost who bestows upon you Christ and His holiness, and works faith in you. It is, indeed, true that the Holy Ghost lets Christians occasionally err, stumble and fall, and lets sin remain; and does it even for this reason, that we may not have complacency in ourselves, as if we were of ourselves holy, but that we may learn what we are, and from whom we have holiness, else we would become proud and rash" (Vol. x., p. 86).

Thus does the assurance of salvation become a *personal* matter. It involves the formal as well as the material principle of the Reformation, or rather both phases of the one great principle, the union of faith and the word—the word as producing saving faith, and faith as recognizing the word as its source and rule. The Holy Spirit through the word produces saving

faith in the individual, and the spirit, given to him through this same word, makes him *personally* certain of being in the possession of the saving truth, and, thus, personally assured of salvation. And this leads us more particularly to notice the connection of the inner witness of the Spirit with His external testimony in historical revelation—the fact, that according to the principle of the Reformation, assurance of salvation is a matter of inner, conscious experience, as well as of objective certainty.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHRISTIAN'S INNER ASSURANCE OF SALVATION THROUGH SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE, AND HIS CERTAINTY OF OBJECTIVE TRUTH.

MIRACULOUS divine revelation, and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, are inseparable as essential elements of true Lutheranism. According to the principle of the Reformation, the assurance of salvation is inwardly and consciously experienced. There is an inner, conscious certainty of reconciliation and peace with God. It is produced in the inner man by the same divine operation which produces faith. It is the certainty of salvation in its self-authenticating, self-evidencing manifestation to the consciousness of the subject—the Spirit bearing witness to His own work. Though inseparably connected with the external word of God, this internal movement is yet distinct from it. They are distinct, divine testimonies; on the one hand the testimony of the Holy Spirit in divine revelation, and on the other, the witness of the same Spirit in the heart of the believer. It is the Spirit's witnessing to our spirits, and making us *personally* certain of the salvation which He has miraculously revealed, through inspiration of the prophets and apostles. It is the more particular testimony of the Spirit, His immediate and special operation upon the soul, whereby He makes us *personally and consciously* assured of our acceptance with God; makes clear and certain to *us* the revelation which God has miraculously given, the special divine operation for the redemption of men, for the restoration of filial relationship to Him, of blessed communion with Him. It is, indeed, the same testimony which the Spirit has given in the word of revelation, but it is in a less historical form, and more in the inner form of knowledge and certainty.

This, as we have seen, Luther recognizes as the characteristic of the dispensation of divine revelation under which we live. In the Old Testament the testimony of the Spirit was more entirely through the external historical revelation. It was to be preserved as a precious objective treasure. "Thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee." It was to be an

abiding covenant, and a constant source of light and comfort. "It shall be a covenant of salt forever before the Lord, unto thee and thy seed with thee." "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies." "Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and seek Him with the whole heart." "Thy testimonies also, are my delight and my counselors." But still it was mainly only objective. In the New Testament, the New Dispensation, this testimony of the Spirit was to take a more inner form; and the prophets were inspired to foresee and proclaim this. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt; for this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my *laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Me, from the least unto the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*"

This promise is expounded by the Epistle to the Hebrews, as realized in its fulfillment in the Christian Dispensation. And Peter explains the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the founding of the Christian Church, as the fulfillment of this promise of the Spirit in the Old Testament: "This is that which is spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and *on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.* And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." And Jesus Himself applies the declaration of the prophet, "They shall all be taught of God," to His disciples, and gives it as a characteristic of His Church. So He says: "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me." John exclaims:

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.” So Peter makes the conscious experience of salvation and the inner assurance of it, a fulfillment of prophecy descriptive of the New Testament dispensation: “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. *Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.*”

This assurance is a blessing which both prophets and apostles make *peculiar to*, and *characteristic of*, Christianity. Paul declares that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His;” and says, that “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we say: Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose. Who shall lay anything to charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” “For ye are *all the children of God by faith* in Jesus Christ. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the

promise. Now, I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth in nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors (the Old Testament dispensation) until the time appointed of the father: even so we, when children, were in bondage under the elements of the world; but when the fullness of time (the New Testament dispensation) was come, 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. And because ye are sons, God *has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.* Therefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” Such is the spirit which pervades the entire New Testament.

Luther insists upon this witness of the Holy Spirit, this self-evidencing power of saving truth through the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the heart. As it is inseparable from the principle of the Reformation, let us attend to the teachings of the great Reformer on this important subject.

§ I. *The Christian's Inner Consciousness of Certainty.*

“God, therefore, must *witness to thee in thy heart* that ‘this is God’s Word,’ else it is not determined. Through the Apostles, God originally had that same Word preached, and He still has it preached. But if even the archangel Gabriel were to proclaim it from heaven, it would not help me. I must have God’s own word: I will hear what God says. Men may, indeed, preach the word to me, but *God alone can put it in the heart.* He must *speak it in the heart,* or nothing results from it. If He be silent, it remains unspoken. No man shall be permitted to seduce me from the word which He has taught me. And of this I must be *as certain as I am that two and three are five,* or that the whole of an ell is longer than the half of it. This is *certain,* and though all the world should speak against it, yet I *know that it is not otherwise.* Who determines me in this? Not man, but the truth alone, which is so certain that no man can deny it.” “Our understanding entirely, and without any deception, dictates this; namely, that three and seven are ten: and though it can give no reason why this is true, yet it cannot be denied that it is true. The understanding, consequently, is itself bound, in that it is more determined by the truth, than the truth

is by it. There is also *such an understanding in the Church through illumination of the Spirit*. As with philosophers no man judges concerning universal truths, but all other ideas are determined by them, so also it is with us respecting the *mind of the Spirit, which judgeth all things, and yet is judged of no man.*"

§ 2. *This Conscious Assurance, according to Luther, is realized in Inner Experience—is a Fact of Personal Experience in the Individual Christian Life.*

"God sends to Christians the very Spirit which Christ has, who is also a child, that together with Him they may cry, Abba, Father (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iv. 1-8)! But this cry, one feels when the conscience, without any vacillation or doubt, firmly believes and is certain that not only is all sin forgiven a man, but also that he is God's child, and certain of salvation, and is able with joyous assured heart in all confidence to call God his dear Father. Of this it must be so certain that it would suffer all death, yea, hell itself, rather than be deprived of it. There may indeed be a struggle, and a man may be anxious and concerned lest he should not be a child; and he may also feel God as a wrathful, stern judge over him. But in the conflict the childlike confidence must at last prevail—however much it may tremble and quake—else all is lost. When now Cain hears this, he will bless himself with both hands and feet, and for great humility say: 'May God preserve me from such shocking heresy and presumption! Shall I, a poor sinner, be so proud as to say, I am a child of God? No! no! I will humble myself and acknowledge myself a poor sinner.' Very well! let them go their way; but be you on your guard against them as the greatest enemies of the Christian faith, and of your salvation. We also know full well that we are poor sinners; but here the question is not what we are and do, but what He is for us, what He has done and still does. We speak not of our nature, but of the grace of God, which is as much more than we as heaven is higher than the earth. Does it seem a great thing to you, my beloved, that you are a child of God? Then let it also not appear a small thing that God's Son has come, born of a woman, made under the law, in order that thou mightest be such a child. Great is everything that God does:

therefore He also makes great and joyful courage, intrepid spirits who are afraid of nothing and masters of all. Cain's work is a contracted thing, and makes altogether desponding, anxious hearts, which are good for nothing either in suffering or work, and which tremble at the rustling of a leaf (Lev. xxvi.). There is a *personal certainty*; we can feel the cry of the Spirit in the heart; for it is, at the same time, the cry of our heart, and the Spirit cries from full power, that is, with the whole heart. Hence all moves with such confidence. (Rom. viii. 16-26.) If then thou feelest not this cry of the Spirit, then rest not from prayer till God hear thee; for thou art Cain, and it is not well with thee. Thou must not expect, indeed, that such cry should be alone and pure in thee. Thy sins also cry, and produce desponding in thy conscience. But the cry of the Spirit of Christ must overwhelm this cry, that is, it must produce a confidence stronger than this despondency (1 John iii. 19-22). Thus is this cry a strong, powerful, unwavering looking from the whole heart to God on our part, as of little children to a loving father. And by this childlike spirit is described the power of the kingdom of Christ, and the proper work and the true divine service, as the Holy Spirit operates in believers, namely, the hearty calling upon God, and the consolation whereby the heart, freed from the terror and fear of sin, *is set at rest*. Where the faith of Christ is, there the Holy Spirit effects *in the heart such comfort and childlike confidence*. The witness of the Spirit is precisely this, that through His operations our heart has comfort, confidence and filial prayer. That we may regard ourselves children of God, we have not of ourselves, nor from the law; but it is the Holy Spirit's witness, who, against the law and the feeling of our unworthiness, bears in the heart such testimony, and *makes us certain of it*. This testimony takes place in this way, namely, that as the Spirit works in us through the Word, we *feel and become conscious of His power, and of the agreement of our experience with the word or declaration of the gospel*. For this you can at any time feel that in necessity and anxiety you can receive comfort from the gospel, overcome doubt; and, can *firmly conclude that you have a gracious God*."

Thus according to the principle of the Reformation, religion is a *personal* concern and, the certainty of it a matter of *inner, conscious experience*. It is obligatory on every man and practi-

cable for each individual. Every man may go to Christ *directly*, and each individual can come into *personal* communion with God in Christ through the Holy Ghost. Others, as the utmost that they can do for him, can only direct him to Christ; they cannot mediate between him and the Saviour; and he can be justified by no work or merit of his own, but only for the sake of Christ and of what He has done for him; he must, therefore, go directly to Christ, must appropriate Christ through faith, and, consequently, *can have personal assurance and certainty of this justification*. The mission and work of Christ are the *revelation of God's gracious will*, and thus faith is made possible, yea, is produced by that same grace; and, consequently, the faith which appropriates the historical Christ—who ever liveth by His meritorious and triumphant work to save—has, necessarily, in it the element of assurance of salvation. But in addition to this there is the witness of the Spirit. The Spirit who produces this faith, bears testimony to His own work, and thus gives us assurance of the forgiveness of sin, that is, acceptance with God: “For,” says Luther, “where forgiveness of sin is, there also there is salvation.” How strange it is that it should be so little known that this was not only a real but an essential element of the great Lutheran Reformation. It should be a precious thing to the Lutheran Church to find that she had in her very incipency the essential elements of the modern development of spiritual and experimental religion. In the experience of Luther, and in the great principle of the Reformation lie all the elements of evangelical piety and the revival of true religion. It was the same spirit which afterwards breathed in Arndt, and the millions who have, in every succeeding generation, been brought to Christ by his writings. The same spirit which lived in Spener, and produced the great religious awakening in Germany, and which was the source of the marvellous phenomena of Methodism in Europe and in this country. The same spirit which has produced the great revivals of our day. They are *all characterized by this interest in personal assurance and experience of the certainty of salvation*. All these results were involved in the living beginning made by Luther, all are included in the principle of the Lutheran Reformation of the sixteenth century. It was, indeed, the revival of true Christianity, the revival of the experience of the certainty of the salvation

produced by the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

§ 3. *The Individual Believer's Personal Certainty respecting Objective Truth.*

Luther not only asserted the practicability of this inner conscious experience of the certainty of peace with God; but he is equally positive in maintaining the individual believer's personal certainty of objective truth. He insists upon it that the certainty of truth involves the *personal* decision of the individual; and that it is not only the individual's right and interest but his solemn duty to attain to *personal* certainty of truth. His language to every Christian is: "Thou must be as certain of the matter, that it is God's Word, as thou art certain that thou livest, nay more certain; for upon it alone thy conscience must stand. And if all men were to come, yea all the angels and all the universe were to come and decide a matter; if thou canst not apprehend the judgment for thyself, canst not decide for thyself, thou art lost. Thou must not base thy judgment upon the Pope or any other man; thou must be so skilled spiritually, that thou canst say: 'This God says; that, not; This is right; that, wrong;' else it is not possible for thee to stand. If thou rest upon the Pope and Councils, then Satan can soon make a breach and enter. What if they should be false? What if they should have erred? Then thou art at once, overthrown and lost. Therefore thou must enact the part of *one that is certain*. Thou must be able fearlessly to say: 'This is God's Word; upon this I will venture body and soul, and a hundred thousand necks.' The Romanists say: 'How can *we* know what is God's Word, and what is true or false? We must have it from the Pope and the Councils.' Very well. Let them determine and say what they will, I tell thee, thou canst not base thy conscience upon it. Thou must *decide for thyself; thy neck, thine all depends upon it*" (Vol. vi., p. 182). Thus, did Luther insist upon "the clearness of the Scriptures for the Christian man," "in all things pertaining to salvation," "in all things necessary for the Christian to know." And we are, thus, led to examine more particularly, his exposition and defence of the right of private judgment, of the sufficiency, intelligibility and efficacy of the Sacred Scriptures.

CHAPTER V.

THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT AND THE SUFFICIENCY, INTELLIGIBILITY AND EFFICACY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

In opposition to the Roman doctrine that we are dependent on oral tradition, on the interpretations of the fathers, and the decrees of Councils and Popes; that we cannot fully understand the Scriptures without such helps,—Luther maintains the intelligibility of the Sacred Volume. He maintains that “one passage of Holy Divine Scripture must be explained and interpreted by the others;” that it is self-interpreting; that *facultas se ipsam interpretandi* must be ascribed to it; and “that in all things necessary for the Christian man to know, it is found to be in itself clear and plain enough to dispel all darkness.” He would not have us receive any human apprehensions of doctrine, whether it be the so-called Apostolic Symbol, or Analogia Fidei, or Ecclesiastical Doctrine, as a standard of interpretation of the Bible; but only analogia Scripturæ Sacræ, namely, that Scripture cannot contradict Scripture; and that to the believing inquirer the Scriptures present a unity of saving truth which is the analogia fidei by which the ecclesiastical doctrine must itself be tried. He would neither say with Tertullian that obscure passages must be interpreted in accordance with the views of the “Mother Churches,” nor with Augustine that they must be explained in accordance “with the known dignity and attributes of God,” but by those doctrines of the Scriptures which are clearly and plainly elicited by the literal and historical interpretation. And though he admits, as we shall see, that discrepancies and inaccuracies in historical details are consistent with the idea of inspiration, yet, he believes the sacred writers as divinely authorized teachers to be infallible in their written as well as in their oral instructions; that, consequently, they do not contradict themselves nor one another in their doctrinal teachings; and that they teach the same system of doctrine, each as the other, and each in every part of his own writings. The certainty of this is clear so far as the central doctrine of

salvation through Christ is concerned. "This conviction and certainty will help none but him alone who has it;" but to him it is perfectly satisfactory.

The creed and traditions of the Church not being divinely inspired, he declares to be of no authoritative use in the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures. He acknowledges, as we shall see, that they may be useful human helps, but not divine, and consequently not certain guides. He held that the *facultas se ipsam interpretandi* of the Bible, makes it "clear and plain enough in all things necessary for the Christian man to know." He does not mean that there are no passages unintelligible to the common reader. The contrary he knew must necessarily be the case. When he considered the vast number of references in the Bible to the manners and customs of antiquity, to ancient geography and history, of all of which the unlearned man is ignorant, he could not have expected that he could understand every passage of Scripture. Nor does Luther mean that there are not obscurities in the references of the Sacred Scriptures that have not been removed even by the greatest attainments in learning; and which may never be removed. But he does mean that the Scriptures are "plain enough" for salvation to all—to the unlearned and to the learned. And as some of the doctrines of natural religion, doctrines derived from general revelation, and which can be apprehended as in accordance with reason, are incomprehensible to our limited capacities; he fully recognizes the fact that some of the doctrines of the special revelation contained in the Bible, transcend the finite powers of all men. But in this case all, clergy and laity, learned and unlearned, are equally dependent on God. And as the very design of special revelation is to communicate new truth, new knowledge, to reveal things before unknown, he does maintain that those doctrines, or truths, or disclosures of the divine will, upon which the salvation of the soul depends, must be proposed by the spirit of inspiration in a manner intelligible to the common capacity of man. In this he was certainly right, and has set us an example of the confidence due to the Bible. A revelation unintelligible is no revelation at all. In giving a revelation, God must have designed to instruct men; consequently the Scriptures, which are the divinely inspired record of that revelation, the divinely

appointed means for the incorruptible preservation, and the infallible communication of it to men, must be intelligible. Either, then, the Scriptures are intelligible, or they are not divine; but they are acknowledged by all Christians to be divine, they must, therefore, also be recognized as intelligible. That this is the character and design of the Bible is taught by the spirit of inspiration. "From a child," says Paul to Timothy, "thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus." And this was spoken of the Old Testament alone. How much more reason have we to believe that those who know both the Old and New Testaments, *will find in them the wisdom and power of God unto salvation*. St. John, in speaking of the New Testament alone, yea, perhaps, of his own gospel only, says: "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name."

Nor does Luther mean that this intelligibility of the Scriptures in things pertaining to salvation, should discourage theological learning or supersede exegetical researches, as Carlstadt and other fanatics conceived that it did. Intelligible to the young and the ignorant, the Bible contains, at the same time, treasures of knowledge for the mature and the learned—knowledge necessary to the growth and perfection of the individual, and to the strength and triumph of the Church. The same Spirit which reveals the truths of salvation excites also the desire "to be filled with that knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." As the divine in the Bible does not exclude the human element, so it does not exclude it from the work of appropriating its truths. As the revelation is made in oral communications and in written words, in articulate speech and intelligible language—language intelligible to its first hearers and readers, it follows that the words in this revelation must have been used according to the rules of language then prevalent, the *usus loquendi* of that day, according to the meaning or sense of the words to those to whom the language was vernacular. Otherwise the communication could not have been understood by them. It is evident, therefore, that the Bible must be explained in the same way, and interpreted by the same rules which apply to any other books written in the

same languages. This was the view of Luther and he called it the *sensum literalem*. He held however, as is clearly seen in these extracts, that as the content or doctrine of Scripture is spiritual, it can be received and apprehended only by the spiritually disposed. So in regard to the sufficiency and efficacy of the Sacred Scriptures, he clearly teaches that they were sufficient, that is, that we need no oral or uninspired written traditions as auxiliaries in the attainment of saving knowledge; and that they are efficacious, that is, that they are a wise and suitable means to accomplish the end for which they are given; and that any human addition to them is not only superfluous, but absurd and wicked. On this ground he opposes the fanatic as well as the papist. The fanatical parties of his day contended that an internal light in the soul of man—by which they did *not* however, mean the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit—must be superadded to the Scriptures in order to enable us to understand a divine revelation. Luther also acknowledged an inner revelation—an inner light without which the outer revelations cannot be understood. But this was the accompanying influence of the Holy Ghost, and he recognized this subjective revelation as only illuminating the objective. He only meant that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, because they are spiritually discerned;” in other words that the contents of the Sacred Scriptures must be attended by the superadded power of the Holy Ghost in order to make them capable of illuminating us. But he held that this immediate influence of the Spirit accompanies the gospel. Possessed of these attributes he regards the Scriptures as having both normative and judicial authority—normative authority, that is, authority to bind us to believe and do what they teach and require; judicial authority, that is, that they must be to us the final appeal in all matters of faith and practice.

The reader will be pleased with a somewhat detailed exhibition of Luther's utterances on these points:

§ 1. *The Individual must, against every other Authority, Decide for Himself According to God's Word.*

In his exposition of 2 Pet. i. 19, Luther says: “Here Peter enters fully into the matter, and speaks to this effect: ‘Every thing is to be done in my preaching to the effect that your heart

can stand upon it, and not permit itself to be torn away from it ; so that both you and I *may be sure that we have God's Word*. For it is a serious thing to deal with the gospel, so that we may apprehend it and preserve it pure and unadulterated without addition or false doctrine.' Hence Peter proceeds to write against human doctrine. Why does he say we have a more sure word of prophecy? Answer: I hold, indeed, that we shall never in the future have such prophets as the Jews had in the Old Testament. But a prophet is, indeed, in the strict sense, one who preaches Christ. Therefore, though the prophets in the Old Testament prophesied of future things, yet in the strict sense they came, and were sent of God to proclaim CHRIST. Those, therefore, who believe in Christ are all prophets ; for they have the principal things which the prophets had, though they do not all have the gift of prophecy. For we are through faith the brethren, kings and priests of Christ, and, therefore, *all are prophets* through Christ. For we can all say what belongs to salvation, and God's honor and glory, the Christian life ; and in addition to this, we can speak of future things as much as is *necessary to know* ; such as that the day of judgment will come, that we will rise from the dead. For this purpose we *understand the whole of Scripture*. Of this Paul speaks (1 Cor. xiv. 31), when he says: '*Ye may all prophesy one by one.*'"

"Thus then Peter says, ye have such a prophetic Word that is sure *in itself* ; see to it that it be sure *to you*. Whereunto ye do well to take heed. As if he would say, it is necessary that ye cling fast to it ; for in dealing with the gospel your case is like that of a man who is *captive* in a house *at midnight in pitch darkness* ; in whose case it would be necessary to *strike a light*, until the day should dawn that he might see. So also the gospel is, in the strict sense, *in the midst of night and darkness*. For all the reason of men is pure error and blindness ; and the world is none other than a kingdom of darkness. In this night God has struck a light, namely, the gospel, by which we can see and walk as long as we are on earth, until the morning dawn and the day break forth. Therefore this text is *strong against human doctrine*. For if the Word of God is thus a light in a dark place, it follows that *all others must be darkness*. For if there were any other light than the Word how could Peter

say: Knowing, first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

“Here Peter attacks the false teachers. ‘Ye know,’ says he, ‘that ye have the Word of God; plant yourselves firmly upon it; and permit not yourselves to be led astray by other and false teachers, though they profess that they have also the Holy Spirit. For this ye shall know, in the first place, that no prophecy is of *private interpretation*. Be guided by this, and do not think that *you can interpret the Scriptures by your own reason and skill*.’

“With this he overthrows and overwhelms all the interpretations of Scripture by the fathers, and forbids that we should build upon such interpretation. If it be Jerome or Augustine, or any other of the fathers who has *himself* interpreted, we do not want him. Peter has commanded: Thou shalt not *thyself* interpret; the Holy Ghost *himself* shall interpret, or it shall *remain uninterpreted*. If now one of the fathers can show that he has his interpretation out of the Scripture which has here certified that it shall be interpreted in that way, it is right; if not, we will not believe him.

“Here Peter attacks the grandest and the best teachers. Therefore we are to be sure, that no man is to be believed, though he present us the Scriptures, if he *himself* construes and interprets them.....Now follows a faithful exhortation, which Christ, Paul and all Apostles have given also, that we *must take care* and guard against *false preachers*. This, especially, it is necessary for us to apprehend, that we are not to permit ourselves to be *deprived of the right and power—which all Christians have—to judge and decide concerning all doctrines*; and not let it come to this, that we are, first, to wait until Councils have decided what we are to believe, and then follow the same. This we will now see in the second chapter: ‘But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily bring in damnable heresies,’ etc. This is what Peter wishes to say: ‘All prophecy is to proceed from the Holy Spirit, as it has been from the beginning of the world, that nothing shall be preached but God’s Word. Yet it has always happened that alongside of the true prophets

and God's Word, there were false teachers; and it always will be so.....Therefore, we are inexcusable, if we believe erroneously, and follow false teachers. It will not help us that we were ignorant of it; for we were forewarned. For this God has commanded us *that each one of us shall judge what this or that one preaches, and give himself account of it.* If we do not, we are lost. Therefore, the *salvation of each one depends upon his capability of knowing what is God's Word, and what are false doctrines."*

"Therefore, Councils here or Councils there, if they are human doctrines they must pass for nothing more. I believe Christ, yea Paul, His Apostle, more than all Councils, should they be as numerous as the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven. Paul would have all accursed if they did not preach God's Word." "Do you know that it is God's counsel, that God's Word is to be given to the people to hear; that we must not attempt by any other means to convert any person from a bad to a good life? *This Word, not the word of man, must do it.* What necessity would there be of God's Word, if human doctrine could help? And what kind of a God would He be, if *His word were not sufficient, if it needed additions from men?"* "But the Word of God is so sensitive that it will not bear any addition. *It will be alone or not at all"* (Vol. xviii., p. 695).

We should prefer the fountain to the stream. "St. Bernhard says: 'I would rather drink from the fountain than from the stream. For even as all men do easily forget the stream if they may drink from the fountain, though the stream may be useful in leading them to the fountain; so must the Scriptures remain master and judge; for if we follow the streams too much, they will lead us too far from the fountain.'"

We must not wait for the decisions of others. "In the meantime while we are culling from the fathers and the Councils; they, what suits them; and we, what is agreeable to us; and cannot agree because the fathers are not agreed among themselves, and the Councils as little with one another;—beloved, who shall preach to those poor souls, in the meantime, who know nothing of such culling and disputing? Is this feeding the sheep of Christ? when we ourselves do not know whether it is grass or poison, hay or dung? Alas, the Church of Christ would be unattended in such a case! No! we must proceed

otherwise than we pretend, or there must have been no Church since the days of the Apostles. But this is not possible; it is established: '*I believe in the Holy Christian Church;*' and '*I am with you even unto the end of the world.*' These words must not fail. That man must be called *ego veritas*, and in comparison with him the fathers and Councils must be called *homo mendax*, should there be any conflict in their words" (Leipzig Ed. Vol. xxi. p., 257). "Blessed God! if the Christian faith were suspended upon men and grounded upon the word of men, what need would there be of the Sacred Scriptures, or for what purpose has God given them? So let us put them under the bench, and put in their stead the Councils and Fathers. Or, *if the fathers were not men, how would we men be saved? If they were men, then they must occasionally have thought and spoken and acted as we think and act. And, consequently, must, like as we do, say the blessed prayer: 'Forgive us our sins,' etc., especially since they have no such promise of the Holy Ghost as the Apostles had, but must be the disciples of the Apostles. If the Holy Ghost had been so foolish as to have supposed or trusted that the Councils and fathers would have done all well, and would not have failed; would there have been any necessity for Him (1 Cor. iii. 10) to warn the church against them; to tell us to prove all things; and to take heed how they build thereon, hay, wood, stubble, etc? By this he does—not secretly and timidly, but openly and powerfully—prophesy that there would be in the Church, wood, hay, and straw-builders, that is, teachers, who yet would remain upon the foundation, and whose works would be burned, and who would suffer loss and yet themselves be saved. This could not be spoken of heretics, for they lay another foundation"*

(Leip. Ed., Vol. xxi., p. 257).

§ 2. *The Attainment of this certainty through the Scriptures, is practicable for every Christian man; that is, the Scriptures are sufficient.*

"We must, then, according to the judgment of Paul, *be able to distinguish between gold and wood, silver and hay, precious stones and stubble.....* There are also no Councils or fathers, *in whom we could find or learn the whole Christian doctrine.....* Put the whole of them together, fathers and Councils, and you cannot cull from them the whole doctrine of the Christian faith.

And if the *Sacred Scriptures had not preserved the truth, it would not have continued long*, for aught that Councils and fathers could do. And, in truth, whence have the fathers and Councils whatever of truth they do teach and discuss? Do you think that they first discovered it in their time, or that the Holy Ghost ever inspired them with new truth? *By what means then was the Church preserved before the Councils and the fathers? Or were there no Christians before the Councils and fathers arose?*" (p. 259). "If now I have not the Council or do not understand it aright, *I have that Scripture and understand it aright according to which the Council is bound also to act, and which is more certain to me than all Councils.....*We must then have something more, and something *more certain, and that is the Holy Scripture*" (p. 285). "We have four principal Councils, and the reasons why they were held. The first, at Nice, vindicated the divinity of Christ against Arius. The second, at Constantinople, vindicated the divinity of the Holy Ghost against Macedonius. The third, at Ephesus, vindicated the one person of Christ against Nestorius. The fourth, at Chalcedon, vindicated the two natures in Christ against Eutychus. But they by this established no new article of faith. For these four articles are much more richly and powerfully exhibited in St. John's gospel, if even the other evangelists and St. Paul and St. Peter had written nothing concerning them, who yet, together with all the prophets, all powerfully teach and testify the same things" (p. 286). "How could I arrive at the conclusion that I must receive the expression of St. Augustine as an article of faith, when he himself does not wish to have his expressions held as articles of faith, and also will not endure the expressions of his predecessors as articles of faith?" (p. 292).

"In the second place, there is an outward judgment with which we are not only certain for ourselves, but can also make others certain, and, for the salvation of others, try the spirits and doctrines. This judgment belongs, properly, to the ministerial office and to teachers, and we use this judgment when we instruct and strengthen the weak and stop the mouths of the gainsayers. We say, therefore, that the *Scriptures are to be the judge to try all spirits in the Church*. For this all Christians must know, and above all things hold as certain, that the *Holy Scriptures are a spiritual light much clearer*

than the sun, especially in all things necessary for a Christian to know, and which are conducive to salvation.....It is necessary in all governments, even in the world, that all matters and errors must be determined by law. But how could they be decided if the law were uncertain? For if the law were uncertain and obscure, we could not only decide nothing, but could hardly be certain what was honorable or dishonorable conduct in life. Hence the law, which is the rule and criterion of all things, must be in the highest degree certain; but if God has given this certainty in worldly things, must He not have given His Christians a criterion, and much more certain lights, and clearer laws and doctrines, by which they may know what is Christian righteousness and piety, or not?" (2 Pet. i. 19; p. 38). "I, therefore, have often said, and say it yet, that in Christendom nothing should be preached *but the bare Word of God*. To this agrees the gospel in that it does not find the Lord among acquaintances and friends. Therefore we must not say: We are to believe what the Councils have determined, or what Jerome, Augustine and other holy fathers have written. But we must point to a place where Christ is to be found, and to none other than that which He has Himself indicated, when He says, He must be in that which is His Father's, that is, *no man can find Him anywhere except in God's Word*. Therefore we must receive that which the holy fathers teach, in such a way, *as with the conscience to trust upon and seek comfort only in the Scripture*. And if they say to you, why must we not believe the holy fathers? you must answer: Christ is not to be found among acquaintances and friends" (Vol. xiii., p. 325). "This is the consolation which we have from the gospel, that *we know that there is no other consolation to be found except in the Scriptures and Word of God*. Therefore did God have it written, Paul says (Rom. xv. 4), namely, that it was written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (p. 326).

"In this text there are two parts which are easily to be observed: *freedom to believe and authority to judge*. You know that the soul-murderers of this day tell us that what Councils and the high doctors have decided and determined, that we must receive without judging whether it be right or wrong. With this they are so secure, that they now decide, as we plainly

see, that we must receive what they say on pain of excommunication. Here you must take a spear and pierce this shield; yea, their conclusion must be to you as a spider's web; and you are to take the spear of which they had deprived us, and turn the point upon them. For note this well, that *it is the sheep that are to judge what is proposed to them*, and that we are to say: We have Christ for our Lord, and His Word, in spite of all devils and men. With this we would comprehend and judge whether the Pope, bishops and their associates do right or not. For He says here, *The sheep hear and know what is the true voice, or not.* So let us proceed. If they have determined anything, we will *see whether it is right, and do according to that judgment which is allowed to every man for himself, and which is not of human, but of divine authority.* For this also the *natural sheep do; they flee from a stranger, and obey the voice of their shepherd.* Thus does the gospel upturn all Councils and all papistical law; so that we are to receive nothing without judging, and have authority also to judge, and that this judgment must stand.....The other part is that *we must force no man to faith*, for the sheep follow Him whom they know, and flee from strangers. Now Christ desires that we should force no man, but let him follow from a willing mind, heart and desire, *not from fear, shame or punishment.* We are to let the Word go out and accomplish all this. If then their hearts are caught, they will come of themselves. *Faith does not come from the heart, unless it has the Word of God.* Wherefore observe that we must let the *pure Word of God alone* operate, and then let those who have received it, follow freely" (p. 732).

§ 3. *This Personal Certainty and Decision of the Individual according to the Scriptures, is indispensable to the Purity of the Church.*

"This I have said against those strenuous interpreters of Scripture, who, whenever an interpretation is discovered different from those thus far in use, immediately call it a slandering of the Church. *We praise her industry, indeed, but we also believe that we are called to cultivate a part of the field of the Lord, and that we are not here only to eat of its fruits*, as it is written (Lev. 21. 10). *When the new cometh, the old is put aside.* Those who have gone before us, *did not accomplish everything.* There

is also a part left for us to do. If it were not so, we could say: If it is enough that they have taught, wherefore is it not also enough that they have led a good life? If one kind of words is sufficient why is not one kind of works? According to this idea, we must satisfy ourselves, as with their words, so with their works, and no man would be permitted to teach or do otherwise than St. Jerome, etc., taught and did" (Vol. v., p. 116).

"Would to God that mine and the interpretations of all teachers were destroyed, and that each Christian himself would take the naked Scriptures and the bare Word of God before him. Thou seest, indeed, out of this my talk, how infinitely unlike God's words are to all words of men! How impossible it is for any man sufficiently to grasp a single word of God and expound it with all his words! It is an endless Word, and is to be apprehended and contemplated with a quiet and contemplative spirit. Whoever could come to it without glossing, to him neither mine nor all men's glossing would be necessary; nay, it would be a hindrance. Therefore, enter, beloved Christians, and let mine and the commentaries of all teachers be to us a scaffolding to the true building, that we may apprehend and taste the naked, bare Word of God, and remain there, for there alone God dwelleth in Zion" (Vol. xxii., Appendix, p. 80).

Melanchthon says of Luther: "It is proper to observe of Luther, that *afterwards as well as at the beginning*, he did not act from pride or self-confidence, but remained in his office, and that he used *no other authority than that of doctrine and preaching*.He gives the reader instruction in the art and peculiarity of languages, in order that *all pious hearts might draw the true testimony and ground of their doctrine from the fountain itself*. For Luther desired not that his writings should delay and hinder people, but *should bring them to the fountain itself*. He desired that we should hear the *Word itself, and that through the same true faith and worship might be kindled in many people*; so that God might be rightly praised and honored, and that there might be many children and heirs of eternal life" (Vol. xxi., p. 731-4).

I know the reader will be gratified by my adding still other extracts from Luther on this important subject:

"St. Augustine declares that in his day already, the Church was so laden with the determinations of bishops that the old

burdens of the Jews were easier to be borne; and he says in the introduction to his work *Librorum Trinitate*, ‘Beloved, do *not follow my writing like the Holy Scriptures*, but what thou findest in the Holy Scriptures, that thou didst not believe before, that believe without a doubt; but, in my writing, thou *shalt regard nothing as certain that was before uncertain*, unless it is proved by me that it is certain. As I read other books, so I would have mine read.’ To St. Jerome, who was very angry because Augustine had criticized a passage in his commentary on Galatians, he says: ‘I do not suppose, dear brother, that you would have your books held as those of the Apostles and prophets!’ If any man had just cause to write to me and beg of me, that I should not regard my books equal to those of the Apostles and prophets, I would die of shame. But this is what we are now at, to wit, that Augustine *had well observed that the fathers are also occasionally men, and have not conquered the seventh chapter of Romans; and therefore he will neither trust his ancestors—the very learned fathers—nor even himself, but will have the Scriptures only as master and judge*. In like manner as St. Bernard, he *would rather drink from the fountain than from the rivulet*. This he could not have said, if he had regarded the books of the fathers as he did the Holy Scripture. And if he had *found no defect in them, he would have said, it is just the same whether I drink from the Scriptures or the fathers*. But this he does not, but, *on the other hand, lets the streamlets flow, and drinks from the fountain.....*What shall we do then? Shall we turn the Church back to the doctrine of the fathers and Councils? Then St. Augustine stands in our way, and will have us trust neither fathers, bishops, nor Councils, however holy and learned they may be, nor will he have even himself relied upon, but points us to the Scriptures, with the idea that when we are not so directed, all is uncertain, lost and vain” (Leip., Vol. xxi., p. 206).

“God has so ordered it, in order that the Church should not be overloaded with too many books. For this reason I am an enemy of my own books, and *often wish that they may perish; because I am concerned lest they should attract the reader, hinder and keep him from reading the Scripture himself*, which alone is the fountain and source of all wisdom. And I am often terrified by the example of former centuries under the papacy. For after they fell upon other books and commentaries, they not

only lost much time, but much light. Therefore, there must be a limit to books, among which we *are to read and praise only those which lead to the study of the Scriptures*, and we are not to receive, in the fathers themselves, what does not agree with the Holy Scriptures. For this alone must remain the judge and mistress of all books" (Vol. ii., 234). "But mark here what kind of a book, an Apostle here presents to Christians to study and read, namely, the Holy Scriptures alone, and says that our doctrine is found in it. If then our doctrine is *found in the Scripture, we are certainly not to seek it anywhere else*; all Christians should daily use this book.....Now let us return to Paul, who tells us here what we shall read, and where we are to find our doctrine. If any other book was to be read, he would have pointed it out. And further he shows, in addition, what fruits such reading produces, *and says, through patience and comfort of the Scripture we might have hope*. Here let all doctrines present themselves, bring forward all books, and see whether they *are able to comfort the soul even in the least temptation. It is not possible to comfort the soul, unless it have God's Word. But where is God's Word in any books, except the Bible?* Why then do we read other books and let this lie? Other books may torment and kill us, but comfort no book can give, but the Holy Scripture. *This title, which Paul gives it, it alone has, that it is a Book of Consolation*" (Vol. xiii., p. 35). "Therefore, we must again bring forth our book or Bible which has endured for fifteen hundred years, since the conception and birth of Christ, and will remain to the last day, although it be attacked by heretics and the devil in our hearts, who knows the art so well, that when he comes to measure and work with men, there is no article so small that he cannot hurl his darts at it. Therefore this article must ever remain in conflict as heretofore, and yet gain the victory with the faithful, against the wisdom of the world and the devil. Therefore we will stick to the *Word and faith* against all such temptations and cavils" (Vol. xxii., p. 128)." Therefore God has so ordered things that this article is preserved and established by His Word alone.....Inasmuch as the *human heart can trust and build upon nothing but God, and the Scripture condemns all confidence in men, and testifies that they err and fail*. For all men, says the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm, are liars" (p. 127). "Behold, this is *the art which we*

are to learn here and not in the schools; not of men, but from above, through the Holy Spirit, who is, in this matter, the only teacher and doctor. And if any would oppose, we are not to dispute much, nor ourselves try to judge, but only point hither and say: Here we have a little book which is called the Credo, in which this article is found, that is, the Bible, which has so long existed and still remains; by that I will hold; upon this I am baptized; upon this I will live and die—further, I will not permit myself to be instructed” (Vol. xxii., p. 127).

§ 4. *The Sacred Scriptures are so much more Certain and Clear than any other Writings or Teachings, that the Christian Man must go immediately to them for Light in Things pertaining to Salvation, and must make them his only Rule of Faith and Practice.*

As the spirit and utterances of Luther on this important subject are the first, and incomparably the best, we can not refrain from quoting his language. “They say I originate new things, and that it is not to be supposed that others have so long erred. This the old prophets had to hear. If length of time were a sufficient justification, the Jews would have had the very best cause against Christ, whose doctrine was different from what they had heard for a thousand years. The heathen would also have properly rejected the apostles, for their ancestors had believed very differently for more than three thousand years. There have been murderers, adulterers and thieves from the beginning of the world, and will be unto the end—must these crimes be right therefore? I do not preach new things. I say that *all Christian things have been lost by those who should have preserved them, namely, the bishops and the learned.* At the same time there is no doubt in my mind that *the truth has hitherto been preserved in some hearts, even if they should have been only children in their cradles. There remained also the spiritual understanding of the law in the Old Testament with some of the lowly, but it was lost by the high priests and the learned who should have preserved it.* Thus also Jeremiah iv. 5 says, that he found less understanding and right among the rulers than among the laity and the common people. Thus it is now that *poor peasants and children better understand Christ than popes, bishops and doctors; and everything is reversed.* But if they will not otherwise, then

let them regard me a heathen. What would they answer, or how would they do, if the Turk were to inquire for the ground of our faith, who does not care how many, or how long, or how great people believed so and so? We would certainly have to be silent, and point him to the Sacred Scriptures for the ground of our faith. It certainly would be shameful and ridiculous if we should say to him, See here: so many priests, bishops, kings, princes, countries and people, have held so and so. Thus men act toward me now. Let us see how stands or lies our ground and our best provision. Let us look at it once, if for no other reason, for the sake of personal strength and edification. Shall we have such a great foundation and not know it, and hide it from every one, when Christ wished to make it open and common to every one, as he says in Matt. v. 15, 16? Did Christ (Luke xxiv. 39) let His hands, and feet, and side, be touched in order that His disciples might be certain? Shall not we, then, touch and prove the Scripture, which is Christ's spiritual body, to see whether it is that in which we believe or not? *For all other writings are dangerous; might, perhaps, be lying spirits which have not flesh and blood like Christ.*"

"With this I will also have answered those who accuse me of rejecting all the holy teachers of the Church. I do not reject them, but as every man well knows that they *have sometimes erred as men*, I will not believe them further than they give me evidence of their views from the Scripture, which has never yet erred; and this, Paul commands me to do (1 Thess. v. 21): *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.* To the same effect writes St. Augustine to St. Jerome: 'I have learned to give only to the books that are called the Holy Scripture this honor, that I firmly believe that none of the writers of them has ever erred; but all others I read in this way, that I do not regard as true what they say, unless they prove it from the Holy Scripture or clear reason.'

"The Holy Scriptures must, indeed, be *clearer and more certain than any other writings*, inasmuch as all teachers substantiate their doctrines by them, as by the clearer and more durable Scripture, and will have their writings confirmed and grounded in them. No man expects to prove a dark discourse by one that is darker still. We are *driven by necessity, therefore, to carry the writings of every teacher to the Bible and thence to bring judgment*

and decision in regard to it; for it alone is the true master over all doctrines and writings on earth. If this may not be, of what use is the Scripture? let us reject it, and content ourselves with human books and teachers.” (Vol. xvii., p. 340.)

“We have a right to resist the power of Councils, to reject their acts, to judge their laws, and freely to confess what we think right, whether it be condemned or confirmed by whatever Council it may be. This article the Papists malignantly interpreted, as if I would teach that every one may willfully, and without reason, resist the Councils, which never came into my head or my pen. But I have said that when they *teach anything in the council contrary to the Scripture, we should believe the Scripture more than the Council.* The Scriptures are our right and defiance, *with which we may resist an angel,* as Paul (Gal. i. 8) commands; *much more, Pope and Council.”* (Vol. xvii., p. 36.)

“Unless I should be convinced by testimony of the Holy Scripture, or by open, plain and clear grounds and reasons (for I do not believe either the Pope or the Councils alone, as it is perfectly clear that they have often erred and contradicted each other); and unless I *shall be convinced by the passages which I have adduced, and my conscience be bound in the Word of God, I will recall nothing; because it is neither safe nor advisable to do anything against conscience.....God's Word is so clear that I can yield nothing, unless I am better instructed and enlightened through the same; for St. Paul declares (1 Thess. v. 21), We shall prove all things, and hold fast that which is good; and (Gal. i. 8, 9), though an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you, let him be accursed.”* (Vol. xvii., p. 580.)

“From this it follows that we must believe no teachers, but must see *whether they clearly follow the Scriptures in order that nothing besides the bare Word of God may rule within every man. This St. Paul teaches when he says: Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* He does not say that we should hold the doctrine of every man, but that we should examine all, and hold fast the good.....But if we are to prove as Paul here says, what *touchstone shall we adopt, for this purpose, other than the Scripture? It must be clearer and more certain than the doctrine of the fathers, or how could we otherwise prove and determine by it what is right or wrong?.....Such jugglery was never heard among the fathers.* It is a new discovery of the Pope and his

sects of the high schools, that we *must not receive the Scriptures naked, but according to the interpretation of the fathers*, in order that we may escape the sword.....Aristotle has written, and nature has taught the peasant without Aristotle, *that we cannot make clear a dark and uncertain thing by that which is dark and uncertain; much less light, by darkness; but the dark and uncertain, by light and certainty*. As, then, all the fathers prove their works by the Scriptures, it is not to be believed that they were so stupid and foolish, that they regarded the Scripture, by which they expounded and made clear their doctrines, as a dark fog; but that they regarded the Scripture as the principal light, and of all others, the *clearest and most certain*, to which they appealed; and upon which they relied, as upon that *most open and clear doctrine, which was to judge and prove all other doctrines*. Thus also St. Augustine declares that he would believe no teacher, however learned he might be, unless he proved his doctrine by the Scripture or clear reason. But from this we learn, how we are to read the fathers; that we shall not regard what they say, but *whether they have clear Scripture or reason.....In truth there is enough written in the Scriptures to make more commands and laws unnecessary. Indeed, there is no longer any power on earth authorized to make Christian laws, as I have often showed*" (Vol. xvii., p. 28).

The following, taken from Melancthon's reply to the French Sorbonne, translated by Luther into German, breathes the same spirit (Vol. xvii., p. 673):

"If then there are no articles of faith except those contained in the Holy Scriptures, why should it be regarded unchristian to reject the authority of the holy fathers and Councils, provided we do not reject the Scriptures? Luther does not reject the Scriptures, as you yourselves acknowledge; why, therefore, is he denounced as unchristian? He rejects, you say, the interpretation of the Scriptures which has thus far been accepted by the high schools, the Councils, and the fathers. So I see clearly that this is the main point. Permit me here then, Magistri Nostri, to ask *whether the Scriptures were not given in such a way, that their meaning could be ascertained without the interpretation of the fathers, the Councils, the universities?* Or is it not so? If you *deny* that the meaning of the Scriptures is *clear, independently of glosses*, then I do not see why the Sacred Scriptures

were given ; inasmuch as the Holy Spirit did not desire to make certain, what He wished to have understood by us. But then why do the Apostles urge us to *teach the Scriptures with all diligence, if their meaning is uncertain?* And what will you say to this, that the fathers would not have themselves believed except in so far as their doctrine was established by the Scriptures? Also what do you say to this, that the old Councils have determined nothing without the Scriptures? And this is also the *mark by which we detect the difference between the true and false Councils, that the true are consonant with clear Scripture, but the false are in disagreement with it.* Therefore you must admit that the *meaning of the Scriptures is so certain and clear that it explains itself, wherever there was before a dark place, in those things which the Holy Ghost would have to be known and believed.* Now, without doubt, He desired that the law should be known, as He commanded it to be written upon the door-posts and upon the hems of the garments. So also He *desired the gospel to be understood, that is, the manner in which we are justified through Christ.* For if the Word of God is to be a rock, to which the soul is to betake itself, how must we regard it, if it *be uncertain, what the meaning of God's Spirit is?* If then the meaning of the Scriptures is *certain, it is to be preferred* not only to the universities or fathers, but also to the Councils, if they would hold otherwise, as the Apostle says (Gal. i. 9): 'Though an angel from heaven teach any other gospel, let him be accursed.' Therefore, Luther has a right to oppose the certain meaning of the Scriptures to the Councils, fathers and universities."

We have, thus, the principle of the Reformation, involving saving faith and saving truth ; faith produced by the Holy Spirit through the gospel—faith in which is personal certainty both of salvation and of the truth of the Scriptures. This leads to the question of the relation of saving faith to the Sacred Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice.

CHAPTER VI

THE INSEPARABLE UNION OF THE TWO PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION, OR RATHER THE UNITY OF THE TWO ASPECTS OF THE ONE GREAT PRINCIPLE IN THE PRODUCTION OF ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.

In what way do the Sacred Scriptures become the sufficient and only infallible rule of faith and practice? How are they related to the experience of justification by faith in Christ—to the feeling of the certainty of salvation? That we must have some rule, some criterion of true faith, is felt by all who sincerely seek to be assured of their salvation. Before the Reformation the following views were entertained. We will compare these with those of the Reformation.

§ 1. *Pre-Reformation Theories.*

1. The theory of the Roman Catholic Church is, that the authority of the Church, in its visible and hierarchical form, alone decides what is the true rule of faith, and what is the true interpretation of that rule. The idea is that God, once for all, by the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, bestowed upon the Church all saving truth and constituted her the faithful conservator and the infallible interpreter of saving truth, made her the judge of the inspiration and apostolic character of all writings, the sole determiner of the canon of the Sacred Scriptures, and the authoritative expounder of all revealed truth.

2. From this extreme of the hierarchical party the heretical mystics revolted to the opposite, and taught, that we are immediately in communion with God—in communion with Him antecedently *to* and independently *of* all means of grace and of all objective authority. This could, at last, result only in that rationalism which makes the human mind itself—the moral consciousness of man—the source of saving truth.

3. Against both these parties the Biblicists of the Middle Ages—such as the Waldenses and Wickliffites—held forth the Sacred Scriptures as the only rule or standard by which the

faith of the individual and of the Church must be guided and tested.

§ 2. *The Theory of the Reformation.*

The Reformation agreed, in regard to the authority of the Bible, with the views of the last against the two former parties. We have seen, in the quotations already made, how decidedly Luther rejected the Roman theory. He is equally explicit in his opposition to the mystical ideas as they manifested themselves in the fanatical parties of his day. Thus in commenting upon John xiv. 25-28 (Vol., x., p. 88), he turns it first against the Romanists and then against the fanatics. "Also he shall teach you again to remember what I have said unto you; that it is My Word and doctrine; with this he shall remain and of this remind you, that you may *understand and judge* that it is My Word, and even that which I have said unto you; and exhibit and make clearer the same from day to day, that ye may *better and better know Me, and how through Me ye are rescued from sin and death.*"

"This I say in answer to the papists who come with this passage and boast the glorious name of the Christian Church; that the Holy Ghost teaches her, and that, therefore, we must keep what she says; for this is true and right. But here the question arises who the Church is or is not? And in determining this question, 'ye must judge,' says Christ, 'whether My Word is there. For the *Holy Ghost shall come in My name and teach what I have said. If it be anything different from this, or not agreeable to this Word, it is not the Christian Church?*' For how could the Church come to that, that she could alter or reverse her Lord's Word. Were she the right Church she would say, 'I cling to the Word of my beloved Lord, Christ, and there will I remain. According to this will I judge, and not hold with those who would do otherwise,' as she has done in former times when she condemned all heresy and false doctrine, indeed, but not out of her own head—as do the Pope and his faction—but according to the Scriptures and Christ's Word, and deciding thus: 'This, says my Christ, this the Holy Ghost has taught me; therefore, Arius and others who teach the contrary are heretical and false teachers.'

"This is determining in the right way, as the Christian Church

should determine; and this we should keep and obey. But what is different, such as garments, diet, and other outward show, that is not determined in this way. For it is not Christ's Word, but from the Pope's own opinion. There, they order what they will, but the Church has nothing to do with it. For what God's Word teaches, and *what the Christian Church determines, that belongs not to this life but to the life to come*; and, for this reason, it *must proceed not from our head, but from above, from Christ, and according to His commandment.*

“But if now we have preserved this text against the papal faction, there come afterwards, on the other side, other spirits, and say *they are they who have the Spirit, and know of nothing else to boast than only the Spirit, the pure Spirit, and also make a very great show, and have grand words with it, as now the Anabaptists and their like, and in former times, the Montanists and many others. And this alone is the controversy with all factions, that they claim to have the Holy Spirit, and are therefore, to be believed in.* And we must ever be in conflict with the devil and such spirits. But if we take a right view of this passage and the like of it, we can very well judge, and reject everything that is contrary to it. For let them bring what they will, I know well what my Lord, Christ says, and what I am to believe. If one come, therefore, and *present anything to me as taught or revealed by the Holy Spirit, I keep to the Word and hold this doctrine up to it, as to the true touchstone.* If now I see that it *agrees with that which Christ says, I receive it as right and good.* But if it be a departure from it, or would produce something different from it, then I say: *Thou art not the Holy Ghost, but the detestable devil. For the true Spirit comes in no other name than in the name of Christ, and teaches nothing other than what the Lord Christ has said.* Thus we can protect and guard ourselves against all error and false spiritualism, if we will only remain with this, and retain this passage truly and purely, and *know that the Holy Ghost does not bring human nonsense or trifles, but great and earnest matters—CHRIST and His gifts.* And we can boldly rely upon it, and conclude that we who have Christ are holy before God, and have the Holy Ghost with us, over against all other and self-chosen holiness.”

But to the view of the mere Biblicists, the principle of the Reformation added *personal, conscious assurance of salvation*, the

gospel—the glad tidings of salvation—as the power of God unto salvation, saving faith, the witness of the Spirit. The mere Biblicists, before the Reformation, *did not clearly apprehend justification by faith in Christ alone, and consequently did not connect this special inner conscious assurance in personal experience of the power of the Word as distinct from the formal Scriptures, with the objective certainty of the Sacred Scriptures.* While they clung to the letter of the Scriptures and made it the rule of faith, they overlooked the power of the saving content of the Sacred Scriptures to produce faith, the suitableness of the plan of salvation to the spiritual nature and wants of man, the self-authenticating power of the truths of redemption to the inquiring soul. They did not apprehend the distinction between the *saving truth* contained in the Sacred Scriptures as *a means of grace*, and the Scriptures in their *formal* character as the rule of faith, the standard of divine truth; thus making them *a mere outward law*. There was on this point, notwithstanding their antagonism in other respects, a great similarity between the method of the Romanists, which made the Church, and that of the Biblicists, which made the Scriptures, merely in their *formal* character, the only rule of faith, or rather the object of faith as well as its rule. By separating the letter from the spirit—and forgetting that though “the Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation,” they are only able to do this “through faith in Jesus Christ”—the Biblicists give only a *purely objective law* in the Sacred Scriptures; just as the Romanists do in the Church.

We have seen how much Luther insisted on *personal assurance, inner and conscious experience of certainty*; the witness of the Holy Spirit to our spirit of the power of Christ to save, and of our adoption into the family of God; on the actual experience of a filial spirit, of the spirit of adoption; on the inner realization of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and actual rejoicing in hope of His glory. It was the conception and experience anew of the Christian revelation as the perfect revelation of God, and of the union and communion between Divinity and humanity. Against the Roman view this *shuts out all mediation of the Church in the matter of the certainty of truth*, of Christian saving truth. While the revelation was not yet complete, as in the Old Testament Dispensation, there was a necessity of such mediations—of a succession of priests and

prophets. But when in the fullness of time the perfect revelation was made by the incarnation of the Son of God, this necessity ceased. All mediations are now concentrated in the person of the Saviour, whether it be of truth or of holiness, of knowledge or of sanctification. With the manifestation of Christ is *inseparably connected the gift of the Holy Ghost*; and as Christ is the Saviour of the individual—as salvation is a personal matter—the Holy Spirit is given to *all who hear the gospel of this salvation*, and are sincerely seeking an interest in its provisions.

The several lines of prophecy in the Old Testament run together into a centre, in which there is the human manifestation of the Son of God, and the appearance of the Son of man. This centre is the incarnation of Jesus Christ, in whom “dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” as well as all the fullness of humanity. In the language of Irenæus: “Christ is the recapitulation of humanity.” As long as this person had not yet come, as long as this perfect revelation had not yet been made, these mediations went on; but when He came, they ceased. Men now come immediately to God in Christ, and the Sacred Scriptures which record this perfect *revelation—by divine power—interpret themselves. This shows the error of the Romanists’ theory.* And the fact that in this sacred history, this historical revelation, we have the *only perfect revelation of God, shows also the defect of the mystical idea of immediate communion without the means of divine revelation, of an inner light independent of the gospel.* The Scriptures contain the word which is the means of grace, of communion for sinful men, and they are the only security of our connection with the Saviour. And it *shows the defect of the Biblicists’ view, in overlooking the fact that this revelation must be conceived of and believed in, as the power of God unto salvation—that the gift of Christ is inseparable from the gift of the Holy Ghost to the individual believer, and that consequently the Sacred Scriptures are means for producing faith as well as, rule of faith.*

Only in the light of the principle of the Reformation, therefore, in its aspect of justification by faith in Christ alone, *could the relation of the Scriptures and faith, and the way in which they became the only rule of faith, be clearly apprehended.* Luther, at the Reformation, *connected the mystic’s doctrine of the necessity of inner experience, with that of the authority of the outer word.* In

the union of faith and the word, of the two great principles involved in this subject of the certainty of salvation, of the material principle and the formal principle; the one the fact of justification by faith alone, the other that of the Sacred Scriptures being the only rule of this faith,—*is the characteristic of the Reformation. In other words, the great Reformers received the one great principle with its two aspects, the material and the formal. These two aspects are not to be separated in our apprehension of the ground of the certainty of salvation.* Luther recognized the truth that the Scriptures, by their saving contents, are the means of grace, as well as they are, in their form, the rule of faith; that by their contents, namely saving truth, the proclamation of the divinely revealed method of salvation, they do—whatever may be the form or the way in which these contents come to us—produce, under the ever-accompanying influence of the Holy Spirit, *saving faith in the subject who is sincerely seeking salvation; and that then this faith thus produced, recognizes the Scriptures as containing the truth and as being the only infallible source of the truth by which it was produced, and freely accepts them as the guide and rule of its being.* Luther says, “To this effect we have a certain prophecy of the Lord: ‘For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.’ From this,” he adds, “it is certain that it is impossible *that there should not be Christians where the gospel is.*” The truth which is in the Bible, is the power of God, and it finds a lodgment in the heart of the believer; so that faith and the Sacred Scriptures have a close connection. We should, therefore, keep the material and the formal principles of the Reformation together in the groundwork of our theology. In deep states of piety this is really, perhaps—whatever may be the appearances to the contrary—always done either consciously or unconsciously. Science, however, even Christian science, in other conditions of experience, or in the absence of experience—is apt to forget this inseparable connection. Let us then, for a while, fix our attention upon it.

§ 3. *This Unity is found in the Adaptedness of the Gospel to the Capacity and Wants of Man.*

The principle of the Reformation is, that the content of the Scriptures, namely, saving truth, is self-evidencing, authenticates itself to the sincere soul; and that it can be traced back to books of undoubted Apostolic origin and authority. This involves the truth that we have religious susceptibilities and wants, to which the great substance of the Scriptures is adapted. At this point they meet us and attach themselves to us, as the complement of our spiritual being, and the guide to our final destination.

1. In the relation of Creatorship and Creatureship subsisting between God and man. The fundamental relation of our being is its relation to God. Not only the original ground but the ultimate good of our being is in Him. Our condition is a state of absolute dependence on Him. We have our true being only in a state of communion with Him. From a true view of his, not merely relative dependence on other being, but of his absolute dependence on God, of his real susceptibilities and wants as a creature, every sincere man must realize that he possesses his true being only in a state of normal relationship with God; that he must yield his life to God in order truly to find it and possess it; that he cannot be satisfied by himself and from himself. The true and only satisfying good, the sovereign good, the everlasting portion of the soul—the good, the possession of which belongs to the very essence of its being—can be found only in its relation to God, in communion with Him. Without this, emptiness and vanity, despondency and wretchedness, must be its doom. But the difference between divinity and humanity, the antithesis of being between Creator and creature, produces a great want.

This want man cannot himself supply. He cannot produce the good. He needs God, but he cannot find Him by his own powers. The highest good is not only not in himself, but it is not to be found by himself. God is not only the sovereign good of the soul but He alone can bring the soul to the enjoyment of Himself, as the end of its being. God is not only the life, but the way and the truth. The earnest soul yearns after God; it seeks the light of eternity, and would view all things in their relation to God and immortality; longs for divine manifest-

ations, for the discovery of the divine will. But these yearnings and premonitions would be in vain without divine revelation. If we are to come into communion with God, He must make Himself known to us. Our capacity for the good is a *receptivity, not a productivity*, a capacity to receive not to produce the good. We can cognize the fact of the divine existence; from His general revelation, may conceive, in some measure, what He is, but not how He is. What He is in Himself and in what relation He stands to us, we can learn only from special revelation. An objective, historical revelation is indispensable to true religion. God must come to us, if we are to come to Him; He must condescend to us, if we are to ascend or be raised to communion with Him. He must have a life in us in order that we may live a life in Him.

This is as *practicable as it is necessary*. Our nature has capacity for God; we can receive Him, if He present Himself; we are susceptible to His influence, if He draw near to us. We are finite, indeed, but we are made for the infinite and destined to the eternal. In His infinity, God is invisible, dwelleth in light which is inaccessible, inapprehensible to man. But as He made us for Himself, He can reveal Himself to us; He can make Himself known to us by means adapted to our nature, give us manifestations of Himself suited to our religious susceptibility; He can give an objective revelation which shall make us conscious of our inner connection with Him, of our spiritual relationship to Him. *Such a revelation in its absolute perfection is found in the Sacred Scriptures.* In the work of creation, in the forms and movements of nature, He manifests, indeed, His wisdom and power, and in some measure, His goodness; but His personal life, His holiness and His grace, can speak to us only in the language of man, can be manifested only in the mind and heart of humanity. This He does in the sacred history, in the acts of revelation recorded in the Bible, and which have their culmination in the incarnation of His only begotten Son. Jesus Christ takes up into Himself all preceding revelations general and special. He is not merely a symbol or sign of the presence of God; not merely a means by which God reveals doctrine concerning Himself; not merely the organ of divine manifestations, but *God Himself, the way, the truth, the life. He that seeth Him hath seen the Father.* He, who in the beginning was with God,

was God; the eternal Logos—by whom all things were made, and in whom they subsist; by whom and through whom and for whom all things were made—was made flesh: is as truly man as He is truly God. Humanity is made the revelation of divinity. The Eternal Word was made flesh in order that we might have the word of the Incarnate Word, the glad tidings of human salvation. The gospel—the power of God inherent in the Eternal Word and manifested in the Incarnate Word—is now proclaimed, and consequently is the *power* of God unto *salvation* to every one that believeth, to the susceptible soul, the soul yearning for communion with God. *This gospel is the substance of the Bible. The contents of the Sacred Scriptures, are, therefore, a saving power to the souls who long for God, making them partakers of divine benefits and changing them from mere creatures into dear children of God.*

2. But we especially need such a special revelation of saving truth, *as sinful beings*. If we are to love, serve and enjoy God, His grace must be presented to us as sinners; it must be preventient and gratuitous; it must seek us, before we seek it; it *must promise us deliverance* from the condemnation and power of sin, from its guilt and pollution, *before it requires of us repentance and holiness*, or we can never be raised from our dread and hatred into confidence and love toward God. It must be a revelation, not so much of what God requires, as of what He graciously gives. It must come to us in the depth of our guilt and depravity; condescend to us, sinful and ignorant, despairing and helpless men, and *raise us by the hand of free forgiving love into the condition and feelings of children*. That we may apprehend grace, it must be freely offered; that we may be able to repent, pardoning mercy must precede, and must first be revealed. This is the substance of the Sacred Scriptures—Jesus Christ and Him crucified for sin, raised from the dead for justification; made of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption; Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and forever, set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. But this gospel pointing men to the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, to the atoning blood of Christ—no matter, in what form it comes to them—is the power of God unto salvation to every one of them that believes. And we have assurance because this gospel and this faith are from the same Spirit.

To be effectual in proclaiming this faith, and the living experience of assurance of salvation, the gospel *is inseparable from the operations of the Holy Ghost*. As we have seen in the extracts from Luther, it is, according to the principle of the Reformation, only by this superadded immediate influence of the Spirit, that the Scriptures are able to produce saving faith. "*No man calleth Jesus Lord, save by the Spirit of God.*" The content of the Bible is the power of God unto salvation only where it is apprehended by that faith which is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit which accompanies its proclamation. Mere intellectual apprehension of the divine Scriptures, without a *living contact of their content with the spiritual susceptibility, such as the personal Holy Spirit alone can effect*, would not produce saving faith. The Bible cannot take the place of the Spirit; it is only an instrument, adapted and powerful, indeed, but it is only the means of the Spirit's agency in regenerating the heart, in giving assurance of the gracious presence of God and the enjoyment of the divine life in the soul. Only thus can the spiritual susceptibility be met, and the spiritual want satisfied; only the personal Spirit can enter into the inner sanctuary of the personal soul and fill it with all the fullness of God; only by His power can the central point of the human spirit be brought into contact with the great object of religion; only thus can there be produced in it personal, conscious assurance of truth—true faith in the realities of the scheme of redemption; only thus can it be penetrated to the very depths of its being and supplied with the power of an eternal life. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost." The Spirit uses the external letter as means in producing an experience of a personal interest in the grace of God, in making man an actual partaker in divine forgiveness, a joyous possessor of the divine salvation. God works faith; man acts it. *The justified sinner exercises a faith produced by the revelation of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Spirit*. Luther says: "We should never forget that Christ *not only merited for us forgiveness of sin, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit;*" and he declares, as we have seen, that no man would ever savingly believe if the Holy Spirit did not work faith in him. But whenever a man does put forth the act of faith, produced and called forth by the Spirit, the act of confiding surrender, and accepts

the saving content of the Scriptures, then he becomes conscious of the possession of it; he receives the blessing of assurance of salvation; he has the witness of the Spirit to a filial relationship with God, in which God treats him though a sinner as if he had never sinned, though a rebel as if he had always obeyed. It is by such *testimony of the Scriptures and by such witness of the Spirit*, that the believer has full satisfaction for all his wants, and *experimental knowledge of the fact that he stands upon the foundation of all religious truth*. The light of all truths in religion, and that which authenticates them all, *is the fact of salvation in Christ—is God in Christ*. This—the saving content of the Scripture—may come to the inquiring mind, even in the absence of the Bible, by oral communication, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, authenticate itself to the heart as God's Word. It brings to consciousness the deep wants of man, revealing man to himself in the hideousness of his sins; it manifests God in Christ, the chief among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely; it thus draws man away from himself in his odiousness, and attracts him to the Saviour in His loveliness. It causes the sincere man to realize its divine self-evidencing power; it brings him to the very centre and source of all divine truth, into the light of all our seeing in religion, into the certainty which characterizes consciousness in all our knowledge. The witness of the Spirit is manifest, not only in the peace of the reconciled and renovated conscience, and the power of the new and blessed life, but also in *the knowledge of the illuminated and regenerated mind*.

With what assurance and confidence Luther speaks on this point we have seen, but a few more of his declarations will be edifying. "Then I say, apprehend this gospel well, for it is given to neither Pope nor Councils, *nor to any man, to determine for us what true faith is*. For Christ says, Beware of false prophets. Either this gospel must be false, or the Pope and the Councils are. *Christ says we have the right to judge all doctrines, and whatever is proposed to be held*. The Lord does not here speak to the Pope, but to all Christians. And as this doctrine is spoken to all, namely, '*Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so to them;*' so these words exclude no man: '*Beware of false prophets.*' From this it follows clearly that I may decide upon doctrine. *Thou must know before all*

Councils that this is the doctrine of Christ, although all men should speak otherwise. Also this doctrine: Thou canst not help thyself; Christ is thy Saviour, who effects that thy sins are forgiven. Thou must *bow and acknowledge in thy heart that it is so; and if thou dost not feel it, thou hast not the faith*, but the word hangs upon thine ear, and rolls upon thy tongue like the bubble upon the water, as the prophet Hosea says. Therefore let not yourselves be persuaded that you must believe what the Pope says or the Councils determine. If thou *knowest God, thou hast already the test, the standard, the rule whereby thou canst judge all doctrines of the fathers, to wit, if thou knowest that Christ is our salvation, that He governs us and that we are sinners.* If then, some one should come and say, Thou must become a monk, thou must do thus and thus, if thou would be saved; faith alone is not enough for salvation; thou canst certainly say, thou art a lying spirit; thy doctrine is false; for he that *believeth in Christ is saved: because it is Christ who teacheth thee this thy faith in the heart.* Therefore no man can secure himself against error unless he be a spiritual man; for this St. Paul saith (1 Cor. ii. 15): *He that is spiritual judgeth all things and is judged of no man. Thus none can judge false doctrine, but the spiritual man.* Therefore, it is all a silly thing that the Councils would determine and establish what we are to believe, when often there is not a man in them who has tasted of the Holy Ghost even in the least degree. Thus it happened in the Council at Nice, that they were about to make laws concerning the spiritual office, that ministers should not marry—which was manifestly all false, because it has no ground in the divine Scriptures—when a single man, by the name of Paphnutius, arose and overturned all this, and said, Not so; this is not *Christian.* Then this whole Council—which yet, without doubt, had many excellent and learned men—were obliged to stop short of this conclusion, and yield to this simple but pious man. For God is inimical to high titles and human wisdom, and, therefore, from time to time, allows them to meet with a bad reception, and brings their undertakings to shame; that men may see that the proverb is true, *Die gelehrten, die verkehrten* (the more learned, the more perverted). Therefore, thou must *experience in thyself that thou canst say: God has said this; that, God has not said.* As soon as thou sayest, *this men have said, that the Councils have determined—*

thou hast already built upon the sand. Therefore, there is *no judge on earth in spiritual matters over Christian doctrine, except the person who has the true faith in his heart*; be it man or woman, young or old, servant or maid, learned or unlearned; for God does not regard the person; for all who keep His commandments are equally dear to Him, and hence they alone have authority to judge." (Vol. vi., p. 183).

§ 4. *Application of this Unity to the Interpretation and Canonicity of the Scriptures.*

In the production of faith are involved, thus, our wants as finite and as sinful beings, the adaptedness of saving truth to these wants, and the fact that, in whatever way this truth comes to us, it can be traced to inspired books—books of the apostolic origin of which there has never been and never can be any doubt among Christians. The idea, then, is this: *the Gospel as contained in undoubted apostolic books produces faith, and from this faith results the determination of the canonicity or inspiration of books about which there has been and may be dispute, and the interpretation of passages in the Bible which may be obscure.* Thus we say that we have received the determination of the canon of Scripture, and the interpretation of its meaning, not so much from the intellectual acumen of the visible Church, as from the living faith, the experimental piety, the spirituality of the invisible Church, of the congregation of the saints, of the true believers in Christ scattered throughout Christendom, of the spiritual men of whom Luther speaks—the Paphnutiuses who could say: This is *Christian*, that is *not*; this is *God's Word*, that is *not*.

I. The Romanists say, *first*: *That we are dependent upon the visible Church for the right interpretation of the Scriptures.* They say it cannot be made conceivable that faith alone can understand the Scriptures. We, on the other hand, say, *that there is no right interpreter without faith. It is only through the faith produced by the saving content of the Scriptures that their meaning can be understood and appreciated.* The literary learning and scientific attainments of the visible Church, are, indeed, important, and should neither be despised nor neglected; but the saving content of the Scriptures is a spiritual reality, and it can, consequently, be fully apprehended only by a spiritual mind. To understand and appropriate it, the soul must have affinity for it, and sympa-

thy with it. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "As John says (1 John ii.)," is the explanation of Luther: "The unction teaches it, that is, *even as the Holy Spirit speaks it in the heart, so it agrees with the Holy Scriptures. Behold, this is the art which we are to learn here, and not in the schools of men, but from above through the Holy Ghost, who is in this matter the only teacher and doctor*" (Luther, Vol. ii., p. 117). And though intellectual culture and scientific skill are valuable helps to faith in the work of learned investigation, yet such is the intelligibility of the Scriptures, that their saving content cannot but be intelligible to all who are spiritually disposed. "We have received, not the spirit which is of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God." It is by "being rooted and grounded in love that we become able to comprehend with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and height, and depth, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." *The believing mind, by the very character which has been produced by the saving content of the Scriptures, becomes the proper medium of their exposition.* It, and it alone is fundamentally qualified to discern and to express their true meaning.

Nor is faith dependent upon *any human formula of doctrine, or upon any human authority, for the right interpretation of the Scriptures.* Let us again hear the principle of the Reformation as it speaks to us through its great organ, Luther. "First, it is necessary to know where and what the Christian congregation is, in order that we may not, as has always been the custom of antichristians, undertake human transactions under the name of the Christian congregation. By this the Christian congregation is certainly known, namely, where the gospel alone is preached. For as we know by the banner of an army, what general and army are encamped in a field, so we certainly know by the gospel, where Christ and His army are.....In the second place, in such a transaction, namely, as judging of doctrine and the calling and dismissal of teachers and pastors, we must *not be guided by human laws or jurisprudence, old traditions, usages, customs, etc., or by the idea that God has conferred upon the Pope or the Emperor, or princes or bishops, this authority, even though it has been held by half the world, or the whole world, and exer-*

cised for one or a thousand years..... For Christ has decided just the contrary. He takes away from the bishops, the learned and the Councils, both right and power to judge of doctrine, and gives them to *every man and all Christians in common*; for He says: (John x. 5, 8) 'When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them.' Here you see clearly whose is the right to judge of doctrine; bishops, Popes and the learned, and *every man* has power to teach; *but the sheep are to judge whether they teach Christ's voice or the voice of strangers.* Hear, beloved, what these babblers babble about Councils, that we must hear the learned, the bishops, the majority, must regard old usage and custom! Do you think I will let God's Word yield to your old custom, usage, bishop? Never more. Then let bishops and Councils conclude what they please; but when we have God's Word for us, it is for us and not for them to decide what is right and wrong; and they shall yield to us and obey our word..... Again Christ says: Beware of false prophets. Behold here He gives the power to judge, *not to the prophets and teachers, but to the scholars or sheep.* For how could we guard against false prophets if we could not prove, judge and condemn their doctrine? So there can be no false prophet among the hearers, but only among the teachers; and hence all teachers, together with their doctrine, must be judged by them. So Paul says: *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* Behold here he will have no doctrine or dogma held unless it be proved and acknowledged as good by the congregation which hears it; for *this proving belongs not to the teacher, as he must first speak in order that we may prove. Thus is the judging taken from the teachers and given to the disciples among Christians.* The constitution of Christianity and that of the world is very different. In the world the rulers command what they wish, and the subjects receive it. But among you, says Christ, it shall not be thus. On the contrary, among Christians, each one is to judge of another and is himself again subject to the other. But spiritual tyranny has made a worldly government out of Christianity. Christ says: Take heed that no man deceive you. But why is it

necessary to adduce more passages. All the warnings in Rom. xvi. 1, 18; 1 Cor. iii. 4, 5; Gal. ii. 8, and everywhere, all the utterances of the prophets in which they *teach us to avoid human doctrine,—do nothing else than take the right and power to judge of doctrine, and lay it upon the hearers with the solemn command, and at the peril of their souls to feel that they have not only the right and the authority to judge whatever is preached, but that they are bound to judge it by the fear of the displeasure of the divine majesty.....* For no man can deny that every Christian *has God's Word, is taught of God, and is anointed a priest* as Christ says: It is written in the prophets; and they shall *be all taught of God.* In Psalms xlv. 8, it is said of Christ; God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. *These fellows of Christ are Christians, Christ's brothers, anointed to be priests with Him.* So also Peter says: *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*" (Vol. xviii., p. 429).

"They bring forth the saints' interpretation of the Scriptures. This is to be a light, and to this they hold fast, and think they have here what no man can reject; and they resist the attempt to bring them to the Scriptures alone, and say: The Scriptures are dark and many heretics are made by it. Is not this a masterpiece of blasphemy? Who has told thee that the fathers are not also dark? Who will undertake to assure us *that the fathers do not err in their interpretation*—inasmuch as it is manifest that they have often erred, do often contradict themselves and each other, and are seldom agreed. God has ordered things in this way, and made the interpretation of the fathers uncertain, that He might by all means prevent us from wandering away from the Scriptures. Yet we slip away, and do not permit ourselves to be held. Therefore, we are to know that what they say is not true, namely, that the fathers illuminate the dark Scriptures. They do injustice to the fathers, and slander them. The work of the fathers is not to illuminate Scripture by their own glosses, but to adduce clear Scripture, and *thus explain Scripture with Scripture alone without any addition of their own.*

"That men *become heretics through the Scriptures, is right. By what else should they become such. As there is no other book which*

teaches the faith except the Scriptures, therefore, like as no man can become a Christian except alone in reference to the Scriptures, so no man can become a heretic except by the Scriptures. But Christ is a sign to be spoken against (Luke ii. 34), at which men stumble. Some fall and rise again. Shall we, therefore, reject Him and set up another Christ beside Him? You do not use wine and bread properly, shall we, therefore, let our fields and vineyards lie neglected, and cultivate others beside them? The evil spirit is the enemy of the Scriptures, therefore, he utters this cry from a slanderous mouth, and thereby slanders them and makes them suspected. But what does this gospel teach? In the first place the Magi do not ask for the High Priest, and say Where is Annas or Caiaphas? or how has this one or that one lived? but they say where is he who is born king of the Jews? Yes, Christ allows them as an example to us, to seek Him in Jerusalem, in the Holy City, with the ministers and the learned, the rulers. But He does not allow Himself to be found in a consecrated place or in holy postures; and they are not answered by what human glosses say, but by what the bare Scriptures say of Christ. They alone are to be sought with holy people and in holy places. In this is clearly represented that, irrespective of all human works, doctrines, glosses, and life, we shall have respect to the Scriptures alone; and that of all holy lives or doctrines, we shall preserve this prerogative that we do not allow ourselves to take up all that they teach or practice but hold a judgment over it, and with discrimination receive only that which is agreeable to Scripture. But what is their own without Scripture, we are to regard as a thing to be rejected, as St. Paul teaches (1 Thess. iv. 21): Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (Vol. xiii., p. 248). "They have bound the sacred Scriptures to the interpretation of the fathers, and yet the same only in so far as it pleases the Pope, and is not against his law. Thus no man is to use them otherwise than it pleases the Pope, to whom alone it belongs to explain the Scriptures; and every man must receive his knowledge and judgment. Though at the same time in words, they do the fathers the honor that they must follow their interpretation. And to this the whole world agree, and receive what the fathers have said, as if they could not err. And here, again, the cry, ah! how could so many learned, holy, exalted persons have failed to understand the Scriptures? Here, again, we are to answer, as

was said before, out of the Gospel,—*be they saints, learned fathers, Councils, or whatever they may be,—if even Mary, Joseph, and all the saints together—it does not follow that they could not err.* From this gospel we should adopt as a maxim against all doctrine which can be presented to us, which is not God's Word, that we are told that we are not to seek Christ among friends and acquaintances, nor yet in that which is human, however pious, holy, or great it may be; for the mother of Christ herself erred and failed in this that she did not know and understand it" (Vol. v., p. 333). "*Thus we must remain free judges, that we have to decide and judge, to receive or condemn whatever the Pope establishes and the Councils determine. But if we receive anything, it must be because it agrees with our conscience and with the Scriptures, and not because they say it.* Therefore, Paul says (Rom. xvii. 7): 'Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;' for all prophesying which leads to dependence on works, and not solely on Christ as their only comfort, however precious it may seem to be, is not according to the analogy of faith; such, as the revelations of ricketing spectres, the masses, pilgrimages, fastings, and seeking the merits of the saints. In this respect many of the holy fathers have erred, such as Gregory, Augustine and others, that they have taken this right of judgment from us. For this misery and distress had an erring origin, namely, that we must believe the Popes and the Councils" (Vol. vi., p. 182).

"The other wall (of the papal fortress) is still more frail and unsound, that they alone wish to be regarded as masters of the Scriptures; for we know they have never in their lives studied anything in them. They assume all government in the interpretation of them, and parade themselves before us with the shameless words that the Pope cannot err in faith, whether he be wicked or pious, and though he cannot adduce a single letter of Scripture. Hence it comes that there are so many heretical and unchristian, yea unnatural laws in the spiritual jurisprudence—of which it is not necessary now to speak. For while they suppose that the Holy Spirit does not leave them, no matter how unlearned and wicked they may be, they become rash and establish what they please. *And if this were so, for what use or necessity would the Holy Scriptures be? Let us burn them and content ourselves with the unlearned*

gentlemen at Rome, who have the Holy Ghost inherently which yet pious hearts may not have inherently. If I had not read it, it would have been incredible to me, that the devil should originate such miserable things at Rome. Yet that we may not fight against them with words, we will adduce the Scripture; Paul says: 'That we shall prove all things; and hold fast to that which is good.' Of what use would this command be, if only he who speaks or presides was to be believed. Also Christ says: 'That all Christians shall be taught of God.' *Thus it may happen that the Pope and his party may be wicked and not true Christians, nor yet taught of God, nor have a right understanding. On the other hand, a lowly pious person may have the right understanding, because he is taught of God. Wherefore shall we not follow him?* Has not the Pope often erred? Who would help Christendom, if another, who has the Scriptures before him, were not to be believed more than he? Wherefore it is a wildly imagined fable, and they cannot bring forth a single letter to prove *that the Pope alone is to interpret Scripture or to establish their interpretation.* They have usurped this authority. And though they pretend that the authority was given to Peter, and that the keys were given to him; it is plain enough that they were not given to Peter alone, but to the whole Church. In addition to this, the keys are designed not for doctrine or government, but alone to bind and loose in reference to sin; and it is a pure fiction what they otherwise and further ascribe to themselves from the keys. *That what Christ says to Peter: I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, extends not to the Pope, is evident, inasmuch as most of the Popes were without faith, as they themselves must acknowledge; and so Christ prayed not only for Peter, but for all Apostles and Christians, as he says: (John xvii. 9-20) I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me; for they are Thine. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.* Is not this spoken plainly enough? Think for yourself. They must acknowledge that there are *pious Christians among us who have the right faith and spirit, and who understand the Word and meaning. Why should we then reject their words and understanding, and follow the Pope who has neither faith nor spirit? This would be to deny the entire faith and the Christian Church.* Again, the Pope can-

not alone be right, if the article be right: I believe in a holy Christian Church; or we must pray in this way: I believe in the Pope at Rome, and limit the Christian faith entirely to one person, which would be a devilish and hellish error.

“ In addition to this we are all priests, as was said above, have one faith, one gospel and kind of sacrament. *Why should we not also have power to judge and decide what is right or wrong in a faith?* Where remains the word of Paul (1 Cor. ii. 15): He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man (2 Cor. iv. 13). *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.* Why should not, then, we feel as well, at least, as an unbelieving Pope, what is conformable and what is not conformable to the faith. From all this, and from many other passages, we are to become courageous and free; and not let ourselves be frightened by imaginary words of the Popes. *‘Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.’ Let us not be driven from this spirit of freedom as Paul calls it, but vigorously proceed to judge, according to our believing understanding of the Scriptures, all that they do or omit; and oblige them to follow the better, and not their own understanding. Was Abraham in former times obliged to hear his Sarah, who was yet in more complete subjection than we, to any one on earth? So the ass of Balaam was more prudent than the prophet himself. Did God then speak through an ass against the prophet, why should he not now be able to speak through a pious person against the Pope? Again St. Paul reproves Peter as an errorist, therefore, it is proper for every Christian to be a defender of the faith; to stand for it, and fight for it, and to condemn all error”* (Vol. xvii. p. 460).

This is the expression of the spirit of the great Reformation, and of the spirit of all true Christianity. Neither the early œcumenical creeds nor the symbols of later times, nor even the so-called Apostles’ Creed, can, according to this principle, lay claim to be infallible interpretations of the divine Word. All these are valuable helps, and as they are the product of times when saving faith was prevalent, they may be regarded as correct exhibitions of fundamental truths of the divine Word; and we may fairly *anticipate that they will be found in accordance with*

the substance of the Bible. So Luther felt, and he has expressed himself on this point also. After giving the Scriptural idea of the Holy Spirit (Vol. viii., p. 230) he says: "Therefore you see here upon what the symbol of St. Athanasius rests—a symbol which is so composed, that I do not know that any thing more important and glorious has been written in the Church of the New Testament, since the days of the Apostles." In another place he says: "Although I have before *taught, and written much concerning faith, what it is, and what it does, and have also published my confession, how I believe, and how I intend to remain*; yet as the devil is ever seeking new stratagems against me, I have superfluously published the *three symbols together in German, which have thus far been held, read and sung in the whole Church, that I may show that I hold the true Christian Church which has these symbols or confessions thus far, and not with the false and boasting Church which is yet the greatest enemy of the true Church; and has introduced much idolatry alongside of the beautiful confession. Like as in former times, the people of Israel, beside the beautiful service of God established in the temple, set up much idolatry in valleys, on mountains and under trees, and yet claimed to be the people of God, and, in virtue of this, persecuted and killed the prophets; and, at last, also Christ Himself*" (Vol. xxii., p. 102. anno 1545).

We should hold such summaries of Christian truth and faith in high respect. But to maintain that any such rule or standard is necessary to the correct understanding of the Scriptures is to deny their intelligibility. The only rule is that of the Protestants at Spire, that "*obscure texts must be explained by those which are clear*"—that analogy of faith, according to which, Scripture cannot contradict Scripture, that relation of connected truth, according to which, if any one proposition be clearly ascertained to be true, the reverse of it, or any proposition inconsistent with it, must be regarded as false; and this principle will clearly distinguish and establish the saving content of the Sacred Scriptures.

II. But in the second place, the Romanists say that it is only by the visible Church that we have any reliable determination of the canonicity of a book. In answer to this we say that saving faith—that *spiritual understanding* which believers have—is the *only organ through which* any satisfactory determination of this question ever has been or ever will be made. The saving

truth is contained in books of the Sacred Volume whose canonicity is undoubted; and by the truths contained in undisputed books of the present canon, including not only such as the Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians, whose apostolic origin no respectable critic—even of the most skeptical school—has ever denied, but nearly all the books of the New Testament about whose apostolical character there has never been any doubt among believers,—the canonicity of other books may be tested. This faith, we hold, was the organ by which the canonicity of the books contained in our present canon was decided, as far as it was decided; and that if there are any such, as the Antilegomena, about the inspiration or apostolic origin of which there was doubt in the early times, doubt at the Reformation, and might still be doubt,—the question of their canonicity will be decided, if ever satisfactorily decided, by the same agency. Not so much through the visible Church as through the invisible faith of true believers, in connection with historical evidence, have we received the present Scriptures as canonical. By their *self-evidencing power*, they become, through the instrumentality of the faith produced by them,—*self-criticising* as well as *self-interpreting*. By the “believing understanding of divine truth,” and the spiritual understanding in the congregation of believers, of which Luther so frequently speaks, the Scriptures have secured their place in the canon and their interpretation for salvation and edification; their canonicity by the one, and their interpretation by the other. Through the instrumentality of the faith, wrought by their saving content, they secure their self-criticism. Through the agency of the believing men, whose existence as believers was effected by this instrumentality, they have secured their place in the canon to the exclusion of those books which are not worthy of such recognition. In addition to their historical evidence, their substance is the instrument by which faith is produced, and then they become the rule of the faith thus produced. They have two functions; they are both means of faith and the rule of faith. First, they are by their contents mainly means; and then, the only rule. They bear to the religious susceptibility of man the relation of means of faith, even before they are fully recognized or understood as its rule. And the one relation is distinguishable, and in some measure, independent of the other. Thus it is con-

ceivable that the content of the Scriptures—the glad tidings of salvation through Christ—in connection with their historical evidence, might produce saving faith in a Roman Catholic, even while he denied their authority as the only infallible rule; but if he had access to the Bible, he would feel its claim, and if free from the prejudices of education and from external restraints, he would acknowledge the Scriptures to be the supreme rule of that faith which their content had produced in him. For, they are for the believing mind not merely an external authority; not merely an external rule, but an inner authority through their spiritual content, their living power—an authority which, though objective and authoritative, is yet chosen and adopted. It is not a mere outward law with no relation to the inner wants of the soul or to the spiritual laws of the mind, but one which through the saving operation of its content, has acquired a vital connection with the intellect, and secured a welcome lodgment in the heart; so that the soul acts freely and lovingly in the acceptance of the truths of the content, at the same time that it acknowledges the absolute authority of Scripture, and submits itself to its control, just as the process of thought goes on as freely after the mind has discovered and recognized the necessary laws of all true thinking, and has submitted consciously to the authority of the laws of the objective being which it cognizes; and feels itself acting just as freely as it did before it was aware of their existence.

If the reader has carefully read the extracts from Luther, he will see not only *the doctrine, but a realization manifest in his person, of the nature and practicability of this union of the freedom of saving faith and the authority of the Sacred Scriptures.* The spirit of inspiration and that of regeneration is one and the same teacher of truth. Having their origin in the same Spirit, saving faith and the Scriptures cannot be opposed, but must be akin to each other. They cannot be exclusive of one another. The new man in Christ subsists by the instrumentality of the substance of the Scripture as well as by the power of the Spirit. It is not by the Word alone, either as contained in the Scriptures or as preached by the Church, that the work of regeneration is effected or that faith is produced. The divine author of the Word transcends it, uses it as His instrument and makes it efficacious for the great result. The Word alone does not pro-

duce the new man; the Holy Ghost is the efficient agent. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit does not operate without the Word, which is the substance of the Scripture, either in the way of external magic, as the Romanist supposes, or in that of internal magic, as the Mystic imagines. The Word tends to produce faith; it is not powerless; it does not return unto God void; it presents the object which is to be believed, and thus gives occasion for faith; it contemplates, anticipates, expects faith. The Scriptures have affinity with the faith for whose origination—by means of their saving content—they become the instrument of divine grace. They tend toward having their content received, believed, appropriated, in a living, personal soul. The truth is for man, and man for the truth, in a normal state and relation; consequently, in proportion to the restoration of the soul, will be the harmony between the Bible and the believer; the greater the affinity, between the spirit of the one and the other. On the one hand the truly inspired Scriptures will seek faith, work faith in men, and thus secure their self-criticism through them as the organs for the exclusion from the canon of any book which is not like them, “not bone of their bone nor flesh of their flesh.” On the other hand, faith will, by the affinity of its spirit to that of the substance of the Scriptures, seek them spontaneously as its authority and rule. It dwells in the light of the same Holy Spirit, and consequently *can and does discern the character and claims* of the Sacred Writings; *it, and it alone, can understand and appreciate them* in all their fullness and preciousness. In the enjoyment of a free delight and the exercise of a willing obedience, it can distinguish genuine from spurious Scripture. In the confidence, which Luther so eloquently describes, it can say and does say of these books: “*this is God’s Word,*” and of any book not in the same spirit and likeness: “*that is not from God.*” It can distinguish what is for Christ from that which is against Him. It cannot, indeed, decide *positively* that any book is inspired, as the Christian truths may be and are contained, in a derived way, in other books. But it can decide *negatively*, *that a book is not inspired, not from God.* In this way in addition to the light of historical evidence, we may suppose faith to have had a determinate agency in the fixing of the present canon. In this way, we may conceive, were our Sacred Books decided upon in the age of living faith; and it is

thus that faith still recognizes and receives them. If we keep in view the distinction between the material and the form of truth, and, consequently, that the contents of the Sacred Scriptures, that is, truth in its material aspect, can act as means of grace producing faith, even before its formal aspect is understood, nay, independently of all questions concerning the inspiration or canonicity of the few books in our Bible that have all along been, and are still from time to time, held in doubt,—we will see that this is not necessarily reasoning in a circle; and among Christians—and for the satisfaction of all who want to be followers of Christ—it ought to be sufficient. In it, we conceive, is a *just ground* for Luther's decided rejection of the idea of our dependence upon *the Church, in its visible organization, for the fixing of the canon and the interpretation of the meaning of the Sacred Scriptures*; a *just ground for the right of "the Christian man" in which Luther so constantly exulted*; for that of *private judgment, for which all the Reformers so manfully contended.*

§ 5. *Results of this reciprocal Relationship of Faith and the Sacred Scriptures.*

This affinity of the two principles, this connection of faith and the Scriptures, as the work of the same Spirit, Luther seemed to have in view, when he says: "You must by yourself, in your conscience, feel Christ Himself, and, consequently, unchangeably *experience that it is God's Word.*" "God pours out the Holy Spirit into our hearts, who *says in the heart that it is so.*" "The Spirit witnesses with our spirit, that a person attains to this, that we *feel that it is so, that he has no manner of doubt.*" "A new heavenly power of the Holy Ghost, which presses Christ and His work into the heart, and makes a real book of it, which consists not in letters and in mere writing, but in *true life and reality.*" "God must witness it to thee *in thy heart, that it is God's Word.*" "Such an *understanding* is in the Church through *illumination of the Spirit.*" "This testimony takes place in this way, namely, that as the Spirit works faith in us through the Word, we *feel and become conscious of His power; and our experience corresponds with the Word or declaration of the Gospel.*" "Thou must be as certain of the matter, that it is God's Word, *as thou art certain that thou livest.*" "*They shall all be taught of God.*" "It is a divine work in the spirit." "There is

no man on earth who *understands a jot or tittle of the Scriptures except those who have the Spirit of God.*" "Through an inner judgment in which each Christian is so enlightened by the Holy Spirit of God's grace for himself and his conscience, that he can *conclude with the utmost certainty concerning every doctrine.*" "Christ's sheep *recognize His voice.*" "Therefore, we will stick to the *Word and faith* against all such temptations and cavils."

If it be objected that this would make faith commensurate with the Scriptures; because if the Scriptures contained more than faith, they would just so far have no authority over it; we answer that this no more follows than it does that the subjective idea in other cases must be regarded as commensurate with the objective law of thought, because it freely receives that law; or that the objective law ceases to have authority just so far as it contains more than the subjective idea. As the objective law contains more than the subjective idea, so do the Scriptures contain more than faith; and as the authority of the objective law extends not only to the present extent of the subjective idea, but is recognized as valid for all increase of knowledge; so the authority of the Scriptures extends not only to the present attainments of faith, but is recognized as valid for all increase in its acquisitions of divine truth. But however much the Scriptures may contain which is not yet apprehended by faith, and which may perhaps never be apprehended, it is certain that they do not contain anything which is in contradiction with saving faith in its essential nature; for in this there is the character of divine certainty, the certainty of the witness of the Holy Spirit. We speak, of course, not of Christian faith in general, but of saving faith specifically, of living faith in Christ as the Saviour of the soul, of *that faith which has in it the assurance of salvation. But of this faith, we say that so far as it extends, it is like the Scriptures, a work of the Holy Spirit,* and, consequently, it cannot be contradicted by them, in its essential nature and elements, in that which constitutes its life and reality. In contrast with the positive character of the evidence of history—of historical criticism and proof of the apostolic origin of the Scriptures—the influence of faith in this matter is of negative character, indeed; it does not determine positively that a book is apostolic, is inspired; it simply denies that any book can be such which does not teach *Christ*, and that any book can be of

divine authority which contradicts *that which clearly results from the proclamation of Christ as the only Saviour of men*, and which is accompanied by internal and external evidences of its saving power and effects. Christians even deny that there is any contradiction between the Bible and reason. Luther, and other heroes of faith, did not denounce reason itself as deceptive or contradictory to Christianity. Dr. Shedd says: "Single passages may be quoted to prove that the Christian apologists disparaged reason and represented it as inimical to revelation. But such passages must be read in connection in the treatise, or the argument. Such expressions, disparaging the use of reason in religion, Baumgarten Crusius remarks may be put into three classes: (1) Those in which reason is taken in its least extensive sense, to denote the reason of a particular party, system or school; (2) Those in which reason is taken in the sense of arrogant private opinion, which sets itself up against public sentiments, historical opinions, and authority generally; (3) Those in which reason is taken in the sense of a one-sided speculative disposition, that is devoid of any profound religious feeling or want. It is against reason in this narrow and inadequate signification, against which it is as much the interest of philosophy to inveigh as it is of revelation, that the disparaging remarks frequently found in Tertullian, of the Apologetic period, and in Athanasius and Augustine, of the Polemic, are leveled. But against the common reason of mankind, the unbiased spontaneous convictions of the race, no such remarks are aimed. On the contrary, a confident appeal is made to them by these very Apologists; while those systems of philosophy, and those intellectual methods, that flow most legitimately and purely from them, are employed by the Christian mind in developing and establishing the truths of revelation." And so Luther appealed to reason as well as to revelation for the certainty of his faith, for he says: "Unless I should be convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, or by open and clear grounds and reasons, I will recall nothing." Now as the Scriptures are not in contradiction even with the common consciousness, with the natural conscience of men, with their innate feeling of right, *but make this the point of their contact with human nature, much less can they be in contradiction with the faith which is the result, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, of that contact—with that*

faith which is the Christian consciousness. *Any book found to be in contradiction with saving faith would also be found in contradiction with genuine Scripture*; for the Scriptures acknowledged by all to be apostolic, do, by their content, produce that faith. Thus do the Scriptures exercise a self-criticism, trying themselves and testing whatever claims to be of divine authority or to be classed with them, through the instrumentality of the believing men whom they, by their contact, have shared in making believers; not by making these men their rulers but their organs, their instruments for the removal from the canon of anything which does not properly belong to it. Thus did the Protestants act when they ejected from the canon the apocryphal books, though the Roman Church had before admitted them. Thus are the Scriptures self-authenticating to the sincere souls seeking salvation; thus do they, by their content, become the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; and thus do they become self-interpreting and self-criticizing through the very faith which, as means of grace, they produce.

But true Christian faith, notwithstanding its inner assurance, and though it may have been produced by the testimony of the Church, the general preaching of the Gospel, the oral proclamation of the terms of salvation; though it may have been produced by the Word coming to the soul in ways other than the immediate possession and use of the Sacred Scriptures; yet, for objective certainty, and for the certainty of the divine character of the Word by which it was produced, does heartily recognize the Sacred Scriptures as its only infallible rule. Consciously or unconsciously it goes back to apostolic testimony. It rests not upon human but upon divine testimony, not upon mere thoughts of men but upon the word spoken by men "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"—upon divine authority. The life of faith is produced by the instrumentality of the Word of God. But the source of this life is in Christ, and *to be sure that we have the life of Christ in us, we must be sure that we have the Word of God*. Consequently, we must have apostolic, inspired testimony; and this testimony we have, in its full purity and absolute certainty, only in the Holy Scriptures. "The position," says Dr. Shedd, "which the Church sustains to the individual is indicated, remarks Augustine, in the words of the Samaritans to

the Samaritan woman: 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is, indeed, the Christ, the Saviour of the world' (John iv. 42). The individual first hears the concurrent testimony of the great body of believers in every age, and then verifies it for himself. He finds a general unanimity in the Church catholic respecting the canonical and apocryphal books, and also respecting their meaning and doctrinal contents. He goes to the examination with the natural expectation of finding that the general judgment is a correct one, and in so far, he comes under the influence of traditional or Catholic opinions. This is the "ecclesiastical authority" which has weight with him. At the same time he exercises the right of private judgment; the right, namely, to examine the general judgment and to perceive its correctness with his own eyes. The Samaritans put confidence in the testimony of the woman, but at the same time they went and saw, and heard themselves. They came into agreement with her by an active, and not by a passive method. In employing this illustration, Augustine adopts the Protestant, and opposes the Papal theory of tradition and authority. The Papist's method of agreeing with the Catholic method is passive. He denies that the individual may intelligently verify the position of the Church for himself, because the Church is *infallible*, and consequently there is no possibility of its being in error. The individual is, therefore, shut up to a mechanical and passive reception of the Catholic decision. The Protestant, on the other hand, though affirming the high probability that the general judgment is correct, does not assert the infallible certainty that it is. It is conceivable and possible that the Church may err. Hence the duty of the individual, while cherishing an antecedent confidence in the decisions of the Church, to examine these decisions in the light of the written Word, and convert this presumption into an intelligent perception, or else demonstrate their falsity beyond dispute. 'Neither ought I to bring forward the authority of the Nicene Council,' says Augustine (Contra Maximianum Arianum, II. xiv. 3), 'nor you that of Ariminum, in order to prejudge the case. I ought not to be bound (detentum) by the authority of the latter, nor you by that of the former. Under the authority of the Scriptures, not those received by particular sects, but those received by all in

common, let the disputation be carried on, in respect to each and every particular.' Chiefly then through the stricter definition and limitation of the idea of revelation, and partly through the need felt, in the controversies with the heretical and separating mind, of some infallible standard of appeal, did the authoritative character of the Scriptures come to be urged and established by the apologist of the Polemic period. Ever since this time, the Church has recognized the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the only *infallible* source of religious knowledge; ever refusing to attribute this characteristic to any other form of knowledge, however true and valid in its own province. The only exception to this is found in that portion of the history of the Roman Catholic Church in which tradition and ecclesiastical authority are placed upon an equality with Scripture. But this portion of Church history is the history of a corruption. For the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church is of the same nature with that of the infallibility of the Pope. Both doctrines alike imply an absolute exemption from error, on the part of the finite mind—a doctrine which belongs to the history of heresies."

Oral tradition is too uncertain to be trusted. To be certain of apostolical testimony in its purity, we must have it in a form which is beyond the reach of the corruptions and perversions arising from the infirmity and wickedness of men, and this it has in the inspired Scriptures. Faith must have the right of private judgment, the right of trying all preaching everywhere and at any moment by this infallible standard. "My sheep hear My voice, and the voice of a stranger will they not follow." This constant right of regress to apostolical testimony by means of the Scriptures makes practicable the objective certainty of faith—of its connection with inspired truth—makes it certain that it had its source in the Holy Spirit and that its content is Christ Himself. The Spirit does indeed operate continuously in the Church, and the Holy Scriptures do not supplant or supersede His presence; they are not a substitute for His continuous influence. The Spirit of Christ, the Spirit which He promised to send, is always here, but this Spirit operates through the Word, and *the certainty that the preaching, which we hear, is the divine Word—the instrumentality which the Spirit uses, is secured to us only by the inspired Scriptures. Only thus are we sure of our his-*

torical connection with the Christ of history. We must ever keep in view the fact that it is God's method, not to speak the words of grace to men, having the Scriptures, in any other way than through that revelation of His salvation, and the truths derived from it. As the agent in our regeneration and sanctification has chosen this instrumentality, and we are not sure of His operations through any other, we are and can be certain of His saving operations, only when we use His Word, and we can only be assured that we have His Word by the light and authority of the Sacred Scriptures. They are therefore, the only sure guide of the divine life, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Thus does the faith, originated by the glad tidings of salvation—no matter in what form they come to us—gain a positive character, and secure its purity, preservation and growth by the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. It, consequently, recognizes this authority for its own sake, and because it is akin to it; not driven by the Church, not bound, but led by its own peculiar and essential nature,—it receives the Scriptures as the gift of its gracious God, and being itself full of the Holy Ghost, it is qualified to discern the evidence of the divine inspiration of those precious books. Being in sympathy with the spirit of these writings, it closes in with their authority; not as something which comes to it with the constraint of law, but as that which corroborates its knowledge, confirms its truth and supports its life. By virtue of the personal experience of the subject of faith, the Scriptures become, by the force of their inherent excellence, its only sure source of light, and its only infallible rule of life. There is, thus, an inseparable connection between the two principles. "On this reciprocal relation," says Martensen, "depends the health of the Church; and if we conceive a time when these factors shall have thoroughly permeated one another, then will the Church have reached its highest earthly goal; it will have returned through the strifes of its period of development back to the fullness revealed by the apostolic Church as a model for all time." How can this relation be effectually preserved? And how is this highest earthly goal of the Church to be attained? We answer: *by making the great principle in both its aspects, the groundwork of the system of our theology.*

CHAPTER VII.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND SAVING TRUTH IN THEIR UNION MUST BE DISTINGUISHED AS A PRINCIPLE AND NOT BE TREATED MERELY AS DOCTRINES; AS BELONGING TO THE GROUNDWORK, AND NOT MERELY AS A PART OF THE SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY.

§ 1. *The Nature of the Distinction.*

The principle of the Reformation is to be regarded as a *principle and not merely as a doctrine*; assurance of salvation as a matter of experience, and not as a result of mere intellectual operations, the Sacred Scriptures, in the relation of their saving contents to the organs of the religious consciousness—to our spiritual capacities and wants—as self-authenticating and independent of scientific verification. The difference between this and the mere speculative apprehensions and logical statements of truth must not be overlooked. Experimental religion, justification by faith in Christ, the gospel as the power of God unto salvation, involve elements and phases of truth, other than those of mere intellection. They are independent of science; they are not comprehended in the logical forms of scholasticism on the one hand, nor in the inner light of mysticism on the other. Justification as a fact of life, a matter of experience under impressions of divine realities made upon the soul by the gospel and Spirit of God—of the contact of the divine objects of religious faith with the internal or spiritual organs of consciousness—involves movements of the mind other than those of mere intellect—a species of knowledge which is independent of the mere logical understanding. When men overlook this they very soon tend toward neglecting justification by faith or, at least, toward making it a mere doctrine, and treating it co-ordinately with other doctrines of the theological system. Instead of being placed *in the forefront as a principle, it becomes only a doctrinal part of the system.* It is taken out of its place in the foundation, removed from the groundwork, and placed among the materials of the edifice. Instead of being the determining

principle, it becomes a mere dependent part of the system. This separation of it from life, results either in the mechanical positivism of a lifeless orthodoxy, or in the destructive negativism of a skeptical rationalism. For as these are but two forms of the logical understanding each, in its way, ignoring the vital relations of truth to experience in consciousness—to the religious susceptibility—they have an inner affinity which will always sooner or later manifest itself. Assurance of salvation now becomes a mere intellectual question; and an intellectualism results, which changes the principle to a doctrine of the system, and makes the mere logical form of saving truth, as “the pure doctrine,” instead of this truth in its vital relations, in its self-evidencing power, the means of grace, the source or instrument of regeneration and sanctification; thus, suspending salvation upon the reception of a certain quantum of doctrinal propositions. Theology, instead of being the obedient servant, assumes now to be the arrogant mistress of saving truth.

§2. *The First Clear Apprehension of the Distinction.*

The importance of the distinction here indicated was, indeed, recognized by the earnest opponents of a rationalizing tendency, and the true apologists for Christianity *before* the Reformation. But it was first speculatively apprehended and clearly propounded by Luther *at* the Reformation. His advance beyond all his predecessors consists in his defining and limiting *the inner certainty of truth in its independence of science to the personal assurance of salvation through faith in Christ alone*. Dr. Shedd after distinguishing faith from the mere “candor of mind or willingness to be convinced,” which even an Aristotle inculcates, says that in the idea of the apologists: “Faith is not a mere readiness to be convinced. It is an actual assurance of the mind; an inward certitude. Faith is the *substance* of things hoped for and the *evidence* of things not seen (Heb. xi. 1.)” “A matter of the heart and will, of life and feeling. It is a practical, and not a speculative act of the mind.” “The object of faith is not cognizable by the senses, for this is the meaning of invisible in this connection, The eternal world with all its realities stands in no sort of relation to a sensuous organism, and is, therefore, inapprehensible by any or all of the physical media of knowledge. Faith, therefore, is the direct contrary of

infidelity, which tests everything by a sensuous experience, and does not believe at all except upon a sensuous knowledge of objects. Faith is not a sensuous but an *intellectual* act, and as the etymology of the word denotes, is *fidelity* to the invisible and eternal; is *fealty* to the invisible, the spiritual, and the supernatural. It is the positive certainty that these are the most real and important of all objects, notwithstanding that they do not come within the sphere of sensuous observation."

All this is true of mere general faith in the invisible. But if the intellectual act which faith is said purely to be, is to be regarded as anything more than belief of testimony, it is not independent of science. It would only be a lower form of knowledge, and would be absorbed into science in its higher development. According to Luther's idea, the "invisible" has become manifest in Christ and the eternal has been revealed in time. There is one point in which there is a real and actual union of God and man—the incarnation—and by the gospel and the Holy Spirit the soul is brought into actual union and communion with God, with the "King immortal, invisible, the only wise God," in Christ through faith. Thus there is a real though not a sensuous contact of the object of faith with the organs of consciousness, with the religious susceptibility, with man's capacity for God, and consequently "the inner certitude," the "actual assurance of the mind," of which Dr. Shedd speaks, is not purely "an intellectual act," but is connected with a real experience, though not a sensuous; with a real, though spiritual contact of the soul with the object of faith. It is a spiritual experience—a faith involving more than a purely intellectual act. This is the realism of Luther, or rather the old Biblical realism revived by Luther, through the principle of the Reformation. Luther's view of faith as well as that of his predecessors made faith rest on testimony; but while the latter, beyond this historical faith, recognized only a "purely intellectual act," Luther connected with this an actual experience in consciousness as realized in saving faith. This was with him the faith which has in it certainty of truth, full and personal assurance of mind.

"But," continues Dr. Shedd, "while the Christian apologist of this period thus regarded faith as different in kind both from the cold speculative belief of the intellect, and the warm but

low certainty of the five senses, he maintained that it is a *rational* act and state of the soul. This is the second characteristic to be noticed. We find in this, as in the former instance, the same disposition on the part of the defender of Christianity to contend for the reasonableness of revealed religion in all its parts and departments. This believing state of the soul, which Christianity insists so much upon, and which constitutes the very life and heart of this religion, is not the credulity of an ignorant and unthinking devotee. Hence the apologist sometimes represents faith as the most *natural* state of the soul. It is the fountain of human society, argues Augustine; we are born in faith, and are shut up to it. Origen presents the same view in his argument against the skepticism of Celsus. Polycarp, in the very twilight of the controversy between faith and unbelief, calls faith 'the mother of us all.' Nonnus, in similar phraseology, terms faith 'the boundless mother of the world.' These expressions relate, it will of course be understood, to faith in its most general signification. They were not made with any direct reference to that more restricted and peculiar act of the soul by which the justifying work of the Redeemer is appropriated; though it deserves to be noticed, they are not without a valid application to justifying faith itself. But these and similar statements of the defender of Christianity were intended to specify the nature of the general attitude of the mind towards revealed truth, and invisible things, which is required of man, in order that he may apprehend them. The apologist claimed that this recumbency of the soul upon the supernatural, the invisible, the specially revealed, was a most reasonable, and in one sense of the word, as Augustine teaches, a natural act and state of the human mind. Employing the term 'natural' to denote what belongs to man's original created nature,—to what belongs to his first unfallen nature, in distinction from his second apostate nature,—the Apologete maintained, in opposition to the skeptic, that the Christian faith does no violence to the constitution of the rational spirit, but on the contrary, falls in with its deepest wants and necessities, and is therefore a natural act and condition. Faith, he said, corresponds to and satisfies the original needs of man and human society. It is the only safe and tranquil mental state for a creature who like man has not yet entered the eternal and invisible world, and who, there-

fore, must take eternal things for the present upon trust. And as matter of fact, so affirmed the defender of faith, we begin to exercise faith in some form or other, as soon as we begin to exist, either physically or morally. The child is the exhibitor and the symbol of this characteristic (Matt. xviii. 2-4); and in mature life those who cease from the trusting repose and faith of childhood, and become unbelieving and infidel, run counter to the convictions of the majority of mankind. In this sense, and by such and similar tokens, faith is perceived to be natural, and unbelief unnatural. The former consequently is rational, the latter irrational; so that the apparent contrariety between faith and reason disappears, as soon as a central point of view is attained.

“The distinction itself between faith and science had already been made in the preceding Apologetic period, by the Alexandrine School. The great founder and head of this school, Origen, though one of the most speculative minds previous to the school-men, was careful to lay down the position that ‘faith precedes scientific knowledge in the order of nature.’ He steadfastly taught that the speculative is grounded in the practical, and not vice versa, and that it is impossible to build up a Christian science out of any other materials than those which are furnished by revealed truth, wrought into the Christian consciousness. Hence evangelical faith in the heart must precede the *philosophical* cognition of Christianity. It does not exist prior to any and every kind of knowledge, but prior to scientific knowledge. Faith is an intelligent act, but not a *scientific*.”

Dr. Shedd says: “These expressions relate, it will of course be understood, to faith in its most general signification. They were not made with any direct reference to that more restricted and peculiar act of the soul by which the justifying work of the Redeemer is appropriated.” This was precisely their defect. They had no clear apprehension of justification by faith, and, consequently, did not and could not make it the faith which precedes science and is independent of it. And we would not only say with Dr. Shedd that “it deserves to be noticed, that their expressions are not without a valid application to justifying faith itself,” but we go further and say that this is the only faith to which they are strictly applicable at all—the only faith which has assurance of truth.

“With these positions of Origen and his school, Augustine

agreed entirely, as did the Church generally, during the polemic period." "He postpones scientific knowledge to faith, and recognizes in Christianity the only absolute religion for mankind, to which he requires the human mind to submit itself; for faith in the object precedes the scientific cognition of the object. Reason, he says, would never have delivered man from darkness and corruption, if God had not accommodated Himself to the finite, and '*cum populari quadam clementia*' humbled the divine intellect even to the human nature and the human body." "It is, therefore, a reasonable act, when, in matters pertaining to salvation, which we are not able to understand completely as yet, but which we shall be able to understand some time or other, our faith precedes our reason, and so purifies the heart that we become capable of the light of the perfect and supreme Reason."

"Whether faith is prior or posterior in the order of nature, to science, is the test question that determines the character of all philosophizing upon Christianity. If faith in the phrase of Clement, be regarded as elementary, the test and epitome of science, there is little danger that the substance of Scriptural Christianity will be evaporated in the endeavor to exhibit its reasonableness. If, on the other hand, the order is reversed, and scientific knowledge is made to precede belief; if the dictum is laid down, as it was by Abelard in the next period, that there is no believing antecedent to scientific understanding, and consequently that the degree of posterior faith depends upon the degree of anterior science: then the all-comprehending mystery and depth of revealed religion will be lost out of sight and the whole grand system of Christianity will be reduced down to that 'simple' religion, desired by the French Director, which consisted of 'a couple of doctrines,' viz.: the existence of a God, and the immortality of the soul. As we follow the history of Apologies down to the present day, we perceive that leading minds have been supernaturalists or rationalists in their methods of defending and philosophizing upon Christianity according as they have adopted or rejected the dictum first announced by Origen, repeated by Augustine, and most thoroughly expanded and established by Anselm—the dictum, *fides precedit intellectum*. In the former class, we find the names of Origen, Augustine, Anselm, Calvin, Pascal. In the latter the names of men like Scotus Erigena, Abelard, Raymond Lully, in whom the speculative

energy overmastered the contemplative, and whose intuition and construction of Christian doctrine was inadequate, and in some circumstances, certainly, fatally defective."

All this is true and admirable. But still the question arises, what is the faith which must precede science? If it be merely the faith which is based upon the natural reason, the common consciousness, then the science resulting will not corroborate the Christian faith. If it be faith based simply on the testimony and authority of the visible Church, then Protestants would not be able to entertain it; and, as we shall presently see, it has uniformly been found to be irreconcilable with science. If it be personal experience of faith—faith produced by the influence of the testimony and authority of the Bible, then it is not the mere general belief in divine truth which has been described—even though it be personal faith—but the specific faith, involved in the principle of the Reformation, which has in it that assurance, that certainty of truth, which the faith must have that can claim to be independent of science, and that must precede it. In this respect justifying faith is distinguished from mere general Christian faith even when the latter is based upon Scriptural testimony. As it is all-important to mark the distinction of this faith out of which the Reformation sprang—this faith which has in it certainty of truth as the basis of science, the groundwork of theology—the reader will, even after the long extract from Dr. Shedd, indulge me in another from Dr. Dorner, in which he describes the conflict between faith and science from the days of Anselm down to the Reformation: "The ecclesiastical dogma, claiming for itself unconditional authority, is neither able nor willing to be reconciled to the demand for personal conviction and certainty. This appears especially in the last and skeptical period of scholasticism. Inasmuch as the subject is to submit passively to the ecclesiastical dogma, as a law which neither needs nor allows any other form of credibility than that afforded by the divine authority of the Church, there was found an antagonism between the intelligent spirit longing for certainty, and the dark and opposing power of tradition. This abject submission, which has neither certainty in itself nor adaptation to become the principle of a Christian knowledge, was called *faith*. Scholasticism in the earlier periods sought to overcome, in the later, to conceal, and finally, to establish this dualism upon prin-

ciple, and to make absolute ignorance the basis of the ecclesiastical positivism. *Anselm of Canterbury* had as yet placed faith, that is, the reception of the objective, ecclesiastical dogma, as first, expecting cognition to occur subsequently, as the result of religious experience. Of a possible antagonism between this experience, or the knowledge attainable through it, and the ecclesiastical doctrine, he has no suspicion. Nor does he inquire whether the reception must occur consciously and as recognized duty, or blindly. For he proceeds from the standpoint of a piety, unshaken and undisturbed by doubt, from the standpoint of the man belonging to the Church from his youth, and who has been kept *morally* in this piety. The case in which this piety cannot yet be, as with the non-Christian; or where it is no more, as with the skeptic—he does not examine. He only shows in a striking manner, that the historical faith must, through personal experience, become endued with certainty, and be wedded to knowledge. In this way he thinks that the conception of the object of faith retains its right, inasmuch as, though it was received on the ground of mere authority, it is still able to acquire certainty of its truth. To Abelard, on the other hand, it seems necessary first of all to *know* what is to be believed; in general, because, as he shows with great profuseness of learning in his work (*sic et non*), that the ecclesiastical faith is, in many important points, uncertain, nay inconsistent in itself; but especially, because that only is to be believed which is known to be true. Hence he changes the formula of Anselm: I believe that I may know (*credo ut intelligam*), into this other: I know that I may believe (*intelligo ut credam*). But a faith which receives only what is proved to be true, is nothing but the consciousness of the evidence accompanying that which has been proved—the feeling of certainty which of itself accompanies the normal process of knowledge. It has no connection with the religious feeling and life. The consciousness of certainty or evidence is, according to Anselm, produced by an *ethico-religious* experience; according to Abelard, by a purely *intellectual* process. As certainty is, to Abelard, altogether of an intellectual nature and not at all of a religious kind, he allows no essential place for the attainment of *personal* certainty of the truth of Christianity. The effect of experience and the action of the will are ignored. According to his principles Christian truth would have to be de-

monstrable by reason, and, consequently, as Christianity would exist already in the universal reason, it would not be indispensable. His rejection by the Church is, therefore, not to be wondered at; but it is not to be forgotten that this rejection left unanswered the question how any others than those yet in nonage could, simply by the authority of the Church, be brought in a *moral* way, to a blind subjection to the content of the ecclesiastical doctrine. Even what had been accorded by Anselm to the value of the relatively independent knowledge attainable in the way of personal experience, seemed in a subsequent period to have been entirely forgotten. The ecclesiastical doctrine would not submit to the test: whether it could make itself certain through experience. For what if it should fail to make itself certain, but on the contrary should call forth criticism? It was not, therefore, to be subjected to this test. No wonder that the later Scholasticism constantly returned with more and more distinctness to the Church as the only supreme authority; and that it labored only in single points to expound more fully, to define more clearly, or to accommodate more completely, the ecclesiastical doctrine to the thinking spirit, as is done especially by Thomas Aquinas."

What was still lacking was the personal assurance of faith—the faith which has in it the certainty of truth. The certainty of experience and the corroboration which Anselm expected and required, could not attend upon a faith resting merely on the testimony and authority of the Church, nor upon a mere *general* Christian faith resting upon the testimony and authority of the Bible even; for such a faith, while it is not superstitious but intelligent, has in it an element of knowledge—yet it has not necessarily *certainty* of knowledge. It may still be attended more or less by the uncertainty of the determination of the speculative intellect. There was wanting, consequently, a more *specific* faith—a faith resting not merely on testimony, but also already *realized* in personal experience; faith in the great centre of truth, Christ alone; *justifying, saving* faith, which has in it *certainty of truth, and is thus distinguished from mere general Christian faith. This was found in the experience of Luther and announced in the principle of the Reformation.* The truth, which had been claimed in vain by the Church as an organism, was now apprehended as coming with *self-evidencing power to the in-*

dividual; and the Holy Ghost, which was supposed to be bestowed upon the visible Church, as possessed by all Christians, who, thus, are the true Church. With the gift of Christ for justification, is conceived to be connected the gift, to the individual, of the Holy Spirit for regeneration and sanctification. This Spirit, through the instrumentality of the gospel, produces faith and bears witness to His own work; and, thus, gives personal assurance of salvation, and inner certainty of Christian truth.

This is the faith which is independent of science, which must precede science, and which can never be absorbed in science. It will be satisfactory and profitable now to select a few of the utterances which we have given from Luther to show how different in nature and in point of certainty is the faith which Luther makes independent of all human authority and science: "I have believed and therefore have I spoken. He that is spiritual judgeth all things and is judged of no man. All believers have the Holy Ghost. To deny this would be to deny the faith and the Christian Church. Thus we must remain free judges, that we have to decide and judge. But if we receive anything it must be because it agrees with our conscience and with the Scriptures. The Holy Scriptures are a light much clearer than the sun, especially in all those things which are necessary for a Christian to know and which are conducive to salvation. For note this well, that it is the sheep that are to judge what is proposed to them; and that we are to say, we have Christ for our Lord and His Word in spite of devils and men; and that the sheep hear and know what is the true voice. Faith does not come from the heart, unless it has the Word of God. This my Christ, this the Holy Ghost has taught me. Beware of false prophets: from this it follows clearly that I may decide upon doctrine. Thou must know before all Councils that this is the doctrine of Christ: thou canst not help thyself; Christ is thy Saviour who effects that thy sins are forgiven. Thou must know and acknowledge in thy heart that it is so; and if thou dost not feel it, thou hast not the faith, but the Word hangs on thine ear and rolls on thy tongue like the bubble upon the water. If thou believest thou hast already the test, the standard, the rule whereby thou canst judge all doctrines of the fathers, to wit, if thou knowest that Christ is our salvation, that He governs us, and that we are sinners. He that believeth in Christ is saved. It is Christ who

teacheth thee this in thy heart. Therefore *no man can secure himself against error, unless he be a spiritual man.* Therefore, thou *must experience in thyself* that thou canst say: God has said this; that, God has not said. There is no judge on earth in spiritual matters *except the person who has the true faith in his heart*, be it man or woman, young or old, servant or maid, learned or unlearned.

“The sheep *follow him, for they know His voice, but a stranger they will not follow, but flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.* He will have no doctrine or dogma held unless it be proved and acknowledged by the congregation which hears it; for this proving belongs not to the teacher, as he must first speak in order that we may prove; thus the judging is taken from the teachers and given to the disciples among Christians. He that is of God, heareth God's Word; he that heareth it not, is not of God. You must in this matter, be so certain, that if I myself should become a fool—which may God forbid—and deny my doctrine, yet you would not depart from it, but would say: *If even Luther himself or an angel from heaven should preach another gospel, let him be accursed. You must by yourself in your conscience feel Christ Himself, and unchangeably experience that it is God's Word, even though all the world should speak against it. The Master teaches in the heart. Christ brings it into the heart.* This is the consolation which we have from the gospel, that we know that comfort is to be found nowhere but in the Scriptures and God's Word. When Paul calls the gospel the office of the Spirit, he does it *to show its power where it operates quite otherwise than law* in the human heart, to wit: *it brings with it the Holy Spirit and makes a new heart, elevates the heart and gives it comfort.* This is the beautiful promise to the overwhelming glory of Christians, that God so deeply condescends to them, operates so nearly to them, that nowhere else *but in and through them, His Word and work and hand, will He manifest or will He let Himself be seen and heard.* Thus a Christian can rejoice with truth and reason, and say: *I believe in the Holy Ghost, who makes all believers holy.* This is our confidence, we with great reason assuredly say: We are holy, and among each other holy brethren at Wittenberg, Rome, Jerusalem, etc. For it is, indeed, the Holy Ghost who bestows upon you Christ and His holiness; and works faith in you. The Scriptures are the *principal light and of all others, the*

clearest and the most certain. As with philosophy, no man judges concerning universal ideas, but all other ideas are determined by these universal truths; *so also it is with us concerning the mind of the Spirit, which judgeth all things and is judged of no man.* And of this I must be as certain as I am that three and two make five, or that an ell is longer than its half. This is certain; though all the world should speak against it, yet I know that it is not otherwise. Who determines me in this? No man, but the truth alone, which is so certain that no man can deny it! Our understanding without any deception dictates that seven and three are ten, though it can give no reason why this is true; yet it cannot be denied that it is true; it is consequently itself bound in that it is more determined by the truth than the truth by it. *There is also such an understanding in the Church through illumination of the Spirit.* Where the faith of Christ is, there the Holy Ghost effects in the heart such comfort and childlike confidence. The witness of the Spirit is precisely this, that our heart has comfort, confidence and filial prayer. That we may regard ourselves children of God, we have not of ourselves nor from the law, *but it is the Holy Spirit's witness,* who against the law and the feeling of our unworthiness, bears witness in the heart, in the very midst of our infirmities, gives such testimony and makes us certain of it. Here I stand; I cannot otherwise; God help me."

This is the *more specific* faith, the *more definite* experience, which is to precede science according to the principle of the Reformation. It is *personal assurance of salvation, the experience of justification by faith, the clearness and certainty of the Sacred Scriptures in all things pertaining to the salvation of the soul,* in all things necessary for the Christian to know, and consequently justification by faith alone, and the Sacred Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice, as the groundwork which must precede science, and must be pre-supposed by the system of theology.

§ 3. *Its Application by the Reformers.*

The importance of this distinction will become manifest by a glance at the history of theology since the Reformation. At first it was deeply felt and in a great measure observed and preserved in theological thought and practice. In the early days

of the Reformation, justification by faith and the clearness and certainty of the Scriptures in all things conducive to salvation were treated as matters, the certainty of which was independent of all science; personal assurance of salvation, as matter of experience; saving truth, as self-evidencing, as the power of God unto salvation. This principle was treated as the groundwork, the animating soul, the living source and the governing spirit of the theological system. In this experimental and practical way it was exhibited by Luther and Melanchthon in the blessed first days of the Reformation. *Justification* was treated as *assured by the experience of faith*, and the "*gospel*," which they considered the revelation of "the manner in which we are to be justified," they proclaimed *as capable of being "understood by all."* This was the great groundwork of their thoughts, and its substance was not only independent of science; but it almost superseded all system. Their operations were mainly practical. So far as they did systematize, all theoretical views were either neglected, left out of the system, or if they were admitted, they were kept in close connection with the experience of the certainty of salvation.

While Luther was preaching justification by faith, as the expression of experimental Christianity, the certainty of the forgiveness of sin and of adoption into the family of God, Melanchthon was, in the same spirit, preparing his *Loci Communes*. He places the momentum of religion as revived in his day in the saving work of Christ, in experimental Christianity; and while he recognizes, for example, the doctrines concerning God, the unity of God, creation, as proper topics in the theological system, yet in the first edition of his work, he does not see any "reason why we should devote ourselves to these most lofty subjects—the doctrines concerning God, concerning the Unity of God, concerning the Trinity of the Godhead, concerning the mystery of Creation, concerning the mode of the Incarnation." He does not think that much good has resulted from the Scholastics having exercised themselves for so many ages upon these topics; and that we should be engaged more in the cognition of the benefits of Christ than in the contemplation of His nature and the mode of His incarnation. This is no evidence that he did not appreciate the importance of the doctrines concerning Christianity; for he afterwards, in later editions, enters

upon the discussion of them, and even attempts a construction of the doctrine of the Trinity, from the divine self-consciousness. But it shows how deeply he felt the *distinction between justification by faith as a principle, and justification by faith as a doctrine*; between the fact, and the doctrine concerning the fact; between Christianity as principle and life, and Christianity as doctrine. *Thus, did the first theological work of the Reformation distinguish the groundwork from the system.*

In the same way did the Reformers, nine years after, make their profession of faith in the Augsburg Confession. They insert no article on the clearness and certainty, the intelligibility and inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, as did the later creeds, especially those of the Reformed Church. Whence this omission? Certainly not from a want of due appreciation of them, but from the sense of their clearness and certainty, as independent of science, as belonging, consequently, to the groundwork more than to the system of the creed and of theology. And, in like spirit, they make justification, not so much a doctrine, as the determining principle of the entire system of Christian truth. It is the central point which, as a principle, directs and controls the entire arrangement of the structure; making the doctrines of God, of Original Sin, of the Son of God, come first as necessarily pre-supposed by the fact that we are justified by faith in Christ alone. And then they exhibit the doctrines concerning the origination of faith, concerning its objective conditions, concerning its preservation, as consequents necessarily following from the great central fact of the certainty of justification, peace with God and the hope of eternal life through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Justification by faith alone, is distinct, in their minds, from the doctrines concerning justification, and the doctrines concerning faith, and is regarded as the groundwork of all doctrinal conceptions. And so far as justification enters into the system it is as the substance, in view of their relations to which all doctrines must be discussed; and hence the entire weight of all the discussions, rests upon the relation of faith to the free grace of God to the gratuitous atonement made by Christ; and upon the consequences of justification by faith—upon the true Christian idea of works, the Church, etc. It was the confession of experimental religion, of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, around which everything,

in the statement and arrangement of doctrines, is made to revolve.

§ 4. *The Sad Effects of the Deviation from it.*

Just in proportion as justification by faith *ceased to be treated as matter of experience, its importance in the theological system was diminished.* At first, even when transformed from a principle to a mere doctrine, and transferred from the groundwork to the system,—it still, for some time, occupied a prominent place *in the system*; but having once been made more a question of intellectual apprehension than of experience in consciousness, it soon began to be placed,—even by theologians who by no means meant to undervalue its importance,—in a position of less and less prominence, until it came, at length, to be among the last topics in the system. Just in proportion as deep personal experience of justification declined, and it began to be regarded not as the gospel, the power of God unto salvation, not as a principle but as a doctrine co-ordinate with other doctrines, its original prominence in the theological system disappeared. *The tendency was to turn the attention away from Christ, to faith in certain doctrinal propositions, and to make salvation depend upon the acceptance of the “pure doctrine;” to turn the attention of men away from the necessity and practicability of personal assurance of salvation, of conscious experience of the saving power of the gospel, to mysterious, magical operations of the Word and sacraments.* Thus it was, at length, really depreciated. Declining from the religious life of the Reformation, and striving to bring the mysteries of faith within the grasp of the mere understanding, to put them into the forms and connections of mere abstract logic, theology neglected the living knowledge which is an element so essential in saving faith. It departed from the principle of the Reformation, that the truth has vital relations to the human soul, and comes to it in ways other than mere speculative apprehension and logical formulas, and it thus became as unscientific as it was unspiritual and powerless for the salvation of men. While blindly secure in its intellectualism and haughtily neglecting the experience of life, it came into conflict with earnest, experimental, practical Christianity, and its “pure doctrine,” separated from the Christian consciousness, from the gospel as the power of God unto salvation, soon became helpless before the understanding which judges only according to sense—be-

for the logical powers, now no longer influenced by a spiritual disposition, but by a secular mind.

The question of the certainty of truth in religion having become a purely intellectual one; and the theory of theology having separated speculative apprehension from conscious experience, and transferred the appropriation of saving truth from the testimony of consciousness entirely to the forms of the understanding—having lost its vital power and enforced its forms as a mere external authority—it came into *conflict with the intellect of Christendom*. The thinking mind, now destitute of experimental assurance, and yet asking for inner certainty of truth, and rebelling against the requirement to be satisfied with mere external authority, *fell into rationalism*. The thinking mind, still acting under the impulse given by the Reformation to the desire for inner certainty, but now alienated from the sense of dependence upon experience in religion, instead of beginning with the facts of the Christian consciousness, with the Christian faith as it authenticates itself to the sincere inquirer after saving truth, to the soul longing for certainty of truth—*makes it a purely intellectual question. It begins with universal doubt instead of experimental faith.*

The first answer thus given to the inquiry after the inner grounds of certainty, was derived from the Cartesian Philosophy, to wit, that clearness and distinctness are the criteria of the truth of our ideas. This was more fully developed in the Leibnitz-Wolfian school, which introduced a demonstrative method into the sphere of theology. All religious truths were now to be demonstrated. But in this effort to reconcile personal conviction with the ecclesiastical doctrines, the objective dogmas were more and more modified by the demands of the mere logical understanding. With some this demonstrative method seemed to be consistent with positive Christianity; with others, it ended in Rationalistic Deism. And when the men of deeper piety and more positive faith—feeling deeply convinced that a mere natural religion affords no certain hope of salvation—adopted a supernaturalistic view of religion, it became manifest in due time that having, in their method, departed from the facts of Christian experience as the groundwork, and occupying common ground with its opponents, they could not successfully maintain the claims of Christianity as a special revelation. The

understanding having cut loose from experience in religion, tends not to confirm and establish, but to undermine and destroy belief in all supernatural interpositions. It cannot in any of its mere connecting operations find the link which unites Christianity with religion in general, and instead of corroborating, it will deny the claims of a special revelation. And as men could not find certainty of truth and satisfy the yearning of the heart after assurance in either the rationalistic or the supernaturalistic theology, and yet were still urged onward in the pursuit, new tendencies were originated.

The first of these may be called philosophical theology. The Critical Philosophy of Kant having subjected the sources and grounds of knowledge to a critical analysis, declared the Cartesian principle that clearness is the criterion of truth, to be a mere assumption; that reason has no speculative capacity to apprehend, decide or prove anything in the question concerning the existence of supernatural realities; and that faith in God and immortality is a mere postulate of what he calls the practical reason. Thus religion became only the recognition of the "categorical imperative"—of the behest of the practical reason as the command of God. The Egoistic Philosophy of Fichte, in endeavoring to evolve the results of the practical reason, recognized in the Critical Philosophy, from the self-consciousness, removed the possibility of revelation as well as of faith in a personal God and a personal immortality of the soul; and left for religion, only faith in a moral order of the world, only faith in a God who is conceived to be identical with the moral life and actions of men. The Identity-Philosophy of Schelling, in endeavoring to remedy the failure of the Egoistic Idealism—in the attempt to develop nature from spirit—assumed an intellectual intuition of the absolute as being neither subjective nor objective, neither spirit nor nature, but the absolute identity of the two. But this co-ordination of nature and spirit, and this apprehension of God as the mere indifference-point of the two, could not be maintained on scientific, any more than on religious grounds. Meanwhile, the Absolute Idealism of Hegel, discovering the insufficiency of the doctrine of identity, both in its assuming an intellectual intuition of the Absolute and in its making the Absolute the point of indifference between nature and spirit, put, instead of the identity, the idea itself—no spec-

tator to cognize, no being to be cognized—nothing but the idea itself in its necessary logical evolution, unconsciously in nature, consciously in man; and developing itself into self-consciousness in the universal sphere of art, religion, and philosophy;—thus making religion only a lower form of knowledge, a mere temporary phenomenon, destined to pass away as philosophy advances. Thus has this intellectualism not only failed to confirm and establish the certainty of the truth of revealed religion; but it has even destroyed the foundations of all religious truth; introducing a pantheism which is destructive of all grounds of moral obligation and of all spiritual worship; culminating in a Strauss in the denial of all personality in God, and in a Feuerbach in reducing all theology to anthropology—in making man God. It has come, consequently, into such utter antagonism with the Christian faith and the plain teachings of the Bible, that it has lost its hold upon the minds and hearts of all truly Christian men. And, in its later developments, it has become consciously inimical to Christianity; and it *now recognizes itself to be, in scientific development and form, the old heathen idea of God and the world.*

§ 5. *Its Continuous Preservation and Its Revival by the Pietists.*

The entire result shows the necessity of the ground of assurance of salvation, as it is established by the principle of the Reformation; and upon which the Reformers were perfectly agreed, notwithstanding the difference of their views on various doctrines of the system. Melancthon, with his ethical nature and practical tendency, was, indeed, the complement of Luther in the work of maintaining and exhibiting the groundwork of the creed and theology. His views, as they came to light in the controversy with the Antinomians, and in the later editions of his *Loci Communes* and of the Augsburg Confession, were, in the former case, positively endorsed by Luther, and, in the latter, they were well understood and tolerated by him. And, indeed, the *Loci* thus modified, and the Augsburg Confession thus altered, were universally used by the Evangelical Lutheran churches for the first twenty years after the Reformation. They were views which tended especially to the maintenance of personal, conscious experience in regeneration and sanctification, and of the experimental and practical character of Christianity gen-

erally. And although, after Luther's death, they were in a great measure suppressed by the prevalent party, they were still operative in the Church. The liberal and practical views of Melancthon, which were really in perfect harmony with the deep mystical spirit of Luther, were never entirely lost from the Church. While most of the theologians devoted their energies to the formal and polemic statement of particular doctrines of the system as strictly Lutheran, to the neglect of the experimental and practical relations of saving truth as they are manifest in the principle of the Reformation; there were never wanting men who sought to direct attention more especially to the experimental, as an essential element in the groundwork of theology, men who maintained the rights of the spirit against the mere form of the letter. As an Arndt developed the inner elements of the Lutheran doctrine of justification in its independence of scholastic formulæ, so a Calixtus constructed theology according to the liberal views and practical tendencies of the Melancthonian spirit. "Arndt's True Christianity," and the works of Scriver, Miller and others, kept alive the interest for experimental piety, for conscious experience in distinction from the supposed mysterious or magical effects of the Word and sacraments. While the thinking mind—when the question of the certainty of truth was, by the scholastic theology, made a mere intellectual question—rebelled against its authority and took the form of Rationalism,—the *religious spirit, in the form of Pietism, came into conflict with it also; with this difference, however, that the latter was a return to the spirit of the Reformation, and to the Sacred Scriptures, as the source of the certainty of truth and salvation.* It was a revival of the principle of the Reformation, a return to the fact of justification by faith, to the maintenance of the necessity of experimental religion, of personal assurance of salvation through inner conscious experience. Its tendency was to undermine the unconditional authority of creeds and systems of theology, to turn men from the superstructure to the foundation, from the symbols to the Bible. In its practical tendencies it maintained the position that the gospel is not only doctrine but life. It expended little energy and time in the mere formulation of doctrines, but labored abundantly, in the light of the divine Word and of experimental religion, to bring forth in the life the practical elements of the doctrinal formulæ. In its

more scientific representatives, it called attention to the historical element in the doctrines of the Church; thus liberating them more and more from the fixed and dead forms of the creed, and committing them to the living determination of Scripture and experience. It has, indeed, been charged with being the forerunner of Rationalism. "The relation of Pietism to Rationalism has often in recent times," says Auberlen, "been spoken of as that of the forerunner, since it broke the objective power of the Church doctrine, and opened the door to a one-sided subjectivism. This opinion is as true and as false, as that which makes Protestantism the forerunner of Rationalism. Those who cling to the old—in the one case, the Catholics; in the other, the modern friends of the Old Protestant Church systems—are always disposed to make the good, which is also the new, responsible for the bad which may be in the new. The revival of the orthodox opposition to Pietism has, therefore, been criticized and considered in what we have already said of the corresponding view of Protestantism. The true history of the matter is as follows. As there was a two-fold opposition to Catholicism, that of skepticism and that of living faith, the humanistic and the Reformation in the sixteenth century; so against the Church and state orthodoxy of the seventeenth century, arose the Rationalistic and the Pietistic opposition. Both insisted on practical religion in opposition to one-sided dogmatism; but one party found it in the so-called natural religion, the other in a living, active Christianity, which is the root of the theology of spiritual men. Humanism was older than the Reformation, and Rationalism was older than Pietism. English Deism, the father of modern Rationalistic negation, began its work long before Pietism. Herbert of Cherbury, who first promulgated the idea of natural religion, died as early as 1648, when Spener was only thirteen years of age.

"At the same time Pietism had, like Protestantism, a formal relation to Rationalism, and outwardly paved the way for the spread of it, through the fact that it laid stress above all things upon a subjective experience, and granted a freer movement of the mind than the authority of the Church had allowed. It must further be admitted, that the Church and her ordinances were and are in many ways misunderstood and neglected, not, indeed, by the fathers of Pietism, but in pietistic circles. But

Rationalism also, because of its one-sided direction of the understanding, stands essentially nearer to orthodoxy than to Pietism, just as, through its fundamental Pelagian view, it stands nearer to Catholicism than to Protestantism. The "religion of thought" is more closely related to the mere faith of the head than to the faith of the heart. At any rate, the modern worldly spirit is most completely antagonistic to Pietism with its tendency to flee from the world. 'Only as in all other extremes,' say we with Delitsch, 'not as the inevitable result of Pietism, is Rationalism to be understood.' Pietism has been opposed to Rationalism from the very beginning, and this opposition became more decisive as Pietism was further developed theologically by Bengel; and Oetinger, with his scholars, furnishes us with the most important elements for the refutation of Rationalism by a scientific method."

§ 6. *The Defect in the Pietistic Apprehension.*

The Pietistic movement was, indeed, a return to the Reformation, a revival of the principles and method of Luther as complemented by Melancthon; and, consequently, it forms an epoch in the history of theology. It once more insisted upon the fact that the Scriptures are sure and certain—intelligible in everything necessary to salvation—and that they are a sufficient guide in the way of life; a truth theoretically recognized before, but greatly neglected in practice. It proclaimed anew the universal priesthood of Christians, and the right and duty of the individual in matters pertaining to the salvation of the soul—an element of the Reformation which had been greatly repressed. It led men to study anew the Sacred Scriptures, especially for spiritual edification, and to seek that spiritual cognition of divine truth, which is inseparable from the experience of its power to promote holiness of heart and life; to feel that to understand the new relation of sonship with God, they must, by receiving Christ, have the power given to them to become actually the sons of God. It insisted that men must have personal experience of the things revealed in the Bible; that they must believe that they may know; that they must feel the truths of the Scriptures in order truly to understand them; and that then only are they really in possession of the materials with which to constitute their creed or their theological system. But

in its effort to preserve the unity of experience and speculation, of experimental and scientific knowledge, it does *not sufficiently distinguish the simple Christian consciousness from the purely scientific apprehension of the truths derived from the study of the Bible.* It taught rather the *general faith and experience inculcated by Augustine and Anselm* as necessarily preceding science, than the *specific faith and experience, the personal assurance of salvation through faith, the inner conscious experience of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to the believer, insisted upon by Luther and Melancthon.* It did not sufficiently distinguish the *specific* experience, the experience of the saving truth, from the experience of Biblical truth in general; the experience of acceptance with God in Christ, the witness of the Spirit, from *general* Christian experience of the truth of the Scriptures, the *experience of that which belongs to the groundwork in which there is personal certainty, from the experience respecting the materials of the system which is inseparable from the uncertainty of mere intellect;* the experience of personal assurance of salvation through faith, from the experience of the truth and power of doctrines concerning that sure experience and that saving faith. Saving faith includes elements other than knowledge, such as feeling and volition; and, consequently, the knowledge in saving faith, elements other than mere Biblical knowledge, than the knowledge attained by the intellectual investigation of the Scriptures. The distinction lies in this, that faith on the one hand includes subjectively elements of feeling and volition in addition to elements of knowledge, and thus more than mere Biblical knowledge; and that, on the other hand, Biblical knowledge contains objectively much which does not and cannot enter into the experience of saving faith, elements which transcend all experience, and which are believed on the testimony of God without experience, and thus in this respect includes more than the knowledge which is in saving faith, more than belongs to the experience of the certainty of salvation. The point of their union is, that the knowledge involved in the experience of faith—no matter in what form it has come to the heart of the believer—is also found in the Bible; that the one is corroborated by the other. Subjective faith is confirmed by objective faith; the experience of salvation produced by the gospel as the proclamation of the pardoning mercy and grace

of God, is verified by the inspired record of this revelation of the scheme of redemption. The personal, specific experience of peace with God, is confirmed by the Scriptures. We *cannot experience* the certainty of all divine truth; but we *can experience* the certainty of the power of Christ to save the soul. The testimony of the Spirit, personal certainty of salvation, according to Luther, "takes place in this way, namely: that, *as the Spirit works in us through the Word, we feel and become conscious of His power; and our experience corresponds with the Word or declaration of the gospel.*" *This experience is practicable and certain in saving faith, but it does not necessarily extend to all the doctrines contained in the Bible.* The subjective idea developed from the Christian consciousness or saving faith is in correlation with the objective law derived from an exposition of the Sacred Scriptures. The centre and the object of both, of the experience in saving faith and of Biblical knowledge, is *Christ; and the Holy Spirit is the author of both faith and the Bible.* But each of them contains elements which the other does not. The experience of faith could be conceived to exist in the absence of the Bible, and actually did exist before the New Testament was written; but, as we have seen, it seeks the Sacred Scriptures as its rule, and needs them as its constant corrective in the midst of the infirmity and depravity of the human heart, as the inexhaustible source of its preservation, purity and growth. They are united, but not commensurate. They are in some measure independent of each other, so far as their existence is concerned, and yet they are inseparably connected; the Bible looking for the realization of its contents in the inner experience of the new man in Christ; and the experience of faith seeking the Sacred Scriptures as the only sure verification of the objective certainty of the gospel which has produced it. The great distinction of the Reformation, *is that it makes this experience of personal salvation, the experience which emphatically and uniquely has assurance and certainty in it, in contradistinction from mere general Christian experience, the experience that precedes science.* It teaches us to agree with Anselm, "That we must believe that we may know;" with the Pietists, "That personal experience, or feeling-perception, must precede all true knowledge of the things of revelation; that the doctrines of the Bible must be felt in order to be truly understood, have root in

the heart, before they can be rightly apprehended by the understanding." It would teach us to accept the declaration of Pascal: "That divine things are infinitely above nature, and God only can place them in the soul; that He has designed that they shall pass from the heart into the head, and not from the head into the heart; and that while it is necessary to know human things in order to love them, it is necessary to love divine things in order to know them." But in addition to this, it would have us *fix our mind upon the definite and distinct experience in saving faith as having in it knowledge, divinely revealed knowledge, the witness of the Holy Spirit, and, consequently, assurance of salvation and certainty of truth*; and to feel that in this we know what no creature—not even an angel from heaven—can contradict, *and what God never will contradict.*

§ 7. *Its Scientific Exhibition by Schleiermacher.*

This distinction,—first apprehended in fact and announced by Luther in his great principle of the Reformation,—was scientifically apprehended and defined by Schleiermacher, and, consequently, his theology of the Christian consciousness has given an impulse, toward a return to the Reformation, to all the evangelical thought of modern times. To Schleiermacher, notwithstanding his errors and heresies in other respects, belongs the immortal honor of having clearly indicated the erroneousness of a method of theologizing prevalent in all parties of the Church; of having first in modern times clearly and scientifically recognized the inseparable connection of systematic theology with a living faith. While the orthodox party sought to deduce the *system* of faith from some doctrine or doctrines of revealed truth, without regarding the vital connection of the gospel with the soul as the power of God unto salvation, and, consequently, without recognizing personal assurance of salvation through faith as the groundwork; while the Rationalistic and Philosophical Theologians sought to deduce the *Christian faith itself* from some ultimate ground in human knowledge, he started from the fundamental feeling in man—the feeling of absolute dependence, and defined Christianity as the religion of redemption—the deliverance of the God-consciousness from the bondage of nature, through the life which proceeds from the person of Christ—making the consciousness of sin and grace, of living

fellowship with Christ, the Redeemer, the antecedent to systematic theology, the source and starting-point for the true apprehension and appropriation of Christian doctrine; thus giving a view of Christianity which is essentially identical with the material principle of the Reformation—justification by faith in the redemption wrought by Christ.

But while Schleiermacher distinguished the Christian consciousness in its independence of science, he failed to recognize its dependence upon special divine revelation for its origin. He started from the Christian consciousness of redemption through Christ, without due attention to the fact that this consciousness is a determinate state of the common consciousness; is produced, and can be produced, only by a supernatural impression, only by a divinely and miraculously revealed fact, and that for the certainty of our knowledge of that revelation we are dependent upon the Bible. He overlooked the fact that this consciousness presupposes special revelation, and must have its corrective and verification in the Sacred Scriptures; and consequently made theology to be only the development or exposition of the Christian consciousness. He asks only what are the presuppositions of this consciousness, without feeling the necessity of a miraculous corroboration of them and of a divinely-inspired record of them. He went back, indeed, to the Reformation, but he took only its material side, only its material principle. Such a theology is a mere seeming, and not actual science.

In this, however, the theology of the Christian consciousness did great service to the science. It led to the discovery of the irreconcilableness of positive faith with mere science, with mere speculative thought, and has called attention, once more, to the fact, that to have certainty of truth in religion, the cognitive elements in religion must not be separated from living experience, from religion as a primitive fact of life, a fact in consciousness. It apprehends Christianity as a fact which can and does become a fact of experience in consciousness. This was certainly a turning-point, a tendency toward a more thoroughly Evangelical Theology, toward a return to the principle of the Reformation. The defect of all the existing systems was, that in their mere intellectualism they attempted to formulate religion according to some speculative apprehension, without observing its claims as a matter of fact—a fact of experience, a fact

of life. Orthodox supernaturalism framed its "pure doctrine" from a mere intellectual apprehension of revealed truth, and did not recognize its vital relations to the soul, the necessity of its becoming a matter of experience. The Vulgar Rationalism maintained its religious ideas, God, freedom, and immortality, on the grounds of pure intellectual demonstration, and ignored all feeling in religion other than that which necessarily accompanies intellectual operations. The Philosophical Theologians assumed an a priori position by which all the gospel history was, at last, turned into myths; and all sacred facts, into ideas. The theology of the Christian consciousness brought to notice, what was, indeed, involved in the principle of the Reformation—that religion has in feeling a sphere distinct from mere knowledge and action, and independent of science; that there is a real distinction between the mere conceptions of the understanding and experimental knowledge, which may be discerned in faith, and introduced into the discussion of theology; and that, consequently, there is an inseparable connection between true theological science and real living faith. While both the vulgar and speculative rationalism—as the culmination in the process of mere intellectualism in theology—sought to deduce the Christian faith from some one of the ultimate grounds of knowledge; this starts from primitive feeling, from actual experience, and was, thus, a renewal of one phase of the principle of the Reformation.

§ 8. *The Defect of the Theology of the Christian Consciousness.*

Its defect is, that it does *not fully preserve the unity of the two phases of this great principle*, the material and the formal; making theology consist too much in the mere development of the material principle, to the neglect or sacrifice of the formal; too much in the exposition of what is involved in the Christian consciousness, independently of the question of the objective truth of its presuppositions, and of the manner in which the consciousness has received this particular determination. As the philosophical theology was defective by its recognizing in faith only a cognitive element, so the emotional theology is defective by its reducing the content of faith entirely to the sentient element; thus making the doctrines of religion a mere reflection of the religious feeling. The consciousness of living commun-

ion with Christ must, indeed, be the starting-point in our theology, but we must not forget *that this consciousness itself is the production of the impression of Christian truth upon the human mind; of truth which, though needed by our nature and adapted to it, is of supernatural and miraculous origin.* It has come to the human mind by special revelation; and, though intimately united with the soul in experience, still it is distinct. Our theology, therefore, must aim not at humanizing the Christian, but at Christianizing the human element in this consciousness. While saving faith is properly received as a belief independent for its origination or existence of all science, it must still be traced to the truth and power of the gospel, and be found capable of enduring the test of the Sacred Scriptures. Consequently, the mere organic development of what is in the Christian consciousness is not necessarily true Christianity; nor its exposition true theology. The Christ of this consciousness is not necessarily the true Christ. While, therefore, it must exist before theology, and must be regarded as that which makes true theology as a science possible, still it is purely subjective; and it is the business of theology, not only to ask what is implied in this consciousness of communion with Christ, but we must ask for its presuppositions, its ideas, in the Sacred Scriptures. Theology must have the Christ "out of us," as well as the Christ "in us," the Christ of the Bible as well as the Christ of the consciousness. This consciousness is limited to the assurance of salvation through faith in Christ. It does not embrace all Christian knowledge; and it must not remain entirely subjective. It must draw from the Scriptures as the only pure source of all religious knowledge; and it must adopt them as its only infallible guide and its only sure criterion.

§ 9. *The Modern Tendency toward a Return to this Distinction.*

But every true revival of the doctrines of the Church *must start from this inner experience of salvation* through faith in Christ. As it was in the days of Luther and Spener, so in our day, it will be just in proportion as this is made the groundwork, that men will be prepared for a clear understanding and a hearty reception of the doctrines of the Church. It is only when all doctrines are referred to this controlling point, to this central truth of the experience of faith, that we can escape, on

the one hand, from the magical idea of an unspiritual, mechanical supernaturalism, and on the other, from the empirical naturalism of a skeptical, negating rationalism, without falling into the a priori meshes of an idealistic, all-absorbing pantheism.

All modern evangelical theology has felt this impulse; and all the leading theological thinkers in it, from the most liberal to the most rigidly orthodox, are taking this direction.

Many—such as the Mediating Theologians—are in this way laboring to unite the Christian consciousness and philosophical thought, in a higher unity, to effect a reconciliation between the faith of the Church and the results of modern science. They feel that the age of apologetics has returned upon us. The work of adjusting the relations of revelation and reason, of religion and science, at all times important, they regard as specially needed now. And considering the great difference between the ancient and modern methods of science, the vast advance of thought in our day, they regard the ecclesiastical doctrines capable of being retained and supported only in a rejuvenated form. They, consequently, avail themselves of the very means of modern science, and use the highest modes of modern thought, in attempting to bring positive Christianity into favorable connection with the consciousness of modern times.

And even those who, despairing of the attempt to remove the antagonism between secular culture and Christianity as it exists in our day, seek to attain a more confessional theology, are doing it under the impulse of this tendency. Influenced by the modern revival of religion, by the progressive psychological development and the clearer apprehension of the nature, the necessities and possibilities of men individually and socially, and deeply interested in the life-questions of the day, they are unwilling to leave out of view these human manifestations. And having a deep and distinct consciousness that the Evangelical Lutheran Confessions are in agreement with the fundamental principle of the Reformation, they are becoming more and more Lutheran in their views; and, without being very anxious about the form, are diligently cultivating the spirit of a confessional theology. Finally, even those who, by means of a stringent enforcement of the symbols of the Church, are in a more mechanical, artificial way, returning to the faith of the fathers, manifest in their treatment of the several topics of

theology that they are not free from this tendency. The strongest thinkers among them are doing more justice to Melancthon than is to be found in the orthodoxy of the seventeenth century. Some of them admit that the Melancthonian element was not fairly dealt with even in the Formula of Concord, and that in several of these respects, such as the freedom of man and the person of Christ, this creed is capable of modification and improvement. "This principle of progress," it is said, "is not rejected even by the most decided adherents of the Lutheran Confession in Germany. They too distinguish between the 'substance of the creed and the leading proof for a certain theology, which cannot be binding on all times.' They also wish for a progressive and continued formation of symbolical doctrines. But such a continuous formation of doctrines can not be simply the addition of something new to the old. The truth is an organic whole, which must be brought by each successive age afresh into the currents of science." This being the groundwork, we are in a condition either to eliminate, or, what is better, to give an evangelical explanation of what appear to be materials of a heterogeneous nature, and to develop the fundamental doctrines of the divine Word as they are exhibited in the Augsburg Confession. The Reformation having thus distinguished between foundation and superstructure, between principle and doctrine, and retaining the great substance of doctrine without very sharply defining the theological dogmas, has left it to each successive age to study them in the light of its time, and to express them in the language suited to its generation. The post-Reformation formations, the scholastic structures of the seventeenth century, great and strong as they were, have had their day and have done their service. They are crumbling; they cannot be successfully repaired; they will never again have contented, satisfied and happy inmates. But the old home of the Reformation will never decay, but will be more and more crowded from age to age with confident and joyful children, who will, upon the old and solid groundwork, extend its dimensions, adorn more and more its apartments, carry higher and higher its superstructure, until its super-incumbent dome shall close in over a renovated Christianity, a purified Church, a regenerate world.

We have a right, and it is our duty, to appropriate the methods

and to use the modes of modern thought; for they are the results, in a great measure, of the influence of Christianity. The Modern Philosophy derived from Christianity, that is, *the idea of God and the world, of religion and man*, developed under the peculiar impulse given to the human mind and the particular determination of the consciousness of the nations of Christendom by the Gospel—that *philosophy*, theology should endeavor more and more clearly to apprehend, appropriate, and apply. This idea, this Christian philosophy, has in a great measure supplanted the ancient philosophy which was derived from heathendom, and has introduced a new and different spirit into science. The Christian idea of God and the world, of religion and man, is really the modern as distinguished from the ancient view of the universe of being. *This Christian world-view underlies all that distinguishes the intellectual as well as the moral movements of the modern as distinguished from the ancient heathen world.* And it will eventually take possession of human thought speculatively, as it has thus far to a great extent done practically. This idea, as an intuition of saving faith, a necessary presupposition of saving truth, belongs to the groundwork. It must, therefore, be taken into consideration in connection with the method of theological science, and *especially as there have been, and are still, revivals, within the sphere of theology, of the heathen idea, the heathen view of God and the world;* and because the true Christian idea has perhaps *never had its due weight in the theological conceptions and discussions, and has, perhaps, never been permitted to become the complete counterpoise to the unbelieving skeptical thought of the day, that it might become,* it should, in a second part of the groundwork, be considered in its bearings on the great life-questions concerning God and religion. We shall, therefore, attempt to show, in some measure, what, in the light of the principle of the Reformation, it claims and what it rejects; what it involves and what it excludes; to make clear the direct issue to which it has come with the heathen idea as its only consistent opponent, and to turn our attention to the vantage-ground that the Christian cause thus occupies in our day.

PART II.

*THE APPLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD AND
THE WORLD, OF RELIGION AND MAN, OF THE RE-
LATIONS BETWEEN GOD AND MAN, AS APPRE-
HENDED BY MEANS OF THE PRINCIPLE
OF THE REFORMATION.*

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA AS REQUIRED TO BE APPRE- HENDED AND APPLIED THROUGH THE PRIN- CIPLE OF THE REFORMATION.

IF there is to be a science of faith, it must be science of a faith which is possessed independently of science. The certainty of faith must have been produced in ways and by means other than those of mere science. It is only when we have the *specific and certain faith involved in the principle of the Reformation, that we have the basis of true Christian science.* It is only when our belief is specific faith in the great centre of all truth, faith in God revealed in Christ, a personal assurance of salvation, an inner certainty of truth produced by the gospel and Spirit of God; only when Christianity is experienced as a fact; only when the great fact of the Sacred History recorded in the Bible has become a matter of experience, that we have a starting-point for a true Christian theology. It is only when we apprehend revelation, not as the communication of mere abstract doctrine to men on the part of God, but as a matter of fact, a history of facts involving both the divine and the human, a history of divine acts in human nature and society—as a sacred history recorded in the Bible, and not a mere body of doctrine put into the hands of the systematizer; only when we regard the divine incarnation, the advent of Christ into the world, as the perfect divine revelation, and *have an assured and certain faith in Him as the Saviour of the soul—that we can apprehend the true idea of God and the world.* It is only in this way that we come into communication effectually with the source from which are derived the ideas which can successfully be made the subjects of science, and which with certainty can be corroborated by scientific investigation. It is only then that we shall *have the true apprehension of the Christian idea as distinguished from the heathen idea* of the universe of being. It must be not merely a speculative thought, but an intuition involved in experience. The most ignorant man who is spiritual, who has experienced

salvation in Christ, who has realized in experience the nature of sin and of grace, may have, at least, a living source and a living beginning of true Christian science; while the most learned philosopher, who is destitute of this, has no true basis of science in Christianity, no true idea of God and the world, of religion and man. Sin and grace are facts—the one involving acts of man, the other acts of God—and *facts can be personally known and clearly understood only by experience*. Hence the appeal to the fact that mere natural religion lacks redemptive power, and that Christianity pre-supposes the facts of sin and guilt, and that its great substance is the fact of an expiation for the one and deliverance from the other, has always been the most effective upon the minds of men. Everything in Christian science depends upon the full appropriation of the Biblical idea of God. Saving faith involves this as an intuition inseparable from its experience. So closely is this experience of justification by faith in Christ alone, connected with the clear and impressive apprehension of the true idea of God and the world, that we might venture to say that the man who admits the reality of sin, as sin on the part of man, and of forgiveness of sin as a free act on the part of God,—cannot consistently remain on mere rationalistic ground. It is, indeed, only the man who has experience of justification by faith who has a clear conviction of this reality; and the man who does experience sin as guilt and grace as a free gift, has in him the germ of a true Christian science, and the capability of scientifically apprehending Christianity. Such a man will have received the Christian idea in such a light that it will be a sure guide to him in the scientific process. The greater realization of the facts of sin and grace, produced by the Methodistic revival of religion in the last century, did more for the restoration of faith in the thinking mind of England than all the learned labors of her greatest apologists; and the present practical interest in personal salvation resulting from the experimental preaching of her evangelical ministers will manifest a similar superiority of power against infidelity in that country at the present day.

Those elements of truth which may be found in some of the better systems of religious heathendom, such as those of Plato and Aristotle, have their source in the revealed idea of God. Their comparatively correct views of God, their theistic notions,

may, according to so profound and impartial an investigator as Schelling, be regarded "as sporadic portions of the patriarchal and Jewish revelations." This prevented in them the pantheistic developments characteristic of heathen systems. But while the revealed idea of God and the world was thus the source of the theistic element contained in the best forms of heathenism—and forms which, though greatly corrupted, yet restrained many of its evil tendencies, and hindered the development of the pantheistic philosophy which really underlies it—still, it only appeared in "sporadic portions," and was never purely or fully appropriated. Even the Grecian philosophy, in its highest forms, as Platonism and Aristotelianism, failed to apprehend God as the Creator of the world in the strict sense. God was to it not personal, but only artistic. It never freed itself from the idea of the eternity of matter, and, consequently, was involved in a pantheism which would, at last, prove itself to be its native and leading idea. The Christian idea comes from the holy God; the heathen, from corrupt man. As the former came first from revelation, it *is but slowly apprehended even by the subjects of that revelation*. Gradually, and by repeated acts of revelation, it was made more and more clear and impressive, until it had its perfect revelation in the gospel. So it has gradually and from time to time, at certain great turning points in the history of Christianity, been more and more fully apprehended by the Christian mind. Its *complete appropriation by the Church will be the moment of her greatest power* against all error. And the more fully the antagonism between it and infidelity is manifested, the more will the latter be seen to be only the heathen idea in its more scientific development, and the greater will be the power of the former over the mind and belief of all sincere and earnest men. The heathen idea is from the cosmical spirit, not from the Holy Spirit. It has its ground, source and end in the creature. In its modern or scientific form it is the conception of the absolute as the All, instead of that of the absolute as the all-comprehending Spirit; of an eternal impersonal necessity, instead of the personal God as the first and the last; and thus it denies all freedom, and removes every truly moral end and motive from human action. And when men now start with the creature in their search for the good, expecting to find it, not as eternally realized in God, but as the result of an evolution of being; when

instead of making the living God, who is the true source of the unity of the universe, and of the good, the first, the eternally existent—they derive the unity and good of being—the one as a product of a multitude of single existences, and the other as a simple consequence of individual activity; regarding God and the good as something ever becoming, but never really existing—never coming truly into being—when they seek the ground of all duty, first, in the *All* instead of the *living personal* God, and goodness as something which they must first produce—must originate from themselves and of themselves, instead of that which is *the first*, and can only be *freely appropriated* by the creature—when men now think thus, they only give expression to the heathen idea, the idea which was in the minds of those whom Paul characterized when he said: “When they knew God they worshiped Him not as God, neither were thankful;” “their foolish hearts were darkened;” “and they worshiped the creature more than the Creator who is God blessed for evermore.”

The Christian idea as distinguished from the heathen world-view, was not, at once, speculatively apprehended by the Church. It was not, at once, freed in the thoughts of men from all heathen elements and influences. The heathen idea has generally corrupted the human mind before the revealed idea comes to it. “The human mind,” says Dr. Shedd, “is always in a certain philosophical condition before it receives Christianity, and even before Christianity is offered to it by the Divine Mind. In the history of man that which is human precedes, chronologically, that which is divine. ‘That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual.’ Men are sinners before they are saints; and they are philosophers before they are theologians. When Christianity was revealed in its last and fullest form, by the incarnation of the Eternal Word, it found the human mind already occupied with a human philosophy. Educated men were Platonists, or Stoics, or Epicureans. And if we go back to the time of the Patriarchal and Jewish revelations of the Old Testament, we find there was in the minds of men, an existing system of natural religion and ethics, which was for that elder secular world what those Grecian philosophies were for the cultivated heathen intellect at the advent of Christ.....Christianity comes down from heaven by a supernatural revelation, but it finds an existing

human culture, into which it enters, and begins to exert its transforming power. Usually it overmasters that culture, but in some instances it is temporally overmastered by it." The apostolic Church, under the guidance of inspired men and of the spiritual experience of the power of Christianity, accepted the Christian idea of God and the world as it is revealed in the Bible, *and appropriated it intellectually by the knowledge which is through faith.* "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." They had little to do with systems of human speculation, except to guard against "Science, falsely so-called," and against "being spoiled by philosophy and vain deceit." There was, as yet, no philosophy which was the result of the power of Christianity upon the human mind, the outgrowth of the influence of the experience and the knowledge of faith—the product of the Christian consciousness; and when philosophical thought came into the Church, it was the philosophy which had its origin in the heathen world. And this was employed not only by the enemies of the Church in attacking Christianity, but also by her friends in defending it against these attacks. The difference between the Christian and the heathen idea of God and the world was not immediately apprehended. The question was not so much whether Platonism, for instance, was substantially true, but whether it was all that was necessary for the spiritual regeneration and salvation of men. Only gradually and from time to time, and on *certain decisive occasions, was the Church led to a speculative apprehension of the world-view which is revealed in the Bible, and which she had all along involved in her faith.* While, for example, Christians always practically appropriated the biblical idea of the unity of God by faith, it was only in the discussions concerning the Trinity, and when the Arians conceived of the Son and Holy Ghost as secondary divinities, that the Church was led to apprehend *speculatively* the *specific* biblical idea of the Divine *unity*. And it was only when these heretics attributed the origin of the second person in the Trinity to an act of creation, that the Church came to the clear apprehension of *the revealed idea of creation in the strict sense.*

But the old heathen idea of God, the speculative apprehension of Him as pure, simple, indeterminate being, which, as we shall see, was in germ, and necessarily became, in its complete logical development, pantheism; and the old idea of man which made him in reality a mere nature-object, still lived and ruled in the theology of the Church. There was no real communion of persons between God and man; the relation between them was merely that of two forces, which mutually suspended each other in their action; so that, for instance, according to Augustinianism, the influence of God's grace would suspend the action of man; and according to Pelagianism, the action of man would suspend the influence of divine grace. They could not be conceived as acting mutually but only alternately. The old heathen idea, when it comes to clear consciousness, as it has in modern times, "must recognize man and all that is about him, as separate links in the same indefinite chain of coming and departing events, each in its destined place fulfilling its own mission, and all constituting a progressive series of necessitated successions which are both unalterable and interminable." This heathen world-view has all along clung more or less to theology, and hindered the appropriation of the true Christian idea. It may, indeed, to quote again the language of Dr. Hickok, "be gravely inquired, if there be not some long-standing and far-famed theories in metaphysics among us, which must infallibly terminate in the above conclusions, whenever they shall be pushed onward to their consequences. A philosophy which includes in the same category of causation the changes in matter and the originations of the mind, though it may use the qualifying terms of a *natural* and a *moral* necessity, but which still do not mark any discrimination in the *connections* but only in the *things* connected, must unavoidably find within itself the charmed circle out of which there can be no escaping. It is not possible that such a theory can vindicate for the human soul its immortality, nor for the Deity in His eternity the possession of any attributes which may rise above, or reach beyond, the interminable conditions in the linked series of a fixed causation."

At the Reformation for the first time there was realized the *true speculative apprehension of the Christian idea of God*, which Luther called the "New Wisdom;" and it was in the light of

this precious idea that he was so indignant at Aristotle. It was not at philosophy itself that he was so furious, but at the false philosophy, "The Old Wisdom," of which Aristotle was in his estimation the representative. And it was then also, for the first time, and mainly through the instrumentality of Melancthon, that the *biblical idea of man in his relation to God was clearly apprehended*. Thus were the true ideas of God and man,—of God as a spirit, as the personal living God, the Creator of all things, as revealing Himself to man and communing with him; and the spiritual personal nature of man, the freedom and responsibility of the individual, the rights and privileges of "the Christian man,"—only brought to clear intellectual apprehension by the principle of the great Lutheran Reformation. The personal assurance of salvation by faith in Christ alone, the inner certainty of truth by the experience of the power of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation, gave a new impulse to philosophical thought. But *while in the new philosophical activity, the "Old Wisdom," the heathen idea, has come to its full development; the "New Wisdom," the Christian idea, has not been fully enough appropriated to be the complete counterpoise to its influence, which it is destined to become.*

Thus did modern philosophy receive its great impulse from the principle of the Reformation. But, as we have seen, when men began to make the question of the certainty of truth a purely intellectual one—separated from the experience of assurance of salvation, from the fact of justification by faith in Christ as a fact of life—the heathen, instead of the Christian idea, came to its culmination. That idea which lay undeveloped under heathenism, was fully developed in the secular philosophy. And theology *failed to appropriate and distinctly apply the Christian world-view; nay, by still holding the old view of God as abstract, simple, indeterminate being, it prepared the way for that pantheism into which the heathen idea has been fully developed.* We should, therefore, consider it the special work of theology in the present day to *apply the true Christian idea, as it is apprehended by means of the principle of the Reformation.* First, because we shall never be fully faithful to the true Lutheran Reformation, and the true Lutheran spirit, until we prosecute our theological studies in this way. Secondly, because evangelical piety, communion with God in Christ, personal experi-

ence of the fact of the justification of sinful men before God by faith in Christ, is not only an essential element in the groundwork, the generating principle, the central point for the whole system of theology, *but it is determinative* of the state of mind for the speculative apprehension and application of the idea of God and the world which the Bible reveals, and which Christianity tends to produce in the mind of its subjects, in all its relations, bearings and operations. Though theology is distinct from mere philosophy, yet as *Christianity tends to produce its own world-view, its own philosophy, theology must recognize, appropriate and apply this result.* Thirdly, because the distinction, the difference, and the antagonism between the Christian idea and the heathen world-view, have come, at last, as was not the case in former days, to be recognized and acknowledged by the enemies of Christianity. They now see that there can, in the last and the *most complete analysis, be but two ideas concerning God and the world*; that no others are conceivable; that these two only possible ideas are directly contradictory to one another; and that every logical thinker must choose one or the other. And they recognize the *one as the heathen, the other as the Christian idea*; the one as denying all personality in God and all personal immortality for man; the other regarding God a Spirit and man free, responsible and immortal. Theology should accept this issue with joy, and recognize it, as a result which could only be brought out by the clear light, which the principle of the Reformation has shed upon the idea of God; and she should now, in this same light, apply this idea not only for her own purification and for the edification of believers, but also for the hastening of the triumph of Christianity over its enemies. For the more clearly this idea is stated in all its bearings, in contrast with the character and consequences of the other, the more readily will the common sense of men and the consciences and hearts of all sincere and earnest souls, accept it as the only truth. Other ideas, suggested by the principle of the Reformation, belong to the system; but the light which, thus, necessarily springs from it, should be used in the groundwork, in the application of the true idea of God and the world, of religion and man, to the most important apologetical and polemical interests—to the most vital questions of religion in our day. We will make *two divisions* of this part, applying this light in

the *first* to the idea of God and the world, and in the *second* to that of religion and man; in the *first* to questions concerning the nature of God, in the *second* to those respecting the nature of religion.

DIVISION I.

THE APPLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD AND THE WORLD, IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION, TO THE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE KNOWABLENESS OF GOD, THE SOURCE AND GROUNDS OF OUR BELIEF IN GOD, THE CONSISTENCY OF THE DIVINE PERSONALITY WITH THE DIVINE INFINITY, THE TRUE NATURE OF THE DIVINE UNITY; THEISM AND PANTHEISM, THE GREAT CONFLICT OF THE DAY.

CHAPTER I.

THE APPLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEA IN THIS LIGHT TO THE QUESTION OF THE KNOWABLENESS AND THE INCOMPREHENSIBILITY OF GOD.

§ 1. *These Attributes are Inseparable in the Divine Nature.*

THE Christian idea of the Creator and the creature as apprehended through the principle of the Reformation forbids all separation of the knowableness and the incomprehensibility of God. It is only in the Realism of this principle, in the experience which it requires, that we have the basis for a *positive* conception of God. "The distinction," says Dr. Shedd, "between a positive and an *exhaustive* conception has been overlooked in the recent discussions respecting the possibility of man's possessing a positive conception of the infinite. If by a positive knowledge be meant an infinite or perfect knowledge that exhausts all the mysteries of an object, then men cannot have a positive knowledge of even a finite thing. But if by positive knowledge is meant true and valid as far as the cognition reaches—if the term relates to *quality* and not to quantity—then man's knowledge of the infinite is as positive as his knowledge of the finite. In this latter and only proper use of the term, man's conception of eternity is as positive as his conception of time, and his apprehension of divine justice is no more a mere negation than his apprehension of human justice. Man's knowledge of God, like his knowledge of the ocean, is a positive perception as far as it extends. He does not exhaustively comprehend the ocean,

but this does not render his knowledge of the ocean as to its *quality* a mere negation. But it is the quality not the quantity of a cognition that determines its validity. 'There is for man no exhaustive or infinite knowledge of either the finite or the infinite. He finds it impossible to give an all-comprehending definition of time as he does of eternity, of the atom of matter as of the essence of God.' Now it is not merely the quantity, but the *quality* of the object about which men have the difficulty. Their perception of the ocean is a "positive perception" because it has been or can be an object of experience—of real contact with their organs of consciousness—and consequently their cognition of the reality of the ocean, being a real cognition of quality, is valid notwithstanding the incomprehensibility of the quantity of the object. But God is not, and cannot be, like the ocean—an object of sensuous experience, of real contact with sensuous organs of consciousness—and consequently on mere empirical grounds they must deny the possibility of a "positive perception" of God, and declare the cognition of Him a "mere negation." In some way, therefore, the cognition of God must involve real experience—real contact of the object with organs of consciousness—though not sensuous but spiritual experience and contact, if it be a "positive perception." If the cognition of the supernatural be the result of insights of the reason, just as the cognition of the natural is the result of intuitions in the sense, then it is true that we have a positive knowledge of God as much as we have a positive knowledge of the ocean, and the incomprehensibility in the former case no more invalidates the reality of our knowledge than it does in the latter. But if this be so then the reason must be faculty for the supernatural as much as the sense is capacity for the natural, and if there is a "positive perception" of the supernatural it must come into contact with the faculty for it, just as in the case of a positive perception of the natural it comes into contact with the capacity for it; and both involve experience—the knowledge of the finite, natural, that of the infinite, spiritual experience.

Nothing short of the inner certainty inculcated by the principle of the Reformation, involving as it does the experience of the revelation of God to man and of the witness of the Holy Ghost in the heart, will meet the requirement. And this ex-

cludes the doctrine of an adequate and comprehensive knowledge of God; but it requires a real and true, a vital and a satisfactory, knowledge of Him. Faith on the one hand presupposes the incomprehensibility of the divine essence—for if it did not it would not be faith, but mere knowledge; and on the other its knowableness, because without this it would be mere superstition. It is only from *experience* that a truly *positive* conception can spring. Luther's *realism*—his inner certainty through faith—presupposes a *real contact* of the object of faith with organs of consciousness (of course not sensuous) with the soul through the external divine revelation and the internal witnessing of the spirit, and consequently the resulting conception is a positive one. It is an insight of the reason, made practicable by God's revelation of Himself to man. There is a real cognition of God; and we have thus a true though not an adequate knowledge of God. It is the cognition of God in His personal attributes: and, at the same time, faith involves the conception of Him as absolute spirit. Man has susceptibility for God, can know God if He be revealed, and faith recognizes God as revealing Himself in the creation and history of the world. According to Luther it combines the certainty—which is on a level with eternal truths—with the humility resulting from the sense of absolute dependence on the object of faith. It combines, therefore, the two ideas of the knowableness and the incomprehensibility of God. On the one hand its language is: "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath revealed Him." "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting, Amen." "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever, Amen." But on the other, it distinctly recognizes in nature and providence the marks of Him who witnesses in the spirit, recognizes Him as revealed unto men in the works of His hands. "Because the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead." It recognizes a special revelation declaring the existence of the God after whom men naturally yearn. "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." "In the beginning was the Word and the

Word was with God, and the Word was God, all things were made by Him." It recognizes Him as making Himself known by a direct operation—by "an impinging of Himself upon the rational soul of His creatures," or in the words of Augustine "perculisti cor, verbo tuo." It recognizes God as not only the self-conscious, but self-revealing God—the God who creates and reveals Himself in creating. "In Him was life and the life was the light of men." Thoroughly self-conscious and perfectly manifest to Himself—in Him all life is light—"in Him is no darkness at all"—the eternal Logos is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. This Word was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. "The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." "He came to His own, and His own received Him not." It ascribes the ignorance of man to his depravity, as resulting from the love of sin. Men held the truth in unrighteousness, or rather, hindered the truth by their unrighteousness; men were alienated from the life of God in the soul—from the life which is the light of men—by the blindness of their hearts, by their moral depravity. It recognizes God as revealing Himself in history, beginning with the fall of man, giving clearer and clearer manifestations, more and more impressive testimonies of wisdom, power and goodness, more and more striking signs of His presence in word and symbol, prophecy and miracle; and, at last, the eternal Word Himself becoming flesh and dwelling among men exhibited His glory, as the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. In Him it recognizes the revelation of the fatherhood of God. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." It recognizes the Father in the Son who could say: "He that seeth Me hath seen the Father." In the life of faith, therefore, which we receive from Him, is the light of the knowledge of God; and thus God makes Himself known. But this, so far from removing the incomprehensibility and unsearchableness of God, only impresses us the more with the presence of a fullness which transcends all knowledge. "Oh! the depths of the riches of both the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" The more we know, the more reason have we to adore His unfathomable

and sovereign being, His self-existent and self-sufficient nature. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor? Who hath first given unto Him that it may be recompensed again? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen."

§ 2. *Objections to the Knowableness of God Answered.*

Faith, though it is limited in its idea by the adorable mystery of the divine existence, yet has a real and true knowledge of God. It has necessarily produced the Christian idea of God, namely: that God is knowable, though not comprehensible. And this idea that the human mind is receptive of such divine knowledge is not contradictory to the human reason. The heathen's altar is to the "unknown," the Christian's to the known God.

If it be objected that all knowledge of God is impossible, because we cannot make any image of Him to the imagination, or any representation of Him in the understanding, we may answer, in the light of the Christian idea, that this objection presupposes that we really know nothing but what can be an object of sense. But we do cognize as realities what cannot be thus known. There is an element of knowledge which is not of the sense or of the understanding judging merely according to the sense. We are rational beings, and, as such, have knowledge of the supersensuous. God cannot, in the nature of the case, be an object of perception through the sense. As He transcends space and time, He cannot be comprehended in any of the forms of space and time—cannot be defined by any operation of the sense. The idea of Him is a reason-conception. It is by no intuition of the sense, but by an insight of the reason, that we cognize Him. Faith, in this case, presents an object which is in agreement with the idea of the reason, or, at least, not in contradiction with it. The knowledge of the object involved cannot be regarded as impossible. It is not the understanding, but the reason, in man which responds to faith.

To the objection that the idea of God is a mere negative idea, that all divine attributes are mere negations, we answer that while to the sense-conception they are mere negations, to the reason-conception they are positive affirmations. While to the one eternity is the negation of time, and simplicity the negation

of space, to the other, these attributes are affirmations of positive being—but being which transcends space and time. As the ideas of intelligence and power are positive conceptions, so are those of omniscience and omnipotence; for if we have experience of the one, we have also of the other; though in neither case have we a sensuous, but only a spiritual, experience. There is in each case a real though a spiritual contact of the object of knowledge with organs of consciousness. Faith in God is faith in a real existence; and the idea arising from it is that of a positive being.

It is often said, in these days, that the idea of God involves a contradiction, because infinite attributes in one and the same subject must be in contradiction; such as infinite justice and infinite goodness, infinite freedom and infinite wisdom, infinite power and infinite knowledge. But the charge of contradiction in these attributes overlooks the fact that infinity in God refers not to space and time; not to extensity, but to intensity; not to quantity, but to quality. It is infinite perfection, infinite moral excellence of being. And in this each attribute is in every other; the essence in the attributes, and the attributes in the essence; omnipotence is intelligent, and intelligence is omnipotent. Liberty is the power to act according to reason; it is rational power—the power of reason; and infinite freedom is the power to act according to infinite reason; it is infinite rational power—the power of infinite reason. Infinite reason in the infinite spirit, the absolute person, does, indeed, make the movements of infinite power morally certain, but by no means necessary either physically or metaphysically or logically. The certainty in the exercise of infinite power is the *perfection*, not the necessity of action.

The great objection of modern times is this: Our conception of God involves a contradiction, because infinity excludes all limitation, and personality implies limitation; so that if God be infinite He cannot be personal, and if He be personal He cannot be infinite. But the conception of God being a reason-conception, there is no contradiction in the idea of infinite or absolute personality. All space being excluded, the infinity is not extension, and the limitation implied by personality is not limitation *ad extra*, not limitation by another, but self-limitation—if limitation in any sense—only self-limitation, self-consciousness, self-

possession, self-control. God would not be perfect in knowledge if He were not self-conscious, if He did not comprehend Himself; and He would not be infinite in power if He could not control His power. Indeed, it is only in His self-controlling that we have the positive idea of the Absolute. We may regard this conclusion as resulting psychologically from the fact that all knowledge is not limited to the sense. And this knowledge being necessarily a reason-cognition, is, in reference to certainty, on a level with all ideas of the reason, is equally certain with that of freedom and responsibility. We do not say that the unassisted reason of man would have either developed itself, or this idea from itself; but it is an idea which springs from the relation of man to God; it is man's normal state to cognize the being of God; and faith consequently, being produced by the revelation of God, necessarily produces in turn the idea of God. "Against the belief in the personality of God," says Martensen, "pantheism has always objected that the ideas 'absolute' and 'personal' contradict each other. As the absolute, unconditioned, unlimited being, God must be one and all; as a person, He can only be conceived as limited, bounded by a world which is not part of Himself; and this is opposed to the idea of the Absolute. We cannot allow, however, that this contradiction really exists. The existence of created beings distinct from God, is not such a limit as to clash with the idea of a perfect being. When pantheism calls the omnipresent Creator of heaven and earth a limited being, it forgets that the limitation in question, so far as it deserves the name, is self-limitation, and that self-limitation is inseparable from a perfect nature. The inward fullness of the divine essence is reflected in the inner infinitude of the divine self-consciousness, and God thus has possession of Himself and the fullness of His being. An all-perfect being which should be unaware of His own perfection, would lack a very essential element of perfection. God limits His own power by calling into existence, out of the depths of His own eternal life, a world of created beings to whom He gives, in a derivative manner, to have life in themselves. But precisely in this way above all others—that He is omnipotent over a free world—does God reveal the inner greatness of His power most clearly. That is no true power which refuses to tolerate any free movement outside of itself, because it is re-

solved to be and to do everything directly and by itself; that is true power which brings free agents into existence, and is, notwithstanding, able to make itself all in all." God is in no *necessary* relations, but it belongs to His perfection that He can put Himself into relations, can, out of abounding love and in perfect wisdom and with highest worthiness of Himself, create and govern a world of finite beings.

§ 3. *The Danger of Incorrect Views of this Subject.*

This topic respecting the union of the knowableness and the incomprehensibility of God, as we have it in the idea required by the principle of the Reformation, is here brought to notice, because there have always been deviations from it not only in the secular mind but also in that of the Church. In the early Church there was connected with the conviction of the being of God the acknowledgment of His incomprehensibility; and in the Middle Ages, the Scholastics generally distinguished between the apprehensibility and the comprehensibility of God. They said we could apprehend God, but not comprehend Him. But there has always been a tendency toward the separation of these two ideas, and toward the denial of one or the other of them. Thus, before the Reformation, the Nominalistic party were led, by their philosophical principles, to deny the knowableness of God; while others, such as John Scotus Erigena, asserted the absolute unknowableness of God—asserted that God did not even know Himself and, consequently could not be known by us. On the other hand the Mystics taught that, by means of the life of love in God, we could contemplate Him immediately and clearly in His own light. The Arians, and especially the Eunomian party among them—against the appeal to the unsearchableness of God in defense of the mystery of the trinity on the part of their opponents—asserted that we could comprehend God as completely as we can an object of sense. Since the Reformation the older theologians of our Church adhered to the union of these two ideas; but one of the results of disconnecting philosophical and theological thought from the experience of faith, is that these different views have been brought into complete antagonism; and one or the other has been denied, according to the different philosophies respecting the relation of idea and being. The Kantians, making all

our knowledge purely subjective, deny that we can cognize the objective reality of our idea of God; the Hegelians, on the contrary, making the idea the only reality, contend that we have in the idea all being in its absolute truth, and, consequently, the knowledge of God. In more recent times the School of Absolute Idealism and that of Materialism as represented, the one by Von Hartman, the other by Duchring, proposing as the function of philosophy the exposition of the universe, contend for the knowableness of God; the former, as "unconscious mind;" the latter, as "blind force." While, on the other hand, in the Critical School—the School of Kant—there are, in regard to this point, two parties, yet both deny the knowableness of God; the one simply declaring that the idea of the divine existence is an absurdity to the intellect, but that it may and ought to be believed on the authority of the Bible; the other holding the doctrine of absolute *nescience*, and declaring it to be absurd, yea, impossible to believe the reality of any thing but the "theory of knowledge" itself; that we know not a knower or a known, that we know only the knowing and not the supposed objects of knowledge; and that, consequently, all idea of a knowledge of God is an absurdity, and all faith in the valid being of God, a mere superstition. These results show the importance of keeping in view the Christian idea of God, as it is revealed in the Scriptures; and, especially, as it necessarily springs up in the mind from the experience of saving faith, the idea which is inseparable from a thorough appropriation of the principle of the Reformation.

CHAPTER II.

THE SOURCE AND GROUND OF OUR BELIEF IN GOD, IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD AND THE WORLD AS THUS APPREHENDED.

§ 1. *Its Opposition to the Notion that our Belief in God Originates from any Demonstrations of the mere Logical Understanding.*

This belief springs up in humanity from the relation of its constitution to its environment, and this involves divine impressions. Man has an original sense of the divine existence which can be explained only on the supposition that the infinite Spirit having made the finite Spirit for Himself has placed it in the closest relationship with Himself, and immediately manifests His presence in it, and that He reveals Himself historically to it. From this contact of divine revelation with the soul, originates faith in God. The God-consciousness is inseparable from the self-consciousness and the inner receptivity is attended by an external revelation. Hence, the Sacred Scriptures do not prove that God is, but only show us what He is. They refer to nature simply as leading to this knowledge of Him.

Belief in its most primitive form precedes all logical demonstrations. Man is brought to believe in God in the first instance, not by reasoning in the understanding simply, but by the dictates of consciousness, by impressions upon the religious susceptibilities. This belief is not the result but the source of our reasoning in regard to God. It cannot in the nature of the case be a logical demonstration. So thought the Reformers; but after the doctrines of religion were made purely questions of intellect, the older Rationalists had such confidence in the practicability of giving a rational demonstration of the religious ideas, God, freedom and immortality—supposed themselves to be in possession of such irrefragable proofs of the being and attributes of God—that they could not realize the necessity of a special, miraculous revelation of His nature and will. But the

Critical Philosophy attacked the validity of all demonstrative proofs of the divine existence; and the Faith Philosophy of Jacobi declared "that a God who can be proved, is no God; for the ground of proof is necessarily above the thing proved."

Now Kant evidently went too far when he declared that the speculative reason has no capacity for the idea and proof of the divine existence, and Jacobi no doubt confounds the ground of the proof of the idea with the ground of the reality, when he supposes that the attempt to prove the truth of our idea of God is the attempt to find a ground higher than God Himself. But the important lesson to be learned from these difficulties is, that our idea of God does not need demonstration; that the divine existence is not so much proved by us as that it manifests itself to us. The several rational proofs are rather an interpretation of the belief already existing, an analysis of what is in the Christian consciousness, than a logical demonstration of it. As the subjective truth of all knowledge is based upon our necessary confidence in the laws of our intellectual faculties, proofs of this kind consist in showing that the thing believed is not in contradiction with the faculty of knowing—that is, that it is not inconsistent with reason. "The various proofs of the existence of God, though now acknowledged generally to be invalid in a syllogistic point of view, are profoundly significant as indicating the general starting-points of the development of the idea of God primarily dwelling in the human mind." They show that the belief, which has resulted from the contact of the primitive susceptibility of man for God with the general and special revelation which He has given, is rational and satisfactory.

§ 2. *The Nature of the Several Proofs of the Divine Existence.*

Thus the ontological argument, from the idea of the absolute, draws the conclusion that it actually exists. The mind has the idea of the most perfect being; an especial element of the most perfect being is existence: therefore, there must be an actually existing most perfect being. Now we may object to Anselm's notion that the necessity and uniqueness of this idea involve the proof of the actual existence of God; we may say that this argument lacks demonstrative validity, because the major proposition embraces only ideal while the conclusion affirms real

existence. Still the proof has a deep ground in reason. It shows what reason demands; that it tends to rise from the conditioned to the unconditioned, from the imperfect to the perfect, from relative to absolute perfection. And while it does not follow from this that the idea must be objectively realized in an actually existing being, it does follow from it that the idea given us of God is natural and unavoidable, and that we have the same reason to believe in the reality of the object of this idea that we have for that of any other reason-conception. Besides, the striving of reason after perfection, and the dictate of conscience making this our duty, while both make the idea of God the highest point of this attainment, render it highly probable that there is an actual being who is the source and end of this striving. This tendency would otherwise be at least unaccountable.

As the ontological proof demands an absolute being as the objective reality of its idea, so the cosmological argument requires an absolute substance as the ground of the world of sense. It is based upon the mutable contingent nature of the world. Everything which occurs in time appears as the effect of a previous cause, but such cause appears again as dependent upon a previous one, and so on in an endless regress. But the mind cannot rest upon any such connection of cause and effect, cannot comprehend the one in the other; and the world being nothing but such a series of causes and effects, it concludes that it is not a necessary but contingent existence, has not its ground of being in itself, but in another being, must be traced to another and a higher than itself. Or the argument may say: The world is made up of finite beings, and the whole thus consisting altogether of finitudes, must itself be finite. It consists of nature and mind, each limited by the other, and neither producing the other, and each pointing to an infinite ground of itself.

As the cosmological argument demands an infinite substance, the teleological or physico-theological proof requires an infinite understanding. It infers from the adaptations in nature a designing understanding; from the order and beauty of the visible world, a rational mind. The world presents the spectacle of an endless diversity of objects, the most varied forms of order and beauty, and adaptation to definite ends. This adaptation is

not grounded in the things themselves, because rational ends can have their last ground only in rational mind, in an intelligence which cannot be ascribed to nature, cannot be found in its blindly operating forces.

As the teleological demands an infinite understanding, so the psychological argument requires an infinite spirit. From the finite human spirit, it infers an infinite divine spirit. Man is self-conscious, personal soul, that is, he is spirit. But the individual member of the human family is finite, and the whole of the humanity to which he belongs is finite. It has neither its ground nor its end in itself. The human spirit—not having the ground and end of its being in itself, nor in the world of nature, nor in the kingdom of finite spirits—demands an infinite spirit as ground and end of itself, of the world, of humanity.

The Moral Argument derived from the practical reason as defined in the Critical Philosophy, developed under the influence of the categorical imperative in man, is thus stated by Kant himself: "The highest good of man consists of two parts, the greatest possible morality and the greatest possible happiness. The former is the demand of his spiritual, the latter of his animal nature. The former only, his morality, is within his own power; and while by persevering virtue he makes this his personal character, he is often obliged to sacrifice his happiness. But since the desire of happiness is neither irrational nor unnatural, he justly concludes either that there is a supreme being who will so guide the course of things (the natural world not of itself subject to moral laws) as to render his holiness and happiness equal, or that the dictates of conscience are unjust and irrational. But the latter supposition is morally impossible; and he is compelled, therefore, to receive the former as true."

§ 3. *Their Insufficiency as Logical Demonstrations.*

These arguments, however, only prove absolute being, infinite substance, infinite understanding, infinite reason, infinite morality; and aside from the experience of faith in the personal living God, aside from the influence of the revelation of Himself—the objective revelation and the subjective experience of its reality, the inner witness of the Spirit—all these proofs of His being, separated from consciousness and life, and treated merely as abstract arguments, may be turned, and are turned by Pantheism,

to subserve its purposes. Thus from the cosmological argument it gets simply the idea of universal being, and regards the *Deity as the life of the universe*, which is perpetually originating and perpetually annihilating contingent existences. There is no real world; God is the ALL. In the ontological argument the pantheist simply turns from *every determinate* form of thought to God as the *eternal ground* of thought. He treats God as *pure truth—the truth in which all finite thinking is to be absorbed*; and again God is merely the ALL. In the teleological process he regards all the vital forces of the world as the *self-realizing of the absolute idea* or God. God is merely the indwelling soul, the all-ruling Spirit, the formative activity of the universe—the Spirit which evolves itself, is result of itself. *God and the world are but two aspects of one and the same unity*; either of the absolute *substance*, with Spinoza; or of the absolute *ego*, with Fichte; or of the absolute *Identity*, with Schelling; or of the absolute *Idea*, with Hegel; or of *blind Will*, with Schopenhauer; or of *unconscious Intelligence*, with Von Hartman. There is in reality no distinction, no contrast of being. *All is Monism*. In the moral proof, God is to the pantheist, the *moral order of the world*. “He has real existence only as he is *produced by our moral endeavors*; *what the God-inspired man does, is God*; *God and the Kingdom of God are one*.” God as a Spirit is the result of the development of the world; as a Spirit He did not exist independently of it; as a Spirit, He was not its Creator. He is unconscious mind unfolding itself with instinctive necessity in successive developments in nature and history; pressing onward in the finite spirit of man in an eternal progressus toward real existence, but never attaining it; always striving for existence as a spirit, but never reaching it in its fullness. It is only through the medium of the spirit of man—through human science—that he is becoming, gradually becoming, conscious of the unconscious movements which He made, the blind acts which He put forth in the formation of the world, of sun, moon, and stars, plant, animal and man.

§ 4. *The Importance of Keeping Within the Light of Experience.*

Thus may all these proofs as a mere intellectual process be turned by Naturalism into mere proofs of blind force, or by Pantheism into mere arguments for unconscious mind. The belief

of a conscious as well as intelligent cause of the world, must be kept inseparable from the impressions which God's revelation of Himself has made upon us, inseparable from the experience of His gracious presence through the gospel and the Holy Ghost; from conscious assurance of salvation by faith in Christ. Just as the idea of God—to be a positive conception—must have a basis in experience, so must the proofs of the divine existence have such a connection in order to have conclusive force in establishing the truth of the existence of God as a personal being. *And the specific and only experience in religion, in which there is certainty of truth, is that involved in the principle of the Reformation.* “The ontological and moral view thus acquires profounder significance. That eternal something, without the pre-supposition of whose existence human thought is an insoluble riddle, is the thinking energy, the true God (*Deus verax*) who pervades all spirits, leads them to wisdom, and scatters all deception and seeming. And the obligations we feel we are under to fulfill the law written in our heart (Rom. ii. 14), is in its deepest roots an obligation to obey the personal will, the holy being who speaks to us through our conscience, and thus reveals Himself as the invisible One, in conjunction with whom we know what we know (con-sciens).” If the belief in God, in the true God, the personal, living God, is to be maintained, we must make room and way for His operations upon men; we must first of all press upon men the great truths of the gospel with full confidence in it as the power of God unto salvation. Thus will men be brought to faith by actual experience of His presence, by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and multitudes will be converted and thus feel the force of the other proofs of the divine existence. As Luther says, “without this Spirit they do not really believe that God exists.” We should labor primarily for the conversion of souls, to bring men under the self-authenticating truth of the gospel, to the experience of assurance of salvation through faith in Christ,—and *not rely solely* upon the demonstrations of the understanding. It is in this way that belief in the living, personal God has been generated and in this way it will be maintained; “for,” says Luther, “*where God's gospel and Spirit are, there also there will always be believers.*”

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA THUS APPREHENDED IN ITS OPPOSITION TO ALL SEPARATION OF THE DIVINE INFINITY FROM THE DIVINE SPIRITUALITY.

§ 1. *The Requirement of this Idea in the Light of Saving Faith and of the Sacred Scriptures.*

Faith requires the Scriptural idea of a personal yet infinite spirit. The experience of the reality of sin as sin, and of the free grace of God, requires the idea of God as a living, personal Being, the Creator and Preserver, the Originator and Ruler, of all things; distinct in His nature from the world, though the world is not separate from Him, or independent of Him. *This theism is the Christian idea.* Faith declares that God is the *absolute* spirit, not the mere organic spirit of the world; the *Creator* of nature, not merely its informing soul; the *Author* of the human spirit, and not merely its essence. Against the Deism which apprehends God, indeed, as transcending the world, but as sustaining only an external relation to it; against the Pantheism which confounds God and the world; it is in favor of the Theism which apprehends Him as both transcendent and immanent, holding the divine transcendence *over* the world against Pantheism, and the divine immanence *in* the world against Deism.

The immediate faith-consciousness, resulting from the nature of man in his environment, and justified by the rational arguments for the being of God, demands an infinite which is spirit, and a spirit which is infinite. Justifying faith, by its element of absolute dependence, and by its feeling of guilt—of the guilt of sin—by its implication that we are moral creatures, and subjects of moral government, requires a spiritual infinite—that is, it presupposes that God is *an Infinite Spirit*. So Abraham regarded God, calling on the name of the everlasting God; and Paul, speaking of the everlasting God, of His eternal power and Godhead; and the sweet singer of Israel, declaring that before

the mountains were brought forth, or even the earth and the world were created, even from everlasting to everlasting, He is God; that of old he laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of His hands; that they shall perish, but He shall endure; that He is the same, and His years shall have no end. So the Evangelical Prophet, declaring that He is the first and the last who inhabiteth eternity. So Daniel, declaring that He is the living God and standeth fast forever, that His Kingdom is one that shall not be destroyed, and that His dominion shall be even unto the end. So believers under the Old Covenant, calling Him Elohim, the God of self-conscious, holy will and freedom; El Shaddai, the all-sufficient, sovereign good, the shield and exceeding great reward of the soul; Jehovah, the holy, living personal, self-revealing God. The Old Testament designates Jehovah as absolute personality, and in the New, the Blessed Jesus designates this absolute personality as Spirit. *God is a Spirit.* So the saints in the Apostolic Church; Peter declaring that with Him one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day; and Paul, adoring Him as the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God, who dwelleth in the light unto which no man can approach.

Thus does faith recognize God as the Creator of all, as the being who only hath immortality; who is love, the perfect, the essential, the only good, the father, the heavenly father. Not creator from necessity—inner or outer—but from His own free counsel. All attributes in Him, and all works of His hands must be traced to free, holy love. The fact that He works, creates worlds and conscious beings, has its ground in no necessity—not even in His essential infinity as such—but in the essential and abounding love of His spiritual personal being. Creation, revelation, self-communication to His creatures and communion with them, are all based upon His free unconstrained love as a spirit, as a person. He is constrained by nothing from without, and impelled by nothing from within, but acts from free love and wisdom, doing what He can accept as worthy of Himself. The God of revelation is not the mere dark cause of finite existence; not the blind force of nature; not unconscious thought; not instinctive mind, but conscious, personal spirit. He is Father and Lord; He is personal, and to His personality belong, not only His thinking and willing *of* the world as distinct from the think-

ing and willing which are going on *in* it, but also all the thinking and willing performed by created beings, all communion between themselves and Him, must be regarded as possible only because He is personal being—is consciously thinking and willing. And He is not merely the Lord who keeps Himself distinct from His subjects, but the Father who reconciles them to Himself. According to the principle of faith and the teaching of the Bible, God is infinite personality—infinite spirit, self-conscious, self-controlled, self-existent, and self-satisfied.

§ 2. *This Idea only Gradually and Imperfectly Apprehended.*

This—the Christian idea of the union of spirituality and infinity in God—has been only gradually apprehended and but imperfectly appropriated, even by the Church. The thinking mind of the Church has oscillated between the idea of God as *absolute being* and of Him as *personal spirit*. The early fathers, in their effort to apprehend the Logos as the eternal reason of God, were brought to the *practical* recognition of the Christian idea of the divine reason as personal, and consequently to that of the divine spirituality. But they were still so far influenced by the heathen philosophy, by its idea of God as mere indistinguishable, indeterminate being, as to fear to ascribe to Him any defined, concrete, determinate existence, and to hesitate to speak of Him as a spirit; because *spirituality is a determinate state of being*. We see this in Origen, and in the Mystics in the Middle Ages, who under the influence of Platonism, apprehended God as the dark ground of being, and seemed to estimate the “pure Deity” higher than the living God, the God of revelation; while the Scholastics, under the influence of Aristotelianism, were led so fully to conceive of God as *actus purus*, that they, in a great measure, overlooked the *concrete* activity which is implied in His spirituality. This idea of God as abstract being has clung more or less to theology, even since the Reformation. It is, therefore, of supreme importance to return to the *positive* conception of God which is *required by the principle of the Reformation, and which results from the specific and practicable experience involved in it*. God is infinite spirit. Infinity and spirituality are inseparably connected in His being. The heathen idea of infinity is a mere negation of all distinctions. But the human mind can never rest in mere negative ideas; it will have

positive conceptions in religion. If deprived of a *positive* conception of the true God, it will have *positive* objects—an *inferior kind of deities*. It can never free itself practically from the idea of the divine personality, of the divine spirituality, of life and spirit in the Godhead. Hence the conception of secondary gods, and the introduction of Polytheism into the heathen world; and just so far as the *heathen idea of the divine infinity has infected Christendom*, we have the same tendency to depart from the worship of God to the worship of saints, etc., from spiritual worship to mechanical ceremonies. When infinity and spirituality are thus separated in idea, the infinity being incapable of any distinctions and all distinctions being incompatible with infinity, the conception of the living, personal God, the God who is spirit, the God who is love, the God of revelation, the God incarnate, the God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, is lost from the mind and heart of the Church. And though Christianity practically checked this tendency by the saving power of the gospel, and the witness of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of believers, it has still reappeared more or less in the speculative apprehensions of theology in the early and Middle Ages of the Church. Nor have modern philosophy and theology escaped the contagion. If the mind have not the *realistic, positive* conception of the infinite God, it will rest upon the *concrete, real* being of the finite as its God. As the Ancient Philosophy, the philosophy of the heathen mind, the philosophy underlying Polytheism, is really pantheistic and consequently unspiritual, so has the philosophy of modern times always tended in this direction except when fully under the influence of Biblical ideas and evangelical religion. Alongside of the philosopher's abstract infinity will always stand the manifold world; and when all concrete being is shut out from God, it will be *conferred upon the world*, and men will fall down and *worship the spirit of the world in its positive being and its concrete forms*. We can only effectually guard against this error by the appropriation and application of the Christian idea of the union of infinity and spirituality in God, *as it is made practicable by the principle of the Reformation*. All attempts to unite this abstract being of God and the concrete existence of the world in a merely speculative way, without a basis in experience, will result either in making God a mere reflection of the world, or the world the

mere shadow of God, either in acosmism or pancosmism. There is but one step between this *abstract divinity* and the substance of Spinoza, the identity of Schelling, or the idea of Hegel, as the *medium* of the union of the *indeterminate infinite* and the *determinate forms* of the universe of being. And soon not only the idea of spirituality, but even that of this mere negative infinity is lost, and God is regarded as always becoming, but never really being, in Himself the *living, personal object of love and worship* which Christianity declares Him to be.

§ 3. *The Reason and Importance of Urging this Idea of the Inseparable Union of the Divine Spirituality and the Divine Infinity.*

It has been with truth observed that the defective view of this union here indicated, has affected *the theology* of the *older dogmaticians of our Church*. Their idea, for example, of the infinity of God, reduces His attributes to the mere forms in which the human mind grasps the absolutely one and simple being. Their God is one who has no determinate existence, no concrete attributes, no activities as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Sanctifier. He is not Luther's living God of revelation, of grace and consolation, but one who sustains only a negative relation to the world enclosed in space and time, to the living personal beings whose life is historical, to the moral and spiritual life of the children of men.

The Christian idea of the union of the divine infinity and spirituality must, therefore, be urged against this mere abstract idea of infinity as an idea which is in contradiction with the true Christian consciousness, with the experience of the Christian when he savingly believes in Christ, and with true Scriptural theology. He who conceives of God as infinite in a sense which denies all determinate being in Him, must not only deny all concrete attributes in Him, and all living acts of Providence and grace on His part; but must deny His spirituality; for spirituality is a *determined form of being, a determinate state of life*. The idea of God would thus become so attenuated that it would be difficult to distinguish it from that of a non-entity. The determinate infinity is higher than the indeterminate; it is absolute spirit. God is self-controlled, self-determined, *personal*.

Infinity in God, therefore, must not be conceived of as merely

the negation of all that is finite, not merely as infinite space or infinite essence, not merely as the distinction of being uncontrolled by others, but also as the absolute positing of Himself. God is infinite in the sense that He is ground and end of Himself, that He is self-existent, independent, absolute. But an entity, which has not only its ground and end in itself, but also has in itself the ground and end of all being, must be a spirit—must be an entity whose inner nature it is to posit itself in thought and volition, in order to return again with infinite satisfaction into itself. “He who hath planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who hath formed the eye, shall He not see?” In the beautiful and impressive language of Martensen: “The variously complicated concatenation of rational means and ends which cooperate in nature and history, in the realization of some purpose, necessarily implies a self-reflecting principle which determines itself and all other things, but the only principle which has power over itself, which does not lose itself in the product of its activity, which returns more profoundly into and on itself every time that it goes forth from itself,—is WILL, is personality. *God is a PERSON*, that is, He is the *self-centralized*, Absolute, the eternal, fundamental Being, which knows itself, as the *I am* in the midst of His infinite glory (Is. xliv. 6), which is conscious of being the Lord of that glory. He is not the undefined $\theta\epsilon\iota\omega\nu$ but $\theta\epsilon\omega\varsigma$; He is *seeing* omnipotence, in the depths of whose wisdom the end which the world is destined to serve, and of which the creature only becomes conscious in time, was actually contained in the form of a *counsel*. The world is accordingly not merely a system of eternal thoughts but a system thoroughly worked out from eternity; and the signs of the presence of reason which we find in nature and history, viewed in their inmost significance, must be pronounced to be the revelation of the will of the God of Creation and Providence, of Him who makes known in the world His eternal power and Godhead (Rom. i. 20).”

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF THE UNITY OF GOD IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION.

§ 1. *It is a Numerical as against a mere Specific Unity, yet a Vital Unity; it is Concrete and, at the same time, excludes every species of Polytheism and Dualism.*

THIS arises from the nature of the Christian consciousness. Saving faith is communion with one God through one Mediator between God and man. The declaration of the ancient creed—that: “As we are compelled by Christian truth to confess each person (of the Trinity) to be distinctively God and Lord, we are prohibited by the Catholic Religion to say that there are three Gods or three Lords”—saving faith receives as the proper response of the Christian mind to the clearest Scriptural declarations. There is no other God besides Him; He is the only God. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me (Ex. xx. 3); Hear, O! Israel, the Lord, our God is one Lord (Deut. vi. 4). There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in Him (1 Cor. viii. 6). Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts; I am the first and I am the last, and besides Me there is no God (Is. xliv. 6). There is only one God, that is, the absolutely perfect being is realized in but one existence. It is not only specific but numerical unity, that is, the idea of the divine unity is not the conception of the unity of a species, but of the unity which is predicated of a distinct individual. The unity of God is not to be taken in the sense that there is one divine species, one race of gods, as there is, for instance, one race of men; but in the sense, that there is numerically but one essence or substance which is God, and can properly be called God. This idea of the divine unity, involved in the experience of faith—in its feeling of absolute dependence upon God and, consequently, its independence of everything else—is in accordance with the demands of reason. *It is an intuition inseparable from faith—saving faith, is necessarily*

evolved out of it, is a necessary element in the experience of faith—a reason-conception. This unity lies necessarily in the rational idea of the Godhead, as the only absolutely, unconditioned being—as possessed of being which in the nature of the case can be only one; because two such could not be apprehended by reason without a separation, and, consequently, a limiting of the one by the other. This unity is essential and necessary in the idea, and it is as impossible to conceive of two Godheads as of two ultimate rules of right. But this inner unity of God is *not an abstract but a concrete unity—the unity of the one living, personal, self-conscious God, is not mere abstract oneness, not simple, pure essence, not subsistence which is absolutely undefined.* This would exclude from His nature all concrete life, and from His unity everything possible to be known. *But faith knows God.* The true, living God has made Himself known, has revealed “the unity of His nature by a variety of determinations of His essence.” The one nature has revealed itself in different attributes, which are not separate from one another, but are all in each and each in all, permeating one another and “having their common centre of unity in the same divine Ego,” the same personal life. The over-looking of this by the older theologians, not only before, but since, the Reformation, has done much to strengthen the tendency to the error of Unitarianism. We are not required by reason to sacrifice the idea of life to that of oneness. That the Christian idea of this concrete fullness in the divine unity is in accordance with reason, is evident from the fact that Polytheism has not only been abandoned and Monotheism accepted in proportion to the development and progress of reason, but that this change has taken place in proportion also as Christianity has been extended and received. While the Christian faith in its development accepts the idea of the trinity of the Godhead, it never ceases to recognize and enforce the necessity of the idea of the unity of the divine essence, as a fundamental one; and it has rejected Arianism with its secondary gods—as it made the Son and the Holy Ghost, to be in its idea—as much *in the interest of the unity* as in that of the trinity of the Godhead. And the fact that Christianity has succeeded in making Monotheism the popular faith wherever it has prevailed, is not only strong proof of its divine origin; but having done this in connection with anthropopathic and anthropomorphic represent-

ations of God as a personal, living being, is convincing evidence, that, not the idea of mere *abstract oneness*, but that of *concrete, vital unity*, is the true idea of the divine unity. This is the Christian idea, which, at the same time, rejects and excludes all Dualism.

Dualism is not only inconsistent with the divine unity, but with the entire Christian idea of God and the world. It is the conception of two original principles or sources of things, a good and an evil. It is utterly in conflict with the idea of the divine infinity, and with the Christian's faith in God as the Redeemer of the world. If evil has not had a beginning, it can have no end; there cannot be a perfect redemption—an eternal salvation. Besides, it takes away the ethical nature and the guilt of sin by its transferring it from the visible to the invisible world, from the sphere of the creature to that of the creator for its origin. If moral evil be in the very nature of things, it cannot be sin; there can be no guilt in it; the creatures involved in it, can never have conviction of sin; and, consequently, can have no repentance of it; there can, indeed, be no spiritual redemption, no ethical process of salvation.

§ 2. *The Relation of Faith to Reason in the Proof of the Divine Unity.*

The proof of the divine unity must be sought in the agreement of the Christian idea, revealed in the Bible and required by the principle of faith, with the demands of the reason; and, not in any mere demonstrations of the logical understanding. All efforts of the latter kind have always failed. Thus some have appealed to the homogeneousness of the plan of the world and the harmony of the entire universe, as presupposing the unity of the Creator and Ruler of it. But remaining within the range of the understanding, Kant properly said that this would only prove unity in the counsel, and not necessarily in the Creator or the source of the world. Besides, the range of our intellectual operations is too narrow, and our knowledge of the universe too limited, to entitle us to the claim, that we can understand the plan of the world, and that we can, consequently, prove demonstrably its homogeneousness and unity. Aside from the antagonisms between good and evil—which are so numerous and so deep that they have perplexed the minds of all thoughtful men—

the fact itself that Dualism has existed so long, and prevailed so widely among human thinkers, makes it highly probable that the unity of God cannot be proved from the plan of the world.

Others have appealed to the act of the creation and government of the world, maintaining that it is impossible that several perfect beings could have united in the creation of the world, or could govern it without being diversely active. But—aside from the fact that in the mere understanding-conception, in the conception of the understanding judging merely according to the sense, there might be several most perfect beings—we could not be certain that there are not several universes or worlds, so that each god might have alone created one of them, and governed it alone; and that, consequently, the Creator and Ruler of this world might be one, and yet there might be no unity of the divine nature. If we say that the conception of an infinitely perfect being makes the idea of several most perfect beings impossible, we speak the truth; but we have then transcended the empirical, passed the limits of the understanding, judging merely according to the sense, and have risen to the *reason-conception which being in correlation with the faith, with the consciousness of the Christian, confirms its truth*. But this is not the result of mere reasoning. And it only shows that the idea produced by the Christian's experience in religion under the influence of the gospel is a reason-conception—that the conception of the unity of God is never made without first having faith in the unity of God; that it is an intuition involved in the experience of saving faith; that it is an idea possible by the insight of the reason under divine revelation; that man has knowledge as an element in his faith, only because he is a rational being. The only reason why those who think that they proceed altogether in a process of reasoning, in reaching this result, do not see this, is that, while they profess to repudiate the dictate of faith and the insight of the reason, they are really impelled by the one and guided by the other, and mistake in accepting as the result of their reasoning what they had been convinced of before, and by means other than any such process. As the several elements of mind—intellect, susceptibility and will, and in the intellect, sense, understanding and reason—are all involved more or less, in every process of thought, so they are inseparably connected

with religious faith and knowledge, and none of them should be neglected in the effort to apprehend the nature of God. Taking all the sources of proof together—the harmony of the laws and forces in the kingdom of nature, the unity of ethical law, together with the idea of absolute perfection which in the nature of the case can only be one and indivisible—the belief in the unity of God, while it has its source in the contact of the divine revelation with the human susceptibility for God, is perfectly in accordance with the reason. It is as rational as it is religious.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA THUS APPREHENDED IN ITS OPPOSITION TO ALL SEPARATING OF GOD AND THE WORLD, AND AS THUS EXCLUDING EVERY FORM OF DEISM.

§ 1. *The Intensity of the Antagonism of the Theistic and the Deistic Ideas in the Light of Saving Faith.*

IF the world, though originally created by God, is now separate from Him, it is independent—it is *another God*. But the idea springing necessarily from saving faith requires a God who is *not only Creator, but Reconciler; who not only puts forth into existence beings distinct from Himself, but who brings them into communion with Himself; who not only creates, but mediates between the infinite and the finite, reconciles between the holy God and the sinful world*. The Deistic idea of God and the world is utterly inconsistent with the saving faith of the Christian. For while it accepts a personal deity, and properly distinguishes between Him and the world, and while it recognizes Him as the original Creator of the world, it yet so separates Him from it as to lead to the denial of all special providence and of all supernatural or miraculous revelation. Thus denying the continuous relation of God to the world, created by Him, it is in irreconcilable contradiction with the Christian consciousness of special salvation through faith in Christ, as the historical, the crucified, but risen and ever-living Redeemer. A God, who did, indeed, create the world, but has no living connection with it; who is, indeed, its lawgiver and judge, but does not enter into any vital relations with the kingdom of nature or the world of men; who does not reveal Himself to man, nor enter into communion with him, is not the Christian's God. A theory which teaches a freedom without dependence, and a morality evolved merely from a self-dependent reason—which ignores the inmost and deepest wants of man, the deepest and strongest impulses of humanity, and the noblest and highest aspirations of the soul; which overlooks the inner connections of man with nature, on

the one hand, and his living relation to God on the other ; thus apprehending neither the nature of sin nor the necessity of redemption, neither the mysteries of religious communion nor the significance and force of prayer—fails to meet the requirements which the Christian faith must make, and the expectations which it must entertain respecting the speculative apprehensions of the intellect in theology. If God be personal ; if He be the Creator of the world, we would expect Him to exercise a providence over it. If He has made man a personal, accountable spirit—a free, responsible agent—He must watch over him and commune with him ; yea we should expect that He would reveal Himself to the spirits which He has made susceptible of His influence, capable of believing on Him, of knowing and of loving Him—to have a kingdom of spirits as well as a world of nature, to make a moral as well as natural revelation of His wisdom and power. It is in direct antagonism with saving faith, in flat contradiction to all the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, and in irreconcilable conflict with the entire spirit of the gospel.

§ 2. *It deserves Notice here only because of its Deleterious Influence in the Church itself.*

If it did not, as we shall see that it does, *perpetually insinuate itself into the Church*, it would be superfluous to notice it in this connection. But we will see as we proceed that in some form or other, as the source or result of certain doctrines and tendencies, there is always danger of its return into the Church and filling it with speculative and practical evils. We should, therefore, realize its deficiencies and errors. It is absolutely unable to cast a single ray of light upon the dark problems of human existence, and leaves us literally “without God and without hope in the world.” It is contrary to the experience of all who have led a life of prayer, and is in opposition to the witness of the Spirit in the hearts of all Christian believers. The existence and history, the observation and experience, of the entire Christian Church in all ages,—show it to be a degenerate Monotheism. It has been well said that it is the Judaistic, as Mohammedanism is the infidel, abuse of the doctrine of the Unity of God. It must, therefore, be excluded from all place in a true theology, and must be constantly guarded against in the clear light which

the principle of the Reformation sheds upon the Christian idea of God and the world. But as there could be no such communion with God as the Christian realizes, if there were the Deistic separation between God and the world; so there could not, if there were no distinction between them. There must be distinct parties or there can be no communion, and this leads to the notice of the opposite and, at the present time, more prevalent and dangerous error.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA THUS APPREHENDED, IN ITS OPPOSITION TO
ALL CONFOUNDING OF GOD AND THE WORLD.

§ 1. *It excludes Every Form of Monism.*

IT forbids the introduction into theology of every species of *Hylozoism*. This system regards the ideal and the real, God and the world, as naturally conditioning one another, inasmuch as it considers the material of the world as the infinite substance of God, penetrated and moved by the Spirit of God, as its informing and animating power. The doctrine is that matter existed from eternity in a chaotic state, and God only gave it life and organized form. It is of two kinds—that of Plato, to wit, that God *of His own will* united Himself to matter; and that of the Stoics, which is that matter and mind, though distinct, *are always and were always necessarily united*. God is the soul of the world; matter, its body. They are both forms of the theory of emanation, namely, that all things existed from eternity in the divine being, and that there is a perpetual *emanation* or irradiation from Him, in the form of light and spirit and life. This view leads to the denial of all freedom and responsibility, of all the ethical elements and of all the moral ends involved in the saving faith of the Christian, and consequently must be rejected by the Christian idea of God and the world.

And so it excludes all *materialism*. This theory denies that the world has a spiritual source or cause distinct from itself. It regards the objects of sense—the phenomenal—as the only real being, and ascribes all the forms and movements of the world to the powers of nature. This, both objectively and subjectively considered, deserves the name of *Atheism*. As it not only denies the objective reality of the idea of God, but discards the idea itself as false and superstitious, it must, when systematically developed, end in practical Atheism. It shuts out not only the Christian faith and assurance of salvation, but all *possibility* of religious faith, as far as it can control the thoughts and feelings and actions of men.

So *Idealism* is inconsistent with true Christian Theism. This philosophy regards the objective as valid only in the subjective representation, resolves the conception of God as personal being or absolute life into the idea of a subjective moral order of the world, and, consequently, so far as the valid being of God is concerned, it is inconsistent with every element of the Christian idea of God and the world.

All these forms of confounding God and the world have their culmination in the ruling error of the day, *Pantheism*—Pantheism which has been prevalent consciously or unconsciously in all erroneous religious systems both before and after the introduction of Christianity; and in its modern development and form, is perhaps, the most fascinating of all the delusive systems of the times.

§ 2. *The Definition and the Several Forms of Pantheism.*

It may be briefly defined as the theory which in some way or other, makes the universe the existence-form of God. It neither distinguishes nor separates between God and the world, but confounds them—makes them identical. It asserts the homogeneity of being and becoming, of God and the world, of Creator and creature. It has two forms. It either ignores the individual being of the world and resolves it *into God*—which may be called *acosmism*—or it ignores the personal being of God and resolves it *into nature* and is thus *pancosmism*—and in this form it is, in its last and legitimate results, pure *naturalism*.

The former is that of Spinoza. It asserts that there is but one substance, but that this has two infinite attributes—thought and extension. All finite, limited, determined things, not only arise from, but they are no other than mere modifications of this one divine substance. This pantheistic system which has all God and no worshipers is as inconsistent with the religious feeling and the Christian idea, as the atheistic scheme which has all worshipers and no God, or at least, all capable of faith and worship, with no proper object to be believed and worshiped.

The second form is that which results from Schelling's doctrine of the identity of subject and object—from the idea of the absolute as holding in itself the subjective and the objective, natural forces and spiritual powers, the finite and the infinite, the real and the ideal; in short, as holding in absolute indifference all

conceivable contraries, differences, antagonisms. This absolute identity is what the system calls God. Only absolute identity is real; nothing else has real being. All that which we call the world is only self-evolution of the absolute; its antitheses, its contraries, its antagonisms, are only opposite poles of the absolute. All differences are therefore, only in degree not in kind, only quantitative, not qualitative; and nothing exists for itself as self-end. Every thing is only an evolution of the absolute in a particular form. The coming forth of the absolute is regarded not only as a revelation, but a fall. Even souls, like the phenomenal world, are not real existences, but have arisen from the fall of the absolute, and will be reunited and absorbed in the absolute. The universe is, therefore, the existence and life of the absolute. To this conception of the absolute the system claims to have attained by an intellectual intuition. But such an intuition seems from the very nature of the system to be impossible. How the intellect, which is itself but one of the transient forms or manifestations of the absolute, could have such an intuition seemed not to be clear. This was consequently rejected in the Absolute Idealism of Hegel, who declared "that Schelling's absolute seemed to be shot out of a pistol." Dropping the intellectual intuition, he assumed the idea itself as the absolute. But this resulted in the same denial of the personality of God.

§ 3. *The Delusive Fascination of Pantheism.*

Pantheism claims the merit of enforcing the immanence of God in the world, of bringing Him near to us; and it has, indeed, as against Deism, an element of truth. But Christian Theism, independently of this system, and more successfully, establishes the immanence which Deism denies. And though Pantheism, by dwelling upon this one aspect of the truth, the immanence of the Deity, and making Him prominent as the being in whom "we live and move and have our being," has, at first, much fascination for the fancy and attraction for the heart; yet, as it denies the divine transcendence, it soon wearies the former and disappoints the latter. All forms are, at last, beautiful and sublime only as they are organs of spirit. But the forms of nature and mind are, here, to the imagination no longer organs of the truly spiritual; and the feelings of the heart find no stay,

or support, or comfort in an impersonal unconscious absolute. Losing God in the world the system slides into materialism and becomes Atheism; losing spirit in matter it becomes sensualism, "the emancipation of the flesh;" or losing matter in spirit it lands in a fanatical asceticism; or it may connect with its speculative nihilism all the recklessness of modern socialistic, revolutionary movements. Or by its ignoring all distinctions of being and quality, all existence is made an empty show, ethical freedom a mere appearance, sin a natural necessity, virtue and vice mere occasions of the evolution of the idea, and redemption, a dramatic movement of the Godhead, in which it becomes conscious only in the human spirit, and exhausts itself in an endless evolution of immanent thought, ever becoming, but never being, a real existence.

It takes from life all true and lasting sources of *enthusiasm and hope*. It destroys the foundations of moral freedom and personal immortality, making men with all the phenomena of their individual existence, nothing but the endless coming and going of the life-manifestations of the absolute, mere transition-points of its becoming, mere bubbles on the ocean of universal being, mere vibrations of the unconscious life of the universe, mere pulsations of the ever becoming but never attained existence of the ALL.

§ 4. *It is in Conflict with the Noblest Impulses of our Nature.*

Against such a system, we need only appeal to the "hope that springs eternal in the human breast;" the strong and healthful stimulant of all human action without which no great achievement has ever adorned the page of human history. It is by this innate impulse that the mind of man is incited and his arm nerved for every great purpose. To limit his hope to this life, is to bid him "forsake the fountain of living waters and hew out for himself cisterns that can hold no water." Nothing can fully satisfy him without the hope of immortality. There is here no sky without its clouds; no flower without its thorns. "Vanity of vanities all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all the labor that he taketh under the sun? All the rivers run into the sea and yet the sea is not full; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing." "All the glory of man is as the grass and the flower, the grass withereth and the flower fadeth,

but the word of the Lord abideth." This word finds a fixed lodgment in the heart of the sincere man; and against all speculations of philosophy and all deductions of science, he will exclaim :

"Ah! star-eyed science hast thou wandered there
To waft us home the message of despair?
Then bind the palm thy sage's brow to suit,
Of blasted leaf and death distilling fruit.
Ah, me! the sordid wreath that murder rears,
Blood-nursed and watered by the widow's tears,
Seems not so foul, so tainted or so dread
As waves the night-shade round the skeptic's head."

What motive has he to cultivate his own mind, if, in his highest acquisitions of knowledge and virtue, he shall have only made his mortal frame a feast for the worm of the grave, a little more refined than it would otherwise have been? Or to labor for the improvement of society, the order and morality of the community, if in his highest success he shall have only been instrumental in teaching his fellow men to perform their funeral march to the grave, in a manner a little more orderly than they would otherwise have done. No! the earnest man will feel that death does not end all, that he has an immortal soul—a personal immortality.

"And is it in the flight of three score years,
To push eternity from human thought,
And smother souls immortal in the dust?
A soul immortal spending all her fires,
Wasting her strength in strenuous idleness,
Thrown into tumult raptured or alarmed,
At aught this scene can threaten or indulge,
Resembles ocean into tempest tossed
To waft a feather or to drown a fly."

§ 5. *It is Inconsistent with True Rational Thought and Religious Feeling.*

In the earlier stages of its development, and especially in its representatives in Germany, it seemed to favor Christianity, and to be in sympathy with the spirit of religion. But in the course of its development the antagonism between its spirit and the faith of the Christian, its idea of God and the world, and the Christian idea, has become more and more manifest and irreconcilable. Destroying as it does the idea of the transcendence of

God, it must be rejected by the religious feeling of the need of personal communion with God. Only the personal can satisfy the wants of the personal; only the personal can heal the personal. The impulses to prayer are not satisfied by this system, and the emotions of love cannot go out toward an unconscious mind or a blind force; the heart cannot rest upon the bosom of impersonality; it cannot be satisfied with a being who has no intelligence, or, at least, no consciousness of thought or freedom of will, other than its own—no conscious thought, or feeling, or counsel, or purpose distinct from the phenomena of this kind existing in its own experience. It wants a higher thought, a better feeling, a holier counsel than its own. Reason resting on faith and in agreement with its interpretation of life and experience, must reject the idea that the Being who brought into existence personal life, should be Himself impersonal; that the conscious should have come from the unconscious; that the order and beauty, the adaptation and grandeur of the visible world, should have their source in unconscious mind or blind force. When she is called upon to look upon God as engaged for countless ages in fabricating worlds, and with steady step or stormy movement, with majestic stride or playful motion, wielding systems of stars and planets; framing the earth and decking it with all the manifold forms of beauty and sublimity; garnishing the heavens with glories of His handiwork—when she is called upon to see Him cause the grass to grow and the flowers to bloom, clothing the lilies of the field in garments more beautiful than the royal apparel in which the wisest of kings was ever arrayed, more graceful and elegant than the genius of man could ever invent or his skill fabricate; to see Him form the brute and create rational man—and then is asked to believe that it is only in the consciousness of man, the work of His creative hand, that He is becoming conscious, gradually coming to know how He made all these things—when she is called upon to do this, she must protest, as well in the right of her own nature as in the name of the religious spirit in man, against any such demands. Existence is, indeed, a mystery, but the explanation which derives the intelligent from the non-intelligent, the conscious from the unconscious; which accepts the genesis of the world of mind and thought and life from inorganic matter; which receives the results of human history as

the operations of blind chance or a mere law of natural selection, prefers a horrible absurdity which must be loathed, to a mystery so profound that it is adorable, and so full of love that it is attractive to both heart and mind. While it fails to assist us in explaining the riddle of existence and life, it asks us to receive what common sense and sound reason have never been able to act upon with either intellectual certainty or moral satisfaction. Beginning with the idea of the universe as a fall from the absolute, it has properly ended, in its last and greatest representatives, Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, in a pessimism which regards existence itself as misery. It pretends to give no satisfaction to the intellect, for it regards the existence of the world as a blunder, a mishap of being; it offers no comfort to the heart for it tells us that consciousness itself is simply a state of suffering and wretchedness. It has ceased to console men for the loss of the hope of a personal immortality, by promising a good time to come on earth; for it now teaches us that, as increase of intelligence is an increase of consciousness, and consequently of misery, all progress in culture is an intensification and an accumulation of the misery of human existence. The heart must be greatly blinded which does not prefer the "godliness which is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come," to the ungodliness—the denial of a personal God—which not only takes away the hope of a personal immortality, of another and a better life, but refuses even to allow the expectation of any satisfaction in the present life. But especially must the uncorrupted conscience repudiate an idea which is in irreconcilable conflict with its very being and nature—an idea which destroys the reality of all moral distinctions and all true grounds of responsibility and retribution, making the sense of guilt, self-deception; and sin, not the product of the voluntary act of the creature but a necessary element, a necessary part of that universe of being which is identical with God Himself. It removes all the foundations of ethics and yet offers no solution of the evil existing in the world, and takes away all hope of deliverance from it except it be found in the annihilation of our personal conscious existence. Strikingly impressive are the remarks of Martensen on this point.

"In reality, therefore, there can be only two religious and

two scientific systems—the Pantheistic and the Theistic—the former having for its highest the *derived* absolute, the universe; the latter based on the original absolute, that is, on God as God. The antagonism between pantheism and theism, is not merely an antagonism of science, of schools, but is, in its deepest roots, a religious antagonism; it cannot, therefore, be fought out alone in the domain of science. Our deciding for pantheism or for theism, depends not merely on thought, but also on the entire tendency of our inner life; depends not merely on the reason, but also on the conscience, or, as Scripture terms it, on the hidden man of the heart. Where the mind is unduly absorbed in physical or metaphysical pursuits, the tendency of the inner life is pantheistic; where, on the contrary, the *ethical* is recognized as the fundamental task of existence, the tendency of the inner life is theistic. We are aware, indeed, that among pantheistic thinkers there have been men who must be counted not only amongst the greatest intelligences, but also amongst the noblest souls, of the human race; but we find precisely in these profoundest and noblest pantheists, a something reaching out beyond their pantheism; we think we can discern in them a yearning and a striving of which they themselves are unconscious, after an ethical, personal God, such as their system denies. In their moments of greatest enthusiasm they have experienced a need of holding intercourse with the highest idea, as though it were a personal being. Even in Spinoza a certain bent toward personality is discernible; for example, when he speaks of intellectual love to God, and styles it a part of that infinite love with which God loves Himself. Schelling, Fichte, and Hegel too, were stirred by a religious, an ethical mysticism, which contained the germ of a personal relation to a personal God."

§ 6. *Its Vain Attempt to Reconcile its View with the Bible.*

Such men as these, at their stage of the development of the pantheistic system, kept themselves in sympathy with the Church. They so explained her dogmas in the light of the idea, that they seemed to accept them; to afford profound explanations of them, and to defend them as lower forms of the highest truths. They earnestly though vainly strove to bring the system into friendly relations with the Sacred Scriptures. But

not only were they really in conflict with the Christian idea of God and the world, as it is developed from the experience of saving faith in Christ, but with the language as well as the Spirit of the Bible. The very first verse of that Holy Book stands in irreconcilable contradiction with this philosophy; and the few passages which seemed to favor it, were easily explained as in perfect harmony with theism, as expressing only the immanence as well as the transcendence of God; the truth that God's life permeates and guides all, that He is the immanent cause and upholder of the world; and, consequently, as expressing only the presence of the wisdom, power and goodness of God, and not the divine essence as if it were absorbed *in*, or did not *transcend* the world.

§ 7. *Its Declared Antagonism with the Christian Idea of God and the World.*

This *antagonism* between the Christian idea and pantheism is now fully *recognized by the supporters of the system*. The scientific representatives of it have passed beyond their predecessors in the development of its results; and its unscientific adherents are applying the consequences to practice in the movements of communism in Europe and in this country. Schopenhauer, seeing that Hegel's mere logic of thought could give no account of the origin of the process—the world-process—the movement in thought and being, declared *will*, blind will, to be the absolute, and *thought* to be only a result. And now Von Hartmann, the latest and the strongest of the present supporters of the system, discovering that the conception of mere blind will, as the absolute, is inconsistent with the manifestations of intelligence—with the evidence of the adaptation of means to ends in the world-process—conceives of the absolute as mind, intelligent mind, indeed, but "*unconscious mind*," with *will and intellect* as its modes or functions. And he makes the attempt to give a philosophy of "the unconscious," as the philosophy of the absolute, as an exposition of the universe of being; making unconscious, instinctive intelligence, the primitive and highest intelligence—even omniscience itself.

§ 8. *Encouraging Results, for Christianity, of "The Philosophy of the Unconscious."*

The cheering aspect of "The Philosophy of the Unconscious" is, that it completely *overthrows* the theories of the materialistic positivists; showing as it does, the absurdity of all attempts to explain away the marks of intelligence and design which are manifest in the world. Never before, perhaps, have we had a more striking array of facts and arguments proving intelligence and design in the adaptations of nature; never a more convincing demonstration of the absurdity of the denial of final causes. It shows the inseparable connection that exists between will and intellect, between force and reason; and, consequently, between efficient and final causes. It shows that efficient causes cannot be conceived as operating without final causes; and that all created or individual being must serve rational ends. And as it makes instinct the prius in mind, and instinctive intelligence the highest state of mind, it comes into *direct conflict with the Darwinian theory* which makes instinct merely inherited experience. This work will, thus, contribute to check one of the most popular and prevalent forms of skepticism. These aspects of the system have been appropriated by theologians, not only because they are instances of one species of scientific skepticism answering another—of idealism refuting the positions of materialism and naturalism—but because they are exhibited with great clearness and power.

So the pessimism of these last representatives tends to show the vanity and misery of the world so much, as the Bible has always represented them to be, that their systems will lead men to ask *whether it is not most likely, that the Bible will be found, at last, to be as true in its representations of the salvation of which it speaks, as it has been found by this philosophy to be in its descriptions of the miseries of man.* The system has ceased to speak of the prospects of man on earth as full of hope; it no longer thinks that if man would only cease to think of heaven he could make a paradise of earth; that if he would only cease to expect another life, he would make a very happy life of the present. This used to be the language of the unbelieving secular mind in opposition to the views of life, death and eternity entertained by the Christian believer. But its language is changed from

hope to despair, from optimism to pessimism. And since the philosophical spirit has ceased to parade optimistic views against the revealed idea of the vanity of this world, and since it is terminating, as in the case of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, in the most profound and hopeless pessimism, we cannot but feel that the result will be a greater sense of the need of the Christian salvation—a feeling so deep that multitudes will find occasion from it, to be led by the practical principles of human nature to lay hold upon the great Saviour, with the cry of the old faith of the Church: "I cannot let Thee go until Thou bless me."

§ 9. *The Philosophy has failed, and only served to bring the Issue between the Christian Idea and Pantheism into the clearest light, as simply that between Christianity and Heathenism.*

And as the system has brought the issue between theism and pantheism, between the Christian idea and the heathen idea of God and the world, simply to the question of *consciousness or unconsciousness* in God, it will, we think, soon be seen by speculative thinkers, as it has long ago and always been experienced practically, to be *a question more of will than of intellect, more of spiritual disposition than of intellectual ability*. The earnest heart as well as the clear head will not be ready to accept Von Hartmann's instinctively rational activity as the first and the primitive source of things. It cannot but feel that with all his ability his attempt at the solution of the problem of existence is a failure. When it is invited to look at this unconscious thought which is in operation in the world, at this instinctively rational activity in man and brute, and is then asked to accept this as the first, the primal source of the universe of conscious beings, it must refuse to comply. It will ask for a solution of the problem itself which this unconscious, instinctive action presents; it will ask for an explanation of the *possibility* of this instinctively rational activity of the unconscious, whether in the organic or the inorganic world, in plant or animal, in the lower or higher forms of life and mind. It cannot stop until it cognize the *primitive* absolute as the *conscious source* of this instinctively rational activity, and "the *unconscious mind*" in which it is found as only the *derived* and not the *original* absolute. When "The Philosophy of the Unconscious" expounds all the forces and

movements of nature, all the realities and manifestations of consciousness by the instinctive operation of "unconscious mind,"—it offers a solution, which itself as much needs explaining, as the problem which it attempts to solve. It needs an exposition as much as the phenomena which it is to expound—needs an explanation, which cannot be given by him who denies a personal, conscious Creator as the first and the last, the ground and end, of this unconscious power and movement. While we fully recognize this unconscious activity in finite existences, in spirit as well as in nature, in mind as well as in matter, and while we stand in admiration before the immense induction of facts proving this kind of activity in all the world—not only in the forces of inorganic nature, but in organic life; not only in plant and animal, but also in man and his history; and follow with intense interest the tracings of this unconscious activity in all the forms of human knowledge and art, yea, even in the greatest productions of genius,—while we acknowledge the fact, we cannot accept the explanation which is given, the conclusion which is drawn. The philosophy which makes the absolute, like Cudworth's plastic nature, operate unconsciously only, and yet with rational ends, and for the accomplishment of designs of unerring wisdom—and this is exactly what this philosophy does—must fail to give a satisfactory explanation of this instinctively rational operation; unless, like Cudworth, it accept the existence, *back of "the unconscious," of a will that is both rational and conscious*, of a personal as well as a wise Creator, of an existence which not only acts from self, but which knows itself. The being who can be the source of such instinctively rational activity, must be one who is self-conscious, self-possessed, self-sufficient, self-satisfied—must be a person, an absolute person, an infinite spirit. To say that the source of all the conscious activity of the universe, "though unconscious is yet omniscient," is an absurdity. An omniscience which does not know itself, is inconceivable. The unconscious rational activity which is so abundantly found in the world should be regarded not as the original, undervived absolute, but as the derived absolute—call it "plastic nature" or "unconscious mind" if you please—a derived absolute—a plastic nature created by the undervived, intelligent, conscious absolute. The system which not only recognizes marks of intelligence in the world, but proves that we must conclude from them

that it has an intelligent source, must also conclude that that intelligent source is conscious being. For it does not solve the question concerning the source of such instinctive, yet rational activity, to say that the source though rational, is unconscious; though intelligent, is not aware of its own being and action. For the end which is realized in the world by this instinctively rational activity, must have existed in that source, as an intelligent thought, a conscious plan, a wise counsel. According to this philosophy we are to regard omniscience as unconscious, because in it there is no distinction of beginning and end. It says that in the absolute, will and intellect are commensurate, power and intelligence so completely correspond, so fully coincide, are so identical, that the absolute though omniscient is unconscious; that the will only does what the intellect knows, and the intellect only knows what the will does; that power only executes what intelligence indicates, and intelligence only cognizes what power performs; and that power and reason, so completely balancing each other, being in such absolute equilibrium, there can be no consciousness — no consciousness but infinite power and infinite reason, absolutely perfect knowledge. But consciousness is here; consciousness is in the universe of being, how did it begin? This philosophy can only answer by saying, it was a fall of the absolute, a mishap of being. But how could that equilibrium ever be disturbed, and consciousness begin? The absolute is not conditioned or affected by any thing other than itself,—and, according to this system, its very nature in itself, as unconscious, is to be in this equilibrium. “The philosophy of the unconscious,” therefore, while it has clearly shown that the marks of design in the world overthrow all the attempts to expound the universe without the admission of an intelligent author, has certainly failed to show that that intelligent source is “unconscious.” When we once recognize rational ends in the mind which is the source of a world full of marks of design, it seems absurd to regard it as merely “the unconscious soul” of the world, or as the self-developing universe itself. It is only in the idea of a person who is the free and independent, the *conscious*, as well as the intelligent source of all, that we have a solution of the problem.

But be this as it may, the scientific representatives of Pantheism now admit that *their idea of God and the world is the old*

heathen idea developed into scientific form, and that it is in direct antagonism with the Bible and Christianity. And it has been so accepted with equal readiness by the masses in many parts of Europe, and by not a few in this country. And when we remember, that there is, in depraved human nature, a constant source of motive to attempt the exposition of the universe without the admission of a living God, a personal creator and judge of men; that the Bible ascribes the pantheism of the heathen to the circumstance that "they did not worship God *as God*, but served the creature more than the Creator, who is God blessed forever;" that "when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened;" that "professing to be wise they became fools,"—when we remember this, we will realize the terrible nature of this, the modern form of the heathen idea, of the present and prevalent infidelity. It has, at length, come into clear and conscious antagonism with the Christian idea; and it is the struggle of Christianity with this most decided enemy, which constitutes the great conflict of the day. The issues will be of unspeakable importance to the cause of God and humanity. It is highly probable that this will be the last great battle of Christianity. In this view of the subject let us take a more extended and particular view of this great conflict.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NATURE OF THE ALL-ABSORBING CONFLICT BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN IDEA AND THE HEATHEN WORLD-VIEW, AS THEY HAVE COME TO BE DEVELOPED AND APPREHENDED AT THE PRESENT DAY.

§ 1. *The Two Antagonistic Religions and the Only Possible Religions.*

It is well said that "there can be but two religions, Pantheism and Theism." Pantheism has, in its full development, *absorbed all the elements of power* in the various systems which confound God and the world, such as idealism and materialism; and Theism, all the grains of truth contained in those which separate between God and the world, such as Deism in all its forms—Judaism, Mohammedanism, Rationalism. There can, consequently, be only two world-views; the one, the heathen, the other, the Christian idea of God and the world; the one holding the absolute in the sense simply of infinite space and of mere unconditioned cause; the other, as "the being who self-controlled, stands absolved from all other controlling;" the one denying the personality of God and the possibility of revelation; the other, not only affirming the divine personality and the possibility of miraculous communications but expecting special divine intercourse and communion of the Creator with his creatures, of God with man. The only consistent opponent of Christianity is Naturalistic Pantheism; and the only genuine and real supporter of it, is true Theism.

The infidelity of the past age was Deism, which held many truths in common with Christianity; alien as it was in its spirit and nature, it had in common with Christianity the belief in a living personal Deity, the moral freedom of men, moral government and final retribution—God, the soul, human responsibility and personal immortality. The infidelity of the present day is Pantheism. It has absorbed all the elements of skepticism in regard to the Christian faith. It has nothing in common with

Christianity, and either uses its ideas and language with entirely different meaning, or it openly declares itself to be the philosophy of heathenism as opposed to Christianity. It calls itself the new religion in the sense that it is that into which all religion is absorbed, and which has superseded Christianity in the claim to being the absolute religion. We will call it by the name which it assumes and notice the points of difference between the two religions *to which all others are now scientifically reduced, and which are now the only competitors for the religious approbation of men.*

§ 2. *Distinction of Being in Kind or Only in Degree?*

The new religion regards all being as homogeneous. As represented by the sensational school, Materialism—the Positive Philosophy of France—matter is the only reality, and thought or mind is only a quality, or accident, or mode of matter; as represented by the ideal school—the Absolute Idealism of Germany—thought or mind is the only reality, and matter is only the objectification of mind, only the mode of the movement of thought. The new religion—Pantheism—may be, as we have seen, material or ideal, but it has in each case the same view of the homogeneousness of all being; and in its last result, it is pure Naturalism.

Christianity—true Theism—on the other hand, says that being is heterogeneous—that there is besides the being of the matter of the materialist and the thought or mind of the idealist, the existence of spirit, of personal being. It regards God and man as spiritual existences, distinct from the material universe of the one, and from the ideal world of the other. Pantheism teaches that there is originally and, in the strict sense, no personal being; Theism declares that God is a living, personal being, and that man is a spiritual, immortal soul. The former denies that there is any supernatural being, any spaceless and timeless existence, any being to whose existence space and time are not inherently significant, for whose knowledge they are not necessary modes; the latter declares that God exists independently of the universe with its modes of space and time. The former denies that there is any power to whose action there is an alternative—affirms that all being is included in the linked connection of cause and effect, and that any cause is cause only

for the effect into which it passes and for no other, that the cause could not be without the effect any more than the effect without the cause, that God could no more exist without the universe than the universe without God. The latter, while it admits that this is true of nature, of the kind of being whose mode of existence is space and time—whether the existence of the ideal world of the idealist with its subjective space and time, or the material world of the materialist with its objective space and time—yet declares that there is power to whose action there is an alternative, power which goes out into action with the alternative not so to go out, or to go out to the contrary action; that it not only produces the world, but is independent of it, can exist without it so far as any physical or metaphysical or logical necessity is concerned; that though God's moral excellence is such, His love so overflowing that we may not be able to conceive that He would exist without creating, and must conclude that creation would be a moral certainty, yet we know that He can exist without it, that it is not necessary to His existence. He is necessary to the existence of the world. He brought it into existence; He upholds and governs it for an end of His own free election. It is the result of His sovereign counsel. While Theism admits that a cause in nature is cause only for the effect which it produces and for no other, that to the ongoings of nature there is no alternative, it declares that God is not such a cause; that He is not only cause for the universe, but that He is more than that; that to His action there is an alternative; that while the forces in nature are conditioned powers He is unconditioned; that He is the first and the last, the ground and end of all being; that He goes out in act from Himself and returns—every time He goes forth into action—into and upon Himself; is self-action and self-law—a will in liberty—a person. It regards man also as capable of action with an alternative; declares that there is for him a spiritual excellence, a moral worthiness, a higher good than mere natural being or animal sensation; and that he can choose between the behests of conscience, the claims of spiritual dignity, and the cravings of animal appetite—between moral excellence and sensuous gratification—that He cognizes a difference in kind and not merely in degree of being; that He sees an end in the reason different in kind from the ends of sense, a differ-

ence not only between mind and matter, but between true spirituality and mere intellectuality—between pure spiritual worthiness and mere animal satisfaction—between true goodness and mere enjoyment—between true virtue and mere happiness—between love which is blessedness and all craving of appetite—and that having this alternative he is capable of free choice, has a will in liberty.

§ 3. *Moral Responsibility or Natural Necessity in Human Action?*

The former teaches that there is really *no moral responsibility in action*; that the action of both God and man being necessary, all power being without alternative to its acts, there can be no responsibility in its exercise. The latter declares that there are actions which are personal, are our own, are acts of free choice, that we are moral agents and responsible for our moral actions. The former teaches that there is really no moral quality in virtue and vice, holiness and sin; that they are in the nature of things, the necessary antagonisms involved in the evolution of being, in the progress of human history and development; that they are only occasions or conditions of the movement of thought and life; that there is in a literal sense no virtue, no vice, no holiness, no sin; that these are no real distinctions; that they are all alike and equally only the necessary antagonisms of life and progress.

It is true that the apostles of this new religion, by an ambiguity of language—for which their system and writings are remarkable and in which generally lies concealed the fallacy by which they deceive themselves as well as others—by an ambiguous use of words, speak of virtue, holiness, freedom; of God, spirit, personality, etc. But their system denies that there is any reality in that which these terms literally mean. And hence when they speak clearly and consistently with their system, they will tell you that the ideas of sin and guilt, of duty and repentance in their common acceptation, are absurd: “That the helplessnesses and sicknesses of their childhood, their crying in their mother’s arms, their having the measles, and their telling lies and stealing things, are all the same in kind and on a perfect level in regard to responsibility; and that they have as much reason, and no more, to repent of the former as of the latter, and are as little to blame for the one as for the other.” And to the

question what shall be done with men who rob and kill, etc., they answer in substance: "Treat them as obnoxious animals, as destructive machines, remove them as inconveniences, abate them as you would any other nuisance, tie them up, imprison them or hang them." That is the whole of it—nothing in crime or punishment of a moral character. The latter teaches that these qualities, holiness and sin, virtue and vice, are real qualities; that guilt is a reality and that punishment has in it a moral element.

§ 4. *True Spirituality or Mere Intellectuality?*

The former teaches that the *cultivation of the intellect is the only means of attaining knowledge* of truth, whether it be divine or human in its origin. The latter that man has God-consciousness as well as self-consciousness and world-consciousness; that in coming to self-consciousness, we not only become conscious of the natural world as other than ourselves, but also of the supernatural as distinct from our being; that God manifests Himself in the conscience. The theist is thus prepared for the declarations of Christianity that the Logos, the Son of God, is life and the life which is the light of men; that the Eternal Word was made flesh, and that He lighteth every man that cometh into the world; that it is only the man who doeth the divine will, as it is made known in the conscience and by the general divine revelation in nature and providence, who becomes able to know that this doctrine, the gospel, is of God; that obedience to the divine will is the chief source of the attainment of divine knowledge; "that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath in reserve for them that love Him, but that He hath revealed them unto us" and made them a matter of experience in one point of our relation to them, and that the central point—assurance of salvation through faith in Christ—of spiritual experience; that there is a region of truth that is beyond the reach of the mere logical understanding, is not to be found in the chain of cause and effect, is not included in any process of mere science; that by this divine law of love we gain spiritual knowledge; that "he that loveth knoweth God."

§ 5. *The Worship of the Divine or of the Human?*

The former teaches that there is, in the strict sense, *no such thing as worship*, that is, spiritual worship; that man's spirituality is measured by his intellectual culture; that the human soul is to be enlightened only by philosophy, and the heart purified only by science; that God is not distinct from man, but that the consciousness of man is the consciousness of God; that Jesus of Nazareth is only one of the manifestations of the divine consciousness, only one of the manifestations of the idea, only one of the great philosophical spirits of nature; that if you would know truth you must worship the goddess of reason, worship genius, worship science; must become an organ for the glory of the idea; must study political economy and thereby know how to construct a perfect government; acquaint yourself with jurisprudence, and, thus, learn how to administer equal and just laws; study sociology, and so become imbued with the spirit of kindness, generosity, hospitality. It declares that man is the highest manifestation of being, and that the labor of his hand and the activity of his intellect, are the highest worship; that, therefore, all churches, schools and states which inculcate dependence on any power higher than man, or encourage the worship of any object other than humanity itself, should be abolished. The latter, on the contrary, teaches that there is something better than mere physical force or intellectual power, than scientific operations or bodily exercises and manual labor, though perfectly consistent with them and promotive of them: that man is dependent upon a being of supreme spiritual excellence; that he must cultivate the heart by that idea and bring it into subjection to the divine authority and have it filled with divine love, that it is only in this way that he comes into the true harmony of being; that God is worthy of all reverence, unbounded reverence, devotion, homage and love; and that we are really brutish or wicked, low and vile, as long as we do not worship and obey Him.

§ 6. *Personal Immortality and Divine Revelation; Man a Product of Nature or a Child of God?*

The former declares that there is no *personal* immortality for man, that we are mere waves upon the ocean of being—waves

which succeed one another, and are no more—all that remains is the great ocean of being; individuality and personality come and go, only the unconscious, the impersonal abides forever. The latter declares for life immortal, eternal life. The former, consequently, must necessarily deny the *possibility of all special* divine revelation, and declare the reality of all miracles impossible and, in the nature of the case, incredible. It can allow, in its idea, no interpositions to come from heaven in behalf of man—to come into the causal nexus of things in space and time. It deems this connection complete from eternity to eternity. It denies even the miracle of creation, and hence in material nature, it adopts, with Laplace, exclusively the theory of evolution; in animated nature, it traces, with Darwin, man back to the ape; in spiritual life, such as Christianity, it traces, with Strauss, all back to myths. In short, against all the evidence of history, against all common belief, it says we must ignore the possibility of a supernatural revelation. The latter with the Bible, teaches both creation and cosmogony, origination and evolution, not as antagonistic but as combined in the plan and revelation of God's mode of creation and preservation. It teaches that as God is a living, personal being, He is naturally in communion with personal beings, puts Himself into communication with them; that He has revealed Himself to man in the constitution of his being and in his environment, in his spirit and in surrounding nature; and that to complete this communion and to conduct him to his high destination, and especially to redeem him from the power of sin and evil, it is not only possible and desirable but in the highest degree probable that He would give a miraculous revelation. It regards the evil in the world as sin, as sin in the sense of its having been originated by moral creatures and, consequently, as guilt. It is therefore ready to regard the religious idea as having its fulfillment and end in the perfect revelation made by the incarnation of the Eternal Logos, in the mission of Jesus Christ for the redemption and salvation of man. But this leads us to think of the importance of possessing the theistic idea as the true Christian idea; to inquire what the Christian idea in the light of the principle of the Reformation, would require as the true Christian Theism.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN IDEA UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION, AND ESPECIALLY IN ITS ETHICAL BEARINGS, REQUIRES OUR THEISM TO BE, IN THE STRICT SENSE, CHRISTIAN THEISM.

§ 1. *Natural Tendency Toward a Defective Theism.*

MUCH of the theistic philosophy, and much even of the theistic faith in the Church, is still, if not estranged, yet *not in complete harmony and sympathy* with the Christian idea as the principle of the Reformation leads us to apprehend it. The time will come, no doubt, when the Christian idea of God and the world will be intellectually apprehended, as well as practically admitted and experienced; when the testimony of the Spirit in the hearts of Christian believers will be speculatively apprehended and received by the universal thinking mind, not only in the Church, but also in the philosophical world. Even the vain attempts to explain the universe of being without the admission of a personal Deity will, at last, be found to have been occasions of a clearer apprehension of the relations of nature and spirit, of reason and revelation, of science and faith; and of preparing the way for the time when revelation will not be regarded as a mere external rule, but when it will be received as an inner authority, objective, indeed, and absolute, yet chosen and adopted by the mind, not as a mere outward law without relation to the inner susceptibilities—to the receptivity and wants of the soul, or to the permanent and essential laws of the mind—but one with such vital relations to the whole being of man, soul and body, intellect, susceptibility and will, with such close connection with the spirit and the heart, that the human intellect, acting freely as well as lovingly and gladly, impelled by practical necessities, but also cheerfully following in the path of clear and satisfactory speculative apprehension, will accept the truths of Christianity, and feel that its highest freedom is not only consistent with, but inseparable from, the most profound

submission to its authority as a special revelation from God. But such is the tendency of the mere logical understanding to Monism—of mere intellectual science to reduce all things to one principle—that Monism will always be the tendency of the mind when theology becomes a mere question of intellect. Absolute Monism or Absolute Nescience will generally be the result of the discussions of the relations of subject and object, nature and spirit, God and man, in the absence of the true Christian experience of assurance of salvation—of the true evangelical apprehension of the distinction between God and man; of the one as the source of all good, of the other as receptivity for it. The union, as well as the distinction of being, is found only in saving faith—in the experience of salvation through faith in Christ.

§ 2. *True Theism is Inseparable from the Gospel and Church of Christ.*

Theology, being a science of faith, must expect to be able to apprehend the true personal God only as He is revealed in Christ. Martensen so impressively shows the necessity of the influence of the Church and the Bible, of faith and the word, on this point, that we must quote his words: "We who have grown up under the influence of Christianity are accustomed to regard theism as a natural religion; for we find many who, whilst refusing to believe in Christianity as a positive supernatural revelation, still cleave to the living God, who reveals Himself in the works of nature and the course of human life; but it is difficult to say how much of this theism is due to the influence of Christianity, and how much has a purely natural origin. Clear it is, however, that this undefined theism—apart from Christ, apart from the Church—which is professed by many of our contemporaries, produces but a vague sort of piety. It is of great importance, indeed, as preparing the way for belief in a positive revelation, as a principle of conservation by which the soul is raised above the world and conducted towards the kingdom of God; but on no man can it confer the fullness of truth and life after which we all yearn." After noticing, in laudatory terms, the services, in this respect, of that rationalistic theist and noble-minded man, Jacobi, he continues: "He gave utterance to a testimony which was written from the creation of

the world in the hearts of men, although the original characters of this sacred inscription were afterwards darkened by the hieroglyphics of pantheism; and this is the testimony which we call the testimony of natural religion. This religion, however, was merely a movement towards, not a resting in, the kingdom of God. It lacked a Mediator between God and man, one to bridge over the infinite gap between the creature and the Eternal, after whom our hearts yearn ('he that seeth Me seeth the Father'); it took no notice of the problem of sin, and its solution in the gospel of the cross. And much as this theism may speak of faith, in the fullest sense of the term it was not a religion of faith; it was rather the religion of those yearnings and forebodings which stir the souls of many in our days, but which can never reach their goal, save in the God of the Church."

"The word *God*," says Luther, in a passage where he attacks the Pantheists of that age, "the word *God* has many significations; the true, the right God, is the God of life and consolation, of righteousness and goodness." These words, however, did not flow forth from a vague, undefined religion of yearnings and premonitions, but from the clearly-defined religion of faith. For Luther believed that the Lord of life and consolation, of righteousness and goodness, had assumed a determinate form, had vouchsafed His presence in a determinate manner as the God of the Church. Luther was quite as well aware as the philosophers that God is omnipresent, that He is not shut up in temples; but he knew also that God is only present for us where He vouchsafes His presence in a special, determinate manner. "Although God is omnipresent, He is nowhere; I cannot lay hold of Him by my own thoughts without the Word. But where He Himself has ordained to be present, there He is certainly to be found. The Jews found Him in Jerusalem at the throne of grace; we find Him in the Word, in Baptism, in the Lord's Supper. Greeks and heathens imitated this by building temples for their gods in particular places, in order that they might be able to find them there; in Ephesus, for example, a temple was built to Diana; in Delphi, one to Apollo. God cannot be found in His majesty—that is, outside of His revelation of Himself in His Word. The majesty of God is too exalted and grand for us to be able to grasp it; He therefore shows us the right way, to wit, CHRIST, and says,

'believe in Him, and you will find out who I am, and what are My nature and will.' The world meanwhile seeks in innumerable ways, with great industry, cost, trouble and labor, to find the invisible and incomprehensible God in His majesty. But God is and remains to them unknown, although they have many thoughts about Him, and discourse and dispute much; for *God has decreed that He will be unknowable and unapprehensible apart from CHRIST.*"

The Christian idea of God and the world—that which recognizes God as living and personal, which neither shuts Him *out* of the world nor encloses Him *in* it, which regards Him as transcendent, supernatural and superhuman, and yet immanent in nature and man, the living God of Providence and grace—this idea is consistent with reason, and demanded by the susceptibilities and wants of man. And it is the only idea of God consistent with the conscience, the moral consciousness, and especially with the Christian consciousness, with the experience of justification, of peace and communion with God, of assurance of salvation through faith in Christ, and with the high and holy teachings of the Sacred Scriptures. The idea of creatorship and creatureship, of the world as standing in the relation of creature to God—of the fatherhood of God and the affiliation of men as standing in the relation of children toward God as the heavenly Father; of the world as dependent on God; as not eternal, but as having had a beginning; as created out of nothing or from the possibilities of God's will; of the existence of creatures, not as necessary, physically or metaphysically, or logically, but merely certain; and this certainty, a moral certainty, arising not from any want but from the fullness of divine love, not from any craving of appetite, or any impulse of passion, but from the holy, free love of Him who is self-satisfied and hath need of nothing; morally certain only because it has actually occurred, and must, consequently, be consistent with infinite excellence and perfectly worthy of God; the idea of God as subject to no necessary connections of cause and effect, as in no necessary relations, but as freely putting Himself in relation; as creating the world but not losing Himself in His operations; as cause of the world, yet above it; *in* it, yet comprehensive *of* it; as not a something, but a person; not the ALL, but all in all and over all—this is the true Christian theism, the true Chris-

tian idea of God which we must accept if we would appropriate the true system of divine truth. It is, indeed, the only true conception of the Absolute, as not only not controlled by any other but as self controlled.

§ 3. *The Connection of True Theism with Christian Ethics.*

True Christian theism is equally necessary to the true scientific apprehension of the Christian life. Not only the dogmatic, but the ethical phase; not only the dogmatic, but the ethical elements of Christianity require, for their speculative apprehension, a true Christian theism. The exposition of the Christian life, as well as the apprehension of the Christian doctrine, requires a return to the Reformation, and the adoption, in the strict sense, of the Christian idea of God and the world, of religion and man, as it is involved in the principle of the Reformation. The scientific apprehension of the Christian life must be divested more and more of all vestiges of the perversions and corruptions introduced by the heathen idea of the nature of God and man, and of the relations between them. We must apprehend clearly the truth, that no idea which falls short of the conception of God as a personal being, in whom morality is eternally realized, from whom all good must be derived, and whose will must be the revelation of the law of all moral action; and of man as a spiritual being, receptive of divine influence, and susceptible to divine communion, can be the universally valid idea of ethical life.

The history of Christian ethics shows that the Christian mind in its theological apprehensions had never, before the Reformation, entirely escaped from the influence of the heathen idea. Men's hearts in Christendom were ethically better than their heads. The practical appropriation of the Christian idea was more complete and true than the speculative apprehension of it. So much was this the case, that it is very questionable whether the purity and development of the Christian life were not more hindered than promoted by the prevalent ethical systems. Certain it is that the greatest benefit to be derived from them is found in the necessity, thus made manifest, of a more thoroughly Christian ethical system; a more decidedly Christian theism—the apprehension of both the subjective and objective grounds of morality as they are fully made known in the appropriation

and experience of Christianity; of the true idea of sin in its power and guilt, and of grace as it is revealed in the divine redemption and experienced by saving faith; of God both as Creator and Reconciler, as reconciled to man in Christ, and bringing him into life-communion with Himself; and of man as not a nature-entity, but a person with a personal peculiarity in him and a moral goal before him; of saving faith as the beginning of affiliation with God; and of the eternal life of holiness and freedom for which he is destined, inspiring him with the spirit of a child of God, and leading him to live and act as an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ of everlasting blessedness; of the moral law as grounded not merely in the excellence of the finite, but in that of the infinite spirit, and yet as not purely outward and objective, but a law of which his nature is receptive, a law dwelling within him and becoming his personal possession, not an external yoke, but an inner power, the complement of his personal being—in short, of man as living and acting not as an isolated individual, nor as being absorbed in the ALL, but as a personal subject in full life-communion with God in Christ by the receptivity of faith on his part, and by the gift of grace on the part of God. From this point of union between God and man, springs, on the one hand, the true Christian idea for the construction of the dogmatical system, and, on the other, for the attainment of a complete ethical science. Only from this, is the true apprehension of sin and holiness, of freedom and grace, of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, made entirely practicable. “In the emancipation of the human spirit by redemption, in the taking up of the moral idea into the inner heart of the consciousness, there lie now, the possibility of, and the incentive to, a *scientific* development of the moral consciousness. Heathendom developed an ethical science only on the basis of a presumed freedom and autonomy of the spirit of the natural man; the Old Testament religion developed none at all, because in it the divine law was as yet an absolutely objective and merely passively-given one, to which man could stand only in an obeying relation. But Christianity regains for the human spirit its true freedom—makes the merely objective law into an also perfectly subjective one, into one that lives in the heart of the regenerated man as his real property, one that enlightens the reason and becomes thereby truly rational—and

hence there is here given the possibility of shaping this pure moral subject-matter as embraced in the divinely enlightened conscience, into free scientific development."

Now while "the religious consciousness of the moral was, indeed, given in high perfection in the first form of Christianity," the scientific apprehension of the idea was very slow and gradual; and was never made in its purity, freed from all vestiges of the heathen idea, until the Reformation. This is manifest in the vain attempt at the coördination, subordination, or superordination between the philosophical and the theological virtues. There was a lack of the true speculative apprehension of Christian Theism. The heathen idea of God as indeterminate being, was more or less present, connecting with the Theism of the Scholastics, Deistic elements; and with that of the Mystics, pantheistical tendencies. And we have in the ideal Pantheism of John Scotus Erigena only a more scientific system of the heathen elements still remaining more or less in all the existing apprehensions of the theological mind, only brought so completely into scientific form that it was not understood by many; and it brought to the consciousness of the few who did understand it, the fact of the existence of these elements, and became the occasion of turning attention to the importance of a more decidedly Christian Theism.

§ 4. *The True Speculative Apprehension of this Connection
First Made at the Reformation.*

At the Reformation Luther had so deep a sense of the true Christian Theism, and so high an appreciation of the peculiar ethical ideas springing from the principle of the Reformation, that he shrank from all attempts at preparing a system of scientific ethics. The distinct elements, the ethical and the religious, had found their point of union, and he seemed in this case also to feel that we need a "new language in which to express the New Wisdom." Just as in the case of church organization and government, he feared that the materials were not yet provided for scientific exhibition; and, lest men should fall back into Legalism, he preferred to wait until the gospel in its vital relations to the mind as the power of God, should have produced a more general and complete development of the Christian life. "He had," says Wuttke, "An anxiety lest such a work might sink

the free moral activity of the Christian from the sphere of faith-communion with Christ into unfree and juridical forms. He expressed it repeatedly, that the true believer needs no law at all, because faith is both law and power, and spontaneously works the God-pleasing out of free love without being hampered by an objective law." "The Christian's love is to be an out-gushing love, flowing from within out of the heart, out of his own little fountain; the spring and the stream are themselves to be good—are not to draw their waters from without. Christ was a redeemer, not a law-giver, and the gospel is not to be turned into a book of laws."

Luther felt that ethical as well as dogmatic science must have its root in saving faith, in the faith that worketh by love. Dorner says of Luther's position on this point: "How justifying faith according to its essence, is the fruitful principle of sanctification or of the Christian-moral life, we have learned especially from 'The Sermon on the freedom of the Christian Man.' Unselfish, pure, God-like love is kindled by the humiliating power of God's love toward the sinner, pardoning gratuitously and from pure grace. Its prevenient nature dissipates fear, but it also destroys the disposition to disown or deny one's sin to Christ or ourselves; for this would be to deny to Christ the merit of His benefits. Justification, as a divine act for Christ's sake, does, indeed, precede all inner changes for the better in man, and exhibit solely the reconciled paternal heart of God—the willing of reconciliation in God, so to speak, in the inner forum of the divine counsel. Love, or the new life of man, has no place, either as merit or even as condition, before this living will of God in His heart to regard men for Christ's sake as reconciled and justified. On the other hand this new divine view of men, which exists—not on account of their connection with Christ through faith—but in virtue of the communion of *Christ* with them even when they are yet sinners, resting solely upon God's unmerited, free grace, does not remain in God as a sealed up or inactive decree; but the gospel is the joyful message of it. And this revelation is powerful enough to carry with it a transformation of the entire inner world. This it accomplishes by wooing the humiliated conscience of the unworthy sinner to a recognition of the prevenient act of love on the part of the suffering Mediator, and to a reciprocation of it to-

gether with believing commitment to Him. As faith apprehends Christ as it is apprehended of Him in the fullness of His self-communicating favor, so there is necessarily posited in such faith participation in the *new life*, as well as in the salvation of Christ. But the forgiveness of sin, that is, the reconciliation of God with the sinner, has not this new life in any way as its cause, nor even the man's *commitment of himself to Christ in faith*; much more, on the contrary, are forgiveness of sin and all salvation gained and secured solely through the communion of *Christ* with men.

“But just as firmly as stands the objective validity of the offered forgiveness of sin on the part of God, *before* faith even exists, so firmly stands this other fact that only *through* faith can this forgiveness—though valid in itself—be *personally appropriated* and enjoyed. The offer of forgiveness exists before faith, and is made known to those not yet believing *in order that they may believe*. If they despise this message in which the inmost pure love toward the unworthy sinner is revealed, there is henceforth no more deliverance for them; they remain in death and its irresistible developments. Thus, they frustrate the will of grace, valid even for them, and are lost, not on account of their former sins, but because they allow their sins to proceed to the point of despising even the love of Christ which suffered for them. On the other hand, the believers become believers only hereby that they receive the gospel as grace, as prevenient manifestation of love toward the sinner, consequently, with a knowledge and feeling of their unworthiness. For otherwise they would not, in their receiving, know what they received; would not, consequently, in fact, have accepted grace as such, although it was valid for them. If this reflection shows that to a believing reception of grace necessarily belongs repentance; and, consequently, an incipient moral change (which, however, is wrought through the offer of salvation), then does the power of positive moral renewal to that which is negative (repentance) lie in the faith which puts man into communion with Christ and all His benefits, and in which true repentance is completed. But the power of Christ, in which faith obtains participation, becomes the impulse of the personal, new life and striving for holiness. Especially does it become such through knowledge and experience of that gift of love which is not given piecemeal or

dependent upon certain performances and stages of inner growth, but which holds entire and full for man, even now in his imperfection. This is the experience of the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, of the forgiveness of sin and peace with God; in virtue of which our heart gives us witness that we are children of God. This is the joyous, blessed back-ground of our temporal, growing, yet constantly imperfect life—the perpetual complementing of our imperfection unto righteousness before God, if we only remain in faith. This, the ideal anticipation of our perfection, and the constant enjoyment of our personal restoration, occur already even in our temporal consciousness, in order that the ideal may be actualized through the saving power of communion with Christ.

“Sanctification or the moral life-shaping of the Christian, is, for Luther, only the necessary phenomenon and manifestation of the power which is posited in faith. Faith is the doer; love, the deed. Faith corresponds to the divine nature in Christ (to the *pneuma*); love, to the human nature. Hence, he even calls the latter the incarnation of faith (*fides incarnata*). The advance to love is so much a necessity of the higher nature that it may be compared to the necessity according to which a good tree bears good fruit; so that where these fruits are absent, either faith was not present, or there must have occurred a disease—an arrest of the sap, a retrogressive movement, and a destruction of the work of God which had been begun. Therefore, he is not afraid to treat the *new life of love which is being formed as a mark of faith* not only for others, but also for the personal consciousness and the certainty of salvation. Of course, he does not treat it as if we had to place confidence in this still constantly imperfect life of love, instead of relying upon Christ, but he does positively mean that we possess, in the growth of the apprehended love in us, in like manner as in the sacramental, a faith-strengthening pledge of the perduring state of grace.

“As to what relates now to the development of *the world of ethics*, Luther certainly remains stationary with faith as the principle of sanctification. He exhibits it in all its fullness and power, in all its blessedness, as the source whence spring delight and free motive to all good.” He felt that while this new life could be and is experienced by the Christian, independently of all science, it would take a long time to prepare the

way for a scientific apprehension and development of the idea of it. And, after hundreds of years of experience and scientific development, the Church must now go back to this principle of the Reformation, and appropriate it *anew*, if she would have a true science of ethics. How much Luther would appreciate—were he still living—the effort to do this, is manifest in his treatment of the effort of Melanchthon. “Melanchthon,” continues Dorner, “without denying this natural, free impulse of faith to become love, pays attention more to the ways and means which belong to the doing of the good. In addition to the gratitude for the salvation obtained in Christ as the constant impulse to do the divine will, he attends also to the moral knowledge or wisdom through which alone it remains not merely in the good will in general, but comes to the choosing of the definite good which lies before us; in virtue of which, further, the Christian first attains not merely to an abrupt or impulsive acting of grateful faith, but to a connected forming of the moral life. Melanchthon sees clearly that we do not, as a matter of course, come to such a connected formation through faith, as this is, indeed, directed to God, and not to the world. It is necessary for this purpose to acquire a connected moral knowledge of ourselves and of the world. Therefore, especially is *ethics* of interest to Melanchthon—the man of science. He laid great stress upon the *law*, even in the regenerate, and for this purpose he returned, on the one hand, to the antique ethics, especially to Aristotle; on the other, he converts to use, the ethics of the Old Testament. He treats, with special love, the proverbs, and, as the correct moral treatment of the earthly things and relations is conditioned by their nature and life-laws, he investigates the world of the first creation, physics, jurisprudence as sources, partly for presuppositions of ethics; partly for moral knowledge itself. But he constantly places all again under the point of view of faith; because only thus can the centrally ethical, that is religion, remain the soul of the entire human life. Only thus can the ill-founded antagonism between morality and religion be put aside, and the source of power for perfecting the known good be kept open. Luther—who often (*e. g.* in the introduction to the Epistle to the Romans) speaks as if faith would of itself, without anything further, hit with unflinching tact upon the morally correct—knew full well, on the other

hand, how much he possessed in this ethical gift of Melancthon. He defends him as skillfully as bravely, against those who thought the faith would be endangered, if it were not exclusively everything. For he well knew that precisely then would faith cease again to have the dignity of the *principle*, when it should not be *principle for something*. Faith alone justifies, but faith is not alone (*Fides justificat, sed fides non est solitaria*)."

The principle of the Reformation thus requires a theism which will apprehend God, both in His immanency in the world, and in His transcendency above the world; in his distinction from man, and in his union with him in Christ through faith; the law as distinct from him and yet written in his heart, and man himself, as renewed by grace, no more the subject of condemnation, no longer a mere creature, but a dear child of God. According to the heathen world-view, ethics could only be the description of the operation of a natural law; according to the Judaistic idea of God and man, it could only be the exposition of a law, both distinct from man and external to him. It preserved against the heathen idea the one great element of theism, the distinction between God and the world, the creatorship of God and the creatureship of man, and the subjection of man to the authority of God as personal lawgiver and judge. But it is only the Christian idea that views the law as distinct *from*, and yet possessed *by* the subject—of the law as put into the mind. In the seventeenth century the Pietists returned, in this respect also, to the principle of the Reformation.

§ 5. *The Pietistic Return to the Apprehension of the Distinction and Union of God and Man in Saving Faith.*

"Spener," to quote again from Wuttke, "brought again into the foreground the thought which, while, indeed, dogmatically admitted, had never yet been emphasized morally, namely, that faith without works is dead; the sanctification of the heart and life does not simply follow upon, and stand in connection with, true faith, but is in such faith already itself directly contained; there are not two spiritual life-streams, but only *one*; the moral personality itself, as justified by faith, admits of no falling apart of faith and morality; all religious life is, immediately and necessarily, at the same time moral; is not simply followed by the

moral as a second collateral element. In the eyes of declining orthodoxy, religion had become too much a mere objective something by which the religious subject is simply impressed and influenced, but not thoroughly permeated. Pietism brought religion and its divine spirit-principle again entirely within the Christian subject, as now transformed, to create a new, spirit-witnessing, objective morality."

§ 6. *The Declension Resulting from Mere Intellectualism.*

In general, and especially in proportion as theological subjects were transferred from the sphere of conscious experience to that of the logical understanding, the influence of the heathen idea was still present—the idea of God as mere abstract being, and of law as mere impersonal force; of man as either altogether dependent, and necessarily determined, or as absolutely independent and free in his moral actions, according as this idea took on a pantheistic or a deistic aspect. Wuttke says of the philosophical systems down to the days of Kant: "Previous philosophical ethics had gone astray in two respects. The two equally true and necessary thoughts that, on the one hand, the moral idea has a universally valid significancy, that it cannot be dependent in its obligating character on the chance caprice of the individual subject; and that yet, on the other, it has in fact for its end the perfection of the person, and hence also his happiness, had been one-sidedly held fast to, each for itself. Naturalistic Pantheism gave validity simply to the objective significancy of the moral—absolutely annihilated the freedom of the will, and conceived by the moral law as a mere fatalism unalterably determining every individual; and when, with the champions of materialistic atheism, this notion of the unfree determination of the individual ultimated practically in an entire letting-loose of the passions, it was not without the countenance of strict consistency with the ground principle. The opposite tendency proceeded from the subject, emphasizing his free will, and hence looking less to the ground than to the end of moral activity; man was to be determined by nothing which does not leave him absolutely free; which does not contribute to his individual advantage; in other words, by the thought of individual happiness. While the first tendency undermined morality by the fact that it annihilated the moral subject, sinking

him into a mere unfree member of the great world-machine, the other tendency imperiled morality in its innermost essence in a no less degree, by the fact that it required no self-subordination of the subject under a *per se* valid idea, but emphasized the absolute claims of the individual personality; so that, in fact, in their ultimate consequences, the two opposite tendencies resulted equally in the letting-loose of the individual in his unbridled naturalness. Christian ethics could not, save by letting itself be led astray by philosophy, fall into either of these errors."

§ 7. *Tendency of the Philosophical Systems of Ethics to Monism.*

These opposite tendencies can only be avoided by finding the point of union of the universal requirements and tendencies of the moral law, with the freedom and end of the individual moral subject, as it is exhibited in the principle of the Reformation. Kant maintained, indeed, the validity *per se* of the moral idea, against both the mere naturalistic and the mere subjective tendencies. But as he finds the basis of the rule of right only in the excellence of the finite, and not in that of the infinite Spirit, he fails as well to give a universally valid law of life, as to find the point of union between religion and morality. And his system, fully and legitimately carried out by Fichte, ended in the old heathen Pantheism. Wuttke says: "As Kant had denied to the pure reason all objective knowledge, and also placed all contents of the practical reason exclusively in the subject, and derived the validity of the law of reason simply from the subject; so Fichte simply made the validity of the individual subject, the *ego*, all-predominant, conceived all objective existence merely negatively as the non-ego, and based cognition and volitionating absolutely on the individual ego. The ego and the non-ego reciprocally determine each other, and, hence stand in reciprocal relation. The ego posits itself as determined by the non-ego, that is, it *cognizes*; and it posits itself, on the other hand, as determining in relation to the non-ego, that is, it *volitionates*. The two are only two phases of the same thing, inasmuch as the non-ego in its entire being exists only so far as it is posited by the ego, so that strictly speaking, the ego is its own object. The ego should in all its determinations be posited only by itself—should be absolutely independent of all non-ego. Only as volitionating, as absolutely determining the non-ego, is the

ego free and independent. The ego as rational, *should* not permit itself to be determined by any non-ego independent of it, should be absolutely independent, should make all non-ego absolutely dependent on itself, should exercise absolute causality upon the same." And the ego thus being conceived as absolute, the system takes a mystico-pantheistic turn. "He expressly presents, as the goal of morality, complete 'self-annihilation'—not, however, in the Christian sense of moral self-denial, but rather in the sense of the religion of India," that is, of Pantheism. Thus we have the heathen idea in the beginning of that full modern development which it has since received, at the hands of Schelling, Hegel, and Von Hartmann.

§ 8. *Science cannot of Itself Decide with Certainty in the Sphere of the Personal, of the Moral and the Free.*

From what has been said, it appears that Theism, much as it commends itself to the reason of man when it is once produced, would yet, without the revelation of God in His personality, not be very easily made the subject of scientific apprehension. Science of itself can apprehend only that which occurs according to fixed and uniform law; what are the acts of will, the results of personal, free will, it cannot of itself determine. Will can reveal itself distinctly and fully only in acts—only in history. Only the necessary, not the free, can be the subject of science in the strict, the demonstrative sense. But acts of will, even when in accordance with infinite reason, are not necessary; and, consequently, can be known only by infinite reason with absolute certainty. They are not certain physically, metaphysically or logically, but only morally certain; and, consequently, they can never be known with certainty by the finite mind until they have transpired or have been made known. Even creation is not a necessary act. The presence and the action of the infinite personal spirit first becomes known to the creature by revelation. Spirit can only make itself known to spirit, and this revelation must be made in word and deed—must be historical. Such a revelation, though not contrary to reason, will transcend the finite powers of apprehension and demonstration. It seems, therefore, that to have true Theism we must have Christian Theism—that is, the Theism which is the result of the Christian revelation. There must first be divine revelation as a historical

fact, sufficiently authenticated by testimony; and this revelation must have such relation to the susceptibilities and wants of man, that as the action of spirit it will have power upon spirit; that its reality will convey its own evidence with it to the sincere and earnest religious spirit, to the soul longing for communion with a spirit higher and better than itself, to the heart yearning for salvation from its conscious degradation and misery. In short, the principle of the Lutheran Reformation, involving as it does *objective revelation* and *subjective certainty* of its truth; the *divine presentation* of salvation and the *personal assurance* of its reality by *inner conscious experience*, exhibits the true modus operandi in this matter. In this way is faith in the living personal God, in this way is the true idea of the divine personality or a true Theism, possible. The true idea of God and the world is inseparable from the specific experience of Christian, saving faith. There is, consequently, great significance in the Lutheran idea which insists so much upon the specific means of grace, and upon the power of the revealed Word as the exhibition of the objective revelation of the personal presence of the living God. This appreciation of the importance of the means of grace, so characteristic of Lutheranism, we should most heartily cherish. But we should give equal heed to the other phase of the true type of it, namely, that this gospel is the power of God unto salvation; something not merely to be received with a historical, but also with a living faith; something which is life as well as truth; something to be experienced, and of the certainty of which we can have personal assurance, and of the power of which we can have conscious experience. Thus will we have personal communion with the living God, and a satisfactory idea of His personal existence. We repeat the language of Luther: "Although God is omnipresent, He is nowhere; I cannot lay hold upon Him by my own thoughts without the Word. But where He has Himself ordained to be present, there He is certainly to be found." "The majesty of God is too exalted and grand for us to be able to grasp it; He, therefore, shows us the right way, to wit, CHRIST, and says: 'Believe in Him, and you will find out who I am, and what are My nature and will.' "

§ 9. *Christian Theism the Satisfactory, and the only Satisfactory World-view.*

The idea of God, as the living personal God, when it is thus found, commends itself to the highest thoughts, the deepest feelings, the noblest aspirations, the holiest purposes of the human soul. It gives man a true interest in His existence, a *true enthusiasm and hope*. It makes all sacred, the body as well as the soul; the material as well as the spiritual world. It apprehends the true nature of the universe of finite being, of man, of nature, and of spirit; neither making the soul a sublimation of matter, nor matter a precipitate of spirit; neither regarding thought a secretion from the brain or an exhalation of "the fire-mist," nor matter a petrification or crystallization of thought. It represents man as free, yet dependent; as having his freedom assured by his dependence on a God who is a living, personal power. Freedom and dependence have their perfect unity in this idea. The believer can do all things through Christ; nothing without Him. Dependent on another, but that other, one with whose life the Christian's life is so connected that he would not desire to be if He were not, would not desire to live without Him; so dependent on God that he is perfectly independent of everything else. Thus in the Christian idea we see the freedom of man secured by his very dependence on God; see how he is finite, yet for the infinite, and destined for a personal immortality. Thus does true Christian Theism become a necessity of human faith, as much as a dictate of divine revelation. So strong and impressive is it, that it is felt to be more rational as well as more satisfactory than Deism or Pantheism. It has, indeed, its difficulties, its insoluble problems for the understanding, but it prefers the mystery which, while it is consistent with all the dictates of the reason and the facts of the experience of life, is demanded by conscience and faith, to the explanation which conflicts with the very foundations of morality and religion, and yet affords no solution of the questions of existence and life and destiny. The divine nature is, in any possible view we may take of it, unfathomable; but the idea which the Christian faith gives is, at least, full of satisfaction and peace, enthusiasm and hope. If we only know Him in part through faith, we are yet by that faith made content with His

incomprehensibility, and filled with adoration of the awful but blessed mystery of His being. The Christian idea of God and the world commends itself to the acceptance of all sincere inquirers for some solid comfort amid the troubles of life and the terrors of death, for the spiritual and everlasting good, which can savingly meet the infinite dissatisfaction in which our own existence and that of the universe leaves us, when we are without a personal power to trust and a personal immortality to expect. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were," thus, indeed, most emphatically, "written for our learning, that we through *patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*"—hope, which confirms the natural sense and yearning of the soul, and which in the language of the poet exclaims :

"This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the best !
The poor, oppresséd, honest man
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been a recompense
To comfort those that mourn "

DIVISION II.

*THE APPLICATION OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF THE RELATION OF
MAN TO GOD—OF FAITH AND RELIGION—IN THE LIGHT OF
THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION.*

THE Christian idea of the nature of faith and religion, as derived from the principle of the Reformation, would regard *all true religion as revealed—revealed either by general or by special divine influence.* This results necessarily from the personal relations which are involved in it. According to this principle man's normal condition is a state of communion with God. He is made for God and eternity. Being not a nature-object, but a personal spirit, he needs God from the very constitution of his being. God is the source of all good—of all light, as well as of all life. He is not only the sovereign good of the soul; but He is the way to the supreme good; He is not only the ground and end, not only the Creator of man, but the guide to the end of his being. The consummation, as well as the origination of human existence, is in God. God is both Creator of the creature and Reconciler of the free being His hand has made. Man has receptivity for the good, but not productivity for the origination of it; he has capacity for God, but he can receive Him only as He gives Himself; can know Him only as He reveals Himself. In reference to the modern division, derived from the source of our knowledge of God, it would lead us to apprehend the so-called natural religion, not as knowledge of God and our relations to Him derived exclusively from nature and reason, and demonstrated by the logical understanding, but as knowledge given to all men by general revelation, by manifestations which God has made of Himself to their consciences through nature internal and external, in their inner constitution and the outer world, in their personal experience and in the general movements of His providence, and by remains of revealed religion, of a special revelation, a supernatural and superhuman communication of divine knowledge; of His character and relations to man by miraculous acts, in a special history within the

general history of His providence, a sacred within the profane or secular history of man, impressions of which originally reached the whole human family. It would have us regard no religious truths as having their source entirely in nature and reason; nor would it have us think of man as having ever been entirely without revelation, or as being able without the aid of revelation, by his own understanding, to have discovered any religious truth, to have power from himself to know the real nature of God, and the true character of His worship. It would have us regard all true knowledge of God as derived from divine revelation, either general or special, and to look upon God as not only creating man, but revealing Himself to him; so that man was never left entirely to himself, but was always the subject of divine revelation; "Because that which may be known of God *is manifest in them*, for God hath *showed it unto them*. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are *clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made*, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, *when they knew God*, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their bodies between themselves; who *changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator*, who is blessed forever, amen." And though in times past "He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways; nevertheless he *left not Himself without witness*, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, filling our hearts with food and gladness." A natural religion, therefore, in the sense of a religion discovered by man independently of divine revelation, it would reject. And in the two sources of the knowledge of God recognized by the earlier theologians, it would regard the first,—the *cognitio dei naturalis*, the knowledge derived partly from immediate consciousness (*notitia Dei insita*) and partly, by the medium of reason, or the thinking mind, in the way of proofs of the being of God (*notitia Dei acquisita*),—not as natural in the sense of independence of

divine revelation ; but it would regard the *immediate consciousness, or faith* as the result of general revelation, of divine impressions or acts of communication involved in the immediate relation of man to God, in his being created for God and in a state of communion with Him ; a consciousness, consequently which, *though immediate in the sense that it is not determined by the creature, is still determined, or is what it is, by divine impressions*, by acts of divine revelation. And it would regard the mediation of the reason or the thinking mind, not as discovering the knowledge of God or proving the divine existence, but rather as analyzing and interpreting, the knowledge which is in faith, in the consciousness of God produced by general revelation. And it would regard the second source of knowledge, *cognitio dei supernaturalis*, that which is by special or miraculous revelation, as *above* reason, though *not contrary* to it. It would regard the general revelation as giving the realities which are not only in accordance with reason, but are demanded by the thinking mind, though not discovered by its own powers ; and the supernatural revelation as disclosing truths and facts which, though not contrary to reason, are neither required nor discovered by the thinking mind, in its own unaided operations. Thus, while reason recognizes as a necessary idea what general revelation gives as reality, namely, the divine existence and perfection ; it does not require as necessary in idea what special revelation makes known as reality, though it was morally certain—for example, Creation and Redemption. It can see that the divine existence is necessary physically, metaphysically, logically ; but not that the creation of the world was necessary either physically, metaphysically, or logically. Special revelation alone can make known acts of the divine will, which transcend the laws of nature ; it alone can reveal facts of the divine interposition in behalf of sinful creatures ; and, consequently, it alone is the divine communication, which is, in the end, entirely satisfactory to reason, and fully sufficient for the practical wants of man.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRUE MEDIUM OF RELIGION IN ITS ORIGIN AND END, OR THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH.

RELIGION is man's relation to God; its root is faith; its end, communion with God. As natural faith is the source of the sound and healthy activities of natural life, so religious faith is that of those of the religious life. According to the principles of the Reformation, faith is the instrumental cause in the origination of true religion, and in the attainment of its end. Where there is no faith, there can be no true religion. In it is the point of union and communion between God and man.

§ 1. *The Nature of Religious Faith in General.*

Faith in general, as religious faith, is knowledge of God springing from the nature of the human spirit, in its vital relations to Him, through the influence of general revelation, connected with the unconditional surrender of himself on the part of man. In the Old Testament, consequently, it is strikingly expressed by a word which means both to be firm and to make firm, to support and to rely upon something; to trust, and to be trusted; to confide *in* and to submit *to*. "If ye do not believe Me, ye shall not be established" (Isaiah vii. 9). In the original the same word, in different forms, is here used in the two clauses of this sentence; in the first, to express trust; in the second, support. In like manner in the New Testament, the same word is used to designate one who trusts, and one who is trusted. Faith is described in the Scriptures, therefore, as a confident persuasion of the reality, and a spiritual apprehension, through divine revelation of the nature of things lying beyond the present and above the visible world; as "the substance," the hypostasis, the substratum, the realization, "of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1). Thus true faith involves both knowledge and feeling; it embraces an act of the intellect and a movement of the susceptibility. But it is also connected with an act of submission to God—which is

manifestly an act of the will. Therefore, knowing, feeling and willing, operate together in faith. It has its existence exclusively in none of them; nor is it compounded of them. But it involves all of them. It is the consciousness of God which is inseparable from true self-consciousness—from the contact of the divine and the human in man's fundamental relation and normal condition. It is potentially or actually present in all men—potentially in the restlessness of the spirit without Christ, and actually present in the repose of the Christian believer. "Thou hast made us for Thyself," says Augustine, "and our heart is restless until it rest in Thee." It is not mere opinion, separate from all experience, not a mere judgment, in which the subject is conscious of the uncertainty of his conclusion, of the possibility of mistake; but a confident persuasion of the truth of the thing believed. It is not mere knowledge; not merely the cognition of some object; it transcends all mere intellections, and includes elements other than knowledge, namely, feeling and volition. It is not the product of mere reasoning in the understanding; it is only in some instances confirmed by logical thought; and it is independent for its origination of all mere intellectual processes. Still it is not the result merely of the yearnings and premonitions of the soul, but is an intelligent state of mind. It rests not merely upon mystical and blind feeling; for, though it involves mystery, yet it is based upon grounds sufficiently assured, and possesses reasons clearly ascertained.

§ 2. *Some of its Distinctions from Other Religious Phenomena.*

It is, thus, distinguished from *non-belief*—the state of those who have not had reasons of faith presented to them; and from *unbelief*—the absence of faith in the presence of, and in spite of, sufficient reasons for belief. It may be consistent with a heterodoxy which, while it rejects particular doctrines or forms of religion, still clings to its fundamentals, and is animated by its spirit. But it utterly excludes a heresy which, while it assumes the name, denies the spirit of Christianity, and is destructive of its essence and life. It is to be distinguished from all those superstitious tendencies in which men believe in the supersensuous world and its connection with nature and man, in a manner contrary to the laws of mind, and unauthorized by the

Bible. It is opposed to all those fanatical impulses which lead men so to over-estimate certain objects as to strive for the attainment of them, irrespective of the propriety of the means employed—to violate the rights of property and life in their effort to gain their supposed good ends. So it is antagonistic to the disposition which fosters intolerance—the spirit in which men labor for the predominance of one religion or form or doctrine of religion over others, by means other than moral power and influence, by other than spiritual weapons. Faith is confidence in truth; it trusts in truth, and in nothing else. It comes through the instrumentality of the truth—of the Word—and it will consent to the wielding of no weapon but the preaching of the Gospel.

§ 3. *Its Relation to Enthusiasm and Theosophy,*

There is a false enthusiasm—a phenomenon closely akin to fanaticism; the former is more an error of the head, the latter more a delusion of the heart; the one is more calculating, the other more swayed by passionate feeling; the one following false judgments, the other blind impulses and delusive feelings. Such a state of mind has nothing in common with true religious faith. True faith is full of sound knowledge and of deep repose.

But there is a sense of the word enthusiasm in which it expresses an element of all true faith, namely, when it means the excitement which results from reflection upon great truths. Then it is the true and natural manifestation of a true and living faith. This is a characteristic of faith in all great realities. Such an enthusiastic faith may exist in reference to anything which can be a subject of feeling, and, consequently, in religion. Such is the enthusiasm expressed in the language of Paul: “Whether I be beside myself it is to God, or whether I be sober it is for your cause; for the love of Christ constraineth us; for we thus judge that if Christ died for all, then were all dead, and that He died for all, that they which live should henceforth live not to themselves, but to Him that died for them and rose again.” This is an enthusiasm perfectly consistent with the highest intelligence and the deepest repose of the Christian faith.

There is a peculiar form of enthusiasm which may be called *Theosophy*. This word is used in a good as well as in a bad

sense ; in the one indicating what is perfectly consistent, in the other what is utterly inconsistent, with sound faith and true theology. In the latter it designates that delusion of men in which they believe that they can come into an immediate knowledge of God and the spirit-world, and into direct communion with supernatural beings, by means other than those afforded and sanctioned by divine revelation. At the same time it is the doctrine of the particular means by which this is proposed to be effected ; such as the visions induced by fixing the eye steadily upon the epigastrium, practiced anciently by some of the enthusiastic monks ; such as the manipulations of animal magnetism, and the operations of the so-called spiritual mediums of modern times. Such theosophy differs, therefore, from true theology, which is the science of faith, in many ways. The latter uses only those means of the knowledge of the supernatural which God has afforded to all by general or special revelation ; the former seeks a peculiar knowledge of the supernatural, and believes itself to have attained it by particular means known only to some, or by capacities possessed only by a few individuals. The latter has reference, indeed, to a mystical, but, at the same time, to a moral connection of men with the superhuman, and aims at the production of a holy life ; while the former has merely a speculative interest, or if a practical, aims mainly at material or temporal benefits. But in the former, or good sense, the word designates the cultivation of that higher knowledge of religion which results from the susceptibility for religion as an original and independent element of human nature ; and to the discussion of that cognitive element of religious faith, of the Christian faith, which is peculiar to the regenerate—in short, the theology of the regenerate in the strict sense ; to the testimony of the spirit enlightening and strengthening the cognitive faculties, as well as confirming and assuring the feelings of the heart. Such knowledge is certainly indicated in the Sacred Scriptures by such passages as these : “If any man will do the will of My Father in heaven, he shall know of this doctrine, whether it be of God ;” where obedience to conscience in relation to God is recognized as the occasion, or, at least, as a capacity for Christian knowledge. Or such texts as the following : “That ye might be rooted and grounded in love, and be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length and

breadth and height and depth, and know the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God." "Ye have an unction from on high and know all things." "He that loveth knoweth God." "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." Such passages indicate, on the one hand, that the religious nature of man is, in its connection with the divine spirit, though not a source or element of knowledge, yet, at least, a peculiar organ for the reception and reproduction of the great truths of revelation; or that God manifests Himself to man in that relation which He necessarily sustains to him, in a special manner, when the creature specially yields himself to the divine impulse; that as God is a living, personal, active being, He cannot but impress Himself upon the religious susceptibility of man, and appropriate it as His organ, in proportion to its holy aspirations after divine truth; and, on the other, that the witness of the Spirit is not only testimony borne to the feelings, but also to the cognitions; not only to the susceptibility, but also to the intellect of the human mind. Such theosophy Luther inculcates, and the principle of the Reformation requires. In this sense the word Theosophy has, of late, come to be used to designate highly speculative and deeply spiritual discussions of divine truth. And theologians distinguished for great speculative capacity, deep spirituality, and special devotion to those aspects of divine truth which are of a highly speculative and at the same time of a deeply spiritual character—aspects realized in experimental Christianity, and brought gradually to speculative apprehension in the Christian idea or philosophy which results from it—the theologians distinguished for attainments of this kind, are sometimes called theosophists; such as Oetinger, Hamann, Rothe, and we might add, Auberlen and Martensen.

§ 4. *Distinguished from False Mysticism.*

True religious faith is also to be distinguished from an impure mystical faith. This word mysticism is also used in a good and in a bad sense. The Pietists distinguished in this respect between different classes of mystics, calling the one *mystici puri*, the other *mystici mixti*; and the German theologians now use the German word *mysticismus* to designate the false, and their word *mystik* they limit to the true mysticism. The latter is belief in a continuous operation of God upon the human soul,

which is entirely independent of, and separate from, all means of grace; independent even of the special revelation of God's operations as recorded in the Bible, and separate from the immediate operations of the Spirit as connected with the inspired historical revelation—an influence which is to be attained by particular religious exercises other than those inculcated in the Sacred Scriptures, such as contemplation, asceticism, etc.—an inner light which can dispense with the miraculous divine revelation of Christianity.

§ 5. *The True Mysticism of Faith.*

But there is a true Christian mysticism, a true mystical element, in the Christian faith. This is manifest in the writings, especially of the Apostle John among the inspired men of the Bible, and in the works of such men as Suso, Ruysbroek, Thomas à Kempis, Tauler, Luther, Arndt, Spener, among un-inspired theologians. Luther of all the reformers had most of this element; and he declares that he had nowhere found a sounder or more evangelical theology than in the sermons of the mystic Tauler. So deeply did he feel the truth and power of this true mystical element in Christianity, that the first religious book which he published was an edition of "Die Deutsche Theologie," *Theologia Teutonica*, the greatest production of the mystical theology of the Middle Ages; and in the introduction to it he declares it to be, next to the Bible, the best guide in the way of life and salvation. It is worthy of remark that Arndt republished the same work with a preface full of approbation of the true mystical spirit, and that Spener began his work by republishing Arndt's discourse with the same feeling. He declares that Luther was so imbued with this theology, had so imbibed its spirit and appropriated its language, that it is often difficult to know when his words are original or borrowed from his favorite mystical writers. It was the union of the true mystical spirit with the light and authority of the Sacred Scriptures, as contradistinguished from mere intellectualism, which gave these men such remarkable power in the theological as well as in the religious world. In short, such a mysticism as Luther, Arndt and Spener exhibited has generally been recognized by all truly evangelical Christians as inseparable from true Christian doctrine and faith. It is an element of

saving faith, of true Christian experience, and of the source of true Christian science. Indeed, a return to the union which Luther effected between the inner spirit of mysticism and the objective light and authority of the Sacred Scriptures, is most desirable.

§ 6. *All One-sidedness in Faith Must be Avoided.*

Some have made faith rest upon mere intellectual cognitions. This, whether it is done by the Supernaturalists or the Rationalists, the orthodox or the heterodox—and both parties have been guilty of it—must be regarded as a one-sided *intellectualism*, or doctrinalism. Some have made feeling the sole element or source of faith. This may be pronounced a one-sided *emotionalism*. That definition which makes the will the sole element or source of faith may be called a one-sided *moralism* or *legalism*; and that which makes the conscience the only element or source of it, a one-sided *conscientialism*. Faith involves all the faculties, embraces the whole man. It has an object, and, consequently, it has a cognitive element; it approves that object, and, consequently, it has an emotional element; it assents to that object, surrenders itself to it, and, consequently, it must have a volitional and active element. “The several factors of which religion is composed limit and sustain one another. Profundity of feeling depends upon the will, and energy of will on the depth of emotion; these have all their central point of union in faith. Faith is life of feeling; but it is also intelligent life—knows what it believes, knows sacred truths in the light of its own intuitions; and, though its knowledge is not comprehensive, like that of demonstrative science; though its intuitions are not a seeing face to face, like those of the sense; though inferior in these forms of apprehension, yet it yields to none of them in point of *certitude*, for the very essence of it is that it is firm, confident *certitude* respecting what is not seen. Finally, it is the profoundest act of the will, of obedience and devotion, and, therefore, necessarily passes over into action.” We may distinguish these elements as did Spenser when he said, Love is an essential, though *not a justifying, element* of saving faith. Against mere Intellectualism, we must maintain the sentient and the active elements; against mere Emotionalism, the cognitive and the active; against mere Moralism or Legal-

ism, the cognitive and sentient elements; against the idea of the older Rationalism, that it is more than mere knowledge; and against Schleiermacherian Mysticism, that it is more than mere feeling. We must equally maintain the necessity of correct views, of actual experience, and of obedient action, as all three together are necessarily involved in true faith.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE OF RELIGION.

§ 1. *Different Designations of Religion.*

FAITH is the root of religion, and the instrumental cause of its results. All the phenomena designated by this term are manifestations of faith. The word *religio*, which was originally used by the heathen to express the relation of man to God, is derived by Cicero from *relegere*, to reflect, meaning seriousness as distinguished from levity, earnestness as distinguished from frivolity in things pertaining to this relation; and those who were thus characterized in their relation to the supernatural were called *religiosi*. On the contrary, Lactantius, who, on account of the elegance of his Latin, was called the Christian Cicero, derives it from *religare*, to bind back, in the sense of the tie that binds us to God. Now, whatever may be the comparative merits of these different derivations, it is certain that the sense in which Lactantius takes the word is the one required by the Christian idea of religion. It was a dogmatic interest more than philological considerations which, in all probability, either consciously or unconsciously influenced Lactantius; it was the Christian idea which modified the meaning of the term, and made it more expressive of true religion, of religion in the Christian sense as distinguished from that of the heathen; it was an instance of the gradual development and of the increasing force of the Christian idea—of the formation of a Christian philosophy. It has greatly modified the language of the old heathen Romans, and given to many Latin words a pregnancy of meaning which they had not before. But the heathen meaning of the word has still clung more or less to the idea of religion, in the theology of the Church, especially among Roman Catholics; hence, the distinction of the clergy and the laity, the former as especially the religious, and the designation of their orders, such as priests, monks, nuns, etc., as the *religiosi*.

The Sacred Scriptures do not use any one word specifically and exclusively to designate all the phenomena of religious faith. They employ a variety of words and use different phrases to express the manifestations of the relation of man to God, which is meant by the common acceptation of the word religion. Thus, objectively, such terms as service, worship, the way, the way of the Lord, the law, the grace of God, the gospel, the faith once delivered to the saints; and, subjectively, the fear of the Lord, the knowledge of God, the love of God, the life of God in the soul, etc.

§ 2. *Divisions and Definition of Religion in the Empirical Apprehension of it.*

When religion is made the subject of mere intellectual apprehension, it may be empirically or speculatively viewed. In the empirical aspect, religion is belief in the existence of supernatural powers as having an influence upon the natural world and upon man, and which are, therefore, to be feared and worshiped. In this sense it embraces all forms of religion, heathen as well as Christian; and among Christians, orthodox and heterodox, supernaturalistic and rationalistic. It is faith viewed irrespective of the nature or number of the object or objects of worship. It is a thorough conviction, a full persuasion of the existence of the object or objects, and a reverence for the divine power thus apprehended. From the number of the objects of faith, it may be Monotheistic, Dualistic, or Polytheistic; from the quality, sensuous or supersensuous; the former, such as idolatry or image-worship in so far as images are regarded as something divine in themselves; the latter, the supersensuous, such as Monotheism, Dualism, Polytheism. In this empirical view of religion it has been defined: *Religio est modus Deum cognoscendi et colendi*, that is, the mode of knowing and worshipping God.

§ 3. *Definitions of Religion Derived from the Speculative Apprehension of it.*

When, in the mere intellectual apprehension, religion is speculatively viewed, it will be defined according to the principle and spirit of the different systems of philosophy. The disciples of the Cartesian philosophy, and afterwards, those of the Leibnitz-

Wolfian School—apprehending the being of God, the moral freedom and responsibility of man, the immortality of the soul and future retribution as demonstrable by reason—made religion consist in a sense of the dependence of the world upon God, and of the responsibility and immortal destiny of man. The idea of God, the soul, freedom, immortality were regarded as the religious ideas, and religion was defined: The belief in the reality of the objects of the religious ideas, together with a corresponding state of heart and life.

In the school of Kant, which bases religion altogether upon the moral nature of man, religion is the recognition of the categorical imperative as a divine behest, or the moral laws of the practical reason as divine commands, and the recognition of virtue as the agreement of the finite will with the infinite will—a definition which resolves religion into mere morality.

The followers of Fichte, who resolved the idea of divinity into that of the moral order of the world, defined religion as faith in the final triumph of all that is good—a view which makes religion a kind of hero-worship. In the school of Schelling, which teaches the identity of subject and object—or which resolves the subjective and the objective into the absolute as the indifference-point of nature and spirit—religion is the recognition of the absolute in the various forms of nature and art, accompanied by a cheerful surrender of our conscious existence to the absolute, that is, it is the union of the finite with the infinite, in the sense that God comes to consciousness in the mind of man—a theory which makes religion mainly the worship of genius.

The Hegelians, who make the idea the only reality, and all other things, whether subjective or objective, whether spirit or nature, only conditions or occasions of the evolution of the idea, only transition-points in the movement of thought, only vessels for the manifestation of the idea,—religion is defined to be the union of the individual with the absolute process of thought, of the finite with the infinite. This system, recognizing the absolute in the metaphysical idea, finds in Christianity the union of God and man. It regards philosophy as raising religion out of the inadequate representations of the sense up to the adequate form of the idea, out of its mythical forms in signs and symbols up to the light of speculative thought; and, con-

sequently as absorbing all religion. According to this view religion is only a lower form of thought, only a lower stage of rational development—one which will be transcended in the progress of philosophy.

In the schools of Theistic philosophy—represented, especially in later years, by such men as the younger Fichte, by Weisse, Fischer, Chalybaeus, Ulrici, etc., in which the claims of personal being in the strict sense, the personality of God and the personal immortality of man, are fully recognized, and the religious spirit as it is represented by Christianity is maintained,—religion would be defined as the acknowledgment and worship of God as a living, personal being, and the expectation of a conscious personal immortality, together with the cognition of the possibility of divine revelation.

Religion is sometimes defined exclusively as life by the emotional theologians in the school of Schleiermacher, which makes the feelings the seat of religion, and defines it to be the feeling of absolute dependence. This is true, if it be connected with the Christian idea of the personality of God and of the divine life in the soul as produced by the truth and Spirit of God.

§ 4. *The Universality and Indestructibility of Religion.*

The Christian idea requires us to regard religion as the relation of man to God—the fundamental, inherent, permanent relation of man—and, consequently as universal and indestructible. It is an element of human nature which, like conscience, can never be explained away by science; nor can it be absorbed by science as a lower form of either knowledge or feeling or action. Man's receptivity for God—his susceptibility to religion—is innate, and as God has never failed to reveal Himself, never left Himself without witness—man is never without religion in some degree or form. Like conscience, it is not a faculty or sense, but a point of contact between God and man. It is a universal fact of human life, of man's existence as an individual and as a society. In every individual there is *subjectively*, and in every community *objectively*, the element of religion. This is now very generally acknowledged even by the opponents of Christianity. It is now seen that religion in some form always has existed and always will exist. It may be neglected and

practically ignored; men may stupefy themselves into habitual indifference to it, but they can never destroy its existence. Even Idealism with its Pantheism, and Materialism with its Atheism, are now seen to be forms of religion. And even absolute Nescience which denies the valid being of the knower and the known, and recognizes only the knowing as real, must yield itself to "the theory of knowledge" as its God. That it has always and everywhere existed is now acknowledged as an indisputable fact.

It is, therefore, a primitive fact. Its universality cannot be explained in any other way. If it were produced by mere reasoning, or purely by intellectual culture, it would not so universally exist. To ascribe it to any kind of craft; state-craft, king-craft or priest-craft, is now treated by the greatest thinkers of all proclivities in philosophy as an absurdity. It cannot be ascribed to accidental operations of intellect or transient emotions of the susceptibility—to ideas of beauty and sublimity, or to feelings of overpowering fear or hope, pain or joy. To ascribe it to an all-pervading dread and terror in the presence of the overwhelming forces of nature, to a constantly perduring nervous tremor, is equally unreasonable, for it leaves the source of that all-pervading fear and of that constantly perduring nervous impression unexplained. Whence the susceptibility to these feelings? Whence the attuning of the nerves for this mental agitation? If religion were merely an idea or a feeling it might be dissipated as a lower mental phenomenon. But it is also volition; it is personal; it involves the will and is impressed by will. All true religion is revealed religion, and all religions have in them an element of revelation, general or special or both—an element that is historical—and have, thus, an element which is indestructible. Mere myths are the embodiment of ideas and feelings, and they may be dissolved by the clear light of science; but religion is a fact of life; it is the expression of will as well as of ideas and feelings. Revelation involves history, is the manifestation of will, of the holy will of God, and, consequently, can never be dissipated by science as a lower form of knowledge or feeling. The myth is human; religion, divine.

§ 5. *The Contents of Religion.*

Religion is not mere knowing, nor feeling, nor willing ; nor is it a compound of all these together. It is in them all, and yet it is independent of them for its existence. It is *before and back of these exercises, in the heart, in the point whence all knowledge, feeling and volition have their spring*, in the immediate life of the spirit in its relation to the God in whom it lives and moves and has its being—the point at which God comes in contact with the souls of men through the instrumentality of His general or His special revelation.

It is not mere knowledge, for then the cultivated would always have more of it than the uncultivated ; adults, more than children ; the gospel would be more acceptable to “ the wise and prudent than to babes and sucklings ;” religion would decline or flourish, decay or grow, in proportion to the diminution or the increase of the powers of thought ; sickness, infancy, and old age would be incapable of religion, and the strong and scientific mind would necessarily be full of religious sentiment and life. But all experience contradicts this.

The Christian idea, consequently, forbids us to make the question of religious doctrines *a mere question of the intellect*. For, just in proportion as this mere intellectualism is fostered, will religion be famished. When this view of religion prevails, different evil tendencies will result, according as the knowledge, in which religion is supposed to consist, is related to different capacities and processes of intellect. If it be mere empirical, historical knowledge, it will merely be stored away in the memory, will be merely memoriter knowledge. This, in connection with the other elements of religion, is important, and, in some degree, necessary to the growth of piety in the individual and the Church. It must not be excluded from the theology which is to be the science of faith. Religion, we have seen, is in its very nature historical ; the Christian religion, especially, rests upon facts which should be known and remembered. But when it is not kept in close connection with the susceptibility and the will ; when it is used without reference to the heart ; it results in a narrow, cold, dead orthodoxy. When this apprehension of religion as mere knowledge is appropriated by the mere logical understanding, there is, indeed, a

higher intellectual tendency ; but, also, a deeper evil. It elaborates the truths and expounds the facts of revelation according to the connections of thought. This process—not to be confounded with the operation of the reason—this process of the connecting understanding—has its proper place in religion, as a safeguard against wandering fancies, superstitious feelings and fanatical movements. But its function is merely critical, and its results are purely negative. It consists in divesting truth of false accretions, distinguishing its inner spirit from its sensuous symbols, and reducing its parts to a scheme of systematic thought. And thus applied it is useful, and, in some respects, indispensable. But when not kept in its proper province and limited to its appropriate work, it produces all the sad results of an unbelieving rationalism. It tends to the substitution of science for religion. True rational (not rationalistic) operations, on the other hand, never separate the intellect from other capacities of mind, nor knowledge from the other elements of religion ; they keep the truths of religion in connection with the feelings and volitions, as well as with the cognitions of the soul ; and expound Christian experience in the light of intuition and the Word of God ; they recognize the fact that philosophy can neither rightfully ignore the influence of Christianity upon the human mind, nor ever be successful in the attempt to supersede or absorb religion.

Nor is religion mere volition or action. The Christian does, indeed, recognize an active element in Christian experience. The deep sense of personality—of the personality of God and of man, involved in the principle of the Reformation—requires the idea of a human as well as a divine activity in the communion of God with man through Christ. It requires the conception of the reciprocal action of the divine will and the human will. It requires the apprehension of divine grace as not suspending, but arousing, animating and strengthening the action of the human soul. It implies that God deals with man, even in regeneration, not as with “a block or stone,” but as with a personal subject, a moral agent, a free spirit. There is a human activity in the negative repentance preceding saving faith, in the positive repentance in the midst of saving faith, as well as in the work of sanctification after regeneration. There is intense spiritual movement in the very beginning of the spiritual life ;

and as all faith is voluntary, there must be, at least, a yielding act in that change itself. We agree heartily with Wuttke in rejecting all theories which would separate morality and religion, and regard them as capable of existing without each other. After rejecting all theories of this kind, he speaks of the best of them in this manner: "Religion is the *first*, the *basis*, also in point of time; while morality is the *second*, the *sequence*. This is the most usual, also the ecclesiastical view; and as applied to Christian morality it is also undoubtedly correct, since here the question is as to being redeemed from a supposed immoral state; in which of course the religious back-ground forms the basis of the renewal, from which, as a starting-point, the moral will, in general, must rise to freedom. When, however, the moral life does not presuppose a spiritual regeneration, then no moment of the religious life is conceivable in which it does not also contain in itself the moral element,—thus absolutely precluding the idea of a precedency of one to the other; moreover, even in the spiritual regeneration of the sinner, the process of *being* morally *laid hold* upon by the sanctifying Spirit of God, issues directly into a willing, and hence moral, *laying hold upon* the offered grace of God."

Still, religion is more than mere action; and though there is an act which, in the sense of a *sine qua non*, may be regarded as inseparable even from regeneration, it is not religion itself. Religion does not resolve itself into mere morality. For though in their perfection they would nearly coincide; though they are never separate from each other; and though there can neither be religion altogether without morality, nor morality entirely without religion; yet in the imperfect stages of their development on earth, the difference between them becomes manifest. Experience shows that there may be real piety in connection with an imperfect moral development; and, genuine moral action in a low state of piety. Besides, the activity in religion takes place in view of ideas and feelings in regard to God and man, sin and guilt, repentance and holiness, which entirely transcend the plane of mere morality. Morality has in it more of the effect of habit; religion, more of that of an original power; morality is connected with numerous laws and maxims and relations; religion is simple, and has but one object: morality needs human society; religion, only communion with God:

morality expresses itself only in action; religion, also in word and symbol, in prayer and song: morality only meets an imperative and fulfills a requirement; religion seeks and obtains gratuitous favor and free salvation: morality rests principally upon the consciousness of freedom; religion, upon the feeling of dependence: morality is in a great measure self-determined; religion is mainly determined by another. This self-determination and this state of being determined, do not, indeed, conflict with each other; and neither is entirely excluded either from religion or morality. But each is so peculiarly predominant in the one and the other, that it requires us to distinguish between them. Though inseparable, the distinction between them must be observed. When this is not done there will be different evils according to the several views of moral action. When religion is placed solely in the will, and there is, at the same time, an empirical view of moral action, then there will result a mere *opus operatum*, purely external and mechanical works, a cold *formalism*, mere reliance upon the magical effects of the performance of religious ceremonies and acts. If there be a more philosophical apprehension of voluntary action, there will be a tendency to the confounding of religion with morality, to the identifying of the religious and moral phenomena; or, at least to the limitation of religion to mere moral culture and influence. It fosters a proud self-righteousness; introduces a cold legalism; dampens the ardor of love in man; and shuts out all idea of atonement and forgiveness of sin, of free grace and gratuitous justification on the part of God. And if it take its highest view of action, as an inner act of the Spirit, and speak of it as religion, the question still remains, whether this results from the mere moral productivity of the soul, or whether it be the action of the new life produced by the regenerating power of the gospel and Spirit of God, that is, whether this spiritual activity is to be understood in the Christian sense of the term? The Christian idea of religion as fully as the rationalistic, declares that religion must have practical results; but it differs from it respecting the manner in which these results are secured; and, consequently, it includes in that inner action of the spirit more than rationalism allows, namely, the impulse of divine grace.

§ 6. *The True Spirit, Tendency and End of Religion.*

The Christian idea, inseparable as it is from experience, is much more in agreement with the doctrine that religion has its seat and source in feeling. The principle of faith involves the sense of man's absolute dependence on God; not only as a creature on His absolute power, but as a sinner on His free favor, on His unmerited forgiveness, on His gratuitous sanctifying power. But it is the feeling of dependence on God, not merely as the absolute ground, but *also as the sovereign good of our being*. It regards feeling as that which is, indeed, the phenomenon nearest to the central point of our spiritual nature, as being the basis of the religious character, but not as comprehensive of it, not as the whole of it. The subject of religion must know the being on whom he is dependent, must know whether it be a mere impersonal absolute or a living ethical power. To have the element of confidence he must cognize that power, as *good*; to have the emotion of reverence, as *holy*; to feel the obligation of duty, as *just*, to be bound to it by conscience, as *free*; in short, he must know it not as a blind power—a power which could only be an object of dread and not of filial fear—but as a personal, living and free being, a wise, holy and good will, as a being who can be the object of trust, devotion and love. It must be properly distinguished from other feelings, and kept in close connection with inseparable elements of knowledge and action. If it be the feeling of absolute dependence, this dependence is not upon mere blind power, but upon the infinite as personal being; and, consequently, it is an intelligent feeling—a feeling inseparable from knowledge. The mere feeling of absolute dependence, without regard to the *nature and character of the object* upon which we depend, is not the true religious feeling. Without a knowledge of God, as a living personal God, and of our relations to him, it would be a blind and debasing impulse, and not the rational and purifying sentiment of religion. Religion elevates and ennobles man; it is a feeling, not of servility but of freedom—of “the liberty wherewith the Son of God makes free.” It humbles, but it does not degrade the subject. It awakens the sense of man's primitive spiritual dignity and high destination, as well as the feeling of sinfulness and condemnation. The feeling of freedom itself is secured by this sense of dependence. As it is not a state of mere passive sub-

jection, but of active freedom, it involves the *cognition* of freedom—of the freedom both of the creator and the creature, of the eternal will and of the created will—the idea of God and man as in free and loving communion; of man as distinct from God, though united with Him; as free, though dependent; and, thus, as susceptible of holiness, capable of holy action and life. Thus it is, by knowledge, that the sense of dependence, instead of being an abject and oppressive feeling, becomes the elevating impulse of true freedom. In religion, feeling rises to the light of knowledge, of conscience, of man's original knowing together with God (*conscientia*), to co-knowledge with God—to the unity of freedom and dependence in the bond of holiness, to the blessedness of spiritual, holy love—of harmony with God and the universe as God wills it.

But the feeling in religion is not only connected with knowledge, but also with *volition*. Religion would not be true service of God, would not be actual reverence and worship, without the action of the will. Men cannot avoid all religious knowledge and feeling; they cannot escape all divine light and all divine impressions. More or less religious knowledge and religious feeling are unavoidable. But whether the knowledge shall be increased and the feeling cherished, whether the subject of them shall surrender himself to God in service and worship, depends upon his own volitions. The religious feeling must, therefore, be enlightened by rational insight and clear thought; it must rise to living knowledge and preserve its purity by the moral process which is suggested by conscience in natural religion, and inculcated and enforced by Christianity. Thus is religion matter of the entire inner man, comprising spiritual knowledge, feeling and action; while its *central point* is the feeling of absolute dependence. This relation of man to God is, accordingly, designated in the sacred Scriptures as a determined state of the heart, a state of heart which modifies the knowing, the feeling and the doing. And by the heart they mean, not any one of the faculties of the mind, or of the classes of the mental phenomena, but the source whence they come and the centre in which they meet; the fountain where knowing, feeling and willing are identical and from which they are developed; out of which are the issues of life; the central point whence all religious operations go out. Religion comes to consciousness as

feeling in the way of experience; to clear knowledge, through rational reflection; and to practical effect, by means of the moral determinations of the will. It extends to the entire inner man, as a primitive life-element; and in its full manifestation, it is the highest style of man—the completion of humanity.

The Christian idea of religion requires us to regard faith not only as the prime-root of the religious phenomena, but as *the great source of all the religious results*. It is the instrument of the great end of religion—of communion with God. “All religion,” says Martensen, “is a sense of God’s existence and man’s relation to God, including the difference and opposition between God and the universe—God and man; but at the same time the solution—the removal of this opposition in a higher unity. Religion may, therefore, be more accurately described, as man’s consciousness of his communion with God.” “The conception of humanity consists in this, that two principles, the cosmical and the holy, are intimately combined together in man, into a free personal unity. It is the vocation of man to be lord of the earth, but as free organ for the holy will of the Creator. It is his vocation to glorify and raise his freedom into dependence on God, his life in the world into a life in God,—his ideal of the world into the ideal of the Kingdom of God. The conception of man is by no means exhausted by the definition that man is a free rational being. His humanity is founded in this, that as a free rational being he is a religious being—that his reason and his freedom are determined by the laws of conscience. Conscience is the seal and pledge of man’s freedom, and inward independence of the universe, but it is so only in so far as it is also the token of his dependence on his Creator. The nature of man in his relation to conscience is such, that he is Lord in so far only as he is at the same time servant,—he is in spirit and in truth his own, in so far only as he is in spirit and in truth the Lord’s also. This relationship of dependence arising from creation—the recipient submissive relationship to divine love—the yearning after God as a need of man’s nature and the holy liberty arising from it—are realized in union with God.”

The *medium of this communion with God, is faith*. In it the distinction and difference between God and man are recognized; and the finite powers are surrendered to God, not as the Pantheist says—to be lost in the infinite, to be absorbed in the

absolute—but to be restored and preserved with the fullness of divine life. “He that loseth his life shall find it.” The creature submits himself to the Creator, not to be annihilated and to lose the distinction of his being, but to be the organ of the divine life. “I am crucified,” says Paul, “but yet I live; nevertheless not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Faith is not only the ground of all religion, but the instrument or organ by which the subject of religion apprehends God and appropriates Him, as the sovereign good and the everlasting portion of the soul. Religion is not an attempt to render anything to God, “for He hath need of nothing,” is self-sufficient, self-satisfied. “Who hath first given unto Him that it might be recompensed again; for of Him and by Him and to Him are all things, who is blessed forever.” The attempt to confer anything upon Him would imply ignorance of His perfection, and of His nature as the only true object of worship. God made us for Himself; but, not because He needed us. Hence religion does not aim at rendering service to God in the strict sense of the word. It is a free service. It is man’s becoming an organ for the divine life, for the manifestation of God; and into this the subject of religion gratefully enters; and, in this sense, he serves God. Nor does religion, in the strict sense, aim at profit for its subject; for this would be the attempt to reduce God from the highest end to the mere means or instrument of the creature. What it mainly wants is not anything that is not God, but God Himself; and hence, it aims at personal communion and union with Him. Thus, is God glorified in the highest degree; and man, most completely satisfied. Man is finite; his thoughts, feelings, volitions, are finite; but he is for the infinite, capacitated for a truth, a goodness, a blessedness which has its reality only in God. As man is finite and God is eternal life, this union and communion can be accomplished only by man’s surrendering his finite life, in order to find in God the fullness of true life. The truly religious man seeks salvation, indeed, but God is his salvation. He can be satisfied with nothing short of God. “Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee,” is the language of the humblest Christian, as well as of the royal singer of Israel in the midst of regal power and in the

rich possession of all that created things can afford. "The truly religious man" says Luther, "serves God and glorifies Him, not that he may be saved, but because he is saved." He will use all proper means of promoting and expressing this communion with God and of faithfully seeking and thankfully receiving the blessings which God hath promised.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY IN THE LIGHT OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN IDEA,
AS IT IS ENFORCED BY THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION.

§ 1. *The Importance of the Union of Freedom and Authority, of the Practicability of the Development of the Individual and of the Growth of the Church in Christian Society.*

RELIGION is in its nature, social; love to God is inseparable from love to man; communion with God will lead to communion between all those who sustain this relation to Him. Religious society is both a presupposition and a consequence of the communion of the individual Christian with God. Religion is a social as well as an individual interest. Though it is a personal interest, and has its seat in the heart of the individual, it needs society for nurture, education, culture. On the other hand it impels the individual, as the organ of God, as a spiritual priest, to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called him out of darkness into His marvelous light;" and it calls upon him to do all he can to bring others to the enjoyment of this same salvation. All Christians are priests; they are a royal priesthood, and are "to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God, holy and acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ." This will lead to association for the instruction of the young and the ignorant, for the guidance of the inquirer, for the public profession of faith, for the proclamation of the gospel, for the extension of the kingdom of Christ, for mutual edification in the faith.

These relations of the individual and the community in religion, of private and public worship, of individual piety and social character, are variously manifested in the history of religion. Sometimes the social feeling is fostered at the expense of individual development; the society is too strong and the individual too weak; the public authority too absolute, and the individual freedom too much restricted. Sometimes private religion and individual liberty are fostered at the expense of public authority; the freedom of the individual is too lawless, the

will of the society too powerless; and the result, will-worship, disintegration. The great desideratum is *the union of freedom and authority*, of the development of the individual and the increase of the influence of the society. When zeal *in* religion is great, and individuals strive consistently and regularly for themselves to perform the duties of religion, and to make the greatest possible attainments in personal holiness, there is a tendency to lose sight of the welfare of society, to shun public association, to retire into solitude, as for example in Monasticism and Mysticism. When men are very zealous *for* religion, in the effort by all proper means to extend the influence of religion and the boundaries of the religious society, there is danger of overlooking the distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals in religion, of underrating the spiritual rights which God has bestowed upon men as individuals; and, thus, of becoming intolerant and exclusive, of laboring for the increase of external power at the cost of internal, spiritual life, and for the extension of the visible Church to the suppression of the invisible universal Church—for the mere outward society, to the destruction of the true inner communion of saints. And in endeavoring to avoid this, there is danger of religious indifference, that is, either of disregarding the value of religion in the individual, as well as in society, or of neglecting it altogether—in the idea that we may dispense with religion in heart and life—and soon all individual piety is lost; and society is in a state of dissolution.

§ 2. *This Object secured by the Principle of the Reformation.*

This principle enforces the true Christian idea of society. The heathen having no conception of God as the Creator and end of the creature, and consequently as the bond of the unity of His creatures, would make society the All and ignore all rights of the individual, or they would make the individual free in the sense of lawlessness. The Roman Catholic Church does indeed, recognize the personal living God; but she does not admit the idea of immediate communion of the individual with God; and, thus, puts herself in God's place as the bond of society. The principle of the Reformation restores the true Christian idea of immediate communion with God, and, thus, communion with each other. The true Christian idea of religious

society is of the greatest importance, not only to men as Christians in the Church, but as citizens in their relation to the state. In it we have not only the true foundation of the "freedom of the Christian man," but also that of the personal rights of the citizen in the state. Heathenism never produced a Church, and never recognized the individual as possessing personal rights—rights independently of the state—never recognized the communion of man with God; and, consequently, it included the whole being of the individual in the state, and sacrificed him to it. "The ground-character of all heathen ethical consciousness and of heathen ethics," says Wuttke, "is, that the starting-point and goal of the moral is not an infinite spirit; but either the impersonal nature-entity, or a merely individually personal being. The starting point is not the infinite God, and the goal is not the perfection of the moral personality in a kingdom of God, as resting upon the moral perfection of the individual person, and in the communion of the person with the infinite personality of God, but is always merely a limited something—either merely an earthly civic perfection with the rejection of a transmundane goal (the Chinese), or the giving up of the personal existence altogether (the Indians), or a merely individual perfection, irrespective of the idea of a kingdom of God embracing the individual as a vital member (the Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Germans)." In its highest state we may say again with Wuttke: "Not the individual man, but the state, is the moral person proper, by which all the morality of the individuals is conditioned, produced and sustained. Not the moral individual persons make the state, but the state makes the moral persons." Now the Christian idea is the reverse of this. It recognizes the individual man's fundamental, primitive relation to be his relation to the personal Creator and ruler of the world; and, the Christian as coming directly to Christ and into immediate communion with God through Him or in Him. The Church does not make the individual Christians, but itself results from their existence. God calls men into communion with Himself through His gospel and spirit; and, thus, constitutes them His Church. This idea was realized practically to a great extent in the primitive Church. But the intellectual apprehension of it was fully made only in the great Reformation; and it is being only gradually appropriated in the Church and the state in mod-

ern times. True civil liberty in the state, as well as the recognition of the rights of the Christian man in ecclesiastical society, springs from the great principle of that movement. The Christian idea of the Church was revived by the recognition of the personal nature of the Christian's relation to God in Christianity, which was brought fully and experimentally to light by the fact of justification by faith in Christ alone, by the recognition of the fact that the certainty of forgiveness of sin and divine favor, the assurance of salvation, comes not through the visible Church, but by the light of the Scriptures, and the experience of justification by faith in Christ alone, produced by the regenerating and witnessing powers of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the individual—which accompany the ministrations of the Church.

The Augsburg Confession says of the Reformers: "They likewise teach that there will always be one holy Church. But the Church is the congregation of saints in which the gospel is correctly taught, and the Sacraments are properly administered. And for the true unity of the Church, it is sufficient to agree concerning the doctrines of the gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that the same human traditions—that is, rites and ceremonies instituted by men—should everywhere be observed. As Paul says: One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, etc.

"Although the Church is properly a congregation of saints and true believers, yet as in the present life many hypocrites and wicked men are mingled with them, it is lawful for us also to receive the Sacraments, though administered by bad men, agreeably to the declaration of our Saviour, that the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, etc."

And Melanchthon, in the Apology for the Confession, thus comments upon this article: "But the Christian Church consists not alone in communion of outward signs, but especially in communion inwardly of spiritual possessions of the heart, as that of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God; and yet this same Church has also external signs by which she is known—namely: where the pure Word of God has free course, where the Sacraments are administered according to it, there certainly is the Church; there are Christians; and this Church only is called, in the Scriptures, the body of Christ. For Christ is her Head, and sanctifies and strengthens her through the

Spirit, as Paul says to the Ephesians: 'And gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.' Therefore, those in whom Christ through His Spirit does not operate, are not members of Christ.....For Paul tells the Ephesians (v. 23) what the Church is, and indicates also, at the same time, outward signs—namely: the gospel and the Sacraments. This language of the Apostle we have followed very closely in our Confession; and we confess also in our Holy Symbol and faith: 'I believe in the Holy Christian Church.' In this we say that the Church is holy; but the ungodly and the wicked cannot be the Church. In the Creed there follows immediately thereafter, communion of saints, which expresses still more clearly what the Christian Church is—namely: the mass or congregation who confess one gospel, have one confession of Christ, have one spirit which renews, sanctifies and governs their hearts.....Not to doubt that the Christian Church is in being and lives on earth, which is the bride of Christ, although the ungodly mass is more and greater; that the Lord Jesus Christ operates here on earth in the mass which is called the Church; forgives sin daily, hears prayer daily, quickens His own people, in temptations, with rich, strong consolations.....The Church is not like another outward polity, limited to this or that country, kingdom or class, as the Pope would say of Rome; but it is certainly true that the company and the men are the true Church who, here and there, throughout the world, from the rising to the setting of the sun, truly believe in Christ, who have one gospel, one Christ, the same baptism and Sacrament, and are governed by one Holy Ghost, although they have unlike ceremonies.....Although the wicked and ungodly hypocrites have communion of outward signs in names and offices with the true Church, yet if we would say precisely what the Church is, we must say that the Church is the body of Christ, and has communion not only in outward signs, but has in the heart these goods—the Holy Ghost and faith.

“For we must certainly know whereby we become members of Christ, and what it is that makes us living members of the Church. For were we to say that the Church is only an outward polity like other governments, in which there are good and bad, etc., then no one could learn from this, or understand that Christ's Kingdom is the spiritual kingdom which it really

is, in which Christ inwardly governs, strengthens and comforts the hearts, dispenses the Holy Ghost, and manifold spiritual gifts; but, would think that it was an outward procedure, a certain order of particular ceremonies of divine worship..... And we do not speak of an imaginary Church which is nowhere to be found, but we say and know for certain that his Church, in which saints live, exists and lives on earth.....But, as there are clear promises of God in the Scriptures that the Church shall always have the Holy Ghost, so there are also solemn warnings in the Scriptures that alongside of the true preachers there will creep in false teachers and wolves. This, however, is, notwithstanding, the Christian Church which has the Holy Ghost. The wolves and the false teachers, though they rage and work mischief in the Church, are not the Church and Kingdom of Christ.....Therefore we say and conclude according to the Holy Scripture, that the true Christian Church is the multitude of those, here and there, throughout the world, who truly believe the gospel of Christ, and who have the Holy Ghost. And we confess that as long as this life on earth lasts, many hypocrites and wicked persons are mingled with true Christians in the Church, and who are also members of the Church, so far as outward signs are concerned."

§ 3. *Christian Believers a Universal Priesthood, all in the same Relation to Christ, and, consequently, all Possessed of Equal Rights and Privileges.*

The principle of the Reformation, at once, announced and established the idea of the universal priesthood of believers, the equality of all Christians in the Church. As all sustain a like personal relation to God, are in the same communion with Him,—they are all immediately members of His Kingdom. No order of men comes between Christ and the Church. Only the office of Christ *precedes* the Church. All men *in* it, consequently, have the same way of access to God, and the same rights and privileges. The Church in its original constitution is not a duality, but a unity; does not consist of two kinds of members, clergy and laity; but is a universal priesthood. The special ministry does not exist *before* the Church; it does not produce the Church, but springs *out* of it. The office of the ministry is *conferred* by Christ; but it is *transferred* by the

Church. The office is bestowed upon the congregation of believers; to it is given the commission to preach the gospel, to teach and baptize all nations; this it fulfills, partly, through all her members, and, especially, by transferring the exercise of its functions, to men whom she can recognize as qualified, and called by the divine Spirit, to be devoted entirely to this work.

Luther—in giving the ground and reason out of the Scripture that a Christian congregation or communion has the right and the power to judge concerning doctrine, and to call and dismiss teachers—fully recognizes the right both of the person who feels called of God to preach, and that of the Church to call or reject him, if they do not consider him thus called. “But if it be true that they have God's Word, and are anointed by Him, then they are bound to confess, teach, and diffuse the same, as Paul says (1 Cor. iv. 10): For we have also the same spirit of faith, therefore we speak; as also the prophet says (Ps. cxvi. 15): I have believed, therefore have I spoken. And the 51st Psalm says of all Christians: I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee. So that here again it is certain that a Christian has not only the right and power to teach God's Word, but that he is bound, at the peril of his soul and the displeasure of God, to do it.

“But how is this; you say if he is not called to this he dare not preach, as you yourself have often taught. Answer: Here you are to regard the Christian in two kinds of places. If he be at a place where there are no Christians, there he needs no other call than that he is a Christian, inwardly called and anointed of God. There he is bound by the duty of brotherly love, though no man has called him to it, to teach and preach the gospel to the erring heathen or non-Christians.

“On the other hand, when he is at a place where there are Christians, equal in right and power with himself, he should not put himself forward, but let himself be called out to preach and teach, in the place, and at the request of the others. Yea, a Christian has so much power that he may and shall speak in the midst of Christians, uncalled of men, whenever he sees that the teacher in that place fails, so that it be done in a decent and orderly manner. This Paul clearly teaches (1 Cor. xiv. 30): If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. Behold here what Paul does; he commands him who

teaches in the midst of Christians to be silent and abdicate; and commands him who hears to stand forth, uncalled; and all because necessity knows no law. If, then, Paul here, when it is necessary, bids each one to stand up uncalled in the midst of Christians, and calls him through this Word of God; and bids the other abdicate, and discharges them by the power of this Word; how much more is it right that a whole congregation should call one to such an office, when it is necessary, as it is at all times, and especially now. For, in the same, Paul gives every Christian power to teach in the midst of Christians, if it be necessary (1 Cor. xiv. 39, 40;)” (Vol. xviii. p. 429).

§ 4. *The Universal Priesthood and the Special Ministry.*

The Church has a great commission to fulfill. Consisting of all true believers wherever they are, she is commissioned to teach all nations. Inseparable from her faith are the authority and the duty to see to it, that the office of preaching the gospel and administering the Sacraments be duly performed. And the congregation of believers, in its original and indestructible unity, including all its members, is possessed of the office instituted by Christ. In this capacity she transfers to particular persons, whom she deems especially endowed for and called to this work, to a special ministry, to the leadership in the fulfillment of her great commission to the world; and recognizes a variety of offices as necessary for the maintenance of order, and the increase of efficiency in the performance of her great work; for her inner edification and her external extension; for the conversion of souls and the conquest of the world for Christ. She is endowed with this authority by the Holy Ghost, who is the author of the faith of the believers constituting her body. “I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Christian Church.” Not dependent on Pope, bishop or priest; “all believers are priests,” says Luther, “by Baptism”—baptism, which is valid not because of its being administered by a special order of persons, but simply by virtue of the divine Word and institution. The Church to which the gospel of salvation, the Word and sacraments are committed, consists alike of all believers. Though invisible, she has reality in spirit: “The foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His” (2 Tim. ii. 19). Though her faith be an invisible reality, those who possess this faith are

visible persons, and they must and will associate and labor together for mutual edification, and for the diffusion of the gospel. And wherever the Word of God is—and it abideth forever—“There, also,” says Luther, “there will always be believers,” and consequently, the Church. Thus, the Church becomes visible in the acting out of her faith—is manifested in organizations, in which there will be mingled, as the Augsburg Confession says, “unbelievers and hypocrites.” But the Church will still manifest her presence by the administration of the Word and sacraments, and in enforcing the other half of the Scriptural mark (2 Tim. ii. 19). “And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” She makes herself known by maintaining the public preaching of the Word, and by the administration of social discipline. Her presence will be discernible to the eye of faith, in the midst of all the unbelief and hypocrisy which thrust themselves upon her, in the language of Luther, “as scabs upon the body.” She must preach the gospel effectually, and hence she recognizes the importance of a special ministry to fulfill, in the best manner possible, the office of teaching which Christ has instituted. But this special ministry, arising, as it does, out of the universal priesthood, and existing only along with it, exercises its functions by the authority, and in the name of the universal priesthood. It must never supersede the latter, nor hinder its activity. It may only be a leader among equals, a helper of all in the one common work of testifying for Christ in word as well as in deed. She does not give any man the authority to preach. This all have. The universal priesthood does not, in the first instance, call any man to the special ministry. This the Spirit does. They only design to call those, whom the Spirit has first called. But they have a right to recognize or resist the claim of any one professing to be moved by the Holy Ghost to exercise a special ministry among them, according to their judgment of the evidence of his being actually thus called. And if such a man could not find a congregation of professing Christians to recognize his ministry, that would not necessarily be proof to him that he was not called of God. The Church is not infallible in any of her visible organizations; the visible Church may have become so corrupt as to have so far driven back the power of the invisible Church, that she can express herself in few visible congregations. There may be a mistake

in his rejection. He must go then to those who are not professing Christians—to the multitude outside of the visible Church in Christendom, or to the heathen, and preach to them—to men who can lay no claim to the right and authority of a spiritual priesthood. And if he be really called of God, souls will be converted—*God's seals to His ministry*—and they will, as a true spiritual priesthood, recognize His ministry. Should the congregations rejecting him have been mistaken or false professors, he will have better certificates than theirs—“epistles known and read of all men.”

§ 5. *The Church and Her Government.*

The congregation of believers must in the orderly use of the means of grace—of religious communion and spiritual culture—have some arrangement for inner edification and external extension. She must have rules for the admission and dismissal of members, for the adjustment of the relations of her different offices, and for the exercise of her social functions, that is, she must, like every other society, have a constitution or form of government and discipline. But such constitution rests upon and is sustained by a common consciousness, and for common rights and privileges. For the sake of greater efficiency, she may transfer the administration of this government and discipline to her special ministers and others. But she may also withdraw it, whenever she deems it proper so to do. As she originates and establishes the forms of government and discipline, so she can change or abolish them, and introduce others, when she believes them to be defective or wrong in themselves, or unsuited to the wants of particular countries or ages. She must profess her faith in an intelligible and impressive manner; and hence, she must have confessions of faith and systems of theology. But she cannot allow them to be made binding on her members beyond the conditions of saving faith. No human authority—whether it call itself representative church, or special ministry, council or synod—can come between Christ and believers, to enforce its decrees as a creed or confession of the Church. The true followers of Christ know Him, know His voice, and are, consequently to be governed entirely by His authority, that is, by His Word and Spirit. “It is not the Pope nor bishops alone,” according to Luther, “who can call a council. Laymen are co-

priests with the special ministry, equally spiritual and equally powerful in all things. They can and should, at this time, call a free council, a Christian council. Each citizen of the spiritual city of Christ is to extinguish any fire of offences, arising in the government of the Pope, or of whomsoever it may be. There is no power in the Church except for reformation. If the Pope use violence, and resist a free, Christian council, let him and his power be disregarded; and if he should ex-communicate and thunder, we should not mind it; but in turn ex-communicate him. And should signs appear in his favor against the lay-power, yea, though it should rain and hail wonders and plagues, we should regard them only as 'lying wonders.' The keys are not given to the Pope alone, but to the whole congregation."

In these passages there breathes the spirit of the great Reformation. Luther does not regard the distinction between clergy and laity as the difference between authority and obedience. He would not, in the work of the Church and the administration of the means of grace, have the congregation reduced—in relation to the office-bearers—to a state of mere passive obedience. He felt that true Christian order must be consistent with the rights and duty of the individual Christian man. He would not, consequently, in the name of order, abrogate freedom. He accords to the congregation the right and duty of proving the doctrine and the official conduct of the office-bearers, and of watching over them. The difference, consequently, between office-bearers and non-office-bearers is only a secondary one, first derived from the unity which is intrinsically in the very nature of the congregation, and which exists *before* and independently of them. In short, to use the language of Dr. Dörner, to whom we are indebted for much of this thought, "The congregation has further the right and the duty of reformation; and when it is not otherwise done, she is herself—without, nay, even in opposition to the standing office—to remove errors of a fundamental character, and to alter the ecclesiastical order originated by herself, should it turn against the foundation upon which the whole congregation is based. No ecclesiastical ordinances had, in Luther's estimation, any absolute value, but were only means of grace, in order to lead to faith. He rejected all tyrannical oppression by human ordinances; and distinctly as he allows to the congregation the right to originate ordi-

nances according to its wants, he still resists by all means the introduction of any further conditions of salvation beyond, *objectively*, the means of grace; and *subjectively*, faith." So, *on the principle of faith he defends the ministerial office against the opposite error.*

"For as certainly as God has given to the Church the treasure of grace in Word and Sacrament, so certainly does He desire their regular use and regulated application." "The Church," he says, in addressing the Anabaptists, "has received the divine commission to dispense the gospel and Sacraments; and, consequently, the duty to provide through both for the extension of that salvation which is to be universal. But if we combine right and duty in unity, there arises the conception of office. The Church has derived from God the office of preaching the gospel and administering the Sacraments, together with the promise that God will be present with His Spirit, and thus make the acts of the Church, in His name, divine acts. If now the Church has received this commission and duty for use, so she has also the duty and right to provide for the preservation of these functions, and to transfer them to individuals. "Ordination," says Luther, "means nothing more than if the bishop, instead of or in the name of the whole Church, were to take one from among the masses of those who have equal power, and command him to exercise that power for the rest." That particular persons—namely: those especially qualified for it—should be selected for this purpose, is not in conflict with the principle of faith and the universal priesthood. "For precisely when a thing belongs equally to all in common, no individual may, simply because he thinks himself divinely instructed, take upon himself the office—no one may put himself forth and arrogate to himself that which belongs equally to all of us." "As it does not follow that because the community may make a mistake in the election of a civil officer, that, therefore, any individual may assume the office; so it does not follow that, because a congregation may make a mistake in calling a minister, therefore, any individual may assume the office, independently of the call of the Church." "So far now as the introduction of persons into the office is by human mediation, it may be a failure. Nevertheless, though unworthy persons may sometimes be called, the regular call through men is to be regarded as divine will and call, as it is

with any other office which is entrusted to any one. Whoever would present himself as a pastor, must exhibit an *ordinary* call, or exhibit a *miraculous* one. If we did not insist on the call, there would, at last, be no Church any more anywhere." How clearly all this results from Luther's realistic idea of the gospel as the power of God, as always producing somewhere and on some persons its saving effect—from his idea of the perpetuity of the Church! We have seen in the extracts from him how he insists upon it that "where the gospel is there will there also be believers," and consequently the Church is indestructible—will exist wherever and whenever, and as long as the gospel exists. And we have seen how he loved to repeat the language of the Creed: "I believe in the Holy Christian Church." Now, this perpetuity of the Church enforces upon us the idea, if not of a dogmatic, at least of an ethical, obligation to maintain the special ministry. There would, indeed, in the neglect of the regular call of the Church, be possible only a hierarchy or an anarchy, which are—each in its way—equally destructive of the Church. To the fanatics he exclaims, therefore: "Whoever comes without a call is a sneak and a plotter: yea, an agent of Satan; for the Holy Ghost does not creep, but He flies openly from heaven. Snakes creep; birds fly. With the regular call we can frighten Satan. I would not give my doctorate, by which I am regularly called for the whole world."

§ 6. *The Administration of Church Discipline.*

In a similar manner the Christian idea is applied by the principle of faith to the securing of the personal rights of the individual in the community of believers, for the protecting of the individual against any oppression of the universal priesthood. Thus did Luther apprehend it. The whole power of the Church consists *positively*, in proclaiming the forgiveness of sin; and *negatively* in declaring unworthy of the communion of the universal priesthood. He makes the power of the keys consist *solely in the authority to preach and apply the gospel*. "The keys are properly committed not to one order, *but to the congregation*; for it exists perpetually upon the earth; and in it the Holy Ghost certainly dwells. Of it alone we certainly know that it has the keys. Regularly called servants of the Church, *receive the keys which have been committed to her*, in

order to exercise them, in an orderly manner, in the name and by the command of the Church; and, thus, to dispense the gospel to individuals." Speaking of private absolution, he declares it to be *the right and duty of each individual*. "This power to forgive sin is nothing else than that the priest, yea, if it be necessary, any Christian man, may say to another, 'Thy sins are forgiven;' and every Christian does this as much as the priest, whether that person be wife or child, young or old. This right and liberty to reprove sin and to preach forgiveness, also, any two or three, assembled in His name, possess, that they should proclaim and speak to one another forgiveness of sins. God, thus overwhelms His people with blessing, and makes every place full of forgiveness of sins; so that they may find it, in their homes, or in the field; in the garden, and wherever any one may meet another." "Every brother may reprove another, and this is an exercise of the keys." The keys belong to the people—to the Christian Church—and consist positively in preaching the gospel, that is, in declaring the forgiveness of sin. "He who accepts it not, has it not." What is given in absolution is also given in preaching.

Negatively, the power of the Church consists in *excluding men from her communion on account of gross sins and evidences of an impenitent life*. But this, according to the principle of the Reformation, is not a *judicial but a declarative act*. So Luther understood it. He says that in it the Church only declares her idea of the condition of the sinner, and says: I bind thee not, but thou hast bound thyself with thy sins. She declares that it is not she, but unrepented sin, that separates the sinner from her. She does not decide judicially respecting his inner state. She only declares what she must conclude, in regard to it, from the known fact of his open sins. "One may be under the ban with God when He is not with men. Whosoever hears the gospel and believes it not, but inwardly contradicts it, falls secretly under the ban with God." "On the other hand, one may be under the ban with men and not with God—may not be under it any more because he has repented; or not at all, because the ban may not have been properly exercised. At the same time the binding key is not a fallible key. Where the ban was not properly exercised there the true key was not, that is, the Church, which alone has the key, was not there. Therefore, the

ban, strictly speaking, is only a threatening with divine displeasure—not collative or exhibitive like absolution. It is not infliction of the deprivation of salvation, but testimony that the soul has deprived itself of it.” He thinks that it is salutary to the sinner, thus solemnly to declare that, by his open and clearly ascertained sins, his inner state before God has become so manifest to men as to call forth the condemnatory judgment of the Church. And he declares that: “Where men forgive sins; or reprove them openly, or particularly, you may know that the people of God are there.” Minister and people should act together in these exercises of the Church. “Christ has made us (believers) all priests.” He would, consequently, not have the name priest applied to the special ministry; but prefers to call them, “ministers of the Word.” “The congregation has not the right, once for all, to transfer the office of preaching and of the keys, which is committed to it, to a particular order, which is then alone to be responsible for its perpetuation and exercise. It is its right and duty in case of necessity to interpose again; and it has constantly the duty to care for the preservation of the pure preaching of the gospel.” Thus, had the great Reformer the true Christian idea of the rights and duties of the laity. He, for the first time, clearly apprehended it in the light of the principle of saving faith, and enforced it as it never had been before. It is an idea which is not only closely connected with the freedom of the citizen in the state, and with the freedom of the Christian man in the Church, but with the purity and power of both Church and state—an idea which is only now being practically and fully carried out, in this age, and especially in this country. And in this respect, the Lutheran Church by carrying into practice—as she is now doing in the General Synod—a principle involved in the very nature of the great Reformation, and clearly inculcated by Luther, will contribute greatly to the well-being and progress of the Kingdom of Christ, at the present day, and in this country. It would be a sphere for the realization of Luther’s idea of the Christian man: “That he lives not in himself but in Christ and his neighbor; in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love. Through faith he ascends above himself into God, through love he descends out of God beneath himself, and yet remains ever in God, and God in him (John i. 51).”

CHAPTER IV.

THE APPLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEA TO RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL EDIFICATION, IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION.

§ I. *The Idea of Worship and Edification, as Determined by the Principle of the Reformation.*

THE great end of religion involves practical religious exercises, and the Christian idea of religion requires that they should be in accordance with the nature and spirit of the faith which is the instrument of communion with God. These exercises are usually called worship, service of God; and properly consist of inner exercises and outward acts arising from faith, and expressing communion with God. True worship is a state of heart and life consistent with faith. When this state becomes habitual it is called piety, and when it is manifested in a course of action, it is termed a holy life, holy living, walking in the love and fear of God. Thus was religion exemplified and the idea of personal communion with God strikingly manifested in "Enoch's walking with God," Abraham's faith and piety, Joseph's holy fear of God, and in the self-denial and self-sacrifice of the Apostles and early Christians. It may manifest itself either by the adoption, in the light of the divine law, of such maxims of life, and the practice of such actions as are known to be well pleasing to God; or, by the observance of external religious exercises or ceremonies, divinely appointed and obligatory on us; thereby to express our loyalty and devotion to God, or to excite our inner feelings of reverence and adoration, of gratitude and love, or to awaken and animate religious faith and holy dispositions; by endeavoring, in the use of words and symbols, to produce in ourselves a clearer consciousness of the religious ideas and a greater strength of the religious feelings.

The idea of religion, springing necessarily from the principle of the Reformation, sheds a most clear and important light upon the nature and use of these divinely-appointed means of grace,

upon the divinely instituted worship of God. Saving faith being, according to this principle, the point of union and communion between the human spirit and its Creator and Saviour, it requires this worship to be equally on the one hand an inner spiritual exercise, and on the other, to be inseparable from the external, objective revelation of God made through the Word and Sacraments. It recognizes, on the one hand, a real capacity in man for God, and consequently for worshiping him in spirit, an innate susceptibility, for personal and immediate communion with Him, and therefore for worshiping Him in truth. But this capacity and susceptibility are not productive, but only receptive, are not spontaneously exercised aright, but only as they are moved by divine influence. The principle, consequently, requires, as we have seen, that in this matter, as in everything belonging to the glory of God and the salvation of the soul, we should be deeply sensible of both the necessity of the miraculous objective revelation historically made and recorded in the Bible, and of the inner revelation of the Spirit in the soul; of the means of grace, and of the superadded immediate influences of the Holy Spirit; and that we should endeavor to keep these two factors in inseparable union in all attempts at divine worship and spiritual edification. We will notice some of the erroneous tendencies to which the Church is always exposed on this subject.

§ 2. *The Great Deviations from the true Christian Idea of Worship and Edification.*

Two great erroneous tendencies are fully exposed by the light shed upon this subject through the principle of the Reformation. The one might be called the *superstitious*; the other the *mystical* tendency. The one ignores *subjective faith*, and attributes a magical influence to the outer, objective means of grace; the other ignores the *objective word*, and ascribes an inner, magical power to subjective faith. The one is principally represented by the Romish Church, which attributes all authority to the external Church; the other, by the fanatical sects, which ascribe all power to the subjective spirit, and put confidence solely in the inner state. The former is the source of a *cold formalism* or a *superstitious asceticism*, according as it is connected with frivolous or earnest minds. The latter may ascribe the subjective power of the spirit to the understanding, and

thus become *rationalistic*; or to blind feeling—to an inner light which, in its indeterminateness, is identical with darkness—and it, thus, becomes *fanatical*. The true idea, as clearly suggested and imperatively required by the principle of the Reformation, the true Christian idea, consists in the union of the *objective word and sacraments with the subjective faith*—the union of the means of grace and the immediate operations of the Spirit. The principle of saving faith requires the letter and the spirit to be kept together.

§ 3. *The Deviation resulting from Superstitious Views.*

The first of these erroneous ideas attaches undue importance to the outer and historical, to the word and sacraments. It treats them as if they were of themselves without the superadded immediate influence of the Spirit, the presence of God Himself. It accepts them as if communion with them were communion with God Himself; relies upon them as if the divine salvation were effected by them alone, without any personal and immediate, distinct and special, divine action. The idea is that the Holy Spirit, together with the word and sacraments, in short all saving grace, was, once for all, bestowed upon the visible Church as an organism, upon the external, the hierarchical Church—the Church which is represented by the priesthood, yea, is the priesthood standing in regular, external and organic connection with apostles to whom the Spirit was originally given—the Church in whose behalf God has, until the final consummation, abdicated all saving powers—all forgiveness and regeneration. It leads men not, first to God in Christ, but to the Church—to worship the Church rather than God. Thus it meets the susceptibility of man, in his sinfulness and helplessness, not to turn his natural faith into spiritual trust, not to guide him in his anxious inquiry, What must I do to be saved? immediately to God in Christ, not directly to the living, ever-present Saviour, but to the Church. Instead of deepening the religious feelings, of promoting the religious process which is going on in the souls of men, and conducting it to its designed and proper end—to the *experience of personal salvation in communion with God in Christ by faith in Him alone*—it arrests its true course, and connects it merely with the external Church; leads it to rest in the magical power of the visible Church with her treasures and means of

grace. It, thus, induces religious formalism; changes what was meant to be used merely as means into the end itself; and puts the visible Church in the place of the true God, with whom we are and ought to come into communion. It leads men to worship the Church, the creature, more than God, the Creator—who alone is God blessed for evermore. It leads men to be satisfied with mere historical faith, instead of urging them to strive for living faith in Christ through the Holy Ghost—induces the superstitious acceptance of an arbitrary substitute for real salvation. It leads men to rely upon the assurance of the Church instead of striving for personal assurance of acceptance with God. It leads them to give up the real contest with their inbred sinfulness, to abandon the actual strife for spiritual victory, to lose their deep yearnings after God, their strong longings for the renewal of the communion with Him which was lost through the sin of man. Believing that in giving to the Church the word and sacraments, God has endowed her with all the powers of salvation, and invested her with authority to dispense them at her will, men will sink into spiritual lethargy. They will be inactive, or their activity will be only external, ecclesiastical, ascetical. The Church has become a substitute for God Himself—has become the God to be trusted in idle indulgence, or served with unspiritual activity. The soul is not supposed to come in contact with God Himself, but only with the Church, and her ministry in Word and Sacrament; not to come into personal communion with God, but only with the divine order of the world, the mystical body of humanity, which is the Church, and over which the priesthood presides; not into the presence of the gracious, sin-pardoning God in Christ, but only into that of His vicegerent, the Church, the hierarchy, to whom He has committed all the treasures of grace. Thus is the Church made to mediate between God and man, and to stand in the way of the individual's personally possessing assurance and experience of the great salvation.

The error of this system never was fully detected or clearly exposed before the great Reformation. Men felt, indeed, that the Church was in error; that she did not lead men in the way of true salvation; that she did not exhibit the true idea of God and the world, of religion and man, as it is revealed in the Bible; and they could point out the difference between many of

her doctrines and the inspired teachings, the antagonism between her spirit and her ways and the Spirit and way of the Lord,—but they could not find the root of the error. But the principle of the Reformation at once exposed the root of the whole evil. Salvation by faith in Christ alone, as we have seen, enabled Luther at once effectually to expose and reform the great error of the Church. And by applying the Christian idea, in the light shed upon it by this great principle of personal assurance of salvation through faith in Christ alone, we will be able constantly to see more clearly the grossness of the error, and its utter antagonism with the idea and spirit of true Christianity. Thus it is manifestly Deism insinuating itself into the Church. Salvation is communion with God Himself; and, consequently, by making the Church take the place of God, and putting God and Christ in the background; by leading men to contemplate God as separate from the Church, so far as any personal immediate influence is exerted upon her individual members, to look for Christ not now in the gift of the Holy Ghost and personal communion—in His dwelling in us, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost—but to look for Him only to appear again at the final judgment, only after the Church has done her work on earth and in purgatory,—by such views she hinders, as far as man can do it, the possibility of salvation. And she introduces practical Deism. By making men content with the mere gifts of God as separate from Him, she obscures the true nature of the free, ethical divine love. For it is characteristic of true love everywhere that it does not bestow merely impersonal gifts. It is the nature of personal love to communicate itself. It cannot be satisfied with mere impersonal things. It can arise only in a personal subject and terminate only on a personal object. Its language is: I am thine and thou art mine. What is mine is thine, and what is thine is mine. It seeks communion with its object. When it bestows impersonal things, it gives them not as ends, but as means to a higher end. All therefore is means to the great end of personal communion with God. He has given us the Church, nay even His Word, that He may give us *His Holy Spirit—that He may give us Himself.*

Thus Romanism, in its false magnifying of the Church, instead of bringing us to the enjoyment of the full powers of salvation, is *only* fostering our superstition, and withholding us from the

enjoyment of the best of God's gifts, His "love shed abroad in our hearts;" from the possession of the highest blessedness, the "Holy Ghost given unto us;" from the true salvation, the sovereign good, the everlasting portion of the soul, the communication of Himself to us, "the one thing needful, the good part that shall never be taken from us." Instead of elevating us by the means of grace to the highest plane of spiritual attainment, it binds us down to the lowest form of religious development, to a mere mediate divine communion; instead of immediate "access to Him by that grace wherein we stand," leaves us to the restless yearnings of the heathen, never giving us the calm repose of the Christian's faith; abandons us to the sad premonitions of nature instead of raising us to the cheering anticipations of the spirit and enabling us to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." By *ignoring personal faith*, the essential and prime factor in the process of salvation, it hinders the free course of the Word of God, hides out of view "the exceeding great and precious promises whereby we become partakers of the divine nature, whereby are given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness;" binds this saving Word to the official acts of certain persons and to the interposition of impersonal things.

She thus *obscures the true nature of both God and man*. She ignores the true personality of man—his personal consciousness and his free will. Her magical grace, bound as it is to her impersonal organism and her impersonal offices, can be conceived as acting only by denying the personal agency of man, and putting itself in its place. We have in this the *opus operatum* of the Word and Sacraments; and the result is not personal spirits "renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness;" not souls who have received "power to become the sons of God;" not "children of God who have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ;" not "children of God by faith," into whose "hearts has come the spirit of His Son, crying Abba, Father;" not children of God at all, but only children of the Church—a kingdom, not of personal spirits, but of impersonal institutions.

So it *obscures also the personality of God*. By its conception of the means of grace, it presents God to us, not as a personal being, but as a nature-power; divine grace, not as an ethical

agency, but as a physical force. God is, indeed, truth ; and truth may be said to be God. But we can say this only because the truth of everything is found, at last, in spirit. Truth has its source and end in spirit. And spirit seeks spirit ; and the revelation of spirit is to spirit. To represent divine grace not as, in the first instance, using impersonal things for the purpose of communicating itself to personal beings, but as attaching itself to them, as if it would commune with them rather than with individual, personal spirits ; to represent it not as using impersonal things merely as means to make personal communion with finite persons practicable, but as permitting itself to be absorbed by them, to be comprehended in them, is to conceive of it as having, in its communications, the nature and, in its operations, the mode of a physical force. It is to conceive of impersonal nature, too, as having more capacity for divine communion than personal man, But such a conception of divine grace is destructive of the very idea of the personality of God. It is inconsistent with the free, moral, holy love of a personal being. Divine grace, therefore, must be conceived of as transcending all means, and always looking beyond them ; as using them only for the purpose of making practicable immediate operations upon, and immediate communion with, personal beings. The love of a living, conscious, personal subject desires living, conscious, personal objects. We can easily see what must be the consequence of such superstitious apprehensions of divine grace. The church presenting such a view of God and His grace, can never, by her religious exercises, prosecuted only in a mechanical way, touch the heart or reach the conscience ; never reveal the necessities or rouse the feelings of the spirit to a sense of personal obligation. She can never satisfy the spiritual wants of mankind, and never produce, in the soul, the spiritual repose of faith, and, in the life, the ruling disposition, the fixed purpose, the steady pursuit of holiness—of true spiritual holiness. She leaves men in the midst of the helpless conflict of natural conscience with animal passions, to be driven hither and thither by the alternate prevalence of the sense of duty and the cravings of appetite, of fear and hope—at one time repenting, at another indulging—until their character is fixed, at last, in spiritual and “eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.” There will always

thus be a lack of unity in the spiritual life of the individual, and in the community-life of the Church, the division of her children into clerical and lay, religious and secular, the retirement and seclusion of monks and nuns, the ambition and parade of popes and bishops. The unity of the spiritual life in the individual, the unity of all Christians in a universal priesthood, the true repose of the soul, and the true manifestation of God's kingdom of spirits, is found only in immediate personal communion with God—in the personal assurance of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

The Romish idea of the Word and Sacraments has introduced into the Church, into revealed religion, a *Deism similar to that introduced into the philosophical world, into natural religion, by the infidels of the last century*. As Deism in natural religion consists in the idea that God is not only distinct but separate from the world which he has created; so Romanism in the Church leads to the idea that God is not only distinct but separate from the subjects of His grace, from the kingdom of spirits *whom He has created anew in Christ*. As Deism says that God, in the creation of the world, once for all, endued it with its forces, and impressed on it its laws; and then let it develop itself without any further providence of His, or any further interference or interposition on His part—so the Romish doctrine really is, that God, in *producing the Church at Pentecost, endowed it with all the powers of salvation, invested it with all its spiritual laws, and now permits it to develop itself without any special influence of His Spirit, or any gracious presence of His personal being*.

It is, therefore, of supreme importance to notice and remember the emphasis and clearness which the principle gives to the true world-view. In this light God is, indeed, the author of the Church, but He transcends it. He has not lost Himself in it, does not limit Himself to it in His operations. And though He is the institutor of the means of grace, He *has not bound them to particular persons, places or offices*. Though a sure pledge of the presence of His saving grace, they do not shut out His immediate influence upon the soul. He is, indeed, historically active for salvation through the Word and Sacraments; meets the seeking soul in even the merely formal administration of them with valid pledges of His prevenient grace, connecting it historically with the atoning work of Christ upon the cross; and, thus,

revealing His readiness to dispense unto it free forgiveness and true regeneration, gratuitous justification and full salvation. But He does not, in this, cease to be omnipresent, or to transcend the Church in His free personal operations. He is in the Church, but *He is more than the Church*; with the means of grace, but *over and above them*. He has not abdicated the powers of salvation, nor transferred them to His Church in such a way as no longer to exert any special and immediate influence upon the souls of men. He has not made Himself subject to His own creatures—the priests and the means of grace. He has not left the Church to develop herself without any further influence of His; nor has He bound Himself to the one form of the dispensation of the Gospel which consists in a special ministry, in its proclamation by particular persons and in particular places—by consecrated persons and in consecrated places. But His gracious presence is everywhere, wherever His gospel is known or spoken; no matter in what form, in what way, or by what persons; and everywhere, makes it a divine power unto salvation to the souls yearning for deliverance from the condemnation and the pollution of sin, and for communion and union with Him. The true idea was apprehended by the Reformers, and thus expressed in the Augsburg Confession: “Through the instrumentality of the Word and Sacraments, the Holy Spirit is given, who, when and where it pleases God, works faith in those who hear the gospel.”

§ 4. *The Deviation Produced by Mysticism.*

As the superstitious tendency introduces an outer magic, so the mystical idea leads to an *inner magic*. It is in danger of *depreciating the importance, necessity and force* of the Word and Sacraments as means of grace. Cognizing only their insufficiency of themselves to produce spiritual life, it makes them useless. It forgets that the Word, the objective Word, is the divinely-appointed instrumentality of faith. This is the idea of those whom the evangelical Pietists called *mystici mixti*, as distinguished from the *mystici puri*; and it is involved, more or less, in the spirit and methods of what may be properly called sects. It may take a mystical or a rationalistic turn, according as it is used by mere blind feeling or by the mere logical understanding. The deviation may arise from a true impulse—from a

desire for personal assurance of salvation. Led by a desire for inner certainty of truth, a genuine religious impulse, it refuses to be stayed by the means of grace, to remain stationary with the mere authority of the external Word. It is not satisfied with the revelation of God, in so far as that revelation is only the work, the creature of God, and not the presence, the manifestation of God—yea, God Himself. It strives for actual communion with God—for personal participation in the divine life. It labors to transcend that which is merely external, by the negation of its sufficiency, by allowing the critical action of the internal spirit—of subjective faith—in reference to the merely outward and objective form. It can admit no saving efficacy in the Word and Sacraments without faith in the subject. In this it is right. But it still has but *one side, one half of the great reality*. It properly enough rejects the outer magic of superstition. But in doing this, it often fails to distinguish between general validity and particular efficacy, and makes the divine validity of the Word and Sacraments as means of grace, as well as their saving efficacy, inseparable from, and dependent upon, the faith of the subject. It thus regards faith as an inner spontaneity, as produced by the soul from and by itself, as not a result produced by the instrumentality of objectively operating means, but regards the soul itself the originator and selector of its means. It is not the Word and Sacraments which produce the faith; but the faith produces the Word and Sacraments—makes them such. In its desire for immediate communion with God, in its refusing to be satisfied with the mere external Word and Sacraments, and striving for inner certainty of truth—for personal assurance of salvation—though this be right in itself, the danger is that, in its one-sidedness, it will attempt to find God without any connection with the historical revelation, which He has given and recorded in the Bible, that is, *independently of God's Word—the means appointed by Him—and, consequently, of the only saving divine revelation*. Thus, the religious process degenerates into a mere subjective movement—a mere human development; if in the direction of the understanding, into a *false rationalism*; and if in that of the feelings into an *impure mysticism*. As the object of faith must, first, be presented, before it can be apprehended—must be presented in order that there may be faith to apprehend it, “as faith cometh by hearing, and hear-

ing by the word of God," that is, as faith can be produced and exercised only on the presupposition that a word of God has been given, the fanatical mystics fail to attain the end of true religion, the realization of the religious idea, namely, communion with the living, the personal, the revealed God, the God of Christianity. For, according to the true Christian idea as apprehended in the light of the principle of saving faith, we can know God only as He reveals himself in His word, can know Him only as He reveals himself in His acts of revelation as they are presented to us in the Sacred Scriptures. That historical revelation, that sacred history of the miraculously revealing and saving acts of God, culminated in the incarnation of the Son of God. The Holy Ghost in His inner operations only illuminates what He has miraculously revealed in the historical revelation. "The Holy Ghost," says Jesus, "whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Of which words Luther gives, as we have seen, this paraphrase: "Also He shall teach you to remember what I have said unto you; that it is My word and doctrine; with this He shall remain and remind you, that you may *understand and judge* that it is My word, and even that which I have said unto you; and exhibit and make clearer from day to day, that ye may better and better *know Me, and how through Me ye are rescued from sin and death.*" In saving faith, in the production of faith, in giving assurance of salvation, in bringing us into immediate communion with God, the Holy Spirit, in His inner revelation, takes only of the "things that are Christ's and shows them unto" us. Thus does the principle of the Reformation connect faith and the Word, and make saving faith the production of the Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word.

In His indeterminate infinity, God is inapprehensible to us, "dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto;" and His spirituality, His personal nature and ethical essence, can reveal itself only in determinate, distinct acts—acts of will—that is, in a *historical* revelation. This false view, therefore, whether taken by the rationalist or the mystic, in turning the soul away from the revealing acts of God—whether it be from the divine acts in the historical revelation of Christ, or from the acts of God's Spirit through the appointed means of grace—separates it from

the gracious and saving acts of God in the incarnation and life, the death and resurrection of Christ, that is, from *all the gracious and saving acts which we certainly know*. It separates the divine spirituality from the divine infinity; conceives of God as simple, undefined infinity; and represents the Creator, not as a distinct personal being, but as the *All*, producing and annihilating definite existences; as absorbing rather than loving, saving and preserving our distinct and personal being in conscious communion with Himself. It results in Pantheism. In turning from the vital unity of God and the modes of His personal revelation—in which He has made Himself known—it falls into the simple oneness, the dark abyss of mysticism, in which there is no determinate form, and, consequently, nothing to be known. In preferring and seeking access to the “pure deity,” in its abstract being, it loses the living God in His concrete attributes and His personal manifestations.

Thus, salvation, which consists in the union of the divine and the human, that is, true communion with God, becomes impossible. For only personal being can love, and only personal being can be the object of love. All beings partake of goodness, but only personal beings can be partakers of love. Love communicates itself; and this only a personal being can do, that is, only a being who possesses himself can communicate himself; only a being who is self-controlling can give himself to others. Love also requires to be reciprocated, and only a personal being can reciprocate love. Love is a personal attribute; free, ethical, holy. It is both self-possessing and self-communicating. It, consequently, preserves itself, and makes the preservation of its objects its great end. Only by the personality of God is man's personality secured. How great must be the error which prefers the abstract, indeterminate, infinite or absolute, to the living, personal God, the God of revelation? It is a false spiritualism which not only leads to the same unethical and mere physical views of God, to which superstition brings men, but also to Pantheism. The outer magic leads to Deism; the inner magic, to Pantheism; while the Christian idea, the realism of the Bible, revived by Luther in the Reformation, leads decidedly to Theism, to the conception of God as a living and personal being: “The Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”

§ 5. *The Union of the Outer Word and the Inner Spirit, of Objective Revelation and Subjective Faith, found in the Principle of the Reformation, the only True Way.*

If, therefore, we would maintain true worship and piety, if we would worship God in spirit and in truth, we must keep the spirit and the letter together. We must, on the one hand, heartily retain that element of true religion which mysticism labors to uphold, namely, the striving for immediate communion with the divine being; and on the other, cheerfully submit ourselves to the objective revelation of God, which constitutes the contents of the Sacred Scriptures, and to those operations with which He has promised to accompany the use of the means of grace. We must receive the Sacred Scriptures as "able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ;" the gospel as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" the Sacraments as by divine appointment, valid in themselves and efficacious to all those not resisting the Holy Ghost who uses them as instruments to urge the Saviour upon our acceptance. While we sincerely and faithfully use the means of grace, we should be careful to remember that the spirit and the letter go together, that these means are sufficient only by the accompanying influence of the Holy Spirit. The more men become sensible of the nature of salvation for such creatures as we are—for finite, sinful beings—the more will they seek communion with God as the God who is love, wise, holy love; and the more they seek to grasp this love in its living acts, that is, in the divine modes of God's revelation of Himself, the more will they feel that the only satisfaction and comfort of the soul is found in the Scriptures, the more will they feel the necessity of the Word and Sacraments as the divinely appointed means of grace. The more they contemplate the external revelation, the more will they, in the internal spirit, behold, in the visible Son, the invisible Father, in the historical Christ, the incarnate personal love which is God. Thus will the inner and the outer be united in the most intense glow of worship, and in the highest attainments of piety. In proportion to the real penetration of men into the inner spirit, will be their susceptibility to the outer manifestations of God in Word and Sacraments; and in proportion to the sincerity of their submission to the objective revelation, will be their capacity to apprehend its living spirit

and to appropriate its inner content. The more men worship God in spirit and in truth, the more intense will become their love for the sacred song and the Christian prayer, the evangelical sermon and the fraternal admonition, in their exhibition of the Word of salvation; and for Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as manifestations and signs, as seals and pledges of the undeserved, prevenient grace of God in Christ. Men should, therefore, for both satisfaction and culture in religion, put themselves into connection with, and under the influence of, the visible, the historical Church with her means of grace; but to find these blessings in all their purity and fullness, they must seek with all earnestness the communion of the invisible Church—the Church consisting of all believers scattered over the earth; must cherish belief in her reality, and confidence in her prayers and her power as the organ of the Holy Ghost. And above all they must seek the special outpourings of the Holy Spirit so richly promised in the Word of God. The superadded, immediate influences of the Spirit are indispensable not only for the conversion of the unbelieving, but for spiritual worship and inner edification. For all thoughts and ideas in divine knowledge, all feelings and purposes in holy living, resulting merely from the educating power of the Church, or the mere influence of the means of grace, will be dark and dead, until the living Spirit from above illuminate and quicken us, until He enter into the yearnings and longings of the soul, and kindle them into the light of faith and the flame of love. The live coal from the upper sanctuary, which touched the prophet's lips, must purify and unite all into the life and form of the new man in Christ. It must descend into the temple of the spirit, and burn upon the altar of the heart—then, and then only, will the life of Christian piety attain its full and highest goal.

“ In vain we tune our formal songs,
 In vain we try to rise,
 Hosannas languish our tongues,
 And our devotion dies.

“ Come, Holy Spirit, from above,
 With all Thy quickening powers,
 Kindle a flame of sacred love
 In these cold hearts of ours.”

CHAPTER V.

THE APPLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEA TO THE RELATIONS OF FAITH AND SCIENCE, IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION.

ACCORDING to the Christian idea, as it springs necessarily from the principle of the Reformation, truth, saving truth, is self-evidencing; it authenticates itself, carries its own evidence with it into the soul. Faith precedes science, does not depend upon it for its existence or origination. But it is not in contradiction with science. Faith and the understanding have distinct functions; and when kept each in its proper province, allowed to operate in its peculiar sphere, and to perform its appropriate work, they will be found to be in perfect harmony.

As natural faith or belief in the objective reality of objects of sense, existing as it does independently of any scientific discovery respecting the origin or proof of this reality, must be regarded as a primitive belief in consciousness resulting from the contact, in some way, through organs of sense, of the objects with the mind; so religious faith—that is, belief in the reality of the supernatural—not being the product of any logical process in the understanding, is an original belief in consciousness, arising from communion in some way through impressions upon the soul—impressions though not of the organic sense, experience though not sensuous—contact with the mind by means of revelation, either general or special, or both. Its origination cannot be explained, nor the reality of its object proved by mere reasoning, but it may be shown to be in agreement with the laws of thought.

§ 1. *Man's Capacity for the Cognitive Element in Faith.*

The origin of the cognitive element in faith may admit of some psychological exposition, though not of logical proof. In some way the mind finds a supernatural in nature—the in-

finite, in the finite mind and the finite world—and comprehends, both the spirit of man and the world of nature, in this supernatural. We may accept a trichotomy in man—soul, body and spirit: the body as the medium of the relation of the soul to nature, and the spirit as the medium of its relation to the supernatural: the bodily organism as that by which it has sensuous experience, has phenomena, distinct, definite objects in consciousness; the spirit that by which it has spiritual experience, has universal and eternal realities—not objects discriminated, limited according to forms of the sense or the understanding, but still realities to the soul. By the one it has sense-cognitions—cognitions of the appearance of being; by the other, reason-cognitions—cognitions of the ground of being: by the one, cognitions of the finite; by the other, of infinite being: by the one, cognitions of the creature; by the other, of the creator. Or we may adopt a dichotomy, regarding man as consisting of soul and body; and then discriminate in the intellect, sense, understanding and reason; then the sense would, through the organism of the body, be the relation of the understanding to the finite—to both finite spirit and finite nature; and the reason, its relation to the infinite, the absolute, through impressions made upon it by revelation either general or special, or both; the one giving to the consciousness the appearances of things as objects distinguished in quality, and limited in space and time; the other, the cognition of the necessary ground of being—that is, of God. In this might be apprehended, at least, the possibility of a solid ground for the cognitive element which is in faith—some psychological account of this primitive fact of consciousness.

Man has God-consciousness just as certainly as he has world-consciousness and self-consciousness. He is distinguished from the brute precisely by the fact that the brute, though conscious, is not self-conscious. It has perceptions—sees, hears, tastes, etc., but it is not conscious that it sees, hears, etc.; it is not conscious of self, does not distinguish itself from its objects. But man is not only conscious of objects, but he discriminates between himself and his objects; knows not only nature, but knows himself—is self-conscious. This self-consciousness involves God-consciousness. In his consciousness of nature and himself, he knows that he is limited by nature, and nature by him; that the

ground of his being is not in nature, nor that of nature in him; and, consequently, that nature and he are both dependent existences. He has, therefore, a sense of absolute dependence, not of mere relative or mutual dependence, but of absolute dependence, of dependence upon absolute being; and, consequently, faith in the supernatural and the superhuman. The cognitive element in this faith is that of the absolute as the ground and end of the soul, of personality in the absolute as the spiritual and everlasting good of the soul—of a personal God and personal immortality. The idea that the consciousness itself is the product of blind force, that our conscious thought has its genesis from an unconscious source, religion and theology need not much dread. Men need only to be told that it traces man and all his science and poetry, his morality and religion, to the “fire-mist.” In addition to what we have already, at the proper place, said on this point, we can confidently say that the materialism—which denies all intelligence in the source of our intelligent existence, all spiritual agency in the production of our moral nature, our moral feelings, the feelings of obligation, and of our spiritual nature, our religious sentiments, our feelings of reverence and worship—that this materialism is so contrary to the ideas and feelings resulting from the very constitution of our being, that the common sense of men will always reject it, as a theory based upon fallacious grounds, as suggested and supported by depraved and perverted minds. It is so entirely irreconcilable with the innate and fundamental convictions and sentiments, with the nobler instincts and higher aspirations of the human soul, and it leads to consequences so brutal, that it will be effectually resisted in the name of humanity itself. And we need only to look at the logical consequences of Pantheism—of the system which would derive our consciousness from unconscious mind, as they are now drawn even by its cultivated as well as consistent professors—in order to be convinced that the common sense of men in Christendom can not for a long time be made to receive it as consistent with a sound mind and a pure heart. It will always, in the end, be resisted by the conscience of mankind.

When it tells us, through its greatest representatives, “that we are God, that we made the world, made the sun, moon and stars,” though we were then unconscious, and knew not what we

were doing; that when we were force we were blind and could choose nothing, but operated from necessity, and now that we are idea, that we are intelligence and choice, we have power to alter nothing which we have made; when it tells us "that God is merely the blind force, or the unconscious mind of nature;" that He has just come to some remembrance of what He has done in the past ages—of "how He then ordered the heavenly bodies, formed the earth with its various substances, gave plants and animals their organisms;" when it tells us that the source of all intelligence *becomes intelligent only in us*, becomes aware of the science of the heavenly bodies, which He has made, *only in our astronomy*—it can never meet a favorable response from the sound mind and the pure heart. And when, in its latest development, it tells us that "the unconscious," from which all conscious existence comes, is, indeed, intelligent—yea, omniscient though unconscious—knows everything, but does not know itself—the difficulty is only increased. For when the number and clearness of the evidences of design have at last forced from the system the recognition of an intelligent author of the world, it will never, after this admission, be able to expound the universe as the product of the operations of "unconscious mind" any more than as that of those of "blind force." Omniscience cannot be conceived as unconscious; that which does not know itself cannot know all things. It is no solution to remind us that "the unconscious is simply the all of being; and that in it the end and the beginning of everything so coincide that there will be intelligent action—though unconscious action—action for intelligent ends with omniscient perfection, with infinite wisdom, and without the possibility of a mistake." For this is a use of language so ambiguous, an employment of thought so full of confusion, that common sense and honest inquiry must reject it. Besides, it does not tell how it is possible, if the perfection of the absolute consist in this coincidence or identity of beginning and end, that the process of distinction—of consciousness—could ever have begun. And it must not be forgotten that this is the latest and greatest attempt of Pantheism to expound the universe without the admission of a personal Creator.

The human self-consciousness is itself a sufficient protection against Atheistic Materialism and Ideal Pantheism in their

denial of a personal Deity and a personal immortality. All the inferences of this nature, drawn from the apparent dependence of life upon the bodily organism, are shown to be illogical, even on physiological grounds. Biology itself, in the hands of many of its most distinguished adherents—whether friends or enemies of Christianity—now acknowledges that life is before organization, and that it is not produced by it, but itself produces organization; that it existed before the organism, and can exist after it is destroyed; thus, showing, though *not positively*, yet negatively, the possibility of a personal immortality. There is, therefore, nothing in physical science which proves or disproves the foundation of the faith and hope of religion, nothing that can be brought successfully against the idea of a personal source and a personal immortality of the soul. Besides, some of the greatest physiologists, influenced by no bias in favor of religion, have said that they notice peculiar differences between the human brain and that of irrational animals—peculiarities in the former indicating the possibility, at least, if not even the probability, of a relation to a spiritual life. There are evidences enough of this kind to cause all inferences against a future life to vanish before the light of our personal self-consciousness. The difference between man and the brute is so clear in this light that all inferences, drawn from the supposed mortality of the latter, lose their force. While the individual brute is only a specimen of its species, has the whole of its being from the species, is impelled only by its forces of life, and obeys only the laws of its kind; the individual man is not a mere example of the human species, is not impelled simply by the forces of humanity as a race, can and does feel himself under obligation to obey laws other than merely those of human nature, has a higher law, and higher motive of action, than the mere race. He distinguishes himself in his self-consciousness, not only from brute nature, but also from the nature which he has merely in his race-connection. He is not merely one of the parts into which humanity has developed itself, not merely an element which was once wholly involved in the race, and is now evolved. He is not merely an individual, but a person—a peculiarly determined individual. He has a personal peculiarity, and a personal goal; is distinguishable from the race in his nature and end; has the elements and tendencies of his existence not solely from the race; has an

impress from above as well as a bent from beneath; is in his essence more than a mere repetition of the species; is ever in his own presence and the presence of God; is morally in his own possession, and absolutely dependent only on God—on being which is higher than nature and better than man. He is so thoroughly separate from nature in kind, and so distinct in his personality from humanity as a species, that he cannot think of himself as comprehended in nature, or included wholly in the race; as having a common destiny with the individual brute, or even with humanity as a mere impersonal nature.

If religious belief be thus a primitive faith, it cannot be regarded, with any propriety, as dependent for its existence upon any discovery of the understanding, nor for its certainty upon any logical demonstration. All that science can require, is that the idea involved in this faith should be found to be in agreement with the laws of thought, and not in contradiction with the laws of being, which the thinking mind necessarily deduces from the facts of existence—from the facts of the existing world.

§ 2. *Faith is not Inimical to Science, but invites its Investigations.*

Some would have us reject all attempts to find a correlation between the religious idea, springing from faith, and the law discovered by science. They would dispense with all reasoning in regard to its truth, and be satisfied with the mere tracing of religion as a phenomenon of human life. But the mind cannot be satisfied without making the religious idea the subject of intelligent thought and investigation, without inquiring into its truth or falsehood. While on the one hand, science has no right to reason independently of the fact of religion; on the other, religion cannot properly decline the tests of scientific reasoning within its proper sphere. Not every belief which can be traced to elements in human nature, or whose root can be found in something which belongs to the constitution of man, is therefore true. Many beliefs are only the result of the operations of intellect in a lower state of development; and they are consequently dispelled, when a higher stage of intelligence is attained. They are the lower and more defective forms of knowledge, and pass away before its higher and more perfect forms in science. Thus have the beliefs in witchcraft, magic,

etc., passed away, in a great measure, before the light of science; and so probably will the great religious myths of the heathen world. For though they are not purely subjective, but have partly an objective origin; are not arbitrarily formed, but are the result of divine contact with man in his relation to the supernatural; are originated partly under the influence of general divine revelation and of "sporadic portions" of a primitive special revelation; yet they are mainly framed and developed from the thoughts and feelings of the human mind, darkened and influenced by sin, and there is little of the divine element in them. They are not pure revelations of the divine will. And so far as they are mere symbolizations, personifications of ideas, they only first present, in the forms of the imagination, what science afterwards, through the agency of the understanding, brings into the clear sight of consciousness, in the representation of thought. The symbol is dropped; the myth is dissipated; the mythical history becomes a mere idea; all is shown to have been mere personification of ideas. This must be the result, because there never was a real history. They never were real historical facts, never were real acts of God, real expressions of will—of the divine will. They are only personifications of ideas, operations of the fancy, and, consequently, they must pass away under the process of scientific investigation and philosophical thought and reasoning.

If religion itself were entirely and only of a similar origin, it would have to vanish before the light of modern culture, like these phenomena of the ancient culture. And it is precisely because it is not such, but is the product of revelation general or special, is the manifestation of will, of the Divine Will—is history—it cannot be absorbed in science, nor superseded or supplanted by it. It has in it an element which is beyond the reach of science, sacred history well authenticated, divine acts of salvation which carry their own evidence with them to the soul. But its facts and ideas must be consistent with the realities and laws of the existing world, not in contradiction to reason and sound conclusions of science. It, therefore, confidently invites the light of science, assured that it will never be dissipated by it, but will only be brought into clearer consciousness in the minds of men.

Besides, though religion itself be indestructible, it may have delusive manifestations, erroneous representations, false forms, as

is manifest in the various and conflicting particular religions of the world; and though faith be ineradicable from the consciousness of men, it may have a false content, as is evident from the numerous cases of superstitious religious faith. Nay, the possibility that it may have a false content has often become a fearful reality, as is manifest in the history of Heathenism and Romanism. The mere fact of the universal existence of religious faith in human consciousness, is not of itself security against error in it, not complete certainty of its truthfulness, else all positive religions would be alike true. But all religions cannot be equally true; and it cannot be a matter of indifference, as some think it is, what a man believes, if he only believes in something. No doubt religious faith, even in its most deluded form, is better than unbelief; and the man who yields himself to the impulse to trust in a power other and higher than the merely natural and human, is in a more normal state of mind as well as of heart, is a nobler and more elevated being than the skeptic who resists this natural tendency to belief. Religion is the relation of man to God—the fundamental relation of his being—and attention to it, in any of its forms, is a sounder mental and moral characteristic than indifference to its claims can possibly be. Faith is, indeed, cognizant of truth immediately through consciousness, independently of scientific reasoning. Science should not, therefore, seek to produce religion, or claim to originate the idea which has its spring in faith alone. But if the knowledge which is in faith should be only apparent, mythical in its origin, delusive or defective, she can assist in dispelling the error and freeing faith from the illusion. Faith, therefore, true faith, faith which has its source not in the mythical dream-world, but in the world of spirits—not in the region of mere intellect in its lower forms of fancy and imagination, any more than in the higher representations of the understanding—but in acts of will, in spirit communicating with spirit, in acts of the divine will—in history properly authenticated—does not shun the examination of the thinking mind, nor dispense with the investigations of the faculty which desires to understand truth and to know the reasons of things.

§ 3. *Science must start from Faith, must receive from it the Religious Idea.*

While some would reject all reasoning in religion, others, overlooking the distinct and independent character of the religious idea as involved necessarily in the movements of human nature in its relation to God, inseparable from the exercises of the human mind under divine impressions from Him who, as certainly as He creates spirit, reveals Himself to it—acts upon it—would make faith altogether dependent for its existence upon merely intellectual operations, and for its validity upon the demonstrations of science. They regard religion as only an undeveloped form of knowledge, and think that the religious ideas must be, and can be, logically demonstrated; that the investigation of the valid being of the objects of religious knowledge, is wholly within the province of the mere human understanding, independently of the original testimony of the religious consciousness—of its primitive intuitions, its immediate faith. These also are mistaken. The thinking mind and the immediate consciousness must be kept together. The understanding cannot originate the religious idea. This arises from faith, through the consciousness determined by higher influences than mere human intellections. But science can determine whether this idea is consistent with the laws of being, which she has discovered by the investigation of facts which lie in her domain. The understanding cannot properly conduct religious investigations separately from the religious consciousness—independently of the insights of the reason and the dictates of revelation. For, if even we had in the understanding the conception of God—that He is and what He is, and the idea of how man according to this conception ought to act toward God,—all this would be a mere seeming. It would be God and our relation to Him only *in idea*, if the reality were not given in another way. What God actually is, and how man actually conducts himself toward God, and how God acts toward him in view of that conduct, cannot be discovered by mere thought—does not admit of any a priori determination; but can be known only from psychological and historical facts, from experience in consciousness, and the observation of the history of mankind—of the actual conduct of man and the providential acts of God. The possibility of sin can be philosophically cognized; its reality

can be known only as a fact—can be learned only from history ; the propriety of the punishment of sin on the part of God can be speculatively apprehended ; the reality can be learned only from His revelation, and from the history of His providence. History cannot be thought out a priori ; it can be known only by experience. When, regardless of the religious consciousness, the understanding proceeds in a merely abstract way to deal with the realities of religion, it arrives, as we have seen, at conclusions inconsistent not only with the religious premonitions and yearnings, but with the common sense and general intuitions, the holiest feelings and the highest impulses of men—with all the noblest ends in the aspirations and all the ethical elements in the purposes of humanity. It tends toward Monism, towards Pantheism, Nihilism ; and must consistently end in some form of pure naturalism, thus coming into contradiction with the dictates of the natural, as well as the religious consciousness of mankind. The realism involved in saving faith must be our starting point in theology, as that of the common consciousness is in natural science.

§ 4. *Faith and Science are not Antagonistic, and should be kept in Union.*

Faith and science should be regarded as complements of each other, and as mutually inviting one another. The religious consciousness gives the fact through experience, and together with this, by an inseparable intuition, the idea of religion ; science decides whether the idea of this fact is consistent with the laws of mind and matter. Religion gives the realization of the facts ; science the intellectual interpretation, the speculative apprehension of it. *In their agreement the truth receives its highest and clearest manifestations.* Thus the thinking mind by its ontological argument for the being of God—from its idea of absolute perfection—infers an absolute being ; from its cosmological proof, an absolute ground of being ; from its teleological argument, an infinite intelligence in being ; and from its psychological proof, an infinite spirituality in existence. But whether the absolute being which is the ground of nature and of mind, or the infinite understanding which underlies the adaptations of things in the world, is distinct from, and transcendent to, nature and the mind and their adaptations, it cannot determine. This

must be decided by an appeal to the consciousness, whose belief that it is such is irrefragable. The reality experienced in consciousness, gives and requires the cognition of an absolute spirit, in the strict sense, as intelligent, conscious, personal will—of God as the living God, independent of the world, its creator and preserver; and reason finds this idea in accordance with the most satisfactory results of the thoughtful mind. The belief and knowledge of the reality of the supernatural and the superhuman must, therefore, have in them elements other than mere abstract reasoning or logical demonstration. But taken together, and in connection with the religious consciousness, they do show that the fact of religion is the content of a rational idea; that the cognition involved in faith is in accordance with the general fact—the ultimate law of being, which is attained by the exposition of the particular facts of the universe of matter and mind. They show that there is nothing in the religious idea which conflicts with the dictates of reason, or the results of the investigations of the thinking mind. They show that the idea which has its spring in religion, which is an intuition inseparable from the experience in the religious consciousness, though not demonstrable by the human understanding, is natural to the soul of man. The human mind is not inherently skeptical or atheistic. It naturally strives in thought, feeling and action, after an Infinite Spirit. If it is to have any comprehension of the facts of being, it demands His actual existence, as the ground and end of the world, as the source and truth of its own being, as its ethical end and everlasting portion. Every idea short of this, fails to be of a comprehensive nature, and leaves “the world a mighty maze, and all without a plan.” The human soul is a spirit, and only a spiritual good is suited to its nature; it is an immortal spirit, and only an eternal good is sufficient for its capacities and wants. The religious idea is the only satisfactory view for an existence constituted and situated as that of man is. Religion reveals the reality which reason may demand, but cannot produce; it experiences the reality of a relation which the understanding can cognize, but cannot discover or demonstrate. But when the proofs for the being of God are treated independently of experience in consciousness, they may lead men to unbelief as readily as to faith. They have in themselves no controlling evidence; and it is grounded

in the very nature of the abstract idea, that it cannot of itself rule the faith and life of the soul. The being of God and man are not mere abstractions, but concrete existence and life; and faith will also be not merely abstract idea, but concrete reality. The proof of the divine existence, and the grounds of human faith, must, therefore, not be treated in a purely theoretic way. Faith is always closely connected with the spiritual disposition. Consequently, and in this case especially, where moral love and hate, spiritual hope and fear, are involved in the highest degree, it is only in connection with the facts of consciousness that science can gain acceptance. It must be based upon experience; must have, for that which it would know, in a discursive way, the immediate testimony of consciousness. It must be only the exposition of faith in its relation to the laws of nature; or the application of the idea derived from faith, for the supplying to itself of the concrete view of being, which it can of itself have only in abstract idea. All ideas of God which find no response in the religious consciousness, all speculations which are in no way connected with the actual life of man, are mere abstractions, are as powerless as they are empty. They contribute little to the store of knowledge, and less to the determinations of life. Just as in natural science, so in religious science: if all that is derived from experience be dropped out of it, there is little left. And what Lord Bacon brought so fully to light in natural science, should be fully accepted in theology—namely: that our science must begin in experience, and must be based upon facts given to us by revelation, general or special, or both; just as natural science must begin with experience, and must be based upon facts of nature. But having a true beginning in reality, and a solid basis in facts, the process of rational interpretation and verification can go successfully on. The religious idea, therefore, *though not a rational knowledge of God, is yet a knowledge of divine things consistent with reason.* It is the result, or rather the manifestation, of the power of that relation of our being which of all others is the most fundamental and vital—that relation to God, which was established in human nature by the creative hand, and which could not be abolished without the destruction of the integrity of that nature. The sources of faith involve mysteries and are founded in depths of human nature and its relations, which can be expounded and

sounded by no mere human science. They are discernible and fathomable only by the light of revelation, and it is in that light, whether given by general or special revelation, or both, that science must find its starting point, and study its materials, when religious truth is the subject. In the religious questions of life and death, of hope and fear, of happiness and misery, which meet us everywhere and always—no mere power of thought can be a substitute for this divine light. We must require of science the recognition of the experience of the facts thus produced; and while we accord to reason, or the thinking mind, the right to test the contents of the religious consciousness by the laws of thought, and the well-ascertained laws of the material world; while we cheerfully follow it, when it rises in its proofs of the divine existence from the world of facts into the sphere of abstract reasoning; we must still demand that its arguments be confirmed by the facts of the religious life as they are manifested in the history of mankind, as they are recorded in the sacred history of human redemption which we have in the Bible. And this brings us to the discussion of Christian faith. Thus far we have had in view more especially general religious faith; if there be in faith an additional content, it must be derived from special revelation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE APPLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEA TO THE RELATION OF REVELATION AND REASON, IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION.

§ I. *The Meaning of Special Divine Revelation.*

CHRISTIAN faith is belief in the Christian religion as a special divine revelation. In the general sense of the word, revelation means the discovery or disclosure of that which was hidden ; but in the religious use of the term, it is limited to the discovery which God makes of Himself and His relations to man. From the general revelation or manifestation—the testimony which God has given of Himself in nature and spirit and in the ordinary movements of His providence—we distinguish a special or miraculous revelation, called extraordinary, supernatural, immediate—words which all involve the idea of a miraculous divine communication to man. The Christian believes that Christianity is a realization of such a revelation. Religion in general is faith in the manifestation of the relation of man to God—the relation in which God placed man to Himself in the first creation ; Christianity is faith in the revelation of the relation in which God has placed Himself to man in Christ, in redemption from sin, in the second creation. In Christianity, religious faith is elevated from mere general belief in God to specific belief in God manifested in Christ ; general communion with God as Creator and Ruler of the world, is raised into saving communion with Him as the Saviour of sinful man in Christ—into a communion of salvation. Referring mainly to the sinful character, the alienated state of man—his fall from God through sin—Christianity proposes a restoration of man to the blessed communion lost by the fall, to communion with God in Christ through faith wrought by the Holy Ghost. It is the religion of Redemption. It is the absolutely perfect revelation of God.

§ 2. *The Superiority of Christianity in its Idea and in its Effects.*

Comparative theology clearly shows, that of all religions which claim to be a divine revelation, Christianity has the greatest, nay, the only claim to that character; that if there ever has been a special revelation a miraculous communication of God's will to man, we have that revelation recorded in the inspired books of the Old and New Testament. Religion finds its true content, the religious idea its perfect form, and the religious life its final goal, in Christianity. This is manifest when it is compared with others, in point of ideal perfection and in reference to the solution of the problems of existence and destiny. When we look at Christianity in the light of the principle of the Reformation—of assurance of salvation, with the realistic view which is involved in that experience—we fully realize that only the Christian revelation has made such a real communion with God, realized in conscious experience, possible. Christianity has revealed and effected a real union between God and man; in Christ divinity and humanity have come together in one person, and men have received “power to become the sons of God, who are born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”—have received “exceeding great and precious promises, whereby they become partakers of the divine nature.” In this communion the distinction between Creator and creature is preserved and made more clear to human consciousness, and yet the antithesis of creatorship and creatureship has been overcome; the opposition between God and man removed; and all things reconciled in Christ—“whether they be things in earth or things in heaven;” men in Christ are changed from being mere creatures to the relation of children of God, having “not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father;” Creator and creature distinct, yet united; God in all, and over all, and all in all—“His will done on earth as it is in heaven.” The antagonism between the Holy God and the sinful creature is destroyed—God holy, and man saved; holiness begun, and practicable everywhere and evermore.

No other religion has this idea or this effect. There can, as we have seen, be but two religions. All religions that have any ideas of the distinction of creature and Creator, of sin and holiness, are either preparations for Christianity as Judaism; or cor-

ruptions of it, as Mohammedanism. The heathen idea of God and the world either confounded God and the world, lost sight of all distinction between them, or entirely separated God from the matter of the world, and introduced an eternal struggle between God and chaos, between the divine architect and the rude material of the world—material so incorrigible that it could never be entirely brought into order. It either lost the creature in God, or the Creator in man. It could hope only for the absorption of the creature in God, or the apotheosis of man—no union of God and man, of Creator and creature. On the other hand, the Christian idea in the Old Testament enforces the distinction between the Creator and the creature, the holy God and the sinful world, but prophesies perpetually of the coming of God to man. Its great theme was “Behold, He cometh;” “Israel’s Hope,” cometh, not to absorb or annihilate, but to save; “Immanuel, God with us,” to be our God and we His people—to “dwell with men.” And in the New Testament, at last, the fulfillment, the heavens open and the new song bursts upon the earth, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.” In Christ is the incarnation of divinity, the union of God and man, of Creator and creature—the point is reached where creation and incarnation coincide in the most perfect distinction and unity, and the most condescending love is the highest glory; where the distinction, though preserved—nay, intensified—becomes consistent with perfect union between the divine and the human. God becomes man, and humanity is taken into union with divinity—the human nature with the divine nature, creatureship with creatorship in the one person of Christ. That which is distinguished from God by the first creation became united with Him by the second. The chasm between the Creator and creature is closed. The antithesis of being is not removed only in idea, but is overcome by a real synthesis of being. Jesus could say: “He that seeth Me seeth the Father.” The life of man becomes the life of God; distinct, yet one with God’s life. The process of union is really begun, and is going on. Eighteen hundred years ago one could say: “I am crucified yet I live, nevertheless not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.” And it will go on until humanity becomes entirely the organ of God;

and, with it, nature is delivered from bondage, transformed and glorified, and "God all in all."

The heathen idea had no origination for evil and could have no end for it; the Christian idea finds the origination of sin in the moral creature and has found the victory over it in God incarnate, "God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." The first creation made man distinct from and dependent upon God; the second makes the created distinction a divine union; the absolute dependence a boundless freedom. He "in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," is mediator between Creator and creature; the God-man is the reconciler between the holy God and the sinful world—"He died for all that they should henceforth live not unto themselves but unto Him who died for them and rose again."

If Christianity were only an idea, it would be the true ideal of religion; it would be the only satisfactory solution of the great problems of existence and destiny. If it were only an idea, we might say that if ever it were proper to die for an idea, this would be such an idea. But it is not merely an idea, it is a reality, and its results are real. And when we consider the difficulties to be overcome, and that it is a second creation, and like the first creation, involves a gradual process contemplating vast ages, we will appreciate the living beginning of it in the past. When compared with other religions in its results, when the great change which it has produced in individual and social life, in men and nations; in all the thinking, sentiments, and movements of humanity, especially the new and exalted idea of God and humanity, of the life and destiny of man; the new peace and life with which it has filled the hearts of multitudes of believers in all ages and in all conditions; the renewal and spiritual improvements which it has introduced into human life and society; the great temporal as well as spiritual benefits which it has bestowed on the human family; the great intellectual and moral, and even physical power, to which it has raised the nations which have received it—when it is thus considered, the most intelligent as well as the most skeptical of those who reject its miraculous origin—as they do that of all religions—recognize its incomparably great and favorable influence upon mankind. They admit that if there be any supernatural relig-

ion, Christianity certainly is that religion. They acknowledge that it is so much superior in excellence and power that it is destined in the progress of human society to supersede all other religions, and that the accomplishment of this is a mere question of time. When it is thus viewed, in the light of reason and experience, it would seem from its intrinsic nature to be the realization of the religious idea, and from its peculiar effects to have come from a miraculous source. And it has sufficient historical evidence to prove the authenticity of the sacred books, the authenticity of the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures. This being accomplished, the prophecies and miracles of the Scriptures prove that it is a special revelation. The objections to it are, in the first instance, mainly a priori objections to the possibility of miracles. It is of importance, therefore, to examine the source of these objections.

§ 3. *The Source of the a priori Objections to a Miraculous Revelation.*

The principal source of objection to the truth of the Christian revelation, is not so much the idea of any *deficiency in the evidence of the authenticity of the Sacred Scriptures, as an assumed or supposed antecedent incredibility of their contents as miracles, as a miraculous revelation*; but in proportion as we trace the source of this incredulity we will see that it has no sound basis, and we have, thus, constantly increasing reason in the course of human thought for the belief that all a priori objections to the possibility of revelation, drawn from either physical or metaphysical science, will, in due time, be found to be destitute of any permanent force—will be found to be either an illegitimate inference of the science or the philosophy; or it will be found that the science or the philosophy itself is unsound. It will be found that they can be legitimately drawn only from those pantheistic or atheistic systems of thought—from that pure naturalism which the common sense and the universal conscience will always rule out of the sphere of religion.

Thus, in the ancient religious world, before the Pantheistic idea, which really underlies all heathen religions, was wrought out into a system of conscious thought, before it was developed scientifically—and when men in heathendom as well as Christendom were guided mainly by the dictates of common consciousness, and generally acted in the immediate light of the

intuitions of the sense and the insights of the reason, were influenced mainly by their natural sense of things—there were no such a priori objections to the possibility of miracles—of special revelations. “That age,” says Dr. Shedd, “referred everything to God, because its religious consciousness was of that warm, glowing character which is disinclined to distinguish in a scientific manner, what proceeds from a supernatural and what from a natural source. All truth, provided it was truth, was conceived as coming from God, in some form or other.” The enemies of Christianity were not influenced by any idea of a necessary impossibility, or even improbability of miracles. When they could not deny the historical evidence of the miraculous acts of Christ, they did not attempt to reject them on the ground of the antecedent impossibility of such acts—on the ground of a violent incredibility in the very nature of the case—but they tried to evade their claim upon their faith, not by denying their supernatural origin, but by ascribing them to evil supernatural influences. It was only after the natural had been more clearly distinguished from the supernatural, that the source of the objection to the possibility of miracles was opened. When, on the one hand, under the *influence of Christianity the distinction between the natural and the supernatural* came to be more clearly recognized, and, on the other, by the labors of *natural science the uniformity of nature's laws* began to be proved, then a view of the universe was introduced, which fostered the idea of the impossibility of miracles. *Only one side of the Christian idea* has been fully incorporated with the course of modern thought; only the *distinction* of the supernatural and the natural, and not their *inseparability* has been fully appropriated; and, thus, Deism and not Theism was the result. The difficulty will continue until the Christian idea—namely the idea that God though distinct from the world is not separate from it; that though transcendent to it, He is immanent in it—is fully appropriated; until men see clearly that there are *but two ideas of God and the world possible*, the *Pantheistic*, which is the idea that necessarily springs from *heathenism* when scientifically developed, and the *Theistic*, which with equal necessity is evolved out of *Christianity*—an intuition inseparable from the experience of its saving power. When this is fully recognized, and the irreconcilableness of the antagonism of these ideas is acknowledged; when it is seen that

the issue is clearly between Pantheism and Theism, naturalism and Christianity; that there is no medium, no neutral ground between them, then will the question have come to be more a question of the will than of the intellect, and the claims of Christianity will be felt by all sincere and earnest souls—by all who follow the dictates of consciousness, who long for a solution of the problem of existence and destiny, who strive for deliverance from the condemnation and pollution of sin, and yearn after rest in God. For a sincere disposition for truth will necessarily in this alternative prefer faith to unbelief. As long as the uniformity of natural law was not discovered the pantheistic idea of the *immanence* of God would not be in conflict with the idea of the possibility of miraculous revelation. But after this discovery, the *transcendence* as well as the immanence must be maintained, or the idea of a miracle becomes an absurdity. Heathen philosophy, that is, pantheism, must now be met by a higher philosophy, the Christian philosophy, the world-view which is developed in the light of Christianity—true theism. All forms of thought inconsistent with this “New Wisdom” must be traced to their source in the heathen idea of God and the world, and then they will be abandoned by all sincere seekers after spiritual truth and peace—truth that shall be satisfactory to man in his present wants and his future hopes and fears. And this will be done just in proportion to the appropriation of the principle of the Reformation in all its bearings—in proportion as men seek that certainty of truth and that assurance of salvation which can come only from the fact of justification by faith in Christ alone, and which do come into the experience of all who yield to the power of the gospel and the testimony of the Holy Spirit which accompanies it. Christianity is a reality, a life, a great fact in the world's history, and, like all other great realities and facts, it involves ideas which are inseparable from the experience of them, and which will necessarily be, in due time, evolved out of that experience. Thus has the Christian idea been evolved out of the experience of man under the light of the Bible. And we shall endeavor to make as clear as possible its antagonism to the naturalism of the day, which is only the true evolution and the scientific form of the old heathen idea—to show that men cannot consistently reject the claims of supernaturalism unless they are prepared to adopt a purely nat-

uralistic system. Let us then notice the several objections to the possibility of special, miraculous revelation in the various forms in which they are presented, and endeavor to show that *no theory, except pure naturalism can consistently make them.*

§ 4. *It cannot be Done Consistently Merely on the Ground of
"Second Causes."*

The idea of the impossibility of miracles prevailed first in modern times in connection with what has sometimes been called a mechanical theory of the universe. It was supposed to be a discovery of philosophy that God had once acted immediately, and only once, namely, in the creation of the world. After this His activity ceased to be immediate, and all things proceeded from a causal nexus of things, of forces of matter and mind originally introduced in the very act of creation. The "first cause" has ceased to act, and all things proceed according to "second causes." All subsequent immediate influence of God, according to this view of the world, is to be held impossible; such as immediate government, special providence, miracles—whether miracles of knowledge, or of power, miraculous inspiration in the mind or miraculous control over matter, whether the Incarnation of Divinity in the conception of Christ, or the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in the founding of the Church at Pentecost—in short the miraculous revelation which Christianity claims to be.

Now, this view of the universe which includes all existences in the linked chain of cause and effect, is as inconsistent with the common consciousness of men as it is with the Christian idea of God and the world. For if this uniformity of nature be referred to the wisdom of God, then, as it results not from necessity but from will, the inference drawn from it is unreasonable. For then it depends on the counsel of that free will, and not upon anything in the nature of things, how it will act. If it be ascribed to mere habit, to a merely confirmed, habitual, natural selection, then we are on naturalistic ground, and we shut out immediate divine action, as well from the origination of the causal nexus, as we do from its operations. The entire distinction upon which the theory is based—the distinction between mediate and immediate, natural and supernatural—when applied to divine action, is merely subjective, is only our conception of

God as acting in different ways; and to have objective validity, it would be reduced to that of the difference between ordinary and extraordinary acts of God. All divine action must be immediate and supernatural. The fact that some of His operations are connected with the instrumentality of "second causes," of the forces of nature or the agency of the human mind, does not make them the less immediate and supernatural. Thus, for example, suppose for a moment that we had had our experience in a previous and different course of things—a different causal nexus—from that of the world now existing, and had then become spectators of the causal nexus in which we now live, then the former course of things would have been to us the natural and mediate, and the divine act producing and sustaining the latter, the supernatural and immediate. Thus we see that these terms, to have any objective significance, must be regarded as expressing only our ideas of the commonness or uncommonness of the different acts of God—the one, the miraculous act by which something entirely new is originated; and the other, the acts performed in connection with, and through the instrumentality of, that which had already been brought into existence. But in both cases the acts are equally immediate and supernatural. In the one case He acts unconditionally; in the other, conditionally—that is, He has respect to the work of His own hand, does not destroy by one act what He has produced by another. In the one case His action is unlimited; in the other, He limits His action by the existence which He has already produced. In the one case He exercises all power; in the other, He permits the exercise of power by the creature—allows the use of power derived from Him—but in both cases His acts are alike, so far as any distinction of natural and supernatural, mediate or immediate, is concerned—all equally supernatural and immediate. The Christian idea includes both these kinds of action. The Bible recognizes both, in the Old Testament, and especially in the New. In the Mosaic account of creation, by the distinction of the acts introducing each new day, from the acts in the intervals of the development of what in each had been produced, we have the divine action not only producing the earth, but letting "the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth," but this divine action is equally immediate and super-

natural in both cases. So in the New Testament there is the recognition of both, in the introduction of the new life and its development, in the connection of the idea of origination with that of organism—of natural development—in its doctrine of seed and growth, of the sowing of the seed, and its germination, the putting of the leaven into the meal, and the fermentation, the planting of the mustard-seed, and its development into the tree. Heathenism knows only evolution; many Christians, perhaps, too often think only of creation; the true idea recognizes both, and keeps them connected in one view of the divine action, as distinguished, indeed, into common and uncommon, frequent and infrequent, ordinary and extraordinary, usual and miraculous, but all equally supernatural and immediate. The creative or extraordinary contemplates the ordinary or usual—the development of its results. Creation, being an intelligent act, an act in view of an end, must allow the action of the thing created in the course of its development—the attainment of the goal for which it was made. Perhaps the distinction would be most clearly expressed by the terms, limited and unlimited action—action in which God limits Himself in the exercise of His power by the wise purpose, with which He has given the creature real power—though derived power—and action in which He does not limit Himself. And this divine capacity of self-limitation, this power of self-control, this personal character, this positive idea of the absolute, is the very point in which the Christian idea and Pantheism, or the heathen idea, came into irreconcilable antagonism. There is, consequently, no room for any such distinctions, as mediate or immediate, natural and supernatural, in the acts of God; and the objector is inconsistent, until he plant himself on the ground of pure naturalism and deny all immediate action of God in the creation, as well as the course of the world, and this will be to deny all divine action, as all such action must be immediate. The question of miracles therefore in the last instance, is the question of divine personality or impersonality of Theism or Pantheism, of Christianity or Atheism.

If, by natural and mediate acts were meant any influence independent of God—"second causes" exclusive of the action of the first cause—it would effectually shut him out from the world; and, thus, destroy the very idea of creation; it would

make something exist independently of God and, consequently, before creation, like the chaos—the eternal material of the heathen—yea it would destroy the idea of God Himself as the all-comprehending absolute personality, which this philosophy still professes to hold Him to be. Besides, none but the thoroughly naturalistic Pantheist or Atheist, can, consistently, deny that there is a moral world in which the highest law is freedom, and in which consequently, there can be no such connection of cause and effect, as this theory conceives for the natural world. From this admission a man is obliged to conclude either that God does not act at all in the moral world or that He acts immediately upon it; and as the former cannot be true the latter must be received, or we cease to believe in a personal God, in a Creator; and are Pantheists or Atheists.

No theory of the universe, therefore, can consistently *deny the possibility* of a Miraculous Revelation, except the *purely naturalistic*. An effect is possible the idea of which is consistent with the idea of its cause. Revelation is possible if the idea of it be not in contradiction with the idea of God. But this can be consistently asserted only on the ground of the world-view of the thorough naturalist. He that would maintain the impossibility of miraculous revelation must show from the idea of God's attributes and His relations to the world, that He cannot, in addition to the general revelation, give a special one. But no system which stops short of the merest naturalism can consistently attempt this. We think this can be shown in all the particular systems of this kind.

§ 5. *This Attempt cannot be Consistently Made by Deistic Rationalism, and, Consequently, the Deist's Objection to the Possibility of Miracles is Groundless.*

The Deistic Rationalism *cannot do it*. For while it denies the possibility of miracles on *cosmological* grounds, it involves the idea of miraculous, antemundane, divine action. While it maintains the immutability of natural laws, it admits that these laws had a beginning, that they are not a system eternally existing and complete from eternity. It teaches that the world had a beginning and that its origination is an act of creation and consequently a miracle. But having admitted a miracle in the origination it cannot consistently shut out miracles from its

course. To stop short with this miracle is unphilosophical; for it supposes nature to be necessarily so complete that it shuts out all miraculous divine action. But this must rest on the idea that nature is complete from eternity as well as to eternity, or it is groundless. And to concede this is pure naturalism—pantheistic atheism. If nature is not complete, from eternity, if it has a teleological course, if it originated from will, from conscious, wise counsel, then it may admit additions—a superinduction of new forces and new laws—without violence to its original constitution; higher forces and laws may be added without the destruction of the existence or uniformity of the action of the lower; a second creation may take place without destroying the first, yea, may be introduced to complete the first. The favorite representation of the system is, that the world, like a clock which once made and wound up runs of itself, goes on in a changeless course evermore. But even this supposed relation of God to His work, like that of an artist to the machine which he has constructed, does not present an inseparable objection to the idea of possible or of even probable interpositions. If a human artist could foresee, while he was constructing a clock, which should be capable, when wound up, of running a hundred years, that at particular periods of that time, say at the end of the first quarter, and then again at the second, or at any interval, the clock would need additional force or forces, which were not necessary in the preceding period, but would now be necessary to obviate a defect which would now, for the first time, hinder its course; or to secure an improvement which would now, first, become practicable,—it is certainly conceivable, that it would be consistent with the highest wisdom in the artist to consider it better to superinduce the new force, when the obviating of the defect, or the securing of the improvement, for the first time, demanded it. This would certainly be as reasonable as to put it into the original construction, and let it lie dormant or latent during all the years when it was not needed, even if this were possible. And so it is conceivable that God, who by the assumption of the deist, created the world in wisdom, might also in wisdom, from time to time, make additions, in the way of new creations, that is, miracles; and the more so, in the latter case, as God is certain of the continuance of His existence and of His power to superintend the thing

which He constructs during the entire period of its being, which is not the case with the human artist. In addition to this, is the fact that the continuance of the existence of the material, as well as the structure, or form, of the world is from Him. If the deist ignore this fact he denies creation in the strict sense and is on pantheistic, naturalistic, atheistic ground. The world can never be separated from God's supporting hand during any moment of its existence, can never be independent of Him, as is the case with the clock in relation to the artist who has constructed it. To deny this dependence of the world upon God would be to conceive it, as the matter of the atheistic materialist which excludes all spirit; or as the unconscious mind of the absolute idealist which shuts out all creative origination; or the eternal evil principle of the dualist; in short would be to make it another God. There is therefore no room for Deistic rationalism.

§ 6. *Theistic Rationalism is still more Inconsistent in its Objection to the Possibility of a Miraculous Revelation.*

The Theistic rationalist finds nothing on *cosmological* grounds inconsistent with a special or miraculous revelation. He bases his objections entirely on *theological and anthropological* grounds. He admits a general divine providence over the world, and a general revelation of God in the movements of nature, in the history of man. He admits that God is carrying on a process of the education of man for an immortal destiny, and though he includes Christianity in this general revelation, he admits that it is a new source of spiritual life to man. But his admissions as a Theist are fatal to his objections.

He says, indeed, that God has so made us, that we are obliged by the very laws of our being, to make reason the final appeal in all our inquiries respecting the ground of religious belief; and that, consequently, it is inconsistent with His wisdom and goodness, to suppose that He would require the human mind to yield itself a captive to a miraculous communication of knowledge, to render obedience to a special revelation; that is, to submit to any claims the reasons of which the mind cannot apprehend. Now it is true that it results from the very constitution which God has given us that we cannot believe anything which is contradictory to reason; but it does not follow from

this that religious truths may not transcend reason. The Creator has not only made reason supreme in its own province; but he has also set bounds to the extent of its dominion. And even in its own domain it finds much that is beyond its reach; and it submits to the truth of much which transcends its power of discernment and exposition. Its science has never penetrated into the inner essence of things, never comprehended the primal nature and origin of the world; how then can she claim that it can sound the depths of the divine nature, comprehend the possibilities of His will, and expound the mysteries of His ways? Her science has left multitudes of the phenomena of external nature and of the events of human history unexplained, and yet she does not dispute their reality. If, therefore, the inquiring mind can rationally, when its own ideas fail, yield itself a captive to experience, and does not in this surrender its relative rights, but only subordinates itself to the higher reason involved in general revelation—if this hold good in the sphere of science in which reason is indisputably supreme—how much more must it hold in the sphere of religion, in regard to which we have seen that it exists independently of science, presenting to it all the limits imposed by experience in life, and reaching in its faith-content into a world of being, where science has no ground for exact investigation—extending to “Him who dwelleth in light into which no man can approach.” It is certainly conceivable that the eternal reason—which, according to the theistic rationalist’s own idea, not only created the world and manifested itself in general in its forms and movements, but transcends the human reason even in this creation and providence,—could give a special revelation, which should transcend the reach of all science, without interfering with the supremacy of reason in its own domain. But if this be so, then, the submission required in a special revelation, is only subjection of a lower form of reason to a higher—of the finite to the infinite reason. Though reason has in nature a source of divine knowledge, it does not follow that this is the only source of the recognition of God and of the apprehension of His ways. Indeed the theistic rationalist, by receiving a general revelation, admits a source of knowledge which is supernatural—a new source of knowledge; and though He includes Christianity in general revelation, He admits that it is a new source of power *in* that manifestation of

God, and consequently he cannot consistently deny that it must be a source of new knowledge—knowledge transcending reason. Indeed, in denying that there can be a new source of knowledge—a source other than mere general reason; while he admits such a source of power different from, and additional to, universal nature in his acceptance of general revelation—the rationalist abandons the ground of theism and places himself upon that of the naturalist. The rationalist ceases to be a theist, and becomes either an atheist or pantheistic naturalist. In the language of Martensen, “denying that a new source of knowledge has been opened in Christ, rationalism must also deny that in Christ a new source of life is opened, different from all other sources of life in creation. If, however, it is certain that in Christ a new source of life is opened, then there must have been also a new source of knowledge opened; a realm of divine counsels hitherto hidden; a realm of new cognitions, which cannot be explained as the product of a development of reason. But these by no means conflict with the universal cognitions of human reason, although they always modify them. For, on the one hand, they serve to fill up and complete the rational cognitions; on the other, they serve to *free* the universal human reason from the darkness with which universal sinfulness has infected it.

“To suppose that this implies an insoluble dualism in the realm of knowledge is as incorrect as to suppose that in the system of the universe the two creations imply an insoluble duality. For, as there is but one system of creation, though in this there are two grand stages, so there is also one system of reason, although herein are involved two degrees of the revelation of reason. Objectively considered, the unity lies in the fact that it is the same Logos that reveals Himself in both creations; but the revelation of the Logos in Christ is a higher degree of revelation, differing from the universal revelation in that it is revelation which *completes* and *redeems* the world; whereas the other merely creates and preserves. Subjectively considered, the unity is found in the fact, that the human reason stands in a receptive relation towards the Spirit of Christ, as the Spirit that completes and redeems the world; a receptivity through which reason is to be raised to a higher stage of productivity.”

But the Theistic rationalist, while he admits that there is a general revelation, and that the hand of God may be seen in nature and providence, objects to the possibility of special revelation, just because it is special—on the ground of the fact that Christianity, for example, has not reached the whole human family. The special revelation, which Christianity claims to be, he objects, is the religion of only a comparatively small part of the human race; and as other religions which also lay claim to revelation are in conflict with it, it in common with all pretended special revelations, must be brought to the bar of reason and rejected as a miraculous revelation. But when he thus refers to the nations without Christ, he overlooks the fact that the Christian nations have, in common, *Theistic views*—while Pantheistic ideas underlie the religions of all the heathen—views which he himself holds, and which are so utterly antagonistic to the heathen ideas, that when it is asked “who maketh thee to differ?” the most probable answer is a special revelation. Besides the condition of those nations without Christianity goes far to invalidate that supremacy of reason, which he claims for the development of humanity, and for the work of human culture; and the claims of these several religions to special revelation, is evidence of the universal feeling, in the human mind, of the necessity of special divine interposition, of the reality of a special revelation existing somewhere. And Christianity is certainly the religion which has the strongest claim to be that special revelation. Indeed the fact that three-fourths of mankind hold views in religion, which he considers erroneous, and more than one-half, ideas the very opposite of those, which he holds to be the rational views of the universe, should convince him that by far the greater part of mankind are, at least, incapable of making a successful use of this supremacy of reason, and need to be guided not by science alone, but mainly by experience, and generally by positive authority. Nay, every page of the history even of the philosophical world, will show him, that not only the ignorant multitude, but even the intelligent minds, are dependent upon special revelation for the Theistic views, which he considers so important. For—not to speak of the superstitious heathen—even Christendom exhibits the sad spectacle of men who are capable of ascending the very pinnacle of thought in scientific reasoning, and yet find no personal God, and no con-

scious immortality to believe in. What multitudes of scientists, even in Christian lands and in our times, are Atheists, because they can neither discern God in the heavens with the telescope, nor demonstrate His existence in the world with the understanding! As the claim of Christianity to be a special revelation, is so closely connected with the preservation of the Theistic view—the true idea of God—he should regard the protection which it affords and the authority which it gives to the belief in God, a strong proof of its consistency with reason. As the only satisfactory explanation of the longing of the heart for rest in God, and the yearning of the soul after personal immortality, it is most desirable, and, consequently, in the light of these facts, it is certainly not unreasonable.

Finally, on Theistic grounds a revelation is not only desirable, but necessary. If God be a personal being, then in creating the world, as it was not necessary for the revelation of Himself to Himself, it must have been to reveal Himself through the creation to the creature. We, consequently, are moral beings—a mere brute world could not know Him, and could not be the object of His love; nor could it reciprocate His love. This involves communion with God; he cannot separate Himself from the creature—the moral creature. He must guide it to the end for which He made it. If we believe in creation in the strict sense, then sin is not in the nature of things. It could not be introduced by the impersonal world of nature; nor can it be ascribed to the creative hand of God. It must result from the free action of moral creatures. Now we are sinners, and God is holy, and He will maintain the harmony of the universe, His own world-order; and if we are to have any well-grounded hope of deliverance from the condemnation and pollution of sin—of attaining the true goal of our being—God must give us a revelation. We could not, otherwise, know how God would act toward us in view of our guilt. We could expect or know nothing with certainty and satisfaction. We are in a state of ruin through sin, from which reason could point out no certain way of deliverance. If humanity has fallen from God, then a special revelation from Him is not only conceivable, as consistent with reason, but, as absolutely necessary. Now the Theistic rationalist admits creation in the strict sense, and he recognizes sin as sin, as originating in the moral creature, and, consequently,

involving guilt; and this, his Theistic theory of the world, certainly would, in view of the creatureship of man, make revelation in a high degree probable, and in consequence of sin, absolutely necessary to his comfort and hope. And it would be, in some degree, morally certain. While we cannot say that there is any necessity, physical, metaphysical or logical, of a revelation—as we cannot say that creation itself was necessary—we can say that, as there was in the love of God eternally the moral certainty that He would create; so, in the case of sin having come into the world, though there would be no necessity with God to interfere in behalf of sinful man and to reveal a special scheme of redemption, there would be conceivable a *moral certainty* of it with *Him*, and an *absolute necessity* of it with *us*. Thus does revelation become probable, yea, in view of the fact of sin, necessary.

§ 7. *The Issue is Between Christian Theism and Atheistic Naturalism.*

There is no longer any room for rationalism, either in its deistic or theistic form; pure naturalism occupies the entire ground of consistent opposition to the possibility of a miraculous revelation. Objections of an a priori kind, can be consistently made only on purely naturalistic grounds. As naturalism resolves all divine life and action into the being and operation of the permanent forces and fixed laws of nature; it can, and must consistently deny the possibility of all miracles. Regarding nature as a system which is itself eternal and complete, into which nothing can come, and from which nothing can be lost, it can allow no occurrence to be real in which there is anything which cannot be explained as a development of laws, forces and conditions which are the same, without diminution or addition, from eternity to eternity. This important fact should, therefore, be kept in view, namely, that any theory which, on philosophical grounds, *rejects the possibility of a special revelation, must, in its legitimate results, end in atheism*—atheism, which is the only consistent form of naturalism—real atheism whether designated by that term, or by pantheism, by acosmism, or pancosmism. After a Feuerbach had proceeded to resolve theology into anthropology, and a Strauss had deduced from his pantheism the impossibility of a special revelation, it was

but natural and consistent, that their rationalism should show itself, as it has, at last done, in Strauss, as pure naturalism. The question really reduces itself at last, to this: Is there a personal, living God? If such a being exist, He has not only created the world; but He reveals Himself in it. Special revelation is not in contradiction with any attribute of such a being. For there is no reason why the God, who reveals Himself in general, should not reveal Himself specially: for the latter is not inconsistent with the miracle of all miracles, the original creation, nor with the divine operations in nature and spirit. It is no more in contradiction with reason, than it is with religion itself. It is not in contradiction with general revelation, because it presupposes this and completes it. There is, therefore, we repeat, no ground left for rationalism either in its theistic or deistic form, *nor for any kind of pantheism even which attempts to stop short of thorough naturalism*—so far as antecedent philosophical objection to the possibility of special revelation is concerned. In bringing the matter to *this issue, science is contributing greatly to the final triumph of Christianity*. For certainly when the appeal is made to the common consciousness, it will decide in favor of the Christian against the pure naturalistic idea of the universe. It is only while the anti-Christian idea seems to have some rational middle ground between Christianity and atheism, and is adorned with qualities, and promises results, which belong only to the former, that it can confuse and fascinate. When it is once stript of all its mystic trappings, and stands forth as pure and bare naturalism, the illusion will be dissipated, and the spell broken. The Christian conception of nature as a great preparatory stage for a higher end, as a system which is passing through a teleological development—in which new forces and laws might be introduced from time to time, in which revelation would be only the complement of reason,—is certainly more agreeable to all that is most rational, most moral, most noble in man, than the naturalistic idea. And it has, thus, the natural beliefs and the common sense of men on its side, when it conceives such interpositions in nature, in behalf of man, to be possible; while naturalism runs counter to the common consciousness, which we all have of personal being, moral freedom and responsibility, and utterly fails to give any solutions of the great questions of life and death—utterly fails to give any

solutions which afford such repose of mind and satisfaction of heart, as do the teachings of Christianity. The question of the truth of the Christian religion, thus freed from all antecedent objections to its credibility, becomes a question of fact, of experience and history. And in the light of what we have said, the history of such a special revelation, of such a miraculous interposition, needs only to be possessed of historical evidence—no more, no less—in order properly to claim credence.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE LIGHT OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN IDEA.

§ 1. *A Special Divine Revelation necessarily involves a History.*

As God is a Spirit and men are spirits, revelation is a communication of spirit to spirit; and consequently, to be clear and intelligible, it must be made through the medium of communication which is characteristic of spirits—in the rational speech of personal beings, in a medium other than the mere inarticulate language of nature. It is a communication of a personal nature, of persons with persons; and consequently it must be made in the sphere of conscience and freedom. As it involves moral laws and promises, requirements and gifts, it must make known acts of will. It is a manifestation of will, and will manifests itself in acts; and, consequently, it involves history. Will has its sphere in history. Ideas may be manifested in the mute forms and the necessary movements of nature; but will, holy will, can express itself only in history in a clear and impressive manner. God's "eternal power and godhead" can be made known "from the creation of the world;" but His moral attributes, His justice and His love, "the God of life and consolation, of righteousness and goodness," are revealed only in the history of the world, in the acts of divine providence, in preservation and government. But general history itself is not an adequate medium. It seems to care mainly for the race. The acts of divine providence in general, do indeed refer to the individual also, but not with sufficient clearness to produce the complete repose and peace of faith. And especially must a revelation to sinful spirits involve a special history—a sacred history within the profane history of the fallen world. Such a history of divine acts for the redemption of man is recorded in the Sacred Scriptures.

§ 2. *No Solid Objections to the Practicability of such a History*

Having seen reason to reject naturalism, and found that there is no middle ground between that and the theism which accepts the possibility and probability of a special revelation, we are prepared to estimate the value, and appreciate the evidence, of such a sacred history. There are no longer objections on *theological* grounds, for God has all the power necessary to carry on such a course of spiritual education. As the Creator of the spirit, He understands perfectly the constitution of man, and how he may be enlightened and influenced; and having all power, He can act upon him according to His will. To deny this, would be to deny that He is able to govern the spiritual world. And it is also *anthropologically* possible. Man has capacity to receive such a revelation. As a man can be influenced intellectually and morally by his fellow creatures without the violation of any law of nature or mind; so he can certainly receive communication from his Creator—the Maker of men and all things—without the destruction of the laws of his own constitution, or those of the world. God's acts in such a history would, indeed, transcend, but not violate the laws of man's nature; they would be supernatural, immediate, additional to nature, but not subversive of its constitution.

It has, indeed, been objected that it would be impossible for the subject of revelation to distinguish the knowledge, thus divinely communicated, from natural knowledge, inasmuch as in the latter, so in the former, the source of the knowledge does not itself come into the consciousness. But aside from the fact that this objection rests upon a psychological doctrine, which is by no means demonstrated to be true; it is enough to know that men do practically distinguish the sources of their natural knowledge from each other, and, consequently, have capacity to distinguish the source of spiritual or revealed knowledge from the natural sources of information. And the theist, in recognizing the possibility of God's giving a special revelation, must recognize the possibility that He can accompany such a communication with sufficient marks of distinction from other knowledge, and with satisfactory evidence of its truth and reality. In other words, if God is able to give a special revelation, He is also able to enable those, to whom He makes it, to know that it is such.

The objection based on the laws of belief as engendered by habit, as the result of uniform repetition, namely, that any break in the uniformity of repetition, as a miracle is supposed to be, would destroy all basis of belief, and that we must, therefore, conclude against all miracles, rests manifestly upon a defective psychology. It declares that as testimony is more likely to be false than our general experience, no miracle can be true. Such psychological reasoning would, in its logical and legitimate course, end in universal skepticism—skepticism in regard to our natural as well as our spiritual knowledge; a result, rejected by common sense, and a state of mind which cannot long be endured, with which few men can rest satisfied; and, consequently, this objection proves too much for all who refuse to be universal skeptics; and, therefore, for nearly all mankind, it will always be found to prove nothing at all.

Revelation in the light of theism being clearly apprehended as *morally* possible, that is, consistent with the wisdom and goodness of God; faith will not be staggered by objections drawn from the transient and conflicting opinions of men respecting what a revelation, if real, would be. It will always point only to the old question put by its Author to the proud criticiser and dictator of His ways: "Where wast thou, when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Thus some have said that if it had been real, it would have been given at once to all nations. Now, aside from the answer which might be drawn from the circumstance that the special revelation which the Bible professes to contain, claims to have been originally given to all men, we may say that the objection would bear with equal force against many of the most precious gifts of God. We might as well require, for instance, that the gifts of genius should have been bestowed upon every man, and that the blessings of science should have been at once given to all. The ignorant unbeliever in the truths of science might as reasonably declare, that if science were true it would shine down out of the sky upon the eyes of all, as does the skeptical objector to revelation, that if it were real, "it should have been written on the face of the heavens," so that all might at once have read it. Others have objected that it would produce an abnormal process of human development; that we should expect that men and nations would be left to develop themselves religiously, simply from

their own innate forces, and according to the laws of their own nature. But we might for the same reason object to all instruction and education. And the actual history of the progress of civilization among men, in which it is manifest that men and nations have never risen from the savage to the civilized state by their own efforts, but that the impulse is always from without—from one individual or nation upon another—shows not only the groundlessness of this objection to special religious instruction divinely given, but goes far to prove that all the superiority of the modern nations of Christendom over the heathen—whose ancestors were alike barbarous—is due to the divine education resulting from special révelation.

In answer to the objections against religious belief, that it fosters superstition, we need only say that this is the abuse, which can be easily distinguished from the true spirit and the proper use of revelation; that the abuse of a thing is no valid argument against its nature and desirableness; and that as Christianity, wherever it has gone, has, instead of promoting, exterminated the superstitions of men—so much so that it is heathendom, and not Christendom, that is now the great abode of superstition—there cannot be in it a tendency to foster superstition. There is nothing, then, in nature or mind, inconsistent with the idea that God has, on the one hand, made the human reason so dependent upon Himself, and has in view so great a destination for man, that He has made it necessary, desirable and practicable to give him the guiding light of special revelation—the educating influence of a sacred history. Nature, though good, is not at once perfected and completed by the creative hand, but is made to pass through a development to a higher end—a teleological development which admits superinductions, in which even the existence of man and his operations might be said to be a miracle to nature; and created spirit itself, though dominant over nature, has still its goal before it. It is to pass through a development in which there is a second, a complementary creation; and the God-man is a miracle to created spirits, as rational man is to the brute world. “In terming itself the new, the second creation,” says Martensen, “Christianity by no means calls itself a disturbance of nature, but rather the completion of the work of creation; the revelation of Christ and the kingdom of Christ it pronounces the last potency of the

work of creation; which power, whether regarded as completing or as redeeming the world, must be conceivable as teleological, operating so as to change and limit the lower forces, in so far as these are in their nature not eternal and organically complete, but only temporal and temporary. Hence the point of unity between the natural and the supernatural lies in the teleological design of nature to subserve the kingdom of God, and its consequent *susceptibility* to, its *capacity of being moulded* by, the supernatural creative activity. Nature does not contradict the notion of a creation; and it is in miracles that the dependence of nature on a free Creator becomes perfectly evident. But, while nature does not contradict the notion of creation, the assumption of a creation is quite as little inconsistent with the notion of nature. For, although the new creation does do away with the laws of *this* nature, yet it by no means destroys the notion of nature itself. For the very notion of nature implies, not a hindering restraint to freedom, but rather that it is the organ of freedom. And as the miraculous element in the life of Christ reveals the unity of spirit and nature, so the revelation of Christ at once anticipates and predicts a new nature, a new heaven, and a new earth, in which a new system of laws will appear; a system which will exhibit the harmony of the laws of nature and freedom—a state for which the whole structure of the present creation, with its unappeased strife between spirit and nature, is only a teleological transition period.” But especially do nature and man perishingly need such divine interposition, such superinduction of a second creation, in consequence of sin. Men are in a state of ruin, and cannot save themselves; the whole body of humanity is diseased, and no one member of it can help the rest. All healing help must come from God. The Healer of nature's wounds, the Physician of souls, the Conqueror of death must come from above, and begin a new work on earth and in humanity. Man is depraved, and a curse is on the earth. The harp of nature, once so sweet and harmonious that it woke the melodies of heaven, and caused the “morning stars to sing together, and all the sons of God to shout for joy,” is now broken. It no longer gives any accordant responses to the harmonies of the universe, as it is conceived of God, and as He will have it to be. And the language of heaven now is, “Remove the diadem, take away the crown; for I will overturn,

overturn, overturn, till He shall come whose right it is, and I will give it Him." It will only be when the banner of this Prince of Peace shall wave over a penitent, believing and restored world, that there "will be none to hurt in all the holy mountain of the Lord." "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now." Nature speaks in none but plaintive tones; and man groans under the burdens of sin, and sighs for deliverance from his "bondage to the fear of death." But the Restorer of nature, "the desire of the nations," has come. He has begun the glorious work which shall culminate in "the new heavens and the new earth," in which dwelleth *righteousness*—not only in the completion of nature and the perfection of man, but in the restoration of the one from the bondage of corruption, and the glorification of the other in the everlasting kingdom of God.

§ 3. *Two Important Facts in the Question of the Authenticity of the Sacred Scriptures.*

In the investigation of the authenticity of the Christian revelation—the credibility of the Sacred History—two important facts should be constantly borne in mind. First, the fact, to which we have called attention, that the objections to the truth of the Sacred Scriptures have arisen mainly from their miraculous character, that is, to the assumed antecedent incredibility respecting all miracles. The objections to the authenticity of the evangelical history rest, in the first instance, and in the principal cases, upon the idea of the impossibility of any miraculous element in history. It is upon this, and not upon any peculiar historical difficulties, not upon any important lack of historical evidence, that the skeptical criticism of the present day proceeds. It proceeds upon the presupposition of the impossibility of a miracle, and that all apparently supernatural events must be ruled out of history as, in the nature of the case, incredible. It makes its a priori philosophy determine what history must be. It asks not for the historical evidence of such an event, in the first instance, but treats it as that which could not have occurred. The disciples of this school of skepticism say that no amount of historical evidence could induce them to believe that a miracle had really occurred. As one of them says: "If all ecclesiastical officers from the Pope to the lowest functionary

in the Church; and if all the civil officers from the President of the United States down to the humblest official, should swear that they had seen a man who was really dead restored to life, I could not believe them; nay, if I saw such an occurrence with my own eyes I would not believe its reality; I would rather believe that my senses had deceived me." Now from what has appeared in the discussion of the possibility of miracles, it is evident that the assumption of the skeptical critics of the antecedent impossibility of any miraculous element anywhere in the history of mankind, is so unwarrantable that it is a clear proof of their being unqualified for the investigation of these documents, and that the results to which they have come are unworthy of confidence.

We have endeavored to show that the rationalist, believing as he does in a personal God and Creator of the world, cannot, whether he be deist or theist, consistently deny the possibility of miracles. And, consequently, having no difficulties on cosmological grounds, whatever difficulty he may, on theological and anthropological grounds, have speculatively in regard to the moral probability and improbability of special divine revelation—even though intellectually he apprehend it as morally impossible—such are the practical interests which, on his own grounds, are involved in the question, that when he approaches the historical question with the presupposition that all miracles must beforehand be ruled out as incredible, he does not, as a critic, deserve our confidence.

When we consider that God alone so perfectly knows Himself and us, that He must make known the manner in which He is to be worshiped and served; when we remember how, in its practical operations, religion seems, in its very nature, to involve a positive authority; that from our finiteness we are often obliged to act when we can have no speculative apprehension of the reason for preferring one course to another, can see nothing in the nature of things deciding what we should do; that from our ignorance we are obliged to trust ourselves so directly and implicitly to the will of God, that we practically need a positive revelation from Him respecting what He would have us believe and do; that faith, the essential element of all true piety, must rest, for certainty and repose, upon positive authority; when we remember that faith involves the will, that it cannot be the

result of mere reasoning or demonstration in the understanding, we will feel that it cannot become fixed and assured without a special revelation of the divine will. And especially when we remember that we are sinners—which the rationalist admits—we cannot have certainty and assurance of faith, unless we have some positive word from God respecting His will concerning us. When we consider these things, we feel that the criticism which, in the minds of men who admit a personal God and Creator, the reality of religion and the necessity of faith—who regard sin as sin—the criticism that in the midst of these admissions, approaches the evangelical history with the a priori decision that it cannot be believed, if it be miraculous—is not worthy of confidence.

And though the pure naturalist consistently, on his ground, rejects the possibility of miracles, yet even he must see that there is enough in the things in conflict with his grounds, and in the practical and incomparably great interests involved, to make it improper for him to let them stand against all the testimony of history. Whatever may appear to be the strength of his logical conclusion, when he remembers how his intellectual process, in everything, practically points to spirit—to personality; how the forms of nature and the works of art are beautiful only when they become to us the organ of spiritual sentiment; how in our search for the truth of things, we must find it in spirit; that if the absolute be truth, then the truth is personal; that practically, spirit, personal being, seems to be the only valid source and the only universal bond of the world—the point of its origin and its unity; when he considers the phenomena of conscience, the sense of freedom, the feeling of responsibility, the wants of the heart—its yearnings and its fears, its longings and its premonitions—all so universally prevalent among men, and even in himself, notwithstanding all his reasonings to the contrary—when he considers these practical interests, even he has no right to say that we may determine beforehand that all miracles must be ruled out of history. And when he does so, we have a right to say that he is not in a state of mind to do justice to history as a critic.

The second important fact is that with all this a priori presumption against them in the spirit of this criticism, a part of the sacred record has come forth from these severe tests un-

harmed—has passed the fiery ordeal unscathed. Thus, for example, no respectable writer, even among the most skeptical of critics, calls in question the authenticity of Paul's Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians and the Galatians. These four epistles are recognized as genuine and authentic by all critics of high character in the skeptical, as well as the believing school. This secures for the truth of Christianity, as a miraculous revelation, several important points. Thus we have the testimony of Paul, which is admitted to be sincere, for the greatest of the Christian miracles, the resurrection of Christ; and this is sufficient to establish the contents of the Christian faith—to prove the truth of Christianity, as a special divine revelation. If we had only these four epistles, we would have the substance of Christianity, a sufficient knowledge of the revealed plan of salvation, and a well-grounded proof of its being a miraculous revelation. The authenticity of these epistles would prove the authenticity of the miraculous story of the gospels, and by implication that of the Old Testament.

§ 4. *The Admission of the Authenticity of these Four Books is fatal to the Rationalist's Attempt to Invalidate the Historical Evidence of the Miracles.*

When the rationalist, after having admitted that Paul wrote these epistles, and that he was a sincere man and honestly declared what he believed to be the truth, still objects that, as Paul was not personally acquainted with the life and acts of Jesus, but had heard these things from others, he may have been deceived—we answer that he lived so near to the time, that if there had been any deception, he would have had every opportunity, and before his conversion would have had every disposition, to discover it; and that he could clearly ascertain whether the story which he had heard from others was true or not. Besides, Paul professes to have received his gospel, not from others, but by revelation from Christ Himself, and to have seen Christ after His resurrection—for example, on the way to Damascus; He is, therefore, and claims to be, an independent witness of the resurrection of Christ. “For,” he declares of himself, “I delivered unto you first of all that which I myself received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day ac-

ording to the Scriptures ; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve ; after that of above five hundred brethren at once ; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen of James ; then of all the apostles. And last of all *He was seen of me also.*" And the attempt of the rationalist to explain away the force of this testimony by supposing that Paul was the subject of "epileptic fits," subject to delusive visions, because he says he "was caught up into paradise and heard things unspeakable"—will fail to satisfy him who believes in the authenticity of these epistles, and in the honesty of their author. For Paul is remarkable for clear sense and sound judgment, as is manifest enough in these writings themselves. Far from over-estimating ecstatic states of mind, he reproves others for attaching comparatively too much importance to them ; and he closely distinguishes between mere visions, and the revelations which he receives from Christ ; and between that which he has received by revelation and that which he speaks only on his own authority. Besides, he himself exercises miraculous gifts and powers which he professes to have received from Christ. Thus, there must have been in his own possession an infallible means of knowing the truth or the falsehood of the report of Christ's power to work miracles. If Paul was honest in the belief that he had these gifts, and in the declaration that he exercised them, and that he had received them from Christ, then the miracles of Christ are real ; for He could not enable another to perform miracles if He did not possess the power to work them Himself. The miracles of the disciple would, in this case, prove those of the Master.

§ 5. *All Attempts of Rationalism to Explain the Evangelical History, without the Admission of Miracles, are Unsatisfactory.*

When the rationalist admits, as he does, that Christianity has produced an entire revolution, a change, an improvement of the mind and heart, of human life and society, such as never was, and never could be accomplished by any or all of the great philosophical systems of heathendom—an improvement which they not only could not effect, but could not even conceive—that it originated ideas of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, which were before impossible to the conception of the human mind ; that it introduced a recognition of the rights

of man as man, of the claims of the individual in society, of the sacredness of human life, which had never before entered into the thoughts of the world; that it created a sympathy for the poor and the suffering which was not only new in the world, not only never practiced, but even contrary to the teaching of its greatest philosophers; that it abolished slavery, the cruel treatment of captives, and the exposure of children, acts which were not only allowed but inculcated before; that it rescued woman from a state of degradation to which it had been thought she was fated by nature, and delivered men from the state of bondage to others which was considered as the natural and necessary condition of a great part of the human family, a condition resulting necessarily from the dualism of the universe from eternity, from that eternal matter which spirit—not even the Spirit of God could control, and which must necessarily remain in a part of the human family; that it abolished the custom of public entertainments and amusements which were given at the cost of lives of innocent men—such as the gladiatorial shows—and the habit of disregarding the rights of nations in war, all of which were before supposed to be grounded in the nature of things;—he who admits all this and consequently brings the question to this issue: Did the few followers of that poor young man, that obscure peasant of Galilee, in the midst of their ignorance and poverty, without wealth or power, originate and inaugurate this great change—accomplish what the Platos and Aristotles of the Old World had in thousands of years failed to accomplish, nay, even to conceive? Did they accomplish it by their mere human thoughts and human powers, with no influence different in kind from that which these great men of heathendom were under? When the question comes to be: Did mere human genius, in these humble, uneducated men, accomplish what it never before effected, under the most favorable circumstances of culture and power; or was it the work of a special divine influence?—then the common sense of man will always decide in favor of the latter side of the alternative. And this view of the subject will become more and more convincing in proportion to the clearness with which men shall apprehend the difference and antagonism of the Christian and the heathen idea of God and the world. Men will see more and more clearly that as there are but *these two world-views possible to the human*

mind, so it is only the Christian idea which could produce such results ; and that it is an idea which must have come to man by special revelation. The fact, too, that whenever men have been removed from that peculiar influence which Christianity exerts, and by which it has produced this great revolution in human life and society, they are found to fall into the same bondage which kept the nations of heathendom in the state in which Christianity found them, proves the same thing.

§ 6. *The Christian can Afford to Wait for the Conclusions of Science with the Assurance that its Final Results, like those Attained in the Past, will be found in Harmony with the Revelations of Christianity.*

Before we close this discussion for the present we would call the attention of the reader to the fact, that the Christian idea is so sure of the great central truth of Christianity as a miraculous revelation, that it can never be effectually disturbed by objections arising from other world-views. In regard to these, it would simply lead us to wait, in the certain expectation, that science will, in due time, answer its own objections, will bring one of its branches to correct the deviations of another ; and that as the sciences have generally seemed, at first, each of them to be in conflict with Christianity, and, then, ere long were found to be in harmony with it, and to become its firm supporters, yea found to have contributed—even by the very discoveries which were at first regarded, through the misapprehensions of her friends, as well as her foes, to be inconsistent with her—to have contributed even by these to the enlargement of the views of Christians, and to the clearer apprehension of these great truths of Christianity—so it will be in the future. In proportion as science and philosophy extend our views of the first creation—the one of the field of nature, the other of the world of mind—will we be able to enlarge our ideas of the second creation, for which this is the preparation.

This has, thus far, been the case in regard to the objections derived from the natural sciences. A fuller discovery of the analogy between the course of nature and the development of sacred history, a clearer view of the providence of God in nature, and of His operations in grace, as described in the Bible, has been the final result.

Thus Geology and the Mosaic account of creation are becoming more and more capable of reconciliation. And, in the meantime, the former has become one of the greatest stores of facts, from which the theologian can draw arguments for the probability of special creations, and for a personal creator. It now presents some of the strongest objections to the deistic perversion of the idea of evolution, which separates it entirely from the possibility of divine interpositions or supernatural influence; and thus denies all special creations, all superinduction of new forces, all new originations in the domain of nature. It presents evidences of superinductions of additional forces, at different intervals, in the pre-Adamic history of our earth, which have never been successfully met by the opponents of the presence of a creative hand, in the evolution and ongoing of nature. And against the pantheistic doctrine of the evolution of nature from eternity without a beginning, it gives strong confirmation to the idea of that miracle of miracles, the first, the original creation, the creation from nothing, the origination from the divine will of the world of nature. It corroborates the view of the universe existing in space and time, as having originated in personal action, from the possibilities of a sovereign will—the will of an absolute personality, of the God who is a Spirit. And it shows, at least, the groundlessness of the assumed improbability of any divine interpositions—of any special creations in the natural world—and that the silent testimony of the rocks is perfectly consistent with the living witness for Christ—with the facts of a new, a second creation.

We need only wait and the several theories of nature and providence—originated by natural sciences, which seem to be in conflict with the Christian idea of God and the world,—will mutually correct each other, and will, in due time, bring out a result which will be in perfect harmony with the teachings of the Sacred Scriptures. Already has much of this been done. The present idea of the plan and mode of divine action, derived from the course of nature, now clearly discovered to be slow and to involve vast periods of time,—is correcting and checking many of the a priori conclusions drawn against Christianity, from former philosophical conceptions of divine action. Thus science has brought to light many examples of the close connections and striking analogies between the system of nature as

discovered by science, and the scheme of grace as revealed in the Bible; between the theology of nature, and the theology of revelation. Thus not long ago it was a standing objection in the philosophical world, that the gradual and roundabout way of divine action, as represented by the scheme of salvation in the Bible, was inconsistent with true rational conceptions of the manner in which the allwise and omnipotent God acts. It was objected by many that the system of grace as revealed in the gospel was so slow and divided into so many distinct economies. This was supposed to be contrary to the divine mode of action as it is manifested in the economy of nature. But now natural sciences—by bringing to light the long pre-Adamic ages of our world, the different and distinct organisms of the several periods, the revolutions that have rent the earth's crust, the passing away of one species of organic and animal life, to make room for higher and more perfect plants and animals—have proved that God actually operates in nature very much as He is said by Christianity to do in grace, namely, by slow steps and gradual processes; and that it is highly probable that another change may await our world, resulting, as the Scriptures declare, in "new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness." It agrees with the Bible in regarding all the pre-Adamic ages and changes of nature as a preparation for the creation, or, at least, the advent of man; and all the movements of providence since, as a provision for the coming of the new man; in exhibiting all the great epochs in the history of our earth, as so many prophetic types of the dispensations of grace, which are transpiring upon its surface, each as a preceding creation, preparatory to a higher stage of being, and all prefigurations of the process of the spiritual life, though not the sources of them. Thus it makes it probable that the changes of nature will be found, at last, to have been only so many different preparations for the universal reign of grace; in short, it makes probable the existence of a moral world, in which nothing intervenes between God and man, and where nothing interferes with the idea of immediate influence and miraculous action. It makes it probable that nature is designed to be the instrument and organ of spirit, to be controlled by the spirit and appropriated to its uses; that a miracle is but the point of union between the world of spirit and the world of nature; that nature and grace are, thus, con-

nected; and that God is in all, as He is before all, and will be all in all, as He is over all.

§ 7. *The Natural Sciences Reciprocally Modify the World-views Severally Derived from them and Enlarge the Theological View of the Divine Plan of Redemption.*

Thus when astronomical science first began to explore the vast field of space and to bring to view the countless globes and systems of the material world, men said: It is incredible that such wonderful things as are involved in the conceptions of Christianity, should really have been done for our insignificant planet, and for the small and lowly family of God's creatures, which the human race seemed to them to be, in the light of those vast multitudes of habitable worlds, and those countless hosts of higher beings, which must, as they supposed, inhabit them. But when astronomy was leading us to this conclusion, geology, a little later, came in to check us. While astronomy was thus seeming to give us countless globes in *space*, fitted to be the abode of innumerable multitudes of high, rational creatures, geology was preparing to follow it, with the history—the actual history—of a world in *time*, which has answered the objections drawn from the vast fields of space, and from the magnitude of the worlds of nature. It proves that, in the divine plan, worlds may be—because our earth actually was—for long ages the abode only of animals of the lower orders, before they are prepared to be the home of rational beings. It shows that there *was no just ground for the conclusion*, that all those worlds in space, must be already the abodes of intelligent creatures; and that they may be only in a state of gradual preparation for the reception of rational inhabitants. It shows that, in point of time, rational created existence may be comparatively in the infancy of its being; that we may in our earthly life, be living in an age of the universe, which is only the beginning of the existence of the great families of moral creatures; that for aught we know, our earth may be the nursery of the intelligent and moral occupants themselves of those “many mansions” in the Heavenly Father's great house, in the vast home of the worlds of matter, which He is preparing. It makes it probable, that with the exception of the angelic beings spoken of in the Bible, men may be the only rational creatures in the universe. Or, at least, it

shows, that our earth may be the laboratory of spiritual truth, the theatre on which are displayed the saving truths necessary for preservation in innocence if not for restoration to holiness, of all moral intelligences. Men may be the only intelligent existences who combine both nature and spirit; and, consequently, the elements of all created existence in their being; existences, therefore, not only higher than the brute, which has only the elements of nature, but superior to the angel, which has only the elements of spirit in its being. Men may, thus, be the subjects and organs of the highest revelation of the divine plan of created existence, nay of God Himself. They may constitute the only society of existences, where all are of one nature, and of "one blood;" thus illustrating the brotherhood of creatures, and the fatherhood of the Creator; the only scene of intelligent life, where the individuals are born and die; where one generation goeth and another cometh; and where consequently, all are so connected that what is done by one is done for all, and what is done for one is done for all; and who can thus be the proper subjects in whose creation, and preservation, and redemption, might be made manifest, on a large scale, and in wide extent, and for long continued revelation, "to principalities and powers in heavenly places," now existing, as well as to those yet to be brought into existence, "the manifold wisdom of God."

In the light of geological science, of the history of our earth, and the beginning of the human, the intelligent life upon it, we might regard it as the training school for the children of the moral universe. Men may be the creatures best suited to be subjects of the divine revelation; the beings in the history of whose redemption and sanctification on earth, and of their final holiness and blessedness in heaven, might be afforded the perfect revelation of God to His creatures. There may be in their salvation and destiny, such a display of the nature and attributes of God, of His character and ways, of the beauty and necessity of holy love in the Creator and the creature,—as would be sufficient to confirm all innocent beings in the choice of perpetual obedience, and secure them in the possession of unchanging holiness and everlasting happiness. It thus shows that the importance of a world of beings capable of such principles, and susceptible to such a work—of a world, which is the scene of such transactions—depends not upon its dimensions in space,

nor upon the degree of the physical power, or even mental endowments; nor upon the comparative number of its inhabitants. As "Bethlehem," though small, "was not the least among the princes of Judah," because out of it came the King and expectation of all nations; so our earth, small as are its dimensions, may not be the least among the dominions of the universe—may be to the universe of worlds, what Bethlehem has been to the nations of the earth. In the sense of the meaning of the word Bethlehem, it may, indeed, be the Bethlehem of the universe of God's spiritual creatures—"the house of bread," the storehouse of spiritual food for the countless multitudes of the present or future subjects of the vast material kingdom of Jehovah.

It makes it credible that humanity was taken into union with divinity in the person of the God-man, the Eternal Logos—the Creator as well as Redeemer of all, the mediator between creatorship and creatureship, as well as between the holy God and the sinful world, the reconciler "of all things in heaven and earth," in order that her children might be prepared by the process of redemption, to take secure and happy possession of the several provinces of the vast physical empire of Jehovah, as fast as they shall become fitted by the processes of nature, to be the abode of rational inhabitants. Or, if it was not done to save them and train them to be the actual inmates of these vast domains, yet, at least, in accordance with their high destiny as the members of Christ's body, the Church, the bride of the great Bridegroom, the sharers in His work, the organs of His spirit, the images of His glory—to be kings and priests unto God, everywhere throughout the universe, and evermore to be engaged in offering "up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ;" and in all worlds instructing and governing their more youthful and less experienced inhabitants; "showing forth" to all intelligent beings "the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light." And then, at last, to be themselves exhibited "with exceeding joy," to an admiring universe as specimens of the glorious work of the great Redeemer, when He "shall have come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe." Thus will "the music of the spheres" be found, at the last, to be in perfect harmony with "the song of Moses and the Lamb."

“ There’s not an orb which Thou beholdest,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed Cherubim.
Such music is in immortal souls,
But while this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in
We cannot hear it.”

Having thus cleared the groundwork of theology from all these unwarranted negations of science and philosophy, we must refer the reader to such works as that of Kurtz, entitled, “The Bible and Astronomy”—which, as the fuller statement of the title has it, is, indeed, “an exposition of the relation between the Biblical Cosmology and natural science”—to the volumes of the distinguished Apologist Joseph Cook, as well as to the numerous excellent works on the positive evidences of Christianity; and now turn our attention to the relation of God and man, of divinity and humanity in the Sacred History—of the divine and the human in the special revelation which we possess in the Sacred Scriptures. It is desirable to look at the subject of the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures in the light of the true Christian idea as it springs from the principle of the Reformation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RECOGNITION OF THE RELATION AND UNION OF THE DIVINE
AND THE HUMAN IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, AS IT RESULTS FROM
THE TRUE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD AND MAN.

§ I. *The Incarnation and Inspiration.*

THE end of the divine movements is divine revelation; and the perfect, the absolutely perfect, revelation of God is CHRIST. The principle of the Reformation is the reception of Christ as the perfect revelation of God—faith in God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. The idea of God and man, of divinity and humanity, arising from this faith, *gives a light to guide us in our view of the union of the divine and the human in the Scriptures.* The incarnation is the perfect revelation of God; and the revelation of divinity as God in Christ was the end of the creation of the world. The first creation took place in view of the second. Only in view of this could there be a world of finite moral beings—could man be created, or could he be permitted to fall. The union of divinity and humanity, consequently, though *not a necessity to God, was, from eternity, a moral certainty.* So clear has this become in modern theological thought, that the idea, first expressed scientifically by Irenæus in the early Church, and re-affirmed by Osiander in the times of the Reformation—namely: *that the Son of God, the eternal Logos, would have become incarnate even if man had not fallen—would have been incarnate, but not a sufferer, not crucified*—that the eternal blessedness which is now secured to believers, by His sufferings as well as His incarnation, would have been secured for the whole human race without suffering—is widely prevalent. This idea seems to be favored by such passages as these: “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in Him” (Eph. i. 10); “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; and He is the Head of the body, the Church; who is the beginning, the first-

born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (Col. i. 15 and 18); "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 24); "That ye put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all in all (Col. iii. 10, 11.) The advocates of this idea say that if we make the glory of God the end of creation, we make men mere transition-points for the movement of God towards this end, and thus favor a pantheistic view of God. If we make human salvation the end, we make the Creator exist for the creature, and thus debase the idea of God. But if we regard *Christ, the union of the divinity and humanity, the end*, we secure the idea of the glory of God and of the blessedness of the creature—the creative complacency of divinity in humanity, and the rest of humanity with the adoring satisfaction in divinity. Now, this most perfect, this absolutely perfect, revelation of God could not have been dependent on the action of man, could certainly not have been suspended on his sinful action, thus making sin necessary to the highest good. The revelation of the eternal Logos is the revelation of God; it is the revelation of God, of Himself to Himself, is involved in the self-consciousness of God; and it is the revelation of God to the creature. "He is the image of the invisible God," "the brightness of the Father's glory," the manifestation of the Deity, "the first-born of every creature," the prototype of humanity, the Mediator between the uncreated and the created; "For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist," or subsist. If even sin had not entered the world, He would have been Mediator between creatorship and creatureship, and would have reconciled them. As He had gone forth to give existence to beings distinct from God, so He would have returned with these creatures into union with God; would have become incarnate and would have reconciled—brought into union in His person—"all things that are in heaven and that are in earth." The sin of man did not prevent this; and in this the Scriptures place the emphasis of divine love for us, that

though "He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, He made Himself of no reputation, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death," suffered to redeem man and reconcile him to God; consequently, "He is the Head of the body, the Church;" "the beginning, the first-born from the dead." Originally the prototype of humanity, He is the first in it who triumphs over death, "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell"—the fullness of divinity and humanity, the perfection of God and the perfection of man, of Creator and creature—that He should be the union of divinity and humanity, should be the perfect revelation of Deity, the end for which all things are made, the end of all divine counsels and movements; and that "having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Now in the union of divinity and humanity in the person of Christ, these natures remain distinct, and the human, though it is united with the divine, has a free and untrammelled development. Its will and agency are not suspended; it does not cease to be a free human nature; for "Christ is very man as He is very God." If this, the absolutely perfect revelation, could be effected by a union of divinity and humanity in which the integrity of the human is thus preserved, then the Spirit who goes forth from Christ—from this union of the divine and the human—to inspire men to exhibit Christ, to testify of Him, might be expected to so accommodate Himself to them—permit Himself to be so appropriated by them—that He would use them not as mere mechanical instruments, would not play upon them as flutes and organs, not as dead, impersonal material to breathe through or to strike upon, but as living, personal, free spirits; and to preserve all the qualities of their true humanity, even its innocent infirmities, and thus use them for the purpose of giving a revelation suited to real and mere human beings, suited to man, and capable of being apprehended and appropriated by him. He would limit Himself also to the revelation of God in Christ; He would communicate facts, would tell us what God is in His relation to us, what He requires of us, and what He has done for us. He would not teach a science of the material universe,

which can only be learned by human apprehension of necessary idea and fixed law; but He would reveal the acts of will, tell us what man has done and what God has done, and will do, which can be learned from no scientific apprehension. Science is necessarily a natural development; and revelation only can tell—make known—acts of the divine will. Science cannot be miraculously communicated. This is as impossible as it is unnecessary. God has made man to learn science; and to be receptive of Revelation. Science requires certain antecedent mental developments which must be purely human, and a knowledge of facts which man must observe. Inspiration could not make astronomy and geology as sciences its subjects. The spirit of the prophets—which was the Spirit of Christ—would in Moses teach only the fact of the creation and evolution of things in the six stages of creative acts, and in the six intervals of evolution. It reveals only facts. If it would teach them in a way apprehensible to men guided by the impressions of the sense, it must speak of things as they would appear to the eye, and not as they are cognized by the thinking mind in science. The laws of nature as they are now discovered by science, if even they had been miraculously announced, could not, in the days of the Sacred History, have been apprehended by the greatest genius any more than by the common mind. Whatever, therefore, belongs to the purely human, its defects—in scientific apprehension, in style, in testimony to historical facts—would be allowed, and yet so guided that the revelation would be a complete guide in the way of life and salvation. The human would remain human elements, but they would be used and guided by the divine into unerring truth in the revelation of the divine salvation.

§ 2. *The Connection between Luther's View of the Person of Christ and Special Revelation or Inspiration.*

The principle of the Reformation sheds light upon this, as upon all the elements of Christianity; and we should never lose sight of it when we are studying the Christian idea of divine revelation and inspiration. The early reformers *expected all improvement, in the apprehension of doctrine, from the appropriation of the evangelical principle of faith.* It was their idea that in proportion as the Church was grounded in this principle, she

would have more correct views, a more perfect conception of God and man, and greater power to apply the true Christian idea in all directions. Luther especially applied it to the doctrine of Revelation. Dorner thus traces the connection between Luther's view of the person of Christ and special revelation: "For him it was intensely important that we should observe how in Christ humanity was elevated and glorified. In his estimation, revelation itself has first found its end in the bringing forth of the perfect man, the Son of Man." "The unity of the person of Christ, in which God and man are united, he establishes by a *remodeling of the conception of God and man, according to the standard of the principle of faith.*" "He rejects what he calls the 'Old Wisdom,' in which majesty, omnipotence, infinity, were regarded as the highest and innermost in God. 'God does not regard it sufficient for His honor that He is Creator of all creatures, as even Jews and Turks know Him to be. He wishes it also to be known *what He inwardly is.* His glory is His love, which seeks the lowly and the poor. *This is the new wisdom.* God's delight in the incarnation consists in this; He has *therein* poured out His essence, revealed His heart. And this He had already resolved before sin was as yet anywhere. "In the old language" creature signifies something which is infinitely different from the highest God-head; they are in direct opposition to each other. But in the new language or wisdom, humanity signifies something other than this—something which has an entire and an inexpressibly close connection with the divinity—and we must learn in a new tongue to express the new wisdom.' He accordingly contends for a true development of the humanity of Christ; he 'would have Him in His infancy a real babe, lie upon the mother's breast, and innocently play like other children.' The tendency of Luther's *doctrine of revelation* is 'to represent God to us as living and comprehensible. He does not, like the older Mysticism, regard God as the indeterminate, infinite being, which is everywhere, but nowhere to be apprehended. But it belongs rather to God's eternal living essence, that He form Himself into a movement, through which He determines Himself in Himself; through this movement there comes forth in God the eternal Word of God. By this determination, which the infinity of God thus gives itself, and by which it becomes apprehensible, God has already also a relation

to the world—especially to the spiritual world, and toward a life communion with it—for, through that eternal movement and self-determination in Himself, God is accessible and self-communicating; as, on the other hand, our nature has—yea, is—also an original susceptibility for God, which was not even lost through sin. Humanity is a material which yearns for forming at the hand of God; it would and can receive God through God, if God give or offer Himself. But now that eternal forming of God in Himself cannot suffice us: God is invisible, incomprehensible to man in his present sinful state, given over as he is to the visible. God must, therefore, make Himself visible—apprehensible, as it were—cosmic, in order that we may have Him. This was done in the incarnation.’ ‘This is now a second act of self-forming of God, coming still nearer to the creature. No less, finally, does the Holy Scripture, the word of the incarnate Word, have power and essence from Him.’ He thus escapes the old mechanical theory of inspiration. Luther is not of the opinion that the words of Scripture were dictated to them (the sacred writers) by the Holy Spirit; ‘but the *knowledge* of the Christian salvation and its economy sprang from the Holy Spirit and His illumination, which were vouchsafed to the Apostles as chosen instruments, and, in general, to the writers of the Scriptures; and herewith has the divine truth already entered into human form; and God’s knowing has become the innermost personal knowing of man. This union of the divine and human, which, in its cognitive aspect, is not bound exclusively to the moral and religious stage of the sacred writers, now certainly perpetuates itself also during the act of writing; but in this human, and not divine act, the sacred writers have obtained the historical material, not from the illumination of the Spirit, but in a historical way, though they sifted it by the power of the illuminating Spirit which operated upon them; and according to the measure of their power, ordered and arranged it in a true divine illumination.’ Though he did not doubt the genuineness of the Epistle of James, he denies its canonicity and persevered in that denial. He occupied a somewhat similar position toward the Epistle to the Hebrews and toward the Apocalypse, though at a later date (1545) he judged somewhat more favorably of the latter. Yea, of one of the arguments of the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians, he says it is

too weak to bear probing. He has no difficulty in acknowledging that in external things, not only Stephen, but also the writers of the Sacred Scriptures have some things which are not accurate. So far as the Old Testament is concerned, in his opinion, its validity is not destroyed by the acknowledgment that some of these writings have passed through remodeling hands. Of what account would it be, he asks, in reference to the Pentateuch, if even Moses had not written it himself? And in reference to the prophets he says: They studied Moses and one another; their books arose while they recorded their thoughts suggested by the Holy Spirit. But though these good and faithful teachers and searchers of Scripture, even have, sometimes, brought into the building, wood, hay, stubble, and not always pure gold, silver and precious stones, there still remains the foundation; the rest the fire of that day will consume?' In the Old Testament he esteems especially the Book of Genesis most highly; it is the fountain from which under the influence of the Holy Spirit, all later prophets have flowed. Among the Historical Books, the books of the Kings are far more to be believed than the Chronicles; Ecclesiastes is adulterated; it originates not with Solomon, etc. Also the Book of Esther, he does not regard as canonical."

§ 3. *The Inspiration of the Scriptures is Inseparable from the Principle of the Reformation, and, consequently, belongs to the Groundwork of the Creed and of Theology.*

We have already seen that the Reformers so regarded it, and so treated it in the structure of the Augsburg Confession. They do not make it a part of the Creed, because it is one of the elements of the very foundation of the Creed. Their appeal to the Sacred Scriptures as the infallible rule of faith and practice necessarily involves this. They were as sure of the certainty as they were of the intelligibility of the Scriptures. They made them the only appeal in the question of the truth of faith. And this must ever be the principle of Evangelical Christians.

As the miraculous revelation closed with the apostolic age, an inspired record of it was necessary for the preservation of this revelation unadulterated and for its certain transmission to succeeding ages. A revelation from God can be regarded certain and obligatory only when it is delivered in substantial purity.

Christianity was first orally communicated, and hence could only be certain to and obligatory upon persons living at that period, or a short time after the death of the apostles, unless there had been provided for the Church a succession of divinely inspired men—at least one in every age—or there had been given a written account of Christianity. Christianity would have been a divine revelation to those to whom it was orally communicated, if not a single book of the New Testament had been written, and it was such for some time, namely, the short period before these books were published. But in the absence of divinely inspired men, it could not have been a revelation to succeeding ages. It could only be such if every succeeding age could be certain of its possessing it in an unadulterated form. But this is not possible on the supposition of its having been suspended merely on oral transmission. Nor would there have been any more certainty or authority in uninspired written transmission; because the writings of uninspired men could only be the record of their uninspired oral instructions and therefore could not possess any more certainty or authority. Hence, as Christianity is professedly certain and of universal obligation, we may naturally look for infallibility in the channel through which it is conveyed to all for whom it was intended. This is involved in the certainty of salvation; in the assurance of faith. The Roman Catholic Church would point men to the infallibility of the visible Church, that is, to the infallibility of the Pope and the Councils as the basis of the infallibility of the oral tradition, and consequently of the certainty of Christian doctrines and the correctness of Christian practices. On the other hand, the formal principle of the Reformation is that the Sacred Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and, consequently, that they are miraculously inspired while oral tradition is not. The answer to the questions, Where is this infallibility to be sought in its purity? How may we know that the doctrine of this salvation, as we possess it, is entirely the revealed doctrine in its purity? How may we know that we may base upon it the hope of our salvation?—the principle of the Reformation answers thus: While God has commissioned His Church—His people—to preach the gospel to every creature, and has promised that this proclamation shall be so accompanied by the Holy Spirit, as to make it efficacious

for the production of saving faith in the souls of men, and declared it to be the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe; He has also given the inspired Scriptures as the standard by which we may test every doctrine, and infallibly know that it is from Him. When you are asked, How are you sure that you have the saving truths of God's revelation in their purity? the answer is: The divinely inspired and authorized apostles—the men to whom this revelation was originally given—did themselves also reduce the truths of this revelation, the instructions which they orally communicated, to writing, and that in this written form they have reached us unimpaired. In other words, Lutheran Protestantism teaches that Christianity is certain to us, and obligatory on all succeeding generations, only because we have in the divinely inspired Scriptures a standing authority and an infallible test by which we know its genuineness.

The principle of the Lutheran Reformation did, indeed, as we have seen, recognize the fact that the truths of salvation—the gospel of Christ—may come to men in other forms than the written record of it, that the word may in other forms also be a means of grace producing saving faith. But in the inspired written form it is the only rule of that faith. The Reformers, consequently, distinguished between the word of God and the Sacred Scriptures. By the former they meant pre-eminently the means of grace, the instrument by which the Holy Ghost works faith in us; by the latter, the only and the infallible standard of faith. When they call the word of God the external, the literal word, they mean only to designate it as objective and written in contradistinction to the internal word or light of the fanatics of the day. They did not—as was done at a later day in both the Lutheran and Reformed Church—make the word of God and Sacred Scriptures identical.

There does seem to be a distinction between the inspiration of the doctrines and the inspiration of the books of the Bible, between the word of God and the sacred records of that word, yet this distinction needs to be carefully guarded against abuse. "But," says Oosterzee, very properly, "While the distinction between Holy Scriptures and the Word of God, must be observed, the union between them must also be maintained." "As Holy Scripture, on the one hand, contains the word of God, *i. e.*,

the divine revelation—so may Scripture in its totality, on the other, be termed the Word of God in consequence of the Theopneustia of its writers.” “On both sides there is need for caution, lest the two sides of the same thing should be opposed to each other as in irreconcilable contrast. The statement, ‘The Bible is God’s word,’ brings into the foreground the higher unity of the Holy Scriptures; the counter statement, ‘the Bible contains God’s word,’ brings into the foreground its manifest diversity. It *contains* the word of God, because it is the record of that which God has spoken to man, as well in deeds as in words; it *is*, taken in its entirety, God’s word, because it is notably the work of one spirit, which in different measure animated the inspired writers, and which is the higher bond even between the most different parts. But the formula, ‘the Bible is God’s word,’ must never be taken in such a way as to mean that every single word in the Bible is a word of God in the proper sense of the expression. Words of men, yea, of devils, as well as of God, are to be read in the Bible, although certainly written under divine guidance. All in the Bible which is plainly seen to be a constituent part of divine revelation is God’s word; and again, the Bible itself is God’s word, because—and in so far as—the Spirit of God addresses us here as nowhere else. Both statements are thus true, when they are allowed to stand side by side; but cease to be pure and just expressions of the truth, as soon as they are opposed to each other. The proposition: ‘*The Bible contains God’s word,*’ is most in harmony with the spirit of the Holy Scripture, and also preferable on account of its greater perspicuity. The proposition: ‘The Bible is God’s word,’ points to the divine origin of the Holy Scripture as a whole, but it may—as applied to particular parts—very easily lead to misunderstanding. Here the accurate remark of Lange is in place: ‘Every single statement is susceptible of misconception; the Bible *in its totality* can, however, be misunderstood, and become a rock of offense, only in the case of a spirit more or less estranged from it. In this it may be compared to the creation. The one-sided observer of the single forms thereof, may become a criticizer of the order of nature, or a Polytheist; but for him who allows the spirit of creation, as a whole, to speak to his spirit, the revelation of God in nature will disclose itself ever more clearly. So it is with the higher revela-

tion of God in the Holy Scripture. In its unity, it is as clear as sunlight—a sparkling crystal of the revelation and recognition of God.’ Let us add, precisely in this its at once divine and human character is manifest, the analogy between the Scriptures and the Christ. But precisely therein lies also the reason why the origin and composition of the Scriptures have for us, no less than the person of the Lord—along with so much that is clear—also their mysterious side, and, like the latter, remain the object of continued research.”

But while the Reformers doubtless did recognize this distinction, they regarded the divine authority of the Sacred Scriptures in the same light as they did the oral instructions of the apostles and as equally infallible. They considered the apostles as fully inspired by the Holy Ghost when they recorded their testimony concerning the truths of salvation as when they orally communicated them. They believed that the expressions contained in their writings no less than their oral utterances, are infallible testimonies of God; that they were instructed what and how they should write, in their office as organs of divine revelation, as well as what and how they should speak in their oral proclamation of the divine offer of salvation to men, by an extraordinary divine influence. In regard to the books written by the apostles themselves there could be no doubt of this, as it would be in the highest degree absurd to suppose that the oral instructions of a divinely inspired teacher should cease to have this character of infallibility, the moment he should attempt to reduce them to writing. The divine authority of the apostolical books is, therefore, an inevitable consequence of the divine authority of the apostolic teachers of Christianity. The rejection of the former is inevitably connected with a step toward the rejection of the latter. These remarks do not, indeed, apply to the writings of Mark and Luke as they were not apostles. But as these writers were companions of apostolic men; as they, in all probability wrote with the sanction and under the eyes of Peter and Paul; and as what they wrote is in perfect harmony with the writings of these apostles, they may be said, to be inspired in the sense of what has been called *inspiratio consequens*, and may be regarded as of divine authority. The divine authority of the Old Testament rests upon that of the New, as it is acknowledged by Christ and His apostles to be a divine revelation.

The divine authority of the Old and New Testaments is, thus, clearly connected with faith in Christ, and is to be regarded as inseparable from the principle of the Reformation.

§ 4. *The Theory of The Inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures.*

While there has been a very general agreement among Christians in regard to the divine authority of the Sacred Scriptures, there has been much difference respecting the degree and mode of their inspiration. In the early ages of the Church, some regarded every idea, sentence, word and letter in the Bible, as penned by the immediate *dictation* of the Holy Ghost. The prophets and apostles were regarded as purely passive subjects in the process of inspiration; as related to the Holy Spirit like the amanuensis to the dictator—yea, like the lyre to the plectrum, the dead mechanical instrument to the musician who plays upon it. At the Reformation, as we have seen in the case of Luther, the *human element* in the inspired writings was more fully recognized. But soon after, views similar to those of the early fathers were generally entertained by the divines of our Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Musaeus did, indeed, venture to doubt the inspiration of every word, but he was soon induced, by the storm of opposition to it, to recant his assertion. Calixtus, the most learned theologian of his day, represented inspiration as a mere assistance and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and for it was declared heretical.

When this mechanical theory lost its hold upon the theological mind, the Rationalists passed to the opposite extreme, denying the inspiration of the Scriptures altogether, while they still profess to believe in a providential divine origin of Christianity. And even some otherwise evangelical divines of Germany—as the distinguished thinker, Rothe—while they seem heartily and unreservedly to believe in a miraculous divine origin of Christianity, do not consider the denial of the inspiration of the Sacred Books, inconsistent with that belief. The great body of divines in the last century, according to the testimony of Knapp, “preferred a medium course, and adopted for the most part the theory of Claude Frassen.” This theory recognized “three degrees in inspiration:” The first, “the revelation of things before unknown”—*inspiratio antecedens* the second, “security against error,” “in exhibiting doctrines and facts,” already

known—*inspiratio concomitans*; the third, “divine authority stamped upon writings originally composed without inspiration”—*inspiratio consequens*. “Others deemed it sufficient to show that the prophets and apostles enjoyed a higher divine assistance and support. They were induced in various ways, sometimes by natural means, and sometimes by immediate divine direction, to write the Sacred Books. They always wrote, as well as spoke, as persons enjoying the influence of the Spirit of God.”

Thus while we have, in the present century, the almost universal rejection—at least outside of the English world—of the mechanical theory; we have almost every degree of what has been called the dynamical theory. We hold that every true theory must be required to be consistent with the plenary inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, with the inspiration of all the parts, the little things as well as the great, of the words as well as of the thoughts. And while the divine element in the Bible must not be regarded as excluding the human element, it must still be regarded as operating miraculously in and upon human nature in the work of inspiration, and as thus producing a new source of knowledge in religion for mankind. Though it belongs to the acts of the second creation, and, consequently, is conditioned by the existence of the first creation, and operates in connection with the subject’s existence and nature; yet it is real creation: it produces something entirely new, is a new origination, a species of knowledge which, without this act of inspiration, not only could not have been attained by humanity alone, but could not have been discovered even by the general revelation which God makes to men in creation and providence.

The true conception seems to be, that the apostles had the same kind and the same degree of assistance in their written as in their oral instruction, and that they were as much required to use their natural powers and to avail themselves of natural means of information in the former as in the latter; and that they did, on the other hand, as certainly in the former as the latter, receive aid of any and every kind which might be necessary to give infallibility to their written as well as to their oral instructions. While, therefore, we reject or rather modify the mere mechanical theory, we must still uphold what seemed to be the chief interest in the maintenance of that theory, namely, *the plenary inspiration* of the

Scriptures, as *extending to words as well as things*. And on the other hand, this must be so far modified by the dynamical theory as to *be consistent with the varieties of style, the discrepancies, etc.* which have been noticed in the Sacred Scriptures. There must be diversities in the Scriptures, because they are written in different ages and by different men. If inspiration so interfered with the style of the writer as to make it different rhetorically and grammatically from his style of writing, or from the *usus loquendi* of his age and country, it would be impossible to prove the genuineness of the Sacred Books, as that depends in a great measure upon the peculiarities of style and dialect of the class of persons to which the writer belongs, of the place where and of the time when he lived. If inspiration interfered with the manner in which witnesses in particular circumstances usually bear testimony to historical facts, we could not determine the authenticity of the Sacred Books, could not know whether they state real facts; because that depends upon our being able to apply the laws of historical evidence to the testimony of these witnesses. In short, the *divine element in the inspired books must not destroy or shut out the human*. The Bible must be a human as well as a divine book.

The true view we take to be this: The *Bible, with all its ideas and all its words, is God's book of revelation; that is, He so moved, influenced, controlled and used the faculties, the mode of thought, and the style of language of the sacred writers, as to make them His organs through which to give a written revelation of His Word, of the plan of salvation*. They did not speak as they were dictated to, but they did speak as they *were moved by*, the Holy Ghost. It is, therefore, emphatically His book, divine and infallible. But as these organs are not dead and mechanical things, but living and personal spirits, He does not use them mechanically, as mere mechanisms are used; not as the musician does his instrument; but dynamically, moving and influencing, elevating and guiding them; so that while the Bible becomes in its totality the infallible and divine record of saving truth to the world, it has these truths in human forms of thought, in human language, and in the style which is peculiar to the individual writers. As the Bible is addressed to human beings, God must, through the organs which He employs, speak to them in a human manner, in human language; and His book

must have the variety of style of the several writers whom He inspires to write it. While He influences and moves, guides and controls the thoughts and style of the writer, so as to communicate the new and supernatural truth, and to make the writing divine as well as human—an infallible source of truth and a sure guide in the way of salvation—he must still not destroy its human characteristics. As it is to be understood by human beings, its language must be capable of being interpreted according to the laws of human language; and as its testimony is to be received by human beings, it must be given in accordance with the mode or manner of sincere human witnesses, and must have the ordinary characteristics of credible human testimony. It must be such as can be tried by those laws of human testimony, which are based upon the constitution which the creative hand of God has given to the human mind. According to this description of plenary inspiration, it is perfectly consistent with the varieties of style, the little discrepancies and inaccuracies, which some think they see in minor details of historical circumstances, etc. These, if they are only like those which accompany all sincere testimony given by different persons, we conceive to be perfectly consistent, not only with the authenticity, but with the inspiration of the sacred writers. If the Divine Spirit, on the other hand, had so controlled the styles of these writers, that they would manifestly have been quite unlike what we would have reason to expect was their ordinary style, or the style of these men at that time and in their circumstances—we could not have interpreted the Sacred Scriptures; and, consequently, they would not have been a revelation to us. At the same time, these books would have lacked one of the most important evidences of genuineness, namely, that of the peculiarities of the style. It was, therefore, necessary, in order to make it a style suitable for the communication of truth to us, and evidential of genuineness and authenticity, to let it remain the style peculiar to the sacred writers themselves, with, indeed, that peculiar elevation which the grandeur of the subject and the spirituality which the quickening and enlightening of the spirit would necessarily produce; but also, with all the grammatical imperfections, and all the rhetorical blemishes, which were ordinarily characteristic of the style of those men.

If the Holy Spirit had so controlled the minds of the sacred

witnesses, that, in addition to securing agreement in the substance of the story which they tell, it had secured agreement in all the details, they would have been led to be so different from other truthful witnesses, that they would not have been believed. In giving their testimony in regard to the facts of the sacred history—in regard, for example, to the life and teachings, the miracles and sufferings, the death and resurrection of Christ—there would have been none of those little inaccuracies or of those slight discrepancies which usually accompany, and which are expected to accompany, the testimony of really sincere and honest witnesses. And in that case we could not have tested the validity of the testimony of the sacred witnesses; that is, we could not have applied to it the true and only laws of testimony. And, indeed, we could not have received it; for if it had been unattended by these characteristics, it would have had to be pronounced the result of collusion among them; and, consequently, rejected as false. The inspiration of the Scriptures must be consistent with their being capable of bearing the marks of authenticity, and with their being in such forms of thought and language that they can be understood by men; and, consequently, *all the natural characteristics of the human element, used by the spirit of inspiration, will be preserved and manifested in giving a revelation; while they will, at the same time, be so guided that the truths of salvation shall be infallibly expressed.* The Christian idea of God and man, which, as we have seen, was so powerfully enforced by Luther, will help us receive the Sacred Scriptures as truly inspired and infallible; for it will enable us to see the perfect consistency of the doctrine of plenary inspiration with the existence of those very characteristics which are so constantly pointed to by the enemies of revelation, as inconsistent with the idea of inspiration.

§ 5. *Whatever Theory of Inspiration We Adopt, We Must Hold Fast to its Miraculous Character.*

Inspiration is a miracle, and though it is consistent with and uses the first, it is a second creation, and, consequently, miraculous. The necessity of recognizing the divine element, the supernatural, superhuman element, the *special miraculous divine influence in the Bible, cannot consistently be denied by any who acknowledge the indestructibility of the Bible, and at the same time*

believe in a personal God. As certainly as the creation of the world was a miracle, so certainly is the Bible the result of miraculous influence. And though God in this second creation used the instrumentality of men, and must be supposed to use them as personal spiritual organs, instruments not simply to be played upon, but instruments which shall receive and appropriate, at the same time that they become organs of the revelation which He gives, yet He produces something new—something that humanity itself could not produce, and something which His ordinary influence upon man does not produce. The writer has at this very moment received a review of a work which has just left the press, in which the author says: "I do not care how many errors, mistakes, discrepancies, mis-statements, the Bible may have.....I only wonder there is so little of grotesque, inexplicable, contradictory.....Here is the world such as it is, and here is the Bible just what it always was, stronger than it ever was, as ineradicable as the earth, as irrepressible as the atmosphere." This is true, but the Bible is thus "ineradicable and irrepressible," because of its miraculous divine origination; and because man was made for it, and it for man. It so combines the divine and the human that it is the creature of God; and yet it is so suited to the first creation as the completion of it, so adapted to the wants of sinful man, that it will always find souls impressible by it, seekers after salvation, to whom it will authenticate itself, and who will submit to its authority as to the authority of a special divine revelation. It will exist as long as there is a soul needing salvation, and capable of being saved. When, therefore, this author says: "The Bible is the work of God just in the same sense in which the world is His work," then only the Pantheist can say that the Bible is a natural production; for the Theist, who believes that the world was originated by a miracle, that it is God's work in the sense of its being the effect of supernatural, superhuman power—must say that the Bible is a special, a miraculous work of God. Just as there is the creative element in the existence of the world, so there is a creative element in the production of the Bible. It will not do for any but Pantheists to reject the inspiration of the Scripture, on the ground that "it is as impossible to define the work of God in the Bible as it is to define it in the world;" for the Theist does define the work of God in the world, in that he defines its

origination as an act of creation, a miracle; and so he defines the work of God in the Bible as, in its origination, a special, a miraculous act. It is true that "He did not turn author, and write a treatise, any more than He turned mechanic, and carved a tree." He did not "carve trees" in making the world; but He did originate it by a miraculous act; and He did not "write a treatise" when He produced the Bible, but still He did originate it by miraculous influence. Only the Pantheist can follow the author in saying, "All Scripture that is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, is given by inspiration of God. Holy men of old spake (as they were) moved by the Holy Ghost, and men of to-day speak moved by the Holy Ghost.....But while the proof of the rigid, plenary, mechanical, miraculous inspiration of the Scriptures is nowhere found in the Bible, or out of it, the proof of their real inspiration, of the fact that they come from above and not from below, is found in their very existence, entirely apart from anything they say." But then the author would find that the Pantheist means by "doctrine," "righteousness," "inspiration," "holy," "Holy Ghost," "above," "below," something radically different from what the Bible teaches on such subjects. But while the Bible does nowhere teach a "mechanical" inspiration, yet "proof of the rigid, plenary, miraculous inspiration" is certainly found in the Holy Scriptures. To say, as does this author, that the writers of the four gospels "assume no other authority than any man assumes who undertakes to write the life of the friend and teacher with whom he has been in daily intimate communion, and whom he has held in immeasurable honor and love;" that "the inspiration claimed by the sacred writers is altogether natural," is utterly untenable; for they had the promise of supernatural inspiration from Jesus.

The remarks of Oosterzee are a sufficient refutation of this position, and a suitable close to this section. "It has been said (a) that the sacred writers do not speak of their inspiration, and, on the other hand, now and then make references to their authorities (Luke i. 1-4). Just as though to be silent were here the same thing as to deny, and such a guidance by the Holy Spirit as we have indicated forbade the use of trustworthy documents!—as though the sacred writers do not *make manifest* their inspiration, and would not have called forth a well-merited

distrust, had they testified of it in so many words (John viii. 13). We are reminded (*b*) that the promise of the Holy Spirit was made and fulfilled, not exclusively to the apostles, but to all believers; and, at least, was not personally addressed to the fellow-helpers of the Lord's first witnesses—Mark, Luke, and others. We shall not reply to this objection by a sharp distinction between ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, which is nowhere made in the gospel itself; but we call attention to the fact that, from the nature of the case, the Spirit must work most abundantly in those who stood closest to Jesus, and had in addition received the highest work to accomplish; at the same time, also, nothing forbids us to suppose, as among others Witsius did, a difference of degree in the inspiration of the different witnesses to the same gospel. (*c*) We are pointed to the difference, *inter se*, of the various prophetic and apostolic doctrinal ideas (*lehrbegriffe*); and this is a peculiarity we do not wish simply to ignore. It is an inseparable consequence of the difference of dispensation, of individuality, of circumstances; and is one proof the more that the Holy Spirit has guided them, not only with the highest freedom, but also with the highest wisdom. Only then would the difference cause us anxiety, if it could be shown that the one proclaimed to us what amounted to another gospel than that proclaimed by the other. As it is, we owe precisely to this diversity the infinite fulness and the higher unity of the Scriptures. (*d*) Errors and inaccuracies, in matters of subordinate importance, are, as we have already seen, undoubtedly to be found in the Bible. A Luther, a Calvin, a Coccejus, among the older theologians; a Tholuck, a Neander, a Lange, a Stier, among the more modern ones, have admitted this without hesitation. But this is absolutely nothing against the truth and authority of God's Word, where it is speaking of the way of salvation."

CHAPTER IX.

THE RELATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, IN THE PRODUCTION OF ASSURANCE OF SALVATION, TO THE WORD AND SACRAMENTS AS MEANS OF GRACE, VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF THE IDEA REQUIRED BY THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION.

§ 1. *Inseparable Connexion of the Means of Grace and Immediate Divine Influences.*

THE direct access of the soul to God in Christ, the immediate communion of the believer with God, the witness of the spirit in the assurance of salvation by faith, in short, all the exercises which, according to the principle of the Reformation, are involved in regeneration and sanctification—the very nature and necessities of faith—require the idea both of divinely appointed means of grace and of immediate operations of the Holy Spirit. This is well expressed in the language of the Augsburg Confession: “Through the instrumentality of the Word and Sacraments, the Holy Spirit is given, who, when and where it pleases God, works faith in those who hear the gospel, namely, that God, for Christ’s sake, and not on account of any merit in us, justifies those who believe that they are received into favor for Christ’s sake.”

The Lutheran divines often include Word and Sacrament in the one idea of the Word, inasmuch as *sacramentum* was often called *verbum visibile*. We will use it in the same way. And here attempt not to give an exposition of the means of grace—which belongs to the system—but only to turn attention to the one point above indicated. The Reformers endeavored to apply the principle of the Reformation to this subject. They distinguished the divine Word revealed in the Sacred Scriptures as law and gospel, commandment and promise. By law they meant the Decalogue, by gospel the promise of grace which was promulgated in the Scriptures from the fall of man down; the one as condemning and convicting of sin, the other offering peace and life.

§ 2. *The General Agreement of the Protestants respecting the Means of Grace.*

In opposition to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the mediation of grace through the visible Church, and, especially through the priesthood and its functions, the Protestants with one accord, declared *the Word of God and the Sacraments to be the only means of grace.*

On this point both of the great branches of the Reformation were agreed. The Augsburg Confession, as already quoted, says: "Through the Word and Sacraments as His instruments, the Holy Spirit is given who works faith in those who hear the gospel when and where it pleases Him." The Heidelberg Catechism, in answer to the question whence comes this (saving faith), says: "The Holy Spirit works it in our hearts through the preaching of the gospel and confirms it through the use of the Sacraments."

§ 3. *The Points of Difference between them and the Romanists.*

They both differed from the Romish church in regard to the administrator of the means of grace. The Protestants made it the Church as a universal priesthood, with its special ministry arising out of the universal priesthood and never independent of it or separate from it: the Romanists made it a priesthood which holds by apostolic succession the sole right to dispense the Word and Sacraments. Hence the Romanists claimed the authority to increase or diminish the number of the means of grace, and to dictate how much of each means shall be used. They diminished them by forbidding the free and general reading of the Bible, by withholding the cup from the laity in the Lord's Supper. They increased them in number by adding new ceremonies, such as those of the mass in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, by increasing the number of the Sacraments from two to seven. They modified the idea of them by turning the Lord's Supper into a sacrifice in which the body and blood of Christ—into which the bread and wine are changed—are offered up to God for the forgiveness of sin. The Protestants, on the other hand, rejected the idea that anything but divine truth, in some form, can be a means of grace, and maintained that nothing can be used as a means of grace that is not revealed in

the Bible or which is not in accordance with it, that is not of divine appointment, or which is not agreeable to it.

They both differed from the Romanists in *the degree of comparative importance of these means, and in the order of priority in their use*. The Romanists attached most importance to the Sacraments; they placed the Sacraments first; the Word second in point of order. The Protestants made the Word most prominent; they placed the Word in the first; the Sacraments, in the second place in point of rank. Hence they were called Gospellers; and they loved to call themselves evangelical. The Lutheran Church especially assumed, and still holds the name, "The Evangelical Church." This is manifest even in church architecture. The Romanist gives the altar the most prominent place in the church edifice; the Protestant, the pulpit.

They both differed from the Romanists in regard to *the sources of the means of grace*. The Romanists made oral tradition the great source; the Protestants, the written Word. So also they both differed from the Romanists respecting *the modus operandi of the means of grace*. The Romanists taught what is called *opus operatum*—that is, that the means of grace effect salvation *opere operato* by their mere administration through the hands of a priest rightly ordained, and with intention to do what the Church wishes, *non ponere obicem*—that is, without any subjective faith—if only the subject do not place a bar—that is, be not guilty of any one of the seven mortal sins; all venial sins being removed by the absolution. The Protestants, on the contrary, declared that the means of grace were not efficacious without faith in the subject. And though Luther and his adherents taught baptismal regeneration, they were not exceptions, for they insisted that the children—regenerated in baptism—had faith.

So they were agreed *in opposing the Anabaptists and other fanatics, who rejected all connection between saving grace and the means of grace*—the Word and Sacraments. The Protestants all agreed that divine grace ordinarily operates through the Word as its means or instrument, and that men have no right to say that they have the Spirit of God, if they neglect or reject His revealed and written Word.

§ 4. *The Points of Difference among Protestants Themselves.*

But the Lutherans and Reformed differed among themselves in some points. The Lutherans distinctly include the Sacraments with the Word in the means of grace, in the means by which the Holy Spirit works faith in us. Hence the Augsburg Confession says "that the Holy Spirit works it in us, through the Word and Sacraments." The Reformed, on the other hand, regarded the Word directly, and the Sacraments only indirectly, as means of grace; they regarded the Word as means, and the Sacraments as seals of faith. Hence the Heidelberg Catechism says: "God works it (saving faith) in our hearts through the preaching of His Word, and confirms it through the use of the Sacraments." The Lutherans, while they distinguished between grace and the means of grace, still regarded the two as inseparable. They taught that the Spirit does not operate without the means, and that the saving influences of the Spirit always accompany the use of the means; that He is never absent from His Word. The Reformed, on the contrary, not only distinguished between grace and the means of grace, but they taught that they were separable, in the sense that the means are often without the accompanying of any saving influences of the Spirit; and that He may sometimes operate without any of the ordinary means to the saving of souls. The Lutherans, upon the whole, attached greater importance and ascribed greater efficacy to the means of grace, especially to the Sacraments, than the Reformed would accord to them. The Lutherans taught that we are sure of finding God as the God of grace, only where He has told us He may be found—that is, through the means which He has instituted—and that, as He has given His Word and Sacraments as these means, we ought to use them in the belief that without that use we cannot find Him, and with full confidence that He is never absent from them; in short, that He has given us a revelation of His saving grace only in the person and work of Christ, and that the only assurance of our having a saving connection with the Incarnate Word, is in the use of the word of that Incarnate Word. While they, therefore, on the one hand, rejected the Romish doctrine of the *opus operatum*, and inculcated the necessity of faith in the subject, if these means were to be regarded efficacious for salvation, they equally opposed the idea of the fanatical parties, that our faith could make any-

thing efficacious which was not a means of God's special appointment; and they distinguished between the validity of the means of grace and their efficacy, declaring that not their validity but only their saving efficacy depends upon the faith of the subject; that our faith did not make the means a valid means, did not make Word or Sacrament valid for salvation; that it only made it efficacious in our case. They wished, thus, to make the means of grace valid in themselves or because of the divine institution and appointment, and not dependent upon the intention of the priest on the one hand, nor upon the faith or the subjective state—the thoughts or feelings of men—on the other. They did, thus, *act in the very spirit of the principle of the Reformation*, which, making justification capable of being realized only by faith, *involves the necessity of the object of faith being first presented*. Faith cannot produce justification, it can only accept it, when it is offered; it cannot exist unless the object to be apprehended by it, be first presented and offered independently of its existence. Grace is offered not because we believe, but that we may believe. In thus maintaining this *union of faith and the Word*, they have preserved to the Church, a precious truth of the plan of salvation. They were, perhaps, led, thus, to attach an undue importance to the Sacraments; and to aim at making too rigid a definition of the means of grace, when they entirely excluded prayer as a means of grace, and only regarded it as a necessary accompaniment of the proper use of the Word and Sacraments. When we remember how much importance and force is ascribed in the Sacred Scriptures to prayer, and how much it is insisted upon as the very means by which we receive blessings from the God of grace; that it is a word of God—a form of divine truth as it exists under the influence of the scheme of redemption: a form of truth as well as the Word and Sacraments—it would seem that the Lutheran idea attempts to limit too much or, at least, to *define too precisely*, the means of grace. But the Lutheran view—as it prevailed in the early days of the Reformation, when it still distinguished clearly between the means of grace and grace itself, and taught, as we have seen from the Augsburg Confession, the superadded, immediate influence of the Holy Spirit as accompanying the means of grace—is certainly one of the most true and precious things in the theology of the Reformation. It is a connection of the

Word and Spirit of God, which cannot be too carefully guarded, or too highly cherished.

But at a later day, in opposition to fanatical parties, on the one hand, who, entirely *separated* the operations of the Spirit from the Word; and, on the other, to the Calvinists, who taught that the saving operations of God in connection with means of grace, were not only immediate but *irresistible*—the divines of our Church were led to deny all superadded influences of the Holy Spirit, and to regard the power and operation of the Word and of the Spirit, as *identical*. Both parties, Lutherans as well as Calvinists, seemed to be agreed in the idea that all *immediate* divine influences must be irresistible, and the former denying that grace is irresistible, made it entirely *mediate*, while the latter regarded it as both *immediate* and *irresistible*.

§ 5. *The Erroneousness of the Idea that the Immediate Influences of God must be Irresistible.*

This idea reduces the divine power to a mere physical force—an omnipotence in the negative sense of being uncontrolled by any other force, but not an omnipotence in the positive sense of being self-controlled. It robs the absolute of his personality and exalts his natural above his moral attributes, places the physical higher than the ethical in the idea of God. It makes His power like a blind nature-force, which must go out into all the effects for which it is cause, must effect whatever it can effect. Its logical result, if fully carried out, would be either the separation between God and the world, even the world of spirits, which deism inculcates, and in which He exerts no influence at all upon it—thus it would be another God; or if not this separation, it would be Spinoza's idea of the world of creatures as only divine attributes and operations: and, thus, we would have an acosmism. Or it would result in the naturalistic pantheism which absorbs all divine power into the world: and, thus, we would have pancosmism. It is, thus, utterly inconsistent with the Christian idea of God as revealed in the Bible; and, especially with that idea, as it is required to be apprehended in the light of the principle of the Reformation—with the realistic view of the communion with God which it enforces. The Christian idea determines personality to the absolute, makes Him self-controlling and self-limiting in the creation and government

of His creatures, makes the spring of His absolute power to be moral excellence; the soul of His activity, holy love; which, while it operates upon its creatures, does not destroy but preserves them; which acts upon moral beings consistently with their free will, and for the establishment of them in their distinct and peculiar personal being; which accommodates itself to the receptivity of the human spirit; and whose glory, as Luther says, is in condescending love. In the language of Martensen, "God limits His own power by calling into existence out of the depths of His own eternal life, a world of created beings to whom He gives, in a derivative way, to have life in themselves. But precisely in this way above all others—that He is omnipotent over a free world—does He reveal the inner greatness of His power most clearly." "That is true power which brings free agents into existence, and is notwithstanding able to make itself all in all."

The idea of the resistibility of the divine will is involved necessarily *in the experience of the guilt of sin*. It is, therefore, necessarily inseparable from the principle of the Reformation which makes the sense of the guilt of sin an essential element of saving faith. No man can be in a state of mind to accept Christianity who does not realize the guilt of sin. The true idea of the personal nature of God, and of the personality, freedom, responsibility of man, involves the guilt of sin. Any theory, therefore, which obscures the guilt of sin must be *erroneous or defective*. The pantheistic theories explain sin as inherent in the nature of things, as a mere natural defect necessarily involved in the very existence of the finite, in the necessary evolution of the world of nature and the history of the human world—the evolution of the universe and the development of human life. Sin, like its opposite—holiness—is only a necessary occasion of the life-movement in the progress of man. And, hence, they consistently deny all guilt in sin. The doctrine of absolute, unconditional predestination and of the irresistibility of divine influence, though its Christian professors are secured—by the explicit teachings of the Scriptures respecting the guilt of sin, by the dictates of an enlightened conscience, and by personal experience in religion—against this tendency, nevertheless does, at least, in the speculative apprehension, obscure the guilt of sin. Making sin an object of divine determination, it makes it neces-

sary. For, though it conceives of it as necessary, only as the condition of redemption, it still, thus, makes it, in some sense, necessary to the highest good; not merely a foreseen incident *in* but a necessary part *of* God's plan of the world; not a mere *possibility* involved in the very existence of freedom in the creature—a possibility which should never have become an actuality, which ought to have remained, and could have remained a mere possibility forever, even in the midst of the world of free creatures—but a reality *unavoidable* in the history of the kingdom of spiritual beings. Thus sin loses its moral nature; redemption from it loses its ethical character, and becomes a mere natural process; and, consequently, the consciousness, or, at least, the speculative idea, of the guilt of sin is obscured.

But the Christian idea as apprehended through the principle of the Reformation is inseparable from the experience of sin as sin. And the experience of the guilt of sin *shuts out the idea of its being a necessity*, and requires it to be regarded as a free act of the creature. It involves, therefore, such independence—derived, indeed, from God—but still such independence, such relative independence of human freedom as utterly forbids the idea of the irresistibility of divine influence. If all things are the result of an unconditional decree, there is no real history of man, no reciprocal relation of a divine will and a real human will; and human history becomes only the evolution of that decree. The life of man and of all the moral world, moves onward in a manner similar to the development of the life of brutes, and to the ongoing of the world of nature, differing not in kind but only in degree. If man is not able to resist the divine influence, history cannot be a living movement, in which there is the reciprocal action of the uncreated and the created will—of the Creator and the creature—and human life becomes a movement of like nature with that of a mere physical force. Such an idea either entirely separates the parties, or it destroys all distinction between them. Such a view, consequently, shuts out all possibility of a real communion between God and man; and, thus, comes into direct conflict with the consciousness of that communion which is so much insisted on by the principle of the Reformation.

The Christian idea of God requires us to speak on this wise: As it became God to create the world, so it became Him to

accept the consequences which necessarily must result from such a creation. He is in no necessary relations, but if He puts Himself in relations, He will act in accordance with the relations in which He places Himself. He is under no necessity of creating a world of free beings, but when He has called such beings into existence, He will preserve their freedom. As it is His will to originate a kingdom of spirits, of free beings in creation, so it is His will to share in the vital development of these moral agents, to accommodate His influences in perfect condescension to their freedom as well as their wants; to operate upon them in the most powerful manner, because it is by moral operation; to attain the most wonderful results, because they are moral results; and yet influence them so lovingly, so gently, so wooingly, that He will govern them freely, will gain their obedience, though they could resist. It must be His will to adapt His operations, to subject His power to all the conditions involved in the idea of the creation, which, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, He saw to be worthy of His creative hand, and of His divine acceptance. To say that He could not thus limit Himself in His operations, is to revive the *old heathen idea of the indeterminate infinity* which, as we have seen, is utterly inconsistent with the divine spirituality. Creative love is capable of self-limitation; and, while in the changes, growth and destination of the creature, it will be so close and tenacious that nothing but the free will can tear its object away from its embraces, yet it will adapt itself in the exercise of power to the rational creature's personal freedom and spiritual nature, as well as to its capacities and wants. The fact of a living communion of God with His moral creatures is as necessary to the idea of His moral perfection as the reality of His foreknowledge of the result of their life is to the idea of His natural perfection. The love which is concerned in the realization of His idea, in the execution of His purposes, and in the fulfillment of His promises, belongs as essentially to infinite spiritual excellence as the omniscience, which conceives the plan and foreknows the end, does to infinite physical perfection.

The true Christian idea requires us to suppose that the kingdom of personal spirits is in more immediate communion with God than the world of nature. But this notion of the irresistibility of God's operation implies that nature, which has no free

will, is, as the result of creation, in more immediate communion with Him than the rational creature, inasmuch as it has no relative independence which must first be overpowered. The Christian idea; on the other hand, apprehends the kingdom of free spirits as the special object of God's personal love and sympathy, and the kingdom of impersonal nature as not only distinct from, but inferior to it, and as only a preparation for its existence and manifestation. And if God continue His activity even in the world of nature, and if He make His operation upon it and in it consistent with the preservation of the forces with which He has endued, and with the regular laws with which He originally impressed it—except in the case of miracles, if even this be an exception—He will certainly continue to operate upon the kingdom of spirits, and adapt His influence upon them, and His work in them, to the existence and preservation of the personal moral nature, the comparative self-dependence and freedom, with which He created them—excepting the cases of miraculous power for the introduction of some new origination, if these be, indeed, exceptions. In the communion of God with men, His operation does not destroy or suspend the activity of the soul any more than the human activity will suspend or destroy the divine operation. In the "Old Wisdom," the revived heathen philosophy of the relation of the indeterminate infinite to the defined finite, this is the conception. But the "New Wisdom," the Christian idea, appropriated anew by the principle of the Reformation, makes the divine and the human operations perfectly consistent with each other, and keeps them in union. Human souls are created to be the vessels of the activity, not of an irresistible nature-force, but of the Holy Ghost: to be the personal subjects of a personal influence. God's decree in regard to men is not unconditional. It is not eternally determined, irrespective of the history of His free creatures in time; but is *conditioned by the freedom, which is His own gift*. It is not merely logical, but also ethical; not merely in accordance with the necessities of eternal reason, but also with the *possibilities involved in the freedom of finite beings*. It is for the manifestation of a world of freedom; for the perfection of creatures who, in a derived sense, have life in themselves, possess a self-movement, *which He has allowed* in the constitution of their being, and of which *He Himself has made them conscious*. His

operations upon such creatures are not irresistible. He makes them dependent for their definite results upon the self-determination of the finite will. Thus is He, not the All, but in all. He limits His will in its natural, unconditional power, when He creates and converts men, in such a way, as to manifest it as the holy power of love—the power of that God who is love, and proclaims Himself to man as the God of love. And His glory will consist in His being able, notwithstanding, to be over all, and to have His will done by free beings in heaven and on earth.

§ 6. *The Erroneousness of the Doctrine, which denies the Immediate Influences of the Holy Spirit, and makes the Power of the Means of Grace Identical with that of Grace Itself.*

The Lutheran divines should not have permitted themselves to be driven to this position by the idea that all immediate divine influence is irresistible. In rejecting the doctrine of unconditional predestination, they should also have freed themselves from the notion of the irresistibility of the divine operations upon man—from the idea that the divine influence upon the human will, is, in any form, irresistible; and should thus have liberated themselves from the idea that the admission of the immediateness of the influences of the Spirit, must be denied, if the idea of their irresistibility is to be avoided.

Their position is *inconsistent with the principle of the Reformation*, and with that clear apprehension of the Christian idea which should have been the result of the adoption of this principle. It tends to bring back the "Old Wisdom" which Luther so much deprecated, namely, the idea of God as separate from the world and man; and, thus, to make personal communion with Him, if not practically, yet in idea, impossible. This substitution of the means of grace in the place of God—of the immediate presence of the Holy Spirit, is a return to the *opus operatum* of Romanism. It makes grace operate like an impersonal power, a physical force, a magical agency, and differs from the Romish idea only in that it does not make the priest a part of this force, or a condition of its efficacious operation. It is a tendency to sever the relations of *personal communion between God and the subject of salvation*. It is a return to that deistic idea of God and the world which, as we have seen, is necessarily excluded from theology by the true idea. It repre-

sents the Holy Spirit as having abdicated his operations in favor of the means of grace, as Romanism represents God to have abdicated the powers of salvation in favor of the Church. The reality of the Holy Spirit's influence is inseparable from its immediateness. He does not operate as a blind force of nature, but as a personal, self-conscious voluntary agent in the human soul; and He produces in it movements and changes, which are the result of His design, which correspond to His purpose; and, consequently, He cannot have made His operations identical with the impersonal means of grace, nor have transferred them to the logico-moral operation of the Word and Sacraments. Though in connection with the Word and its contents—He still operates immediately upon the soul; He is personally, and, consequently, immediately present. The Word being originally inspired by Him, does indeed, bring Him with it, and thus, He operates mediately, but He operates, in addition to this, *immediately*. "I (Paul) have planted and Apollos watered but God gave the increase." The Scriptures declare that He is given to us, and that we have assurance of communion with God because "He has given us His Spirit;" that "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God," because of the work of the Holy Ghost "which is given unto us," that "the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God," that "no man calleth Jesus, Lord, save by the Spirit of God." And Luther declares that "the Holy Spirit alone is the interpreter of the Word," that "if he do not interpret it, it remains uninterpreted," that "no man understands the truths of the Word except by the Spirit," that "he must speak it in the heart," "he alone can bring it into the heart."

We are spiritually diseased, and we need healing help, but it is only the personal that can heal the personal. The Word is not personal; it is not a personal agent; it cannot come to us; but we must go to it; we must apply it to our wants. But we could never, in this way, have assurance of salvation, as the principle of the Reformation requires. We would not have the witness of the Spirit. In the language of Julius Mueller, from whom we have derived some of these thoughts: "*The mediateness of his (the Spirit's) influence is only half the expression of this relation; it is completed by the immediateness. The two must be maintained together.*" The divine Word is not a fixed medium

for the Holy Spirit, which separates him from our spirit; it is his organ, *in* and *with* which he is *himself present* with us. As justifying faith places us *in immediate communion with Christ*; so in conversion and sanctification we cannot dispense with the *immediate communion of the Holy Ghost*. It will be found impossible truly to preserve, in the doctrine of justification, that which is the life-nerve of it, namely, the *immediateness of the apprehension of Christ*; if, in the doctrine of conversion, the immediateness of the relation to the Holy Spirit, the personal operation of the latter in our own spirit, be not secured in and with the Word through the content and form of its representations." "The interest of the Lutheran theology in taking this position (that of identifying the power of the Word and the Spirit) was to preserve the belief: That the principal operation of the Holy Spirit is intimately and inseparably connected with the mediating operation of the Word. But for this we think it is now seen that it is not necessary to confound or identify the operations of the Word and the Spirit; and much less to make the influence of the Spirit *immanent in the Word*, or to *limit the operations of the Divine Word, as means of grace, simply and exclusively to the ecclesiastical and official exhibition of it*, as some of the Old Lutherans of our day are doing."

§ 7. *The Evils resulting from the Idea that all Immediate Divine Operations Must Be Irresistible.*

It is manifest that the idea of God, to which the principle of the Reformation so strongly urges, had not been fully appropriated, when men, on the one hand, regarded God's decree unconditional, and His influence irresistible; and when, on the other hand, they thought that to avoid the idea of the irresistibility of the operations of divine grace, they must deny their immediateness. Luther had in some measure apprehended it. He had declared the necessity of rejecting the old idea of God as the undetermined Infinite, and of conceiving of Him as the living, personal God, whose glory is His love, whose greatness is manifested in the power of His condescending love. It was this that led him, if not to renounce, yet to subordinate the speculative idea of unconditional election, to the actual revelation of God's decree, made in the cross of Christ. He so deeply felt this, that he said we needed a new language, a new expression for

this new wisdom, which had come fully into the possession of the faith of the Church, only through the principle of the Reformation. Hence he directs us to the atoning death of the blessed Saviour, if we would know the divine decree ; for in that God had revealed His heart *to* men, and *in regard* to men.

The true idea of God shuts out, on the one hand, the Pelagianism which makes man so independent of God that he can of himself originate holiness ; and, on the other, that Augustinianism which makes man dependent in such a way that he is not a moral agent, that he is not receptive of holiness, but must first be overpowered by an irresistible influence. But that idea of dependence and freedom, and of the point of union between dependence and freedom, involved in the coming together of the eternal and the created will in the attaining of human destiny, of the union of the productivity of God and the receptivity of man, which is experienced in justification by simple faith in Christ alone,—was not then fully developed ; and it could not, perhaps, be scientifically apprehended, until “the new wisdom” had found its expression in the clearer views of the personality of God and man, which *were involved, indeed, in the Reformation, but which it has taken centuries of experience, in both truth and error, to develop.*

Instead of being controlled by this idea, theology returned, consequently, to the old Scholastic system. The old idea of God and man was revived. Instead of keeping the understanding in close connection with experience, with consciousness, with the facts of life, with religion as the living reality, which the principle of the Reformation shows it to be ; and, consequently, with the idea of the personal, living God, implied in the guilt of human sin, and of the freedom of divine grace, implied in the idea of gratuitous justification as involving freedom, in the strictest sense, on the part of God ; with the fact of the blame-worthiness and condemnation of sin, as revealing the freedom of the human will,—instead of being controlled by this conscious experience, from which the Reformation had sprung, and which it always requires,—theology, soon after Luther’s death, returned to the mediæval Scholastic conception of God. This idea, in minds of Pelagian tendency, made the human activity suspend the divine activity ; and in those of Augustinian proclivities, the divine activity suspend the human activity

in the regeneration of the soul. This view was entirely foreign to the Christian idea, to the new life, to the religious experience and strong realistic views of Luther. Instead of conceiving, with Luther, that, "The true, the right God, is the God of life and consolation, of righteousness and goodness," the God who has revealed Himself in a determinate form in Christ, and vouchsafed His presence in a determinate manner in His Church,—it still apprehended Him as simple essence, or as *actus purus*, as absolutely undefined being, as the being in whom there is no distinction of knowledge and will, and in whose decree, eternal reason and everlasting love, logical necessity and ethical holy freedom, cannot be distinguished. It denied all self-limitation to God, overlooking the bearing of the fact of created existence as distinct from Him, made so by His own hand, and, consequently, to be respected as such in His dealings with it; and, therefore, failing to recognize God as adapting His activity to the laws of His own work in nature, and conditioning His influence in and upon the human spirit by the freedom which He has Himself bestowed; it excluded all concrete life from God's nature, all determinate existence from His being; and, consequently, it had to conclude either that He did not act at all, or that He acted irresistibly.

Luther had said: "In the old conception of God—in the 'Old Wisdom'—majesty, power, infinity, were regarded the highest in God; to it it seemed utterly unbecoming that God should not only operate upon man, but should assume human nature, should Himself become man. In the 'Old Wisdom' and language, a creature is something that is infinitely different from the highest God-head; but in the 'New Wisdom' or language, humanity means something more, something in unspeakably close connection with the God-head. We need a new language to express the 'New Wisdom,' the new idea of the likeness of man to God"—that is, the great truth that God is a personal living being, a being whose *acts* are *historical in His relation to man, suited to man's nature as an historical existence*. The neglect of this idea leads either to Deistic or Pantheistic views of God. In the early days of the Reformation, the prevalence of experimental religion prevented this development. In that strong and healthy state of piety, theology was kept close to life, as we have seen in the method of Luther and Melancthon, and in that of the

Augsburg Confession, and, consequently, it was less influenced by the old idea of abstract, undefined infinity, and more by that of the concrete life of the personal God. But when piety declined, and the question of the certainty of truth came to be more and more a purely intellectual one—when the question of the relations of God and man in regeneration was transferred from the heart to the head, and as the true Christian idea of God and man in their personal relations as required by a complete apprehension of the bearings of the principle of the Reformation upon theology and anthropology had not yet been fully developed, and men returned generally to the old scholastic idea—the views which we have considered so defective were the natural and necessary result.

Great evils spring from these defective views. They lead to some of the most deplorable mental tendencies to which man is liable. If men believe that all immediate divine operations are irresistible and, at the same time believe that God acts immediately upon the world of nature and upon the soul of man, there will be fostered a mental disposition favorable to that pantheism which regards the universe as merely the existence-form of the Godhead, which looks upon God as the soul of the world, from which all spirits are developed, and into which they are all, at last, to be absorbed. If they reject all immediate divine influences, because they believe that, if they occurred, they would be irresistible, they will be led toward that deism, which supposes that God, in the original creation, hurled the world into such a distance from Himself that He never operates upon it; that He is so separate from the natural world and the souls of men, that He is a mere idle spectator of their existence and movements.

When men, in the former case, regard all individual human beings as mere dependent and passive vessels for the glory of God, there is, for such thinkers, but one step to the pantheistic view of them, as mere vessels for the glory of the idea. From the representation of them as the mere passive subjects, in which and through which God moves with irresistible power, the way is easy to the pantheistic notion, that they are only transition-points in the evolution of the idea—occasions of the movements of the soul of the world, in the course of its coming into conscious existence. For if the subjects, through which God reveals Himself, be mere means, and not also ends in

themselves; if the divine will operate only on material, whose existence is not an object of personal love and fellowship,—it loses its glory. There is no revelation of itself; for there is no subject which can know it and reciprocate its feelings. Yea, it ceases to be recognized as a personal will, and comes to be regarded—as the pantheist conceives of it—*mere unconscious mind or blind force*.

The doctrine of the irresistibility of divine grace, of all immediate divine operations, gave a powerful impulse to the fuller development of pantheism, which it has received since the period of the Reformation. Absolute predestinarianism, making men only transition-points of the movements of the divine will—the existence of man, the atonement by Christ, saving faith, man and his history, as well as the existence, forms, and movements of the natural world, only the evolution of God's eternal, unconditional decree,—is closely akin to the idea that the *universe and man are only the evolution of God Himself*. It was only the old conception which was carried out into its logical results by the principle of the early ideal pantheism, that all definition, all limitation, is simply negation. *Practically* the professors of absolute predestinarianism in the Church were kept by their devotion to the authority of the Scriptures, their obedience to the dictates of conscience, and their regard for the interests of vital Christianity, from a similar process of thought. But speculatively, and in the course of logical necessity, there was from the pure, undefined, divine essence of the old wisdom, but one step to the world-substance of the ideal pantheism. For it also made so much of God that it was well said to be "God-intoxicated," denying, as it did, the reality of the world in its idea of God, and making God the only real substance, and the universe His eternal attributes of thought and extension. But it was soon changed into naturalistic pantheism—into the idea that God *first attains actual existence through the attributes of thought and extension*. And, as in the old abstract idea of God, as pure undefined substance, all concrete life was transferred, by polytheism, from the Creator to the creature; so, in the pantheistic absolute idea of Him, all the realities of existence are carried, by the positivists, over into the world itself. In this process the idea of God has now no living power or inward reality. It can no longer maintain the existence of its

abstract essence against the concrete cosmos of naturalism. Thus is the process ever onward, from the idea of indeterminate being, to *ideal* pantheism; and from that, to *naturalistic* pantheism.

The latter view, namely, that which, to escape the idea of the irresistibility of all immediate divine operations, denies all immediateness of divine influences, leads to deistic ideas. Thus, by identifying the operations of grace with those of the Word, by enduing the means of grace with divine power, it makes them operate like a physical force. The result, though not so gross, indeed, is yet similar to the *opus operatum* of Romanism. As the latter puts the Church in the place of God, removes God into a distance from the subjects of salvation, and presents the Church with priests and sacraments operating magically; and separates between the souls of individual men and God, thus preventing all immediate communion between them, so the former, by making this communion not to be, in the first instance, communion *personally* with God, but only with Him as He is in the means of grace, or as He is conveyed by them as channels; only as communion with Him, through *impersonal* organs,—leads to the deism which so separates between God and the world, between Creator and creature, that *there is no personal communion between them*. And if this was the tendency of the Old Scholastic Lutheranism, then that of the modern hierarchical Lutheranism—so utterly un-Lutheran in this, respect—is toward pantheism. This hierarchical idea regards the Church as the body of Christ in the sense that it is an embodiment and evolution of Christ. As pantheism makes the universe God-developed, so this makes the Church, simply Christ-developed.

“The idea,” says Julius Mueller, “that immediate influence of God must be irresistible, opened the way for the rationalistic rejection of all supernatural revelation. It proceeds thus: The Son of God appeared in the world, and finished the work of redemption. God then took care that through the inspiration of the Biblical writers, this revelation should be laid down in a book, which is committed, in connection with external circumstances, to the providence of God. First, the Holy Ghost in his living, personal operations in the conversion of man, is set aside in *honor* of the Sacred Scriptures; then in *honor of the natural powers of man*, the supernatural operation of the Holy Scrip-

tures is set aside, and its logico-moral power is put in its place ; and, finally, the conclusion is, that in our conversion and reformation *there is nothing supernatural* ; that the feelings, etc., involved in it, are no greater than would naturally arise from a book, of which we have reason to believe that it is a word of God. From the idea that all immediate divine operations must be irresistible, and, therefore, must be rejected, there was but one step to the position that if *God operate at all supernaturally, He must operate with irresistible omnipotence."*

As the communion with God through means of grace is personal, the true idea of the *modus operandi* of assurance of salvation, of regeneration by grace, will speculatively be attained, in proportion to the clearness and completeness of the *apprehension of the divine and human personality*. We will find, in applying this test to the theories in question, that they contain germs out of which came, if not the development itself, at least occasions and impulses to the development of the modern Deistic and Pantheistic modes of skeptical thought. They naturally lead also to the *rationalistic idea of the impossibility of revelation and miracles*. The philosophy of the Church being not the *new Christian, but the old heathen philosophy*—the idea of God derived from sinful man, and not the idea given by the God of revelation Himself in the Bible ; the revealed idea appropriated not by the reason in its insights, but ignored, or, at least, retained only in a negative form by the mere logical understanding in its notional connections—is it any wonder that men could turn it into forms of opposition to the possibility of miracles? It is very important, therefore, in order to break the force of these objections, to show that they arise from the erroneous idea of the true God ; and that, if men are to believe in the possibility of revelation, they must have the idea of that God, who alone can reveal Himself, and who has revealed Himself. If we would remove the objections to the possibility of miracles, we must *exhibit the true God of revelation*. We must, on the one hand, *eliminate from the church-doctrine all the corruptions which have come from the heathen idea* ; and, on the other, *keep it always in close connection with spiritual experience*. We cannot be too deeply impressed, by all this, with the importance of the experimental religion so much insisted on by Luther and the Pietists, of the personal assurance of salvation through faith,

not only for our own peace and for the conversion of souls, but also as the medium of the true ideas of God and man, and consequently, as the source of a true theological science. The same thing will be found to be the case in the idea of the relation of divine grace to the human will in the production of personal assurance of salvation. Theology should always remember that it deals here with what Luther calls "a divine work in the soul"—the work of a personal agent in a personal subject; a work in which the divine will and the human will are reciprocal; in which the divine fullness and human want are commensurate, and divine productivity and human receptivity correspond to each other.

CHAPTER X.

THE APPLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD AND MAN
TO THE MODUS OPERANDI OF ASSURANCE OF SALVATION—TO
THE RELATION OF DIVINE GRACE TO THE HUMAN WILL—IN
THE LIGHT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE REFORMATION.

ACCORDING to the principle of the Reformation—according to the idea of the divine and human personality as we must now apprehend it—no theory of the assurance of salvation, which entirely ignores the human will, which regards the divine agency as suspending or excluding the personal agency of the subject—can be regarded as true. God's goodness can be bestowed upon the whole universe—upon impersonal as well as personal beings. But His love is a personal quality; it has only personal objects. When God, who is love, communicates Himself to the creature, it is an ethical process. This love must be holy love, or the distinction of Creator and creature would cease to be; and, of course, the communication would cease; for the creature—the receptivity—would have ceased to be; the object of love, of holy, ethical love would have ceased to be. Love must preserve its object, must neither absorb its distinct existence, nor suspend its personal operations. God does not lose Himself, nor does man lose his personal, distinct being in the operation of regeneration and sanctification. As justification is a matter of personal experience, it involves voluntary movements in the subject of salvation. But the erroneous view which excludes all such movements is found in the scholastic systems of the post-Reformation era, in both the Lutheran and the Reformed churches.

§ 1. *They Treat Man as a Mere Passive Subject of Divine Operations.*

Both of them properly rejected the Pelagian idea that the movement in saving faith originates in man, and adopted the doctrine of Augustine that it must come from God. But they apprehended *no point of union between the influence of divine*

grace and the action of the human will. They seemed to regard them as mutually and necessarily excluding one another in their operations. The Calvinistic theory, adopting the ideas of Augustine, said: Our works are evidence of the reality of that faith which is produced by the Holy Spirit alone and produced only in the elect. The fruits of faith, therefore, in a holy life, are the evidence of our personal election to salvation, and, thus, we have assurance of salvation. It made man a mere passive subject of divine and irresistible grace; and in the moment of his regeneration, he is as unconscious of the process involved in the origination of his spiritual life, as he was in the generation of his natural life.

The Lutheran theory rejected the doctrine of unconditional election and irresistible, special grace; and made the Word and Sacraments the revelation of the saving will of God or of the decree of God's grace. If then we have faith in Christ, we have in this faith the assurance of salvation. For as this faith could not be without the saving power of God, as it could not have originated from ourselves, it must have been wrought in us by the Spirit of God through the Word and Sacraments. Man is entirely passive in regeneration; he is like a "block or stone," with only this difference, that he has power to resist. But so far as any agency is concerned he is a passive subject of another's agency. As Andreae, one of the most distinguished authors of the Formula of Concord says, by way of illustration, in one of his sermons: "The subject of regeneration has just as much to do with the regeneration of his soul as the malefactor has with his execution—with the fact that there will be an execution. Just as he might say to the curious crowd who were rushing headlong toward the place: 'Don't be in a hurry, good people, there can't be any hanging till I get there;' so the subject of regeneration, if he could foresee the time and place of his regeneration, could say: 'That case of regeneration cannot take place till I get there.' He must be there; that is all. There must be the subject of the execution in the one case, and the subject of regeneration in the other; but in both cases, the subjects are entirely and equally passive; they have no agency; others produce the entire effect without them, except as subjects upon which to operate." Man is in regeneration as unconscious of the process as he was in his original creation. He knows only

the result, faith and its fruits, and the means by which it has been produced. All conscious experience of the change itself is excluded.

§ 2. *It is only when Assurance of Salvation becomes mainly a Question of Intellect, apart from Experience, that Difficulties Begin.*

As long as the experience of justification by faith is lively and prevalent, and men have not yet to meet the errors and perversions of truth and experience which always spring up in the greatest and purest revivals, there is little interest in the question concerning the mode of the inner assurance of salvation or the objective certainty of truth. This has been settled by the witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart, and the self-evidencing power of the gospel to the soul. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." He is in the possession of life, and his experience of this new life is the experience of immortal life. The believing soul has, therefore, a satisfactory assurance of salvation; realizing the peace of God in inner experience; feeling itself to be in sympathy with God in Christ, and in a state of accordance with His Word; enjoying salvation at the present moment, and assured in its hope of the future; full of love and joy; unspeakably happy in this salvation, it cannot raise the question of its certainty or of the *modus operandi* of the assurance which it feels. But when the glow of piety subsides, and circumstances make it necessary to pass beyond experience; when the doctrine of the certainty of this experience begins to be abused and perverted; or when polemical interests and speculative tendencies lead men to make the subject of religion a matter mainly of the understanding—the question will arise: Is there good ground for this assurance? How do I come to this certainty? Why am I thus sure of my salvation? What is the evidence that my state of mind, this faith, is the work of God? And various answers will be given to the inquiry. And this separation of the intellectual apprehension from the experience in consciousness, did occur. "Inasmuch," says Dorner, "as together with the forgiveness or *justificatio* appropriated in faith there is posited a new state of life, it is not to be wondered at that, for example, in the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, faith is still regarded as renewing as well as justifying, yea,

that *justificatio* is also called *renovatio* and *regeneratio*, whilst the Formula of Concord seeks speculatively or in idea more strictly to distinguish what is still with it, not actually separated; but which, at a later day, resulted too often in an actual separation of that which belongs together."

When it became a question of intellect, various answers were given to the inquiry for the *modus operandi* of assurance of salvation. The Reformers were all agreed respecting the great truths of sin and grace which distinguished them, on the one hand, from the Romanists, and from the mystical parties on the other. They were all agreed concerning the natural depravity of man, and the fact that faith is produced by divine grace alone. But when the question arose: How do we know that this is a real work of grace in our souls? and especially when this question was transferred from the sphere of living experience to that of the logical understanding—from the witness of the Spirit, to the testimony of theology—then different theories were originated.

§ 3. *The Theory of Unconditional Election, and Irresistible Special Grace.*

Some fell back on the doctrine of absolute predestination, of unconditional election to eternal life—an election revealed in irresistible, special grace, as producing saving faith, and thus assurance of salvation. They so separated between the Spirit and the Word, between the force of the means of grace and the power of grace itself, as to teach that as the Word alone could not have been efficacious to produce this change, to work this faith, it must have been the work of electing love, of discriminating grace; and the fact of regeneration is the evidence of our election to eternal life, and the assurance of our perseverance in a state of justification unto the end. This—the Calvinistic predestination—is the Augustinian theory, with the addition of the distinct apprehension of justification by faith alone, and the elimination of the idea of love as the form of faith, and as an element of justifying faith. It said: I am sure of salvation, notwithstanding my sinfulness and depravity, my numerous infirmities and frequent aberrations; I shall be saved from all my delinquencies, and restored after every fall, because of the unconditional divine election manifested in my regeneration, in

my faith. The soul cannot have, and need not have, any personal experience of the process of regeneration; it is entirely passive under the power of an irresistible divine operation. It can know regeneration and faith only by their fruits in a holy life.

§ 4. *The System Which Makes the Word and Sacraments the Efficacious Revelation of Saving Grace.*

Others regarded the justifying grace of God as always efficaciously present, producing regeneration, working faith wherever and whenever it is not resisted, and maintained that this regeneration—this faith itself—is the assurance of salvation. It said: I am sure of my salvation; for, notwithstanding my sinfulness, the Word and Sacraments are not only the power of God unto salvation to all that believe, but they are a constant pledge of grace to me individually; if I fall, I can always be restored again by the power of the Word and the Sacraments; the day of grace—over the entire duration of which the grace of baptism extends—reaches to the end of life. Besides, the Word and Sacraments not only signify grace, but they convey what they signify. They are not only pledges of grace and means of grace, but channels of that grace conveying the blessing of salvation into my soul when I do not resist, or when I cease to resist.

This is the strict Lutheran theory. Luther had taken positions, in his controversies with the fanatics who abused, on the one hand, the doctrine of inner and personal experience, and, on the other, neglected and even rejected the idea of the necessity of external means of grace—positions which, in his case, as we have seen, were not only consistent with the principle of the Reformation, of justification by faith, but required by it; but men afterwards availed themselves of some of these positions to frame this theory of assurance of salvation. This party, not always sharing in the practical, personal experience which Luther had, not always appreciating as Luther did the vital relations of saving truth, maintained this theory especially in opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine of the unconditional decree to salvation, and of the separate and independent operations of saving grace. The theory in its full development is the Roman doctrine, with the addition of the distinct apprehension and

emphatic annunciation of justification by faith alone, and the elimination of the idea that the efficacy of the Word and Sacraments depends upon the intention of the Church or the priest. The Word and Sacraments are efficacious in themselves, invested and endued by God with supernatural, divine power, and are independent, in this respect, of the Church as an external organism. Nor are they dependent for their efficacy upon the will of the subject of salvation; they only become efficacious for salvation to the individual by faith, and that faith which they themselves produce in him. Their validity is independent of our subjective state. They produce their effects of themselves, by inherent, divine power. They are manifestations of God; and just as the objective salvation was wrought out by the Incarnate Word independently of me, so is the subjective salvation produced by the Word (the Sacraments being *verbum visibile*) of the Incarnate Word, without my agency. I am but the passive subject of the divine operations. I have only power to resist, not to yield. If I do not resist or cease to resist, the work is effectual, and I am saved. This theory, consequently, like that of the predestinarian, ignores the will of the subject, makes man the passive subject of divine operations, and places the entire process of regeneration beyond the sphere of any experience in consciousness.

§ 5. *The Theory which Recognizes a Point of Union between Divine Grace and The Human Will in Regeneration.*

But there were others in the Lutheran Church, who, keeping in view the idea of the personality of God and of man, especially the ethical nature of both Creator and creature, the distinction between them, and the essential freedom of both as revealed in justification by faith—in the guilt of sin and the gratuitousness of grace,—felt that man could not be entirely passive. Deeply conscious of the spiritual and active nature of the human soul, they rejected the idea that it could be treated as a mere “block or stone;” and they, consequently, combined the grace of God, the Word and the human will, in the idea of the production of this saving change. And while they regarded man as purely passive in relation to the freeness of justification; the grace of God as the producing cause in regeneration; saving faith in its origination, preservation and completion as the work of the di-

vine Spirit; and the Word and Sacraments as the means and pledges of justifying and sanctifying grace,—yet they would not forget that the subject of salvation is still a personal being; that freedom of choice is an essential element of his existence; that without it, he would not be human; and, consequently, as it could not be lost by the fall, however much it might be obstructed and perverted by sin, it must not only be present, but called into action in the moment of regeneration, or the subject of that change would not be a real man, not a true human being. While they regarded God as the sole author and finisher of the work of saving faith, they would remember that as God is a personal being, He would manifest His power over man, not in the way of a physical force, but as a moral power; and that as man is a personal being, God would deal with him as an ethical subject, and not as with a “block or stone,” “differing only from the material block or stone in that he has the power to resist.” They would remember that as God has chosen to give distinct and free existence to man, He would treat him as a spiritual and personal being, and not as a mere nature-object. They would remember that as He has chosen to limit Himself in the exercise of His power by allowing the existence of personal beings, beings made capable by His own creative hand, of self-action; as He has by His own gift bestowed upon man self-determining power in his ethical relations,—so He would condition His decrees, and adapt His operations to the nature of this free agency in the work of regeneration, that is, would call forth the voluntary acts of the subject. And as God by the revelation of His holiness, brings men to negative repentance or conviction of sin; and by His Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word and Sacraments, produces in them positive repentance and living faith,—so He would excite in them also the consciousness of acceptance with Him—of forgiveness of sin and the certainty of salvation. And, as He is perpetually dealing with men through these revelations and pledges of His prevenient and pardoning grace; they have the constant assurance of salvation—assurance of salvation, notwithstanding their infirmities and short-comings. And in all this as God acts immediately in connection with the means of grace, He allows, yea anticipates, expects a response from the human will. This theory includes all the elements involved in the experience of the assurance of sal-

vation; and, in some form, will always be found the only one perfectly consistent, not only with the *fact*, but also with the *idea* of experimental religion.

This was Melancthon's view, well-known to Luther and tolerated by him. It was the first statement of the truth freed from the one-sidedness of Augustine, on the one hand, and the error of Pelagius, on the other. And though it was a somewhat imperfect statement, it was a well-grounded protest against the extreme of the strict Lutheran party, and a proper complement of Luther's views. It was condemned as synergism by the Formula of Concord, *while its principle was manifestly involved in the ground on which that creed rejects the doctrine of absolute predestination*. The elements of this view were present in the Lutheran Church at a very early day; they have existed in all its history; have modified, more or less, the theology of the Church at all times; and they prevail, to a great extent, in the present systems of all classes of Lutheran theologians; many of the most rigid adherents of the Formula of Concord being, more or less, under the influence of the Melancthonian element; some even acknowledging that injustice has been done to this view of Melancthon, and that the creed needs modification on this point. As this is a most important element in the development of the theology of our Church, we must insert the following very satisfactory view of the subject, taken from "Dorner's History of Protestant Theology": "If Luther believed that he dared not interweave freedom in the process of salvation, because he feared that once admitted, it would irresistibly lead to the reception of the doctrine of meritorious works, and to the denial of the truth that all good is derived from God; the Church of the German Reformation has not in this attached itself to Luther; but very early there is observable a counteraction, more immediately on the part of the laity, against the entire denial of freedom. And this is also expressed officially in the first public Confession, the Augustana. Melancthon and other theologians were led by consciousness to abstain from presenting Luther's doctrine of predestination as the Common Confession of the Evangelical Church. Hence, as Melancthon writes to Brentz, there was a designed silence concerning this question in the Confession; the *liberium arbitrium in civilibus* was taught; and in reference to the spiritual, secondary

causes were especially emphasized, without, however, concealing the fact that Word and Sacrament only have the saving efficacy which is potentially in them when and where, God co-operates with them by His Spirit." "Melanchthon, being predominantly of an ethical character and thereby the complement of Luther, sought constantly more and more in commentaries, and in the later editions of his *Loci*, to secure a place for moral freedom in man." "And the express monument of the prevalence of this mode of thought in Germany on this point of doctrine, is the fact that the Formula of Concord, though unfavorable to Melanchthonianism, and designed to suppress it, yet on this point, if it does not, indeed, adopt its doctrinal type in particulars, does still adopt its fundamental tendency, and seeks to mediate for freedom of choice an indispensable place."

"Already in the Saxon Visitation Articles of 1527, Melanchthon, in immediate connection with the religious, gives emphasis in the strongest way to the ethical phases, and lays such stress upon law and repentance, that it drew down upon him the attacks of the Antinomians. In this conflict Luther placed himself decidedly upon the side of Melanchthon, and in his smaller Catechism, he has appropriated a proper place to the ethical material, especially the Decalogue. In this it was already manifest that the evangelical doctrine of the freedom of the will would take a middle course between Erasmianism and Antinomianism. But Melanchthon constantly developed more and more sharply and independently his ethico-religious standpoint. In the edition of his *Loci* in 1533, he already declared against the denial of contingency in the relation to God, and calls it *Stoicism*. He shows, by reference to antiquity, that conscience has ever remained and spoken in humanity, yea, was an acting factor. He thinks that the conception of guilt would suffer if every moral factor on the side of the will were denied, whether it were by *divine omnipotence* or by *original sin*. He declares that we must not indulge in subtilities concerning election, but hold to the universal promise. Even though the mercy of God is the cause of election, we may, contemplating the matter from below, say that those are certainly elected who appropriate grace. But there is also a certain *causality* of the *justificatio* even in him who receives it, though not a *worthiness*." "He does not deny the spiritual impotency of the will, but it is strengthened

by the Word of God, to which it can attach itself. Thus he comes to his *three* coöperating causes of salvation: The *Word*, the *Holy Spirit*, and the *Will* which does not remain inactive, but resists infirmities *in such a manner*, indeed, that God's call and helping movement precede this will which merits nothing, but occupies only an instrumental relation to salvation." "Man can pray for help, and he can reject grace. This he calls free will, as power to attach itself to grace (*liberum arbitrium, as facultas applicandi sese ad gratiam*): Grace disposes man; he must freely consent to it. Here Melanchthon does not, by any means (as Frank, Formula of Concord I. 134, thinks) ascribe to free will a meritorious causality (*causa meritoria*). The fides remains for him "*οργανον ληπτικον* instrumental mediation, the possession of salvation, not of merit. The power to decide for the good he derives in every instance from God—from grace, mediated by the Word, which is conceived of as essentially preventent and as removing the effects of original sin." "Finally, we cannot find anything essentially blame-worthy in Melanchthon's doctrine of free will. In its real meaning, it is not, indeed, touched by the counter propositions of the Formula of Concord. He designs not in the least, to limit grace or to magnify human independence of God, but designs the preservation of the idea of the guilt of sin, and the ethical character of the process of salvation, and, consequently, that the work of conversion should proceed in the form of our own personal consciousness and choice, which cannot be denied without injury to a fundamental tendency of the Reformation—its tendency to recognizing personality in God and man."

This fundamental tendency of the Reformation—its tendency to produce a clearer apprehension and a more complete appropriation of the Christian idea of the personality of God and of man,—must eventually lead to the rejection of the doctrine of unconditional election and of irresistible grace, on the one hand, and of the "block and stone" theory of human passivity on the other. If man were a mere nature-entity, the end of his being would be determined by his constitution; he would be purely passive under the operation of the force which supplied his wants and accomplished his destiny. But as he is a personal being; the end for which he exists is a goal the attainment of which involves personal agency. The supply of his personal

wants as a finite being involves *free* divine communication and *free* human reception; and his regeneration as a sinful creature, *free* divine operation and *free* human submission. It involves *personal* action on the part of God, and a *personal* act on the part of man. Though it must be regarded as merely a yielding act, still it is an act; that is, the subject of regeneration is not purely passive. The regenerating influence originates with God, but man yields to it. God produces the change; man accepts and acts it. God does not regenerate man without calling forth the action of the human will. Thus the true Christian idea of God and man, as the experience of faith enables men more and more to apprehend it, will restrict the Augustinianism both of the Calvinistic predestinarian and of the strict Lutheran theories, and so modify and complete that of Melancthon as to free it from any unevangelical synergism.

§ 6. *The View Required by the Principle of the Reformation.*

The Augustinian theory is right as against the Pelagian idea of the powers of man; of his power as a finite being to produce the good and to originate holiness, of his ability as a sinful creature to initiate the process of regeneration, of his acting separately and independently of God, of his capability to perform meritorious works, and of his being able positively and actively to contribute to his regeneration; for this Pelagian idea is certainly not the true and complete speculative apprehension of man's nature and relations to God. But the Augustinian idea is imperfect and one-sided. It overlooks the fact that, according to the Scriptures, man is a *spirit*; that willing is as much an element of his nature, as thinking and feeling; that he is made for the infinite; that he has an inseparable relation to God; that he does not find his origin or end in the mere life of his species, but only in God; that the individual man has not only a general character derived from the race, but a personal peculiarity which comes from his immediate relation to God; that he belongs to the kingdom of spirits as well as to the kingdom of nature; that he has an impress from the finger of God, as well as a bent from the depravity of the race. It overlooks the fact that according to the Scriptures there is yet remaining in every man, though obscured by natural depravity, the image of God. His life is to be regarded as sacred, and the great guilt of

murder is that "In the image of God made He man;" "the world of iniquity that the tongue is," is that it "curses men which are made after the similitude of God." It overlooks the fact that man is a personal spirit, though he is obstructed by the bondage of sin, that he has capacity for truth, though so deluded "by the blindness of the heart," that he "holds the truth in unrighteousness;" that men "should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him;" that they have a consciousness of God; "that that which may be known of God is manifest in them;" "that they are a law unto themselves;" have a conscience, a moral imperative binding them to God and pointing them to eternity, "their thoughts meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another;" and, consequently, that men have still a spiritual susceptibility. The Scriptures recognize every man as having his being under the illuminating influence of the same Logos from whom he has his existence, and as having susceptibilities to which the gospel attaches itself.

While Pelagianism regards man in his nature so separate and independent as to have a Deistic tendency, Augustinianism also acts, as if man by the fall, were out of all spiritual relation to God; as if there were an actual separation, in which the movement for union must not only begin with God, but must be initiated as independently of man, as much without his agency, as much leaving him out of the question, as it would be, if he had fallen out of existence; as if there were in him no relation of a spiritual nature whatever to God and His operations; as if the process of regeneration were as arbitrary and mechanical as the Deist's view of God and the world; as if he were not only created anew, but *de novo*; nothing existing in his spiritual nature to condition the divine action; as if it were the annihilation of the individual and the literal creation of a new man. On the other hand, like Pantheism, it makes individual men seem to be mere phenomenal manifestations of the divine life—not images of God and organs of His revelation.

Now the principle of the Reformation preserves the distinction and the relation between God and man. It brings to conscious experience and clear apprehension, not only the distinction of creatorship and creatureship, and of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man; but, in these distinctions, the point of contact between the Holy God and the sinful creature, between

Christianity and human nature, by the conception of sin and grace in the light of the personality of man and the Holy Freedom of God; the apprehension and appropriation of the Scriptural idea of the relation between God and man, of divine grace and human capacity; of God as free to punish the sinner, but as having a divine necessity of atonement for sin, if he would pardon; of the nature of man, not as merely passive before God, but as also receptive, a being who, while unable to merit or originate or produce, is free to accept, in opposition to the "block and stone" idea of the strict Lutheran theory, and to the notion of irresistible grace involved in the Calvinistic predestination. On the other hand it would modify or guard the Melancthonian view by bringing to clear light this *spiritual susceptibility more as a receptivity than a productivity, more as a yielding, as an accepting act, an act put forth only under divine influence, than as an act which is self-originated.* It would make the experience of the guilt of sin and the operations of the human conscience, the witness to the present sinfulness of man, the evidence of his original holiness and blessed relation to God; and his present capacity, not religious productivity but spiritual receptivity. It represents man as in a state of sin, as fallen, indeed, and alienated, but not separated from God; not as having lost his relation to God, but as being sinful and unhappy in it. There must be a *meeting of the divine will and the human will. There must be movements on the part of God and man; and the movements must begin with God, but they are not arbitrary.* The atonement is as much a divine necessity as repentance is a human necessity, if there are to be forgiveness of sin and reconciliation between God and man—not a physical or metaphysical necessity, but a moral necessity. Even the creation of the world was not a necessity to God, but having created a moral world into which sin has come, *forgiveness of the sinful creature involves the necessity of atonement.* The atonement being made and man repentant, God reconciled and man believing, harmony between God and man is re-established, and a real, living beginning of the realization of the idea of man's existence is made. Now in the accomplishment of this end, it would regard God as the *originator and producer of all, as taking the initiative.* But it would also have us regard the facts of reason, conscience, intellectual endowments, as all involved in spiritual regeneration and relig-

ious life : man as sinful, but still personal, still having traces of the image of God—*all points of contact for divine grace*. The man is only brought into his normal state ; the true Christian being the true man. He is related to grace as the earth is to the sun ; he *needs* grace and he is *receptive* of it. He is related to grace as the earth to “the rain that cometh down from heaven and returneth not thither, but watereth it, and maketh it bring forth and bud.” He has not natural nor moral, but he has gracious ability—*ability through the relation into which he is brought to God by prevenient grace*. He is not productive, but he is receptive ; God produces all, but *not without man’s acting all*. Man cannot, of himself, realize the idea or attain the goal of his being. But his wants and divine grace correspond to each other ; his receptivity and the gift of divine life are commensurate. *The gift of the Spirit is inseparable from the gift of the Son*. Divine grace is the productive power ; human want the receptive power ; the divine Spirit the illuminating power, the human soul the apprehending power. God alone can give ; man can only receive. The principle of the Reformation gives the true theistic idea which neither separates God from man as does Deism ; nor confounds God with him as does Pantheism—the true idea of God, not as mere abstract being but concrete life, not as extensively but intensively infinite, the living God acting in close connection with the creatures He has made, and with the institutions He has ordained for the attainment of their destination. *By its union of experience and reason, of fact and thought, it gives not a mere idealistic or spiritualistic, but a realistic idea of the divine operations. It involves the conception of a contact of the divine and the human in the regeneration and sanctification of the soul ; and as the soul is a personal being, it cannot be merely and purely passive in this change*. It would have us notice the fact that there is in every man an organ for religion ; that religion is a life-element prevailing in some way universally and necessarily among men ; and the fact that God has given a general revelation, and that as man has belief in the reality of natural objects only because he has receptivity for impressions from the external world, so to have faith in religious realities, he must have receptivity for divine influences ; and consequently, he cannot be entirely passive in regeneration. This is the only theory that is entirely consistent with the idea of experimental

religion. Hence Melancthon indignantly rejects the Romish figment of the *opus operatum* of the Sacraments which, as he says in the Apology to the Augsburg Confession: "Imagines that the Holy Ghost is given through them without any good motions of the recipient; as if the gift of the Holy Ghost were a matter in which we ourselves needed not to be active." A Luther whose piety was so original and deep-rooted that it was not only independent of, but in a great measure separate from, theology, would not so fully realize this as a Melancthon, the man of science, whose piety, though equally sincere and earnest, was more immediately connected with his theology, yea, was so inseparable from theological thought, that he could declare—what every theologian ought to be able to say—that his own spiritual edification was constantly in his view in all his theological labors. Faith, as we have seen, is independent, for its existence, of science; but when it does enter into connection with it, it will be promoted or hindered, according as the ideas of the latter are or are not consistent with its purity and power. So this question of assurance of salvation having once become a question of intellect, the Melancthonian theory becomes very important. It is the system which will always enter deeply into a living theology. As this has been the tendency from the days of Arndt and Spener down to the latest revival, so it ever will be the tendency most closely connected with experimental and practical religion.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NEED AND BENEFIT OF SUCH A RETURN TO THE PRINCIPLE
OF THE LUTHERAN REFORMATION IN THIS AGE AND IN THIS
COUNTRY.

§ 1. *The Great and Imperishable Interests of Theology.*

SOME say that theology is on the wane; that its days are numbered: that it will soon be no more. This is as much evidence of shallow views of the nature and relations of things as was the attempt of the skeptics in the last age to expound religion as the result of priestcraft. Theology will always live. It is the most important of all sciences—*scientia scientiarum*. Its subject is the deepest in its relations and the most comprehensive in its range; the noblest in its sentiments and the highest in its end; the greatest element in all the institutions of men, and the mightiest power in all the movements of human society, giving the highest degree of intensity to the capacities and energies, the thoughts and feelings, the purposes and efforts, the labors and conflicts, the joys and hopes, the self-denials and the sacrifices, of the children of men. Goethe only gives us evidence of the great mind that he was, and that he was great as a philosopher as well as a poet, when he says: "The conflict between belief and unbelief is the deepest—the sole problem of the history of the world." As religion, however much it may, at times, be neglected or perverted, will, at last, always show itself to be the overpowering, all-controlling, all-absorbing feeling of human nature; so theology *will never fail to be one of the greatest intellectual*, as well as practical interests of men—will prove itself to be the kingdom of God in the intellect as well as in the heart. Instead of declining it will increase in interest in proportion to mental development. The processes of theology involve the greatest conceivable topics, embracing such subjects as the divine nature and attributes; God's counsels, works and providence; the religious nature of man; his primitive innocence, his

fall and depravity, his redemption and regeneration, his character, origin and destiny—they will consequently never lose their hold upon the human mind.

§ 2. *How Theology may Promote the Interests of Christianity amidst its Ever-varying Circumstances and its Constantly Changing Dogmatic Forms.*

While Christianity is imperishable, its circumstances change; and it is the great task of theology to exhibit it in such forms as will make it most successful in overcoming the peculiar opposition, and in supplying the special wants of the times. The present day requires a new application of apologetical labor for the defense of Christianity. The following view of the present condition of Christianity, given by President Killen, of the Presbyterian College, Belfast, which has just left the press, is no doubt correct: "The age in which we live presents peculiar characteristics. The zeal displayed in the erection and multiplication of churches, the industry employed in the printing and circulation of the Scriptures, the increase of the agencies for the spiritual amelioration of society, the energy and self-denial exhibited by not a few ministers and missionaries, the great awakenings which have taken place in many parts of the world, and the immense sums expended in various ways for the support and advancement of the gospel, all attest the existence of a large amount of earnest Christianity; and yet, seldom has skepticism been so openly avowed, and so diligently propagated. It is well known that it has leavened whole masses of the working population in America and Europe; and, if we are to believe the statements of some of its distinguished advocates, it has spread to an alarming extent among the upper ranks in England and elsewhere. The avidity with which the productions of infidel authors are perused, and the manner in which they are pushed into notice by certain popular journalists, who dare not distinctly acknowledge their approval of them, reveal a very unhealthy state of the public mind. An essayist of wit and flippancy, who possesses a smattering of general knowledge which he can make readily available for the entertainment of others, and who never loses an opportunity of turning religion into ridicule, is almost sure to find a multitude of readers."

In this state of the Christian warfare, we think that there is a

necessity of betaking ourselves to the great citadel, the principle of the Reformation. There the Christian idea appears in a light that will enable us to have the greatest intellectual confidence in its truth, and to exhibit it in the most attractive and convincing forms to others. As in the days of the waning of confidence in Christian truth, incurred by the erroneous methods in which it had been treated and presented, and the heterogeneous materials with which it had been encumbered, in the pre-Reformation era; so now, in these days of the eclipse of faith, of growing skepticism, the principle of the Reformation—the principle of faith in the simplicity of its truth, and it alone—is the light in which to point out the way by which *confidence* in Christian truth can be restored. If, instead of meeting the present objections, which are the result of developments made possible through the impulse given to the human mind in the Reformation, by merely opposing to them the present forms of Christianity, we go back anew to the principle of that great source of the modern movements of the human mind—and now, in the light of all the discoveries and experiences of men, of all the consciousness and realization of personal being and its relations, which have been made in the secular as well as the ecclesiastical mind—and appropriate afresh that central principle of religious truth, yea, of all truth, we will be able to see for ourselves and to make others see, how Christian truth plants itself in the inmost thinking, feeling, and willing of the sincerely inquiring mind, and how it authenticates itself as coming from God. In this spirit there will spring up the confidence that all true science will be Christian science in its completed results; that the highest speculative thought will be found, in due time, to be in perfect harmony with the deepest evangelical experience, or, at least, not inconsistent with it; and that every scientific discovery of the laws of nature will, at last, be in agreement with the Christian idea of God and the world, of religion and man.

So it led Luther and his coadjutors in the beginning of the Reformation, as we have seen, to regard the gospel as self-evidencing, as a power of God which carries its own evidence with it into the consciousness of the earnest seeker for the certainty of truth, of the anxious inquirer after the assurance of salvation. It led them to place the certainty of Christian truth, thus at-

tainable, upon a level with the necessary truths of the reason. It will give us full confidence in the certainty of Christian truth for ourselves, and, thus, great influence over others. As secular science starts in experience, so the principle of the Reformation gives us a starting point for Christian science in experience, and thus leads us to look upon Christian truth as having such living relations to the wants of man, and coming to him so really by contact of divine realities with his spiritual susceptibilities, that we will expect the result in the end to be as necessarily Christian faith, as, in the contact of natural objects with the mind, the result is natural faith; that as the latter terminates in the belief of the world of nature, so does the former, in faith in the reality of the spiritual world. If this be not the result, it is because the question has become, through moral depravity, not so much a question of intellect as of will. The experience of sin and grace, of the guilt of sinful man and the mercy of the holy God, prepares the way for the recognition of the certainty of Christian truth as satisfactorily as does natural experience for that of natural truth.

The same thing holds in regard to the changes of dogmatic forms. While theology is imperishable, it is progressive; and its forms will change. And in the reconstruction which seems to be now setting in with unprecedented rapidity, freedom and independence, we are convinced that men will be successful in their efforts just in proportion to the completeness of their return to primitive Christianity, as it found its true expression in the principle of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Another clear-minded British author has lately said: "Nevertheless, voices.....are telling us that we are in the midst of a transition age, so loudly that the dullest cannot choose but hear. It needs no diviner to tell us that *this century will not pass without a great breaking up* of the dogmatic structures that have been held *ever since the Reformation or the succeeding age*. From every side at once a simplifying of the codes, or a revision of the standards, is being demanded. I will not ask whether this is good or bad, desirable or not. It is enough that it is inevitable. From such removal of old landmarks, two opposite results may arise. Either it may *make faith easier, by taking cumbrous forms out of the way—it may make the approach to Christ and God more simple and more natural—may, in fact,*

bring God nearer to the souls of men—or it may remove Him to a greater distance, and make life more completely secular. Which shall the result be? This depends, for each one of us, on the way we use the new state of things, on the preparedness or unpreparedness of heart with which we meet it." The good result will not be wrought out by a destructive radicalism which has no respect for the past; nor will it be secured by the blind conservatism which would resist all the improvements of the present. The proper preparedness will not consist in making the certainty of truth a merely intellectual question, apart from personal experience of its saving power; nor in a rigid adherence to the old forms of doctrine, however unsuitable to the new state of mental development in Christendom. But the preparedness for the good result, as well as the realization of it, will be in proportion to our return to that immediateness of access to God in Christ, which is independent of scientific conception and of dogmatic formula, which is involved in the fact of justification by faith alone, and in which the certainty of truth and assurance of salvation become a matter of experience. In this we will have a proper basis for the reconstruction of dogmatic forms, and a true starting-point for sound theological progress in the light of the Sacred Scriptures. In short, the true preparation for the new state of things, and for the proper use of it, will be found *in the revival of the principle of the Reformation as it existed in the early days of the Reformation*; in the clear apprehension of the ideas involved in that principle, as they have since been developed; and in the more complete appropriation of the Christian idea of God and the world, of religion and man, which the principle of the Reformation has always demanded, but which has become more and more practicable in the light of centuries of psychological investigation, ethical research, and practical experience. Especially should this appropriation be now made anew under the influence of that deep consciousness and high view of personality, divine and human—a necessary result of the Reformation, but which could never before have been so fully realized. The principle of the Reformation alone has the capacity for a true assimilation of truth, and a perfect certainty of truth. As we have seen, there was never before the Reformation a clear apprehension of the ground of inner certainty of truth, and of personal assurance of salvation; but

the principle of the the Reformation leads to this, makes truth the personal property of man, connects it most intimately with his self-consciousness. It confirms the harmony of the first and second creations; represents the highest manifestation of truth to be in their agreement; overthrows all the barriers which had been thrown in the way of the apprehension and appropriation of the first creation, and secures anew the unity of the man and the Christian; attaches itself to the conscience, to the moral nature, and to the natural knowledge of man; in short, represents Christianity as capable of leading to that higher stage of self-consciousness, in which the mind will realize its restoration to the unity with God which is the perfection of its being, the realization of its ideal, the fulfillment of its destination.

§ 3. *The Affinity of the Principle of the Reformation with the Spirit and Method of Science.*

We should not, for a moment, indulge the idea that either stagnation in the progress of science or destruction of the faith is desirable or possible. Neither faith nor science is or should be destructible. There ought to be no conflict, and the source of the conflict which exists must, like all the conflicts of society, be ascribed to our sinful depravity. "Neither the history of nations, nor that of individuals, is characterized," says Martensen, "by harmonious progress; on the contrary, at one time we find a false tendency to movement which leads to the fruit being plucked before it is ripe, and the goal being reached forward to ere the development is complete; at another time spiritless stagnation, when life seems to have been brought to a close just where it ought to begin. How often, too, do we find the progress of both peoples and individuals interrupted by their falling back into old and long-discarded errors. The conflicts constantly taking place in social life between the old and the new, bear witness to the existence of this disorganization, which chokes the germs of the future and denies the past, instead of seeking to secure for its spirit and substance a continuous and progressive life."

We should not admit the idea that there is a real conflict between the Christian faith and true science. Certainly this is not the case with the principle of the Reformation in its presentation of Christianity. So far from its being different, in its spirit

and mode, from true science, it may be said to *have in it the very soul of modern science*. Indeed, it was the requirement of the certainty of truth through experience which was involved in the principle of the Reformation, that first gave the impulse to that doctrine of the necessity of experience and observation which now pervades so thoroughly the methods of science, and under the influence of which its greatest achievements have been made. It is too often forgotten by the enemies of Christianity, and even by its friends, nay, even by its theologians, that if modern science declares that we must begin, not with a priori conceptions of nature, but with experience, the Lutheran Reformation had said this long before respecting supernatural things; that it inculcated an inner certainty of truth through personal experience as the starting point in Christian science. The Lutheran Reformation was the mother of *the spirit of a modern philosophy as well as of a new theology*—was the source of the speculative apprehension of the Christian idea, “the New Wisdom,” as well as of the deep sense of Evangelical experience, of experimental religion, of the experience of the power of the gospel unto personal salvation, which has been the great characteristic of the revivals of religion so frequent and general since that day.

We should be mainly concerned, therefore, to free Christianity from all heterogeneous materials, which may have been commingled with it; and to exhibit it with full confidence in its self-evidencing character—its self-authenticating power. Thus exhibited, it will always find faith in sincere minds. However great may be the appearance of estrangement between Christianity and science, it must be only apparent; and if real, it can only be temporary. The completed theology and the final philosophy will be in perfect harmony. Genuine Evangelical experience and true speculative thought are really in agreement, and will sooner or later be seen to be so. *Modern philosophy, in all that distinguishes it from ancient philosophy*, is the child of Christianity; and as it was, in its incipency, produced by a Christian impulse, so it will be brought, by the *principle of the Reformation*, which embodies the spirit of Christianity, to *free itself from the heathen idea*—the elements really foreign to its true nature—and, in its culmination, to adopt the Christian idea as revealed in the Bible, and the Christian salvation as it is experienced by its earnest professors, as the only satisfactory

solution of the mysteries of existence—of our origin and destiny—the only hope of recovery from the depravities, and the only source of comfort amid the miseries of life; the only ground of hopeful prospects for man on earth, or of blessed results beyond the bounds of time; the only sure promise of an immortal life, the only certain pledge of perfect holiness and final happiness for him—obliged as he is to contemplate death and the grave.

§ 4. *The Results of the Appropriation anew of the Principle of the Reformation upon Science at this Day.*

In proportion to the completeness with which theology appropriates and exhibits Christianity in the spirit of the Reformation, will it gain a strong hold upon the human mind. It is when it stands upon the ground of the experience of faith, and keeps in close connection with life, that Christian science will most powerfully influence even the intellect of mankind. It will then be found, more and more, that Christianity is adapted to our inner capacities and wants, to the necessities of man *as rational* as well as sentient, to the *requirements of reason* as well as the feelings of the heart, to our *primitive nature* as well as to our sinful state. It will gradually be seen that the second creation, so far from being in conflict, even in its miraculous character, with the first creation, is really the completion of it—is that in view of which it was, and in view of which only it could be properly called into being, and in which it is to find its perfection and its end. It will be found that *Christianity attaches itself to the true nature of man*; that it is not only and mainly an external authority, or an outer law without affinity to the innate laws of our being, but that it is capable of being incorporated and designed to be embodied in our mental life; that it is not only the law that binds us to God, and the universe as God would have it, but that it is, at the same time, the power which secures our personal perfection, our individual destination to holiness and happiness—in the blessedness of love—in the harmony of the world of ethical being. It will be seen that in it only do we find the revelation of the universally valid idea of being, the bond of unity of the moral universe, the ground and end of our existence, and especially the origination and consummation of the ethical system into which sin has

come. The Christian idea, as it is revealed in the Scriptures and enforced by the principle of the Reformation, only needs to be fairly exhibited, and it will find a lodgment for itself in the souls of men. It will "commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." It will show itself to be the proper guide to the goal of our existence, to be the fulfilling of our receptivity, the supplying of our wants. It will show that our being in its most fundamental relation *is precisely capacity for faith*, and that the last and full form of faith, its only appropriate, satisfactory, perfect conception, will be that of God—*God in Christ*; that when the mind is taken captive in obedience to the cross, it is only the reason checking its abnormal tendencies, subduing its unnatural pride, curbing its erroneous impulses, and correcting the corruptions of a sinful heart by the light of the gospel and the power of grace, as by the light of truth and the power of right, by a light and a power which do not destroy, or supersede, or suspend its freedom, or its functions, or its activities, but become one with it in all the proper exercises of its being. It will be seen that in becoming Christian, humanity only throws off its false and assumes its true character, only turns from wrong to right relations of existence; that it is reason itself which is conqueror when the mind submits to Christianity; that the Christian mind is the reason in its normal state—a state from which it had fallen by sin and to which only Christianity could restore it—that it is then, and then only, upon the way to the great end of its being; and that all true culture must proceed from, and lead to, Christ, the great centre of all truth as He is the centre of revealed truth.

§ 5. *This is the Great Task of Theology at the Present Day and in This Country.*

To preserve this great principle from heterogeneous materials, and to trace it in all its intellectual as well as its spiritual and cosmical bearings, wherever it already exists, and to introduce it where it is still absent, is *the great task to which theology should address itself in this age and in this country*. Especially should the theology of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, share largely in this work. It is, indeed, not the work of a sect, or of a Church, but the work of Christian men who have been so situated and trained in their

ecclesiastical history and relations, as to have their hearts best qualified, and their minds most free for untrammelled effort; and among no other body of Christians have we a right to expect so large a proportion of such men—a work for all evangelical Christians, but especially for evangelical Lutherans in this age and in this country.

As all the centuries of the pre-Reformation life, both ecclesiastical and sectarian—as all the results of theology, both scholastic and mystical—were a preparation, either negatively or positively, of the way for the *original* annunciation of the principle of the Reformation, that justifying faith is the central fact of the Christian life and the regulative principle for the application of all truth, and that it is only by the Sacred Scriptures that the objective presuppositions and realities of faith can be verified; so all the post-Reformation structures of doctrine and ecclesiastical developments—Lutheranism, Zwinglianism, Calvinism, Arminianism, doctrinally; and Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism, ecclesiastically—ought now to be regarded as so many preparations, made through centuries of experience and observation, *for going back*—not empty-handed, but richly laden with the precious results which have been gathered, and effectually warned by the bitter fruits of the full *development of the heathen idea, and the comparative neglect of the true idea of God*—and taking up anew, and in the light and power of all this experience, making a more perfect appropriation of the principle of the Reformation, and a *more complete apprehension of the Christian idea*—necessarily springing from it with peculiar clearness and intensity—in all its bearings upon the doctrines and forms of the Church, and upon the several spheres and interests of life as they now exist.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PRACTICABILITY OF MEETING THIS WANT, AND OF REALIZING THIS PROSPECT FOR AN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN THEOLOGY AT THE PRESENT DAY.

§ 1. *The Present State of Skeptical Thought affords an Advantageous Position and a Great Source of Encouragement to Theology in General.*

THEOLOGY has now, by the acknowledgment of its opponents, the right to claim for Christianity the exclusive possession of beliefs which were formerly claimed by infidelity to be established by reason independently of revelation. In a former age skepticism spoke of a large portion of spiritual truth as independent of the influence of Christianity. Formerly it confidently spoke of "the universal religion," to which all the various religions that have existed—and Christianity among the rest—could be reduced, and which is to be regarded as sufficient for all mankind. "This universal system consists of five articles: 1. That there is one supreme God. 2. That He is to be worshiped. 3. That piety and virtue are the principal parts of His worship. 4. That man should repent of sin, and that if he does so God will pardon it. 5. That there are rewards for the good, and punishments for the evil, partly in this life, and partly in a future state." These articles, it supposed, were sentiments inscribed by the finger of God in the creation of man upon the minds of all men. Hitherto it spoke eloquently of a personal God, of the freedom and responsibility, the spiritual dignity and immortal destiny of man; of the distinctions between virtue and vice, of the elevating and purifying influence of a rational belief in God as the Creator, Redeemer, Governor and final Judge of the world; of the satisfaction and consolation, amid the depravities and sufferings of earth, derived from the hope of a blessed immortality. And it made this position, which it supposed it could occupy between Christianity and Atheism, its strong point in rejecting all special revelation.

But now infidelity holds that these beliefs are all of them superstitious notions, that they are not discoveries of reason, but the result of Christianity as the great source of superstitious beliefs. It now acknowledges that there are but two world-views, but two ideas of the universe possible to human conception, on the last and most complete scientific analysis; the one, the Christian idea, the other, the heathen conception of God and the world; the one acknowledging all these beliefs respecting the spiritual nature of man on earth and all these hopes for him in heaven, the other excluding them all. In its complete scientific development—the culmination to which it has now come—it declares that there is no personal God and no personal immortality; that men are not only in consequence of their sinful alienation—as even the Christian might say—but by the very nature and constitution of their being, “without God and without hope in the world.” There seem, indeed, to be only two grand sources of human thought on this subject. “In regard to the efforts made by philosophy,” says Martensen, “to solve the problem of the rise and origin of things, we remark that it is in all cases limited to the choice between the type of mythology and that of revelation. For although we do not overlook the distinction between intuition and conception, there is no denying the fact, that all that is *essential* in the knowledge possessed by humanity, and the fundamental features of its consciousness of these things, are embodied either in myths or in revelation. Nothing more can be *positively* known concerning these things than is furnished by mythology and revelation, by the mythological representations of *chaos* and the Mosaic idea of the *creative Word*, the profounder signification of which was first opened by John in the prologue to his gospel. The one or other of these types is necessarily followed by every logically self-consistent system of philosophy. The most recent philosophical systems have received their fructifying element principally from the *mythological* type, especially from the Greek view of the world, and have endeavored to explain the origin of things in a purely cosmogonic way, to the exclusion of creation proper.” All the truths of what is usually called natural religion, are now rejected by the prevalent form of infidelity as unworthy of belief. They may now be claimed—by the concession of the enemy—as confirmed, fixed in the minds and

belief of men, if not even originally revealed, by Christianity. Though they are, no doubt, in some measure the result of the general revelation of Spirit to spirit, of God to men, they have only been clearly apprehended and enforced within the range of the sacred history—the special revelation. They may now be safely ascribed to revelation, general or special, or both; for the enemy declares that his idea—the only other possible—entirely shuts them out of the pale of scientific truth and discovery. Formerly he contended that reason discovered and demonstrated these beliefs without the aid of revelation; now he declares that science against Christianity shows them to be impossible.

By admitting that these beliefs are the result of Christianity independently of reason, the enemy has made a concession which theology can make of great advantage in the enforcement of revealed truth. Indeed, the clear-minded opponents of Christianity of the present day, explicitly—often in so many words—acknowledge that if these beliefs were well-founded, that if they believed them—namely, those of a personal God, of creation in the strict sense, of a spiritual world, of personal freedom and responsibility—that if they regarded sin as sin, as the result of the free action of man, as guilt—they could not only not object to the possibility, but would have to hold to the necessity, of special revelation. They admit that divine revelation would have to be expected; that the very nature of man and his condition as a moral and sinful creature would make it necessary that the Creator of the moral world—in the case of sin having come into it—should be the originator of the remedy; that only its Creator could restore it, if ever it were restored; that the wants of man would require, expect, and predict a divine revelation. They recognize it as a logical consequence, that if man be such a being—creature, immortal, *sinful*—he cannot realize his true ideal nor attain his manifest destination without divine revelation; that these circumstances would require it as lungs do air, as eyes do light, as stomachs do food, and as the diseased body does medicine. Reason would so clearly demand revelation that the condition of man without it would have to be regarded irrational, abnormal.

They are right in recognizing the fact that the rejection of Christianity, is inseparable from the denial of man's responsibility and destiny as a moral, spiritual, personal being. If the

moral world be a reality, its present condition is hopeless without special divine interposition. We need a revelation not only that we may have, in the behest of the infinite will, a universally valid law of moral action, and faith in morality as eternally realized in the divine existence, but for all solid ground of hope for restoration of the moral world when sin has come into it. We cannot do better than to quote from a distinguished psychologist on this point: "But we now turn to a fact which every mind may recognize, viz., an end in moral character, or worthiness in ethical personality, which wholly subordinates all other ends of the sentient or human being." "As 'the life is more than meat,' so is the integrity of moral character more than appetite or art or science. If any want whatever, or any happiness in any degree or duration, or any interest in beauty or truth, induce the will into its service as end, so that it shall cease to hold the highest worthiness of the ethical personality as supreme end, then is the moral character degraded and debased; the spiritual birthright is sold for "a mess of pottage," and the soul is forced to blush in conscious shame, in the inner witnessing of its own vileness. 'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit, who can bear?'" "So, if I am affected with *remorse*, I at once distinguish it from regret for some imprudence or unkindness, and feel that it bespeaks something more than happiness lost, even ethical dignity debased and worthiness of moral character degraded. I may experience *shame* in my sentient being, if some conditions in nature have made me to appear ludicrous—or when, through mere imprudence, I have exposed myself to ridicule—but I well know the difference between all such shame and that ethical debasement which blushes even before its own consciousness that it has been guilty of subjecting the spirit to the flesh." "But that which *ought* to be, *will* not be, when one person has violated a right and introduced sin into the ethical system. This one violation reaches through and breaks in upon the rights and the complacency of the whole." "And when such offending member introduces his disturbing and colliding action, it is the equitable claim of the whole that the delinquent and all his deranging action be at once excluded. But it *ought* not to be that his exclusion be merely topical displacement, as the removal from a material machine of some part broken or become rotten. Remorse and shame is the sinner's

due, and the moral disapprobation of all the holy, perpetually made manifest toward him, is the righteous demerit of the guilty." "In such a state of facts, all comprehension of an ethical system were impossible. That has come in which should not have originated, and that consummation which should be, is unattainable. The fact as it is, has no satisfactory origin or end, as ethical system. It stands itself, in its own working, abhorrent to the moral reason and conscience which it embodies; and is an ethical blot, eternal and irremediable in its own helplessness of all self-cleansing. And here the question is, how comprehend the ethical system in humanity as we find it, marred, perverted, and incorrigible from its own action? We can comprehend an ethical system as it *should* be very readily; since the existence of the human society would itself originate the rights and imperatives, and the fulfillment of the law universal would be its consummation; but it is a very different fact of comprehension when the ethical system is already perverted, and in itself helpless and hopeless of all restoration in its own movement. How such perverted ethical system originated? How be consummated? is now the problem." "It might be easy to show here, that the provisions of the gospel scheme of Redemption are precisely adapted to the interests of reason in effecting such an ethical comprehension, and that the divine interpositions have been wholly regulated by the behests of God's own worthiness and dignity. It behooved Him so to interfere and no otherwise in the permission, the overwhelming and restraining, the expiation, pardoning, and punishing of sin. On the Christian ground of a moral government, its comprehension is in complete conformity with every fact of man's ethical responsibility and God's righteous sovereignty. Man in his freedom *should* have been no otherwise restrained; God in His holiness *should* no otherwise have interposed."

§ 2. *Theology should avail itself of this State of Things.*

The full and consistent development of infidelity into the denial even of natural religion is a great advantage to Christianity. First because the great mass of men, as we have seen, can never agree with the pantheistic, naturalistic negations of the facts which are evincive of the existence of a spiritual world and of the moral nature and responsibility of man. They

are and always will be theistic on these points; they do and always will receive the doctrine of the personality of God and of man as truths. Just in proportion then to the increased energy with which infidelity discards them and declares them to be the product of Christianity, will be the augmented strength of the hold of the latter upon the faith of all who are not entirely lost to all susceptibility for salvation; that is, of all who really believe in the facts of moral being, and of all who, though they may have doubts respecting them, yet do not wholly discard them. And, secondly, because the denial of these facts is evidence of a perverted intellect or a corrupt heart. If these facts remain in a man's consciousness notwithstanding the negations of his science, he is very unscientific in ignoring them, very unphilosophic in denying them or trying to explain them away, simply because they cannot be comprehended in the mere logical understanding or in any science of mere nature. And if he do not realize them in his consciousness, it must be because of the moral darkness that is in him. In regard to such men the apostle would declare: "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The facts are so universally recognized, that whether the result of reason or Christianity, they cannot be declared delusive on mere naturalistic grounds. They lie beyond the sphere of any mere science of nature; and all the philosophical attempts to explain them away will always prove unsatisfactory. The mere sensational philosophy which has its culmination in the so-called positive philosophy—the atheistic philosophy which denies the reality of all spiritual being, which teaches that the phenomenal, the sensuous, is the only reality; which either denies the absolute or declares that it is unknowable; and which declares that we cannot have any knowledge of God or spirit,—does not deserve the *name of philosophy*. It may be true science of the merely sensuous, the mere phenomenal world; but as it does not transcend that, it is absurd in denying the reality of all beyond. And all the forms of pantheism, as we have seen, fail to give any satisfactory explanation or comprehension of the spiritual phenomena—the moral facts of life.

Theology should, therefore, state anew these truths in their relation to the whole scheme of revealed truth. All the psychological discoveries of modern times, so important to man as a moral and spiritual being—all the observations resulting from investigations of the history of moral life and action, so numerous and so rich—can now, as they never could before, be appropriated by the theologian for the purpose of deeper and truer conceptions of divine things—of God and of spirit generally, and of the relations of the soul to the realities of the unseen world. And while the negations of mere natural science and the pretensions of Pantheistic philosophy will never be much regarded by the sincere among the people of plain common sense; with the great multitude who all, whether learned or unlearned, receive the truths of natural religion in these days, the theologian has the opportunity to show more and more fully—now that the beliefs in natural religion are conceded to Christianity—that Christianity is consistent with all moral truth, and akin to all the spiritual powers of the universe; that it assumes for our belief “no other conditions than those by which the creation itself exists;” that revelation is but the perfecting of what was contemplated and begun in creation; that it is only from the standpoint of Christianity, as the centre of truth, that we get a comprehensive view of the moral world, and an enlarged and complete idea of the reason, and a glorious and satisfactory prospect of the destiny of its existence; that it is impossible to reject Christianity without rejecting these truths of natural religion. Thus with consistent thinkers, *outside of the circle of pure naturalism*, the question of its acceptance can be shown to have become a question not so much of the state of the intellect as of the condition of the will. So that the moral development of the world has, at last, come to a point when the Saviour’s words cannot but be realized in all their truth and force: “If any man will do the will of My Father in heaven, he shall know of this doctrine, whether it be of God.”

§ 3. *Theology should now Appropriate and Christianize the Results of Human Thought and Experience.*

Theology should now return to the principle of the Reformation laden with all the benefits of the development of human thought and the manifestation of human wants and possibilities,

which have characterized the modern researches in psychological and ethical science. Skepticism had appropriated and humanized what was really Christian; now theology has the opportunity to appropriate and Christianize what is human—what the human intellect and conscience have contributed toward the enlargement and enrichment of the truths derived originally from revelation. The fact that infidelity has so completely abandoned these beliefs of natural religion, shows how close is their affinity with Christianity; and how it is that Christ has, indeed, “brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.” Modern skepticism is only the scientific development of the ancient heathen world-view. And that heathenism, even in its highest forms and its best representatives, had no conception of creation in the strict sense; and consequently it could have no hope of a personal immortality. A Plato's idea of the future existence of the soul involved that of its pre-existence from eternity, and consequently not, in the strict sense, a personal existence in the past or in the future life. And an Aristotle has neither the full idea of an absolute personality, nor the clear conception of an actual creation; and consequently he has very dubious views respecting the future destiny of man. These truths are not discovered by unaided reason, nor are they developed from the more natural consciousness, but from the consciousness determined partly by general revelation, and mainly as it is determined by special revelation. “We hear, indeed,” says Martensen, “the sacred voice of God speaking through the voices of profane history; and in the deeds of men, in secular events, we discern also the deeds of God; but in the tumult of the world's history our ear confounds God's voice with the voices of men, and the holy, providential design now and then disclosed in the fate of men, is concealed again from our sight amidst the restless stream of events. If we may in truth speak of a sacred, a divine revelation, then there must be a history within history, there must be within profane history a *sacred history*, in which God reveals Himself as God; a history in which is revealed the sacred design of the world as such, in which the Word of God so encases itself in the word of man that the latter becomes the pure organ for the former, and in which the acts of God are so involved in the acts of men that the latter become a perfectly transparent medium through which the former may be seen.” But when

the mind once has these truths of what is usually called natural religion, though they are the result of divine revelation, then it has intuitions of moral responsibility and moral government, of spiritual worthiness and immortal destiny, which go far to prepare it to believe and confess Christianity—to recognize the reasonableness of its revelations and the justice of the claims of the scheme of redemption which it enforces upon a sinful world. We might not be able to discover the ethical personality in man; but when we are enabled to cognize it, then that high priest of human nature, Shakspeare, can regard us all as knowing, by rational insight, an ethical worthiness which must be respected, a spiritual integrity which must be maintained, a categorical imperative in the dictates of conscience which must be obeyed. And all humanity responds to it, as a universal maxim, when he makes one of his imaginary personages say; “I may do all that doth become a man; who does more is none.” So, though men may not have been able without revelation to have discovered the divine personality, the ethical world, the spiritual kingdom, yet when they once do apprehend them, they have—inseparable from the susceptibility to divine revelation, under the divine impressions—in their experience of the truths communicated, intuitions of right, insights of the reason respecting divine excellence, infinite worthiness, which will prepare them to agree with Christianity that sin merits infinite disapprobation and condign punishment at the hands of God; and that if it be pardoned an expiation must be made infinitely satisfactory to justice, an atonement which God only can effect—a God-man only can render. They are prepared to say: God may do all that doth become God; if He did more, if He saved a sinful world without atonement, He would not be, or, at least, would not be revealed as the personal Creator of the world, the originator and consummator of the ethical system which it involves. They are prepared with adoration as well as gratitude to believe in Him “who though He knew no sin, was *made* sin—a sin-offering—for us”—in Him whom “God hath set forth to be a propitiation for sin through faith in His *blood*.” They are prepared heartily to respond to the inspired declaration: “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," and to determine "that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." If the beliefs in natural religion have often not actually been a preparation for the reception of Christianity, but have, on the other hand, too often been destroyed in the onward march of a mere logical understanding and displaced by the negations of pure naturalism, it is because theology has too much neglected the great principle of the Reformation, and, consequently, failed to draw its forces from the great centre of all Christian power. And if it would avail itself of these truths of natural religion, it must remember that if the sole problem of a created world be reconciliation between Creatorship and creatureship, the main problem of a sinful world is reconciliation between the holy God and the sinful world; that if religion be the great problem of the world, the fundamental problem of religion in a sinful world is salvation from sin—*personal assurance* of the sinner's acceptance with the Holy God through Jesus Christ. Have we not evidence that when this is made the centre of all theological thought, the motive of all preaching and Christian activity, Christianity becomes almost irresistible to those who believe in the truths of the so-called natural religion? Was not this the case in the days of Luther, when positive religion had become a mere form, and men were just in that mental state when they would rapidly have followed the naturalism which had then begun to prevail, if the preaching of the cross in the emphatic manner of the principle of the Reformation had not turned *religious beliefs toward the necessity of personal assurance of salvation* through faith in Christ alone? Is not this the reason that infidelity is always so little checked by Romanism? Was it not this characteristic of the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield which made the natural religion of the day cease to plead its independence, and become a preparation for the reception of Christianity instead of naturalism? The writer is not too young to have had some personal observation of a similar effect upon the rationalism, then so widely prevalent in our Church, by the same characteristic in the preaching of the men who were most instrumental in the forming and sustaining of the General Synod! How notoriously is this the wonderful power of the preaching of such men as Moody in our day! This appropriation, this Christianization of these rational beliefs, is practicable; but it can be made so only by making justifica-

tion by faith the central and determining principle in our theology; not by receiving it merely intellectually, but by making it a matter of which we can speak as did Paul—"I know whom I have believed"—a matter of inner, conscious experience, and insisting upon it as such. It is, indeed, true that publicans and harlots are more likely to be converted to Christianity than self-righteous persons. But self-righteousness and natural religion are not identical; and the great mass of the converts, as we all know, comes from persons who have not thrown off all religious belief. But it shows that an evangelical theology should always and everywhere, and in the strict sense, "know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

§ 4. *In a Similar Manner can the Defective Conclusions and even Erroneous Tendencies of the Past become the Source of Benefit to Theology.*

We have seen how all the proofs for the being of God upon which the rationalists, and even the supernaturalists, formerly so much relied, fall short of demonstrative evidence of the valid being of a personal, conscious God and Creator of the world. But we have, at the same time, seen how this truth, produced as it is by revelation, general or special, is interpreted and confirmed by these arguments, in that they show that the mind naturally has the capacity for the idea and can develop it; and that the belief in such a being is not inconsistent with reason. So in regard to the immortality of the soul, the rational, thinking mind—from the capacity of man for a development never realized in this life, and from the ethical demand for a harmony of morality and happiness never attained in this world,—deduces the idea of immortality, of a future and conscious state of being. But it is only in immediate faith, in a determination of consciousness by revelation, either general or special; only from a source other than, and additional to, any mere logical processes of thought, that an actual hope of personal immortality is produced in the soul. But the production of this hope, though independent of mere reasoning, does not shut it out. It involves reason; it is natural; it is possible to the human mind, even by revelation, only because that mind has the faculty of the reason. It is natural, therefore, to the human intellect to receive, though it cannot produce it. Thus may theology in

this age and in this country learn much from the vain attempt to find certainty of religious truth in reason alone—to find a ground for religious belief independently of revelation. This attempt could not attain its object—the inner certainty of truth, the reconciliation of Christianity with reason in the sense of its being a mere natural religion.

But it did not exist in vain. It has been, and will be still more effectually, overruled by the Spirit for the advantage of Christianity. The theologian may, from the past history of religious thought, learn much even from Rationalism. In opposition to all narrow and constrained orthodoxy, it will be of service in bringing to full consciousness the fact that, though reason cannot discover and demonstrate religious truth, it can appreciate it; and that there are spheres and relations of it, in which reason is an important help to theology. It has, at least, brought to view the value and power of elements of truth which had been too much neglected by the Church. It has led men more fully to consider the nature of man, the point especially—conscience—at which the gospel lays hold upon him; to exhibit more fully the wants of the human heart; to study more carefully the general revelation of God in conscience, nature and history; to observe more earnestly the truth that it is the same Eternal Logos who “is manifest in the flesh” for the salvation of men, who “made all things,” who “is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;” to take more comprehensive views of the connection between creation and redemption, between the divine plan of the world and the grand plan of salvation—all of which was present in germ in the principle of the Lutheran Reformation, and was, from the beginning, destined, in some way, to be evolved out of it.

While Rationalism has thus by compelling theology to give greater attention to the points of contact between Christianity and the nature of man, been the occasion of the confirmation of the true theory of the appropriation and certainty of salvation; Supernaturalism, on the other hand, in its efforts against rationalism, has contributed much toward making clear, for all time to come, the necessity of recognizing the positive element in the Christian revelation. And though it failed in its struggle to maintain the claims of Christianity as a special revelation, the reason of its failure was the occasion of making more manifest

the fact that the Christian idea of God and the world, and the method of bringing the revealed truth to the human mind, to which the principle of the Reformation leads, had not been fully apprehended.

But while Rationalism was triumphant on the common ground—on which Supernaturalism had submitted to stand with it—it was soon destined itself to pass from the state of belief in natural religion, to the atheism of pure Naturalism. The same logical process, by which the rationalist opposed Supernaturalism, led him into pure Naturalism. But even from the course of Rationalism to this deplorable result, we may learn much that deserves the attention of evangelical theology. The attempts of the Critical Philosophy to overturn the pretensions of the Vulgar Rationalism to demonstrate divine truth through the connections of the understanding—but which it called a process of reason—its efforts to show that it could attain to certainty of the divine altogether by the mere force of reason—although they presented but one side of the truth, and themselves culminated in a worse form of Rationalism—the Speculative Rationalism—have still done good service in destroying the tendency to require and the attempt to employ demonstration on subjects which are beyond its sphere. The effort of the Egoistic Idealism to bring thought and being into union through volition and action, has increased the attention of men to the ethical elements in man and in Christianity; that of the Identity-Philosophy has led men to study the relations and reciprocities between nature and spirit; that of Absolute Idealism has given increased interest to the Christian idea of religion as the union of the divine and the human. All these efforts of thought together with those of “the Philosophy of the Unconscious,” to show the absurdity of the denial of marks of intelligence and design in the world, and of the attempt to expound the universe on the grounds of materialism or of any theory of evolution—not even excepting that of Darwin—all these, notwithstanding their errors, are still, in their way, a preparation for a return to the old Evangelical doctrine of the true source of truth and assurance of salvation, opened up in the great Reformation. They are, indeed, important developments of the subjective interest which was revived at the Reformation; they are, in some measure, movements which had to occur in order to prepare the

way for the scientific appreciation of that clear and full consciousness of personality in God and man, of the distinction and the union of God and man, involved in the certainty of salvation, and the fact of justification by faith in Christ alone. Without this consciousness, the conditions of this experience could not have been complied with, and without it there will never be attained the true and complete speculative apprehension of these great truths.

So the erroneous tendencies of these philosophers may, as a source of warning, be of benefit to theology. They show how dangerous it is to attempt to find certainty merely through the logical understanding, or to separate between the faith, which lies in consciousness, and the process of reasoning. Thus the philosophy of Kant led to a Moralism which rejects all authority, and, consequently, all positive revelation; that of Schelling and of Hegel to a Pantheism which, as we have seen, is utterly inconsistent with the Christian faith. But they should be of this negative benefit to us, that they enable us to see the resemblance between their processes and many of those involved in the defective ecclesiastical theories which were noticed in a former section. This similarity in the processes of philosophical systems, which ended in such Pantheistic and Deistic results, with many of those in the church-theories, may enable us to come to a clearer consciousness of the nature of the defects in the latter; and thus, also, the better to supply them. Great and repeated efforts have been made to bring the results of these philosophies directly into the service of theology, but their inconsistency with it has only become the more manifest; and the philosophies themselves have resulted, as we have seen, in leading their disciples back to the heathen idea of God and man—to accept this world as all, and death as the end of all.

These results should deeply impress us with the importance of keeping in mind the invariable end of all our personal experience and of all our observations of other men, namely, that religion must be treated as an element of life universally existing in humanity, and, as Christians believe, by general revelation; that religious faith is the result of impressions from the supernatural, just as certainly as natural faith is from impressions of the natural world. Like the sciences of all other life-elements of human nature, like the sciences of language and morality,

the science of religion must have a starting-point in experience. Theology not being a science of pure knowledge, but of the knowledge which is an element of faith, must accept religion as a fact of life, as matter of experience. In the midst of the scoffing tones of some, and the sad accents of others in the philosophical world, all uniting to say: This world of sense is all—declaring that death ends all—it hears the voice of Christian experience which says: No! this is not all. My God is more than this, even “the King eternal, immortal, incorruptible.” Death does not end all; my Saviour, Jesus Christ, has risen from the dead, and He can say: “Behold, I and the children which God hath given me. For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.” “For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. And the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” “Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Does the law thunder, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die?” Jesus, the embodiment and the fulfillment of the law, has “died for me,” and by His spirit, He has written the law in my heart. Does sin arise in dread array? “Christ rose again for my justification,” and He is greater than all my sins. Does death threaten, the grave yawn, and hell rage? Christ has taken the sting from death, the victory from the grave, and He has demolished the powers of hell. “He has carried captivity captive and received good gifts for men.” “Nay, in all these things we shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.” Starting, thus, from Christianity as a fact of life, theology has a fair field of operation in penetrating into the es-

sence of this great fact, in proceeding from the outer forms in which this fact has been presented to their inner spirit, from the transient manifestations of it to the permanent substance, from the outer changing forms to the inner perduring essence of the system of faith.

§ 5. *It should Labor for those Views of Doctrine and those Forms of Expression which shall Exhibit the Fundamental Conception of the Church more Clearly and Impressively.*

We believe that such a process is practicable in regard to the Lutheran dogmatic forms; that whatever is objectionable is merely transient, destined to pass away, or to be left as a matter for free and constant investigation; while the spirit and type of the doctrine shall appear only the more true and precious. We believe in the practicability of a Lutheran theology true to the spirit, conservative of the genuine type, and yet capable of modifying the mode of apprehending the specific doctrines and of exhibiting them in rejuvenated forms. It must, indeed, be conservative of the great principle, in all its changes of the mode of exhibiting its results.

We have the great principle of the Reformation in its fundamental bearings, giving the personal assurance and conscious experience of salvation, together with the revealed idea of God and the world, intuitively apprehended in this experience, as the groundwork. In the application of this principle, in consistently building upon this groundwork, we must have a clear consciousness first of the distinctive peculiarities of true Lutheranism: the realism of Luther, the union of the word and faith; the historical objective certainty of the revelation of salvation, secured by the certainty, sufficiency, and intelligibility of the sacred Scriptures; the inner, subjective certainty of truth and personal assurance of salvation produced by the accompanying, superadded, immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. We must recognize the miraculous revelation of salvation in the Word and Sacraments—the Saviour manifested in the historical revelation by the Holy Spirit; the truth of the proclamation of the divine salvation by the gospel and the efficacy of it by the constant presence of the Holy Spirit; the gift of the Son, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; as inseparable. Thus salvation is offered to every man by the Word and Sacraments, and the Holy Spirit

makes it efficacious, working faith—saving faith—in all who do not resist: and He bears witness to His own work in the heart, produces personal assurance of salvation and inner certainty of truth—the certitude of faith. Thus we have objective and subjective certainty of the truth and reality of the great salvation—certainty of the truth and reality of the revelation of salvation proclaimed in the message of the gospel; and the certainty of our own personal interest in it—of our being personally justified, renewed, and adopted into the family of God. This realism of Lutheranism must be preserved, on the one hand, against the mystical idea of an immediate inner communion with God, or of any enjoyment of divine salvation separate from and independent of God's objective revelation—of the divinely appointed means of grace; and, on the other, against the idea of absolute predestination, of limited atonement, of special grace confined to the unconditionally elected:—against the one, because it ignores the necessity of the miraculous divine revelation of salvation; against the other, because, while it teaches the necessity and reality of that revelation, it makes it uncertain to the individual; denies the certainty of its being efficaciously presented to all; and denies that the Sacraments are real pledges of efficacious, saving grace to all who have the gospel, and that the Holy Ghost invariably accompanies the means of grace, producing saving faith and assurance of salvation in all who do not resist Him. Thus, true Lutheranism consists in insisting on the necessity of the revelation of salvation on the one hand, on the sincerity and the universality of the offer of it on the other; on the necessity of the means of grace, and on the reality of their being the divine pledge and presentation of salvation to all to whom they come; and on the necessity of inner, conscious experience and assurance of it. It requires real experience. The faith that accepts salvation renounces sin. In bringing us into reconciliation and communion with God, it brings us also into enmity and antagonism to this world—to depravity and sin. Saving faith, therefore, involves personal, conscious experience of the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Word and Spirit of God.

Then, again, we have justification by faith as the guiding and determining principle in the investigation of all doctrines; the "*Articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*," as the light in which to

estimate them, the point of view from which to consider their evangelical character in spirit, and their correctness in form. If Luther could have been assured of any honest and thorough application of this principle, he would have required no more of any man. "Let heaven and earth fall," he says in the Schmalcald Articles, "or whatever else that will not remain, we cannot swerve or yield anything on this point. Upon this article is based all that we have preached and done against the Pope, the devil and the world. On this point there must be no doubting or wavering, or all is lost, and the Pope and the devil and every thing will triumph over us." And history has proved that he was right. How differently he speaks of other points—of mere doctrines—of the teachings of men, and even of his own—we have clearly seen in the extracts already given; but we may add one more. In the preface to "The Instruction of the Visitors of the Pastors in the Electorate of Saxony," he declares "that he does not issue them as mandates, lest they should be the occasion of new papal decrees, but as a record or transaction (*eine historie oder geschichte*), which might serve as our confession and testimony." If he were now living, he would certainly be ready for the work of applying anew the great principle of the Reformation. The manner, for instance, in which he felt the necessity of waiting for further development of evangelical experience, before the work of science in Christian ethics and in church government could be safely and successfully undertaken, shows how he would now avail himself of all that development for hundreds of years. If, then, we ask in how far the peculiar Lutheran views of the Word and Sacraments are essential to the most effective presentation and pledging of saving grace, and if so, in what forms would they be expressed? or if there should be heterogeneous elements to be eliminated, or modifications desirable to be made, what new statements of them have become necessary and practicable?—the answer is, we must apply anew the principle of justifying faith. If they imply any saving efficacy of them without faith, as justification without faith in infant baptismal regeneration; then these views must be found capable of an explanation consistent with the requirement of justification by faith, or they must be modified; and, while the fundamental conception remains, the details and forms of these views must be subjected to the determining principle of Lutheranism. The substance of

the Lutheran doctrines concerning the Word and Sacraments, we are convinced, will endure investigations, and will be more and more appreciated and appropriated by all evangelical Christians—a process, as is well known, which is now rapidly going on in England and in this country. And the fact that this never was the case while these views were made unconditionally binding, should encourage us to attempt this new and free appropriation.

§ 6. *The General Synod is a Practical Exemplification of such Evangelical Lutheranism, and a Good Preparation for the Speculative Apprehension of It.*

About the time of the formation of the General Synod in this country, there began to be a return to the principle of the Reformation in the Fatherland. As the result of a great revival of religious interest in Germany, the doctrine of justification acquired, in some degree, its old prominence in the system of Christian doctrines. And every revival of religion has contributed to this revival of the spirit of the Reformation. It was in the revival of evangelical religion that the General Synod originated; and in this spirit it was organized. It was the work of men who, like Spener and Franke, labored for the spiritual appropriation of saving truth, for the conversion of men, for the experimental and the practical in religion, in contradistinction from the cold formalism into which a great part of the Church in this country had fallen. Through the provisions of its formula for government and discipline, the modes of its theological training, the peculiar methods of its instruction and worship, it labored for the revival of experimental religion. By this special interest in the revival of *personal experience of the certainty of salvation* among the members of the Church—by these special efforts for the conversion of sinners—justification as a matter of fact, as a *matter of experience, became central in the minds of the people, and was made prominent as the principle, the groundwork, of our system of doctrine.* And while there was not much public discussion of doctrinal points, there perhaps never was a body of ministers whose preaching was more thoroughly and uniformly evangelical, in the Reformation sense of the term. Sin and grace were the great themes of the pulpit throughout the entire bounds of the Synod. If this personal interest in the assurance

of salvation was the source of the Reformation as well as the characteristic of it, and if the principle of justification became the regulative principle, in the early days of the Reformation, of the entire system of doctrine, such was also the case here; and the *way has thus been prepared for the application anew of this principle in all its bearings upon the intellectual apprehension and the doctrinal statements of the views held in our Church*, for the further elimination of heterogeneous materials, and the more complete appropriation of that which is most precious in the true spirit and type of evangelical Lutheran doctrine. While we do this, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not desire to depreciate the Confession of the Church. On the contrary, we acknowledge that the more we study it, the more we feel its truth and excellence. *We consider our Creed, just as it is, the best in Christendom.* There is no other confession to which we could with as little difficulty subscribe unconditionally; and while we think that the forms of some of our doctrines need explanation anew, in the light of the Scriptures and the past experience of the Church—and even modification—we do believe them to be capable of such evangelical interpretation without affecting the substance of them, or destroying the integrity of the system to which they belong. We think such explanation or modification should be made, as would guard against defective apprehensions of them, or real misapprehensions of them; against erroneous deductions from some of their forms—evils to which they have been exposed in the past—such, for example, as “is most distinctly seen in the controversy of the orthodox Christians with the Pietists, respecting the *theologia irrogenitorum*,”—when “the orthodox expressly affirmed that the official acts of unregenerate preachers might be attended with as rich a blessing as those of the regenerate, if only they preached the orthodox doctrines, and that it was possible to penetrate into the truths of the Holy Scriptures without a regenerate heart.” We believe, indeed, that those very aspects of some of our doctrines, which have been thus proved to be very liable to abuse, contain important elements of truth—elements of truth meant to be maintained by their being put in their present form—elements of truth which we heartily adopt and intend to maintain, though we may present them in a somewhat different form.

In the conflicts of the Lutherans with the Romanists, and their controversies with the Reformed, as well as in their opposition to the fanatical parties of the day—in short, in the condition and circumstances of the Church in the sixteenth century—positions were taken on some points of doctrine, which were afterward carried to such extremes, and into such details, that they appear in forms inconsistent with the principle of the Reformation, with the fact of our justification by faith alone, with personal experience of salvation; and which consequently were destined from the beginning to be finally modified or changed in the process of time, and by the accumulation of experience respecting their truth and necessity, their propriety and bearing. In such cases certainly there should be, and can be, changes of form, not only consistently *with*, but directly *for*, the preservation of the spirit and substance of the doctrines. Acting in this free way—laying hold of the doctrines of the Church in their *fundamental aspects, and treating them in the way which we have indicated, in point of form, of relative importance, of minor relations, of details of statement*—will not diminish the importance of the doctrines, but will only lead to a clearer apprehension of them, and a more complete appropriation of their spirit and substance. Dogmatic interest should have a bearing upon the form of doctrine now, as it has ever had. We have manifest instances of this in the Reformers themselves.

§ 7. *Illustration in The Treatment of the Doctrine of Absolute Predestination.*

We see this in the treatment and final disposition made of the doctrine of unconditional election, by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the sixteenth century. This doctrine was held by all the principal Reformers in the beginning of the Reformation; and was maintained by Luther against Erasmus, as if he regarded it as inseparable from the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. The occasion of this seems to have been the necessity of resisting, in the most decided manner, the Pelagian tendencies then prevalent in the Romish Church. This was regarded by the Reformers as destructive of all true religion. Even the magical *opus operatum* was not regarded by them as destructive of all piety. But genuine piety and Pelagianism could not, in their view, exist together; and there seemed, at the same time,

to be an inseparable connection between the denial of absolute predestination and Pelagianism. But when they began to feel, on the one hand, that unconditional election was in conflict with the proclamation to all, indiscriminately, of justification by grace through faith; and, especially, with their idea of the specializing of the offer of grace to each individual subject in the Sacraments; that in baptism, for instance, each subject receives a special pledge of God's pardoning grace—they were disposed to reject, or, at least, to dispense with, the doctrine of absolute predestination in the system. And when, on the other hand, they saw, in the pledging significance of the Word and Sacraments, that gracious ability which enabled them, as they thought, to maintain the doctrine of the total depravity and natural inability of man—without the aid of the idea of unconditional election or irresistible grace—they regarded the doctrine of absolute predestination as destitute of any dogmatic value in their system. Hence they silently passed it by in their Confession at Augsburg, and at length generally and finally rejected it. Still they retained Augustinianism in other respects, and it can not be said that the Church ever did, or ever will, accept the rejection of absolute predestination in the spirit and forms of Arminianism. She does not the less decidedly reject Pelagianism; she only restricts Augustinianism. And while we agree with the Church in rejecting this doctrine, we cannot refrain from declaring that it too contains elements of truth, and fosters tendencies in the spirit of religion, which should never be lost from the Church. And its rejection of the doctrine should rather be a rejection of the form, and a mere restriction of the application of the doctrine itself. But we have in this an example of the bearing of the principle of justification by faith alone, and of the manner in which the Reformers themselves applied it to the freeing of the system from heterogeneous elements, and for preserving the spirit of the evangelical faith.

§ 8. *The same True of Their Rigid Adherence to the Real Presence.*

So their peculiar views in regard to the Sacraments had a close connection with the idea of the necessity of maintaining their pledging significance in its fullest extent. Just as they had thought predestination necessary as a bar to Pelagianism, so, in their opposition to what they regarded as a false spiritual-

ism, as a fanatical tendency, as a disposition to depreciate the Sacraments, they were led, in a great measure, to the tenacity with which they contended for the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper as a fundamental point. Its significance is to be found in the view of the communication of the body and blood of Christ as an additional pledge of the forgiveness of sin in the ordinance. They taught that we receive no blessing in the Sacraments other than in the Word; and, consequently, that the body and blood of Christ, orally received, are not the saving benefit received in the Sacrament, but only a pledge of it. They differed from the Reformed in this matter only in this, that while the latter were content with the Word and the Symbols as pledges of prevenient grace in the Sacraments, they added to these the real presence and oral communication of the body and blood of Christ, as a most precious pledge of the forgiveness of sins. The gift of forgiveness of sins is the only benefit, and the same—no more, no less than what is received through the Word. But they regarded the presence of the body and blood of Christ as a pledge of this. Now, who can fail to see the influence of a dogmatic interest in this? And who shall say that if this laudable desire to maintain in its full extent the precious idea of the pledging significance of the Sacrament could, in their estimation, have remained unimpaired; that if the fear that the Reformed view contained an element of that fanaticism which depreciated the value of the Sacraments, could have been removed; or that if the idea of the Reformed had originally been, what it became after its modification by Calvin,—they would not have taken a different position, as did Melancthon and a great part of the most pious and intelligent members of the Church, both of the ministry and the laity. We are, therefore, acting in the true spirit of the principle of the original Lutheran Reformation, when after the lapse of centuries, in which experience has proved that there was not, or, at least, that there is not *now*, any solid reason for that dogmatic interest; that the dangers feared by the church were imaginary, or, at least, that they are not *now real*; that the heresies, which they thought were involved, and the depreciation of the Sacraments, which they expected to follow from the rejection of the doctrine of the corporeal presence, have not been realized,—we place the peculiar views of the Sacraments among

the non-fundamentals—doctrines which they who think them unscriptural and inconsistent with the great principle of justification by faith alone, should be permitted to reject without being regarded as unfaithful to the true Lutheranism, or subjected to ecclesiastical censure. If the rigid adherence of the strict Lutherans to their views was of service in checking tendencies which would, perhaps, otherwise have interfered with the proper use and benefit of the ordinance, it has done its work. Those tendencies do not now exist in the other branches of Protestantism; and there is now no good reason for making the peculiar, strict Lutheran views terms of communion. They should be regarded as capable of *improvement in form, if not in spirit*—as capable of development; and considered the proper subjects of theological investigation, so that everything defective in the statement of them might be amended, and that, at the same time, the *realism of Luther, the precious idea principally intended to be maintained and preserved* by them, might be the more clearly apprehended, and the more fully appropriated—namely, Luther's *intense idea of the reality of the union* of the two natures in the person of Christ, and of the reality of the offer of salvation as made to all in the Word and Sacraments. In so far as these views are connected with Luther's realistic idea of divine revelation, with his realistic view of Christ's relation to us, they preserve for us a precious element of truth. And the great idea that we need such pledges of God's prevenient grace as the Sacraments exhibit, together with a real communion with Christ—with his entire person, in his human as well as in his divine nature—should, indeed, always be maintained and made prominent in our exhibition of the great salvation in the Sacraments as well as in the Word. But this can certainly be done as fully in connection with the views, for instance, of Melancthon, as of those of Luther, on this point.

§ 9. *The Dogmatic Interest in the Communicatio Idiomatum.*

The doctrine of the real presence seemed to require that of the ubiquity of Christ's body, and to be, at least, the occasion of the Lutheran view of the *communicatio idiomatum*. The doctrine of Luther concerning the human nature of Christ, and especially his views respecting *His real human development*, so fully and decidedly expressed before the controversy on the

Lord's Supper, seems to be so irreconcilable with the implications in this doctrine, that one cannot refrain from the thought that, if he could have found another argument equally adapted to sustain the doctrine of the real presence, he would not have adopted this; especially does this seem probable when we remember that those earlier views—which he had deemed important enough to be classed in “the New Wisdom”—were never recalled by him. These earlier views, therefore, which are manifestly the result of the great central doctrine—justification by faith—are consequently those which are destined to live and to be united with the proper apprehension of his deep view of the real union of the divine and the human natures, which he always held; while the later doctrine will be abandoned, or at least modified, and regarded as non-fundamental. This is manifest from the difference of opinion which underlies the entire exhibition of the doctrine even in the Formula of Concord; and from the liberties on this subject, yea, modifications of the doctrine, indulged in not only by the moderate, but also by the most rigid old Lutherans of modern times. Thus, for example, while the Reformed have adopted very generally the Lutheran doctrine of the capacity of human nature for the divine, the strict Lutherans of the present day have accepted the Reformed application of the *κενωσις* spoken of in Phil. ii. 7, to the *Λόγος Ἀσαρκος*. They apply this self-limitation to the divine nature of Christ—to the Logos himself; and many of the most strictly orthodox, such as Thomasius, conceive of this self-limitation “as a self-depotentiation of the Logos, out of love; so that the Logos has limited himself in His being even to adequacy with the embryonic life of a human child, in order, first gradually out of the unconscious self-given form, now in unity with a man or divine-human, again to become self-conscious, and again to acquire his actuality in and out of Himself.” To which Dorner adds: “From this, the old Lutheran dogmatics (of former times) is so infinitely removed, that even when, for the sake of the truth of the *exinanitio*, it denies *majestas* to the humanity on earth, it still maintains that the Logos, united with such humanity, unchanged in Himself, governs the world in an omnipresent manner; and that, for the time of the becoming, a divine consciousness and willing are to be received—a consciousness which is not yet the consciousness of the man. Here,

also, the *exinanitio* is made the presupposition of the incarnation, which is characteristic of the Reformed, whilst the Lutheran doctrine made the incarnation precede the *exinanitio*." (Dorner's *His. of Doc. of Person of Christ*, Vol. II., p. 1262-1267.)

The following thoughts, collected from Dorner's *History of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, are offered for the reader's consideration: "The silence of the first edition of the *Loci*, respecting the Trinity of the Godhead and the two natures in Christ, indicates indifference to the fine-spun and scholastic forms of these doctrines, the conviction of Luther and Melancthon that they are not fundamental to the Christian faith, the confidence that what is necessary to salvation is implicitly contained in the central point of the gospel, and that the way is open for a regeneration of these dogmas. Luther had, in his clear and energetic apprehension of the God-manhood—the appropriation of all that is human by the divine, and all that is divine by the human—the germ of the true Christology. But he was led by the sacramental controversy to regard this as completed at once. His deep and rich Christological intuitions were not systematically developed; and, after the controversy with the Swiss, were unfortunately put under the guidance of another doctrine. At first the God-manhood and its becoming were kept in connection, but after this controversy began, the historical becoming was made to retire before the glorified—the exalted. Melancthon continued in Luther's early thoughts, but did not reach his depth—so Brentz and Chemnitz were respectively related to Luther and Melancthon. The inner reconciliation of these two would be the birth of a new and higher Christology—a form of it analogous to the Lutheran doctrine of justification; yea, would be essentially also the reconciliation of the Reformed and Lutheran Christology, and mediately of their respective doctrines respecting the Lord's Supper. But this was attempted prematurely. Instead of the antithesis of the Wuerttembergers, and the Saxons with Chemnitz at their head, having time to be brought to clear consciousness, the points of difference were covered over, in their common antagonism to the opponents of their doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper; whilst this doctrine, instead of dogmatically leading, should have awaited its completion from Christology.

Hence the concessions, compromises, contradictions, in which they are involved. New presuppositions, which were lacking to both parties, belong to it—the clear insight into that which belongs to the idea of man, the knowledge of his ethical endowments and of the ethical laws of his becoming, a philosophy imbued with the Protestant spirit. But this did not yet exist.” (Vol. II., 705-717.)

“ Both the Reformed and the Lutherans insisted upon the real and not merely apparent humanity, in opposition to the Mediæval defect in this respect: the Reformed more in that form for which the earthly relations are the measure; the Lutheran more in the ideal or the idea of the glorified humanity, in comparison with which the empirical form of our human life has still clinging to it something transient and merely apparent. The theological and anthropological conditions for the apprehension and statement of the ethical attributes of God, upon which Luther laid so much stress that he saw in them the innermost essence of God, were still wanting. But the principle of the Reformation carried in its bosom a true Christology, whether sooner or later appearing; and in this sense also it is an endless beginning. Certain previous questions must be decided, certain presuppositions established, without which a satisfactory Christology is impossible. Remains of Judaism and Heathenism, of Pantheism and Deism, must be overcome. Aristotelianism prevailed before, and, notwithstanding Luther's opposition, prevailed more and more in the sixteenth century, and in the seventeenth, quite as much as in the Catholic theology. It was suited to the purpose of analyzing that which is given by tradition as the fundamental doctrine of salvation. How different the state of the case in the time of the Reformation! At that time the *religious* spirit opened for itself the way for cognizing what is, in the first instance, merely traditional, based on external authority, according to its inner, self-dependent power and truth; not content with the merely objective, but unfettered and free to make the merely external its spiritual possession, its innermost truth and certainty. The spirit of the Reformation would allow itself to be bound by nothing but the inner power of truth, and for this reason turned away from the system of Catholicism.” (Vol. II, pp. 932, 933.)

“ But this spirit was arrested in the seventeenth century, and

concealed in a form which received more and more the lineaments of the formally renounced Romish church, returning in principle to the occupancy of common ground with her, and seeming to recognize no higher aim than to be a rival Church with her. This appears most significantly in the retrograde forming of the doctrine of justifying faith, and of the person of Christ—in principle to the Catholic type. Not only was the ethico-religious side of faith, according to which it is *fiducia* and *certitudo salutis*, again insensibly changed into an intellectual ‘good work,’ into an accommodation of the thinking to the conception of orthodoxy, and the subjection of the will under the ecclesiastical dogmas which controlled the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, but also the Reformatory life-point, the certainty of salvation of the justified, the new personality, in which, through the affiancing of the divine and the human in faith, the all-sufficient beginning-point of perfection is placed, was distorted and buried—yea, under the evangelical name, was remodeled into the Catholic. For what was an imputation of the righteousness of Christ, which, instead of being the beginning and the principle for perfection, becomes much more its goal, and does not constitute the transition to a continuity of the new life, other than the restoration to the believing man of the *donum superadditum* of the Roman Church, which never can and never is to belong to the man, and against which Luther so zealously spoke, well knowing that in this was rooted the extreme point of his antagonism with Rome? But the same thing was carried out in Christology, in which the effect of the *communicatio idiomatum* was to be most adequately described as a kind of *donum superadditum* for the humanity of Christ. Not to speak of the Docetic and Catholicizing remains even in the Christology of the Formula of Concord.” (Vol. II., p. 933.)

“But where the doctrines of objective and subjective salvation were thus placed upon the point of the *donum superadditum*—where nature and supernatural grace were still represented as foreign to, and exclusive of, each other—there a consistent science was impossible.” “The entire history of Christology is a witness to the fact, that if that conception of the divine and the human as two absolutely opposite substances—which, in the Chalcedon Dogma of the two natures, secured for itself, in the historical sense, the sanction of the Church—be true, then there

remains but the alternative, in some form, of Ebionitism or Docetism, of Nestorianism or Monophysitism. The conception of the divine and the human has, therefore, to be investigated anew and remodeled before a purer Christology can come into existence." "For this investigation, and for this formation of a new Christian philosophy, the Church of the Reformation has in it the impulse, which was not to be exhausted by any of the parasitic formations that belonged only to an earlier stage." (Vol. II., pp. 934, 935.)

While, therefore, we resist the attempt to make the symbolically-established view of this doctrine fundamental to true Lutheran theology, we should not depreciate the subject, but endeavor to develop it in the light of the principle of the Reformation. It is one of great importance; and, viewed in its true bearings, the strictly Lutheran view of it may yet be exhibited in such forms as to be acceptable to most Lutheran minds, and be found capable of being properly appreciated by Christians generally. The Lutheran proposition, *natura humana capax divinæ*, once so universally and sternly rejected by the Reformed, is now generally recognized, and by many highly prized. And it is so closely connected with the fundamental idea of religion as union and communion with God—with the idea of man as made for the infinite, and destined for eternity—with the idea of the union of divinity and humanity in the incarnation—that it may certainly be studied with great personal benefit. It is so closely connected with the Scriptural view of the plan of God—the plan for "the reconciliation of all things, whether they be things in heaven or things in earth"—the plan of God as embracing both the first and the second creation in the great work of the Mediator and Redeemer, with the cosmical relations of the Saviour in His kingly office as the Lord of nature as well as the King of saints, with His work in the corporeal resurrection of His people, the liberation of nature in connection with the glorious manifestation of the sons of God, the transformation of the material universe into the grand theatre and the suitable instrumentality of His glorious spiritual kingdom, to become the fit image and the appropriate organ of the perfected spirit—it is so vast in its compass, so endless in its bearings, that it claims the attention of all who would gain true, just and enlarged views of their Saviour's person, work and

glory. And it has been observed as somewhat remarkable that, while every one must at once be struck with the affinity of the Lutheran view of the person of Christ with these cosmical relations and bearings, Calvin's views have, notwithstanding, been actually more used, and have much greater influence in these directions of Christian thought. It seems very probable that this would not have been the case if the Lutheran view had been as free as that of Calvin from the trammels of the creed. But be this as it may, as the subject is confessedly one difficult of apprehension, as the interests here noticed are not shut out by other views, and as multitudes of the most intelligent and sincere Christians have never been able to receive the strict Lutheran view of it, the whole subject should be left open to free and patient investigation.

§ 10. *The True Intent of Private Confession and Absolution.*

The same thing may be said of private confession and absolution. Luther's great interest in recommending and retaining it, freed, as he thought it could be, from the Romish abuse of it—separated, as he thought it ought to be, from its exclusive exercise by the priests, and remanded to the possession and exercise of all Christians—was the fact that it was a *means of applying the declaration and pledge of prevenient grace to individual men* on all proper occasions. He seemed to regard it as only one of the ways of preaching the gospel, as a means especially of proclaiming the gospel of gratuitous justification to *individuals who are anxious about their personal salvation*. Some method or measure of this kind has always been felt to be important to all who are earnestly engaged in the work of dealing with inquiring souls.

Men act, therefore, in the very spirit of Luther, and for the securing of the very ends, the very interests which he had in view in maintaining private confession and absolution, when in modern times—the mechanical nature and almost certain abuse of the formal confession to the minister, and of the official announcement of absolution, having become manifest by experience—they, instead of this method, encourage special conferences and inquiry meetings, in which the personal application of the proclamation of pardoning grace and free salvation can be made individually to inquiring souls, without the danger of a superstitious dependence upon the official form. Luther's own explana-

tion of it certainly admits this view of the matter. And as, in this light, it is capable of an evangelical explanation, and as the original and right use of it cannot be revived, and the mere formal use of it ought not to be attempted, this application or modification of it ought to be received as the true Christian use of it. Thus, while we drop the form, we recognize in it the aim—at all times important—of special ways and methods of keeping before the mind of the individual seeking salvation the necessity of accepting salvation as full and free, of apprehending, in the first instance, not some attitude which he is to take toward God, but the attitude which God has taken toward the sinner—of apprehending “God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,” of believing “on Him who justifieth the ungodly,” “who is just and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus.” While we lay aside the form, therefore, as unsuitable, we retain the spirit of it, and apply it in the light of the principle of the Reformation, and of the idea of the relations of God and man which are suggested by it.

§ 11. *Church Government is Especially to be Developed Now and Here.*

In Church government the principle of the Lutheran Reformation *could not, in the early history of our Church, be fully applied.* There is here room for free development; for the elimination of much that is inconsistent with the principle of the Reformation, and for the more complete appropriation of the Christian idea which springs from it. Luther recognized and lamented the imperfection of the government and discipline of the Church in his day. He complains in his communications with the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren, that he cannot bring good morals and discipline to bear among his people. “Church discipline would be a truly Christian work, but I do not trust myself alone with it.” He says: “I would gladly introduce it, but it is not yet time.” He says to the Bohemian Brethren: “It is yet early spring with us, and things grow slowly; pray for us that God may help us effectually.” He deeply felt and lamented this state of things. But he also felt that he could not, in the circumstances in which he was placed, organize the Church in *accordance with the principle of the Reformation, or*

with safety to it. He seemed, consequently, unwilling to make the attempt. He left nearly all ecclesiastical organizing to Melancthon. For himself, he preferred to wait until, by the progress of the gospel, a better preparation should have been made for the organization of the Church according to the idea suggested and required by the principle of the Reformation. Hence the comparatively defective organization of the Lutheran Church.

The Reformed, like the Waldenses before the Reformation, not dreading so much the conflict of outer law with the principle of faith, at once entered upon ecclesiastical organization. But in the Lutheran Church there was a hesitancy, arising from the *fear of falling back into the ante-Reformation legalism.* There was, consequently, a much more faint attempt at organization. But this result has left the way open for the final formation and introduction of a form of Church government, by the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which shall have had the advantage of centuries of experience by the Church at large, and in the way which the original Reformers desired; and which shall, from this circumstance, be more in accordance with the principle and spirit of the Reformation than any which could have been constructed by them or in their day.

Such an achievement would be of incalculable importance at this day and in this country. The progress of our Church in this respect seems, indeed, to have been slow. But we must remember that, if faith is to be the source and determining principle of ecclesiastical government, it must be so. If we admitted, as freely as has been done by the Reformed churches, some elements of the legal principle, the work would not involve such a slow process and gradual movement. It would be comparatively easy; but it would also be correspondingly imperfect. We should not be impatient. The Reformation is the revival of Christianity; and its completion and full appropriation will be co-etaneous and commensurate with the progress and development of Christianity itself. And especially this work of the realization and manifestation of the social relations of Christianity; this manifestation in visible organization of the invisible Church—the true spiritual kingdom of Christ—requires time. The organization and government of the Church from the principle of faith, though slow and late, will be

the most perfect ; and it will last the longest. We have in this one of the grounds for the prospect of an important future for the Evangelical Lutheran Church, especially in this country. It is characteristic for developing everything from the principle of faith ; and it is certain that the formula for the government and discipline of the Church will, at last, be found to be perfect in proportion to its agreement with this great principle ; and to the degree in which it is developed from the principle of faith, and is the result of the experience of justification by faith alone. It was just because he could not organize the Church in the spirit of this faith—as a development of this principle—that Luther preferred to accept, for the time being, the Episcopal supervision of the princes, until, under the protection thus afforded to the preaching of the gospel, a people should be produced who could maintain Church government in the spirit of faith, and with entire consistency with “the freedom of the Christian man.” It was this feeling that caused the Augsburg Confession to contain the principles of true civil freedom—as no other creed before, or at the time, did—the very spirit, indeed, which has been adopted more and more in modern times in Church and State. Here is a great and glorious prospect for Christians in general ; and especially for Evangelical Lutheran people in this age and in this country. In this work, we are perfectly free, in this age, and especially in this country, to carry out true Lutheranism ; and in it we labor not for ourselves alone, but for the whole Church of Christ. Any success in such a work, would exert a blessed influence on all branches of Protestantism, and on the interests of entire Christendom.

§ 12. *The Lutheranism Needed Now and in This Country.*

Such a revival of the great principle of the Lutheran Reformation, in its bearings on the apprehension of the doctrine and the conducting of the operations of the Church, is especially needed at this day and in this country. *For the salvation of the Church and the State—for protection against the inroads of superstition and infidelity—we need to be brought anew into vital union with the revival of evangelical truth, which occurred in the great Lutheran Reformation.* The want of the day is a true Evangelical Lutheranism—a Lutheranism which would be a revival of true Christianity. We need a Lutheranism which should not

regard itself so much as a Church, as the appropriation and representation of the apostolic, primitive Church, which was revived in the Reformation by Luther; not so much as a denomination or sect of Christians, as the result of the revival of Christianity, as it finds its true and complete expression in the principle of faith and the Word. It should be the exhibition and application, speculatively and practically, of the great principle of the Reformation as the central principle of Christianity. It should be not so much the formation of a new Church, or the promulgation of a new doctrine, as the representation of the old apostolic Church, and of the old gospel of salvation, the primitive Christianity, in the spirit, freedom and power of its manifestation through the principle of the great Lutheran Reformation of the sixteenth century. It should be a Lutheranism which, instead of spending all its energies upon the peculiarities which distinguish the Lutheran Church as an organism from others, shall put forth all its power to preserve and apply the *positive* principle of that Church, as the principle of true Christianity, revived in the Reformation and always the basis of all true churches. It should be a Lutheranism which would enable us to see how all error in religion is a departure or deviation from the great central principle—the fact of justification by faith in Christ alone, and the practicability of certainty of truth, for the individual Christian man, through the intelligibility of the Sacred Scriptures. It should be a Lutheranism which would enable us to see this, whether it be the fundamental error of Rome which puts man in the place of God, or the non-fundamental one of those who make absolute predestination, instead of the gracious will of God as manifested in the proclamation of salvation to all, the prominent point in their system. It should enable us to see this in the error of those who exalt the human powers, the independence of the will of man, to the extent of subordinating divine grace; as well as in that of those who fail to distinguish between the dogma and the living truth, who, while they reject the works of the will of the Church as necessary to salvation, would yet make the works of her intellect, in the production of dogmas, necessary to the belief of saving truth. It should enable us to see this in the error of those who have such confidence in the powers of the human intellect as would make special revelation almost, if not entirely, unnec-

essary, and who, thus, ignore the distinctive character of Christianity; as well as in that of those who make the doctrine of the means of grace so prominent as to lose sight of the efficient agent in the work of grace, as to confound the influence of the Spirit with the force of the Word and Sacraments, as almost to deny the necessity of living faith, and of superadded, immediate operations of God; in short, the error of those who attach so great a significancy to the Word and Sacraments, as to abolish the immediateness of the operations of the Holy Spirit in the work of regeneration and sanctification.

The great want of the day is a Lutheranism which, while it enables us to avoid all dependence upon any magical effect of the means of grace, shall also, in the light of the principle of the Reformation, guard us against all tendency to neglect their importance and necessity—their importance as the appointed instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, and their necessity for connecting us with the “Christ out of us,” and His gracious “work for us,” in His atoning death; for preserving the union of the Christ “in us” with the Christ “for us;” for securing the connection of the historical fact of Christianity and the spiritual experience of its power in our religious life. We need a Lutheranism which shall enable us duly to estimate the vital parts of the Christian religion, as well as clearly to see the subordination, even in the revelation itself, of all the other parts, so as to distinguish the essential from the non-essential, as to avoid all exclusiveness within the clear limits of fundamentals, and at the same time so deeply to feel the absolute necessity of faith in these fundamentals for the preservation and the growth of the Church, that we shall hate and shun all unevangelical latitudinarianism. And such a Lutheranism is practicable. It could afford to modify, or, at least, to regard as non-fundamental, all the points which distinguish our Church from other evangelical denominations; for it would still have its great heart-principle undisturbed, and could use it as determinative of all the parts of the doctrinal system. If Calvinism gave up absolute predestination, or Arminianism conditional election, each of them would abandon the centre of its system. But Lutheranism is no such mere adoption or rejection of Augustinianism. She could waive or subordinate all that which has separated the Lutheran Church from the reformed Churches without touching the great

centre of her life. She would still be the mother of them all. In such a work she would only make the more prominent the great principle in which all evangelical Christians have ever agreed with her, from the day in which she first discovered it and announced it to them. She would appear the manifestation of Christianity, as revived in the principle of the Reformation, and the bond of union among all true believers in Christ.

The true Lutheranism, therefore, is not that which exhausts itself in efforts to maintain unchanged the forms of its system of doctrines, but that which labors ever in the spirit of the great fundamental conception of the Church—the idea of personal assurance of salvation through faith in Christ alone, with the Word of God alone as its criterion and rule—the conception which has, during all her conflicts with others, and in all the forms of her own thought and action, been struggling to come to more and more complete expression. If Lutheranism could, now, have the same confidence in the power of the truth, just as it is revealed in the Sacred Scriptures, in its intelligibility “in all things necessary for the Christian man to know,” which it had in what Seckendorf calls “the seven blessed first years of the Reformation,” there would be on a large scale a similar union and rejoicing of minds and hearts in the Protestant Christian world. She has, as we have seen, already done something of this, through the agency of the General Synod, in the work of Christian union. And she is destined to do still more of this blessed work. No Christians can be expected to have more of this confidence in truth. For, while there has been a breaking up of so many of the old forms of doctrine among all churches, the great principle of the Lutheran Reformation—the principle which she has always recognized as that by which the Church must stand or fall—has been more and more appropriated; and it now stands forth, in all the grandeur of its simplicity and truth, as the all-determining heart and centre of the Christian Church and life.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRUE PRINCIPLE OF DIVISION IN THE SYSTEM OF EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN THEOLOGY, AS IT APPEARS IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEA, THUS APPREHENDED.

§ 1. *A Sketch of Divisions Independently of This Determining Principle.*

THE word theology, according to its etymology a discourse concerning God, used by the ancient heathen to designate writings respecting the genealogy and exploits of their gods, is not found in the New Testament—the word *θεολογος* in the inscription of the Apocalypse being evidently put there not by John himself, but by another hand, and at a later day. In the New Testament, the terms *γνώσις* and *σοφία* are employed to express the deeper and more scientific knowledge of religion. In the earlier systems *γνώσις* was used to designate the more speculative, and *πίστις* the more popular knowledge of Christianity. The word theology was not introduced into Christian literature until the second century of the Church, and then it was applied mainly to discussions concerning the divinity of Christ. Thus in allusion to the Logos of John in the New Testament, men began to call the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, *theology*; and as John was supposed especially to represent the divinity of Christ, he was called *θεολογος*. In contradistinction to this word, the term *οικονομία* was applied to the doctrine of the human nature and Messiahship of Christ. Gradually the word theology began to be used to designate systematic instruction in the Christian religion; and at length, after the example of Abelard, who called his principal work *Theologia Christiana*, it began to be used to designate a scientific exhibition of the doctrines of Christianity. But still it was long applied mainly to the doctrine and discussions of the Trinity.

Since the Reformation two methods—the synthetic and the analytic—have been employed in the discussion and division of theology; the former mainly before and the latter principally

since the days of Calixtus, who introduced it. They divided theology according to the various points of view. Viewed in its relation to the understanding and the will, it was divided into *credenda* and *agenda*, things to be believed and things to be done. In reference to the source of our knowledge or the *principium cognoscendi*, it was divided into natural and revealed theology; from the subject, into archetypical or original, and typical or derived; the former the knowledge which God has of Himself; the latter, the knowledge which creatures have of Him. And as creatures are divided into angels and men, it was divided into the theology of angels and the theology of men; and as angels are divided into good angels and bad angels, it was divided into the theology of good angels and bad angels, or more briefly, into the theology of angels and the theology of devils. And, as men existed before and after the fall, the theology of men was divided into *theologiam antelapsam* and *theologiam postlapsam*; and as since the fall some of these are regenerate and others unregenerate, into the theology of the regenerate and the theology of the unregenerate; and as the former are some in their pilgrimage, still on their way to heaven, "walking by faith and not by sight," while others are already "in heaven beholding the face of God,"—into the theology of the way and the theology of vision. So from the end or object of theology, they divided it into doctrinal and practical theology. Finally, from the mode of treating it, they derived the divisions into polemic, symbolic, casuistic, exegetical, catechetical, etc. These divisions have been superseded by those which we have noticed in the introduction, but it is still important, in the study of theology, to look at the subject from these points of view. It was long a question in modern times whether the word should be used as the name of the whole system, or should be limited to the designation of the doctrine concerning God. At length, in the division of theology, first, generically into Historical, Exegetical, Systematic, and Practical Theology; and then, specifically, in dividing Systematic Theology into Dogmatics and Ethics, one of the topics of Dogmatics, namely, God, is again designated theology, or theology proper.

The science has also been considered—and this applies especially to systematic theology—from the standpoint of the object

and of the subject, that is, the truth as it is in itself without the human mind, or the truth as it is already apprehended by the mind. That theology may be thus objectively and subjectively considered, is manifest, but it is not properly a division of the system itself, as it may be applied to every part of it. It applies rather to the difference in the manner in which men apprehend the truth, such as the difference between the theology of the regenerate and the unregenerate, and the difference between a purely Biblical and a systematic theology; the former being more objective, the latter more subjective. So the definition of revealed theology, as the system of doctrines which is contained in the Bible, is defective for the reason that the Scriptures are the *principium cognoscendi* of revealed theology, and not the system of it. This mode has now, consequently, at least in Germany, been distinguished from systematic theology, and is now called Biblical Theology. The distinguished Dr. Beck and others have, indeed, revived this definition by their method of attaining, in a genetic way, the system contained in the Bible, as the true system of theology. But still, whatever may be the merits of this theology, it is more appropriately called Biblical than Systematic Theology. Others still, speaking of it as revealed theology, define it as the artificial connection of those truths which God has revealed for the salvation of men in the Books which He has inspired, or those truths which He has revealed for the salvation of the soul arranged in systematic order. This, like all these methods, fails to make the experience of salvation, as independent of the science, the starting-point in theology, and does not, consequently, give a satisfactory division.

§ 2. *The Pietistic Approximation to the True Principle of Division.*

The Pietists made experience the starting-point in theology; but they did not sufficiently distinguish the specific experience in justification by faith in Christ alone, as that which has certainty in it, from the mere general Christian experience. They insisted that "experience must precede scientific knowledge;" that "the doctrines of the Bible must be felt in order to be understood." *Non intelligo ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam*—the motto of Anselm—was heartily adopted by them. They said: "We must believe that we may experience, and experience that we may know." This was, indeed, a turning-point in the

study of theology, a return to the principle of the Reformation, and contributed greatly to the true method of conducting the process in a systematic theology. But they differed from the principle of the Reformation in this, that what this principle inculcates, is the *assurance of personal salvation, as especially the matter of experience, which must precede science*; and not the experience which we may have of the salutary effect of the different doctrines taught in the Bible. They overlooked the fact that the Bible contains truths which cannot be experienced, that are beyond the reach of all human experience, and which can still be recognized as true on the testimony of God; and, on the other hand, that faith—saving faith—contains elements which no kind of knowledge in itself alone contains. They did not, in their attempt at the preservation of the unity of experience and speculation, of experimental and scientific knowledge, sufficiently distinguish the subjective from the objective—the knowledge of faith, which includes also elements other than the knowledge which is gained even by the mere intellectual study of the Bible. The distinction lies in this, that faith, on the one hand, includes, subjectively, elements of feeling and volition, in addition to elements of knowledge; and, thus, more than biblical knowledge; and, on the other hand, that biblical knowledge objectively contains more than is included in the knowledge which is an element of faith—things that are received by faith without the element of knowledge. The point of their union is that the knowledge of faith springs from the experience of the great central fact in the history of redemption, which is recorded in the Bible; and, consequently, the idea involved in faith is confirmed by biblical knowledge (and no idea involved in faith, not so confirmed, is an element of true faith) and increased in extent in proportion to our attainments in that biblical knowledge. The knowledge that is an element of saving faith, may be regarded as the subjective idea, which is verified by the Bible, is found to be in agreement with the great objective law of the facts of redemption, as it is discovered by investigation and exposition of the Sacred Scriptures. The center of both—of faith and the Bible, of subjective experience and objective revelation, of the subjective idea and the objective law,—is *Christ, the living Christ, the Christ whom the Bible reveals, and the Christ who, by the power of the gospel and the influence and*

witness of the Holy Spirit, produces saving faith and the assurance of salvation in our hearts—the Christ “out of us,” and the Christ “in us.” But each of these, the subjective idea and the objective law, contains elements which the other does not. They are in agreement, but they are not commensurate; they are, as we have seen, in a measure independent, and yet they are inseparably united, the latter enlarging, verifying, and correcting the former as the source of its purification, growth and power. The Pietists failed to distinguish between *the special experience of the assurance of salvation—the peculiar certainty of the truth of the great central fact of Christianity—and the experience of the power of other truths and facts which are not so immediately necessary to salvation, and of which we have not such experience of certainty*, but only the testimony of another, though that testimony be that of God, and, consequently, a sufficient basis of faith without personal experience of the truth—between the *certainty* of the peace of God which *is experienced*, and *that*, for instance, of the trinity of the Godhead, which is believed on divine testimony *without experience*.

§ 3. *Imperfect Appropriation of it by Schleiermacher.*

Schleiermacher distinguished the Christian consciousness as a special experience; but he failed to distinguish between the certainty of the fact and that of the idea—failed to see that even an idea, springing from the certainty of this particular experience, may be a mere seeming unless it be found in agreement with an objective law of the facts in general, of which this experience includes but a part. He failed to see that the Christian consciousness is itself a product—is the human consciousness determined by facts, which belong to a world of realities lying outside of the field of experience, beyond the sphere of even the Christian consciousness,—and that, consequently, the idea derived from the Christian consciousness, must find its verification in the Bible. He made theology to be only the development of what is involved in the Christian’s faith—the exposition of the Christian consciousness. He made Christ—the Christ “in us”—the starting point, but he did not feel the necessity of finding the Christ “out of us,” as in agreement with the Christ “in us,” of having the historical Christ, as well as the ideal Christ. He went back, indeed, to the principle of the Reforma-

tion, but he took only its material aspect. We must now take the formal phase also. We must, on the one hand, have the subjective idea—the idea arising from the exposition of the Christian consciousness, from the evolution of what is involved in the experience of assurance of salvation—but we must, on the other hand, have this idea verified by the objective law of the facts of redemption, found in the Sacred Scriptures. It is not enough to ask what are the presuppositions of the Christian consciousness; we must find these presuppositions to be realities revealed by God and recorded in His Word. The defect of the pietistic idea of the experience of truth, which consisted in its failing to distinguish the *specific* experience—the *experience of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation through faith in Christ alone*, and to make the idea necessarily arising from the fact of justification by faith, the subjective idea of the system of Christian truth—must be avoided. But we should be equally on our guard against the defect of the method which would be content with the *mere deduction from the Christian consciousness, of its presuppositions, without feeling* the necessity of verifying these ideas by the teachings of the sacred volume. An objective law in correlation with our subjective idea must be found, must be the result of the exposition of the Scriptures; or we cannot be said to have a theology, though we may have religion. We must take each point and test it by the light of the inspired volume. We must *develop the ideas which spring from experience under the material principle—justification by faith—in the light of the formal principle—the Sacred Scriptures as the only infallible standard of Christian truth.*

The process will involve, on the one hand, the exposition of saving faith or the Christian consciousness, the development of the subjective ideas arising from it; and on the other the verification of them by the exposition of the facts or acts of divine revelation recorded in the Bible—the discovery of the objective law of the facts concerning God and man, and their relations to each other as given in the Scriptures. It will be the verification, not of the material principle itself—for this is independent of science—but of its presuppositions—of the ideas suggested by it. If the result be an agreement of the subjective ideas and the objective laws, we have an inductive science of theology.

§ 4. *The Application of this Principle in the Method of Division.*

Thus we may ask what is involved in sin and grace as they are experienced in saving faith, and in this way derive ideas from the Christian consciousness. The experience of justification by faith, is the experience of the guilt of sin, and of the freeness of grace. From this we may ascend to such presuppositions as these, namely, objectively: the reality of sin as sin, else there would have been no necessity of an atonement for sin, and there could be no gratuitous justification, thus excluding all mere naturalistic explanations of sin. We may apprehend sin as universal, or there would have been no absolute necessity of redemption, thus excluding all Pelagianism; sin as not eternal, or it could never be overcome by redemption; thus shutting out Manichaeism. We would have also the presupposition of a primitive sinless state, or man would not be a fallen being, would not need a special Saviour. Where there is no possibility of sin, there can be no possibility of salvation. The guilt of sin involves the personality of man, or he could not have fallen, thus excluding all mere Naturalism; it involves also the fact that he is the creature of a personal Creator, thus excluding all Pantheism; and the reality of a divine providence, thus excluding all Deism. Grace involves, objectively, the doctrine of the person of the Saviour as divine, supernatural, or we could not have the consciousness of being delivered by Him from the bondage of nature, thus shutting out all Ebionistic views; and, as human, or he could not be the Head of the human race, could not make His life our life, thus excluding all Gnostic Idealism. It involves as presuppositions, special divine influences; regenerating, sanctifying, witnessing, assuring; and means of grace, divine revelation, supernatural power and supernatural knowledge, word of God, pledges of grace; and as results, the Saviour's kingdom—of nature, grace and glory. Justification involves, subjectively, repentance of sin, striving after holiness of heart and life, the spirit of adoption, of affiliation; filial fear, love, hope; and grace involves, objectively, illumination, conviction, conversion of the sinner.

All these presuppositions are ideas which may be deduced from the experience involved in saving faith. But they are *only ideas, and to become science they must be found to be ideas of realities, and, consequently, they must be verified by the revelation of the*

facts of redemption, of which the Bible is the depository. Just as in the natural sciences, the inductive method requires us to verify our hypothesis by induction of facts; so here we must take our subjective ideas, whatever they may be, and inquire whether they be in harmony with the great law of the facts in each case, as it is disclosed in the Sacred Scriptures. From the experience of the reality of sin and guilt, we derive an idea, the truth of which we must try by what the Bible says and implies concerning the world as without sin, and what it declares respecting the world with sin in it. From the experience of forgiveness of sin—of free salvation, we deduce ideas, but these ideas must be tested by what the Scriptures say of Redemption, etc.

We may have thus: First, an *Agathology*; God, the Sovereign Good; His Nature, embracing, the Idea of God, Knowableness of God, Belief in God, Proofs of the Divine Existence, the Divine Attributes, the Trinity of the Godhead; the Works of God, His Decrees, or Plan of the World, Creation, embracing Angels, Man; Divine Providence, embracing the Preservation and Government of the things made—all “good,” “very good.” Secondly, a *Hamartology*; Sin, in its Nature as originated by the Creature; its Guilt and Condemnation; its Origin in the world of Spirits, Doctrine of Angels, Fall of Angels, Devils, Satan; its Origin in Man; the Temptation, the Fall, Natural Depravity, Imputation, Actual Sins, Degrees and Punishment of Sin. Thirdly, a *Soterology*; The Gracious Purpose of God to save Man; embracing The Person of Christ: His divine Nature, The Eternal Logos, Mediator of all Revelation—of God to Himself in the Eternal Trinity, to Creatures in Creation and Redemption; Mediator in the divine works, between Creatorship and creatureship in Creation; in Providence, conducting all things to perfect union of God and His moral creatures—would, perhaps, as the most perfect revelation of God and as necessary to the attainment of the goal of creation, have become incarnate even if man had not sinned—but the entrance of sin did not deter Him from coming—though it had to be an advent of inconceivably great suffering—amazing love! did not deter Him from becoming man. We have also in this divine revelation, in redemption, His Human Nature; real, our brother as well as our Lord; the union of the Two Natures in The One Per-

son; the States of Christ, His Humiliation, His Exaltation; the Works of Christ; Prophetical, Priestly, Kingly. Then we have, fourthly, *Soteriology*, The Appropriation of The Saviour's Work; The offices of The Holy Ghost, Vocation, Illumination, Regeneration, Sanctification, Assurance of Salvation; Means of Grace, The Word, Sacraments, Providence, Prayer. Fifthly, *Ecclesiology*; Experience of Salvation; of the Individual; Repentance, Faith, Hope, Love, Consolation in Affliction, Death, Intermediate State; of Society: Church invisible, consisting of all believers scattered throughout the world; The Visible Church, The Administration of Word and Sacraments; Special Ministry, Church Government and Discipline, Spiritual Reign of Christ; Second Advent, Resurrection of The Just, Universal Kingdom of Christ. Sixthly, *Eschatology*; Death in general, General Resurrection, Final Judgment, Eternal Retribution.

By this we wish only to indicate what we regard the true method for an Evangelical Lutheran Theology; namely, to take the ideas of Sin and Grace as they spring from the experience of justification by faith in Christ alone—the ideas of the union of God and man, of the Holy “God in Christ reconciling the sinful world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,” of sinful but penitent man, accepting this revelation of the gracious God and surrendering himself to Him in Christ,—to take the ideas derived from the apprehension of the point of union between grace and faith—of the new life of God in the soul—to take the ideas of Sin and Grace thus arising from the Christian's experience and comparing them, *first*, with the declarations of the Augsburg Confession; *secondly*, with the expressions of the Christian Consciousness of the Church in general; *thirdly*, with the teachings, of the Bible as decisive—with the Sacred Scriptures as the final appeal. The grand question must be, Are the ideas involved in our experience, corroborated by the objective inspired revelation of saving truth? Then, *fourthly*, we may compare them with the results of science and philosophy. Our ideas verified by the Sacred Scriptures, thus become a Christian science—a science of the Christian faith, a true Theology.

At the same time, much that is not the subject of our experience, yet belongs to this salvation, and is found in the Sacred Volume. This must also be studied. So also the relations of

the scheme of redemption to angels and to nature, to the world of spirits and the world of nature, must be noticed—the cosmical relations of Christ as well His saving work—His “reconciling all, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.” The great characteristic of this method is that it does not take any one *doctrine of the system* as the controlling principle for the division, but a *principle that is independent* of the system—the fact of justification by faith in Christ alone, communion with God in Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost through faith, as a matter of experience, and as suggesting the ideas, the verification of which constitutes the process of the science of theology. The principle is not found in God alone, nor in man alone, but in the union of God and man; and the point of this union is justification by faith as a fact, in which there is a real union of God and man by the operation of grace on the part of God, and the receptivity of faith on the part of man; and the result, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

§ 5. *The Advantages of this Method of Division.*

In this way we escape the difficulties which attend the very best divisions when some *one doctrine of the system itself becomes the principle of division.*

The arrangement and division of the materials of systematic theology are, in the prevalent mode of division, *inevitably dependent upon the fundamental dogmatic view.* And it is by no means a matter of indifference in what relation the individual articles of our system are placed to one another, and how they are made to bear upon the sum-total of Christian truth. All divisions of this kind have difficulties which may be, in some measure, obviated by the method here proposed. A glance at some of the best of these divisions will confirm this.

Thus, as the doctrine of the person of Christ, the Son of God and the son of man, as the Saviour of the world, is the fundamental article of Christianity, it has been regarded as the centre of the theological system, as the doctrine in the light of which all other doctrines should be treated, either as they are necessarily presupposed, or as they inevitably follow as a consequence from it. Hence some propose to make the person of Christ the first topic in the division of theology. But if the person of Christ is to be understood, the discussion of the

divine nature and of human nature must precede it, for this person is both divine and human. Hence the topic of theology proper, which is the discussion concerning God, His being, the proofs of His existence, His attributes, works, providence; and that of anthropology, which treats of man, his nature and relations, must have priority in the system. Christology, therefore, cannot properly be the principle of division. Only when Christ is regarded *first as the object of faith independently of the system*, is the feeling of the prominence which His Person should have in our view fully satisfied. *We must first have the idea derived from the experience of the saving faith produced by the gospel*, as the power of God unto salvation under the influence of His Holy Spirit, *and then, carry this idea into the light of the sacred Scripture, in search there of the objective law of the facts of the plan and work of salvation*—part of which only we have experienced in justification by faith—in order to see whether our subjective idea and this objective law are in correlation; and, thus, whether we have a science of faith, a theology. Then, and only then, *the doctrine of the Person of Christ will properly be seen in the prominence, which is attempted, in vain, by the method of making it the principle of the division of the system.*

So while the usual order has been to discuss the doctrine of the Trinity and that respecting the Decrees of God in immediate connection with, and as a part of, theology proper, that is, of the doctrine concerning God; some have objected to this order, for the reason that these doctrines can only be properly appreciated after others have been treated of; and they have preferred to place the doctrines of the divine Trinity and the divine Decrees at the end of the system. But this seems also to be a defective view, because the decrees or the plan of God are inseparable from the idea of God; and the doctrine of the Trinity has by others been regarded as manifestly underlying the whole structure of Christianity. So much is this the case that many of the greatest theologians, such as Calvin, Martensen, Kahnis, divide the system in the order of the doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But the usual order has all its difficulties removed by the method which is here proposed. The old topical method with its usual designations, Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, may be substantially retained, if we do not let these topics stand in mere juxtaposition or

mechanical sequence, but in living relation to one another. And *this we have in the method which first evokes the idea of this connection out of the living experience of salvation and the exposition of the Christian consciousness. This gives first of all a view of all the doctrines in their relation to each other; they can then, in the process of the verification, correction and purification of the ideas, evolved out of the Christian consciousness, in the light of the Holy Scriptures, be treated in the usual order. The Trinity and the Decrees can be treated first in their economical aspects, and then in their essential nature—the first as immanent, the second as transcendent. And we may be able to see in the apprehension of these doctrines by the Church—made in the course of the development of her consciousness as Christian consciousness, and now confirmed by the investigations of Scripture—a light which will illuminate all other doctrines. These doctrines may be seen to throw rays of glory over the entire system of divine truth; they may appear as the completed revelation of God; the one of His essential nature, the other of the operations of His wisdom, power and love—the revelation of God as all in all, as well as over all. The immanent Trinity may come to be apprehended as the *revelation of God, of Himself to Himself; and thus, to have great significance for the entire revelation of Himself to man, and for the entire manifestation of the plan of redemption.* And the doctrine of Election, contemplated from the standpoint of Redemption, will manifest the *union of the glory of God and the salvation of man in Christ, who is the end of all, the first and the last; and thus reveal the true nature of the covenant of redemption, and the relations of Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

So some have selected from among the *ideas of the Scriptures some one leading and controlling idea as the principle of the division of the system.* Thus two great ideas in regard to Christianity prevail in the Bible: one, that it is the revelation of divine grace for the salvation of men; the other, that it is for the glory of God. According to the one, the human is regarded more as the subject of the divine salvation; according to the other, more as the organ of God's revelation of Himself. The one seems to make God exist only for the happiness of man; the other to make man exist only for the manifestation of God. *These two ideas, though distinct, are inseparable, and they*

must both be true. And if we wish to treat satisfactorily the truths and facts of Christianity in their relations to human salvation, and in their relations to the revelation of the glory of God—to treat fully of man and the God-man as the highest organs of the divine manifestation; and finally and completely, to combine the two processes by contemplating them together in their point of unity—the results of one in the light of those of the other—then we should not begin with these facts separately, lest we make one of these ideas control, or even exclude the other, but *with the idea resulting from the experience of salvation by faith in Christ, and thus see their union in the divine salvation as actually experienced, involving as it does the perfect revelation of God in Christ, in the God-man, and, consequently, the inseparable connection of the manifestation of God's glory in the salvation of men through faith in Christ.* The good, the highest good, is not God separate from the creature, nor the creature separate from the Creator. God must, indeed, be viewed as distinct in His existence and independent of all other being; self-existent, self-sufficient, and self-satisfied, not needing anything; but as He has given existence to creatures, it was morally certain—though not necessary either physically or metaphysically—certain from eternity, that He would create them; and as it must have been infinitely worthy of Him to create them, their existence belongs to the highest good from eternity *in idea*, and from creation *in reality.* *The highest revelation of the chief good is in Christ and in the consummation of His work; and this involves the union of God and the creature in Him—the glory of God and the salvation of the creature united with God in Christ by faith—the glory of God in their everlasting blessedness and undisturbed glorification in their union with Him, if they had not sinned; and now also in their deliverance from evil—since, and though they have sinned—by the redemption in Christ, and their everlasting blessedness in their union with God in Him.* Thus the glory of God and the happiness of the saints constitute heaven; and the deliverance of the brute creature, of material nature, from the bondage of corruption, its glorification in connection with the manifestation of the sons of God, as the theatre of God's Kingdom—the complete image and manifestation of the power, the suitable instrumentality and means of the operations of God and man. And consequently, the cosmical

relations of Christ also belong to the System of Theology; His work in creation as well as in redemption, His reconciling or bringing into union with God the forces of nature as well as the powers of spirit, of the souls of the saints—the powers as in a derived way, having existence in themselves; and spirits as in a derived way, having life in themselves; distinct from God and yet dependent on Him; coming from and returning to Him; distinct from Him and yet having Him all in all and over all. This is the consummation of that chief good, that *summum bonum*, which is realized in its beginning in the justification of the soul through faith, in the fact of the union of the subject of grace with God in Christ through faith in the Holy Ghost, in the experience of assurance of salvation by faith in Christ.

Men have also sometimes seized upon some prevailing and controlling idea of religion, and made it the principle of the division of theology. Thus, for example, as religion is the fundamental relation of man, we might use it as such a governing principle in the system; and treat, first, of the relation of God to men as children of God, of the creatorship of God and the creatureship of man, that is, of *Theology*; secondly, of man in his relation to God as not yet mediated by Christ, the doctrine of the primitive state and original destination of man, then concerning the fall and sin, that is, *Anthropology*; thirdly, of the person of Christ, the God-man, that is, *Christology*; fourthly, of the work of redemption by Christ, that is, *objective Soteriology*; fifthly, of man in his relation to Christ, and through Christ to God, that is, *subjective Soteriology*; sixthly, of the order of salvation, the doctrine of the *Holy Ghost*; seventhly, in his relation to Christ, and through Christ to the world, that is, the *communion of saints*, the Church, the Word and Sacraments, that is, *Ecclesiology*; eighthly, of man in his changed relations to nature, death and the resurrection, final judgment, eternal retribution, that is, *Eschatology*. This division resembles the true idea, in that it starts from a point of experience in religion, but it may be experience only in natural religion, and consequently cannot be the true starting point, nor be carried as a principle of division into the sphere of revealed religion, of Christian theology. This method, not beginning with a strictly Christian experience, does not prepare us to appreciate the Bible as the source of the verification of our experience, and leads us

into the danger of letting reason have the same control here that it has in natural religion, of substituting ideas for facts, or at least of confounding the ideal and the historical, of resolving the facts into the ideas. The principle of the Reformation, on the contrary, *is the experience of revealed truth, of the power of the gospel unto salvation.* It is not experience of a relation not yet mediated by Christ. *The subjective idea or the hypothesis* which is to be our guide in the investigation of the truths and facts of Christianity, *must spring from an experience which Christianity has first made possible*, a peculiar determination of consciousness which has been produced by Christianity as the living power of God in relation to the human soul.

So the *idea of a covenant runs through the Bible, and this may be taken as controlling in the system.* We might thus divide into, first, the parties to the covenant, giving God, or *Theology proper*; secondly, Man, or *Anthropology*; then *Christology*, the doctrine of the Mediator of the covenant, in His person; *Soteriology objectively*, in His work of redemption; the benefits of the covenant appropriated through the Holy Ghost, *subjective Soteriology*; different economies in the dispensation of the covenant, means of grace, Word and Sacraments, order of salvation, vocation, illumination, conviction, conversion, justification, sanctification, *Ecclesiology, Eschatology.*

And so *the idea of the kingdom of God, like that of the covenant, runs through the entire history of revelation in the Old and New Testament.* If the idea of a covenant agrees with that of Christianity as a revelation for human salvation; that of the kingdom corresponds to that of Christianity, as a manifestation of the glory of God. If the former corresponds with the idea of humanity, as the subject of the divine salvation; the latter corresponds with that of humanity as the highest organ of God's revelation of Himself; as the former does justice to the one, so the latter does to the other. The latter would present the several topics of the theological system in the following light. First, *Theology proper*; God, the sovereign king of the kingdom; His being, attributes, trinity, counsels, decrees. Secondly, *Anthropology*; that is, the subjects of the kingdom; man—in his primitive state and in sin—the organ or subject for the manifestation of God's justice and mercy—of His glory. Thirdly, Christ, the founder of the kingdom, especially in His relations to

the first and second creations, His cosmical and spiritual relations; the incarnation, or the second creation, the completion as well as the restoration of the first creation; that is, *Christology*. Fourthly, *Soteriology*; the establishment of the kingdom; God as Lord of all the world of creatures, of nature and of spirit; the kingdom in the heart; grace, means of grace; the kingdom all over the human world, that is, the Millennial reign; the kingdom over the entire physical world, the delivering of it from bondage and the introducing of it into the liberty of the sons of God; the divine-human and the cosmical kingdom. As the kingdom originates in God, when completed it returns to Him; God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, all in all—the consummation of the end of all religion—union with God, the sovereign good, not absorbed in the world, nor the world absorbed in Him; God not the All, but all in all and over all.

Thus we see how either of these ideas, taken from among the doctrines contained in the system, would equally serve as the principle of division. And who shall say which has the greater claim, if either is to be used for this purpose, or which of them shall be subordinate to the other in the system? The truth is, that they are neither superordinate nor subordinate; nor does one exclude the other; but they are both united in a broader, if not a higher idea, in one more comprehensive, if not grander—*in the idea which springs necessarily from justification by faith, from the experience of peace with God in Christ; the idea which is not a part of the system, but of the groundwork; and, consequently, is the principle for the discussion and division of the system.* Both these ideas, human salvation and the glory of God, will come to full treatment in this method; and it will be found to be the point of union between the idea of the covenant and that of the kingdom. This theological process, the development of the ideas springing from the material principle in the light of the formal principle of the Reformation—and, thus, also the verification of these ideas from experience, a real experience of justification, of assurance of salvation through faith in Christ as a fact—will be found, we trust, the true and practicable method for an Evangelical Lutheran Theology which shall be as believing and orthodox as it is sound and scientific.

We should joyfully labor in such a work. We live amid the blessed results of Christianity. The “leaven,” so “little” when

first inserted, is rapidly fermenting, and will soon leaven the entire mass of humanity. "The mustard seed," so small, has sprung into a great tree, affording "leaves for the healing of the nations," and extending its branches for a shelter to the weak and helpless, and affording a cooling shade for the rest of those "who labor and are heavy laden." The kingdom, first promised to a "little flock," has extended its boundaries far and wide, exerting its benign influences over the civilized and the barbarous, the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the high and the low; blessing the king upon his throne and the peasant in his cottage; purifying the centres of civilization, and pursuing men with its conservative and elevating powers to the outermost verge of human society. Many centuries have passed since this kingdom was promised by the Great King to the "little flock." Meantime earthly thrones have been erected and overturned, kingdoms have been established and destroyed, nations have risen and fallen, and others now exist, in turn to be swallowed by the billows of time; but triumphant and high above the storm and the wave has stood this heavenly kingdom, ever growing in power and glory; and thus it will stand until "great voices shall be heard from heaven," proclaiming that "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." For,

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

Let us consecrate all our energies, our highest thoughts, our best feelings, our mightiest actions, to the promotion of this great cause of God and humanity; and though our eyes close upon earth before its final consummation, we will behold it from a higher and more glorious post of observation, "amid the sanctities of heaven."

Whether the process of creation and reconciliation will close with the glorious consummation of the present universe, in the kingdom of God and the salvation of men, or whether it is only one of the grand steps in the movements of divine counsel and providence, we cannot tell. As there has been a second as well as a first creation in the work of divine revelation, there may yet be future and higher stages of this revelation in the creation

and reconciliation of creatures. It may be, as there was a kingdom of spirits whose subjects are now also subjects of the present higher manifestation of God's glory, and are now ministering spirits to us who are the heirs of salvation, who are now in a state of training for this kingdom in its glorious manifestation, that future revelations of God's glory will be made through other creatures—subjects of a still higher stage of creation and reconciliation, subjects of the distinct existence and perfect union of finite beings with the infinite God as the source and end of all—creatures to whom we, as kings and priests, shall minister as we have been ministered unto. But whatever additional stages of creation and reconciliation there may be, Christ will be the Mediator of them all, the first and the last, the Creator and Reconciler of all things in the new-created heavens and the new-created earths. They will all be only fuller manifestations of the absolutely perfect revelation of God, which He is. And in either case, we do know that God will be most glorious, and we most happy. All will be filled with the infinite blessedness of communion with God, who shall be in all, and over all, and all in all; to whom be all power and praise forever and ever: Amen.

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