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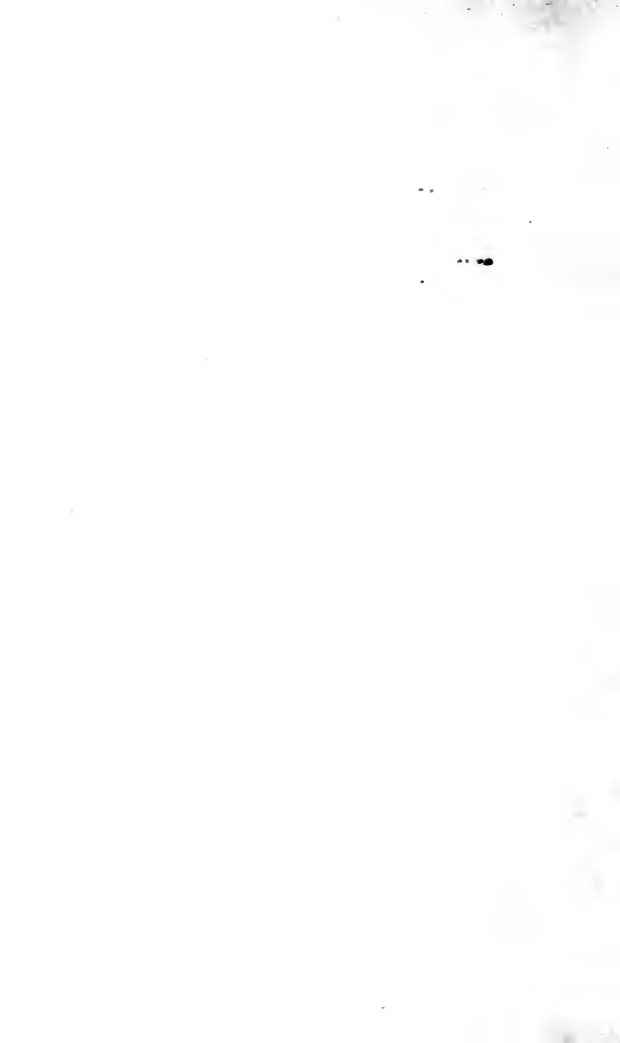
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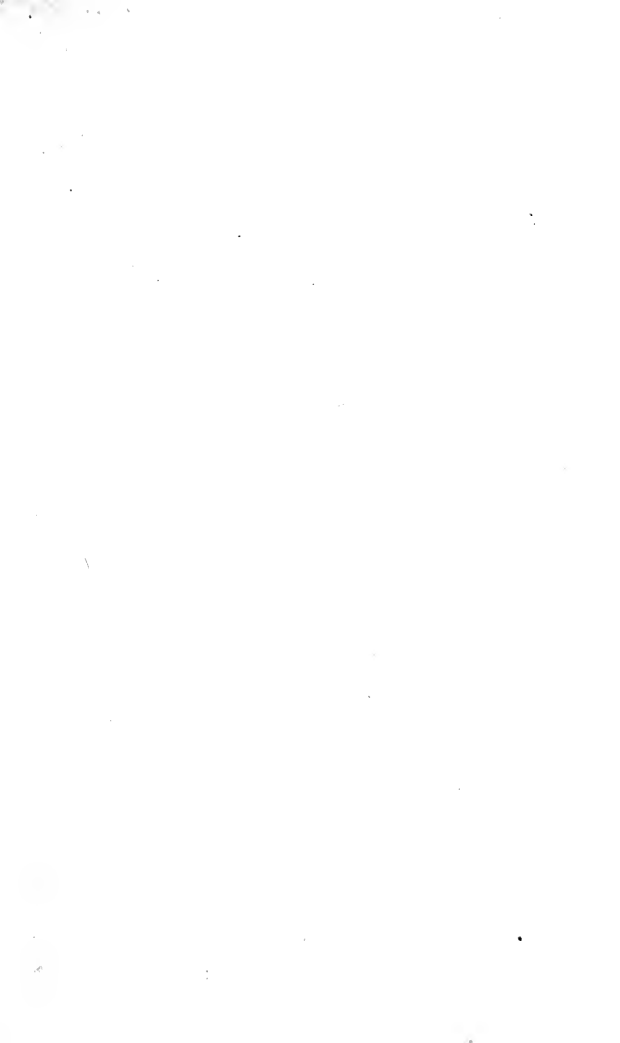
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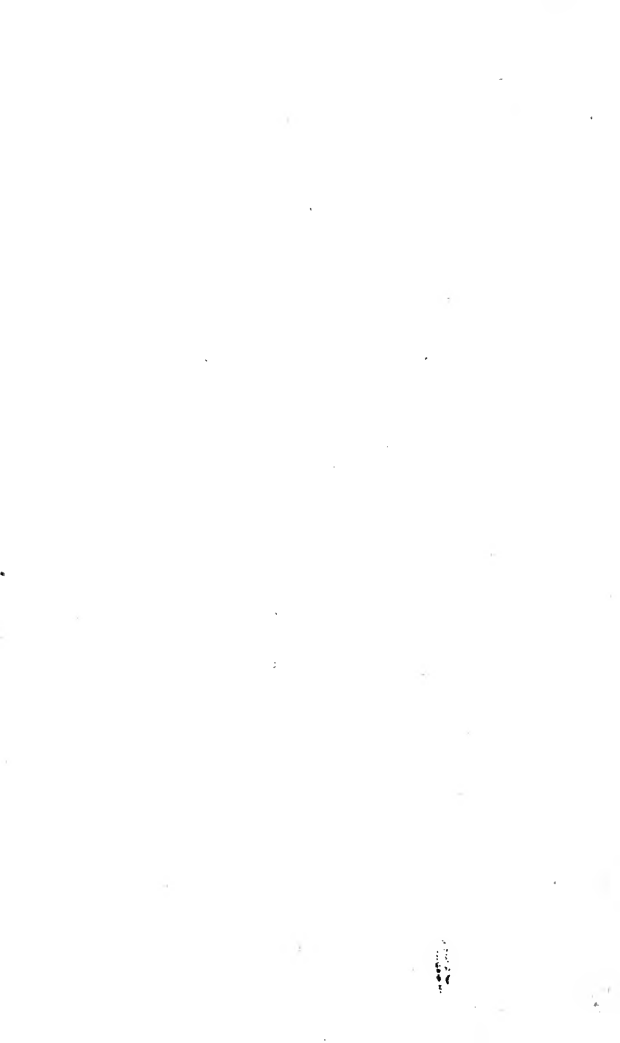
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OLD AND NEW THEOLOGY.

BY

JAMES WOOD, D.D.

ALSO

A REVIEW

OF

BEMAN ON THE ATONEMENT

FROM THE

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# OLD AND NEW THEOLOGY,

OR AN EXHIBITION OF

THOSE DIFFERENCES WITH REGARD TO

SCRIPTURE DOCTRINES,

WHICH HAVE RECENTLY AGITATED AND NOW DIVIDED

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

No man having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith, the old is better.—LUKE v. 39.

SECOND EDITION.

BY JAMES WOOD, D. D.



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## P R E F A C E

TO THE FIRST EDITION IN 1838.

IN numerous instances during the past year, the question has been proposed to me, "What is the difference between the doctrinal views of the Old and New School? Though several books and pamphlets have been written on a number of these points, and though most if not all of them have been discussed at various times in our periodicals, there are many in our churches who are not sufficiently informed on the subject, particularly in those sections where the new doctrines have not become prevalent, and where but few publications on the points at issue have been circulated. Recent occurrences render it peculiarly important that all in our connexion should fully understand the merits of the question.

It has now become a *practical* one. A decision is now being made whether we will continue with the church of our former choice, or unite with those who, without changing their name, have organized a new body. With a view of giving information to such as desire to ascertain on which side the truth lies, we shall present, in as concise a manner as the case will admit, the distinguishing features of the *New Theology*—comparing them, as we proceed, with those doctrines which have, by way of contrast, been denominated *old*. For the sentiments of the Old School we shall refer to the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian church and to standard Calvinistic writers. We think this cannot be reasonably objected to, even by our New School brethren; since they have never charged the former with departing from the Confession of Faith. For the New School doctrines, we shall make quotations from the professors at New Haven, Mr. Finney, and various ministers in the Presbyterian church. We quote from those first named, because Dr. Taylor and his associates, though belonging to another denomination, are regarded as the *modern* authors of these speculations; and Mr.



Finney, until within a few years past, belonged to our body, and preached and published most of his sentiments on these subjects before he left the church.

Some of the new doctrines began to be broached at New Haven in 1821-22, which created much dissatisfaction in the minds of a number who were made acquainted with the fact. In 1826 Professor Fitch published his Discourses on the Nature of Sin, and this was followed by a series of communications in the Christian Spectator, on the Means of Regeneration. The former were reviewed by Dr. Green in the Christian Advocate, and the latter called forth a controversy between Dr. Taylor and Dr. Tyler. In 1828 Dr. Taylor delivered his *Concio ad Clerum*, which was the cause of Dr. Woods writing his Letters addressed to Dr. Taylor; and the whole series taken together drew from Dr. Griffin his Treatise on Divine Efficiency, and led to the establishment of the East Windsor Theological Seminary.

Mr. Finney, who was hopefully converted and licensed to preach a few years previous, became celebrated as an evangelist in Western New-York, in 1825-26. Though distin-

guished at first rather by "new measures" than by new doctrines, he soon adopted the views of Dr. Taylor; and he has probably done more to give them currency in certain sections of the church than any other individual. On some points he has gone further than his archetype; and on all perhaps has expressed himself with more frankness and less caution—asserting in positive terms what the former taught only by affirming, that the *contrary* could not be *proved*. His lectures and sermons were the subject of animadversion in several periodicals; and as I happen to know, a certain minister seriously urged one of his (Mr. Finney's) co-presbyters to commence process against him; but nothing of this kind, I believe, was ever attempted.

In 1829 Mr. Barnes preached and published his sermon on the Way of Salvation; which disclosed the fact that on a number of points he agreed substantially with the new system; and upon his being called, some months afterwards, to a pastoral charge in Philadelphia, some of the members of the Philadelphia Presbytery objected to receiving and installing him, on the ground that his sermon, which had been extensively circulated in that

city, contained important errors in doctrine. The action of the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly, in 1830–31, the publication of his Notes on the Romans in 1835, and the charges and trials for heresy during that and the following year, are too familiar to all connected with our church, to need any particular notice. The preceding statements have been made merely to show the coincidence between the rise and progress of the new divinity in New England and its commencement and extension in the Presbyterian church.

It has been said that the controversy in the Presbyterian church does not respect doctrines at all, except as a secondary thing. Some have told us it is a strife for power—others a contest for the purse—and others a thrust at Congregationalism, and through that at New England. With whatever view these allegations have been made, the effect of them has been to produce distrust and disunion in many cases where there would otherwise have been a hearty concurrence in most if not all of the measures adopted for the reform of the church. This has been particularly the case with some whose partialities are strong in favour of

New England. It would seem that such had forgotten for the time, that in New England the same controversy is going on which has agitated and ruptured the Presbyterian church. If it is a war against New England, how does it happen that many of their ablest theologians have taken sides with the assailants? nay, that they were the first in raising the note of alarm? The language of Dr. Green, in 1831, undoubtedly expresses the feelings of a large majority, if not of all the ministers in the Presbyterian church. "What!" we have heard it said, even by some who love us, "What! are you arraying yourselves against the whole Theology of New England?" No—we have answered privately, and now answer publicly. No—we are arraying ourselves against Taylorism and Fitchism, and Murdochism, and Emmonsism, and self-conversionism. But we thank God, this is not "the whole theology of New England," and we hope and believe it never will be. We know that there is a host of men, sound in the faith, who dislike and oppose most decisively, this whole mass of error; and we hail these men, and love them as fel-

low labourers in the cause of truth, and bid them God speed with all our hearts.

Though in the progress of the difficulties some prominence has been given of late to Congregationalism, it was only from the circumstance that this was believed to have an important connexion with the main question at issue. It is not the Congregationalism of New England, that was the subject of discussion, but Congregationalism in the Presbyterian church. Against Congregationalism, as such, there exists no hostility; but when, through the Plan of Union, it became the means, like the Trojan horse, of introducing into our body many who were unfriendly to our doctrines and government, it became necessary, in self-defence, to free the church from this improper, and to us, ruinous condition.\*

\* According to the statement published by me, as corrected in the second edition, there are in the four disowned Synods three hundred and thirty-four churches nominally Presbyterian, and two hundred and eighty-six Congregational. A short time ago, a minister who was then a member of the Otsego Presbytery, observed to me, If you have reported as favourably concerning all the Presbyteries as you have concerning ours, they have no reason

The same remarks are applicable to the resolutions of the General Assembly concerning certain benevolent societies. Towards the American Home Missionary Society and the American Education Society, in their incipient stages, and *considered merely as organizations for doing good*, there was for a number of years the greatest cordiality. This is evident from the fact that they were repeatedly recommended by the General Assembly. But when it was found that their operations within our bounds, besides interfering with the free action of our own Boards, were made the instruments in the hands of those who managed the various Presbyterian auxiliaries, of increasing and extending our difficulties, and rendering them more unmanageable—the one by furnishing young men for our pulpits whose sentiments did not accord with our Standards, and the other by directing and sustaining them in their fields of labour—the Assembly of 1837 withdrew

to complain. Instead of there being eight Presbyterian and eight Congregational churches as reported by me, there are, he said, but six Presbyterian churches and ten Congregational.

their former recommendations and requested them to cease operating in our churches. As in their action concerning the Plan of Union and the four Synods, so in regard to these societies, the ground of their proceedings was, that they believed them to be (to use their own language) "exceedingly injurious to the peace and purity of the Presbyterian church"—and while they "hoped and believed that the Assembly would not be behind the protesters, [the patrons of those societies] in zeal for the spread of *divine truth*, they desire that in carrying on those great enterprises, the church may not be misled to adopt a system of action which may be perverted to the spread of error."

It is not true, therefore, that the controversy has little or no respect to doctrines. On the contrary, the principal and primary ground of it, has been a discrepancy in doctrinal sentiments. Its origin may be traced to the opinion so prevalent of late, among certain classes of men, that we ought to expect as great improvements in theology as have been made in the arts and sciences—that those formularies of Christian faith, which have been received for centuries as

containing a correct statement of Scripture doctrine, are too antiquated for this enlightened age; and if received now, are to be explained agreeably to certain philosophical principles which were unknown in the days of our ancestors—and that the Bible itself is to be so expounded as to accord with those theories of mind, of free agency, and of moral government, which have been introduced by the new philosophy. It is this which gives to their theology the denomination of *new*. Considered chronologically, it is far from being new. Similar sentiments were advanced on most of the points in dispute, as long ago as the time of Pelagius, and they have sprung up and flourished for a while at different periods since. Were this the proper place, we could easily substantiate this remark by a reference to documents.

The principles upon which these modern improvements in theology profess to be based, appear to me to be radically erroneous. If the doctrines of religion were as difficult to be *discovered* by a diligent reader of the sacred Scriptures, as the laws and motions of the heavenly bodies are to an observer of the planets, the march of mind might be expect-



ed to be as visible in the development of new theological truths, as in the new discoveries of astronomy. But the Bible, I have always supposed, has recorded truth in order to *reveal* it; and not to place it so far beyond the reach of common observation, as to require the aid of a telescope to enable us to discern its character and proportion. Truth is immutable. The Bible is, therefore, not to be interpreted by a set of philosophical dogmas, which vary, it may be, with every successive age: but by a careful examination and comparison of its several words and phrases. These obvious way-marks were the same in the time of Augustine and Calvin, and the Westminster divines, as they are now; and it is by a faithful adherence to these, that so much uniformity has been preserved among Christians of every age, in regard to the doctrines of our holy religion. Abstruse metaphysical speculations have now and then held out their false lights, and led portions of the church into error; but whenever the pride of intellect and learning has been humbled by the Spirit of God, and there has been a return to that simple hearted piety, which is willing to receive the plain teachings

of the Bible, without stopping to inquire whether they are consistent with certain new modes of philosophizing, it has uniformly resulted in the revival of those old and venerable doctrines, which have been the stability and glory of the church in every period of her history.

We do not intend to convey the idea, that all who are now denominated New School, or who have united in organizing the new Assembly, embrace the new doctrines. Various reasons have operated to produce in the minds of some, so much sympathy for those who maintain these sentiments, that they have taken sides with them, and hence have received their name, though they disclaim all affinity for their peculiar views. Others receive the new divinity in a modified form; and a third class adopt some of its dogmas, while they reject others. These last remarks apply to some of those from whose productions we design to make extracts in the following pages.

How large a proportion of the new Assembly embrace the New Theology, we will not undertake to say. We might state a number of facts, which appear to show that it is

adopted, at least "*for substance of doctrine,*" by a very considerable majority. On the contrary, there are some who have expressed opposition to these doctrines, but who have been influenced, it is probable, by their local situation, or their connexions and sympathies, to join the new body. Our earnest wish is, that they may exert a happy influence. We have no malignant feelings to gratify—but shall rejoice to know that every error has been corrected, every ground of complaint removed, and that as a body, they may regain that Christian confidence, to which a few of their number are now so justly entitled. It is to be deeply regretted, that in one or two things, they would not pursue a different course. Twelve months ago a committee, appointed by that party, consented to take another *name*, and to leave their brethren of the Old School in the quiet possession of their records, board of trustees, and certain invested funds. An amicable division would doubtless have taken place at that time, had it not been for the fact that the committee from the New School party, though they consented to the above reasonable terms, insisted upon such other condi-

tions as could not be acceded to without jeopardizing those very interests for the securing of which a division had become necessary. Hence the negotiation failed. But now they claim to be the true General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and have appealed to the civil courts to wrest, if possible, from the hands of their brethren, what, they virtually acknowledged a year ago, does not belong in equity to themselves, but to those whom they have thus assailed. Such a procedure seems to us grossly improper, as well as inconsistent. It is to be hoped, however, that on further reflection, they will be induced to retrace their steps and pursue a course more agreeable to their former professions and to the spirit of the gospel.

But while we do not doubt that these suits, if prosecuted, will be decided in favour of the defendants, provided law and *justice* do not conflict with each other, we wish to remind the reader that the question, which body is the *true General Assembly*, does not depend upon any decision which is to be made by the civil courts. They can decide who shall have the *funds*; but beyond this their jurisdiction does not extend. The General

Assembly was organized ten years before they had a board of trustees; and their organization was as complete during that time as it was afterwards. It had then its constitution—and this constitution, be it remembered, makes the General Assembly, and not a civil court, the body of final resort in all cases of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. This board of trustees was incorporated for the purpose of managing certain funds in behalf of the Assembly, and for nothing else. If their charter had been a limited one, its expiration would not have affected the character of the General Assembly; and if it shall be taken away, the only result which can follow, will be to deprive them of their funds; but as an ecclesiastical body, they remain unimpaired. If they were the true General Assembly in 1789, and for the ten following years before their charter was obtained, they are the true General Assembly now, whatever becomes of their property.

Though we shall be gratified to have them succeed in this respect, we regard the result of these suits as of little importance compared with other matters which have been involved in the controversy; but which we trust are

now finally settled. In regard to the question of property, we feel very much like a native Christian of the South Sea Islands who had lost his house by fire, and who in the act of rushing into the flames to secure a copy of the New Testament, was severely scorched by the conflagration. As the missionaries were condoling with him on the loss of his house, he put his hand under his garment, and taking out the sacred treasure which he had saved, exclaimed with extacy, "True, I have lost my property, but I have saved my gospels!" We may lose our property before the civil tribunals; but if we have saved our "gospels," we shall be infinite gainers, and ought therefore to "take joyfully the spoiling of our goods." These remarks are made in view of the prominence given in the New School prints to a judicial decision: but we are far from believing that any professional ingenuity or legal skill will be able to procure such a result as they anticipate; even should they venture to bring the question to trial.

# OLD AND NEW THEOLOGY.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE CHARACTER AND GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

IN New England, the controversy on the subject of the present chapter embraces some propositions which have never been much discussed in the Presbyterian church; and concerning which the great majority of our ministers, we believe, have not expressed a decided opinion. We refer to the following, which we give in the language of Dr. Tyler: "Dr. Taylor maintains, contrary to my belief, that the existence of sin is not, on the whole, for the best; and that a greater amount of good would have been secured had all God's creatures remained holy, than will result from the present system." Again: "Dr. Taylor maintains, contrary to my belief, that God, all things considered, prefers holiness to sin, in all instances in which the latter takes place." It has been a common sentiment among New England divines, since the time

of Edwards, "that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, and as such, so far as it exists, is preferable, on the whole, to holiness in its stead." The sentiment is founded upon what has been denominated the *Beltistian Theory*; which, it is said, was first taught by Leibnitz, about the commencement of the last century. This theory maintains, that "of all possible systems, God, infinitely wise and good, *must* adapt that which is *best*. The present system, therefore, is preferable to every other; and since sin is a part of the system, "its existence is, on the whole, for the best." Not that "sin must be good in *itself*," as Dr. Taylor disingenuously insinuates that they hold—this is no part of their belief—but that God will so overrule it, for the promotion of his glory and the happiness of the universe, "that a greater amount of good will result from the present system, than would have been secured had all God's creatures remained holy."\* Concerning the principle of Leibnitz, from which these conclusions are drawn, Dr. Witherspoon remarks: "This scheme seems to me to labour under two great and obvious difficulties—that the infinite God should set limits to himself, by the production of a created system—it brings creation a great deal too near the Creator to say

\* New England *optimism*, as it is sometimes denominated, arises from the theory that virtue consists in benevolence—or that the tendency of holiness to produce happiness, is that which gives it its chief, if not its only excellence.



it is the alternative of Omnipotence. The other difficulty is, that it seems to make something which I do not know how to express otherwise than by the ancient stoical fate, antecedent and superior even to God himself. I would therefore think it best to say, with the current of orthodox divines, that God was perfectly free in his purpose and providence, and that there is no reason to be sought for the one or the other beyond himself."

Admitting then, that there was no *necessity* on the part of the Creator to form one particular system rather than another, it becomes merely a question of fact, whether more good will result to the universe from the existence of sin, all things considered, than would have been secured if sin had never been permitted? To this question, most of the ministers in our church, we are disposed to think, would reply by saying, "We cannot tell." All agree that "the existence of sin under the divine government is a profound mystery;" and also that he will make use of it to display some of his illustrious perfections; and to communicate to his creatures rich and eternal blessings. But whether he might not have formed a system, if it had been his pleasure, by which his glory would have been still more displayed, and a still greater amount of happiness secured to his creatures, it is not our province to decide. As he has no where told us that he has made the best system *possible*, and as we cannot perceive that his infinite goodness required him to do it, we are dis-

posed to leave the question to be contemplated and solved, (if a solution be desirable,) when we shall have the advantage of that expansion of mind, that increase of knowledge, and that interchange of sentiment with other created beings, which we shall enjoy in the heavenly world.

But while in regard to these propositions we express no opinion, we consider the reasoning of Dr. Taylor in attempting to refute them, as involving pernicious errors. It is on this account that we have introduced the subject in the present volume. Pressed with the difficulty that if sin under the divine government will not on the whole be for the best, why did God permit it? he has taken the bold, not to say the impious ground, that God did all he *could* to prevent the existence of sin, but *could* not, without infringing on the moral agency of man—and that he would make the world holier and happier now if he *could*, without abridging human liberty.

His language on this subject is as follows: "It will not be denied that free moral agents *can* do wrong under every possible influence to prevent it. The *possibility* of a contradiction in supposing them to be prevented from doing wrong, is therefore demonstrably certain. Free moral agents can do wrong under all possible preventing influence."—*Christian Spectator*, Sept. 1830, p. 563.\*

\* As I have not all the numbers of the *Christian Spectator* in my possession, I shall, in my quotations from that work, make free use of a pamphlet written by the Rev. Daniel Dow.

“But in our view it is a question whether it is not essential to the honour of God to suppose that he has done all he could to secure the universal holiness of his accountable creatures; and that nevertheless, some, in defiance of it, would rebel. Such a proposition we think neither violates the feelings of enlightened piety, nor the decision of revelation.”—*Christian Spectator*, 1832, p. 567.

“God not only prefers on the whole that his creatures should for ever perform their duties rather than neglect them, but purposes on his part to do all in his power to promote this object in his kingdom.”—*Christian Spectator*, 1832, p. 660.

“It is a groundless assumption, that God could have prevented all sin, or at least, the present degree of sin in a moral system. If holiness in a moral system be preferable to sin in its stead, why did not a benevolent God, were it possible to him, prevent all sin, and secure the prevalence of universal holiness? Would not a moral universe of perfect holiness, and of course perfect happiness, be happier and better than one comprising ‘sin and its miseries?’ And must not infinite benevolence accomplish all the good he can? Would not a benevolent God, then, *had it been possible to him in the nature of things*, have secured the existence of universal holiness in his moral kingdom?” *Concio ad Clerum*.

It is not surprising that the publication of such sentiments created alarm among the

orthodox clergy of New-England; and that speedy efforts were made to arrest their progress.

Unhappily, they soon found their way to New York, and through the agency of Mr. Finney and others, obtained considerable currency. Mr. Finney's views will appear from the following quotation. In reply to an objection that as God "is almighty, he could prevent sin if he pleased," &c., he observes: "To say nothing of his word and oath upon this subject, you have only to look into his law to see that he has done all that the nature of the case admitted to prevent the existence of sin. The sanctions of his law are absolutely infinite: in them he has embodied and held forth the highest possible motives to obedience. His law is moral and not physical; a government of motive and not of force. It is in vain to talk of his omnipotence preventing sin. If infinite motives cannot prevent it, it cannot be prevented under a moral government, and to maintain the contrary is absurd and a contradiction. To administer moral laws is not the object of physical power. To maintain, therefore, that the physical omnipotence of God can prevent sin, is to talk nonsense."—Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 58.

Similar language is employed by him and other writers of the same school with reference to the power of God to convert sinners, and to make the world holier and happier than it now is. Mr. Edward R. Tyler [not

Dr. Tyler] preached a sermon at New Haven, Oct. 1829, (published by request,) in which occur the following sentences:\* “He [God] does not prefer the present system to one which might have presented itself to His choice, had it been possible to retain all moral beings in obedience; but prefers it to the non-existence of a moral system, notwithstanding sin is its unavoidable attendant.” “*The nature of things, as they now exist, forbids, as far as God himself is concerned, the more frequent existence of holiness in the place of sin. How do you know that the influence which He employs, even in respect to those who perish, is not all which the nature of the case admits? How do you know that he can maintain his moral government, or preserve moral agents in being as such, and prevent sin? Do you not pass the boundaries of human knowledge in saying that He is able to prevent all sin, while He preserves, unimpaired, the freedom of accountable beings? Such may be the nature of free agents that they cannot be governed in a manner to exclude sin, or to restrict it to a smaller compass than it actually possesses.*” “Such is the nature of free agents, that God foresaw he could not create them without liability to err and actual transgression. He knew at the same time, that the best possible system included such beings;

\* Mr. Tyler was at that time Pastor of the South Church in Middletown; Conn.

that is, beings capable of knowing and loving Him. He regretted, as He abundantly teaches us in His word, that some of those whom he was about to create would sin. Had it been possible to secure them all in obedience, more happiness would have been enjoyed by his creatures, and equal glory would have surrounded His own throne. But although the system which he saw to be best, could not be realized in consequence of the anticipated perversion of moral agency, he perceived a system such as he has adopted, notwithstanding the evil attending it, to be preferable to any which should exclude moral beings." "It is to him a subject of regret and grief, yet men transgress; they rebel in spite of his wishes; *they persevere in sin in spite of all which he CAN do to reclaim them.*"

A writer in the Christian Spectator [believed to be Professor Fitch,] advances the same ideas. "Whatever *degree* or kind of influence" says he, "is used with them, to favour their return to him, at any given time, *is as strongly favourable to their conversion as it CAN be made amid the obstacles which a world of guilty and rebellious moral agents oppose to God's works of grace.*"—Review of Dr. Fisk's Discourse on Predestination and Election.

In accordance with these sentiments, it was not uncommon a few years ago in some parts of New York, to hear from the pulpit and in the lecture room, that God is doing all He

*can* to convert and save sinners—that if He *could*, He would convert many more than He does—that He converts as many as He *can persuade* to yield their hearts to Him—and other expressions to the same effect. Of very similar import is the remark attributed to a son of Dr. Beecher, which, according to the Hartford Christian Watchman, was *one* cause of Dr. Porter's anxiety in relation to the father—it having been reported that he approved of the sentiment, viz. “that though God is physically omnipotent, He has not acquired moral power enough to govern the universe according to his will.”

How different these statements are from the old theology, will appear by a reference to the Confession of Faith; which teaches that God “hath most sovereign dominion over his creatures, to do by them, for them, and upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth”—that He is “Almighty, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory.” They are equally at variance with the word of God, which declares that “he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?”

The positions assumed by Dr. Taylor and others, besides being unscriptural, are believed by many to involve principles which are subversive of some important Scripture doctrines. They place such limits upon the

*power* of God, as to be a virtual denial of his *omnipotence*. They make him so dependent upon his creatures as to render him liable to *disappointment*, and consequently to a *diminution of his happiness*. Dr. Taylor, or one of his friends, admits that his blessedness has been diminished by the existence of sin. "It is admitted that what men have done to impair the blessedness of God by sin, has not failed of its results in the actual diminution of his blessedness, compared with what it had been, had they obeyed his perfect law."—*Spirit of the Pilgrims*, vol. v. p. 693. Mr. Tyler, who has just been referred to, makes the same admission. "This doctrine," he remarks, "is said to be inconsistent with the happiness of God. And we admit, that as far as his happiness is affected by the conduct of his creatures, he would have been better pleased had angels and men always remained steadfast in his fear and service."

They involve a denial of the Divine decrees—for if God does not possess such absolute control over his creatures that he can govern them according to his pleasure, how could he have decreed any thing unconditionally concerning them, since it might happen, that in the exercise of their free agency, they would act contrary to the Divine purpose? On the same principle they virtually reject the Calvinistic doctrine of election, and make election depend upon the foreknowledge of God and the will of the creature. This is actually the way in which Mr. Finney ex-



plains the doctrine. "The elect, then," says he, "must be those who God foresaw could be converted under the wisest administration of his government. That administering it in a way that would be most beneficial to all worlds, exerting such an amount of moral influence on every individual as would result, on the whole, in the greatest good to his divine kingdom, he foresaw that certain individuals could, with this wisest amount of moral influence, be reclaimed and sanctified, and for this reason, they were chosen to eternal life." "The elect were chosen to eternal life, because God foresaw that in the perfect exercise of their freedom they could be induced to repent and embrace the gospel." "In choosing his elect, you must understand that he has thrown the responsibility of their being saved upon them: that the whole is suspended upon their consent to the terms; you are perfectly able to give your consent, and this moment to lay hold on eternal life. Irrespective of your own choice, no election can save you, and no reprobation can damn you."—Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 224, 25, 29, 33. Mr. Tyler, from whose sermon we have already quoted, gives the same explanation of this doctrine, or, in other words, virtually denies it. "God foresees," he observes, "whom he *can* make willing in the day of his power, and resolves that they shall be saved." Prof. Fitch also advances the same idea in his review of Dr. Fisk's discourses on

### Predestination and Election, in the Christian Spectator.

The same remarks may be made, substantially, concerning the saints' perseverance, and even their stability in heaven. If the free will of sinners may effectually resist all the influence which God can use for their conversion, why may not the free will of Christians, under the counter influence of temptation, break through all the moral influences which God can bring to bear upon them, and they completely and eternally fall away? And if so, why may not the same catastrophe befall them after they arrive at heaven? To borrow the language of Dr. Tyler: "If his creatures are so independent of him that he cannot control them at pleasure, what assurance can he give us that every saint and every angel will not yet apostatize and spread desolation through the moral universe?"

Horrible as this thought is, it appears to be a legitimate consequence from the reasoning of the New Haven divines. "But this possibility that moral agents will sin, remains (suppose what else you will) so long as moral agency remains; and how can it be proved that a thing *will not* be, when, for aught that appears, it *may* be? When in view of all the facts and evidence in the case it remains true that it *may* be, what evidence or proof can exist that it *will not* be?"—Ch. Spec. 1830, p. 563. Again: "We know that a moral system necessarily implies the

existence of free agents, with the power to act in despite of all opposing power. This fact sets human reason at defiance in every attempt to prove that some of these agents will not use that power and actually sin." Ch. Spec. 1831, p. 617. If, then, the saints and angels in heaven are "*free agents*," they have, according to the above reasoning, "the power to act in despite of all opposing power," and it cannot be proved "that some of these agents will not use that power and actually sin."

On this subject we will quote some pertinent remarks from "Views in Theology," a periodical published in New York. "It is as true of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, that they are moral agents, and that their powers are the same in kind that are known to originate sin, as it is of us; as clear that if God "should begin and pursue any method of providence and government" over them, "the causes which originate sin would still exist in kind, under his providence," as it is, that they would among men; and "since under any system of providence, the condition of his creatures must be constantly changing;" as clear, therefore—if the powers of moral agency alone be considered—"that among these fluctuations, there may arise conjunctures under any providence, in which temptations will rise and prevail to the overthrow of some of those creatures," as it is that they may, under any providence, over such beings as ourselves.

“On the principles then, on which his reasoning proceeds, we not only have no certainty of the continued obedience of holy, angelic, and redeemed spirits, but have an absolute probability of their universally yielding to rebellion at some period of their existence, notwithstanding every species and degree of preventing influence that God can exert over them!”

To these, we will add the following from Dr. Griffin: “If God could not have prevented sin in all worlds and ages, he cannot prevent sin in any world or age, or in any creature at any time, except by preventing the particular occasion and temptation. If God could not have prevented sin in the universe, he cannot prevent believers from fatally falling; he cannot prevent Gabriel and Paul from sinking at once into devils, and heaven from turning into a hell. And were he to create new races to fill the vacant seats, they might turn to devils as fast as he created them, in spite of any thing that he could do short of destroying their moral agency. He is liable to be defeated in all his designs, and to be as miserable as he is benevolent. This is infinitely the gloomiest idea that was ever thrown upon the world. It is gloomier than hell itself. For this involves only the destruction of a part, but that involves the wretchedness of God and his whole creation. And how awfully gloomy as it respects the prospects of individual believers. You have no security that you shall stand an hour.

And even if you get to heaven, you have no certainty of remaining there a day. All is doubt and sepulchral gloom. And where is the glory of God? Where the transcendent glory of raising to spiritual life a world dead in trespasses and sins? Where the glory of swaying an undivided sceptre, and doing his whole pleasure “in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth?”—Griffin on Divine Efficiency, pp. 180, 181.

The *practical* influence of these assumptions is believed to be no less objectionable than their tendencies to error.

1. In relation to prayer. If we adopt the principle that God has not supreme control over the hearts of all men, how can we with confidence plead the fulfilment of those promises which are to be accomplished by the instrumentality of his creatures? However willing he may be to answer our prayers, there may be found among the various agents to be employed, some Pharaoh, so much more obstinate than the king of Egypt, that no influence which God can employ, will incline him to let his people go—or some Ahithophel, so much more sagacious and influential than the counsellor of Absalom, that the Lord will not be able to “turn his counsel to foolishness,” and bring back his own anointed to the throne of Israel.

2. If we believe ourselves so independent of God, that we can successfully resist any moral influence which he can bring to bear upon our minds, how feeble will be the in-

centives to the exercise of humility? Tell a carnal, unregenerate man, that though God had physical power to create him, he has not moral power to govern him, and you could not furnish his mind with better aliment for pride and rebellion. Should you, after giving this lesson, press upon him the claims of Jehovah, you might expect to be answered, as Moses was by the proud oppressor of Israel: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?"

3. The same may be said in regard to submission. Of this, the case just referred to affords an ample illustration. What a miserable reflection it would have been to present to an enslaved Israelite, that he ought to submit cheerfully to his bondage, because it was not in the power of the Lord to prevent it! Men are free agents: in the exercise of that agency, your ancestors *would* settle themselves in Egypt—and in the exercise of the same agency, the Egyptians *would* enslave them! God *knew* that such would be the result, and he would have hindered it if he *could*, but *could not*, without destroying their free agency! "Free moral agents *can* do wrong under every possible influence to prevent it."

4. Such reflections afford as little foundation for gratitude as for submission. Why do we feel grateful to God for those favours which are conferred upon us by the agency of our fellow men, except on the principle that they are only instruments in *his* hand—

who, without “offering the least violence to their wills, or taking away the liberty or contingency of second causes,” “hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, and upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth!” On any other ground, *they* would be worthy of the *principal*, and *he* only of *secondary* praise.

In conclusion, we will observe, (adopting the language of the “Views in Theology,” already referred to,) “The great questions involved in this controversy, it is sufficiently apparent from the foregoing discussion, are not of mere ordinary interest, but vitally important; and the decisions that are formed respecting them by the teachers of religion, must exert a momentous influence on the churches and religion of our country. The subjects to which they relate—the attributes of God, the reality and nature of his government, the doctrines of his word, the nature of the mind, the laws of its agency, the causes that influence it—if any are entitled to that rank, are fundamental: and the problems which it is the object of the controversy to solve, whether God is almighty as a moral and providential ruler as well as creator, or weak and liable to perpetual frustration; whether he is wholly able, or wholly unable to prevent moral beings from sinning; whether he can or cannot determine and foresee the events of their agency, and thence whether his predictions, threatenings and promises are true or false—indisputably involve all that is

essential in Christianity; and the scheme which affirms the one is as diverse from that which asserts the other, as light is from darkness, and truth from falsehood." "The question between them, is nothing less than the question—of two wholly dissimilar and contradictory systems, which is it that is the gospel of the grace of God, and which therefore is it that wholly contradicts and subverts the gospel?"



## CHAPTER II.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ADAM, AND OUR RELATION TO HIM AS OUR FEDERAL HEAD—INVOLVING THE DOCTRINE OF IMPUTATION AND ORIGINAL SIN.

ACCORDING to Witsius, "A covenant of God with man is an agreement between God and man, about the method of obtaining consummate happiness, with the addition of a threatening of eternal destruction, with which the despiser of the happiness offered in that way is to be punished." Such a covenant God made with Adam before the fall; and through him with all his posterity—he acting as their federal head and representative. "The first covenant made with man," says our Confession of Faith, "was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect



and personal obedience”—(as our catechism adds,) “forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil upon pain of death.” This has been the common sentiment among the reformed churches since the time of Luther and Calvin. It also formed a part of the creed of the early Christian Fathers.

Some of the reasons for this doctrine, are the following:

1. The law given to Adam in Gen. ii. 16, 17, contained all the essential properties of a covenant; viz. parties, a condition, a penalty, and an implied promise. It is not essential to a covenant that the parties should be equal—nor was it necessary in the present case, that Adam should give a formal consent to the terms proposed; because they were binding upon him as a creature of God, independent of his consent. But inasmuch as he was created in the image of God, and had his law written in his heart, there was undoubtedly a cordial assent to the proposed condition.

2. That transaction is referred to by the prophet Hosea, under the name of a covenant. “But they like men [Heb. like Adam,] have transgressed the covenant.” Hosea vi. 7. Upon this passage Henry remarks, “Herein they trod in the steps of our first parents; they, *like* Adam, have transgressed the covenant; (so it might very well be read;) as he transgressed the covenant of innocency, so they transgressed the covenant of grace; so

treacherously, so foolishly; *there* in paradise, he violated his engagements to God; and there in Canaan, another paradise, they violated their engagements. And by their *treacherous dealing* they, like Adam, have ruined themselves and theirs." This text has no definite sense, unless it refers to Adam.

3. Christ is said to have been given "for a covenant of the people;" (Isa. xlii. 6,) and since a parallel is drawn by the apostles between Christ and Adam; the latter being called the first, and the former the second Adam; the analogy requires us to regard the first Adam, as a party to a covenant.

The representative character of Adam may be proved by the following considerations. All the dispensations of Jehovah concerning Adam before the fall, respected his posterity as well as himself; such as dominion over the creatures, liberty to eat of the productions of the earth, the law of marriage, &c. When God made this covenant with Adam, it does not appear that Eve was yet formed—and yet it is manifest from her reply to the tempter, (Gen. iii. 2, 3,) that she considered herself as included in the transaction. The consequences of Adam's transgression affected his posterity as well as himself. Gen. iii. 16, 19; Rom. v. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 22. The apostle draws a parallel between Christ and Adam; in which he describes Christ as the representative of his spiritual seed, as Adam was of his natural seed. Rom. v. 12, 19; 1 Cor. xv. 22. But how did Christ repre-

sent his seed except in the covenant of grace? Adam, therefore, must have represented his in the covenant of works.

That covenant made with Adam and through him with his posterity, involves the doctrine of imputation and original sin. Destroy that and you destroy these—they must stand or fall together. And as they are both based upon the same covenant, so they are closely connected with each other. “So far as I know,” says President Edwards, “most of those who hold one of these have maintained the other; and most of those who have opposed one have opposed the other. And it may perhaps appear in our future consideration of the subject, that they are closely connected, and that the arguments which prove the one, establish the other, and that there are no more difficulties attending the allowing of one than the other.”

Upon these points the Confession of Faith teaches, that our first parents “being the root of all mankind; the guilt of this sin [eating the forbidden fruit] was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation”—and that “from this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.” The phrase “root of all mankind,” it is evident from the proof texts, refers not merely to natural relation, but also to covenant head-

ship; the latter being the principal foundation upon which the guilt of Adam's first sin is imputed to us; while the former is the *channel* through which our corrupted nature is conveyed. "Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way, are conceived and born in sin."—Larger Catechism. Imputation regards us as being responsible in law, for what Adam did as our representative—and as a punishment for his sin, our original righteousness was lost, and we are born with a corrupt disposition. This is what is meant by original sin.

As President Edwards is often referred to as a standard author on these points we will quote a few sentences from his work on original sin. "By *original sin*, says he, as the phrase has been most commonly used by divines, is meant *the innate sinful depravity of the heart*. But yet when the doctrine of original sin is spoken of, it is vulgarly understood in that latitude, as to include not only *the depravity of nature*, but the *imputation of Adam's first sin*; or, in other words, the *liableness or exposedness* of Adam's posterity in the *divine judgment*, to partake of the *punishment* of that sin."

By the imputation of Adam's sin then, according to President Edwards, is meant liability to punishment on account of his sin—and by original sin, the inherent depravity of our nature. This we believe is in exact

accordance with our standards, as they are understood by our most approved commentators.

Dr. Hodge, in his commentary on the Romans, observes, "This doctrine [of imputation] does not include the idea of a mysterious identity of Adam and his race; nor that of a transfer of the moral turpitude of his sin to his descendants. It does not teach that his offence was personally or properly the sin of all men, or that his act was, in any mysterious sense, the act of his posterity. "The sin of Adam, therefore, is no ground to us of remorse." "This doctrine merely teaches that *in virtue of the union representative and natural, between Adam and his posterity, his sin is the ground of their condemnation, that is, of their subjection to penal evils.*" In reference to original sin, he says, "it is not, however, the doctrine of the Scriptures, nor of the reformed churches, nor of our standards, that the corruption of nature of which they speak, is any depravation of the soul, or an essential attribute, or the infusion of any positive evil." "These confessions [of the reformers] teach that *original righteousness was lost*, and BY THAT DEFECT the *tendency to sin, or corrupt disposition, or corruption of nature*, is occasioned. Though they speak of original sin as being first negative, *i. e. the loss of righteousness*; and secondly, positive, or *corruption of nature*; yet by the latter, they state, is to be understood, not the infusion of any thing in *itself*

*sinful*, but an actual *tendency or disposition to evil* resulting from the loss of righteousness." As some of the strongest objections to these doctrines arise either from misunderstanding or misrepresenting them, the only answer which is necessary in many instances, is, to show that the doctrines as held by those who embrace them, are not what the objector supposes. The above quotations will serve to show what are the true doctrines on this subject. Some of the proofs by which they are substantiated, together with such remarks as may occur to us, will be reserved for a subsequent chapter.\*

We will now state with as much accuracy as we are capable of, what we understand to be the New School doctrines in reference to this subject. According to the New Theology, there was not in the proper sense of the word any covenant made with Adam, but he was merely placed under a law. He was not the federal head or representative of his posterity, but only their natural parent. Though as his descendants, we feel the effects of his sin, and become sinful ourselves in consequence of it, the doctrine that his sin was imputed to us is unjust and absurd. All

\* To any one who desires particular information on these points, we recommend the commentary of the Rev. Dr. Hodge, from which we have just quoted. There is no work within my knowledge, which to me is so clear and satisfactory in its statements and reasonings on this subject; and I believe it expresses the views which are generally entertained by those who are denominated the "*Old School*," or "*Orthodox*" portion of the Presbyterian Church.

sin and holiness consist in acts. To speak of a sinful or holy *nature*, (except in a figurative sense) is, therefore, absurd. When Adam was created he was neither sinful nor holy, but he acquired a holy character by the performance of holy acts, i. e. by choosing God as his supreme good, and placing his affections upon him. Jesus Christ, though called holy at his birth, was so merely in the sense of dedicated, and not as possessing (morally considered) a holy nature. When we are born we possess no moral character any more than brutes, but we acquire a moral character as soon as we arrive at moral agency, and put forth moral acts. In the sense in which it has been commonly understood, there is no such thing as original sin, there being no other original sin than the first sin a child commits after arriving at moral agency. Children are born with the same nature as Adam possessed at his creation—and the difference between us and him is, that we are born in different *circumstances*; and that the inferior powers of our nature have obtained greater relative strength; from which it universally results as a matter of fact, that our first acts are sinful, instead of being holy as his were; i. e. we do not choose God as the object of our supreme affection, but the world—and this choice of the world as our chief good is what constitutes human depravity.

Before referring to our authorities, we wish to observe that those who hold either

wholly or in part to the above doctrines, have not entirely laid aside the use of the terms, covenant, imputation, original sin, &c. —but they employ them in a different sense from that which has been generally attached to them by Calvinistic writers.

Mr. Finney, for example, uses the term *covenant*, in regard to the transaction between God and Adam; and yet he denies that Adam was the federal head of his posterity. His doctrine appears to be that all mankind were placed prospectively under the covenant of works, and were to have a trial or probation, each one for himself, similar to what Adam had; and that from their connexion with him as their natural parent, it so happens that they all break the covenant as soon as they arrive at moral agency, and thus become sinners. His language is, “I suppose that *mankind were originally all under a covenant of works*, and that Adam was not so their head or representative, that his obedience or disobedience involved them irresistibly in sin and condemnation, irrespective of their own acts.”—Lectures to Professing Christians, p. 286. Take these words in connexion with what precedes, and their import will be more obvious. “It has been supposed by many, says he, that there was a *covenant* made with Adam such as this, that if he continued to obey the law for a limited period, all his posterity should be confirmed in holiness and happiness for ever. What the reason is for this



belief, I am unable to ascertain: I am not aware that the doctrine is taught in the Bible." Here he alludes in direct terms to the common doctrine, and expresses his dissent from it. But what does he hold? "Adam," says he, "was the *natural head* of the human race, and his sin has involved them in its consequences; but not on the principle that his sin is *literally* accounted their sin." [*Quære*: Who does maintain this opinion?] "The truth," he adds, "is simply this: that from the relation in which he stood as their *natural head*, as a matter of fact, his sin has resulted in the sin and ruin of his posterity." Then follows what we first quoted. Thus it appears that though he employs the terms covenant of works, he rejects the doctrine which is generally entertained by those who use them. He intends one thing by them, and they another.

Mr. Barnes, in the seventh edition of his *Notes on the Romans*, (p. 128,) uses the word *impute*, in reference to the guilt of Adam's first sin; though by a comparison between his remarks here, and some which are found in other parts of the book, it is evident he attaches a different meaning to the word, from what is common among Calvinistic writers. He says, (p. 95,) "I have examined *all* the passages" where the word occurs in the Old Testament, "and as the result of my examination, have come to the conclusion that there is not *one* in which the word is used in the sense of *reckoning* or *imputing*

to a man that which does not strictly *belong* to him; or of charging on him that which *ought* not to be charged on him as a matter of personal right. The word is never used to denote *imputing* in the sense of *transferring*, or of charging that on one which does not properly belong to him. The same is the case in the New Testament. The word occurs about forty times, and in a similar signification. No doctrine of *transferring*, or of setting over to a man what does not properly belong to him, be it sin or holiness, can be derived, therefore, from this word."

The *transfer of the moral turpitude* of Adam's sin is no part of the doctrine, as held by its advocates—but this is not what Mr. Barnes intends to deny; because he expressly informs us that by transferring he means "setting over to a man what does not properly belong to him." The word *impute*, then, according to him, is never used in the sense of "setting over to a man what does not properly belong to him"—i. e. what "*ought* not to be charged on him as a matter of *personal right*." Nor is this *doctrine* taught in any of these passages. How different is this from the language of Turretin and Owen, as quoted by Dr. Hodge. "Imputation," says the former, "is either of *something foreign to us*, or of something properly our own. Sometimes that is imputed to us which is personally ours; in which sense God imputes to sinners their transgressions. *Sometimes that is imputed to us which is without us, and not*

*performed by ourselves ; thus the righteousness of Christ is said to be imputed to us, and our sins are imputed to him, although he has neither sin in himself, nor we righteousness. Here we speak of the latter kind of imputation, not the former, because we are talking of a sin committed by Adam, and not by us. . . .* The foundation, therefore, of imputation, is not only the natural connexion which exists between us and Adam, since, in that case, all his sins might be imputed to us, but mainly the moral and federal, in virtue of which God entered into covenant with him as our head.” Owen says, “*Things which are not our own originally, inherently, may yet be imputed to us, ex justitia, by the rule of righteousness.* And this may be done upon a double relation unto those whose they are. 1. Federal. 2. Natural. *Things done by one may be imputed unto others, propter relationem fœderalem, because of a covenant relation between them. So the sin of Adam was imputed to all his posterity.* And the ground hereof is, that we stood in the same covenant with him who was our head and representative.” . . . “Nothing is intended by the imputation of sin unto any, but the rendering them justly obnoxious unto the punishment due unto that sin.”

Though, therefore, Mr. Barnes uses the word impute, he does not mean with these authors, that Adam’s posterity were rendered legally liable to punishment on account of his sin ; but only that they are “subject to pain,

and death, and depravity, as the *consequence* of his sin;" "*subject to depravity as the consequence;*" i. e. liable to become depraved as soon as they arrive at moral agency, on account of their being descended from Adam who was "the head of the race;" and who having sinned, "secured as a certain result that all the race will be sinners also;" such being "the organization of the great society of which he was the head and father." "The drunkard," says he, "secures as a result, commonly, that his family will be reduced to beggary, want and wo. A pirate, or a traitor, will whelm not himself only, but his family in ruin. Such is the great law or constitution, on which society is now organized; and we are not to be surprised that the same *principle* occurred in the *primary organization* of human affairs." Is this the sense in which our Confession of Faith uses the word *impute*? I will leave it for the reader to judge.

Professor Fitch of New Haven has not laid aside the phrase *original sin*, though the whole drift of his discourses on the nature of sin is inconsistent with the common doctrine, and was doubtless intended to overthrow it. If it be true, according to him, "that sin, in every form and instance, is reducible to the act of a moral agent, in which he violates a known rule of duty," how can it be possible that there is any such thing as is called by President Edwards, "*the innate sinful depravity of the heart*?" Professor Fitch does

not pretend that there is—and yet he would make his readers believe that he holds to original sin, and he tells us in one of his inferences, that “the subject may assist us in making a right explanation of the doctrine.” And what is it? “Nothing can in truth be called original sin, but his first moral choice, or preference being evil.” One can hardly exculpate him from disingenuousness in retaining the terms, after having adopted principles subversive of their clear import; and then employing them in a sense materially different from common and long established usage. He must certainly have known that his definition of original sin is strikingly at variance with that of Calvin; who describes it as “*an hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through every part of the soul*, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, and then produces those works which the Scriptures denominate the works of the flesh.”

We have extended these remarks so much beyond what we anticipated, that the quotations we intended to make in proof of our statement concerning the New School doctrines, must be reserved for another chapter. We will therefore close the present chapter with a few appropriate and forcible observations of Dr. Miller, taken from his Letters to Presbyterians. After enumerating most of the New School doctrines which are brought to view in this chapter and some others which we shall notice hereafter, he says: “If *Pela-*

*gian* and *semi-Pelagian* sentiments existed in the *fifth century*, here they are in all their unquestionable and revolting features. More particularly in regard to the denial of *original sin* and the assertion of the doctrine of *human ability*, *Pelagius* and his followers never went further than some of the advocates of the doctrines above recited. To attempt to persuade us to the contrary, is to suppose that the record of the published language and opinions of those ancient heretics is lost or forgotten. And to assert that these opinions are reconcilable with the Calvinistic system, is to offer a poor compliment to the memory of the most acute, learned and pious divines, that ever adorned the Church of God, from the days of *Augustine* to those of the venerable band of Puritans, who, after bearing a noble testimony against surrounding errors on the other side of the *Atlantic*, bore the lamp of truth and planted the standard of Christ in this western hemisphere." These observations are not introduced with a view of influencing the reader to receive the statement they contain, on the mere authority of a venerable name; nor of forestalling his judgment with regard to the points under consideration. All that we expect or desire is, that they will influence him to consider the controversy not as consisting (as some profess to believe) in a mere "strife about words," but as involving important and dangerous errors; and will induce him to give that attention to the proofs we are about to

exhibit, and to other sources of evidence to which he may have access, as will enable him to ascertain to his entire satisfaction, whether these things are so." If wise and good men now concur with the "most acute, learned pious divines that ever adorned the Church of God" in former days, in judging these sentiments to be heretical and pernicious; they claim the careful examination of those who attach any importance to religious truth, and desire to enjoy its invaluable and permanent benefits.



### CHAPTER III.

THE SUBJECT OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER CONTINUED, EXHIBITING THE NEW THEOLOGY CONCERNING GOD'S COVENANT WITH ADAM, AS THE FEDERAL HEAD OF HIS POSTERITY, IMPUTATION, ORIGINAL SIN, &c.

Our statement in the last chapter concerning the New Theology, though embraced under three or four general heads, involves as many other points, which either grow out of the former, or are so connected with them, that our views of the one will materially affect our sentiments concerning the other. Accordingly, in that statement, these several particulars were presented; but they are so involved in each other, it will not be easy in our quotations to keep them entirely distinct.

We shall therefore make no formal divisions, but introduce them in such order as we find most convenient.

I will suppose myself in the company of several prominent ministers, to whom a gentleman present by the name of Querist, proposes the following questions:

Querist.—Mr. Barnes, I have recently perused your sermon on the Way of Salvation, and your Notes on the Romans. Am I correct in supposing that you deny that any covenant was made with Adam, as the federal head or representative of his posterity?

Mr. Barnes.—“Nothing is said of a *covenant* with him. No where in the Scriptures is the term *covenant* applied to any transaction with Adam. All that is established here is the simple fact that Adam sinned, and that this made it certain that all his posterity would be sinners. Beyond this, the language of the Apostle does not go; and all else that has been said of this, is the result of mere philosophical speculation.”—Notes on the Romans, 1st edition, p. 128.

Querist.—Was not Christ the covenant head of his people, and does not the Apostle draw a parallel between Adam and Christ?

Mr. Barnes.—“A comparison is also instituted between Adam and Christ in 1 Cor. xv. 22—25. The reason is, not that Adam was the *representative* or *federal head* of the human race, about which the Apostle says nothing, and which is not even implied, but that he was the first of the race; he was the



fountain, the head, the father; and the consequences of that first act, introducing sin into the world, could be seen every where. The words *representative* and *federal head* are never applied to Adam in the Bible. The reason is, that the word *representative* implies an idea which could not have existed in the case—*the consent of those who are represented*. Besides, the Bible does not teach that they acted in him, or by him; or that he acted *for* them. No passage has ever yet been found that stated this doctrine.”—Notes on the Romans, 1st edition, pp. 120, 121.

Querist.—I perceive that in the later editions of your Notes the above phraseology is considerably changed—have you altered your sentiments?

Mr. Barnes.—“Some expressions in the former editions have been misunderstood; some are now seen to have been ambiguous; a few that have given offence have been changed, because, *without abandoning any principle of doctrine or interpretation*, I could convey my ideas in language more acceptable and less fitted to produce offence.”—Advertisement to the fifth edition. “My views have never changed on the subject, that I can now recollect.”—Mr. Barnes’ Defence before the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, in June and July, 1835.

Querist.—Do you then deny the doctrine of *imputation*?

Mr. Barnes.—“That doctrine is nothing but an effort to explain the *manner* of an

event which the Apostle did not think it proper to attempt to explain. That doctrine is, in fact, no explanation. It is introducing an additional difficulty. For, to say that I am blameworthy, or ill-deserving, for a sin in which I had no agency, is no *explanation*, but is involving me in an additional difficulty, still more perplexing, to ascertain how such a doctrine can possibly be just.”—Notes on the Romans, 7th edition, pp. 121, 122. “Christianity does not charge on men crimes of which they are not guilty. It does not say, as I suppose, that the sinner is held to be personally answerable for the transgressions of Adam, or of any other man.”—Sermon on the Way of Salvation.

Querist.—You cannot be ignorant, sir, that these views are at variance with the sentiments of Calvinistic writers. The 5th chapter of Romans has been universally considered as teaching this doctrine. President Edwards says: “As this place, in general, is very full and plain, so the doctrine of the corruption of nature, derived from Adam, and also the *imputation of his first sin*, are *both* clearly taught in it. The imputation of Adam’s one transgression, is, indeed, most directly and frequently asserted. We are here assured that by **ONE MAN’S SIN**, death passed upon all; all being adjudged to this punishment, as having sinned (so it is implied) in that one man’s sin. And it is repeated over and over, that *all are condemned, many are dead, many made sinners, &c., by*

*one man's offence, by the disobedience of ONE, and by ONE offence.*" . . . . . "Though the word *impute* is not used with respect to Adam's sin, yet it is said, *all have sinned*; which, respecting infants, can be true only of their sinning by this sin. And it is said, *by his disobedience many were made sinners*; and *judgment* came upon all by *that sin*; and that by this means, *death* (the wages of sin) *passed on all men, &c.*, which phrases amount to full and precise explanations of the word *impute*; and, therefore, do more certainly determine the point really insisted on." —Edwards on Original Sin, vol. 2, pp. 512, 517.

Mr. Barnes.—"It is not denied that this [my] language varies from the statements which are often made on the subject, and from the opinion which has been entertained by many men. And it is admitted that it does not accord with that used on the same subject in the Confession of Faith, and in other standards of doctrine. The main difference is, that it is difficult to affix any clear and definite meaning to the expression "we sinned *in* him and fell *with* him." It is manifest, so far as it is capable of interpretation, that it is intended to convey the idea, not that the sin of Adam is *imputed* to us, or set over to our account; but that there was a *personal identity* constituted between Adam and his posterity, so that it was really *our act*, and *ours only*, after all, that is chargeable on us. This was the idea of Edwards.

*The notion of IMPUTING sin is an invention of modern times; and it is not, it is believed, the doctrine of the Confession of Faith.*" . . . "Christianity affirms the fact, that, in connexion with the sin of Adam, or as a result, all moral agents in this world will sin, and sinning, will die.—Rom. v. 12—19. It does not affirm, however, any thing about the *mode* in which this would be done. There are many ways, conceivable, in which that sin might secure the result, as there are many ways in which all similar *facts* may be explained. The drunkard commonly secures, as a result, the fact, that his family will be beggared, illiterate, perhaps profane or intemperate. Both facts are evidently to be explained on the *same principle* as a part of moral government."—Note to his sermon on the Way of Salvation.

Querist.—Are these the views of the other gentlemen present?

Mr. Duffield.—"If by [the union of representation] is meant nothing more than that Adam did not act exclusively for himself; but that his conduct was to determine the character and conduct of those that should come after him, we will not object. But if it is meant to designate *any positive procedure of God*, in which he made Adam to stand, and required him to act, as the substitute of the persons of his offspring, numerically considered, and by name, head for head, so that they might be held, as in commercial transactions, personally liable for this sin, as

being guilty copartners with him in it, we certainly may require other and better proof than what is commonly submitted.”—Duffield on Regeneration, p. 391.

Querist.—I know of no one who holds the doctrine precisely as you have stated it—but let me inquire whether you believe there existed any *legal* union between Adam and his posterity on account of his being their covenant head; and, that the guilt of his first sin was imputed to them, or set over in law to their account, so that they were thereby subjected to *penal* evils?

Mr. Duffield.—“When it is said, in the second commandment, that God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations,” will it be contended that this is because the former stood as the *representatives* of the latter, acting *legally*, in their name, and for them? We presume not. And yet stronger language cannot be employed to denote the results which flow from Adam’s sin, by virtue of our connexion with him. Why, then, must we suppose that there is a principle in the one case different from that in the other? And that what seems to flow out of the *natural* relation between parent and children, and to be the *natural* consequence of such relation, must be attributed to a *legal union* or *moral identity* between Adam and his offspring?”—Duffield on Regeneration, p. 392.

Querist.—According to this view, what becomes of the old doctrine of original sin, as

consisting in the corruption or depravity of our nature? The doctrines of imputation and a *corrupt nature* have been regarded as so closely connected, that the denial of the former involved the rejection of the latter—and the same proofs which have been relied upon to establish the one, have generally been adduced to defend the other. Thus, president Edwards, in the passage already referred to, says: “And the doctrine of original *depravity* is also here taught, [i. e. in Rom. v. 12–21,] where the apostle says, *by one man sin entered into the world*; having a plain respect (as hath been shown) to that *universal corruption and wickedness*, as well as guilt, which he had before largely treated of.” Is original sin to be given up; or so modified as to become an entirely different doctrine?

Dr. Beecher.—“The Reformers with one accord, taught that the sin of Adam was imputed to all his posterity, and that a *corrupt nature descends from him to every one of his posterity*, in consequence of which infants are unholy, unfit for heaven, and justly exposed to future punishment. Their opinion seems to have been, that the very substance or essence of the soul was depraved, and that the moral contamination extended alike to all its powers and faculties, insomuch that sin became a property of every man’s nature, and was propagated as really as flesh and blood.”. . . “*Our Puritan fathers adhered to the doctrine of original sin*, as consisting in the imputation of Adam’s sin, and in a

*hereditary depravity*; and this continued to be the received doctrine of the churches of New England until after the time of Edwards. He adopted the views of the Reformers on the subject of original sin, as consisting in the imputation of Adam's sin, and a *depraved nature, transmitted by descent*. But after him this mode of stating the subject was gradually changed, until long since, the prevailing doctrine in New England has been, that *men are not guilty of Adam's sin*, and that *depravity* is not of the substance of the soul, nor an inherent or physical quality, but is *wholly voluntary*, and *consists in a transgression of the law, in such circumstances as constitute accountability* and desert of punishment."—Dr. Beecher's Controversy with the editor of the Christian Examiner in the Spirit of the Pilgrims, in 1828, as quoted in the Biblical Repertory.\*

Querist.—Am I to understand by these remarks, that the doctrine of a *sinful or corrupt nature*, has been abandoned?

Dr. Beecher.—“Neither a holy nor a depraved nature are possible without understanding, conscience, and choice. To say of an accountable creature, that he is depraved

\* Since writing this chapter, I have seen the number of the Spirit of the Pilgrims, in which the above is found, with Dr. Beecher's own signature. In his “Views in Theology,” he appears to speak a different language—language not easily reconciled with the above quotation. But as he does not profess to have changed his sentiments, the preceding must be regarded as expressing his opinions.

by nature, is only to say that rendered capable by his Maker of obedience, he disobeys from the commencement of his accountability." . . . . "A depraved nature can no more exist without voluntary agency and accountability, than a material nature can exist without solidity and extension." . . . . "If, therefore, man is depraved by nature, it is a voluntary and accountable nature which is depraved, exercised in disobedience to the law of God." . . . . "Native depravity, then, is a state of the affections, in a voluntary accountable creature, at variance with divine requirement, from the beginning of accountability."—Sermon on the Native Character of Man.

Mr. Finney.—"All depravity [is] *voluntary*—consisting in voluntary transgression. [It is] the sinner's own act. Something of his own creation. That over which he has a perfect control, and for which he is entirely responsible. O! the darkness and confusion, and utter nonsense of that view of depravity which exhibits it, as something lying back, and the cause of all actual transgression."—Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 139.

Querist.—Does all sin, then, consist in *acts*?

Professor Fitch.—"Sin, in every form and instance, is reducible to the *act* of a moral agent, in which he violates a known rule of duty."—Discourses on the Nature of Sin.

Querist.—By parity of reasoning, all holiness must likewise consist in acts.

Mr. Finney.—"All holiness in God, angels,



or men, must be *voluntary* or it is not holiness." . . . . "When Adam was first created, and awoke into being, before he had obeyed or disobeyed his Maker, he could have had no moral character at all; he had exercised no affections, no desires, nor put forth any *actions*. In this state he was a complete moral agent; and in this respect in the image of his Maker: but as yet he could have had no moral character; for moral character cannot be a subject of creation, but attaches to voluntary *actions*."—Sermons on Important Subjects, pp. 7, 10, 11.

Querist.—If these views are correct, what must be said concerning infants? Are they neither sinful nor holy?

Mr. Duffield.—"It is a question alike pertinent and important whether in the incipient period of infancy and childhood there *can* be any *moral character* whatever possessed. Moral character is character acquired by acts of a moral nature. Moral acts are those acts which are contemplated by the law, prescribing the rule of human conduct." . . . . "It is obvious that in infancy and incipient childhood, when none of the actions are deliberate, or the result of motive, operating in connexion with the knowledge of law, and of the great end of all human actions, no moral *character* can appropriately be predicated." . . . . "Properly speaking, therefore, we can predicate of it neither sin nor holiness, personally considered."—Duffield on Regeneration, pp. 377, 378, 379.

Querist.—Was not Jesus Christ *holy* from his birth?

Mr. Duffield.—“ Things inanimate have, in scriptural parlance, sometimes, been called *holy*, as the inmost chamber of the temple was called the holy of holies; but then it was because of some especial and peculiar relationship which it had to God. He dwelt in it. It was *set apart* as pre-eminently and exclusively appropriate to God. In this sense the yet unconscious human nature of Christ may be denominated *holy*, for it was the habitation of God, and singularly and exclusively appropriate to him, differing in this respect essentially and entirely from that of any of the descendants of Adam.”—Duffield on Regeneration, p. 353.

Querist.—If infants are not *sinful* before they arrive at moral agency, and have no legal or covenant connexion with Adam as their representative, how can you account for their death?

Mr. Duffield.—“ There is no manner of necessity, in order to account for the death of infants, to suppose that the sin of Adam became their personal sin, either in respect of its act, or its *ill desert*. Their death eventuates according to that law of dependence, which marks the whole government of God in this world, by virtue of which the consequences of the act of one man terminate oft-times on the person of another, when there is not the union of representation.” Work on Regeneration, p. 389.

Professor Goodrich, of New Haven.—“ Infants die. The answer has been given a thousand times; brutes die also. But, . . . . “ animals are not subjects of the moral government of God. Neither are infants previous to moral agency; for what has moral government to do with those who are not moral agents?” . . . . . “ Animals, and infants previous to moral agency do, therefore, stand on precisely the same ground in reference to this subject. Suffering and death afford no more evidence of sin in the one case than in the other.”—Christian Spectator, 1829, p. 373—attributed to Professor Goodrich.

Querist.—If infants do not possess a corrupt nature, please to inform me by what process they become sinful—and how it happens that not one of the human family born in the ordinary way has ever escaped this catastrophe.

Professor Goodrich.—“ A child enters the world with a variety of appetites and desires, which are generally acknowledged to be neither sinful nor holy. Committed in a state of utter helplessness, to the assiduity of parental fondness, it commences existence, the object of unceasing care, watchfulness and concession to those around him. Under such circumstances it is that the natural appetites are first developed, and each advancing month brings them new objects of gratification. The obvious consequence is, that *self indulgence* becomes the master principle in

the soul of every child, long before it can understand that this self indulgence will interfere with the rights or intrench on the happiness of others. Thus, by repetition, is the force of constitutional propensities accumulating a bias towards self-gratification, which becomes incredibly strong before a knowledge of duty or a sense of right and wrong can possibly have entered the mind. That moment—the commencement of moral agency, at length arrives.” . . . . . “Why then is it so necessary to suppose some distinct evil propensity—some fountain of iniquity in the breast of the child previous to moral action?” . . . . . “But let us look at facts. Angels sinned. Was the cause which led to their first act of rebellion, in itself sinful? Eve was tempted and fell. Was her natural appetite for food, or her desire for knowledge—to which the temptation was addressed—a sinful feeling? And why may not our constitutional propensities now, lead to the same result at the commencement of moral agency, as was actually exhibited in fallen angels and our first parents, even when advanced in holiness!” . . . . . “Did not vehement desire produce sin in Adam’s first act of transgression? Was there any previous principle of depravity in him? Why then may not strong constitutional desires be followed *now* by a choice of their objects as well as in the case of Adam?”—Christian Spectator, 1829, pp. 366, 367, 368.

Mr. Duffield.—The infant “is placed in a

rebellious world, subject to the influence of ignorance, with very limited and imperfect experience, and liable to the strong impulses of appetite and passion." . . . . "Instinct, animal sensation, constitutional susceptibilities create an impulse, which not being counteracted by moral considerations or gracious influence, lead the will in a wrong direction and to wrong objects. It was thus that sin was induced in our holy progenitors. No one can plead in Eve an efficient cause of sin resident in her nature (any *prava vis*) or operative power, sinful in itself, anterior to and apart from her own voluntary acts. And if *she* was led into sin though characteristically holy, and destitute of any *innate propensity* to sin, where is the necessity for supposing that the sins of her progeny are to be referred to such a cause?" . . . . . "Temptation alone is sufficient under present circumstances."—Work on Regeneration, pp. 310, 379, 380.

Mr. Finney.—"If it be asked how it happens that children universally adopt the principle of selfishness, unless their nature is sinful? I answer, that they adopt the principle of self-gratification or selfishness, because they possess *human* nature, and come into being under the *peculiar circumstances* in which all the children of Adam are born since the fall; but not because human nature is *itself* sinful. The cause of their becoming sinners is to be found in their nature's being what it is, and surrounded by the *peculiar*

*circumstances of temptation* to which they are exposed in a world of sinners." . . . .  
 "Adam was created in the perfection of *manhood*, certainly not with a sinful *nature*, and yet an appeal to his innocent, constitutional appetites led him into sin. If *adult* Adam, without a sinful nature, and after a season of obedience and perfect holiness, was led to change his mind by an appeal to his innocent, constitutional propensities, how can the fact that *infants* possessing the *same nature with Adam*, and surrounded by circumstances of still greater temptation, universally fall into sin, prove that their *nature is itself* sinful? Is such an inference called for? Is it legitimate? What, holy and adult Adam is led, by an appeal to his innocent constitution, to adopt the principle of selfishness, and no suspicion is or can be entertained, that he had a sinful nature; but if *little children* under circumstances of temptation, aggravated by the fall, are led into sin, we are to believe that *their nature* is sinful! This is wonderful philosophy!"—Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 157.

Dr. Taylor.—"If no being can sin without a constitutional propensity to sin, how came Adam to sin? If one being, as Adam, can sin, and did in fact sin, without such a propensity to sin, why may not others?"—Spirit of the Pilgrims, vol. 6, p. 13, as quoted by Dow.

Querist.—Do you accord, Dr. Taylor, with the sentiment just expressed by Mr. Finney,

that "*infants possess the same nature with Adam*" at his creation?

Dr. Taylor.—"Mankind come into the world with the same nature in *kind* as that with which Adam was created."—Ibid. vol. 6, p. 5.

Querist.—What influence then has the fall exerted on the posterity of Adam?

Dr. Taylor.—"I answer, that it may have been to change their nature, not in *kind*, but degree."—Ibid. vol. 6, p. 12.

Querist.—On the supposition that the nature of Adam and that of his posterity were alike in kind, why did not he sin, as soon as he commenced his moral existence?

Dr. Taylor.—"I answer, that the reason may have been, that his *nature differed*, not in *kind*, but in *degree* from that of his posterity."—Ibid.

Querist.—On this principle, in what respect did the human nature of Christ differ from that of other children?—and if he possessed in his human nature, what other children possess, why did he not exhibit the same moral character?

Dr. Taylor.—"I might answer as before, that his human *nature may* have differed from that of other children not in kind, but *degree*."—Ibid.

We have given the preceding quotations at considerable length, that those readers who may not have attended to the controversy, may perceive from their own statements, its various bearings and tendencies;

and how far those have gone who have been bold enough to follow out their principles to their legitimate and full results. We do not attribute to all whose names we have introduced, every sentiment which has been advanced by some of them—but it cannot fail, we think, to strike the mind of the reader that there is such an affinity between the several parts of the series, that the man who adopts one of the doctrines in this category, will be in great danger of ultimately embracing the whole. They all belong to the same system; and ought therefore to be introduced in stating the distinguishing features of the New Theology; though many who adhere to the system in part, do not go to the *ne plus ultra* of the scheme, as it is here exhibited.

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## CHAPTER IV.

REMARKS ON IMPUTATION, ORIGINAL SIN, &c., WITH REFERENCE TO THE VIEWS PRESENTED IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

THE controversy respecting our connexion with Adam, and the influence produced upon us by the fall, commenced early in the fifth century, when Pelagius, a British monk, published opinions at variance with the common doctrines of the church. He and his followers entertained substantially the same



views which have been exhibited in the preceding chapter; though they adopted a method somewhat different to account for the commission of sin by little children, and went farther in their views concerning the influence of Adam's sin upon his descendants. They maintained that "the sin of Adam injured himself alone, and did not affect his posterity;" and that we sin only by "imitation." But their sentiments concerning the nature of sin, original sin, and imputation, were the same with those which distinguish the New Theology.

Concerning the first, Pelagius says, "And here, in my opinion, the first inquiry ought to be, *What is sin?* Is it a substance, or is it a mere name devoid of substance; not a thing, not an existence, not a body, nor any thing else (which has a separate existence) but an *act*; and if this is its nature, as I believe it is, how could that which is devoid of substance debilitate or change human nature?" . . . . "Every thing, good or evil, praiseworthy or censurable, which we possess, did not originate with us, *but is done by us*; for we are born capable both of good and evil, but not in possession of these qualities; for in our birth we are equally destitute of virtue and vice; and previously to moral agency, there is nothing in man but that which God created in him."—Biblical Repertory.

This question concerning the nature of sin was regarded as decisive concerning the other

two; and it was introduced by Pelagius with that view. Says he, "It is disputed concerning this, whether our *nature is debilitated and deteriorated by sin*. And here, in my opinion, the first inquiry ought to be *what is sin?*" &c. So it is regarded at the present time. Says Mr. Finney, "In order to admit the sinfulness of *nature*, we must believe sin to consist in the substance of the constitution, instead of voluntary *action*, which is a thing impossible."—Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 158.

Mr. Duffield, after stating several things which he supposes may be meant by the phrase original sin, gives as the views of the Westminster divines, that it denotes "something which has the power to originate sin, and which is necessarily involved in our very being, from the first moment of its origination." This he intimates was intended by the expression in our catechism, "the corruption of our whole nature." He then says, (after some preliminaries) "It is strange that ever it should have been made a question, whether sin may be predicated of being or simple existence, since sin is undeniably an *act* of a *moral* character, and therefore *can* only be committed by one who is possessed of moral powers, i. e. one who is capable of acting according as the law requires or prohibits." . . . . "Holiness, or sin which is its opposite, has a direct and immediate reference to those voluntary *acts* and exercises, which the law is designed to secure or pre-

vent." . . . "How very absurd, therefore, is it to predicate sin of that which does not fall under cognizance of law at all!" Though he uses the phrase "being or simple existence," as that concerning which it is absurd to predicate sin, he refers unquestionably to the expression in the catechism which he had just quoted, and upon which he was remarking, viz. "the corruption of our whole nature." It is absurd therefore, according to him, to speak of our having a corrupt nature, since, as he maintains, all sin consists in voluntary *acts* of a moral agent, in violation of a known law. Hence the imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity, and original sin, are rejected as unphilosophical and absurd.

Says Pelagius, "When it is declared that all have sinned in Adam, *it should not be understood of any original sin contracted by their birth*, but of imitation." . . . "How can a man be considered guilty by God of that sin which he knows not to be his own? for if it is necessary, it is not his own; but if it is his own, it is voluntary; and if voluntary, it can be avoided."

Julian, one of the disciples of Pelagius, says, "Whoever is accused of a crime, the charge is made against his conduct, and not against his birth." . . . "Therefore we conclude that the triune God should be adored as most just; and it has been made to appear most irrefragably, that *the sin of another never can be imputed by him to little children.*" . . . "Hence that is evident which

we defend as most reasonable, that no one is born in sin, and that God never judges men to be guilty on account of their birth." . . . . "Children, inasmuch as they are children, never can be guilty, until they have done something by their own proper will."—Biblical Repertory.

How striking is the resemblance between these views and the following remarks of Mr. Barnes: "When Paul," says he, "states a simple *fact*, men often advance a *theory*. . . . A melancholy instance of this we have in the account which the apostle gives, (ch. 5.) about the effect of the sin of Adam. . . . They have sought for a theory to account for it. And many suppose they have found it in the doctrine that the sin of Adam is *imputed*, or set over by an arbitrary arrangement to beings otherwise innocent, and that they are held to be responsible for a deed committed by a man thousands of years before they were born. This is the *theory*; and men insensibly forget that it is *mere theory*." . . . . "I understand it, therefore, [Rom. v. 12,] as referring to the fact that men sin *in their own persons, sin in themselves*—as indeed how *can* they *sin* in any other way?"—Notes on the Romans, pp. 10, 117.

We admit that this coincidence between the New School doctrines and Pelagianism, does not afford *certain* proof of their being untrue. It is however a strong *presumptive* evidence, since Pelagianism has been reject-

ed as heretical by every Evangelical Church in Christendom.

Cœlestius, a disciple of Pelagius, is said to have been more zealous and successful in the propagation of these errors than his master. Hence, in early times, they were perhaps associated with *his name*, more than with that of Pelagius. Among other councils who condemned his heresy, was the council of Ephesus, A. D. 431; who “denominated it the *wicked doctrine* of Cœlestius.”—Biblical Repertory.

In a number of the Confessions of Faith adopted by different churches after the Reformation, Pelagianism is mentioned by name. Thus, in one of the Articles of the Episcopal Church, it is said, “Original sin standeth not in the following of *Adam* (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk,) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of *Adam*, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil.”

Though in the Westminster Confession, this heresy is not expressly *named*, there can be no doubt that the framers intended to reject and condemn it. Compare the preceding doctrines of Pelagius and his followers with our quotations from the Confession of Faith in chap. iii.; also the following from the Larger Catechism: “The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of *Adam’s* first sin, the want of that

righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually: which is commonly called *original sin*, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.”

We have said that the denial of the doctrine of imputation and original sin, arises in part from the adoption of the theory that all sin consists in acts. Upon this point, therefore, it will be pertinent to make a few remarks.

1. Holiness and sin are predicated of the *heart*. Thus the Bible speaks of an honest and good heart, a broken heart, a clean heart, an evil heart, a hard heart, &c., which convey the idea that there is something in man of a moral character, prior to his *acts*—something which forms the basis from which his good and evil *actions* proceed; and which determines the character of those actions. Hence holiness and sin do not consist wholly in acts, but belong to our nature.

2. We are said to be conceived and born in sin—and if so, we must be sinful *by nature*; for we have not then put forth any moral *acts*.

3. We are declared to be by nature the children of wrath—and if children of wrath by nature, then we must be *by nature, sinners*, for sin alone exposes to wrath. All sin therefore cannot consist in *acts*.

4. Adam was created in the image of God

—which according to our standards, consisted in “knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.” By the fall this image was lost. In regard to *spiritual* things we became ignorant.—“The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God,” &c. Our moral characters became corrupt and wicked. In other words, we forfeited our original righteousness and became prone to evil. By regeneration this image is restored. Col. iii. 10: “And have put on the new man which is renewed in *knowledge* after the *image* of Him that created him.” Eph. iv. 24: “And that ye put on the new man, which *after God* is created in *righteousness and true holiness.*” These texts are decisive as to what the image of God consisted in, viz. “knowledge, righteousness and true holiness.” Yet in this image man was *created*; and of course possessed it before he put forth moral acts. Consequently all holiness and sin do not consist in *acts*, but may be predicated of our nature.

The manner in which this argument has been disposed of, is truly singular. On the principle that all holiness consists in *acts*, it cannot be created. This the advocates of the New Theology admit. Since then, Adam was created in the image of God, a new theory must be devised as to what that image was. In this, however, there is not a perfect agreement. According to Mr. Finney, it consisted in moral agency. “In this state, says he, [i. e. when Adam was first created,]

he was a *complete moral agent*, and *in this respect in the image of his Maker.*”—Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 11. Mr. Duffield makes it consist principally in some imaginary resemblance to the Trinity. “There is, however,” says he, “one important respect in which this resemblance in man to God may be seen, which, indeed, is generally overlooked, but which we are disposed to think is of *principal* consequence. It is not one person of the Godhead only who is represented as speaking at the formation of man, but the whole three. Jehovah, the ever blessed *Three in One*, said, “Let us make man in our image”—not in the image of any one person, nor of each distinctly, but of all *conjointly*. How admirably are the distinct personality and essential unity of the Godhead represented or *imaged* in man possessing three distinct kinds of life, and yet constituting but one moral being! In him are united the *vegetable*, the *animal*, and the *moral or spiritual life*, each having and preserving its distinct character, but all combined in one responsible individual.”—Work on Regeneration, p. 143.

What a pity it is that the apostle Paul had not become acquainted with this new theory concerning the nature of sin and holiness! He would not then have committed such a mistake in describing the image of God in which man was created, and to which we are restored by divine grace!

5. It will be perceived by the preceding re-



marks, that this doctrine involves also a new theory of regeneration. This is not denied—and hence the sentiments which have long prevailed on this subject are rejected, and the notion of *gradual* regeneration by moral *sua-sion*, is substituted in their place. But as we intend to exhibit this feature of the New Theology more at length in a subsequent chapter, we will not dwell upon it here.

6. This doctrine places those who die in infancy in a most unenviable position. If all sin and holiness consist in the voluntary acts of a moral agent, infants, before arriving at moral agency, have no moral character; but stand in respect to moral government, on the same level with brute animals. This is the New School doctrine. Since, therefore, thousands die in infancy, where do they go? If they have no moral character, the blessings of the gospel are no more adapted to them, than to the brutes. Hence if they die before they become moral agents, they must either be annihilated, or spend an eternity in some unknown and inconceivable state of existence—neither in heaven nor hell, but possibly between the two—in some *limbus infantum*, similar, perhaps, to that of the papists; yet with this advantage in favour of the latter, that *their* infants, possessing moral character, may be renewed and saved. What a comfortless doctrine must this be to parents, when weeping by the cradle of expiring infancy!\*

\* The manner in which the advocates of the New Theology attempt to relieve themselves from this difficulty, is

7. The death of infants affords strong proof of the doctrine of *imputation* and *original sin*. If there is no *legal* connexion between us and Adam, if his sin is *not imputed* to us, and we are *not born* with a *corrupt nature*; where is the *justice* of inflicting upon infants who have never committed *actual* transgression, a part of the penalty threatened upon Adam for his disobedience?

8. The doctrine of imputation affords the only evidence we can have that those dying in infancy are saved. If Adam's sin was not imputed to them to their condemnation, how can the righteousness of Christ be imputed to them for their justification? Christ came to "seek and save that which was lost"—"to save sinners"—he saves no others. If, therefore, they were not lost in Adam—if they were not made sinners by his sin—Christ did not come to save them. But he did come to save such. Says he, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." They are therefore sinners—and as they lost their original righteousness through the first Adam, the foundation was laid for their restoration and salvation through the second. On any other principle there would

the following, viz., that the atonement places those who die in infancy in such *circumstances* in the next world, as to result in their becoming holy at the commencement of moral agency. But this supposition has no foundation in Scripture. Christ is never represented as entering our world to prevent men from becoming sinners, but to save those who were sinners already.

be no hope in their case. But here is ground for consolation. In the language of Dr. Watts,

“ A thousand new-born babes are dead,  
By fatal union to their head:  
But whilst our spirits, filled with awe,  
Behold the terrors of thy law,  
We sing the honours of thy grace,  
That sent to save our ruined race:  
Adam the second, from the dust  
Raises the ruins of the first.”

9. The doctrine of imputation is essential to a correct view of the plan of salvation. As Dr. Hodge has well expressed it: “The denial of this doctrine involves also the denial of the scriptural view of the atonement and justification. It is essential to the scriptural form of these doctrines that the idea of legal substitution should be retained. Christ bore our sins; our iniquities were laid upon him; which, according to the true meaning of Scripture language, can only signify, that he bore the punishment of those sins; not the same evils indeed either in kind or degree; but still penal, because judicially inflicted for the support of law. . . . This idea of legal substitution enters also into the scriptural view of justification. In justification, according to Paul’s language, God imputes righteousness to the ungodly. This righteousness is not their own; but they are regarded and treated as righteous on account of the obedience of Christ. That is, his righteousness is so laid to their account or imputed to them that they are regarded and treated as if it were their own, or as if they had kept the law.”—Commentary on the Romans, pp. 127, 128.

The connexion of imputation with the work of Christ, gives to this doctrine its chief importance. The same principle is applied in the Bible both to Adam and Christ. If, therefore, we deny our *legal* connexion with Adam, and the *imputation* of his first sin to his posterity, we must necessarily adopt views concerning the method of salvation by Jesus Christ, materially different from those above given. On the supposition that the principle of representation is inadmissible in the case of Adam, it must be equally so in reference to Christ. If we cannot be condemned in law by the disobedience of the one, we cannot be justified by the obedience of the other. A blow is thus struck at the foundation of our hope;—a blow, which, if it destroys our connexion with Adam, destroys also our connexion with Christ, and our title to heaven.

Says Owen, “By some the imputation of the actual apostasy and transgression of Adam, the head of our nature, whereby his sin became the sin of the world, is utterly denied. Hereby both the ground the apostle proceedeth on, in evincing the necessity of our justification or our being made righteous by the obedience of another, and all the arguments brought in confirmation of the doctrine of it, in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, are evaded and overthrown. Socinus confesseth that place to give great countenance unto the doctrine of justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ;

and therefore he sets himself to oppose with sundry artifices the imputation of the sin of Adam, unto his natural posterity. For he perceived well enough that upon the admission thereof, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto his spiritual seed, would unavoidably follow according unto the tenor of the apostle's discourse." . . . "Some deny the depravation and corruption of our nature, which ensued on our apostasy from God, and the loss of his image. Or if they do not absolutely deny it, yet they so extenuate it as to render it a matter of no great concern unto us." . . . "That deformity of soul which came upon us in the loss of the image of God, wherein the beauty and harmony of all our faculties, in all their actings, in order unto their utmost end, did consist; that enmity unto God, even in the mind which ensued thereon; that darkness with which our understandings were clouded, yea, blinded withal; the spiritual death which passed on the whole soul, and total alienation from the life of God; that impotency unto good, that inclination unto evil, that deceitfulness of sin, that power and efficacy of corrupt lusts, which the Scriptures and experience so fully charge on the state of lost nature, are rejected as empty notions, or fables. No wonder if such persons look upon imputed righteousness as the shadow of a dream, who esteem those things which evidence its necessity to but fond imaginations. And small hope is there to bring such men to value the right-

eousness of Christ, as imputed to them, who are so unacquainted with their own unrighteousness inherent in them."

10. The Scripture proofs relied upon to establish the doctrine of imputation and original sin, are such as the following. John iii. 3, 6: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Here our first or natural birth is contrasted with our second or spiritual birth. If at the first we are unfit for the kingdom of heaven, and are qualified only by the second, then it is clear we are *born sinners*.

Rom. v. 12—21. "As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, &c. We have already quoted some remarks on this passage from President Edwards, in the last chapter, to which we refer the reader. The quotation commences as follows: "The doctrine of the *corruption of nature*, derived from Adam, and also the *imputation of his first sin*, are *both* clearly taught in it," &c. The phrases, "for that, or in whom *all* have *sinned*," "through the offence of *one* many be *dead*," "the judgment was by *one* to *condemnation*," "by *one* man's *offence*, *death* reigned by *one*," "by *one* man's disobedience many were *made sinners*," and other similar ones, contain so exact a description of the doctrine, that the proof which they furnish would not be more

conclusive, if the very words *impute* and *original sin* had been introduced.

Rom. vii. 18—23. “For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not,” &c. This struggle between the old and new man, between indwelling sin and the principle of grace, affords strong evidence of the natural propensity of man to sin.

1 Cor. xv. 22. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” By simply reversing the order of the passage, its relevancy to our present purpose will be manifest. As all who shall be made alive will enjoy this blessing by virtue of their connexion with Christ as their covenant head; so all who die, experience this calamity in consequence of a similar connexion with Adam; who “being the root of all mankind, the guilt of [his first sin] was *imputed*, and the same *death in sin, and corrupted nature*, conveyed to all his posterity, descending from him by ordinary generation.”

Eph. ii. 3. “And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” This has been generally understood both by ancient and modern commentators as teaching the doctrine that we are born in a state of sin and condemnation. If we are children of wrath by *nature*, we must have been *born* in that condition; and if born children of *wrath*, we must have been born in *sin*.

In the Old Testament, the following among

others may be referred to: Gen. vi. 5. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." This is descriptive not of one man only, but of the race; and how can this universal corruption be accounted for except on the principle of original sin? Job xiv. 4. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." If, then, parents are "unclean," if they are universally sinful, children inherit from them the same character. Psal. li. 5. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." This is an express declaration that the Psalmist was conceived in sin; and if it was true of him, it is true of all others. These three passages taken in connexion form a complete syllogism in support of this doctrine. If the first of them is applicable to all mankind, as appears from the similarity of that description, and those given by David and Paul; and if the two latter exhibit the fountain from which the evil imaginations of the heart take their rise, as they appear clearly to indicate; then all men possess a depraved and sinful nature, inherited from their parents.

As the chief object of the present volume is to exhibit the *difference* between the Old and New Theology, we have not thought it expedient to enter largely upon the *proofs* in favour of the former. But what has been adduced is sufficient, we think, to show the truth of the Old system, in opposition to the



New, and to serve as a kind of index to a more minute and extensive examination of the subject.

Before closing the chapter we will make a few remarks on the charge of *injustice* which is brought against the views entertained by the Old School divines with regard to this subject. We believe it to be wholly unfounded; but against the opposite theory, it might be made to lie with great force. Does any one pronounce it unjust for a man to be held liable for a debt contracted by one of his ancestors, provided in becoming his heir, that was made one of the *legal* conditions by which he should inherit his estate? But suppose he had no *legal* connexion with him at all, but simply the relation of *natural* descent—which, according to the New School doctrine, is our only connexion with Adam—where would be the justice in holding him responsible for the payment of his ancestor's debts? He sustains to him, remember, no *legal* connexion, but is held responsible, merely because he is his *descendant*. Is this *just*?—Since then all are obliged to admit that we suffer evils in consequence of Adam's sin, why not adopt the *scripture* doctrine, that being included with him in the *covenant of works*, we became *legally* involved in the ruin brought upon the world by his sin? This covenant or *legal* connexion, renders it *just* that we should inherit these calamities—but on any other principle their infliction upon us can not be easily explained, without

bearing painfully upon the justice of God's dispensations.

Such is the organization of human governments, that we are usually connected in *law* with those from whom we have *descended*—and there is a fitness and propriety in this arrangement. Hence, unless special provision is made to the contrary, the *natural* descendant becomes the *legal* heir. Such also is the Divine economy with regard to man. The appointment of Adam as our federal head was not altogether arbitrary, as it would have been, had he been appointed the federal head of angels—but it was according to the fitness of things. Hence our *natural* relation is made use of as the *medium* of bringing about those results, which have their origin in our *federal* relation. Original sin flows to us through the *channel of natural* descent—and various evils which now flow from parent to child, descend in the same way:—but their *foundation* must be traced back to the *covenant* made with our first father, as the *representative* of his posterity; the guilt of whose first sin being imputed to us, a corrupt and depraved nature and other penal evils follow as the consequence. Is any one disposed to say, I never gave my *consent* to that covenant, and therefore it is unjust to punish me for its violation? We ask in return, whether the individual whose case has been supposed, gave his consent that his ancestor should leave the estate which he has inherited from him, encum-

bered with debt? And yet, no *sane* man would ever think of calling in question the propriety of his being held responsible. If, however, he had no *legal* connexion with that ancestor, his *natural* relation would not be sufficient to bind him. He is his heir, not *merely* because he has *descended* from him, but because the *law of the land* has made him such. The latter and not the former, imposes upon him the liabilities which his ancestor incurred; and though he never gave his consent, he regards it as just and right.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST AND OUR JUSTIFICATION THROUGH HIM.

THE nature and design of Christ's sufferings are generally described by theological writers of the present day, under the name of Atonement—a term not found in our standards, and but once in the English version of the New Testament. For a considerable time after the Reformation, the mediatorial work of Christ was commonly expressed by the words, *reconciliation, redemption, and satisfaction*: which are the terms employed in our Confession of Faith. This accounts

for the fact that the word atonement does not occur in that volume. The mere use of a term is of little consequence, provided the true doctrine is retained. But many have not only laid aside the ancient phraseology, but with it, all that is valuable in the atonement itself. Instead of allowing it to be any proper satisfaction to Divine justice, by which a righteous and holy God is propitiated; some affirm that it was designed merely to make an impression on intelligent beings of the righteousness of God, thus opening the way for pardon—and others, that it was intended only to produce a change in the sinner himself by the influence which the scenes of Calvary are calculated to exert on his mind. The latter is the Socinian view, and the second that of the New School.

It is proper to remark that the view first alluded to, includes the other two. While it regards the atonement as primarily intended to satisfy the justice of God, by answering the demands, and suffering the penalty of his law, it was designed and adapted to make a strong impression both upon the universe and upon the sinner himself. But though the first view includes the others as the greater does the less, these do not include the first, but reject it. By making the atonement consist wholly in the second or third view, there is involved a denial that Christ endured the penalty of the law, or assumed any legal responsibility in our behalf, or made any satisfaction, strictly speaking, to the justice

of God—thus giving up what has been regarded by most, if not all evangelical churches since the Reformation, as essential to the atonement.

We wish to observe farther, by way of explanation, that by Christ's enduring the penalty of the law, is not meant that he endured *literally* the same suffering either in *kind* or *duration* which would have been inflicted upon the sinner, if a Saviour had not been provided. In a penalty, some things are *essential*—others *incidental*. It was *essential* to the penalty, that Christ should suffer a violent and ignominious death—but whether he should die by decapitation or by crucifixion, was *incidental*. It was *essential* that he should suffer *for our sins*—but how *long* his sufferings should continue, was *incidental*. If inflicted upon us, they must necessarily be eternal—because sin is an infinite evil, and finite beings cannot endure the punishment which is due to it except by an eternal duration. But from the infinite dignity of Christ's character, the penal demands of the law could be fully answered by his suffering ever so short a time. A similar remark may be made concerning the remorse of conscience which forms a part of the torments of the wicked. The imputation of our sins to Christ does not involve a transfer of moral character, but only of legal responsibility. In being "made sin for us," Christ did not become personally a sinner—but "was holy and harmless and undefiled."

Of course he could have no remorse of conscience, such as a convicted sinner suffers in view of his guilt. But this is merely *incidental*, and depends upon circumstances. Some sinners never appear to feel remorse at all—and no sinner, probably, feels it at all times. What is intended then by Christ's suffering the penalty of the law as our substitute is, that in law he assumed our place, and endured all that was essential in its penal demands—whereby he fully satisfied Divine justice, and those who are united to him by faith, are, as an act of *justice to Christ*, but of *free unbounded mercy to them*, “redeemed from the curse of the law,” he “being made a curse for them.” This doctrine, the Old Theology maintains—the New denies.

The following quotations will exemplify the New School views. Dr. Beman,\* in his “Sermons on the Doctrine of the Atonement,” observes: (p. 34,) “The law can have no penal demand except against the offender. With a substitute it has no concern; and though a thousand substitutes should die, the law, in itself considered, and left to its own natural operation, would have the same demand upon the transgressor which it always had. This claim can never be invalidated. This penal demand can never be extinguished.” Speaking of those who entertain oppo-

\* Dr. Beman has not, I believe, published his sentiments on the other points embraced in the New Theology, and therefore I cannot state with *certainty* what they are.

site views, he says, (p. 45,) "They contend that the real penalty of the law was inflicted on Christ; and at the same time acknowledge that the sufferings of Christ were not the same, either in nature or degree, as those sufferings which were threatened against the transgressor. The words of our text [Gal. iii. 13,] are considered by many as furnishing unequivocal testimony to the fact, that Christ endured the penalty of the law in the room of his people. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." But it is, in no shape, asserted here, that Christ suffered the penalty of the law. The apostle tells us in what sense he was "made a curse for us." "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Believers are saved from the curse or penalty of the law by the consideration, that Christ was "made a curse" for them in another and a very different sense. He was "made a curse" inasmuch as he suffered, in order to open the door of hope to man, the pains and ignominy of crucifixion. He hung upon a tree. He died as a malefactor. He died as one accursed." In a note on the next page, with reference to some remarks in a sermon by Dr. Dana, of Londonderry, he observes: "But why is it necessary to support the position, that the curse of the law was inflicted on Christ? If it should be said, that the Divine veracity was pledged to execute the law—we reply that the Divine veracity can find no support in that kind of infliction of

the curse which is here supposed. A substantial execution of the law—an endurance of the penalty so far as the nature of the case admitted or required—an infliction of suffering, not upon the transgressor, but upon a surety, when the law had not made the most distant allusion to a surety, certainly has much more the appearance of *evasion* than *execution* of the law.” He says, (p. 51,) “As to imputation, we do deny that the sins of men, or of any part of our race, were so transferred to Christ, that they became his sins, or were so reckoned to him, that he sustained their legal responsibilities.”\* Again, (p. 68,) “There is nothing in the character of Christ’s sufferings which can affect or modify the penalty of the law. These sufferings were not legal. They constituted no part of that curse which was threatened against the transgressor.”

What then, according to him, was the nature of Christ’s sufferings? He says, (p. 35, 36,) “He suffered and died the just for the unjust;” “and those sufferings which he endured as a holy being, were intended, in the case of all those who are finally saved, as a *substitute for the infliction of the penalty of the law*. We say a *substitute for the infliction of the penalty*; for the penalty itself, if it be executed at all, must fall upon the sinner, and upon no one else.” Again, (p.

\* The Old Theology does not maintain that our sins “became his sins”—but only that he sustained our legal responsibilities.



50, 51,) "The atonement was a substitute for the infliction of the penalty of the law—or the sufferings of Christ were a substitute for the punishment of sinners. . . . This is vicarious suffering. It is the suffering of Christ in the place of the endless suffering of the sinner." Once more: (p. 64, 65,) "The penalty of the law, strictly speaking, was not inflicted at all; for this penalty, in which was [were] embodied the principles of distributive justice, required the death of the sinner, and did not require the death of Christ. As a substitute for the infliction of this penalty, God did accept of the sufferings of his Son."

Was there then no satisfaction made to divine justice? Says Dr. Beman, (p. 65,) "The law, or justice, that is, distributive justice, as expressed in the law, has received no satisfaction at all. The whole legal system has been suspended, at least, for the present, in order to make way for the operation of one of a different character. In introducing this system of mercy, which involves a suspension of the penal curse, God has required a satisfaction to the principles of general or public justice—a satisfaction which will effectually secure all the good to the universe which is intended to be accomplished by the penalty of the law when inflicted, and, at the same time, prevent all that practical mischief which would result from arresting the hand of punitive justice without the intervention of an atonement." But what does he mean by "*general or public justice?*" He says, (p. 63, 64,) "It has no direct reference to

law, but embraces those principles of virtue or benevolence by which we are bound to govern our conduct; and by which God himself governs the universe. It is in this sense that the terms "just" and "righteousness" occur in our text. [Rom. iii. 26.] . . . This atonement was required, that God might be "just," or righteous, that is, that he might do the thing which was fit and proper, and best and most expedient to be done: and at the same time be at perfect liberty to justify "him which believeth in Jesus."

Let me now inquire, is this what is meant in the Confession of Faith, where it reads, "The Lord Jesus Christ, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the Eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath *fully satisfied the justice of his Father?*" We think not. No intimation of this kind is given. The framers of our Standards do not appear to have learned that God governs the universe by one kind of justice, viz. by the "principles of virtue or benevolence;" and punishes sinners for rebelling against his government, by another and a different kind, viz. the justice which is "expressed in the law."

Are these two kinds of justice in conflict with each other? or is not God's justice "as expressed in the law," the same kind of justice by which he "governs the universe?" Was not the law founded on the "principles of virtue or benevolence?" Why then could not Jehovah exhibit those principles, by the

obedience and sacrifice of Christ in our behalf, *in conformity to the law?* “But when the fulness of the 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.” Gal. iv. 4, 5. Does this mean that those “under the law,” were exposed to the retribution of one kind of justice; and that Christ, who was “made under the law, to redeem them,” rendered satisfaction to another and a different kind—to a species of justice unknown to the law, and contrary to it? Does not the law embody those things which “are fit and proper, and best and most expedient to be done?” If so, why was it necessary to “suspend” it, in order to introduce a code of justice, which “has no direct reference to law,” but belongs to a system possessing “a different character?”

These positions, it appears to me, involve the sentiment, that the Divine government and law, as the former is now administered, are not in harmony with each other—that the government of God could not be administered according to the “principles of virtue or benevolence,” in a manner “fit and proper, and most and best expedient to be done”—without a suspension of “the whole legal system;” or which is the same thing, a disregard of his law. And if the atonement proceeded on this principle, we cannot perceive why it might not have been dispensed with altogether—for if “the penalty of the law was not

inflicted at all," but a system was introduced "which involves a suspension of the legal curse," why might not God as moral Governor, in the exercise of that "virtue or benevolence, by which he governs the universe," and in pursuance of what "was fit and proper, and best and most expedient to be done," have suspended "the whole legal system," and extended pardon to sinners without an atonement?

Dr. Beman assigns three reasons why the atonement was *necessary*; all of which lose their force on the supposition that Christ did not suffer the penalty of the law. He says, "the atonement was necessary as an expression of God's regard for the moral law." But how could it express his regard for the law, provided the law has received no satisfaction at all, "but the whole legal system was suspended in order to make way for the operation of one," which "has no direct reference to law?" Again he says, "the atonement was necessary in order to evince the Divine determination to punish sin, or to execute the penalty of the law." On the principle that Christ acted as our surety, and sustained in our stead those penal evils which were essential to the execution of the threatening contained in the law, we can perceive how "the Divine determination to punish sin" was evinced. Not so, however, if we "deny that the sins of men were so reckoned to Christ, that he sustained their legal responsibilities;" and view the atonement as "a sys-

tem of mercy," in which the "sufferings of Christ were not legal, and constituted no part of that curse which was threatened against the transgressor." This makes the atonement an entire departure from law, and could therefore never be adduced to show that God has determined to execute its penalty.

The other reason which he assigns for the necessity of the atonement, is liable, on his principles, to the same objection. "The necessity of the atonement, (says he,) will further appear, if we contemplate the relations of this doctrine with the rational universe." . . . . . "We may naturally suppose, that it was the intention of God, in saving sinners, to make a grand impression upon the universe." . . . "What effect would the salvation of sinners without an atonement, probably have upon the angels of heaven?" . . . "This example has taught them to revere the law, and to expect the infliction of the penalty upon every transgressor." . . . . . "Every angel feels the impression which this public act is calculated to make; and while he dreads, with a new sensation, the penalty, he clings more closely to the precept of the law. But suppose the provisions of this law were entirely set aside, in our world, as would be the case if sinful men were to be saved without an atonement, and, in the estimation of fallen angels, you create war between God and his own eternal law."

Let me now ask, are not "the provisions of the law entirely set aside in our world,"

according to his scheme? Not, it is true, "by saving sinful men without an atonement;" but by saving them through that *kind* of atonement, which "has no direct reference to law," and "involves a suspension of its legal curse." If the law "has no concern with a substitute;" and if Christ's "sufferings constituted no part of that curse, which was threatened against the transgressor;" how can a *view* of his sufferings teach the angels "to revere the law, and to expect the infliction of the penalty upon every transgressor!" Would it not, on the contrary, produce the impression that the law was given up; and its "provisions entirely set aside in our world?" and if this would be the impression upon holy angels, it would be the same upon devils. To use his own language, "in the estimation of fallen angels, you create war between God and his own eternal law." On the principle that Christ suffered the penalty of the law as our substitute, all is plain—but if not, neither man nor angel can tell satisfactorily, how "God can be *just* while he justifies him that believeth;" or why, if he can be *just* in bestowing pardon *with an atonement*, he might not be *just* in bestowing it *without* any.

Another work on the atonement, said to have been founded on Dr. Beman's Sermons, has been published in England, by Mr. Jenkyn, and republished in this country with an introductory recommendation by Dr. Carroll. On these two accounts it may be properly re-

ferred to as a specimen of the New Views.\* Mr. Jenkyn introduces seven arguments to prove that Christ did not suffer the penalty of the law—but that his sufferings were a substitute for the penalty. According to him, the very idea of an atonement, involves a suspension of the penalty. “An atonement, (says he,) is a measure or an expedient, that is a satisfaction for the *suspension* of the threatened penalty. A suspension or a non-execution of the literal threatening is always implied in an atonement.” P. 25. “If a man transgress a law, he must, in a just and firm government, be punished. Why? Lest others have a bad opinion of the law and transgress it too. But suppose that this end of the law be secured without punishing the transgressor; suppose that a measure shall be devised by the governor, which shall save the criminal, and yet keep men from having a bad opinion of the law. Why, in such case, all would approve of it,

\* Concerning Dr. Beman's Discourses, Mr. Jenkyn says:—“This little work is a rich nursery of what Lord Bacon calls ‘The seeds of things.’ It abounds in living theological principles, each of which, if duly cultivated and reared, would unfold great and ample truths, illustrative of this great doctrine.” Concerning Jenkyn's work, Dr. Carroll uses similar language:—“As a treatise, (says he,) on the grand *relations* of the atonement, it is a book which may be emphatically said to contain ‘the seeds of things’—the elements of mightier and nobler combinations of thought respecting the sacrifice of Christ, than any modern production.” . . . . . “We believe that its influence on the opinions of theological students and ministers will be great and salutary, beyond computation.”

both on the score of justice and on the score of benevolence. For public justice only requires that men should be kept from having such a bad opinion of the law as to break it. If this can be done without inflicting what, in distributive justice, is due to the criminal, public justice is satisfied, because its ends are fully answered. The death of Christ secures this end." P. 140, 1. Again: "The truth of any proposition or declaration, consists more in the *spirit* than in the *letter* of it. Truth in a *promise* and truth in a *threatening*, are different, especially in measures of government. Truth in a promise obliges the promiser to perform his word, or else to be regarded as unfaithful and false. But truth in a threatening does not, in the administration of discipline or government, actually oblige to literal execution; it only makes the punishment to be due and admissible. A threatened penalty does not deprive the lawgiver of his sovereign and supra-legal power to dispense with it, if he can secure the ends of it by any other measure." . . . . . "This supra-legal prerogative of suspending punishment, God has exercised in many instances, as in the sparing of Nineveh, and I believe in the sparing of our first parents. The identical penalty of the Eden constitution was not literally executed, either on man or on Christ. It was not executed on *man*, for then there would have been *no* human race. The first pair would have been destroyed, and mankind would never have come into being. It was



not executed on *Christ*. He did no sin; he violated no constitution, and yet he *died*. Surely no law or constitution under which he was, could legally visit him with a penalty. If it be said that he suffered it for others, let it be remembered that immutable verity as much requires that the penalty should be inflicted on the *literal* sinner *only*, as that it should be inflicted at all." P. 64, 65.

In addition to the remarks already made on Dr. Beman's views, which will answer equally well for those of Mr. Jenkyn, we wish to notice a sentiment not before alluded to. It is contained in the last paragraph quoted from Jenkyn, and is as follows, viz: that though God is bound to fulfil his promises, he is not bound to execute his threatenings. This distinction is resorted to for the purpose of avoiding the difficulty, that if God does not inflict the penalty of the law either on the sinner or upon Christ as his substitute, his veracity is thereby impeached. We admit that the Divine veracity does not require the execution of a *conditional* threatening, as in the case of Nineveh; but no one will pretend that God's *law* threatened punishment for disobedience *conditionally*. The moment the law was violated, the transgressor fell under the curse. And he must either endure it eternally, or be released by having satisfaction paid to divine justice in some other way. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." "In the day thou

eatest thereof, thou shalt *surely* die.” Accordingly, as soon as Adam transgressed he began to feel the curse. He lost God’s image and favour—he became *spiritually dead*—and he would have suffered temporal and eternal death, had they not been averted by the interposition of a substitute.\* The penalty of the law must be substantially executed.

“Die he or justice must, unless for him  
Some other able and as willing, pay  
The rigid satisfaction—death for death.”

If God is not bound to fulfil his threatenings, how can it be proved that the punishment of the wicked will be eternal? Though it is distinctly and frequently asserted in the Bible that such will be the doom of the finally impenitent, yet if God’s veracity does not require the execution of this threatening, there is no certainty that it will be inflicted: nay, there is much reason to believe the contrary; because if there is nothing in God’s character, or law, which requires him to punish sin, we may be sure that his infinite goodness will lead him to release the sinner from condemnation; and thus, atonement or no atone-

\* It is sometimes said that God did not execute his threatening upon Adam, because he did not die a temporal death that very day. But the threatening *began* to be inflicted that very day—and this was all which was intended by it. From the nature of the case, *eternal* death cannot be inflicted in a *day*, because it requires an endless duration. Even in the case of the wicked in hell—it has only *begun* to be inflicted—and yet who doubts that they are suffering the penalty of the law?

ment, all mankind will be saved. But if the *nature* of God requires him to punish sin, and if when he has threatened to punish it, his *veracity* requires him to execute that threatening; then either Christ endured what was essential in the penalty of the law as our substitute, or our union to him by faith cannot shelter us from its penal demands. Its threatenings still lie against us, and must ere long be inflicted. It is not true, therefore, that "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." He is not "an hiding place from the wind; a covert from the tempest."

Mr. Barnes in his sermon on the Way of Salvation, and in his Notes on the Romans, gives substantially the same view of the atonement with Dr. Beman and Mr. Jenkyn. But in another production of his, viz: an Introductory Essay to Butler's Analogy, which was first published in the Christian Spectator, and afterwards prefixed to a new edition of the Analogy, he presents the subject in a manner still more exceptionable. If I mistake not, it is such a view as any Unitarian in the United States would subscribe to. His language is as follows: "Now, in recurring to the analogy of nature, we have only to ask, whether calamities which are hastening to fall on us, are ever put back by the intervention of another? Are there any cases in which either our own crimes or the manifest judgments of God, are bringing ruin upon us, where that ruin is turned aside by the

interposition of others? Now we at once cast our eyes backward to all the helpless and dangerous periods of our being. Did God come forth *directly*, and protect us in the defenceless period of infancy? Who watched over the sleep of the cradle, and guarded us in sickness and helplessness? It was the tenderness of a mother bending over our slumbering childhood, foregoing sleep, and rest, and ease, and hailing toil and care that *we* might be defended. Why then is it strange, that when God thus ushers us into existence through the pain and toil of another, he should convey the blessings of a higher existence by the groans and pangs of a higher Mediator? God gives us knowledge. But does he come forth to teach us by inspiration, or guide us by his own hand to the fountains of wisdom? It is by years of patient toil in others that we possess the elements of science, the principles of morals, the endowments of religion. He gives us food and raiment. Is the Great Parent of benevolence seen clothing us by his own hand, or ministering directly to our wants? Who makes provisions for the sons and daughters of feebleness, gaiety, or idleness? Who but the care-worn and anxious father and mother, who toil that their offspring may receive these benefits from their hands? Why then may not the garments of salvation and the manna of life, come through a higher Mediator, and be the fruit of severer toil and sufferings? Heaven's highest, richest benefits are thus conveyed to the race through

thousands of hands acting as *mediums* between man and God. It is thus through the instrumentality of others, that the great Giver of life breathes health into our bodies, and vigour into our frames. And why should he not reach also the sick and weary *mind*—the soul languishing under a long and wretched disease, by the hand of a mediator? Why should he not kindle the glow of spiritual health on the wan cheek, and infuse celestial life into our veins, by him who is the great Physician of our souls? The very earth, air, waters, are all channels for conveying blessings to us from God. Why then should the infidel stand back, and all sinners frown, when we claim the same thing in redemption, and affirm that in this great concern, “there is *one* Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all?”

“But still it may be said, that this is not an *atonement*. We admit it. We maintain only that it vindicates the main principle of atonement, and shows that it is according to a *general law*, that God imparts spiritual blessings to us through a Mediator. What, we ask, is the precise objectionable point in the atonement, if it be not that God aids us in our sins and woes, by the self-denial and sufferings of another? And we ask, whether there is any thing so peculiar in such a system, as to make it intrinsically absurd and incredible? Now we think there is nothing more universal and indisputable than a sys-

tem of nature like this. God has made the whole animal world tributary to man. And it is by the toil and pain of creation, that our wants are supplied, our appetites gratified, our bodies sustained, our sickness alleviated—that is, the impending evils of labour, famine, or disease are put away by these substituted toils and privations. By the blood of patriots he gives us the blessings of liberty—that is, by *their* sufferings in our defence we are delivered from the miseries of rapine, murder, or slavery, which might have encompassed our dwellings. The toil of a father is the price by which a son is saved from ignorance, depravity, want, or death. The tears of a mother, and her long watchfulness, save from the perils of infancy, and an early death. Friend aids friend by toil; a parent foregoes rest for a child; and the patriot pours out his blood on the altars of freedom, that *others* may enjoy the blessings of liberty—that is, that others may not be doomed to slavery, want, and death.

“ Yet still it may be said, that we have not come, in the analogy, to the precise point of the atonement, in producing *reconciliation* with God by the sufferings of another. We ask then, what is the Scripture account of the effect of the atonement in producing reconciliation? Man is justly exposed to suffering. He is guilty, and it is the righteous purpose of God that the guilty should suffer. God is *so* opposed to him that he will inflict suffering on him, unless by an atonement it

is prevented. By the intervention of an atonement, therefore, the Scriptures affirm that such sufferings shall be averted. The man shall be saved from the impending calamity. Sufficient for all the purposes of justice and of just government, has fallen on the substitute, and the sinner may be pardoned and reconciled to God. Now, we affirm that in every instance of the substituted sufferings, or self-denial of the parent, the patriot, or the benefactor, there occurs a state of things so analogous to this, as to show that it is in strict accordance with the just government of God, and to remove all the objections to the peculiarity of the atonement. Over a helpless babe ushered into the world, naked, feeble, speechless, there impend hunger, cold, sickness, sudden death—a mother's watchfulness averts these evils. Over a nation impend revolutions, sword, famine, and the pestilence. The blood of the patriot averts these, and the nation smiles in peace. Look at a single instance: Xerxes poured his millions on the shores of Greece. The vast host darkened all the plains, and stretched towards the capital. In the train there followed weeping, blood, conflagration, and the loss of liberty. Leonidas, almost alone, stood in his path. He fought. Who can calculate the effects of the valour and blood of that single man and his compatriots in averting calamities from Greece, and from other nations struggling in the cause of freedom? Who can tell how much of rapine, of

cruelty, and of groans and tears it turned away from that nation?"

It is due to Mr. Barnes to state, that he observes in the words immediately following the above extract, "Now we by no means affirm that this is *all* that is meant by an atonement, as revealed by Christianity." Yet in his subsequent remarks he does not advance a single idea which gives a *higher* view of that great transaction, than is presented above: and in the passage we have quoted, he affirms that the view which he has given "vindicates the *main principle* of atonement." If his illustrations vindicate the *main principle* of atonement, they must convey a correct idea of what the atonement is. But if the reader is left to obtain his knowledge on this subject from these statements, he would adopt a scheme unworthy the name of atonement. Indeed, Mr. Barnes admits, with reference to the first part of his statement, that it is not an atonement; though at the same time he asserts that the "main principle of atonement" is vindicated by the view which he had presented. But if the "*main principle*" of atonement is exhibited in any part of the above extract, or in the whole taken together, we can see no reason for the necessity of a *Divine* Mediator; and should be disposed seriously to inquire whether Socinianism is not all the Christianity that we need?\*

\* The Christian Examiner, a Unitarian periodical, published at Boston, contains a review of Mr. Barnes's



We shall give but one more specimen of the New Theology on this subject. It will be taken from a sermon of Dr. Murdock, preached before the students at Andover in 1823. He was at that time a professor in the Andover Theological Seminary.

“In this text [Rom. iii. 25, 26,] Paul declares explicitly, what was the immediate *object* of Christ’s atoning sacrifice; that is, what effect it had in the economy of redemption, or how it laid a proper foundation for the pardon and the salvation of sinful men. It was the immediate object of this sacrifice *to declare* the righteousness of God: in other words, to display and vindicate the perfect holiness and uprightness of his character as a moral Governor. This display being made, he can with propriety forgive all that believe in Christ Jesus.” . . . “To enable God righteously to pardon the repenting sinner, the

Notes on the Romans, in which the writer observes, “On the atonement, our author’s views are far in advance of those of the church to which he belongs. Though he maintains that Christ was in some sense a substitute in the place of sinners he denies a strictly and fully vicarious atonement, and makes the Saviour’s death important chiefly as an illustration of the inherent and essential connexion between sin and suffering.” With regard to the book, the reviewer says, “While, for the most part, we would advise no additions, were the work re-edited under Unitarian supervision, we should note exceedingly few omissions. Indeed, on many of the standard and Trinitarian proof-texts, Mr. Barnes has candidly indicated the inadequacy of the text to prove the doctrine.” . . . “Sometimes Mr. Barnes does not so much as suggest a Trinitarian idea in commenting on texts which have been deemed decidedly and irresistibly Trinitarian in their bearing.”

atonement must give the same support to law, or must display as impressively the perfect holiness and justice of God, as the execution of the law on transgressors would. It must be something different from the execution of the law itself; because it is to be a substitute for it, something which renders it safe and proper to suspend the regular course of distributive justice." . . . . "Now such an expedient, the text represents the sacrifice of Christ to be. It is a declaration of the righteousness of God; so that he might be just"—might secure the objects of distributive justice, as it becomes a righteous moral governor to do—"and yet might justify," or acquit and exempt from punishment him that believeth in Jesus. It was in the nature of it, an exhibition or proof of the righteousness of God. It did not consist in the execution of the law on any being whatever; for it was a substitute for the execution of it." . . . . . "Its immediate influence was not on the character and relations of man as transgressors, nor on the claims of the law upon them. Its direct operation was on the feelings and apprehensions of the beings at large, who are under the moral government of God. In two respects it coincided precisely with a public execution of the law itself: its immediate influence was on the same persons; and that influence was produced in the same way—by means of a public exhibition." . . . "The only difficulty is to understand how this exhibition was a display of the righteous-

ness of God. To solve it, some have resorted to the supposition that the Son of God became our *sponsor*, and satisfied the demands of the law by suffering in our stead. But to this hypothesis there are strong objections. To suppose that Christ was really and truly *our sponsor*, and that he suffered in this character, would involve such a transfer of legal obligations and liabilities and merits, as is inadmissible; and to suppose any thing short of this, will not explain the difficulty. For if, while we call him a sponsor, we deny that he was legally holden or responsible for us, and liable in equity to suffer in our stead, we assign no intelligible reason why his sufferings should avail any thing for our benefit, or display at all the righteousness of God." . . . . "We must, therefore, resort to some other solution. And what is more simple, and at the same time satisfactory, than that which is suggested by the text? The atonement was an *exhibition or display*; that is, it was a *symbolical transaction*. It was a transaction in which God and his Son were the actors; and they acted in perfect harmony, though performing different parts in the august drama." . . . . "The object of both, in this affecting tragedy, was to make an impression on the minds of rational beings every where and to the end of time. And the impression to be made was, that God is a holy and righteous God; that while inclined to mercy he cannot forget the demands of justice and the danger to his kingdom from the

pardon of the guilty; that he must show his feelings on this subject: and show them so clearly and fully that all his rational creatures shall feel that he honours his law while suspending its operation, as much as he would by the execution of it. But how, it may be asked, are these things expressed or represented by this transaction? The answer is—symbolically. The Son of God came down to our world to do and suffer what he did; not merely for the sake of doing those acts and enduring those sorrows, but for the sake of the impression to be made on the minds of all beholders, by his labouring and suffering in this manner.”

The principal difference between these views and those of Dr. Beman and others of the same school, is that he has laid aside the usual orthodox terms, and expressed his sentiments in other language. Perhaps this was *one* reason why such a sensation was produced in the community by the appearance of the sermon. Professor Stuart published two discourses (if I remember correctly,) with a view to counteract its influence; and Dr. Dana, of Londonderry, preached a sermon (probably for the same end,) before the Convention of Congregational and Presbyterian Ministers of New-Hampshire; which was published by their request. From this sermon we shall give some extracts, as expressive of the Old Theology on this subject. His text is in Isa. liii. 4, 5, 6; concerning which he observes:

“JEHOVAH, the just, the benevolent JEHOVAH, is pleased to bruise him and to put him to grief. UNPARALLELED MYSTERY! How shall it be explained? One fact, and that alone explains it. He suffered as a *substitute*. He suffered not for himself, but for those whom he came to save. This the prophet unequivocally declares in the text; and declares in such variety and accumulation of language, as is calculated to make the very strongest impression on the mind.” . . .

“A moment’s reflection may convince us that if any of our sinful race are to be pardoned and saved, an atonement is absolutely *necessary*. God is holy and just; infinitely and immutably holy and just. These attributes imply that he has a perfect and irreconcilable aversion to all sin; and must manifest this aversion to his creatures. But how can this be done if sin be pardoned without an atonement? Would not the great Jehovah in this case, practically deny himself? Would not the lustre of his glorious attributes be awfully eclipsed and tarnished? Further, as the Sovereign of the universe, God has given his intelligent creatures a law. This law, while it requires perfect obedience, must likewise be enforced by penalties. Nor is it enough that these penalties be merely denounced. They must be *executed* on those who incur them by transgression; or on a surety. Otherwise, where is the truth of the Lawgiver? Where is the stability of the law? Where is the dignity of government?”

.... "Still further, it is easy to see that satisfaction, if made by a surety, must correspond with the debt due from those in whose behalf it is rendered. Mankind universally owe to their heavenly Sovereign, a debt of perfect, undeviating obedience." .... "We have likewise contracted a debt of punishment. This results from the penal sanction of the law, and is proportionate to the evil of sin. It corresponds with the majesty and glory of the Lawgiver, and with our own obligations to obedience. Now if a surety undertake for us, he must pay our debt in both these regards." .... "As to his *sufferings*, we contend not that the Redeemer endured precisely the same misery, in kind or degree, to which the sinner was exposed, and which he must otherwise have endured. This was neither necessary nor possible. Infinite purity could not know the tortures of remorse. Infinite excellence could not feel the anguish of malignant passions. Nor was it needful that the Saviour, in making atonement for human guilt, should sustain sufferings without end. Such, it is admitted, must have been the punishment of the sinner, had he borne it in his own person. But this necessity results, not directly from the penal sanction of the law, but from the impossibility that a finite transgressor should, within any limited period, render satisfaction for his sins. But the infinite dignity of the Saviour imparted an infinite value and efficacy to his *temporary* sufferings.

Indeed it cannot be doubted that he endured as much of that same misery to which the sinner stands exposed, as consisted with the perfect innocence, dignity and glory of his character. He suffered not only the united assaults of human cruelty and infernal rage, but the far more torturing pains of *Divine dereliction*. And inasmuch as the Scripture expressly declares that in redeeming us from the law he was *made a curse for us*, we are constrained to conclude that his sufferings were a substantial execution of the threatening of the law; a real endurance of its penalty, so far as the nature of the case admitted or required.”

With reference to Dr. Murdock’s\* views, Dr. Dana observes: “In the first place, it tends, apparently at least, to subvert the law. It declares that ‘the atonement is something different from the execution of the law, and a *substitute* for it;’ that ‘it did not fulfil the law, or satisfy its demands on transgressors.’ In accordance with these views, it declares that ‘the justification of believers is not founded on the principles of law and distributive justice;’ and further, that it is a real departure from the regular course of justice; and such a departure from it, as leaves the claims of the law on the persons justified forever unsatisfied. Without commenting at large on these suggestions so peculiar, and so grating (as I apprehend) to

\* Dr. Murdock is not mentioned by name.

the ears and hearts of most Christians, I will simply set before you the Saviour's own intentions, in his advent and mediation; and these as declared in his own words: 'Think not (says he) that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.' Surely then his atonement was not 'a *substitute* for the execution of the law.' On the contrary, his obedience and sufferings were a substantial fulfilment of its precept and its penalty; and were designed to procure the justification and salvation of men, not through a 'departure from the regular course of justice;' not by 'leaving the claims of the law forever unsatisfied;' but in perfect accordance with the immutable and everlasting principles both of law and justice." . . . .

2. "This scheme gives us such views of the divine character, as are equally inexplicable and distressing." . . . . "A Being of spotless innocence, and Divine dignity; a Being adored by angels and dear to God; a Being, in short, the most lovely and glorious that the intelligent creation ever saw, is subjected to sufferings more complicated and severe than were ever before endured in our world; and all this not by way of *substitution*; not by way of *satisfaction for the sins of others*; but of *exhibition or display!*"

3. "It is a serious question whether the



theory in view does not comprise a *virtual denial* of the *atonement* itself. It leaves us the name; but what does it leave of the reality? An *exhibition* is not an atonement. A *display* is not an atonement. A mere *symbolical transaction* is not an atonement." . .

"Where, then, let it be asked in the *fourth* place, is the foundation of the believer's hope? It is a notorious fact, that the great body of Christians in every age have embraced the doctrine of the vicarious sufferings and obedience of their Saviour. Pressed with a sense of guilt, they have taken refuge in his atoning blood. Conscious of the imperfection of their best obedience, they have trusted in his righteousness alone. United to their Redeemer by living faith, they have assured themselves of a *personal interest* in his atonement and righteousness. And they have exulted in the thought that this method of salvation met all the demands, and secured all the honours, of the divine law and justice. Shall Christians now be told that this is mere dream and delusion; that no proper satisfaction for their sins has ever been made; that their justification is nothing but an *absolute pardon*; and that even this is a 'departure from the regular course of justice?' Doctrine like this is calculated to appal the believer's heart, and plant thorns in his dying pillow. It is even calculated to send a pang to the bosoms of the blest; to silence those anthems of praise which the redeemed on high are offering 'to Him that loved them

and washed them from their sins in his own blood.'”

There was the same necessity for Christ's suffering the penalty of the law, as for his suffering at all. To employ the language of a venerable professor, “The penalty of a holy, violated law, was the only thing which stood in the way. Mere sufferings of any one are of no value, except in relation to some end. The sufferings of Christ could no otherwise open a way of pardon but by removing the penalty of the law; but they could have no tendency to remove the penalty but by his enduring it. Sufferings not required by law and justice must have been unjust sufferings, and never could effect any good. Such exhibition could not have the effect of demonstrating God's hatred of sin, for it was not the punishment of sin; nor could it make the impression on the world, that the Ruler of the Universe would hereafter punish sin; for, according to this theory, sin goes unpunished, and dreadful sufferings are inflicted on the innocent to whom no sin is imputed. This scheme as really subverts the true doctrine of atonement, as that of Socinus; and no reason appears why it was necessary that the person making this exhibition should be a Divine person.”—Dr. Alexander.

The whole controversy concerning the *nature* of the atonement, may be resolved into two questions: 1. Is God bound to punish sin? and 2. Does this necessity arise from the *nature* of God, or from circumstances

which lie without him? In other words, do his *holiness* and *justice* require him to manifest his abhorrence to sin by inflicting upon it deserved punishment? or does the necessity for manifesting this abhorrence lie only in "reasons of state," as civilians say—i. e. in the necessity of making a salutary impression upon his moral government?

That the *veracity* of God requires him to execute the threatenings of his law, we have already shown. But why do we find such a law in existence?—a law binding him to punish sin? "The opposition of God's *law* to sin," says Symington, is "just the opposition of his *nature* to sin; his nature, not his will, is the ultimate standard of morality. His determination to punish sin is not *voluntary*, but *necessary*. He does not annex a punishment to sin because he *wills* to do so, but because his *nature* requires it. If the whole of such procedure could be resolved into mere volition, then it is not only supposable that God might not have determined to punish sin, but, which is blasphemous, that he might have determined to reward it. This is not more clearly deducible from the nature of a being of perfect moral excellence, than plainly taught in Scripture: "*He will by no means clear the guilty. The Lord is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee. God is angry with the wicked every day. The*

*Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? Our God is a consuming fire.*" (Exod. xxiv. 7; Josh. xxiv. 19; Ps. v. 4; vi. 11; Neh. i. 2, 6; Rom. iii. 5; Heb. xii. 29.) We may confidently appeal to every unprejudiced mind whether such descriptions as these do not fully bear us out in the view we have taken of God's retributive justice. And if this view is correct, sin cannot go unpunished; it cannot be pardoned without a satisfaction; God cannot but take vengeance on iniquity; to do otherwise would be to violate the perfection of his nature. Just he is, and just he ever must be; and there is only one way, that of an atoning sacrifice, by which he can be at once "a JUST God and a SAVIOUR."—Symington on the Atonement.

If the only reason why God is bound to punish sin arises from the effect to be produced upon the universe, then if he had created no other intelligent beings except man, no atonement would have been necessary—because no moral beings would exist upon whom to make this impression—and of course he might have forgiven us irrespective of an atonement, without doing any injury to his government. But if the necessity of punishing sin lies primarily in his *nature*, an atonement would be as necessary for the redemption of a single sinner, if he had been the

only being in the universe, as it was under the circumstances in which this scheme of mercy was devised. And this we believe to be the fact. Otherwise God does not possess *essentially*, that *holiness*, which the Scriptures represent as constituting the glory of his character.

If then the question be asked, why is God bound to punish sin? the first answer is, because it is *right*—*sin* being opposite to his *nature*—and his *nature* therefore requires him to manifest towards it his abhorrence. Is the question repeated? We reply, it is required from a regard to his *law* and *government*. Though the former is the *primary* reason, the latter is of great importance, and must never be forgotten. Taken together, they show not only the necessity of an atonement in order to the pardon of sin, but that the atonement must consist in a substantial endurance of the penalty of the law. On any other principle, sin goes unpunished; and we are driven to the conclusion before adverted to, that God is not “glorious in *holiness*”—“a *just* God,” who “will by no means clear the guilty.”

The following extract from Dr. Bellamy will show how nearly the above views correspond with the sentiments prevalent in New England a hundred years ago: “It was fit, if any intelligent creature should at any time swerve at all from the perfect will of God, that he should for ever lose his favour and fall under his everlasting displeasure, for

a thing so infinitely wrong: and in such a case it was fit the Governor of the world should be infinitely displeas'd and publicly testify his infinite displeasure by a punishment adequate thereto, inflicted on the sinning creature. This would satisfy justice; for justice is satisfied when the thing which is wrong is punished according to its desert. Hence, it was fit, when by a constitution, holy, just, and good, Adam was made a public head, to represent his race, and act not only for himself, but for all his posterity; it was fit, I say, that he and all his race, for his first transgression, should lose the favour, and fall under the everlasting displeasure of the Almighty. It was fit that God should be infinitely displeas'd at so abominable a thing—and that as Governor of the world, he should publicly bear testimony against it, as an infinite evil, by inflicting the infinite punishment the law threaten'd; i. e. by damning the whole world. This would have satisfied justice; for justice is satisfied when justice takes place—when the guilty are treated with that severity they ought to be—when sin is punished as being what it is. Now Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has, by his Father's appointment and approbation, assumed our nature—taken the place of a guilty world—and had not only Adam's first transgression, but the iniquities of us all laid upon him, and in our room and stead, hath suffered the wrath of God, the curse of the law, offering up himself a sacrifice to God for the sins of

men: and hereby the infinite evil of sin and the righteousness of the law are publicly owned and acknowledged, and the deserved punishment voluntarily submitted unto by man, i. e. by his representative: and thus justice is satisfied; for justice is satisfied when justice takes place; and sin is now treated as being what it is, as much as if God had damned the whole world; and God, as Governor, appears as severe against it. And thus the righteousness of God is declared and manifested, by Christ's being set forth to be a propitiation for sin; and he may now be just and yet justify him that believes in Jesus." — True Religion Delineated, pp. 332, 333.

Similar to the views here expressed, were those of the early European divines. "There was no defect in the payment he made. We owed a debt of blood to the law, and his life was offered up as a sacrifice; otherwise the law had remained in its full vigour and justice had been unsatisfied. That a Divine person hath suffered our punishment, is properly the reason of our redemption." . . . . " *The blood of Christ shed*, (Matt. xxvi. 28,) poured forth from his veins and offered up to God, in that precise consideration, ratifies the *New Testament*. The sum is, our Saviour by his death suffered the malediction of the law, and his Divine nature gave a full value to his sufferings." . . . . "And God, who was infinitely provoked, is infinitely pleased." — Bates.

"A surety, sponsor, for us, the Lord Christ was, by his voluntary undertaking out of his

rich grace and love, to do, answer, and perform all that is required on our parts, that we may enjoy the benefits of the covenant, the grace and glory prepared, proposed, and promised in it, in the way and manner determined on by Divine wisdom. And this may be reduced unto two heads: 1. His answering for our transgressions against the first covenant. 2. His purchase and procurement of the grace of the new. “He was made a curse for us that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us.” Gal. iii. 13—15. . . . “That is, *he underwent the punishment due unto our sins, to make atonement for us, by offering himself a propitiatory sacrifice for the expiation of our sins.*”—Owen.

“Christ hath redeemed us who believe in his name from the terrible curse of the law, and bought us off from that servitude and misery to which it inexorably doomed us, by being himself made a curse for us, and *enduring the penalty* which our sins had deserved.”—Doddridge.

“I wonder that Jerome and Erasmus should labour and seek for I know not what figure of speech, to show that Christ was not called accursed. Truly in this is placed all our hope: in this the infinite love of God is manifested: in this is placed our salvation, that God properly and without any figure, poured out *all his wrath* on his own Son; caused him to be accursed, that he might receive us into his favour. Finally, without any figure, Christ was made a curse for us, in such a



manner that unless he had been truly God, he must have remained under the curse forever, from which, for our sakes, he emerged. For indeed, if the obedience be figurative and imaginary, so must our hope of glory be.”—Beza, as quoted by Scott.

These several quotations all proceed on the principle that the necessity of the atonement lay *primarily* in the *nature* of God: that his *justice* must be *appeased* by a true and proper *satisfaction*, before it was possible for him to regard sinners with favour; and that this satisfaction having been made by the vicarious and expiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who “hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour,” pardon and salvation are freely bestowed upon believing sinners, in perfect harmony with all the Divine attributes. With the work which Christ performed, God the Father was infinitely well pleased; and through him he looks with complacency upon all who are united to him by faith. He was well pleased, because Christ performed all that law and justice required—for, as Bellamy observes, “justice is satisfied when justice takes place.” “I have finished the work,” said Christ, “which thou gavest me to do.” And again, just before he expired he said, “It is finished.” His work of *active* obedience was finished when he uttered the first; and when he spake the last, his work of *suffering* was also completed. We behold him now as “the *Lamb*

of God," sacrificed to propitiate the Divine favour; John i. 29: as "the *propitiation* for our sins;" 1 John ii. 2: as a "*sin-offering*" presented to God for a sacrifice of expiation; 2 Cor. v. 21, Gr.: as "a ransom," or redemption-price, to "redeem us from the curse of the law;" Matt. xx. 28; Gal. iii. 13: as "the man, God's fellow;" "on whom was laid the iniquity of us all;" who "bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" Zech. xiii. 7; Isa. liii. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 24: as, in fine, both the offering and the priest, who having "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," "offered himself without spot to God," and, "by his own blood, entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us;" Heb. ix. 12, 14, 26. How explicit are these passages with regard to the *nature* of Christ's sufferings. If Christ did not offer himself a sacrifice for our sins; if he did not endure substantially the penalty of the law in order to make satisfaction to Divine justice in behalf of those who should believe in him, we know not how to interpret the plainest language. So clearly is this doctrine taught, and so adapted is it to remedy the guilt and misery of our fallen condition, that we doubt whether a mind truly enlightened can fail to perceive it, or an awakened conscience be insensible to its value. In view of it, I am disposed to exclaim with grateful emotions, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou

comfortest me.” “God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” “Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be confounded.”

“With joy, with grief, that healing hand I see;  
Alas! how low! how far beneath the skies!  
The skies it formed, and now it bleeds for me—  
But bleeds the balm I want—  
There hangs all human hope; that nail supports  
The falling universe: that gone, we drop;  
Horror receives us, and the dismal wish  
Creation had been smothered in her birth.”



## CHAPTER VI.

JUSTIFICATION—A CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

INTIMATELY connected with the doctrine of atonement, is that of justification. The different views, therefore, with regard to the former, which have been exhibited in the last chapter, will give a corresponding complexion to our sentiments concerning the latter. Those who maintain that Christ obeyed the law and suffered its penalty in our stead, and thereby made a true and proper satisfaction to Divine justice, believe that his obedience and sufferings, constituting what is usually styled his righteousness, are imputed to the believer for his justification; Christ's righteousness being received by faith as the instrument. Accord-

ingly justification consists not only in the pardon of sin, or in other words, in the release of the believing sinner from punishment; but also in the acceptance of his person as righteous in the eye of the law, through the obedience of Christ reckoned or imputed to him; by which he has a title to eternal life.

On the contrary, those who deny that Christ obeyed the law and suffered its penalty as our substitute, deny also the imputation of his righteousness for our justification; and though they retain the word, justification, they make it consist in mere *pardon*.\* In the eye of the law, the believer, according to their views, is not justified at all, and never will be through eternity. Though on the ground of what Christ has done, God is pleased to *forgive* the sinner upon his believing; Christ's righteousness is not reckoned in any sense as his, or set down to his account. He believes, and his *faith*, or *act of believing* is accounted to him for righteousness; that is, faith is so reckoned to his account, that God *treats* him as if he were righteous.

\* "The pardon of sin alone can with no propriety be denominated justification. Pardon and justification are not only distinct, but in common cases, utterly incompatible. A culprit tried and condemned may among men be pardoned, but it would be a solecism to say, that such a man was justified." . . . "But by the plan of salvation through Christ there is not only a ground for pardon, but there is rendered to the law a **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, which lays the foundation for an act of justification. By pardon the sinner is freed from condemnation, by justification he is entitled to the heavenly inheritance."—Dr. Alexander.

That the views first given accord with the general sentiments of the church since the Reformation is capable of abundant proof. Though in the time of the Reformers the opponents of the true doctrine did not take the same ground, in every respect, which has been taken since, and which is described in the statement just made concerning the views entertained by the advocates of the New Theology; in one particular they are all agreed, viz: in rejecting the imputation of Christ's righteousness; the adoption or denial of which is the basis of all the other differences that exist on this subject. To this doctrine, therefore, the Reformers clung, as the sheet-anchor of the Christian faith. Justification by faith, through the imputed righteousness of Christ—this was their doctrine. And so important did they regard it, that Luther was accustomed to denominate it, (as is well known,) *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*; the very pillar on which the church rests; a denial of which must result in her ruin. The manner in which his mind was brought to entertain clear views on this subject is highly interesting. "Three days and three nights together he lay upon his bed without meat, drink, or any sleep, like a dead man, (as some do write of him,) labouring in soul and spirit upon a certain place of St. Paul in the third chapter of the Romans, "to declare his righteousness," [or justice,] thinking Christ to be sent for no other end but to show forth God's justice, as an execu-

tor of his law; till at length being assured and satisfied by the Lord, touching the right meaning of these words, signifying the justice of God to be executed upon his Son to save us from the stroke thereof, he immediately upon the same, started up from his bed, so confirmed in faith, as nothing afterwards could appal him."—Life of Luther, prefixed to his Commentary on the Galatians.

The following extracts from Owen on Justification will show the nature of the controversy soon after the Reformation. "There are two grand parties by whom the doctrine of justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ is opposed, namely, the Papists and the Socinians. But they proceed on different principles, and unto different ends. The design of the one is to exalt their own merits; of the other, to destroy the merit of Christ." . . . . "Those of the Roman church plainly say, that upon the infusion of a habit of grace, with the expulsion of sin and the renovation of our natures thereby, which they call the first justification, we are actually justified before God, by our own works of righteousness." . . . . They say, 'that this righteousness of works is not absolutely perfect, nor in itself able to justify us in the sight of God, but owes all its worth and dignity unto this purpose unto the merit of Christ.' . . . . But 'Christ hath only merited the first grace for us, that we therewith, and thereby, may merit life eternal.' . . . . Hence 'those other ingredients of confession,

absolution, penances or commutations, aids from saints and angels, especially the blessed Virgin, all warmed by the fire of purgatory, and confidently administered unto persons sick of ignorance, darkness and sin.' . . . . .  
 "The Socinians, who expressly oppose the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, plead for a participation of its effects or benefits only." . . . . . "He [Socinus] supposeth, that if all he did in a way of obedience, was due from himself on his own account, and was only the duty which he owed unto God for himself in his station and circumstances, as a man in this world, it cannot be meritorious for us, nor any way imputed unto us. And in like manner to weaken the doctrine of his satisfaction, and the imputation thereof unto us, he contends that Christ offered as a priest for himself, in that kind of offering which he made on the cross." . . . . . "Hereby he excludes the church from any benefit by the mediation of Christ, but only what consists in his doctrine, example, and the exercise of his power in heaven for our good."

"We grant an inherent righteousness in all that do believe." . . . . "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.' Eph. v. 9. 'Being made free from sin, we became the servants of righteousness,' Rom. vi. 18. And our duty it is to 'follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, meekness.' 1 Tim. ii. 22." . . . . "But although this righteousness of believers be on other accounts like the fruit of the vine, that

glads the heart of God and man, yet as unto our justification before God, it is like the *wood* of the vine—a pin is not to be taken from it to hang any weight of this cause upon.” . . . . “That righteousness which neither answereth the law of God, nor the end of God in our justification by the gospel, is not that whereon we are justified. But such is this inherent righteousness of believers, even of the best of them.” . . . . “It is imperfect with respect unto every act and duty of it, whether internal or external. There is iniquity cleaving unto our holy things, and all our ‘righteousnesses are as filthy rags.’ Isa. lxiv. 6.”

“That which is imputed is the righteousness of Christ; and briefly I understand hereby, his whole obedience unto God in all that he did and suffered for the Church. This I say is imputed unto believers, so as to become their only righteousness before God unto the justification of life.” . . . . “The judgment of the reformed churches herein is known unto all.” . . . . “Especially the Church of England is in her doctrine express as unto the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, both active and passive, as it is usually distinguished. This hath been of late so fully manifested out of her authentic writings, that is, the articles of religion, and books of homilies, and other writings publicly authorized, that it is altogether needless to give any further demonstration of it.” . . . . “The law hath two parts or powers; 1. Its preceptive



part. . . . 2. The sanction on supposition of disobedience, binding the sinner unto punishment." . . . "The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the whole law for us; he did not only undergo the penalty of it due unto our sins, but also yielded that perfect obedience which it did require." . . . "Christ's fulfilling the law in obedience unto its commands, is no less imputed unto us for our justification, than his undergoing the penalty of it is." . . . "For why was it necessary, or why would God have it so, that the Lord Christ, as the surety of the covenant, should undergo the curse and penalty of the law, which we had incurred the guilt of, by sin, that we may be justified in his sight? Was it not that the glory and honour of his righteousness, as the author of the law, and the Supreme Governor of all mankind thereby, might not be violated in the absolute impunity of the infringers of it? And if it was requisite unto the glory of God, that the penalty of the law should be undergone for us, or suffered by our surety in our stead, because we had sinned; wherefore is it not as requisite unto the glory of God, that the preceptive part of the law be complied withal for us, inasmuch as obedience thereunto is required of us? And as we are no more able of ourselves to fulfil the law, in a way of obedience, than to undergo the penalty of it, so as that we may be justified thereby; so no reason can be given, why God is not as much concerned in honour and glory, that the preceptive power and part of

the law be complied withal by perfect obedience, as that the sanction of it be established by undergoing its penalty." . . . . "The conscience of a convinced sinner, who presents himself in the presence of God, finds all practically reduced unto this one point, viz: whether he will trust unto his own personal inherent righteousness, or in a full renunciation of it, betake himself unto the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ alone." . . . . "The latter is the true and only relief of distressed consciences, of sinners who are weary and heavy laden—that which alone they may oppose unto the sentence of the law, and interpose between God's justice and their souls, wherein they may take shelter from the storms of that wrath which abideth on them that believe not."

These views of Owen accord with the doctrine of our Confession of Faith and with the sentiments of other standard writers. The language of our Confession is as follows: "Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous, not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone: not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness

by faith." Says Calvin, "He is said to be *justified in the sight of God*, who in the Divine judgment is reputed righteous, and accepted on account of his righteousness." . . . "He must be said, therefore, to be *justified by works*, whose life discovers such purity and holiness as to deserve the character of righteousness before the throne of God; or who, by the integrity of his works, can answer and satisfy the Divine judgment. On the other hand, he will be *justified by faith*, who being excluded from the righteousness of works, apprehends by faith the righteousness of Christ, invested in which he appears in the sight of God, not as a sinner, but as a righteous man. Thus we simply explain justification to be an acceptance by which God receives into his favour and esteems us as righteous persons; and we say that it consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness."—Calvin's Institutes, vol. 2, pp. 203, 204.

These remarks, let it be remembered, refer to our relation to God in point of *law*. "Imputation is never represented as affecting the moral character, but merely the relation of men to God and his law. To impute sin, is to regard and treat as a sinner; and to impute righteousness is to regard and treat as righteous."—Hodge on the Romans, pp. 225, 226. Though personally considered, we are sinners, and as such wholly undeserving, yet when we are united to Christ by faith, his righteousness is so imputed to us or reck-

oned in law to our account, that God regards and treats us as righteous—"the righteousness of the law being" considered as "fulfilled in us," because Christ has fulfilled it for us. It is therefore no ground for self-complacency, but of humiliation and gratitude.

With reference to those to whom Christ's righteousness is imputed for their justification our standards say, "Yet inasmuch as he [Christ] was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners." Thus, according to this view of the doctrine, justice and mercy are harmoniously and sweetly blended. While the sinner is saved without conflicting with the claims of God's law, it is "all to the praise of his glorious grace." We have other quotations to make on this subject, but shall reserve them until we present a few specimens of the New Theology.

Says Mr. Finney, "Gospel justification is not by the imputed righteousness of Christ. Under the gospel, sinners are not justified by having the obedience of Jesus Christ set down to their account, as if he had obeyed the law for them or in their stead. It is not an uncommon mistake to suppose that when sinners are justified under the gospel they are accounted righteous in the eye of the law, by

having the obedience or righteousness of Christ imputed to them. I have not time to go into an examination of this subject now. I can only say that this idea is absurd and impossible, for the reason that Jesus Christ was bound to obey the law for himself, and could no more perform works of supererogation, or obey on our account, than any body else.”\* . . . . “Abraham’s faith was imputed to him for righteousness, because it was itself an act of righteousness, and because it worked by love, and therefore produced holiness. Justifying faith is holiness, so far as it goes, and produces holiness of heart and life, and is imputed to the believer as holiness, not instead of holiness.”—Lectures to Professing Christians, pp. 215, 216.

Mr. Barnes says, “The phrase *righteousness of God* is equivalent to *God’s plan of justifying men*”—in regard to which he observes, “It is not that *his* righteousness becomes *ours*. This is not true; and there is no intelligible sense in which that can be understood. But it is God’s plan for *pardon- ing* sin, and for *treating us* as if we had not committed it.”—Notes on the Romans, pp. 28, 29. Again, (p. 94,) in reference to the phrase, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness,” he remarks, “The word ‘it’ here, evidently refers to the *act* of believing. *It does not re-*

\* This is a *Socinian* objection; and on *Socinian principles* it is valid; but if Christ be *Divine*, it has no force.

*fer to the righteousness of another—of God or of the Messiah; but the discussion is solely of the strong act of Abraham's faith, which in some sense was counted to him for righteousness. In what sense this was, is explained directly after. All that is material to remark here is, that the act of Abraham, the strong confidence of his mind in the promises of God, his unwavering assurance that what God had promised he would perform, was reckoned for righteousness. The same thing is more fully expressed, verse 18, 22. When, therefore, it is said that the righteousness of Christ is accounted or imputed to us; when it is said that his merits are transferred and reckoned as ours; whatever may be the truth of the doctrine, it cannot be defended by this passage of Scripture. Faith is always an act of the mind." . . . "God promises; the man believes; and this is the whole of it." It is manifest that Mr. Barnes intended in these passages to deny that we are justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness; and with regard to the manner in which we are justified, he is directly at variance with the Confession of Faith. He teaches that the act of believing is imputed for righteousness; and the Confession of Faith declares expressly to the contrary—"not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness." The Confession teaches moreover that we are justified on principles of law and justice, as well as of grace and*

mercy—all of them harmoniously meeting together in the cross of Christ. He intimates that legal principles have nothing to do in the matter. “It [Rom. i. 17,] does not touch the question, whether it is by imputed righteousness or not; it does not say that it is on legal principles.”—Notes on the Romans, p. 28. This sentence, though it does not amount to a positive denial, was designed, we have no doubt, to convey this idea. Similar forms of expression often occur in this volume, where it is evident from the connexion, he means to be understood as denying the doctrine.

The New Haven divines appear to entertain the same sentiments; as the following from the Christian Spectator will serve to show: “What then is the ground on which the penitent sinner is pardoned? It is not that the sufferings of Christ were of the nature of *punishment*; for being innocent, he had no sins of his own to be punished for; and as he was a distinct being from us, he could not be strictly punished for ours.” . . . . “It is not that by his death he satisfied the penal justice of God; for if he did, punishment could not be equitably inflicted on sinners, whether penitent or not. Nor indeed is it that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to those who are pardoned, either as a personal quality, or in such a manner as to be accounted to them as *if* it were theirs. Nothing can be imputed but that which is their own person-

al attribute or act. Hence, though Dr. B.\* does in one place speak of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers, he obviously refers not to its transfer, but to the enjoyment of its *consequences*; and he more commonly speaks 'of faith,' a personal quality of the saints, 'as imputed for righteousness.' What then is the ground on which forgiveness is bestowed? It is simply this, that the death of Christ removed the difficulties which would otherwise have eternally barred the exercise of pardoning mercy."—*Christian Spectator*, September, 1830.

How radically different are these sentiments from the doctrine of justification as held by most evangelical churches! If they are scriptural, then multitudes of Christians have mistaken the way of salvation. But if they are erroneous, (as we believe them to be,) then those who embrace them have reason to examine anew the foundation of their hopes for eternity. The two systems can never be made to harmonize with each other. If the one is scriptural, the other must fall; and they involve points which affect so seriously the great and everlasting interests of man, that no one ought to be indifferent with regard to them. Indifference here would be highly criminal.

\* The person referred to here is not Dr. Beman; but if one will turn to Beman on the Atonement, p. 51, he will perceive that most of what is here said is more applicable to him than to Dr. Bellamy, whom it is believed the reviewer has treated unfairly. See quotations from Dr. Bellamy in subsequent pages.



For the purpose of showing how fully the Old Theology on this subject accords with the general voice of the church since the Reformation, we shall introduce a few additional quotations.

Bates.—“There are but two ways of appearing before the righteous and Supreme Judge: 1. In sinless obedience. . . . . Whoever presumes to appear before God’s judgment-seat, in his own righteousness, shall be covered with confusion. 2. By the righteousness of Christ. This alone absolves from the guilt of sin, saves from hell, and can endure the trial of God’s tribunal. This the Apostle prized as his invaluable treasure (Phil. iii. 9,) in comparison of which “*all other things are but dross and dung, that I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*” That which he ordained and rewarded in the person of our Redeemer, he cannot but accept. Now *this righteousness is meritoriously imputed to believers.*”—Harmony of the Divine Attributes, p. 298, 299.

Bellamy.—“By *the first covenant*, the constitution with Adam, his perfect obedience through his appointed time of trial, would, by virtue of that constitution or covenant, have entitled us to everlasting life. By *the second covenant*, the perfect righteousness of Christ, the *second Adam*, entitles all true believers to everlasting life, by and according

to this new and living way. A perfect righteousness was necessary according to the law of nature, and a perfect righteousness is insisted upon in both covenants. According to the law of nature, it was to be performed *personally*; but according to both covenants, it is appointed to be performed by a *public head*. According to the first covenant we were to have been interested in the righteousness of our public head, by virtue of our union to him as his posterity, for whom he was appointed to act. According to the second covenant, we are interested in the righteousness of Christ, our public head, by virtue of our union to him by faith.”—True Religion Delineated, p. 421, 422.

Edwards.—“It is absolutely necessary, that in order to a sinner’s being justified, the righteousness of some other should be reckoned to his account; for it is declared that the person justified is looked upon as (in himself) ungodly; but God neither will nor can justify a person without a righteousness; for justification is manifestly a *forensic* term, as the word is used in Scripture, and a judicial thing, or the act of a judge. So that if a person should be justified without a righteousness, the judgment would not be according to truth. The sentence of justification would be a false sentence, unless there be a righteousness performed, that is by the judge properly looked upon as his. To say that God does not justify the sinner without sincere, though an imperfect obedience, does

not help the case; for an imperfect righteousness before a judge is no righteousness." . . . . "God doth in the sentence of justification pronounce a sinner perfectly righteous, or else he would need a further justification after he is justified." . . . . "By that [Christ's] righteousness being *imputed* to us, is meant no other than this, that the righteousness of Christ is accepted for us, and admitted instead of that perfect inherent righteousness which ought to be in ourselves. Christ's perfect obedience shall be reckoned to our account, so that we shall have the benefit of it, as though we had performed it ourselves. And so we suppose that a title to eternal life is given us as the reward of this righteousness." . . . . "There is the very same need of Christ's obeying the law in our stead, in order to the reward, as of his suffering the penalty of the law in our stead, in order to our escaping the penalty; and the same reason why one should be accepted on our account, as the other." . . . . "Faith justifies, or gives an interest in Christ's satisfaction and merits, and a right to the benefits procured thereby, as it thus makes Christ and the believer *one* in the acceptance of the Supreme Judge." . . . "What is *real* in the union between Christ and his people, is the foundation of what is *legal*; that is, it is something really in them, and between them, uniting them, that is the ground of the suitableness of their being accounted as one by the judge." . . . . "God does not give those that believe, an union

with or an interest in the Saviour as a *reward* for faith, but only because faith is the soul's *active* uniting with Christ, or is itself the very act of union, *on their part.*"

Concerning the opinion of those who believe justification to be nothing more than pardon, he observes: "Some suppose that nothing more is intended in Scripture by justification than barely the remission of sins. If so, it is very strange, if we consider the nature of the case; for it is most evident, and none will deny, that it is with respect to the rule or *law* of God, we are under, that we are said in Scripture to be either justified or condemned. Now what is it to justify a person as the subject of a *law* or rule, but to judge him as standing *right* with respect to that rule? To justify a person in a particular case, is to approve of him as standing *right*, as subject to the *law* in that case; and to justify in general, is to pass him in judgment, as standing right in a state correspondent to the law or rule in general; but certainly, in order to a person's being looked on as standing right with respect to the rule in general, or in a state corresponding with the law of God, more is needful than not having the guilt of sin; for whatever that law is, whether a new or an old one, doubtless something positive is needed in order to its being answered. We are no more justified by the voice of the law, or of him that judges according to it, by a mere pardon of sin, than Adam, our first surety, was justified by

the law at the first point of his existence, before he had fulfilled the obedience of the law, or had so much as any trial, whether he would fulfil it or no. If Adam had finished his course of perfect obedience, he would have been justified; and certainly his justification would have implied something more than what is merely negative; he would have been approved of, as having fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and accordingly would have been adjudged to the reward of it. So Christ, our second surety, was not justified till he had done the work the Father had appointed him; and kept the Father's commandments through all trials; and then in his resurrection he was justified. When he had been put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, 1 Pet. iii. 18, then he that was manifest in the flesh was justified in the Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16; but God, when he justified him in raising him from the dead, did not only release him from his humiliation for sin, and acquit him from any further suffering or abasement for it, but admitted him to that eternal and immortal life, and to the beginning of that exaltation that was the reward of what he had done. And indeed the justification of a believer is no other than his being admitted to communion in the justification of this head and surety of all believers; for as Christ suffered the punishment of sin, not as a private person, but as our surety; so when, after this suffering, he was raised from the dead, he was therein justified,

not as a private person, but as the surety and representative of all that should believe in him." . . . . "To suppose that all Christ does is only to make atonement for us by suffering, is to make him our Saviour but in part. It is to rob him of half his glory as a Saviour, For if so, all that he does is to deliver us from hell; he does not purchase heaven for us."—Discourse on Justification.

Alexander.—"Some have attempted to evade the doctrine [of the imputation of Christ's righteousness] by alleging, that not the righteousness of Christ but its effects are imputed to us. They who talk thus do not seem to understand what they say. It must be by the imputation of the righteousness that the good effects are derived to us; but the imputation of the effects themselves cannot be. To talk of imputing pardon—of imputing justification—imputing peace, &c. is to use words without meaning. What we are inquiring after is the reason why these blessings become ours. It cannot be on account of our own righteousness, which is of the law; it must be on account of the righteousness of Christ. The next question is, how does that righteousness avail to obtain for us pardon and justification and peace with God? The answer is, by imputation; that is, it is set down to our credit. God accepts it on our behalf; yea, he bestows it upon us. If there be any such thing as imputation, it must be of the righteousness of Christ itself, and the benefits connected

with salvation flow from this imputation. We conclude, therefore, that the righteousness of Christ can only justify us, by being imputed to us."

In reply to the objection that this doctrine "makes the sinner's justification a matter of justice, and not of grace," he says, "All theories which suppose that grace is exercised at the expense of justice, or that in order to the manifestation of grace, law and justice must be suspended, labour under a radical mistake in theology, which cannot but introduce darkness and perplexity into their whole system. Indeed, if law and justice could have been set aside or suspended, there had been no occasion for the plan of redemption. The only reason why sinners could not be saved was, that the law and justice of God stood in the way; but if, by a sovereign act, these obstacles could have been removed, salvation might have been accomplished without an atonement. But though the Scriptures, every where, ascribe salvation to GRACE, FREE GRACE; yet they never teach that this grace requires God to deny himself, as to his attribute of justice; or that law and justice are at all interfered with; or for a moment suspended. On the contrary, the idea is continually kept in view, that grace reigns *through righteousness*; that the propitiation of Christ is necessary, that God may be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly. Redemption is the obtaining deliverance by paying a price; and yet redemption and grace, so far from being inconsistent, are constantly united, as

parts of the same glorious plan, according to the Scriptures. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.' (Eph. i. 7.) The only way in which it was possible for grace to be exercised, was by a plan which made provision for the complete satisfaction of law and justice. This was the great problem, to the solution of which no finite wisdom was competent; but which the infinite wisdom of Jehovah has accomplished by the mission and sacrifice of his own dear Son. What is objected, therefore, is a thing essential to the exercise of grace. And the whole appearance of plausibility in the objection arises from not distinguishing between God's dealings with our substitute and with *us*. To him there was no mercy shown; the whole process was in strict execution of law and justice. The last farthing due, so to speak, was exacted of our Surety, when he stood in our place, under the holy and sin avenging law of God. But this exercise of justice towards him was the very thing which opened the way for superabounding mercy towards us. And this cost at which the sluices of grace were opened, so far from lessening, constitutes its riches and glory."\*

\* This extract from Dr. Alexander, and those which have been before given from his pen, are contained in a short and able Treatise on Justification by Faith, written by him for the Presbyterian Tract Society, now the Board of Publication of the Presbyterian Church. This tract and the other tracts published by that Board, we recommend to the perusal of our readers.



We will close our extracts by a few sentences bearing upon the New School doctrine, that the *act of believing* is imputed for righteousness. They shall be from the pen of Dr. Doddridge, in his note on the phrase, "Imputed to him [Abraham] for righteousness;" which is the principal text relied upon to prove the new doctrine. Says he, "I think nothing can be easier than to understand how this may be said in full consistence with our being justified by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, that is, our being treated by God as righteous, for the sake of what he has done and suffered: for though this be the meritorious cause of our acceptance with God, yet faith may be said to be *imputed to us in order to our being justified* or becoming righteous: that is, according to the view which I have elsewhere more largely stated, as we are charged as debtors in the book of God's account, what Christ has done in fulfilling all righteousness for us is charged as the grand balance of the account; but that it may appear that we are according to the tenor of the gospel entitled to the benefit of this, it is also entered in the book of God's remembrance "that we are believers:" and this appearing, we are graciously discharged, yea, rewarded, as if we ourselves had been perfectly innocent and obedient."

In concluding the present chapter we wish again to call the attention of the reader to the intimate connexion which exists between the doctrine of justification and most of the other

doctrines which have been brought to view in the preceding pages. Though this has been already alluded to, when speaking of imputation and original sin, the truth of the remark was not, perhaps, so obvious as it must be now. The federal headship of Adam, the imputation of the guilt of his first sin to his posterity, original sin, the atonement and justification, are so closely connected, that if we have incorrect views with regard to the one, we shall err respecting the others. The views concerning these doctrines which we regard as scriptural, and which we have endeavoured to substantiate, so far as the design of the work would permit, are all different parts of the same system. If one of them be materially modified or denied, it involves a similar modification or denial of the whole. "While men are disputing," says Dr. Bellamy, "against the original constitution with Adam,\* they unawares undermine the second constitution, which is the foundation of all our hopes. Eager to avoid Adam's first sin, whereby comes condemnation, they render of none effect Christ's righteousness, whereby comes justification." . . . . "What remains, therefore, but Deism and Infidelity?"

Truth is harmonious. The several doctrines of the Bible, like the stones in Solo-

\* Dr. Bellamy's views concerning God's covenant with Adam, original sin, &c., are the same with those of President Edwards; from whom extracts on this subject have been given.—See *True Religion Delineated*, pp. 269, 271.

mon's temple, unite together, without the use of an "ax or hammer" to pare down their edges. But if one be rejected, there is not only a vacancy left in the building, which no art or ingenuity can supply, but the edifice itself is in danger of falling.



## CHAPTER VII.

HUMAN ABILITY, REGENERATION, AND THE INFLUENCES OF  
THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THAT the fall of man has not released us from obligation to love and obey God, is maintained by all. This, however, it is believed, is perfectly consistent with the doctrine, that from our "original corruption, we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." As our inability is not only our misfortune, but our *sin*, it can never destroy moral obligation. Upon these points Calvinistic writers are generally agreed. But as the subject is attended with difficulties, which some have been anxious to avoid, a distinction has been resorted to between *natural* and *moral* inability; the latter of which, it is supposed, is the inability under which the sinner lies; and that he still possesses *natural* ability to do his duty. By this it is meant that he merely has the *physical powers*, or the *faculties of mind*, which are re-

quisite to enable him to do what God requires—but that his mind is, nevertheless, *wholly disinclined* to that which is good; or in other words, that he is *morally unable* to exercise holy affections. This distinction, it might be easily shown, is not without foundation; and yet when applied to the subject of religion, it is doubted by many, whether its use really solves any difficulties, or is productive of any practical good; chiefly from the ambiguity of the terms, and their liability to be misunderstood.

It is no part of our present purpose to discuss this question. We have introduced it in order to prepare the way for the observation, that those whose sentiments we are now considering, retain the term *natural* in connexion with ability; and thus *appear* to accord with those who are in the habit of making the distinction to which we have referred; though in reality they occupy very different ground. Though when they speak of ability, they frequently annex to it the word *natural*, they seldom speak of *inability* at all—but produce the impression that the ability which they preach is fully adequate to enable the sinner, independently of Divine grace, to do all that God requires.

This was the opinion of Dr. Porter concerning Dr. Beecher's preaching, prior to 1829. In a letter addressed to him which has been published in various papers, he says, "You exalt one part of Calvinism, viz: *human agency*, so as virtually to lose sight

of its correlate *human dependence*, and thus make regeneration so much a result of *means* and instrumentality, that the sinner is born rather 'of blood or of the will of man than of God.' "

A similar opinion has been formed by some concerning his "Views in Theology," published in 1836. Dr. Harvey says concerning them, "Dr. Beecher's *Views*, it is true, have many shades and shadows of orthodoxy. The superstructure looks fair and imposing; but the philosophy is Pelagian, and all the orthodoxy in his '*Views*' is undermined by a false theory of moral agency, on which the whole is founded."—Harvey on Moral Agency, p. 6. The following quotations will show what foundation Dr. Harvey had for this opinion.

Br. Beecher says, (p. 30, 31,) "That man possesses since the fall the powers of agency requisite to obligation, *on the ground of the possibility of obedience*, is a matter of notoriety. Not one of the powers of mind which constituted ability before the fall has been obliterated by that event. All that has ever been conceived, or that can now be conceived, as entering into the constitution of a free agent, capable of choosing life or death, or which did exist in Adam when he could and did obey, yet mutable, survived the fall." He says, (p. 31, 32,) "Choice, in its very nature, implies the possibility of a *different or contrary* election to that which is made. There is always an *alternative* to that which the

mind decides on, with the conscious *power of choosing either.*" . . . . "The question of free will is not whether man *chooses*—this is notorious, none deny it; but whether his choice is free as opposed to a fatal necessity." Again, (p. 35,) "Choice, without the possibility of other or contrary choice, is the immemorial doctrine of fatalism:" and further, (p. 47,) "This doctrine of the *natural ability of choice, commensurate with obligation*, has been, and is, the received doctrine of the universal orthodox church, from the primitive age down to this day."

The first of these propositions speaks without any qualification of the "*possibility of obedience*," in reference to fallen man—and makes this essential to obligation. The second and third predicate this possibility of obedience upon the possession of a *self-determining power of the will*, by which we can not only *choose*, but *alter our volitions* at pleasure. This, according to his view, is essential to free agency. The third affirms that "*this natural ability of choice*," by which we understand him to mean, the power which we naturally possess as free agents, over our volitions, "*is commensurate with obligation.*" If these are the ideas which he intends to convey, it follows, that man since the fall possesses all the powers which are requisite to enable him to change his sinful volitions for those which are holy: or, to use the language of Dr. Harvey, "that man possesses, since the fall, the powers of agency

requisite to obligation, on the ground of possessing a power of contrary choice, by which he can recover himself from perfect sinfulness to perfect holiness."—Harvey on Moral Agency, pp. 80, 81. "Natural ability of choice, commensurate with obligation, says Dr. Harvey, must mean something more than the mere power of choice; it means natural ability not only to do right, if one is disposed, but natural ability to overcome every moral impediment. In other words, it means natural ability to overcome moral inability, or natural ability which can produce ability enough to overcome moral inability. Thus, as I have before had occasion to remark, the great object is to render man, in his fallen state, independent of the grace of God. To accomplish this purpose, Dr. Beecher introduces the extra power of contrary choice as an addition to the simple power of choice, and which he deems sufficient to equal obligation, and if so, to bring the sinner out of darkness into light, to raise him from death to life. Thus Dr. Beecher, in effect, coincides with Pelagius, who denied all moral inability. Pelagius takes the city by undermining and sinking the wall; Dr. Beecher by building an embankment which shall overtop the wall. One sinks the wall to the surface, the other raises the surface to the wall's top; and in both cases, the obstacle of moral inability is annihilated."—Harvey on Moral Agency, pp. 115, 116.

We have exhibited Dr. Beecher's views in

the above form, because the language of his several propositions is such, that the sentiments intended to be conveyed are not perfectly obvious upon a simple perusal. The deductions which we have made, or which we have quoted from Dr. Harvey, we do not of course, ascribe to Dr. Beecher, as expressing what he believes—but if we have not mistaken his views, they appear to lead, by legitimate consequence, to these conclusions—and to *some* of them it is probable he would not refuse his assent; since it would be going no further than has been expressed by two or three who belong to the same school.

Says Mr. Duffield,—“Not much less deluding are the system and tactics of those who fearing to invade the province of the Spirit, are careful to remind the sinner, that he is utterly unable by his own unassisted powers either to believe or to repent to the saving of his soul. It might as truly be said, that he cannot rise and walk, by his own unassisted powers.”—Work on Regeneration, p. 542.

Mr. Finney’s language is that “as God requires men to make themselves a new heart, on pain of eternal death, it is the strongest possible evidence that they are *able* to do it—to say he has commanded them to do it, without telling them they are *able*, is consummate trifling.” . . . . “If the sinner ever has a new heart, he must obey the command of the text, and make it himself.” . . . . . “Sinner! instead of waiting and praying for



God to change your heart, you should at once summon up your powers, put forth the effort, and change the governing preferences of your mind. But here, some one may ask, Can the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, change itself? I have already said that this text in the original reads, 'The minding of the flesh is enmity against God.' This minding of the flesh then is a choice or preference to gratify the flesh. Now it is indeed absurd to say, that a choice can change itself; but it is not absurd to say, that the agent who exercises this choice can change it. The sinner that minds the flesh, can change his mind, and mind God."—Sermons on important Subjects, pp. 18, 37, 38.

This exposition of the "carnal mind" is a favourite one with writers of this class. Says Mr. Barnes, "The amount of his [Paul's] affirmation is simply, that the *minding of the flesh*, the supreme attention to its dictates and desires, is not and cannot be subject to the law of God. They are wholly contradictory and irreconcilable." . . . . "But whether the *man himself* might not obey the law, whether *he* has, or has not, ability to do it, is a question which the Apostle does not touch, and on which this passage should not be adduced."—Notes on the Romans, p. 164. In commenting on the phrase "neither indeed can be," he repeats the same sentiment concerning ability which is expressed above. Also in his exposition of the passage, "when we were without strength Christ died

for the ungodly:" "The remark of the Apostle here," says he, "has reference *only* to the condition of the race *before* an atonement is made. It does not pertain to the question whether man has strength to repent and to believe, after an atonement *is* made, which is a very different inquiry." Though Mr. Barnes expresses himself with much more caution than Messrs. Finney and Duffield, it is apparent that he favours their sentiments.

There is so striking a similarity between the views of these men and those of Dr. John Taylor of Norwich, that it will be appropriate to refer to the latter; with the remarks of President Edwards upon them, showing what he thought of their tendency. They are contained in his work on Original Sin. "It will follow," says he, "on our author's principles [Dr. Taylor's principles] not only with respect to infants, but even *adult* persons, that redemption is *needless*, and Christ is dead in vain. Not only is there no need of Christ's redemption in order to deliverance from any consequences of *Adam's* sin, but also in order to perfect freedom from *personal* sin, and all its evil consequences. For God has made other sufficient provision for that, viz. *a sufficient power and ability, in all mankind, to do all their duty and wholly to avoid sin.* Yea he insists upon it, that 'when men have not sufficient power to do their duty, they have *no* duty to do. We may safely and assuredly conclude, (says he,) that mankind in all parts of the world have SUFFICIENT

power to do the duty which God requires of them; and that he requires of them NO MORE than they have SUFFICIENT powers to do.' And in another place, 'God has given powers EQUAL to the duty which he expects.' And he expresses a great dislike at R. R.'s supposing 'that our propensities to evil, and temptations are too strong to be EFFECTUALLY and CONSTANTLY resisted; or that we are unavoidably sinful IN A DEGREE; that our appetites and passions will be breaking out, notwithstanding our everlasting watchfulness.' These things fully imply that men have in their own natural ability sufficient means to avoid sin, and to be perfectly free from it; and so from all the bad consequences of it. And if the means are *sufficient*, then there is no need of more; and therefore there is no need of Christ's dying in order to it. What Dr. Taylor says fully implies that it would be unjust in God to give mankind being in such circumstances, as that they would be more likely to sin, so as to be exposed to final misery, than otherwise. Hence then, without Christ and his redemption, and without any grace at all, MERE JUSTICE makes *sufficient provision* for our being free from sin and misery by our own power."

"If all mankind, in all parts of the world, have sufficient power to do their whole duty, without being sinful *in any degree*, then they have sufficient power to obtain righteousness by the law: and then, according to the apostle Paul, *Christ is dead in vain.* Gal. ii.

21. 'If righteousness come by law, Christ is dead in vain;'—*by law*, or the rule of right action, as our author explains the phrase. And according to the sense in which he explains this very place, 'it would have frustrated, or rendered useless, the grace of God, if Christ died to accomplish what was or MIGHT have been effected by law itself without his death. 'So that it most clearly follows from his own doctrine, *that Christ is dead in vain*, and the grace of God is *useless*. The same apostle says, *if there had been a law which COULD have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law*, Gal. iii. 21.; *i. e.* (according to Dr. Taylor's own sense,) if there was a law, that man, in his present state had sufficient power to fulfil. For Dr. Taylor supposes the reason why the law could not give life, to be 'not because it was weak in itself, but through the weakness of our flesh, and the infirmity of human nature in the present state.' But he says, 'We are under a mild dispensation of GRACE making allowance for our infirmities.' By *our infirmities*, we may, on good ground, suppose he means that infirmity of human nature, which he gives as the reason why the law cannot give life. But what *grace* is there for making that allowance for our infirmities, which *justice* itself (according to his doctrine,) most absolutely requires, as he supposes Divine justice exactly proportions our duty to our ability?

“Again, if it be said, that although Christ's

redemption was not necessary to preserve men from *beginning to sin*, and getting into a course of sin, because they have sufficient power in themselves to avoid it; yet it may be necessary to deliver men, *after* they have by their own folly brought themselves under the *dominion* of evil appetites and passions; I answer, if it be so, that men need deliverance from those habits and passions, which are become too strong for them, yet that deliverance, on our author's principles, would be no salvation from *sin*. For the exercise of passions which are too strong for us, and which we cannot overcome, is *necessary*: and he strongly urges, that a necessary evil can be no *moral* evil. It is true it is the *effect* of evil, as it is the effect of a bad practice, while the man had power to have avoided it. But then, according to Dr. Taylor that evil *cause* alone is sin; for he says expressly, '*The cause of every effect is alone chargeable with the effect it produceth, or which proceedeth from it.*' And as to that sin which was the *cause*, the man needed no Saviour from *that*, having had *sufficient power* in himself to have avoided it. So that it follows by our author's scheme, that *none* of mankind, neither infants nor adult persons, neither the more or less vicious, neither *Jews* nor *Gentiles*, neither *Heathens* nor *Christians*, ever did or even could stand in any *need* of a Saviour; and that with respect to *all*, the truth is, *Christ is dead in vain*.

“If any should say, although all mankind in all ages have sufficient ability to do their whole duty, and so may by their own power enjoy perfect freedom from sin, yet God *fore-saw* that they *would sin*, and that *after* they had sinned they would need Christ’s death; I answer, it is plain, by what the apostle says in those places which were just now mentioned, (Gal. ii. 21, and iii. 21,) that God would have esteemed it needless to give his Son to die for men, unless there had been a prior impossibility of their having righteousness by any law; and that *if there had been a law which could have given life*, this other way by the death of Christ would not have been provided. And this appears so agreeable to our author’s own sense of things, by his words which have been cited, wherein he says, ‘It would have FRUSTRATED or rendered USELESS the grace of God, if Christ died to accomplish what was or MIGHT HAVE BEEN effected by law itself, without his death.’”

The new views concerning human ability have an exact counterpart in the description which is given by different writers of this school, of the work of regeneration, and the agency of the Holy Spirit. According to them, regeneration consists in the mere change of the governing purpose or preference of the soul—by which the sinner renounces the world as the supreme object of pursuit, and makes choice of God and heavenly things. Prompted by self-love, or in other words, by a constitutional desire for happiness, which is nei-

ther sinful nor holy, and the selfish principle in his heart being suspended, he enters upon a serious consideration and comparison of the various objects of happiness: until he discovers the infinite superiority of God and divine things to every other object. Then, by “desperate efforts,” he fixes his heart upon them; and thus becomes a Christian. The part which the Holy Spirit performs in the work is, to present truth powerfully before the mind in the form of motives, like an advocate arguing a cause before a jury; or as one man influences and persuades another in the common affairs of life; though with infinitely greater skill and force than can be employed by any human agent. His attention is thus arrested—he revolves in his mind the points at issue—and at length being convinced where his true interest lies, he is prevailed upon by the moral suasion of the Spirit, to change the governing purpose or preference of his mind, and to choose God as his supreme portion.

The language of Dr. Taylor is as follows: “We proceed to say then, that before the act of the will or heart in which the sinner first prefers God to any other object, the object of the preference must be viewed or estimated as the greatest good. Before the object can be viewed as the greatest good, it must be compared with other objects, as both are sources or means of good. Before this act of comparing, there must be an act dictated not by selfishness but *self-love*, in which the mind determines to direct its thoughts to the

objects for the sake of considering their relative value, of forming a judgment respecting it; and of choosing one or the other as the chief good.”—Christian Spectator, 1829, pp. 19, 20.

“Divine truth does not become a means to this end, until the selfish principle so long cherished in the heart is suspended; and the mind is left to the control of that constitutional desire of happiness which is an original principle of our nature. Then it is, we apprehend, that God and the world are contemplated by the mind as objects of choice, substantially as they would be by a being who had just entered on existence, and who was called upon for the first time to select the one or the other as his supreme good.”—Christian Spectator, 1829, p. 210.

“Now we readily concede that sinners never use the means of regeneration with a holy heart, nor with an unholy or sinful heart. But does it therefore follow that they never use them with any heart *at all*? What is that heart with which God in his law requires sinners to love him? Surely not a heart which is holy before they love him. Still less with a sinful heart; and yet he requires them to love him with some heart, even *their* heart. Is this no heart at all? We think on the contrary it is a *real* heart, a heart with which sinners can love God, even *without the grace of the Spirit*, and certainly with it.”—Christian Spectator, 1830, pp. 149, 150.



Concerning the nature of the Spirit's agency, we believe Dr. Taylor has not published his views. But the author of "Letters on the New-Haven Theology" informs us that his sentiments correspond with those of Mr. Finney.

Mr. Finney says, "The Spirit pours the exhortation home with such power, that the sinner turns. Now, in speaking of this change, it is perfectly proper to say, that the Spirit turned him, just as you would say of a man who had persuaded another to change his mind on the subject of politics, that he had converted him and brought him over." . . . . . "He does not act by direct physical contact upon the mind, but he uses the truth as his sword to pierce the sinner; and the motives presented in the gospel are the instruments he uses to change the sinner's heart. Some have doubted this, and supposed that it is equivalent to denying the Spirit's agency altogether to maintain that he converts sinners by motives. Others have denied the possibility of changing the heart by motives. But did not the serpent change Adam's heart by motives? and cannot the Spirit of God with infinitely higher motives exert as great power over mind as he can?" . . . . "From these remarks it is easy to answer the question sometimes put by individuals who seem to be entirely in the dark on this subject, whether in converting the soul the Spirit acts directly on the mind, or on the truth. This is the same nonsense

as if you should ask whether an earthly advocate who had gained his cause, did it by acting directly and physically on the jury or on his argument." . . . . "The power which God exerts in the conversion of a soul is *moral* power; it is that kind of power by which a statesman sways the mind of a senate; or by which an advocate moves and bows the heart of a jury."—Sermons on Important Subjects, pp. 21, 27, 28, 30.

As to what regeneration consists in, Mr. Finney observes, "A change of heart, then, consists in changing the controlling preference of the mind in regard to the *end* of pursuit. The selfish heart is a preference of self-interest to the glory of God and the interests of his kingdom. A new heart consists in a preference of the glory of God and the interests of his kingdom to one's own happiness." . . . "It is a change in the choice of a *Supreme Ruler*." Ibid. pp. 9, 10. In describing the process by which the sinner effects this change, he occupies nearly a whole sermon, which we cannot of course, with propriety, transfer to these pages. It corresponds substantially with the views already given from Dr. Taylor.

Mr. Duffield's account of Regeneration is as follows: "It is going altogether beyond the analogy in the case, to assert that there is in Regeneration the *injection, infusion, or implantation, or creation* of a *new principle of spiritual life*." . . . "Whenever the Spirit of God excites and secures in the mind and

heart of man those acts and emotions which are appropriate to his rational soul, i. e. when they are directed to God, as his supreme good and chief end, he is renewed, regenerated, born again.”—Work on Regeneration, pp. 202, 203, 204. But how does the Spirit produce this result? According to him it is done by moral suasion. He has two whole chapters, occupying thirty-five pages, entitled “The Moral Suasion of the Spirit.” In one of these he illustrates his views of the nature of the Spirit’s agency by the power of persuasion exerted by one man over another, and the greater success which a man of “practical knowledge and tact and particular acquaintance with dispositions,” &c. has above one who is less skilful. “Shall we suppose, (says he,) that God cannot do with sinners in reference to himself what one man has done with another?—that a physical efficiency is necessary to make the sinner willing to confide in him and repent of his rebellion? To suppose this, is in fact to attribute a moral influence to man more potent than that which, in such a case, it would be requisite God should exert! It would in effect be to say that *man* can subdue *his* foe, and by an appropriate moral influence convert him into a friend; but that God *cannot* convert *his* enemy, and bring him to believe, *except* he puts forth his physical power and literally creates him over again.” Pp. 492, 493.\*

\* This power of moral suasion is the kind of influence referred to by a certain preacher who said, “If I were as

During the progress of the discussion concerning the New Theology, it was alleged by some by way of objection to the new theory, that it involved the principle that regeneration is not an *instantaneous* but a *gradual* work. This allegation so far as I recollect, was for a time neither admitted nor denied. But recently the doctrine of *gradual* regeneration has been avowed. Mr. Gilbert,\* of Wilmington, Delaware, published in the *Philadelphian* in 1833, a number of communications on this subject; which were afterwards revised and enlarged, and in 1836, at the "earnest request" of the "members of the Ministers' Meeting of New Castle County, Delaware," were published in a pamphlet form, under the title of "Moral Suasion; or Regeneration not a Miracle," &c. It is dedicated to the members of the Ministers' Meeting, and to the elders of the churches under their pastoral charge. These facts appear to show that Mr. Gilbert's views accord with the sentiments of the other ministers with whom he is associated in that State, and that they

eloquent as the Holy Ghost I could convert sinners as well as He." In the *National Preacher* for February 1832, a sermon furnished by Dr. Griffin commences by quoting the above remark. It being attributed by some to a Presbyterian minister of my acquaintance, I asked him whether he had ever used this expression. He replied that he had, and vindicated its correctness; though he said it did not appear in the connexion in which he used it, as it does when standing by itself.

\* In the organization of the New School General Assembly in May, 1838, Mr. Gilbert was chosen permanent clerk.

*desire* to have them prevail throughout their churches.

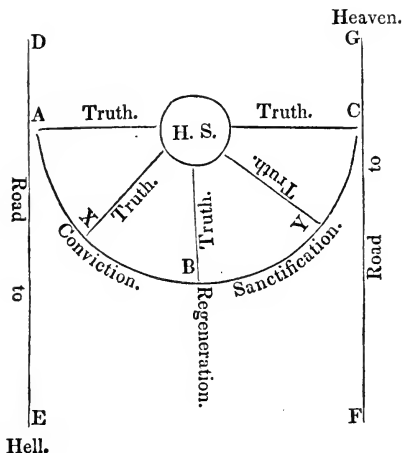
Mr. Gilbert affirms that "the Bible knows no *instantaneous regeneration*; this is a refinement of theological philosophers. Being born again, and changing the heart of stone to a heart of flesh, is a *gradual process*; although under some circumstances it may be a very *short one*." The remark of Dr. Griffin, that "motives can never change an *unholy temper*," &c. he calls "strange philosophy; flying not only in the face of Scripture, but of every day matters of fact." "How often," (says he,) "do we see *enmity* to a neighbour, corrected, moderated, subdued and turned to love, by proper motives presented to the mind? And enmity to God is restrained and subdued in the same manner." These motives, he maintains, are presented in the latter case by the Holy Spirit, who convicts, converts, and sanctifies, "by the influence of truth presented to the mind and in no other way." In one place, he says: "*Regeneration cannot be wrought without the truth*. It is in view of the truth, through the truth, and by the truth, the soul is convicted, converted, and sanctified from beginning to end."

To illustrate his views he has furnished a diagram consisting of an arc of a circle, in the centre of which he has placed the Holy Spirit. From this centre are drawn straight lines to various points in the arc, representing truth as employed by the Spirit. A sin-

ner pursuing his way to hell is represented as being met by one of these lines, through the influence of which he is persuaded to diverge a little from the path he was pursuing, and proceeding at an angle of about forty-five degrees, he passes gradually through the several steps of conviction, regeneration, and sanctification, describing in his progress the arc of the circle; until arriving at a point directly opposite from where he started, he becomes perfect and ascends to heaven.

That the reader may see for himself this new and improved method of regeneration by attraction, we will give the diagram with the author's explanation.\* We ought to remark, however, that he uses the terms conviction and sanctification in accommodation to the views and language of others. According to his own views the whole process from beginning to end belongs to the work of regeneration. "By *regeneration*," says he, "is understood the divine agency in the *whole process* of a sinner's conviction and conversion; but in this discussion I use it as it is used by Dr. Griffin, Mr. Smith and others, in the *restricted sense* as distinguished from previous conviction and subsequent sanctification." "It [the Bible] knows of no regeneration as distinct from conviction and the beginning of sanctification."

\* As a matter of taste we would exclude this diagram from our pages—but other considerations which we regard as paramount, induce us to insert it.



## THE AUTHOR'S EXPLANATION.

“ Let the semicircle, A. B. C. represent the sinner’s course from sin to holiness. Let D. E. represent the road to hell, in which the impenitent sinner is found by the Holy Spirit, and influenced at the point A. by a new presentation of truth, to stop and turn gradually from his downward course, through the curve of conviction, towards the point B. when his conviction becoming perfect and irresistible, he *yields* and *turns* from his downward course, through the process of sanctification, until at C. (or at death,) becoming perfect, he flies off, if you please, in a tangent, to heaven. Till he reaches the

point B. though turning gradually from the more direct road to hell, he is still in the downward course, and should the Spirit let go of him, at any point, he flies off, by his own centrifugal force, in a moment towards perdition. *The point B. represents what these writers call 'Regeneration.'*”

“The Holy Spirit, like the sun in the centre, is the source of all right motion; and the power by which he attracts or influences the sinner, is the power of truth, or moral motive; by which the moral agent is checked at A., and moved and controlled through the whole course from A. to C. It is understood, of course, that the whole process may be longer or shorter, according to circumstances; may begin and be perfected, as with the thief on the cross, in a single day; or as in the case of Methuselah, may occupy nine hundred or one thousand years. Conviction, also, may be short, and sanctification long, or the reverse. But conviction must, from the nature of the case, precede regeneration, or regeneration cannot be a *rational* change. A physical change may take place without conviction; but physical regeneration is a thing which I cannot comprehend, any more than physical conviction or physical sanctification. The doctrine of the moral suasionists is, that the *influence which convicts, also regenerates and sanctifies*. That the same power which moves the sinner from A. to B. moves him through the point B. and along the line



to C. And that the whole change is wrought through appropriate means, without a miracle, by the Holy Spirit."

Agreeably to these ideas of gradual progress from the first point to the last, he says: "There is very little distinction between the last degree of sin and the lowest degree of holiness; between the last exercise of an unconverted and the first of a converted man; between the last feeble struggle of selfishness and the first feeble exercise of love." . . . . "There is a great difference between supreme selfishness and supreme love *in their extremes*; but between the last feeble influence of selfishness and the first feeble exercise of love to God, the difference is as imperceptible, as between the *adjacent sides of the Equatorial line.*" . . . . "The point B. on the diagram represents the transition line. And it may be asked, Is it not an important one? I answer, yes. Important on many accounts, but not because of any *special influence* used then, but like the Equator, as a measure of relative progress, and as the *era of a great change in all our moral relations and circumstances.* Like the Equatorial line, however, it is *in itself* of no consequence at all."

If this were not a subject too serious for ridicule, Mr. Gilbert might be successfully assailed by this weapon. He has fairly exposed himself to this mode of attack. But if I possessed a talent for the humorous, and were disposed to indulge in it, I feel too much shocked at his method of illustration to treat

it with ridicule. He appears to have felt himself, that he would run "the risk of being counted very presumptuous;" and I doubt not he was correct in his apprehensions. A majority of his readers, it seems to me, (unless they belong to a particular class) will feel that he has "trodden on holy ground," without "taking his shoes from off his feet;" that he has "put forth his hand and touched the ark of God," without "sanctifying himself;" or in other words, that he has so presented the subject, as to make him appear almost profane.

This very circumstance, however, serves to show the fallacy of these new doctrines. Mr. Gilbert uses no irreverent language—he does not caricature the New Theology. The views expressed by different writers as quoted in the present chapter, if carried out to their full extent, and illustrated by a diagram, could not perhaps be exhibited more accurately than by that which has been presented. But a description given in words, which have often an equivocal or doubtful import, produces not only a less vivid, but a less accurate impression than that which is made by a figure faithfully drawn and presented to the eye. This remark is true not only in reference to landscapes, &c., but to a certain extent in regard to moral and religious truth. Mr. Gilbert has shown by his diagram, that it is capable of being employed in the present instance; and possibly it may be of service to the cause of truth, by showing in a more

striking manner than can be exhibited by quoting their language, the dangerous extremes to which those men are tending. Give not only words but *visibility* to their doctrines—let them be *seen* as well as heard—and they will arouse the feelings of many who have not before been seriously alarmed.



## CHAPTER VIII.

HUMAN ABILITY, REGENERATION, &C., CONTINUED FROM THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

WE observed in chapter fifth that the New Theology concerning the nature of sin and holiness, viz: that they consist in acts, involves a new theory of regeneration. What this theory is may be learned from the statements made in the preceding chapter. It is the following: that in regeneration no *principle* of holiness is implanted in the soul, prior to the exercise of holy acts, from which principle, or “moral state of the soul,” those acts proceed; but that the whole change consists in the *acts* of the soul itself; which from having been sinful now become holy. A previous holy relish or taste, which, according to the old doctrine, is essential in order to give to these acts a holy character, is regarded by these new system-makers, as unphilosophical

and absurd; involving what they term physical regeneration, passivity, &c.

If by physical regeneration is meant a mechanical change in the substance of the soul, it forms no part of the Old Theology—but if it mean a direct agency of the Spirit upon the soul, by which its faculties are so renewed, that it receives the principles of a new and holy life, and therefore may be properly said to possess a new nature, it is what I understand to be the true doctrine. “The scriptural representations of conversion, (says President Edwards,) strongly imply and signify a change of nature; such as *being born again; becoming new creatures; rising from the dead; being renewed in the spirit of the mind; dying to sin, and living to righteousness; putting off the old man and putting on the new man; being ingrafted into a new stock; having a divine seed implanted in the heart; being made partakers of the Divine nature,*” &c. . . . “He [God] gives his Spirit to be united to the faculties of the soul and to *dwell there* as a principle of spiritual life and activity. He not only actuates the soul, but he abides in it. The mind thus endued with grace is possessed of a new nature.”—Edwards on the Affections, vol. 5th.

That the soul is passive in regeneration, is the doctrine of our standards—and it necessarily results from the preceding view concerning the nature of the change. In the chapter on Effectual Calling, both are present-

ed in connexion with each other. The change itself is declared to consist in “enlightening the minds [the minds of those whom he effectually calls] spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills,” &c. It is then added, in the next section, “This effectual call is of God’s free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man; who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit,” &c. The former part of this quotation exhibits the implantation of a holy principle, or the change of our natures, by conferring spiritual illumination, removing the heart of stone and giving a heart of flesh, and by renewing the will. The latter affirms that this new nature was not imparted to us by our own agency, but by God who works upon us by his Holy Spirit, to quicken and renew us; and that we must of course, as to this particular point in the history of the change, be the passive recipients of Divine grace—not bringing it about by our own acts, but being acted upon by the renovating power of God.

This doctrine, however, does not imply that we are not to be active beforehand in the diligent use of the means of grace—nor that we are inactive at the time, with respect to the effects of the change. Simultaneously with this change and as the immediate consequence of it, the sinner is “persuaded and

enabled to embrace Jesus Christ, as he is freely offered to him in the gospel." In this he is not passive, but active. When God "by his almighty power determines the sinner to that which is good," or in other words, gives him an apprehension of the excellence of divine things, and of the all-sufficiency of Christ as his Saviour, and thus "effectually draws" him to Christ; he comes, not reluctantly, but "most freely, being made willing by his grace." Regeneration, or the implanting of a holy principle, is the cause; and our conversion, or turning to God, is the effect. In the former we are passive, in the latter active. Though in the order of time they are simultaneous, in the order of nature the former is the antecedent, the latter the consequent; just as breathing, though simultaneous with the existence of life, is nevertheless the effect of it, and would never occur, unless life had been previously communicated.

Dr. Cox, who does not appear to have adopted all the principles of the New Theology, has expressed himself on the subject of regeneration in a manner very different from what has been customary among Calvinistic writers.\* To the doctrine that "God creates or

\* Since the publication of the first edition, Dr. Cox has published a series of numbers in the *New York Evangelist*, entitled "The Hexagon," in which he has discussed at length several important points of difference between the Old and New Schools, and sided strongly with the latter, maintaining their particular views of doctrine.

inserts some *holy principle* in us, which constitutes regeneration, and in which we are entirely passive, but that thereafter we actively do our duty; he strongly objects, and says, "it can command the confidence of no well disciplined mind." He adds, it is true, "till we have both a definition of what is meant by *holy principle* and a demonstration of its existence," &c.; and he wishes to have it understood that he does not object to its use, if explained in a particular way—but the doctrine, as it has been commonly received, he does not embrace. In his letter to the conductors of the Biblical Repertory, in reply to their review of his sermon, he asks, "Is not a Christian active in all his moral relations? In believing and obeying God? Certainly active in the total progress of religion, in the soul and life: then why not also in its rise? If active progressively, then why not initially too? If active in the work of sanctification, why not in the whole of it, in its commencement as well as its continuance; in regeneration as well as sanctification? *How is a man regenerated, but as he believes and obeys the gospel?* Is he regenerated *before* he does this? Is he more dependent in regeneration one whit than in sanctification?" What he terms the passivity doctrine, or the doctrine of passive regeneration, he explicitly and frequently disavows.

The remarks of the editors of the Repertory, in their review of his sermon, are so much in point, that we shall transcribe a

paragraph of considerable length, in the place of any further observations of ours upon this subject.

“As to the point which Dr. Cox thinks so ‘intrinsically absurd,’ and about which he says so much, whether a man is passive in regeneration, it will be seen that, for its own sake, it does not merit a moment’s discussion. It depends entirely on the previous question. If regeneration be that act of the soul by which it chooses God for its portion, there is an end of all debate on the subject. For no one will maintain that the soul is passive in acting. But if there be any change in the moral state of the soul, prior to its turning unto God, then it is proper to say, that the soul is passive as to that particular point; that is, that the Holy Spirit is the author, and the soul the subject of the change. For all that is meant by the soul’s being passive, is, that it is not the agent of the change in question. Its immediate and delightful turning unto God is its own act; the state of mind which leads to this act is produced directly by the Spirit of God. The whole question is, whether any such anterior change is necessary. Whether a soul polluted and degraded by sin, or in Scripture language, carnal, needs any change in its moral taste before it can behold the loveliness of the Divine character. For that this view must precede the exercise of affection, we presume will not be denied. If this point be decided, the propriety of using the word passive to denote



that the soul is the subject and not the agent of the change in question, need not give us much trouble. Sure it is that this change is in Scripture always referred to the Holy Spirit. It is the soul that repents, believes, hopes and fears; but it is the Holy Spirit that regenerates. He is the author of our faith and repentance by inducing us to act, but no man regenerates himself. The soul, although essentially active, is still capable of being acted upon. It receives impressions from sensible objects, from other spirits and from the Holy Ghost. In every sensation, there is an impression made by some external object, and the immediate knowledge which the mind takes of the impression. As to the first point, it is passive, or the subject; as to the second, it is active, or the agent. These two are indeed inseparably connected, and so are regeneration and conversion. . . . And if the Holy Spirit does make such an impression on the mind, or exert such an influence as induces it immediately to turn to God, then it is correct to say that it is passive in regeneration, though active in conversion. However, this is a very subordinate point; the main question is, whether there is not a holy 'relish,' taste, or principle produced in the soul prior, in the order of nature, to any holy act of the soul itself. If Dr. Cox can show this to be 'intrinsically absurd,' we shall give up the question of 'passivity' without a moment's demur. To relinquish the other point, however, will cost us a painful

struggle. It will be giving up the main point in debate between the friends and opposers of the doctrine of grace from Augustine to the present day. It will be the renunciation of what Calvinists, old and new, have believed to be the scriptural doctrine of original righteousness, original sin, and efficacious grace. It will be the rejection of that whole system of mingled sovereignty and love which has been the foundation, for ages, of so many hopes, and of so much blessedness to the people of God."

We mentioned in the last chapter that the New Theology involves the doctrine of *gradual* regeneration; and we quoted from Mr. Gilbert's pamphlet to show that this sentiment is now avowed by some of the advocates of the new system. On this point Dr. Griffin remarks, "The *evidence* of the change may be earlier or later in its appearance, and more or less rapid in its developments, but the change itself is always instantaneous. Is not such an idea more than implied in the text? [Ezek. xi. 19.] What is the blessing promised? Not the *gradual* improvement of an *old* temper, but "a *new* spirit;"—"the stony heart" not softened *by degrees* into flesh, but by one decisive effort removed, and a heart of flesh substituted in its room." . . . . "This doctrine, however, does not militate against the idea of an *antecedent preparation* in the conscience, wrought by the means of grace and the enlightening influences of the Spirit."—Park Street Lectures, pp. 91, 101.

These means according to our standards are "the word, sacraments and prayer." In answer to the question, How is the word made effectual to salvation? the following answer is given: "The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing and humbling sinners, of driving them out of themselves. and drawing them unto Christ," &c. Thus the law is said to be "our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ;" "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;" "Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth." But the word, let it be remembered, is only the *means*, which the Holy Spirit can employ or not as he pleases; and which when he does employ (as is usually the case) does not become effectual to salvation, till he by a direct influence upon the heart, prepares it to receive and embrace the truth. Lydia did not attend to the things spoken by Paul, until "*the Lord opened her heart.*" In order that David might behold wondrous things out of God's law, he prayed that God would "*open his eyes.*" The primitive Christians had access by faith into God's grace, and rejoiced in the hope of the glory of God, exercising the grace of patience in their tribulations, "*because the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts* by the Holy Ghost given unto them."

Though all these texts do not refer to regeneration in the *restricted* sense, they prove the doctrine of the *direct* influence of the

Spirit upon the heart—and it is for this purpose we have referred to them. If the Spirit exerts an immediate influence upon the hearts of believers, in order to make the word effectual to their sanctification: much more on the hearts of sinners to make it effectual to their conversion. In the mind of the believer there is something congenial with the spirit of the gospel; something, therefore, for Divine truth to act upon in the form of motives; but, to use the language of Dr. Griffin, “motives can never change an *unholy temper*; there is no tendency in truth to change a depraved ‘*taste*.’ The change must take place before light can act.”

This doctrine of the direct agency of the Spirit, and the implantation of a principle of holiness in the heart, is inseparably connected with the sentiment that the change is instantaneous. Motives operate gradually upon the mind; but the communication to the soul of a new spiritual taste, is the work of a moment. We either possess this holy temper or we do not; there is no point of time when we have neither enmity nor love; or when our affections are suspended in equilibrio between the two. Our souls are necessarily either in one state or its opposite; and our transition, therefore, from one to the other must be instantaneous; as when God said, “Let there be light, and there was light.”

It may, perhaps, be thought by some that the difference between instantaneous and gradual regeneration is not important, since

both recognize the necessity of becoming holy. But a little reflection will show the contrary. Gradual regeneration is founded on the principle that there is something good in the unregenerate man, which needs only to be fostered and cherished, in order to make him holy. Of course it involves a denial of total depravity, and the necessity of an entire radical change of character. It fosters pride and self-righteousness; and produces hostility to those doctrines of grace which distinguish the gospel from the religion of nature. It is, in short, taking a step towards infidelity.

In regard to human ability, our Confession of Faith uses the following language: "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength to convert himself, or prepare himself thereunto." Some have endeavoured to prove from this passage that, according to the Confession of Faith, depravity belongs exclusively to the will. But this it appears to me is not a correct exposition. As the design of the chapter was to treat "Of Free Will," it would of course state explicitly what effect the fall had upon the will, without speaking, as a matter of course, concerning the other powers of the soul. There is, however, a clause introduced, which was evidently designed to refer to the whole moral man:

“*Dead in sin.*” The preceding clause, viz. “so as a natural man being altogether averse from that which is good,” refers to the will; but to this, the other is superadded—“*and dead in sin*”—which was intended to convey an additional idea, embracing, perhaps, the former, but amplifying and extending it, so as to include the depravity of our whole nature. This will appear by a reference to the chapter on the “Fall of Man;” where it reads as follows: “By this sin they [our first parents] fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.” It will also appear by a reference to the chapter on “Effectual Calling;” where, in describing the manner in which we are brought “out of that state of sin and death,” it is not only said that our wills are renewed, but our minds spiritually and savingly enlightened to understand the things of God; and our heart of stone taken away and a heart of flesh given unto us. If depravity belongs to the will only, that alone needs to be operated upon in effectual calling. It is evident, therefore, that our standards teach the doctrine not only that the will is depraved, but likewise “all the faculties of the soul.”

This view also accords with Scripture. “There is none that *understandeth.*” Rom. iii. 11. “Having the *understanding darkened*, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, be-

cause of the *blindness* of their heart." Eph. iv. 18. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; *neither can he know them*, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. Here it is manifest that our depravity affects the understanding. Hence in conversion it is necessary that we be enlightened to discern spiritual things. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." Eph. i. 18. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. iv. 6. "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Col. iii. 10.

Depravity is also predicated of the heart and conscience. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Jer. xvii. 9. "But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Tit. i. 15. Do these texts refer exclusively to the will? or do they not include also the other moral powers? As the heart is the seat of the affections; to say that the heart is wicked, is equivalent to declaring the affections to be depraved and alienated from God. Accordingly, to change the heart is to give us a holy temper—to renew our affections. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord

thy God." Deut. xxx. 6. "And I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh." Ezek. xi. 19. When this is done, our conscience will likewise be rectified. "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." Heb. x. 22. Then too the will which is controlled by the state of the heart, is sweetly inclined by the same Spirit, to choose and rest upon Christ, as the portion of the soul. "~~My~~ people shall be *willing* in the day of thy power." Psa. cx. 3.

From this view of the subject it appears that the fall has affected the whole moral man. What God says of Judah is applicable to all mankind. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it." Isa. i. 5, 6. This doctrine, we admit, is very humiliating, and calculated to make the sinner feel his dependence upon God. But this, instead of being an objection, is a proof of its correctness. While it must not be so interpreted as to annihilate or even impair the sinner's obligation, or form any excuse for his impenitence and unbelief, it is a doctrine which is pre-eminently adapted to drive him from those refuges of self-righteousness and self-sufficiency, which prove the ruin of so many souls, and lead him to seek salvation only through the grace and righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is indeed the very point to which sinners always come before they embrace the Saviour.



On this subject Dr. Witherspoon uses the following language: "On a conviction of our own inability, one would think we should but the more humbly and the more earnestly apply to Him, who is all-sufficient in power and grace. The deplorable and naturally helpless state of sinners, doth not hinder exhortations to them in Scripture; and therefore takes not away their obligation to duty. See an address, where the strongest metaphors are retained, the exhortation given in these very terms, and the foundation of the duty plainly pointed out: 'Wherefore he saith, awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' From which it is very plain, that the moral inability, under which sinners now lie, as a consequence of the fall, is not of such a nature as to take away the guilt of sin, the propriety of exhortation to duty, or the necessity of endeavours after recovery." . . . "I make no scruple to acknowledge, that it is impossible for me; nay, I find no difficulty in supposing that it is impossible for any finite mind to point out the bounds between the 'dependence' and 'activity' of the creature." . . . "The new birth is a 'supernatural change;' it is the effect of the power of God; it is the work of the Holy Ghost. I have been at the more pains to establish this truth, because I am persuaded, that until it be truly received, there may be a form, but there can be nothing of the power of godliness." ..

“But what shall we say? Alas! the very subject we are now speaking of, affords a new proof of the blindness, prejudice, and obstinacy of sinners. They are self-condemned; for they do not act the same part in similar cases. The affairs of the present life are not managed in so preposterous a manner. He that ploughs his ground, and throws in his seed, cannot so much as unite one grain to the clod; nay he is not able to conceive how it is done. He cannot carry on, nay, he cannot so much as begin one single step of this wonderful process toward the subsequent crop; the mortification of the seed, the resurrection of the blade, and gradual increase, till it come to perfect maturity. Is it, therefore, reasonable that he should say, ‘I for my part can do nothing; it is, first and last, an effect of Divine power and energy: and God can as easily raise a crop without sowing as with it; in a single instant, and in any place, as in a long time by the mutual influence of soil and season; I will therefore spare myself the hardship of toil and labour, and wait with patience till I see what he will be pleased to send?’ Would not this be madness? Would it not be universally reputed so? And would it not be equal madness to turn the grace of God into licentiousness? Believe it, the warning is equally reasonable and equally necessary, in spiritual as in temporal things. ‘Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also

reap: for he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'”—Practical Treatise on Regeneration, sect. 4.

But while the doctrine of human inability and dependence upon God, as understood and believed by the friends of the Old Theology, does not destroy accountableness, nor impair obligation, nor discourage effort; but brings the sinner to his proper place, before the throne of Divine mercy; we think the doctrine of *ability*, as maintained by the advocates of the New Theology, is calculated to produce such independence of feeling, with regard to the Spirit's influences, as to be a serious obstacle to genuine conversion. Among the “false comforts for sinners,” which Mr. Finney enumerates, one is, “telling the sinner to *pray for a new heart*.” He asks, “Does God say, Pray for a new heart? Never. He says, ‘Make you a new heart.’ And the sinner is not to be told to pray to God to do his duty for him, but to go and do it himself.”—Lectures on Revivals, p. 318. Thus it appears, we must not direct sinners to seek God for renewing grace, because they have sufficient ability of their own to perform the work. To preach to them the necessity of the Spirit's influences while exhorting them to duty, would be according to him “unphilosophical.” We must tell them “to go and do it themselves.” What kind of conversions is such instruction as this calculated

to produce?\*

It is no wonder that the revivals of religion which have occurred within the last ten years, under the ministry of such

\* Let the reader judge of the probable effect upon the sinner of preaching such doctrines as are developed in the following conversation between a licentiate, a student from New Haven, and two highly respectable ministers, in 1832. It was taken down at the time by one of the ministers, as he has informed me, "the paper sealed up and has been kept since a secret." In communicating it to me a few weeks ago, he observes, "If you judge it to be proper, you are now at liberty to use the document in your forthcoming book; suppressing the names for the present, but considering me as responsible for the statement, and ready to give the names hereafter if necessary."

"Mr. ———, [one of the ministers,] in the course of general conversation, alluded to New Haven as a school of Theology, and asked finally that Mr. ———, [the licentiate,] would state what were the peculiarities of *Professor Fitch's scheme of natural depravity*. Mr. ——— avowed himself a believer in that scheme, and stated among other things, in substance" as follows: ("many of the following views, he said, however, *were his own*, and not chargeable upon any others, or any particular school:) that 'moral character was predicated entirely on *choice between good and evil*: that man was not regarded with displeasure in the sight of God, either by *imputation of original sin*, or as having a disposition to evil. He was in no sense a sinner, until of sufficient age and capacity to choose for himself; and *if* there was a period in his existence previous to that, *during* that period he was an innocent being.'

"The bearing of this on the doctrine of *regeneration* was then suggested; whereupon Mr. ——— stated in substance, that he did not regard the saying of Christ to Nicodemus, 'that which is born of the *flesh is flesh*, and that which is born of the *Spirit is spirit*,' as implying any thing like a new moral nature, opposite to his first nature, as given to him in regeneration. He believed that subject had been misunderstood. There was indeed a necessity for regeneration, but it consisted not in the implantation of new principles, but the rational turning of the

men, should furnish so many examples of apostasy. In a discourse delivered by Mr. Finney in Chatham street chapel in 1836,

same principles to a new course. *As to the way in which it was produced*, God's help was indeed necessary, but no more so than in every other action of man. He presented motives, and when a man sincerely made up his resolution to follow them, and did decide to do so, that was the beginning of a new life.' Mr. ——— asked him if any sinner ever did come to Christ without *feeling his helpless and lost condition?* Mr. ——— said 'he thought, *yes*; and mentioned his own case.' "

"The bearing of the subject on *atonement and justification* was next alluded to; and Mr. ——— [the licentiate,] observed 'that it was a scheme which did indeed run through the whole. As to atonement he believed in it, but he seemed to consider it as consisting in *what lay between God and his intelligent universe exclusively*, and that for *laying a ground of justifying his own proceedings*; as such, a man ought to trust in or believe the atonement: but in [the] matter of personal experience we had nothing to do with it: the righteousness of Christ is in no sense imputed to us: we must be accepted on the ground of our own obedience.'

"Much was said also of *the practical influence* of such a style of preaching; and it was objected to Mr. ———'s scheme, that taking men as they are, they would be likely to interpret his views of their own powers and independency as even more favourable to themselves than he probably intended: and Mr. ——— [one of the ministers] remarked that as the gospel was represented 'to be a seeking and saving *that which was lost*;' 'to kill and make alive;' he had always felt it to be more necessary to show men their helplessness connected with their guilt, and a way of hope, than to persuade them of their own powers. Mr. ——— [the licentiate,] held the opposite opinion. He seemed to think that the reason why many more were not pious, was, *that too many and unnecessary difficulties were left in the way*. They ought to be *reasoned with more*: show them that this work is not *so hard and unreasonable*: they could be persuaded to make a choice if you would only present the thing as *rational*; and many were

are found such sentences as the following:\*  
 “You profess that you want to have sinners converted. But what avails it if they sink right back again into conformity to the world?” . . . . “Where are the proper results of the glorious revivals we have had?” . . . . “The great body of them [the converts of the last ten years] are a disgrace to religion.” . . . . “Of what use is it to convert sinners and make them such Christians as these?” This is an acknowledgment that the fruits of those revivals are not such as were anticipated—and so long as converts are made under the influence of such doctrines, and that system of measures which corresponds with them, we must expect similar results. Their “goodness will be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it will pass away.”

The following remarks of Dr. Reed, one of the delegates from England to the Ameri-

thus won, where this scheme was now adopted.’ He said much of the figurative language of Scripture, and seemed to think that such passages as ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God,’ did not apply to men at the present age of the world, but peculiarly to the Jews, on account of their prejudices. The opposition which we have often witnessed against religion in natural men is not so much against God or religion itself, as against the prejudiced representations of it by mistaken teachers.’ ”

This individual who is denominated by my correspondent “a *respectable* young man,” was at that time, as I infer from his letter, seeking a settlement in a Presbyterian congregation.

\* We quote from the *Literary and Theological Review*. The sermon it appears was reported in the *New York Evangelist*, February 13, 1836.

can churches, accord with the sentiments and observation of very many in America, who have been "witnesses of these things." "The New Divinity and the New Measures, have greatly coalesced, and they have given for the time, currency to each other. Many pious and ardent persons and preachers, from the causes to which I have adverted, were disposed to think that the new opinions had all the advantage in a revival, and this gave them all the preference in their judgment. Where they in connexion with the New Measures have been vigorously applied, there has, indeed, been no want of excitement. The preacher who firmly believes that the conversion of men rests on the force of *moral suasion*, is not unlikely to be persuasive. And the hearer who is told 'he can convert himself,' that it is 'as easy for him to do so as to walk,' that he has only 'to resolve to do it and it is done,' is not unlikely to be moved into self-complacent exertion. But it may be asked, does either the preacher or the hearer possess those sentiments which are likely to lead to a true conversion, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance?"

"By their fruits ye shall know them. There has certainly been good done where there has been much evil, for with this evil there has been a large portion of divine truth. But I fear not to say, that where there has been the largest infusion of the New Divinity into the New Measures, there has been the greatest amount of unwarrant-

able extravagance. There has been great excitement, much animal emotion and sympathy, high resolves, and multiplied conversions, *but time has tested them and they have failed.*”



## CHAPTER IX.

A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW THEOLOGY, BY WAY OF REVIEW, AND A NOTICE OF THE PERFECTIONISM OF MR. FINNEY.

THAT the reader may see at a single view the most prominent points of difference between the Old and New Theology, we shall exhibit them in few words by way of contrast:—in doing which we shall take a kind of retrospect of the volume, and exemplify some of the principles which have been noticed, by a few additional quotations.

1. The Old Theology places God upon the throne of the universe, and makes him competent to say concerning all creatures and events, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” The New makes him so dependent upon the volitions of moral agents, that he is liable to suffer disappointment and to have his happiness diminished, by the uncontrollable agency of men:—and this not only in the present world, but in the



next. Prof. Fitch affirms that God's "purpose was to confer on the beings composing his moral kingdom, the power of volition and choice, *and to use the best influence God could use on the whole to secure the holiness and prevent the sin of such beings, who themselves, and not he, were to have immediate power over their volitions.*" Again: "We affirm that the causes in *kind* which originate sin, being inseparably inherent in a moral universe, may so accumulate in DEGREE *under every system of Providence and government which CAN be pursued*, as to render sure the occurrence of sin. If in a universe of such beings, *no possible system of Providence adopted and pursued THROUGH ETERNITY can shut out all occasions of the outbreakings of sin*, it is easy to see, that as to his preventing it, sin is unavoidably incidental to the acts of the Creator in creating and governing such a kingdom." . . . . "The causes in *kind* which are known to originate sin in the present universe, must necessarily be present in any possible universe of moral beings." . . . . . "If the causes of defectibility are thus inseparable from the existence of a universe of moral beings, *is there not a ground of probability that they will lead to actual defection in every possible system as well as in this?*"—Review of Dr. Fisk's Discourse on Predestination and Election, and a Defence of that Review in the Christian Spectator. What low and unworthy views does this statement convey con-

cerning the Deity! What dismal prospects it presents to the expectant of future and eternal bliss!

2. The Old Theology regards the fall of man as a catastrophe so direful in its effects, that no power less than Omnipotence is adequate to “quicken sinners who are dead in trespasses and sins.” The New treats it as a calamity, which the sinner is able, since the introduction of a system of mercy through Jesus Christ, to repair himself. Says Mr. Finney, “Now suppose God to have come out upon Adam with the command of the text, ‘Make you a new heart, for why will ye die?’ Could Adam have justly answered, Dost thou think that I can change my own heart? Can I, who have a heart totally depraved, can I change that heart? Might not the Almighty have answered him in words of fire, Rebel, you have just changed your heart from holiness to sin, now change it back from sin to holiness.”—*Sermons on Important Subjects*, p. 13. See also Mr. Barnes’ remarks on the text, “When we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly,” in chap. vii. We shall likewise give one or two additional quotations in the present chapter, under the head of Ability.

3. The Old Theology maintains that Adam was the federal head of his posterity, and that, by breaking the covenant under which he was placed, he involved not only himself, but all his posterity in sin and misery—the guilt of his first sin being imputed to them,

or set over in law to their account; so that they all come into the world with depraved and sinful natures. The New denies that we sustain a *covenant* relation to Adam; and maintains that he was only our *natural* head and father—from whose sin it results as a matter of fact, according to the common laws of human society, and that all his posterity become sinners when they arrive at moral agency; before which time they are neither sinful nor holy; and that they become sinners by their own *voluntary* act, after a trial, it would seem, similar to what Adam had. Says Dr. Taylor, in reply to a supposed objection, “Why render this universal sinfulness of a race, the consequence of one man’s act? why not give to each a fair trial for himself?” “I answer, *God does give to each a fair trial for himself. Not a human being does or can become thus sinful or depraved but by his own choice.* God does not compel him to sin by the *nature* he gives him. Nor is his sin, although a consequence of Adam’s sin, in such a sense its consequence as not to be a free voluntary act of his own. He sins freely, voluntarily. There is no other way of sinning. God, (there is no irreverence in saying it) can make nothing else sin, but the sinner’s act.” *Concio ad Clerum.*

Mr Barnes observes: “If it were a dogma of a pretended revelation, that God might at pleasure, and by an arbitrary decree, make crime pass from one individual to another—

striking onward from age to age, and reaching downward to 'the last season of recorded time'—punished in the original offender; re-punished in his children; and punished again and again, by infinite multiples, in countless ages and individuals; and all this judicial infliction, for a single act, performed cycles of ages before the individuals lived, we see not how any evidence could shake our intrinsic belief that this is unjust and improbable." . . . . "We never can adopt that system which tramples on the analogies which actually exist, and holds men to be personally *answerable*, and actually *punished* by a just God, for an act committed thousands of years before they were born. Such a doctrine is no where to be found in the Scriptures."—Introductory Essay to Butler's Analogy, pp. 35, 39.

All that we deem it necessary to say concerning the views contained in these extracts, is, that *Unitarians* consider them "*sound and lucid.*" In the Review of Mr. Barnes' Notes on the Romans, in the Christian Examiner, already referred to, [a Unitarian Quarterly] the reviewer says: "On the subject of man's nature, capacities, and duty, our author is *sound and lucid.* The idea of hereditary depravity he spurns, as unworthy of even a passing notice. He asserts repeatedly that men sin only *in their own person, in themselves*, as indeed how *can they sin* in any other way? The imputation of Adam's transgression he treats as a scholastic absur-

dity.” . . . “Of the figment of Adam’s federal headship and the condemnation of his posterity for partnership in his sin, Mr. Barnes, says ‘there is not one word of it in the Bible.’”\*

4. The Old Theology maintains that the atonement consisted in rendering satisfaction to Divine justice by the vicarious sufferings of Christ, who endured in our stead the penalty of the law, and offered up himself an acceptable sacrifice to God: by which offering God’s “favour was propitiated for us,” his law magnified and his government sustained: so that without doing violence to his

\* The views of Socinus are as follows:

Quest. 1. “Is it in our power fully to obey the commandments of God?”

Answ. “Certainly; for it is evident, that the first man was so formed by God, that he was endued with free will; and no reason existed why he should be deprived of this power after the fall; nor was it consistent with the justice of God, that man should be deprived of free will. Accordingly, in the punishment inflicted on his sin, there is no mention made of any such loss.”

Quest. 2. “But is not the will of man vitiated by original sin?”

Answ. “There is no such thing as original sin; the Scripture teaches no such doctrine; and the will of man could not be vitiated by a cause which had no existence. The sin of Adam being a single act could not corrupt his own nature, much less had it power to deprave the nature of all his posterity. That this sin should be charged on them, is, as has been said, a doctrine unknown to the Scriptures; and it is utterly incredible, that God, who is the fountain of equity, should be willing to impute it to them.”—Racovian Catechism, compiled from the writings of Socinus, and published A. D. 1606; translated for the Biblical Repertory; q. v.

holy nature, or relinquishing the claims of his law, or dishonouring his government, he *secured* the salvation of those who were given to Christ in the covenant of redemption; [John xvii. 2; Isa. liii. 11, 12;] and laid the foundation for a free *offer* of mercy to all who hear the gospel. Mark xvi. 15. John iii. 16.

The New Theology considers the atonement as involving a *suspension* of the penalty of the law, and as consisting in a “*symbolical display*” to the universe, for the purpose of producing such an impression of God’s hatred to sin, as would render it safe and proper for him as moral Governor, to bestow pardon upon sinners: and as to sinners themselves, it is an “*experiment*,” made by God for their salvation; which, through his impotency to control moral agents, may *fail* of its intended result.\* Among other *relations* of the atonement discussed by Mr. Jenkyn, he considers it in relation to the *purposes* and *providences* of God. Under the former he observes, “The various dispensations of probation are various *experiments* in moral government, in which *God submits his own plans* and ways to the acceptance and for the use of *free agents*. If any ob-

\* I have not met with any writer who expressed himself in this revolting form, except Mr. Jenkyn, in his work on the Atonement. But this is a correct statement, it appears to me, of the doctrine, as held by those (if they are consistent) who in connexion with the New School view of atonement, adopt also the new theory concerning the character and government of God.

ject to the word '*experiment*,' I beg to refer them for the meaning of it, to the parable of the barren fig tree, and to that of the husbandman sending his servants, and afterwards his son to the vineyard. These dispensations or *experiments* are capable of *failure*. The Eden *experiment failed*—and the Sinai *experiment failed*. Such susceptibility of *failure* has been shown to be *incidental to a moral government* and a state of trial." Under its relation to *providence* he says, "The measures of providence are liable to *failure*. A medicine may fail, notwithstanding the virtue which providence has given it. The crop of the husbandman may fail, notwithstanding the provision that seed time and harvest time shall continue. *The morbid fear of acknowledging such a liableness to failure in the measures of providence* is unaccountable, when *God declares his own government of the Jews, under the theocracy, to have failed of its end*. 'In vain have I smitten them, they have refused to receive correction.' Jer. ii. 30. The word of God distinctly and expressly recognizes the same *liableness to failure in the great measure of atonement*. Are you sure that it is not attachment to system rather than attachment to the truth that makes you hesitate to avow it?" Pp. 97, 168. Quere. If God's "*plan*" or "*experiment*," or "*measure of atonement*," is liable to *failure*; and if it *does fail* in numerous instances, as Mr. Jenkyn intimates, and elsewhere admits, what *security* have we that it will not *fail alto-*

*gether?* What if it should happen, that when "*submitted to the acceptance of free agents,*" they should *all* object to it, and refuse to comply with its conditions! Has God *power to control* the exercise of their *free agency* and *persuade* them to *change their minds?* or may they not, in despite of his mightiest influence, persist in rejecting Christ, and so despoil him of his Mediatorial reward!

5. The Old Theology arrays the believer in the robe of Christ's righteousness; which being imputed to him and received by faith, is the ground of his justification before God. "This is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**" Jer. xxiii.

6. "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith." Phil. iii. 9. "And to her [the Lamb's wife, the church] was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Rev. xix. 8. "You have here," says Henry, "a description of the bride, how she appeared; *in fine linen, clean and white*, which is, *the righteousness of saints*; in the robes of *Christ's righteousness*, both *imputed* for justification, and *imparted* for sanctification."

The New Theology discards the doctrine of imputed righteousness, and maintains that the believer's *faith*, being an act which God approves, and which leads to other holy acts, is reckoned to him for righteousness; and in



consequence of it God pardons his sin and receives him into favour. "Faith," says Mr. Finney, "is the appointed instrument of our justification, because it is the natural instrument of sanctification. It is the instrument of bringing us back to obedience, and therefore is designated as the means of obtaining the blessings of that return. It is not *imputed* to us by an arbitrary act, FOR what it is not, but *for what it is*, as the foundation of all real obedience to God. This is the reason why faith is made the medium through which pardon comes. It is simply set down to us for what it really is; because it first leads us to obey God from a principle of love to him."—Lectures to Professing Christians, p. 221.

Which of these doctrines is more calculated to humble the creature and to honour Christ? "If faith itself is our justifying righteousness, then it justifies as a work, as truly as any other works could; and" . . . . "if a man is justified on account of the act of believing, and that act he can perform by the power of free will, he has as much ground of boasting as he could possibly have, if he had been justified by other works."—Dr. Alexander.

6. The Old Theology places the sinner at the threshold of sovereign mercy, a *dependent* though guilty suppliant for grace and salvation. The New gives him sufficient ability to do all that God requires of him, without Divine aid. In a Review of Watson's Institutes in the Christian Spectator, are found the following: "He [Mr. Watson]

repeatedly speaks of the power of the will, by which he intends, of course, its ‘gracious ability’ before the fall, as being lost by Adam, ‘for himself and for his descendants.’” . . . .

“Admitting it to be true in Adam’s case, that by sinning *he* was shorn of his power to obey God, what has this to do with his *posterity*? The principle assumed in the argument, renders it impossible, that their moral agency should be unhinged, until they exist and sin; therefore *Adam’s sin could have no more tendency to destroy their power to choose good, or to set their teeth on edge, than it had to produce the same effects upon Satan and his apostate host.*” . . . . . “We should like to know, whether the admirers of Mr. Watson believe it impossible for God to create a being, *possessing in himself the ability to choose good and be holy, without the gift of the Spirit?* and if so, where is his omnipotence? If it is admitted, that he *can* create such a being, we ask whether the principles of Divine government do not fully demonstrate, that *man is such a being?* If he is not, is God’s government adapted to him? What notion can be formed of a subject of moral government, who is destitute of moral liberty? or in other words, who, in every instance of obedience or disobedience, does not act with inherent power to the contrary choice?”\*—Ch. Spec. 1835, pp. 376, 377.

7. The Old Theology makes regeneration

\* Concerning the power of contrary choice, see Dr. Beecher’s views and Dr. Harvey’s remarks upon them in chapter vii.

a *radical* change—a change in the *disposition* and *temper* of the sinner, as well as in his *acts*. The New regards it as merely giving a different *direction* to our constitutional desires; but appears to make little or no difference between the *principles* of action, in converted and unconverted men. They differ only as to the “*end* of pursuit.” In reference to a sentiment advanced by Dr. Griffin, that the sinner has *no taste for holiness*, and therefore cannot be regenerated by *motives*, Mr. Gilbert remarks, “The impenitent sinner has no ‘taste’ for *conviction*; his unholy temper is as really opposed to *truth* as to *holiness*; and this philosophy would make it as impossible to *convict* as to convert him; to sanctify, as to regenerate him. The unconverted man has no ‘taste’ for conviction, nor the converted man for *more* sanctification.” Mark: “*The unconverted man has no taste for conviction, nor the converted man for MORE sanctification!*” What then is the difference between the *taste* or *temper* or *disposition*, of an impenitent sinner, and a child of God? For aught we can perceive, they are precisely the same.

8. The Old Theology gives honour to Christ and the Holy Spirit—the New has a tendency to throw them, particularly the latter, into the shade. “You see (says Mr. Finney) how unphilosophical it is, while pressing the sinner to submission, to divert his mind and turn his attention to the subject of the Spirit’s influence. While his attention is di-

rected to that subject, his submission is impossible." Sermons on Important Subjects, p. 61. Of course, those who would be instrumental in converting sinners, must say little or nothing about the Spirit.\* And it is true, as a matter of *fact*, that the class of preachers to which we now refer, say almost as little about *Christ* as about the Spirit. They preach much about *submitting to God*; but they seldom exhibit the second person of the Trinity, in his Mediatorial character, and the duty of embracing him as a Saviour. The Apostolic

\* I have in my possession a written statement communicated to me by a very respectable minister, which affords another illustration of this sentiment. Says he, "In the summer of 1832, while travelling in the valley of the Mississippi, I spent a few weeks in the city of —, and gave assistance, as I was able, by request of the pastor in — church of that place. Unusual attention to religion existed when I arrived, and continued for some time. A strong tendency was manifested both to new doctrines and new measures. One evening when on the way to the church with the pastor, where I had engaged to preach, *he requested I should say nothing in my preaching, concerning the influences of the Spirit*, as he had new views on repentance. He did not deny the work of the Spirit, but thought it should not be preached. He was then and still remains a leading member of his Synod." To this we will add the following:

A former student of Dr. Taylor has informed me, verbally, that he heard Dr. Taylor advance the sentiment in two different sermons, "*that sinners must act in the work of conversion just as if there was no Holy Ghost.*" To prove the truth of his remark, he alluded to Acts xix. 2. "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." He had heard, also, through others, of Dr. Taylor's advancing the same sentiment at different times; and he believed he was in the *habit* of doing it where he preached a course of revival sermons.

direction, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," is exchanged for a phraseology which is calculated to convey the impression that conversion consists in the mere choice of God as a moral Governor. This indeed is Mr. Finney's account of it. "It [a change of heart] is a change in the choice of a *Supreme Ruler*." . . . . "The world is divided into two great political parties; the difference between them is, that one party choose Satan as the god of this world;" . . . . "the other party choose Jehovah for their Governor." Jesus Christ, as a distinct person in the Godhead, and faith in him as our Redeemer, appear to have little to do in the process.\*

9. The Old Theology honours the Holy Scriptures, by drawing its doctrines and proofs from this source alone, without calling in the aid of philosophy. The New, resorts to the latter, in order to obtain its first principles; and then interprets the former so as to make them accord with these philosophical opinions. This remark, we are aware, may be

\* In the summer of 1834, I heard a sermon from Professor ———, of New Haven. I do not recollect that there was a sentiment in it to which I took exceptions; and yet there was such an *absence* of what a Christian desires and expects to find, in a sermon which professed to teach us how we may approach God with acceptance, as to afford too much reason for the observation of a pious and intelligent lady soon after, viz: "that he kept Christ and the Holy Spirit so much out of view, she could not help thinking that he was a deist." This lady had not yet heard the name or residence of the preacher; and of course could not have been influenced by any considerations of this kind.

called in question. The leaders in the New School party have had much to say concerning the "*facts*" of Scripture, and have charged their brethren of the Old School with resorting to philosophy. But a little investigation of this subject, will show the statement first made to be strictly true. In Mr. Finney's two sermons on the duty of sinners to change their own hearts, he uses the words philosophy, philosophical, unphilosophical, &c., at least fourteen times. He tells us about "the *philosophy* of conversion," "the *philosophy* of self-examination," and "the *philosophy* of special efforts to promote revivals of religion." Every step in the change is brought to the test of *philosophy*: and the failure of the sinner to submit to God is ascribed in one instance to his not understanding the *philosophy* of the process. "He, therefore, (says he) who does not understand the *philosophy* of this; who does not understand the use and power of *attention*, the use and power of conscience, and upon what to fix his mind, to lead him to a right decision, will naturally complain that he does not know how to submit." The Scriptures are also brought forward and compared by this rule. "When he [Joshua] assembled the people of Israel and laid their duty before them, and said, 'choose you this day whom ye will serve;' he did not *unphilosophically* remind them at the same time of their dependence upon the Spirit of God." Thus we have *philosophical* preaching, *philosophical* protracted meetings, *phi-*

*philosophical* self-examination, *philosophical* submission, and *philosophical* conversion. May not the result of the whole be a merely *philosophical christian*? Other proofs which might be adduced, from different writers, we must leave to those who desire to examine this subject.

It may possibly be said that we have given more prominence to Mr. Finney than was proper; since he goes further than most of his brethren, and is not, therefore, a fair specimen of their views. We admit he has expressed himself more *freely* than perhaps *any* one else; but if we compare the quotations made from various authors, we shall perceive they all belong to the same family. It has been our aim both in our statements and quotations, to exhibit the doctrines of the New Theology, just as they are, without the least exaggeration. For this purpose our extracts from New School authors have been numerous, and sufficiently extended as to length, to give a correct view of their sentiments. But if it can be made to appear that we have misrepresented their views in a single important point, we shall cheerfully rectify the mistake.

## PERFECTIONISM OF MR. FINNEY.

THERE is one extreme into which Mr. Finney has fallen, that we by no means charge upon the New School, as a body—and we have therefore as yet entirely omitted it. We mean his *perfectionism*. In this we presume he has few followers. We will however bestow upon it a little attention, that it may serve as a beacon to admonish those who have embarked on the voyage of religious discovery.

In his Lectures to professing Christians, he has two on Christian Perfection; and he adverts to the subject in several others. He defines perfection in the following words: “It is to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.” This he maintains is attainable in the present life. “1. God wills it. 2. *All the promises and prophecies of God* that respect the sanctification of believers in this world, are to be understood of course *of their perfect sanctification*. 3. Perfect sanctification is *the great blessing* promised throughout the Bible. 4. The perfect sanctification of believers is the very *object for which the Holy Spirit is promised*. 5. If it is not a practicable duty to be perfectly holy in this world, then it will follow that the devil has so completely accomplished his design in corrupting mankind,



that Jesus Christ is at a fault, and has *no way to sanctify his people but to take them out of the world.* 6. If perfect sanctification is not attainable in this world, it must be, either from a want of motives in the gospel, or a want of sufficient power in the Spirit of God."

In another lecture he appears to teach perfection in *knowledge* as well as in holiness; amounting to an illumination little short of Divine inspiration. "*The manner in which the Spirit of God does this,*" says he, *i. e.* communicates ideas to the mind without the use of words, "is what we can never know in this world. But the fact is undeniable, that he can reach the mind without the use of words, and can put our minds in possession of the ideas themselves, of which the types, or figures, or words, of the human teacher, are only the signs or imperfect representatives." . . . "The needed influences of the Spirit of God may be possessed by all men freely under the gospel." . . . "They [ministers] should not attempt to explain passages of which they are not confident *they have been taught the meaning by the Holy Spirit.* It is presumption. And they need not do it, for they may always have the teachings of the Spirit by asking." . . . "This is applicable both to preachers and to teachers in Sabbath Schools and Bible classes." . . . "Will you lay your hearts open to God, and not give him rest, *till he has filled you with Divine knowledge?*"

In other lectures he goes further still, and maintains, if I understand his language, that when the Christian has thus given himself up entirely to Christ, to be taught and governed by him, he becomes so identified with Christ, that his spirit and Christ's Spirit are, morally considered, *one*—Christ becomes responsible for his acts; and of course he not only ceases from sin, but he *cannot* commit sin. Whatever he does, Christ is responsible for it. This he calls entering into rest. "When one ceases from his own works, he so perfectly gives up his own interest and his own will, and places himself so perfectly under the dominion and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that whatever he does is done by the impulse of the Spirit of God." . . . . "They are in one sense our works, because we do them by our voluntary agency. Yet in another sense they are his works, because he is the moving cause of all." . . . . "He [Christ] is just as absolutely your sanctification, as your justification. If you depend upon him for sanctification, he will no more let you sin than he will let you go to hell." . . . . "The reputation of the wife is wholly united to that of her husband, so that his reputation is hers, and her reputation is his. What affects her character affects his; and what affects his character affects hers. Their reputation is one, their interests are one. So with the church, whatever concerns the church is just as much the interest of Christ, as if it was

personally his own matter.” . . . . “If any actions or civil liability come against the wife, the husband is responsible. If the wife has committed a trespass, the husband is answerable. It is his business to guide and govern her, and her business to obey, and if he does not restrain her from breaking the laws, he is responsible.” . . . . “In like manner, Jesus Christ is Lord over his church, and if he does not actually restrain his church from sin, he has it to answer for.” . . . . “It is his business to take care of the church, and control her, and keep her from sin; and for every sin of every member, Jesus Christ is responsible, and must answer.” . . . . “O! if believers would only throw themselves wholly on Christ, and make him responsible, by placing themselves entirely at his control, they would know his power to save, and would live without sin.”

We have given these extracts at some length, that those who have not access to his Lectures, may obtain a full view of his sentiments. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that the sentences last quoted are *Antinomian*. The history of Antinomianism does not furnish many expressions, more licentious in their tendency than these. This heresy is more frequently the result of an *abuse* of the doctrines of grace; but in the present instance, it appears to have originated in an opposite cause, viz: in those views of human ability, which render grace in a measure superflu-

ous.\* “There is,” says he, “no more moral inability to be *perfectly* holy, than there is to be holy at all.” On the same principle, therefore, that he could preach to the sinner the practicability of changing his own heart, he might argue that the Christian can arrive at perfect holiness in this life. He actually adopts the same mode of reasoning in both cases. It is therefore very natural to conclude, that the frequent discussion of the subject of ability in reference to the sinner, had much to do in forming his opinions with regard to Christian perfection. Having arrived at this point, he applied his ideas of perfection, not only to our sanctification, but to all our relations to God. In a lecture from the text, “Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;” he considers each of the terms as conveying an idea equally expressive. Since then, according to the views which he had

\* It is supposed by some that there is no logical connexion between Mr. Finney's former and present views—but that he has got upon a new track. Formerly, as one observes, “he left Christ and the Holy Spirit almost out of view; he hardly preached the gospel at all; but now Christ and the Holy Spirit are every thing. He pushes union with Christ, imputation, covenant relation, &c. into Antinomianism.” The only connexion, he says, between the latter and his Pelagianism, is that “he is a fanatic now as he was before.” But as others think differently, we shall state the probable process by which it is supposed he was led into these errors. Yet whether they are the “logical sequence” of his former views or not, they furnish an instructive lesson to those who are disposed to countenance error.

previously adopted, sanctification was to be taken as implying *perfect* holiness, the perfectibility of wisdom would seem to follow as a consequence. Hence he says in regard to this, "As he [Christ] is the infinite source of wisdom, how can it be said that he is made unto us wisdom, unless we are partakers of his wisdom, and have it guaranteed to us; so that, at any time, if we trust in him, we may have it as certainly, and in any degree we need, to guide us as infallibly, as if we had it originally ourselves?" Thus we are brought into the field of fanaticism.

The only condition required in order to obtain either wisdom or sanctification, is faith. "The act of the mind, says he, that thus throws the soul into the hand of Christ for sanctification, is faith. Nothing is wanting, but for the mind to break off from any confidence in itself, and to give itself up to him, to be led and controlled by him, absolutely." Then Christ assumes the responsibility; he undertakes to do all for him that he needs; he becomes accountable for his conduct. Says he, "Until an individual receives Christ, he does not cease from his own works. The moment he does that, by this very act he throws the entire responsibility upon Christ. The moment the mind does fairly yield itself up to Christ, the responsibility comes upon him, just as the person who undertakes to conduct the blind man is responsible for his safe conduct. The believer by the act of faith pledges Christ for his obedience and

sanctification. By giving himself up to Christ, all the veracity of the Godhead is put at stake, that he shall be led aright, or made holy." Here we have the final result of the whole process. By the proper exercise of our free will, we can first change our own hearts, or in other words, put forth the "act" of saving faith upon Jesus Christ. By the proper exercise of the same free will, we can put forth a stronger "act" of faith, and make him our wisdom and sanctification:—our wisdom, in such a sense, that he will "guide us infallibly, as if we had it originally ourselves:"—and our sanctification, so entire and absolute, that Christ becomes responsible for our conduct, and "if he does not restrain us from sin, he has it to answer for."

In the March number of the Literary and Theological Review for the year 1838, there is an able article on this subject; from which we will make the following extract. "In the works before us [referring to Mr. Finney's Sermons and Lectures,] we have an authentic genealogy of a *family of errors*. We are not obliged, as in other instances, to trace them through successive generations of men. They are all found in the same mind, and *Pelagianism*, as contained in the preceding extracts, is the venerable ancestor of them all. From his infancy it was remarked that he was an *uncommon child*. Unlike other children, he was by nature neither "*sinful nor holy*." Unhappily, however, very soon after his birth, he "*fell into a state of supreme*

*selfishness,*" from which even the "physical power of God" could not extricate him. But he had *rare abilities*, and a "giant strength" of will, which he could hardly refrain from calling "*the strength of Omnipotence.*" And therefore, he always believed himself to be one of those who could be recovered "*with the wisest amount of moral influence.*" He had elevated notions of human virtue, and would suffer no change to be made in his condition, which was not produced by "*his own act.*" He was willing, indeed, that the Holy Spirit should operate on him, provided it were only *as an earthly advocate acts on a jury.* He was willing that "*motives should be gathered from all worlds and poured in a focal blaze on his mind.*" He was anxious to receive good counsel from his friends, and reverently to hear divine truth; but the change from "*supreme selfishness*" he declared to be his own "*appropriate work;*" and he was at length accustomed to say, that he had effected it by "*his own act.*" It was natural to suppose, that the theological children of such a system would have some remarkable characteristics. In Pelagius and Cœlestius it had produced Perfectionism, and there was reason to fear that in the mind of Mr. Finney, it would generate the same progeny. In various parts of the land the system had been earnestly inculcated. Its most sagacious disciples were beginning to declare themselves to "*be perfect,*" to have "*rolled the responsibility of their future*

*and eternal obedience on an everlasting arm;*" to receive "*immediate communications from God;*" to be "*personally united to Him,*" and have "*entered into rest.*" These heresies were early demonstrated to have had their origin in the system itself. As Mr. Finney had been the Apostle of this system in these latter days, it was intimated that his doctrines, as inculcated in his preaching and by the press, had tended to produce these impieties. This view of the subject was indignantly repelled even by the candid ones among his followers. The thought that *his doctrines* had produced such results, they could not for a moment entertain. Although others had no doubt that Mr. Finney was the true parent of Perfectionism, they had more opinion of his caution, than to suppose he could soon be induced openly to own and adopt it. But, to the amazement of all, he now comes forth, bringing with him for induction into the church, the doctrine of *the perfection of the saints in this life, of the responsibility of Christ for his people, of immediate communications to them from God, and of their entrance into rest even in this world.* These last views were not developed till he had abandoned the Presbyterian Church. Ever since their publication, it is almost inconceivable by those who have heard of him chiefly as a promoter of revivals, and have been unwilling to listen to the notes of warning, so long honestly and responsively sounded by *individuals*—it is almost incon-



ceivable, that he has inculcated these fanatical doctrines. Even the Christian Spectator, though it fears "he may be liable to misconstruction and injure the consciences of many weak and pious persons," declares, "we do not believe he means any thing more than we should fully admit—the possibility and duty of obedience to God in all things commanded." But this view of his meaning it is impossible to sustain either by individual sentences, or the evident design of his Lectures on these subjects. His errors are written so legibly, that he who runs may read. Mr. Finney now stands before the community as a practical illustration of the effects of rejecting the doctrine, that *human nature is depraved*: and of believing, that in regeneration and sanctification, *the word of the Spirit is confined chiefly to the understanding*.



## CONCLUSION.

IF the statements contained in this volume are to be relied upon; in other words, if New School writers maintain those sentiments which are clearly conveyed by their language, they have widely departed from "the faith once delivered to the saints." But should any be still disposed to repeat the remark, "There is no difference; the contest is

a mere logomachy," &c.; we will refer them, first, to the action of the General Assembly in former years, condemning as heretical those very doctrines substantially, which now make a part of the New Theology.

In 1798, the case of Rev. H. Balch came before the Assembly by way of reference from the Synod of the Carolinas. The following is a part of the minutes of the Assembly on this subject. "With regard to his doctrine of original sin, it is to be observed, that he is erroneous in representing personal corruption as not derived from Adam; making Adam's sin to be imputed to his posterity in consequence of a corrupt nature *already possessed*, and derived from, we know not what; thus in effect setting aside the idea of Adam's being the federal head, or representative of his descendants, and the whole doctrine of the covenant of works."

"It is also manifest that Mr. B. is greatly erroneous in asserting that the formal cause of a believer's justification is the imputation of the *fruits and effects* of Christ's righteousness, and not that righteousness itself; because righteousness, and that alone, is the formal demand of the law, and consequently the sinner's violation of the Divine law, can be pardoned only by virtue of the Redeemer's perfect righteousness being imputed to him and reckoned as his. It is also not true that the *benefits* of Christ's righteousness are, with strict propriety, said to be *imputed* at all, as these benefits *flow to*, and are *possess-*

*ed by*, the believer, as a *consequence* of his justification and having an interest in the infinite merits of the Saviour.”

In 1810, a work of the Rev. William C. Davis, entitled the “Gospel Plan,” came before the Assembly, by an overture from the Synod of the Carolinas. Among the doctrines contained in the book of an exceptionable character, and which the Assembly condemned, are the following: “That the active obedience of Christ constitutes no part of that righteousness by which a sinner is justified;” that “God could not make Adam, or any other creature, either holy or unholy;” and that, “if God has to plant all the principal parts of salvation in a sinner’s heart, to enable him to believe, the gospel plan is quite out of his reach, and consequently does not suit his case; and it must be impossible for God to condemn a man for unbelief; for no just law condemns or criminales any person for not doing what he cannot do.” Concerning these doctrines the Assembly resolved that they are “contrary to the Confession of Faith of our Church.”—Assembly’s Digest, pp. 130, 145, 146, 147.

If the persons before alluded to, are not yet satisfied that there is a palpable and important difference between the Old and New Theology, we will refer them, secondly, to the opinion of *Unitarians*, as expressed in the review of Mr. Barnes’ Notes on the Romans, in the Christian Examiner; one or two extracts from which have already been made.

“In conclusion we would say, (observes the reviewer,) that while our orthodox brethren publish and circulate and receive with favour such books as these “Notes,” we most cordially extend to them the right hand of fellowship, even though they refuse to return it. We regard them as fellow labourers with *us*, for the overthrow of time-hallowed absurdities; for the cleansing of the Christian creed from ‘whatever defileth and maketh a lie.’ Calvinism is now a house divided against itself. It embraces within its walls two, not only distinct, but opposite sects;\* the one that of the friends, the other that of the enemies of free inquiry;—the one that of the votaries of reason, the other that of the blind-fold recipients of a traditional faith. The house is tottering, is on the point of falling; and when it falls, we confidently expect to receive into the citadel of liberal Christianity, and shall greet with a most hearty welcome, those, beneath whose well aimed blows, the walls of the old mansion are shaken and its foundation crumbling.”

That *ministers of the gospel* should entertain the opinion, (as some do,) that there is no material difference between the two systems, is truly astonishing. It results in part, we believe, from inattention. But men who have devoted their lives to the “cure of souls,” who have been placed by the Head of the Church, as “watchmen to the house of Israel,” are bound, it appears to me, to make

\* This was written in 1836.

themselves thoroughly acquainted with these things. *Civilians and men of business* have some apology for their want of information—it not being in general compatible with their pursuits, to attend very *minutely* to theological discussions. Hence it is not so wonderful that a considerable number of this class, who are sound in the faith, should be disposed, in the exercise of that charity which “hopeth all things,” to indulge the belief that the grounds of controversy are less important than some have supposed. But if they will take sufficient time to examine the subject, until they become fully acquainted with the questions in debate, we believe their minds will undergo a similar change to that of the Emperor Constantine, with regard to the Arian heresy.

After the discussion had commenced between Arius and Alexander bishop of Alexandria in Egypt, but prior to the council of Nice, at which the Emperor presided and gave his consent to the condemnation of the Arian doctrine, he addressed a letter to Alexander and Arius, with a view to bring about a reconciliation; in which he says, “The honour and character of the assembly of Christians may be preserved entire, and the same communion retained among you all, notwithstanding you may greatly differ among yourselves *in matters of very little importance*,” &c. . . . “Your subtle disputes and inquiries respecting these *trifling matters*, if you cannot agree in sentiment, should re-

main in your own thoughts, and be laid up in the secret depths of the mind." But before the close of the Nicene council, the points of difference did not appear to him "trifling matters." The Emperor wrote two letters at the close of the council, in one of which, directed to the churches in general,\* he "informs them that the faith has been examined, and placed in so clear a light that no difficulty remains." At the same time he published "an edict directed to the bishops and people, condemning Arius and his writings. He says that Porphyry, having composed impious books against Christianity, rendered himself infamous in the eyes of posterity, and that his writings were destroyed. It has in like manner, he continues, been decreed, that Arius and his followers be called Porphyrians, so that they may bear the name of him whom they have imitated; and that if any book written by Arius shall be found, it shall be committed to the flames, that no monument of his corrupt doctrine may descend to future ages."—Historical View of the Council of Nice, pp. 27, 40, 41.

It must not be understood from this illustration that we mean to insinuate that our New School brethren are Arians. All we intend is, that their errors are real and not imaginary; that they are not small, but important; and that the counter opinion of those men is entitled to little influence, however intelligent and pious and orthodox they may

\* The other was addressed to the church at Alexandria.

be, who have not paid sufficient attention to the subject, even to state with precision, the points in controversy. Let them seriously and carefully examine the New School doctrines, and we cannot doubt, they will be obliged to acknowledge, that if our Confession of Faith is agreeable to the Scriptures, those doctrines must belong to "another gospel."

To me it is not surprising that the Presbyterian Church were alarmed. The wonder is, that the alarm was not sooner and universally felt. If efficient measures had been adopted ten years ago, when those errors had just made their appearance, they might have been rectified without a division. But they were suffered to remain and spread, until they became so prevalent, that discipline was impracticable; and either some extraordinary measures must be resorted to, or the Church be ruined. To use the language of an excellent and distinguished brother in the ministry, "We were reduced to this simple question, Is the Presbyterian Church worth an effort to save?" Under these circumstances, the General Assembly of 1837 were called to act: and though, from the mode of procedure which they were obliged to adopt, they separated from them, for the time being, some whom they would have gladly retained; subsequent events have already proved, that those measures will result in great good. Those discordant materials which have for years past rendered the floor of the General

Assembly an arena of strife, are now removed. The Church purified from error and harmonious in action, may now engage with efficiency and success, in her appropriate work of carrying the symbols of her faith to a perishing world. We have now no pretext for inaction. While we rejoice in the zeal and success of every branch of Christ's Church, who are engaged in the work of preaching the gospel, let us not be behind them, either in the expansiveness or efficiency of our benevolence.

THE END.



A REVIEW

OF

BEMAN ON THE ATONEMENT.

FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE

BIBLICAL REPERTORY, JANUARY 1845.



# R E V I E W

OF

## BEMAN ON THE ATONEMENT.\*

THE doctrine of which this little book treats, has always been regarded as the cardinal doctrine of the gospel. It was the burden of apostolical preaching, the rock of offence to Jews and Greeks, the corner stone of that temple in which God dwells by his Spirit. The cross is the symbol of Christianity; that in which every believer glories, as the only ground of his confidence toward God. The rejection of this doctrine, therefore, has always been regarded, and is in fact, a rejection of the gospel. It is the repudiation of the way of salvation revealed by God, and the adoption of some method not only different but irreconcilable. Whatever, therefore, affects the integrity of this doctrine, affects the whole system of religion. It lies in such immediate contact with the source of all spiritual life,

\* *Christ, The only Sacrifice: or the Atonement in its Relations to God and Man.* By Nathan S. S. Beman, D. D., Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Troy, New York. With an Introductory chapter by Samuel Hanson Cox, D.D., Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, New York. Second edition, re-written, enlarged, and improved. New York: Mark H. Newman. 1844, pp. 171.

that the very nature of religion depends on the manner in which it is apprehended. Though all moral and religious truths are in their nature sources of power, and never fail to influence more or less the character of those who embrace them, yet some truths are more powerful, and hence more important than others. We may speculate with comparative impunity on the nature of angels, on the origin of evil, on the purposes of God, on his relation to the world, and even on the grounds and nature of human responsibility; but when we come to the question, how am I to gain access to God? how can I secure the pardon of my sins and acceptance with Him? what is the true ground of hope and what must I do to place myself on that ground so as to secure the assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost? then the less we speculate the better. The nearer we keep to the simple, authoritative statements of God's word, the firmer will be our faith, the more full and free our access to God, and the more harmonious and healthful our whole religious experience. Such is the informing influence of such experience, when it is genuine, that is, when really guided by the Spirit and conformed to the revelation of God, that it effects a far nearer coincidence of views in all the children of God, than the multiplicity of sects, and conflicting systems of theology would lead us to imagine. The mass of true Christians, in all denominations, get their religion directly from the Bible, and are but

little affected by the peculiarities of their creeds. And even among those who make theology a study, there is often one form of doctrine for speculation, and another simpler and truer, for the closet. Metaphysical distinctions are forgot in prayer, or under the pressure of real conviction of sin, and need of pardon and of divine assistance. Hence it is that the devotional writings of Christians agree far nearer than their creeds. It may be taken for granted that that mode of stating divine truth, which is most in accordance with the devotional language of true Christians; which best expresses those views which the soul takes when it appropriates the doctrines of the gospel for its own spiritual emergencies, is the truest and the best.

How then does the believer regard the person and work of Christ, in his own exercises of faith, gratitude, or love? What is the language in which those exercises are expressed? If we look to the devotional writings of the church, in all ages and countries, and of all sects and names, we shall get one clear, consistent answer. What David wrote three thousand years ago, expresses, with precision, the emotions of God's people now. The hymns of the early Christians, of the Lutherans, of the Reformed, of Moravians, of British and American Christians, all express the common consciousness of God's people; they all echo the words and accents in which the truth came clothed from the mouth of God, and in which, in spite of the obstructions of theolo-

gical theories, it finds its way to every believing heart. Now one thing is very plain, Dr. Beman's theory of the atonement never could be learnt from the devotional language of the church, ours can. Every thing we believe on the subject is inwrought, not only in the language of the Bible, but in the language of God's people, whether they pray or praise, whether they mourn or rejoice. We have therefore the heart of the church on our side at least.

It lies on the very surface of the Scriptures: 1. That all men are sinners. 2. That sin for its own sake, and not merely to prevent others from sinning, deserves punishment. 3. That God is just, that is, disposed from the very excellence of his nature, to treat his creatures as they deserve, to manifest his favour to the good, and his disapprobation towards the wicked. 4. That to propitiate God, to satisfy his righteous justice, the Son of God assumed our nature, was made under the law, fulfilled all righteousness, bore our sins, the chastisement or punishment of which, was laid on him. 5. That by his righteousness, those that believe, are constituted righteous; that his merit is so given, reckoned or imputed to them, that they are regarded and treated as righteous in the sight of God. These truths, which lie on the surface of the Scripture, are wrought into the very soul of the church, and are in fact its life. Yet every one of them, except the first, Dr. Beman either expressly or virtually denies.

He denies that sin for its own sake deserves punishment. He every where represents the prevention of crime as the great end to be answered by punishment even in the government of God. If that end can be otherwise answered, then justice is satisfied; the necessity and propriety of punishment ceases. This is the fundamental principle of the whole system, and is avowed or implied upon almost every page. His argument in proof that repentance is not a sufficient ground for pardon, is that it has no tendency to prevent crime in others. In human governments, he says, punishment is designed to prevent a repetition of crime by the criminal, and to prevent its commission by others. The former of these ends might be answered by repentance, but not the latter. So in the case of the divine government, repentance on the part of the sinner, might, "so far as his moral feelings are concerned," render it consistent in God to forgive, but then, "Where is the honour of the law? Where is the good of the universe?" p. 57. The design of "penalty is to operate as a powerful motive to obedience." p. 127. There is, he says, the same necessity for atonement, as for the penalty of the moral law, and that necessity, he uniformly represents, as a necessity "to secure the order and prosperity of the universe." p. 128.

It is of course admitted that the prevention of crime is one of the effects, and consequently one of the ends of punishment. But

to say that it is *the* end, that it is so the ground of its infliction, that all necessity for punishment ceases when that end is answered, is to deny the very nature of sin. The ideas of right and wrong are simple ideas, derived immediately from our moral nature. And it is included in those ideas that what is right deserves approbation, and what is wrong deserves disapprobation, for their own sake, and entirely irrespective of the consequences which are to flow from the expression of this moral judgment concerning them. When a man sins, he feels that he deserves to suffer, or as the apostle expresses it, that he is "worthy of death." But what is this feeling? Is it that he ought to be punished to prevent others from sinning? So far from this being the whole of the feeling, it is no part of it. If the sinner were alone in the universe, if there was no possibility of others being affected by his example, or by his impunity, the sense of ill-desert would exist in all its force. For sin is that which in itself, and for itself, irrespective of all consequences, deserves ill. This is the very nature of it, and to deny this is to deny that there is really any such thing as sin. There may be acts which tend to promote happiness, and others which tend to destroy it; but there is no morality in such tendency merely, any more than there is health and sickness. The nature of moral acts may be evinced by their tendency, but that tendency does not constitute their nature. To love God, to reverence excellence, to for-



give injuries, all tend to promote happiness, but no man, who has a moral sense in exercise, can say that they are right only because of such tendency. They are right, because they are right, in virtue of their own inherent nature. And the opposite dispositions or acts are in their nature evil, irrespective of their tendency to produce misery.

The theory that the end of punishment, even in the divine government, is to prevent crime, is only one expression of the more general theory, that happiness is the end of creation, and that all holiness is resolvable into benevolence. This theory is a product of the mere understanding, and does violence to the instinctive moral judgment of men. We know that holiness is something more than a means; that to be happy is not the end and reason for being holy; that enjoyment is not the highest end of being. Our moral nature cannot be thus obliterated, and right and wrong, made matters of profit and loss. The command not to do evil that good may come, would on this theory, be a contradiction, since that ceases to be evil which produces good. All virtue is thus resolved into expediency, and the doctrine that the end sanctifies the means, becomes the fundamental principle of virtue. It is strange that even when the moral feelings are in abeyance, and men are engaged in spinning from the intellect, a theory that will reduce to unity, the conflicting facts of the moral world, they could adopt a view which reduces all intelli-

gent beings to mere recipients of happiness, and degrades the higher attributes of their nature into mere instruments of enjoyment; a theory which meets its refutation in every moral emotion, and which has proved itself false by its practical effects. We may safely appeal to the convictions of every man's breast, against this whole theory, and against the doctrine that sin is punished and deserves punishment only as a warning to others. No man when humbled under the sense of his guilt in the sight of God, can resist the conviction of the inherent ill-desert of sin. He feels that it would be right that he should be made to suffer, nay, that rectitude, justice, or moral excellence demands his suffering; and the hardest thing for the sinner to believe, is, often, that it can be consistent with the moral excellence of God, to grant him forgiveness. Into this feeling the idea of counteracting the progress of sin, or promoting the good of the universe, does not in any measure enter. The feeling would be the same, though there were no universe. It is ill-desert and not the general good, which every man feels in his own case, is the ground of his just liability to punishment. And without this feeling there can be no conviction of sin. We may also appeal against this metaphysical theory to the universal consciousness of men. Though it is admitted that governmental reasons properly enter into the considerations which determine the nature and measure of punishment, yet it is the universal and intuitive

judgment of men, that the criminal could not be rightly punished merely for the public good, if he did not deserve to be punished irrespective of that good. His suffering benefits the public because it is deserved; it is not deserved because it benefits the public. That this is the universal judgment of men is proved by every exhibition of their feelings on this subject. When any atrocious crime is committed, the public indignation is aroused. And when the nature of that indignation is examined, it becomes manifest that it arises from a sense of the inherent ill-desert of the crime; that it is a sense of justice, and not a regard to the good of society which produces the demand for punishment. To allow such a criminal to escape with impunity, is felt to be an outrage against justice, and not against benevolence. If the public good was the grand end of punishment, then if the punishment of the innocent would promote that object most effectually, the innocent should suffer instead of the guilty; consequently if murders would be most restrained by the execution of the wives and children of the assassins, it would be right and obligatory to execute them, and not the perpetrators of the crime. If this would shock every man, let him ask himself, why? what is the reason that the execution of an innocent woman for the public good, would be an atrocity, when the execution of the guilty husband is regarded as a duty? It is simply because the guilty deserve punishment irrespective of the good

of society. And if so, then the public good is not the ground of punishment in the government of God, but the inherent ill-desert of sin. Men in all ages have evinced this deep seated sense of justice. Every sacrifice ever offered to God, to propitiate his favour, was an expression of the conviction that the sin for its own sake deserved punishment. To tell a man who brought his victim to the altar, that the real philosophy of his conduct, was to express a desire for his own reformation, or for the good of society, would be a mockery. Such an idea never entered any human heart, when in the presence of God and seeking his forgiveness.

It is not pretended that this theory is taught in the Bible. It purports to be a philosophy. The Bible contradicts it on every page, because every page contains some expression of genuine human feeling, of the conviction of the real difference between right and wrong, of a true sense of sin, or of the great truth that our responsibility is to God, and not to the universe. The doctrine therefore that sin is punished merely to preserve the order and prosperity of the universe, is an utterly false and revolting theory; inconsistent with the intuitive moral judgments of men, subversive of all moral distinctions, irreconcilable with the experience of every man when really convinced of sin, and contradicted by every thing the Bible teaches on the subject.

Dr. Beman again denies, and it is essential

to his system that he should deny, the justice of God. He admits that God has a disposition to promote the welfare of his creatures, and so to order his moral government as to make it produce the greatest amount of happiness. This, however, is benevolence, and not justice. The two sentiments are perfectly distinct. This our own consciousness teaches. We know that pity is not reverence, that gratitude is not compassion, and we know just as well that justice is not benevolence. The two are perfectly harmonious, and are but different exhibitions of moral excellence. The judge of all the earth must do right. It is right to promote happiness, and it is right to punish sin; but to refer the punishment of sin to the desire to promote happiness, is to attribute but one form of moral excellence to God, and to make his excellence less comprehensive than our own. Dr. Beman speaks of commutative, distributive, and general justice. The former has relation only to the regulation of property, and has nothing to do with this subject. Distributive justice consists in the distribution of rewards and punishments, according to merit or demerit. General justice, he says, embraces the general principles of virtue or benevolence by which God governs the universe. The second kind, he correctly says, is justice in the common and appropriate sense of the word. p. 131. When we say that he denies the justice of God, we mean that he denies that justice in its common and

appropriate sense, is an essential attribute of the divine nature. There is nothing in his nature that leads to the punishment of sin, but benevolence, or a regard to the happiness of the universe. If that is secured, sin and all sin may go unpunished for ever. This we say is a denial of divine justice.

It is a principle of our nature, and a command of God, that we should regard him as absolutely perfect; that every moral excellence which we find in ourselves we should refer to him in an infinite degree. Why do we believe that God is merciful, but because he has so made us that we approve of mercy, and because he has in his word declared himself to be full of compassion? Our moral nature is as much a revelation of God's perfections, as the heavens are of his wisdom and power. If, therefore, he has implanted in us a sentiment of justice, distinct from that of benevolence, we are constrained by the very constitution of our nature to refer that perfection to God. All men in fact do it. It enters into the sense of responsibility, into the nature of remorse, and into that fearful looking for of judgment which manifest themselves in every human breast. Men know that God is just, for they in their measure are just; and they instinctively fear the punishment of their sins. To be told that God is only benevolent, and that he punishes only when the happiness of his government requires it, is to destroy our whole allegiance to God, and to do violence to the constitution

of our nature. This is a doctrine that can only be held as a theory. It is in conflict with the most intimate moral convictions of men. This, as already remarked, is evinced by the sacrificial rites of all ages and nations, which derive their whole character and import from the assumption that God is just. If justice is merged into benevolence, they cease to have any significance as propitiatory offerings. If then distributive justice, justice "in its common and appropriate sense," is by the common consciousness of men declared to be a virtue, it is thereby revealed to belong to God; and he can no more cease to be just, than he can cease to be benevolent or holy. This is only saying that if moral excellence leads us to judge that sin in itself deserves punishment, then the infinite moral excellence of God cannot but lead him to treat it as it deserves.

Again, it is included in our conception of God as absolutely independent and self-sufficient, that the reasons of his acts should be in himself. He is absolutely perfect, he acts with undeviating rectitude, and by so acting he promotes the highest good of his creatures. But the good of his creatures is not the end of his actions, for "of him and through him and to him are all things." It is to subordinate God to the creature, to make the creature the end of his actions. He rewards one man and punishes another, not because he will thus make others happy, but because it is

right, and by doing right the greatest good to others is the result. This is the view which both reason and Scripture presents of God as infinite and self-sufficient, who is the beginning and the end of all things. It is hence plain how the justice of God necessarily flows from his holiness. He is so holy that he delights in all that is good, and hates all that is evil; and if he acts agreeable to his nature, he constantly manifests this love of excellence and hatred of sin. But what is reward and punishment but the manifestation of the approbation or disapprobation of God? If holiness is communion with him, sin is alienation from him; if his favour goes out towards the one, his displeasure goes out towards the other; if the one is attracted, the other is repelled. The attributes of God are not so many distinct qualities, but one perfection of excellence, diversified in our conceptions, by the diversity of the objects towards which it is manifested. The justice of God is therefore nothing but the holiness of God in relation to sin. So long as he is holy, he must be just; he must repel sin, which is the highest idea we can form of punishment. To say then that God punishes only for governmental reasons, is to destroy our very conception of his nature.

That distributive justice is an essential attribute of God, is therefore revealed to us in the very constitution of our nature, in which we find a sense of justice, which is no more



a form of benevolence than it is of reverence. It is revealed in all the operations of conscience; in the common consciousness of men, as expressed in all their prayers, confessions and sacrificial rites. It is revealed in the Scriptures in every possible way; in all they teach of the nature of God, of his holiness, of his hatred of sin, of his determination to punish it; in the institution of sacrifices, and in the law. If the precepts of the law are an expression of the divine perfection, so is the penalty. If the one declare what it is right for God to require, the other declares what it is right for him to inflict. If God does not command us to love him, merely to make his dominions happy, neither does he punish merely for the public good. The law is a revelation of what is right, and God will require and do right for its own sake, and not for another and a lower end. God then is just, and Dr. Beman and his theory, by denying that there is any such attribute in God as justice distinct from benevolence, do equal violence to conscience, reason and the Bible.

Dr. Beman, again, denies that Christ made a true and proper satisfaction to divine justice, and thus departs from the common faith of Christendom, and seriously vitiates the whole doctrine of redemption. It is well known that at the time of the Reformation, there was no controversy between Protestants and Romanists either as to the necessity or nature of the atonement. All classes of

Protestants and the Church of Rome itself, united in teaching, 1. That the Son of God having assumed our nature obeyed and suffered in our stead, thereby making a true, proper and complete satisfaction for our sins. And 2. That his righteousness was so given or imputed unto us as to constitute us righteous in the sight of God. The Romanists even reproached Protestants for not coming up to their doctrine on this subject, insisting that the satisfaction of Christ was not only full and equivalent, but superabundant. “*Pretium, says the Cat. Rom. i. 5, 15, quod Christus pro nobis persolvit, debitis nostris non par solum et aequale fuit, verum ea longe superavit.*” It is one of the standing heads of theology in the Romish systems, *Satisfactio Christi fuit de rigore justitiæ*, which they prove; and answer the common Socinian objections, viz. that such a satisfaction destroys the grace of salvation, that it is impossible that the temporal sufferings of Christ should have such efficacy, &c. As to their views of the second point above mentioned it is enough to quote the following passage from Turretin, vol. 2, p. 709. “It is not questioned,” he says, “whether the righteousness and merit of Christ are imputed to us; for this the Papists dare not deny. The Council of Trent, Sess. vi. c. 8, says, ‘Christ by his most holy passion on the cross merited justification for us, and satisfied God the Father in our behalf, and no one can be righteous to whom the merits of the

passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are not communicated.’ Hence Vasques in 1. 2. q. 114. disp. 222. chap. 1. says, ‘We concede that not only what is within us, as sin, faith, righteousness, may be imputed to us, but also what is without us, as the merits and obedience of Christ; because not only what is within, but, also what is without, on account of which something is given to us, is said to belong to us, (*ad aliquem effectum*,) as though they were really our own.’ Bellarmin Lib. 2. de Justif. cap. 7, acknowledges the same thing, when he says, ‘If Protestants meant only that the merits of Christ are imputed to us, because God gives them to us, so that we can present them to God for our sins, he having assumed the burden of making satisfaction for us, and of reconciling us to the Father, the doctrine would be true.’ This is in fact precisely what we do mean. For when he adds, ‘we hold that the righteousness of Christ is so imputed to us, as by it we become formally or inherently just,’ he asserts what is gratuitous and false, on account of his own perverse and preposterous theory of moral justification.”\*

\* It is characteristic of the Church of Rome that while she holds the truth, she contrives to make it of no effect by her traditions. Thus while she teaches that the merit of Christ is the ground of our justification, she makes those merits accessible only through her ministrations, and confounds justification and sanctification. And while she holds the truth as to the nature of Christ’s satisfaction, she chooses to confine it to original and mortal sins, that she may make room for her own doctrine of satisfaction

The Lutheran church held the strictest form of doctrine as to the nature of Christ's satisfaction, and as to justification. That church teaches that the sufferings of Christ were strictly penal, that his obedience and death made a full and proper satisfaction to the law and justice of God, and are imputed to the believers as the sole ground of their justification. We cannot swell our article with numerous citations in proof of a well known fact. In the Apology for the Augsburg Confession, p. 93, it is said, "Christus, quia sine peccato subiit pœnam peccati, et victima pro nobis factus est, sustulit illud jus legis, ne accuset, ne damnet hos qui credunt in ipsum, quia ipse est propitiatio pro eis, propter quam justi reputantur." In the Form of Concord, it is said, "Justitia illa, quae coram Deo fidei aut credentibus ex mera gratia imputatur, est obedientia, passio, et resurrectio Christi, quibus ille legi nostra causa satisfacit et peccata nostra expiavit." p. 684. Again, p. 696. "Humana natura sola, sine divinitate, aeterno omnipotenti Deo neque obedientia, neque passione pro totius mundi peccatis satisfacere valuisset. Divinitas vero sola sine humanitate inter Deum et nos mediatoris partes implere non potuisset. Cum autem . . . obedientia illa Christi non sit unius duntaxat naturae, sed totius personae; ideo ea est perfectissima pro humano genere

by good works and penances. The infinite value of the Saviour's merit, she perverts as a source, whence to derive the power to grant indulgences, &c.

satisfactio et expiatio; qua aeternæ et immutabili justitiæ divinæ . . . . satis est factum.”

It will not be necessary to prove that the Reformed churches held precisely the same doctrine. There was no controversy between them and the Lutherans either as to the nature of the satisfaction of Christ, or as to justification. They differed only as to the design of Christ's death, whether it had respect equally to all men, or had a special reference to his own people, a point which we hope to have room to discuss in the sequel of this article. We are now concerned only about the nature of the atonement. Bretschneider states, in a few words, the common doctrine on this subject of the two great divisions of the Protestant world. After saying that God, according to that doctrine is immutably just, and therefore must punish sin, and yet being immutably benevolent, he determined to provide redemption, he proceeds, “For this it was necessary, 1. that some one in the place of men, should fulfil the law which they ought to have kept, and 2. that some one should endure the punishment (Strafen) which they had incurred. This no mere man could do, for no man, (since all are subject to original sin,) could perfectly keep the law, and every man must suffer for his own sin. Neither could any divine person accomplish the task, since he could not sustain suffering and punishment. He alone who is at once God and man, with a human nature free from sin,

could accomplish the work.”\* This righteousness, he adds, “God imputes to men as though they had wrought it out themselves.”

Against this doctrine of satisfaction to the divine justice, the Socinians were the first to object.† Under the pressure of their objections the Remonstrants in Holland gave way, and Grotius in his work, *De Satisfactione Christi*, though defending in the main the Catholic or common doctrine, introduced the principle, that the satisfaction of Christ was rendered to the governmental justice of God. Very far below the doctrine of Grotius, in many important respects, is the theory of Dr. Beman. In some cases he falls even below Socinus. “God as the supreme governor,” he says, “must so conduct all his movements, whether of justice or mercy, as to leave on the minds of dependent creatures, a deep and just impression, that the penalty of the law will be executed, and that the sinner must perish. *To fix this impression indelibly in the breast of the sinner, is the object of the atonement.*” p. 41.‡ This however is prob-

\* Bretschneider's *Handbuch der Dogmatik*. vol. 2, p. 266.

† In the Racovian Catechism, it is asked, “Did Christ die, that he might, properly speaking, merit our salvation, or, in like manner properly speaking, discharge the debt due for our sins? Ans. Although Christians generally now hold that opinion, yet the sentiment is false, erroneous, and exceedingly pernicious.”

‡ Socinus taught that the atonement was designed  
1. To confirm the new covenant and all its promises, especially those of the pardon of sin, and of eternal life.  
2. To assure us of the love of God. 3. To induce us to

ably a lapsus, such an one however, as few men could make. He generally includes other intelligent creatures. Still, with him, the atonement is a mere method of instruction; a means to exhibit a certain truth for the moral restraint or improvement of those to whom it is made known. The gratuitous forgiveness of sin, it is said, would tend to produce the impression that God was indifferent to his law, and that sin might be committed with impunity. To counteract that impression, to teach, or declare that sin was, in the sight of God, an evil, and would be punished, and thus to open a way to exercise mercy, without weakening the motive to obedience, is the design of the death of Christ. Justice in its "common appropriate sense" he says, "was not satisfied by the atonement of Jesus Christ." p. 131. "The law, or justice, that is, distributive justice, as expressed in the law, has received no satisfaction at all." p. 133. So far as the atonement secured the government of God from the evils of gratuitous forgiveness, it was a satisfaction to his benevolence, but not to justice in any other sense. p. 182. It was designed to teach a certain truth; it is "a symbolical and substantive expression of God's regard to the moral law." p. 35. "It furnishes an expression of his regard for the moral law," and "evinces his determination to punish sin,"

embrace the gospel. 4. To encourage us by his example to trust in God. 5. To abrogate the old dispensation, &c.

p. 91. "To fix indelibly this impression on the heart of the sinner is the object of the atonement." p. 42.

Our first remark on this subject, after showing, as we think we have done, that the whole basis of this theory is false, is that it is destitute of any semblance of support from Scripture. It hardly purports to be any thing more than a hypothesis on which to reconcile what the Bible teaches with our views of moral government. It is a device to make the atonement rational, to explain away the mystery which hangs over it, and makes the whole august transaction perfectly intelligible. Dr. Beman says that the doctrine of the atonement enters "into the very texture of revelation, warp and woof." It is, he says, "the vital principle, in the very heart of the gospel." p. 62. Surely then we have a right to have it treated as "a purely biblical question," as he affirms it to be. Yet in his chapter on the nature of the atonement, as far as we can find, he refers but to one solitary text in the whole Bible! It is a theory woven warp and woof out of the understanding, not even out of the conscience. The solitary passage which Dr. Beman cites as teaching his doctrine is Rom. iii. 25, where it is said that God set forth Christ as a propitiation for our sins, to declare his righteousness. "The object of the atonement," he says, "is here stated in explicit terms. It was required and made in order to open a consistent way for the publication of pardon, or for the exercise



of grace to sinners. Its purpose was to declare the righteousness or moral rectitude and perfection of God in dispensing, in this instance, with the literal execution of the penalty of the law, and in bestowing eternal life upon those who deserved to die." p. 124. He afterwards, p. 132, says, the words *just* and *righteousness* as here used have "no direct reference to law," but express "those principles of virtue or benevolence by which we are bound to regulate our conduct, and by which God governs the universe." Then of course the passage might be rendered, "Christ was set forth as a propitiation to declare the benevolence of God, that he might be benevolent even in remitting the sins of those that believe;" an interpretation which needs no refutation. The first remark then to be made on this passage is, that it teaches the very reverse of what it is cited to prove. Dr. Beman himself says that in their "common and appropriate sense," the words *just* and *justice* have reference to law, and express what he calls distributive justice. Then if the language of the apostle is to be taken in "common and appropriate sense," it teaches that the propitiation of Christ was designed as an exhibition of justice in its proper sense; in order to make it apparent that God was just even in remitting sin; that the demands of justice had not been sacrificed, but on the contrary fully satisfied. It is only by taking the words in a sense that is inappropriate and unusual, that any other doctrine can be

got out of the passage. Besides, Dr. Beman's interpretation is not only in direct opposition to the common meaning of the words, but to the necessary sense of the context. Satisfaction to justice is the formal idea of a propitiation, and saying that Christ was a propitiation, is only saying in other words, that our sins were laid on him, that he bore the chastisement or punishment of our sins, in order that God might be just, in justifying those that believe. Again, this interpretation is agreeable to the sense in which the words just, righteous, righteousness, &c. are familiarly used by the apostle. Is God unrighteous, he asks, who taketh vengeance? Rom. iii. 5. He denounces the divine judgment, by saying, God will cut short the work in righteousness. Rom. ix. 28. See also 2 Thess. i. 5, 6. The obvious sense then of the passage in Romans iii. 25, is the opposite to that which Dr. Beman gives it.\*

\* "We see ourselves obliged," says Tholuck, "to admit, in this place, the idea of distributive justice (*vergeltende Gerechtigkeit*)." He afterwards says that the loss of that idea in theology has occasioned "unspeakable evil," and that the doctrine of atonement "must remain sealed up until it is acknowledged." See his *Römerbrief* ed. 1842. He refers with approbation to Usteri's exposition of this passage in his *Paulinischer Lehrbegriff*. On turning to that author we find he says, his object is to prove "that the representation contained in Rom. iii. 24, 25, viz. that God, to declare his righteousness, laid on Christ the punishment of the sins of men, is the doctrine of Paul." And he accordingly goes on to prove it, particularly from Rom. viii. 3. Usteri is one of those writers, who do not feel called upon to believe what the Scriptures teach, though they make it a point of honour to state its meaning fairly.

But if we admit that the passage in question does teach that the atonement was designed to set forth God's regard for the good of the universe, what then? would it establish Dr. Beman's theory? Far from it. It is one of the most common fallacies of theological writers, to seize upon some one passage, and shutting their eyes on all others, assume that it teaches the whole truth on a given subject. The death of Christ was designed to answer manifold ends, more perhaps than it has yet entered into the heart of man to imagine. It would be the extreme of folly to take one of those ends, and infer that its attainment was its whole design, or let us into the full knowledge of its nature. Is it not said a hundred times that the death of Christ was designed to exhibit the love of God? Does this prove that it does not display his righteousness? It is said to declare his wisdom; does that prove it does not display his love? It was designed to bring us unto God, but does that prove it was not also an atonement? It is not by taking any one view, or any one text, that we can arrive at the truth. We must have a theory which will embrace all the facts; a doctrine which includes all the revelations God has made on this subject. The objection to Dr. Beman's view of the design of Christ's death, is not that it is false, but that it is defective. It states only a part, and a subordinate part of the truth. The atonement is an exhibition of God's purpose to maintain his law and to inflict its penalty,

and thus to operate as a restraint and a motive on all intelligent beings, because it involves the execution of that penalty. It is this that gives it all its power. It would be no exhibition of justice, if it were not an exercise of justice; it would not teach that the penalty of law must be inflicted, unless it was inflicted. We hold all the little truth there is in Dr. Beman's doctrine, but we hold unspeakably more.

Our immediate object, however, is to call attention to the entire absence of all scriptural support for this theory. We have already shown that the only passage directly referred to does not teach what it is cited to prove, and that if it did, it would give no support to the theory built upon it. The surprising fact, however, should be more distinctly noticed, that while the Bible is said to be full of the doctrine of atonement, scarcely an attempt is made to prove its nature from the Bible. Christ is said to be a sacrifice, to bear our sins, to be a propitiation, a ransom, &c. &c., but no attempt is made to tell us what all this means. There is no examination of the terms, no elucidation of the meaning they bore in the age of the apostles. The writer does not even pretend to found his theory upon them. In the chapter in which he gives his own view of the nature of the atonement, they are scarcely even mentioned. The whole affair is a piece of pure rationalistic speculation, formed on certain principles of moral philosophy which have nothing to do

with the Bible. It is assumed that happiness is the end of all things; that to promote happiness is the essence of virtue; that the prevention of crime, which causes misery, is the end of punishment; that the death of Christ, as it tends to prevent crime, supersedes the necessity of punishment. There is the theory. And we can hardly avoid saying that it has more affinity with Jeremy Bentham, and "the greatest happiness" system, than it has with the Bible, or with the sympathies of Christians.

Our next remark on this theory is that it is perfectly arbitrary. The Bible teaches that Christ was a sacrifice, that he bore our sins, that the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him; that he propitiated God; was a ransom; was made sin, that he might be made righteous. These and similar statements set forth the nature of the atonement. There are many others describing some of its manifold effects. It declared the justice of God, exhibited his wisdom, set us an example, purifies his people, and in short, glorifies God and promotes the best interest of his kingdom. If you take in the former statements, there is perfect unity in all these representations. The work of Christ is a display of the justice and love of God, it leads men to repentance, and exerts this moral influence on the universe, because it is a satisfaction to divine justice, and answers the demands of his law. But if the scriptural account of its nature be rejected, then it is a

matter to be arbitrarily decided, which of its effects shall be selected as determining its character. If Dr. Beman says it is an atonement because it expresses God's regard to the order and welfare of his government; Socinus may say, it is an atonement because it assures us of the love of God. The one is just as much right as the other; for both are right as far as they go; but both are arbitrary in selecting what suits their taste, or their philosophy, and rejecting all the rest. Dr. Beman does not pretend that his doctrine is taught in those passages of Scripture which really describe the nature of the atonement, neither does Socinus. Both say that all is figurative. The one says its nature is to be inferred from one of its effects, the other from another; the one considers it as designed mainly to teach God's rectoral justice, the other his love. It is perfectly plain that on this plan the citadel is surrendered. Dr. Beman can have nothing to say to the Socinian, which the Socinian cannot retort on Dr. Beman. Both admit that we are saved by the death of Christ; the one affirming that it is because it brings us to repentance and thus makes our forgiveness consistent with the character of God and the interests of his kingdom; the other, that it is because it reconciles forgiveness with the good of the universe, in a different way.

It may also on this ground be made a fair subject of debate, which view really assigns most importance to the death of Christ. Is

it clear that fear is more conservative than love? that the exhibition of God's regard to law, would have a greater effect in promoting holiness than the exhibition of his mercy? We very much doubt it. And we confess ourselves very much at a loss to see why the Socinian view of the design of the Redeemer's death, should be regarded as a rejection of the doctrine of atonement, if his death was merely designed to exert a conservative influence on the moral government of God. Certain it is that this is not the doctrine against which the early Socinians contended.

It is further plain that the principles of interpretation which Dr. Beman is obliged to adopt to reconcile his theory with the Bible, are all that is wanted to serve the purpose of Socinians. They both deny that we are to take the language of Scripture according to its "common and appropriate sense," and agreeable to the mode of thinking prevalent in the age in which it was uttered. The vastly different views entertained by Dr. Beman and Socinus as to the person of Christ, make of course a corresponding difference in their whole religious system. But as to the nature of the atonement, we have always considered the ground advocated by Dr. Beman, as utterly untenable against the arguments of Socinians. It is a rejection of the scriptural account, and after that is done, one theory has as much authority as another.

Our third remark is, that this theory besides being independent of Scripture, and

perfectly arbitrary, is directly opposed to the explicit teaching of the word of God. Be it remembered that the Bible is admitted to be full of the doctrine of the atonement; that it is the great central point in the religion of redeemed man. It is also admitted that God has revealed not only the fact that we are saved by the obedience and death of Christ, but also the way in which his work is efficacious to that end. The Socinian says, it is by its moral effect upon men; Dr. Beman says, it is from its tendency to prevent crime and preserve the order of the universe; the common faith of Christendom is, that Christ saves us by satisfying the demands of law and justice in our stead. As the Bible is full of this doctrine it must enable us to decide which of these views is right, for the Bible was intended to teach us the way of salvation. We are taught then first, that *Christ bore our sins*. Heb. ix. 28, 1 Pet. ii. 24, Is. liii. 12, &c. It cannot be disputed that the usual scriptural meaning of the expression, *to bear sin*, is to bear the punishment due to sin. Lev. xxii. 9. If they keep not my ordinance "they shall bear sin for it." Num. xviii. 22, xiv. 33. Lev. v. 1, 17. "He is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity." Ez. xviii. 20. "The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." No one doubts that this means, the son shall not be punished for the sins of the father, nor the father for the sins



of the son. When therefore the Scriptures say that Christ bore our sins, they say in express terms, that he bore the punishment of our sins. This is rendered the more certain, because he bore them by suffering, or by dying; and because the Scriptures express this same idea in so many other ways. This account of the nature of the atonement is found not only in poetical descriptions of Christ's sufferings, but in the most didactic portions of the Bible. The language used had an established sense in the minds of those to whom it was addressed, who could not fail to understand it according to its obvious meaning. That meaning, therefore, we are bound, by all sound rules of interpretation, to believe the sacred writers intended to convey. How does Dr. Beman answer this? Does he attempt to show that the phrase "to bear sin" does not commonly mean to bear the punishment of sin? or that it has not that meaning when used in reference to Christ? As far as we have been able to find, he contents himself with some general remarks against taking figurative language in its literal sense. He subjects the passages, in which the phrase in question occurs, to no critical examination. He makes no attempt to show that figurative language may not convey a definite meaning, or that that meaning is not to be learnt from usage, and the known opinions of those to whom it is addressed. It is enough for him that he does not like the truth, which the passages in question would then

teach; that he cannot see how the innocent could so take the place of the guilty as to bear their punishment; that he cannot reconcile this doctrine with the justice of God, nor with his views of other portions of Scripture. In the mean time the plain meaning of the Scriptures stands, and those who find all other scriptural representations consistent with that meaning, and to whom it is in fact the very ground of their hope towards God, will receive it gladly, and in all its simplicity. The theory of Dr. Beman, then, which denies that Christ suffered the penalty due to our sins, must be admitted to be in direct conflict with these express declarations of the word of God.\*

Secondly, the Scriptures in order to teach us the nature of atonement, say that Christ offered himself as a sacrifice unto God. What then is, according to the Scriptures, a sacrifice for sins? "The essence of a propitiatory

\* Professor Stuart, in his commentary and Excursus on Heb. ix. 28, says, "*To bear the sins of others*, is to bear or endure the penalty due to them." Having proved this, he adds, "The sentiment of the clause then clearly is, that Jesus by his death, (which could take place but once,) endured the penalty that our sins deserved or bore the sorrows due to us." What he further says, that the sufferings of Christ were not in *all respects* and considered in every point of view, an exact and specific *quid pro quo*, as it regards the penalty threatened against sin, that the Saviour did not suffer a guilty conscience, or despair, would be pertinent, had he first proved that any respectable body of Christians held any such doctrine, or that a guilty conscience, or despair is an essential part of the penalty of the law.

sacrifice," says Storr, "is the forgiveness of sin, through the transfer of punishment from the actual offender to another."\* The moderate Bishop Burnet says, "The notion of an expiatory sacrifice which was then, when the New Testament was writ, well understood all the world over, both by Jews and Gentiles, was this, that the sin of one person was transferred on a man or beast, who upon that was devoted or offered to God, and suffered in the room of the offending person; and by this oblation, the punishment of the sin being laid on the sacrifice, an expiation was made for sin, and the sinner was believed to be reconciled to God."† That this is the correct view of the scriptural doctrine concerning sacrifices, may be inferred, 1. From its being confessedly the light in which they were generally regarded by the Jews and by the whole ancient world, and from its being a simple and natural explanation of the service. On this hypothesis, every thing is significant and intelligible. 2. From the express didactic statements of the Bible. The life is said to be in the blood, and "I have given it to you as an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul (life). Lev. xvii. 11. The very nature of the service then was the substitution of life for life. The life forfeited was redeemed by the life paid. 3. From all the rites connected with the service and all the

\* Zweck des Todes Jesu. § 8.

† Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles. Article 2.

expressions employed concerning it. There was to be confession of sin, imposition of hands (as expressing the idea of transfer and substitution,) the sins were said to be laid on the head of the victim, which was then put to death, or, as in the case of the scape-goat, dismissed into the wilderness and another goat sacrificed in its place. All these directions plainly teach that the nature of expiatory offerings consisted in the substitution of the victim for the offender, and in the infliction of the penalty of death incurred by the one, upon the other. 4. That this is the scriptural doctrine on this subject, is made still plainer by the fact, that all that is taught by saying, that the Messiah bore our sins, that our iniquities were laid upon him, that he bore our sorrows, that the chastisement of our peace was laid on him, is expressed by the prophet by saying, he made "his soul an offering for sin." Then an offering for sin, is one on whom sin is laid, who bears sins, *i. e.*, as has been shown, the penalty due to sin. 5. This view of the subject is further confirmed by a consideration of the effects ascribed to these sacrifices. They made atonement; they propitiated God; they secured the remission of the penalty incurred. When an Israelite had committed any offence by which he forfeited his standing in the theocracy, (that is, the favour of God as his theocratical ruler,) he brought to the priest the appointed sacrifice, made confession of his sin, the victim was slain in his

place, and he was restored to his standing, and saved from being cut off from his people. These sacrifices always produced these effects; they always secured the remission of the theocratical penalty for which they were offered and accepted. Whether they secured the forgiveness of the soul before God, depended on the state of mind of the offerer. Of themselves they had no such efficacy, since it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin. But nothing is plainer from Scripture, than that the way in which the Israelites obtained the remission of the civil or theocratical penalties which they had incurred, was intended to teach us how sin is pardoned in the sight of God through Jesus Christ.

If then the Scriptures, according to the almost unanimous judgment of Christians, teach that the idea of an expiatory sacrifice, is, that by vicarious punishment justice is satisfied and sin forgiven; if this was the view taken of them by Jews and Gentiles, then does the Bible, in so constantly representing Christ as a propitiation, as a lamb, as a sacrifice for sin, expressly teach that he bore the penalty due to our sins, that he satisfied divine justice, and secured for all in whose behalf that sacrifice is accepted, the pardon of sin and restoration to the divine favour. To talk of figure here is out of the question. Admit that the language is figurative, the question is, what idea was it intended to convey? beyond doubt that which the sacred writers

knew with certainty would be attached to it, by their immediate readers, and which in fact has been attached to it in all ages of the Church.\* To tell a conscience-stricken Israelite that a sacrifice was designed either to impress his own mind, or the minds of others with the truth that God is just or benevolent, would have been a mockery. It was to him an atonement, a propitiation, a vicarious punishment, or it was nothing. And it is no less a mockery to tell a convinced sinner, that the death of Christ was designed to lead him to repentance, or to preserve the good order of the universe. Unless the Redeemer was a sacrifice, on whom our sins were laid, who bore the penalty we had incurred, it is, to such a sinner, no atonement, and no adequate ground of confidence toward God.†

\* "It is not possible for us to preserve" says Bishop Burnet, "any reverence for the New Testament, or the writers of it, so far as to think them even honest men, not to say inspired men, if we can imagine, that in so sacred and important a matter they could exceed so much as to represent that a sacrifice which is not truly so. This is a subject which will not bear figures and amplifications; it must be treated strictly, and with a just exactness of expression."—Burnet on the Thirty-Nine Articles, the same page quoted above.

† "The innate sense of divine justice, which all men possess, demands that the sinner should receive his due, that the stroke he has given to the law, should recoil upon himself. The deeper his sense of guilt, the less can he be satisfied with mere pardon, and the more does he demand punishment, for by punishment he is JUSTIFIED. Whence do we derive his intimate persuasion of God's justice? Not from without; because men, as empirically guided, regard freedom from suffering as the highest good; it must therefore be implanted in our nature by God himself. The

Again, it is a part of the common faith of the Church, that Jesus Christ, is a true and proper priest; that what was symbolical and figurative, with regard to other priests, is real as it regards him. He is called a priest; it is proved that he has all the qualifications for the office, that he was divinely appointed, that he performed all its duties, secures all its benefits, and that his priesthood supersedes all others. We are accordingly commanded to come to him in the character of a priest, to commit our souls into his hands, that he may reconcile us to God, and make intercession for us. This is the scriptural method of representing the manner in which Christ saves us, and the nature of his work. Dr. Beman in his chapter on the "Fact of the Atonement," which is directed

holiness of God, which reveals itself to the sinner by the connexion between suffering and transgression, has therefore, a witness for itself in every human breast. Hence, on the one hand, the proclamation of pardon and reconciliation, could not satisfy the conscience of the sinner, unless his guilt had been atoned for by punishment; and on the other hand, divine love could not offer its blessings to the sinner, unless holiness was revealed together with love. It was therefore necessary that suffering commensurate with the apostasy of man should be endured, which men would impute to themselves as their own. Such was the suffering, inward and outward, of the Redeemer. Two things were necessary, 1. That those sufferings should correspond to (entsprechen) the greatness of the sin of mankind. 2. That the sinner could rightfully impute them to himself."—THOLUCK, *Beilage II. zum Hebraerbrief*, p. 104. There is more real and precious truth, according to our judgment, in that short paragraph, than in all Dr. Beman's book.

against Socinians, avails himself of all the usual sources of scriptural proof, and in the course of the chapter is forced to speak of Christ as a sacrifice and a Priest. But when he comes to the exposition of his views of the nature of the atonement, he finds it expedient and even necessary, to leave that mode of representation entirely out of view. We hear no more of propitiating God, of Christ as a sacrifice, of his character as a Priest. It is now all moral government, the order and interest of the universe, symbolical teaching, exhibition of truth and motives. Why is all this? Why does not Dr. Beman's doctrine admit of being thrown into the scriptural form? Why must the terms sacrifice, priest, propitiation, be discarded, when teaching the nature of the atonement? For the very obvious reason that there is an entire incongruity between his views and the word of God. What has a sacrifice and priest to do with governmental display? This fact alone works the condemnation of Dr. Beman's whole theory. His plan of salvation, his method of access to God, is irreconcilable with that presented in the Scriptures. There we are taught that as the Israelite who had offended, came to the priest, who made an atonement for him in the appointed way, and thus reconciled him to God; so the penitent sinner, must come to Christ as his High Priest, who satisfies the divine justice by presenting his own merits before God, and who ever lives to make intercession for him.



Would this representation ever lead a human being to imagine, that Christ merely makes pardon possible, that his death was a symbolical lesson to the universe? According to Dr. Beman's theory, Christ is not a Priest. We are under no necessity of recognizing him as such, nor of committing ourselves into his hands, nor of relying on his merits and intercession. A mere possibility of salvation for all men is all that Christ has accomplished. But does this make him a High Priest, in the scriptural and universally received sense of the term?

A third method by which the Scriptures teach us the nature of the atonement, is by express declarations concerning the nature of his sufferings, or the immediate design of his death. It is expressly taught that his sufferings were penal, that he endured the penalty of the law, and that he thus suffered not for himself but for us. This is a point about which there is so much strange misconception, that it is necessary to explain the meaning of the terms here used. The sufferings of rational beings are either calamities, having no reference to sin; or chastisement designed for the improvement of the sufferer; or penal when designed for the satisfaction of justice. Now what is meant by the language above used is, that the sufferings of Christ were not mere calamities; neither were they chastisements, (in the sense just stated,) nor were they simply exemplary, nor merely symbolical, designed to teach this or that

truth, but that they were penal, i. e. designed to satisfy divine justice. This is the distinctive character assigned to them in Scripture. Again, by the penalty of the law is meant, that suffering which the law demands as a satisfaction to justice. It is not any specific kind or degree of suffering, for it varies both as to degree and kind, in every supposable case of its infliction. The sufferings of no two men that ever lived, are precisely alike, in this world or the next, unless their constitution, temperament, sins, feelings, and circumstances were precisely alike, which is absolutely incredible. The objection therefore started by Socinians, that Christ did not suffer the penalty of the law, because he did not suffer remorse, despair, or eternal banishment from God, was answered, by contemporary theologians, by denying that those things entered essentially into the penalty of the law. That penalty is in Scripture called death, which includes every kind of evil inflicted by divine justice in punishment of sin; and inasmuch as Christ suffered such evil, and to such a degree as fully satisfied divine justice, he suffered what the Scriptures call the penalty of the law. It is not the nature, but the relation of sufferings to the law, which gives them their distinctive character. What degree of suffering the law demands, as it varies in every specific case, God only can determine. The sufferings of Christ were unutterably great; still with one voice, Papists, Lutherans, and Reformed, re-

butted the objection of Socinus, that the transient sufferings of one man could not be equivalent to the sufferings due to the sins of men, by referring, not to the degree of the Saviour's anguish, as equal to the misery due to all for whom he died, but to the infinite dignity of his person. It was the Lord of glory who was crucified. As the bodily sufferings of a man are referred to his whole person, so the Scriptures refer the sufferings of Christ's human nature to his whole person. And he was a divine, and not a human person; but a divine person with a human nature. This is an awful subject, on which all irreverent speculation must be very offensive to God. Let it be enough to say with the Scriptures that Christ suffered the penalty of the law in our stead, and that the penalty of the law was that kind and amount of suffering, which from such a person, was a full satisfaction to the divine justice. All that our standards say on this point, they say wisely, viz. that the Saviour endured the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, the accursed death of the cross, and continued under the power of death for a time. This was the penalty of the law; for the wrath of God, however expressed, constitutes that penalty, in the strictest and highest sense.

That the Scriptures do teach that Christ's sufferings were penal, has already been proved from those passages in which he is said to bear our sins, that our iniquities were laid upon him, that he suffered the chastise-

ment of our peace, and that as a sacrifice he endured the death which we had incurred. The same truth is expressed still more explicitly in Gal. iii. 13. The apostle thus argues. The law pronounces accursed all who do not obey every command; no man has ever rendered this perfect obedience, therefore all men are under the curse; but Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us. There can be no doubt what the apostle means, when he says, that all men are under the curse; nor when he says, cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the law to do them; neither can it be doubted what he means when he says, Christ was made a curse. The three expressions, under the curse, accursed, and made a curse, cannot mean essentially different things. If the former mean that we were exposed to the penalty, the latter must mean that Christ endured the penalty. He hath redeemed us from the curse by bearing it in our stead.\*

To the same effect the apostle speaks in Rom. viii. 3. What the law could not do

\* In this interpretation every modern commentator of whom we have any knowledge concurs, as for example Koppe, Flatt, Winer, Usteri, Matthies, Rueckert, De Wette. What the apostle adds in the next verse, "For it is written, cursed is every one that is hung upon a tree," is evidently intended to justify from Scripture the use of the word *curse*. Those publicly exposed as suffering the sentence of the law, are called *cursed*; hence since Christ, though perfectly holy, did bear the sentence of the law, the word may be properly applied to him.

(i. e. effect the justification of men) in that it was weak through the flesh, that God did, having sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, or as a sin-offering, he condemned, i. e. punished sin, in the flesh, i. e. in him, who was clothed in our nature. This passage agrees, as to the principal point, with the one cited from Galatians. The sentence which we had incurred was carried into effect upon the Redeemer, in order that we might be delivered from the law under which we were justly condemned. In 2 Cor. v. 21, the apostle in urging men to be reconciled to God, presents the nature and mode of the atonement, as the ground of his exhortation. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." The only sense in which Christ, who was free from all sin, could be made sin, was by having our sins laid upon him; and the only way in which our sins could be laid upon him, was by his so assuming our place as to endure, in our stead, the penalty we had incurred. "God made him to be sin," says De Wette, "in that he laid on him the punishment of sin." Here again we have precisely the same doctrine, taught under all the other forms of expression already considered. Christ was made sin, as we in him are made righteousness; we are justified, he was condemned; we are freed from the penalty, he endured it; he was treated as justice required the sinner to be treated; we are treated according to his merits and not our own deserts.

Fourthly, there are various other forms under which the Scriptures set forth the nature of Christ's death which the limits of a review forbid our considering. He has redeemed us; he has purchased us; he gave himself as a ransom, &c. It is readily admitted that all these terms are often used in a wide sense, to express the general idea of deliverance without reference to the mode by which that deliverance is effected. It cannot however be denied that they properly express deliverance by purchase, i. e. by the payment of what is considered equivalent to the person or thing redeemed. In the Bible it is not simply said that Christ has delivered us; nor is it said he delivered us by power, nor by teaching, but by his death, by his own precious blood, by giving himself, by being made a curse for us. Such representations cannot fail to convey the idea of a redemption in the proper sense of the term, and therefore teach the true nature of the atonement. We are redeemed; that which was given for us was of infinite value.

If the Scriptures thus teach that Christ saves us by bearing our sins, or being made a sin-offering in our place, then the more general expressions, such as he died for us, he gave himself for us, we are saved by his death, his blood, his cross, and others of a similar kind, are all to be understood in accordance with those more explicit statements. To the pious reader of the New Testament, therefore, the precious truth that Christ died

as our substitute, enduring in his own person, the death which we had incurred, redeeming us from the curse by being made a curse for us, meets him upon almost every page, and confirms his confidence in the truth and exalts his estimate of its value, by this frequency of repetition and variety of statement.

Fifth, there is still another consideration in proof of the unscriptural character of Dr. Beman's theory, which is too important to be overlooked. The apostle in unfolding the plan of redemption proceeds on the assumption that men are under a law or covenant which demands perfect obedience, and which threatens death in case of transgression. He then shows that no man, whether Jew or Gentile, can fulfil the conditions of that covenant, or so obey the law as to claim justification on the ground of his own righteousness. Still as this law is perfectly righteous, it cannot be arbitrarily set aside. What then was to be done? What hope can there be for the salvation of sinners? The apostle answers by saying, that what the law could not do, (that is, save men,) God has accomplished by the mission of his Son. But how does the Son save us? This is the very question before us. It relates to the nature of the work of Christ, which Dr. Beman has undertaken to discuss. Paul's answer to that question is, that Christ saves us by being made under the law and fulfilling all its demands. He fulfilled all righteousness, he

knew no sin, he was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and thus endured the death which the law threatened against sin. He has thus redeemed us from the law; that is, we are no longer under obligation to satisfy, in our own person, its demands, in order to our justification. The perfect righteousness of Christ is offered as the ground of justification, and all who accept of that righteousness by faith, have it so imputed to them, that they can plead it as their own, and God has promised to accept it to their salvation. We can hardly persuade ourselves that any ordinary reader of the Bible, can deny that this is a correct representation of the manner in which Paul preached the gospel. It is the burden of all his writings, it is the gospel itself as it lay in his mind, and as he presented it to others. It is the whole subject of the first eight chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, and of all the doctrinal part of his Epistle to the Galatians. In the former of these epistles, he shows that there are but two methods of justification, the one by our own righteousness and the other by the righteousness of God. Having shown that no man has or can have an adequate righteousness, of his own, he shows that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God, that is, the righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ, and which is upon all them that believe. This righteousness is so complete, that God is just in justifying those who have the faith



by which it is received and appropriated. He afterwards illustrates this great doctrine of imputed righteousness, by a reference to the case of Adam, and shows that as on the account of the offence of one man, a sentence of condemnation passed on all men, so on account of the righteousness of one man, the free gift of justification has come upon all. As by the disobedience of one the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, the many are made righteous. It is involved in all this, that we are no longer under the law, no longer subject to its demand of a perfect personal righteousness, but justified by a righteousness which satisfies its widest claims. Hence the apostle so frequently asserts, ye are not under the law; ye are free from the law. But how? not by abrogating the law, or by dispensing with its righteous claims, but legally as a woman is free from her husband, not by deserting him, not by repudiating his authority, but by his ceasing to have any claim to her, which continues only so long as he lives. So we are freed from the law by the body of Christ, i. e., by his death. He was made under the law that he might redeem them who were under the law; he hath redeemed us from its curse by being made a curse for us; he has taken away the handwriting which was against us, nailing it to the cross. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, because we are by this gospel freed from the

law and its condemnation. Hence Paul teaches that if righteousness, (that is, what satisfies the demands of the law) could have come in any other way, Christ is dead in vain. How exclusively this righteousness of Christ was the ground of the apostle's personal confidence, is plain from his pregnant declaration to the Philippians, that he counted all things but dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

With this representation of the plan of salvation, Dr. Beman's theory is utterly irreconcilable. According to his theory, the demands of the law have not been satisfied. "The relation of the sinner to the curse which this law pronounces against the transgressor, is legally—not evangelically—just the same that it was without an atonement." "The law has the same demand upon him, and utters the same denunciation of wrath against him. The law, or justice, that is distributive justice, as expressed in the law, has received no satisfaction at all." p. 133. What then has Christ's atonement done for us? He has simply opened the way for pardon. "All that the atonement has done for the sinner," says Dr. Beman, "is to place him within the reach of pardon." p. 137. "The way is now open. Mercy can now operate. The door is open." p. 106. The atonement "was required and made in order to open a consist-

ent way for the publication of pardon, or for the exercise of grace to sinners." p. 124.

This theory directly contradicts the apostle's doctrine, 1. Because he teaches that Christ was made under the law for the purpose of redeeming them that are under the law, and that he was made a curse for us. We are therefore delivered from the law, as a covenant of works, and are not subject to its demands and its curse when united to him. 2. Because it virtually denies that Christ wrought out any righteousness which is the ground of our justification. He merely makes pardon possible, whereas Paul says that by his obedience we are made righteous, that we become the righteousness of God in him. On this new theory, the language of the apostle, when he speaks of not having his own righteousness, but the righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is unintelligible. 3. It destroys the very nature of justification, which is "an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed unto us, and received by faith alone." But according to this theory, there is no such thing as justification: we are merely pardoned. In Scripture, however, and in all languages, the ideas of pardon and justification are distinct and in a measure opposite.\* If we are jus-

\* "The word *δικαιοῦν*," says De Wette, "means not merely negatively *to pardon*; but also affirmatively *to declare righteous*."

tified, we are declared righteous. That is, it is declared that, as concerns us, on some ground or for some reason, the law is satisfied; and that reason Paul says must either be our own righteousness, or the righteousness of Christ. Dr. Beman's theory admits of no such idea of justification. The sinner is merely forgiven, because the death of Christ, prevents such forgiveness doing any harm. This is not what the Bible teaches, when it speaks of our being made the righteousness of God in Christ; or of his imputing righteousness to us; or of our receiving the gift of righteousness. This is not what the convinced sinner needs, to whom, not mere pardon, but justification, on the ground of a righteousness, which though not his own, is his, as wrought out for him and bestowed by the free gift of God, is necessary to peace with God. Rom. v. 1.

4. It destroys the nature of justifying faith and deranges the whole plan of salvation. In accordance with the Scriptures, faith in Jesus Christ, is, in our standards, declared to be a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel. This is perfectly natural and intelligible, if Christ is our righteousness. If his work of obedience and death is the sole ground of justification before God, then we understand what the Bible means by believing upon Christ, putting our trust in him, being found in him; then the phrase, faith of Christ, which so often occurs as expressing

the idea of a faith of which he is the object, has its appropriate meaning. Then too we understand what is meant by coming to Christ, receiving Christ, putting on Christ, being in Christ. Upon Dr. Beman's theory, however, all this is well nigh unintelligible. We admit that a vague sense may be put on these expressions on any theory of the atonement, even that of the Socinians. If the death of Christ is necessary to salvation, either, as they say, by revealing the love of God, or as Dr. Beman says, by revealing his regard for law, then to believe in Christ, or to receive Christ, might be said to mean, to believe the truth that without the revelation made by his death, God would not forgive sin. But how far is this from being the full and natural import of the terms! Who would ever express mere acquiescence in the fact that Christ has made salvation possible, by saying, "I would be found in him not having mine own righteousness, but the righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ?" The fact is the Socinian view is in some respects much easier reconciled with Scripture than that of Dr. Beman. The passage just quoted, for example, might have this meaning, viz. we must have, not the moral excellence which the law can give, but that inward righteousness of which faith in Christ is the source. This would have some plausibility, but what "the righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ" can mean, as opposed

to our own righteousness, on Dr. Beman's ground, it is hard to conceive.

Again, according to the Bible and the common doctrine of the Church, when a sinner is convinced of his sin and misery, of his entire unworthiness in the sight of God, he is to be directed to renounce all dependence upon himself and to believe in Christ, that is, to place all his confidence in him. But if Christ has only made salvation possible, if he has merely brought the sinner within the reach of mercy, this is a most unnatural direction. What has the sinner to come to Christ for? Why should he be directed to receive or submit to the righteousness of God? Christ has nothing to do for him. He has made salvation possible, and his work is done; what the sinner has to do is to submit to God. The way is open, let him lay aside his rebellion, and begin to love and serve his Maker. Such are the directions, which this theory would lead its advocates to give to those who are convinced of their sin and danger. This is not a mere imagination, such are the directions, commonly and characteristically given by those who adopt Dr. Beman's view of the atonement. Christ disappears in a great measure from his own gospel. You may take up volume after volume of their sermons, and you will find excellent discourses upon sin, obligation, moral government, regeneration, divine sovereignty, &c., but the cross is comparatively

kept out of view. Christ has no immediate work in the sinner's salvation; and accordingly the common directions to those who ask, what they must do to be saved, is, submit to God, choose him and his service, or something of similar import. To such an extreme has this been carried, by some whose logical consistency has overcome the influence of scriptural language and traditionary instruction, that they have not hesitated to say that the command, Believe in Christ, is obsolete. It was the proper test of submission in the apostolic age, but in our day, when all men recognize Christ as the Messiah, it is altogether inappropriate. We doubt not that thousands who agree substantially with Dr. Beman, would be shocked at this language; nevertheless it is the legitimate consequence of his theory. If the atonement is a mere governmental display, a mere symbolical method of instruction, then the command to believe in Christ, to come to him, to trust in him and his righteousness, is not the language in which sinners should be addressed. It does not inform them of the specific thing which they must do in order to be saved. Christ has opened the door, their business is now immediately with God.

Again, can any reader of the Bible, can any Christian at least, doubt that union with Christ, was to the apostles one of the most important and dearest of all the doctrines of the gospel; a doctrine which lay at the root

of all the other doctrines of redemption, the foundation of their hopes, the source of their spiritual life. But according to the theory that Christ's death is a mere symbolical method of instruction, an expression of a great truth, that it merely opens the way for mercy, what can union with Christ mean? In what sense are we in him? how are we his members? How is it that we die, that we live, that we are to rise from the dead in virtue of that union? What is meant by living by faith, of which he is the object? The fact is this theory changes the whole nature of the gospel; every thing is altered; the nature of faith, the nature of justification, the mode of access to God, our relation to Christ, the inward exercises of communion with him, so that the Christian feels disposed to say with Mary, They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

We do not believe there is truth enough in this theory to sustain the life of religion in any man's heart. We have no idea that Dr. Beman, Dr. Cox, or any good man really lives by it. The truth, as it is practically embraced and appropriated by the soul under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is the truth in the form in which it is presented in the Bible, and not as expressed in abstract propositions. It is therefore very possible for a man, to adopt theoretically such an abstract statement of a scriptural doctrine, as really denies its nature and destroys its power, and yet that same man may receive the truth for



his own salvation as it is revealed in the Bible. We see daily instances of this in the case of Arminians, who professedly reject doctrines, which are really included in every prayer they utter. In like manner we believe that many who profess to adopt the theory, that the death of Christ merely opens the way for mercy, that it is only the symbolical expression of a moral truth, deny that theory in every act of faith they exercise in Jesus Christ. Still the theory is none the less false and dangerous. It has its effect, and just so far as it operates, it tends to destroy all true religion. Its tendency, especially in private Christians, is counteracted by reading the Scriptures and by the teaching of the Spirit. But the evil of the constant inculcation of error and misrepresentation of truth, cannot easily be exaggerated. The particular error concerning the nature of the atonement inculcated in this book, has, we believe, done more to corrupt religion, and to promote Socinianism, than any other of the vaunted improvements of American theology, which, after all, are but feeble re-productions of the rejected errors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The doctrine of atonement for which we contend as the distinguishing and essential doctrine of the gospel, is, 1. That sin for its own sake deserves the wrath and curse of God. 2. That God is just, immutably determined, from the excellence of his nature, to punish sin. 3. That out of his sovereign and

infinite love, in order to redeem us from the law, that is, from its demands and curse, he sent his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, who in his own person fulfilled those demands, and endured that curse in our stead. 4. That his righteousness, or merit, thus wrought out, is imputed to every one that believes, to his justification before God. This is the doctrine of the church catholic, overlaid, corrupted, and made of none effect, in the church of Rome; disembarrassed, reproduced, and exhibited as *the* doctrine of the Reformation; in manifold forms since opposed or rejected, but ever virtually embraced and trusted in by every sincere child of God.

What then are the objections to this great doctrine? The first objection urged by Dr. Beman is, that it involves "a transfer of moral character between Christ and those for whom he died. Christ could not be punished on legal principles, until he was guilty in the eye of the law; and his people could not be justified on legal principles, till its penalty was literally inflicted. This transfer of character so as to render Jesus Christ the sinner, and the soul for whom he died, innocent, appears to us without foundation in reason and Scripture." The objection then is, that the doctrine that Christ endured the punishment of our sins, and that we are justified by the imputation of his righteousness, involves such a transfer of moral character as to render Jesus Christ a sinner, and those for whom

he died innocent! This objection is directed not against this or that individual writer, but against whole bodies and classes of men, for Dr. Beman over and over asserts that there are but two views of the atonement, the one against which he brings this and other objections, and his own governmental theory. We have already shown that the former is the common doctrine of all the churches of the Reformation. It is against them therefore, this objection is brought. Our first remark on it is, that it is the old, often repeated, and often refuted slander of Socinians and Papists, the latter corrupting and denying the doctrine of their own church. Our second remark is, that it is a gross, shocking, and, we are constrained in conscience to add, wicked misrepresentation. Dr. Beman betrays his want of faith in the truth of the accusation, though he makes it against hundreds and thousands of his brethren, by saying that a doctrine which represents Jesus Christ as a sinner, "appears to us without foundation in reason and Scripture."! Shocking blasphemy *appears to us without foundation!* What man who believed what he said could utter such language? Is this the way in which a doctrine which represents the Son of God a sinner, is to be spoken of? No, Dr. Beman knew full well, that the doctrine he writes against, includes no such blasphemy. He cannot be so grossly ignorant as not to know that the distinction between the imputation and the infusion of sin and righteous-

ness, is one for which the churches of the Reformation contended as for their life; and that the distinction is plain, intelligible, scriptural, and unavoidable;—one which he and all other men do make, and must make. When the prophet says, “The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father,” does Dr. Beman pretend to believe, that he means that the moral character of the father shall not be transferred to the son? that the sin of the one shall not be infused into the other? Why then does he pretend to believe (for we hope it is mere pretence) that when we say, our sins were laid on Christ, we teach that our moral character was so transferred to him as to render him a sinner? Our third remark is, that the objection is glaringly unjust. We say in the very language of Scripture that Christ bore our sins. We tell in what sense we understand that language, viz. that it means, not that Christ was rendered in moral character a sinner, which is blasphemy, but that he bore the punishment of our sins, which is the universally admitted meaning of the scriptural phrase. We say further, that by punishment we mean sufferings judicially inflicted as a satisfaction to justice. These things are so plain, they have been so often repeated; they so evidently do not involve the shocking doctrine charged on those who use this language, that we can have little respect for the man, who can gravely, and tamely repeat the charge, to the prejudice of the truth, and to the wounding of his brethren.

Dr. Beman's second objection is, that the system he opposes destroys "all mercy in God the Father, in the salvation of sinners, because it represents God as totally disinclined to the exercise of compassion, till every jot and tittle of the legal curse was inflicted. On the same principle grace or pardon in the release of the sinner from future punishment, would be out of the question; for what grace or pardon, or favour, can there be in the discharge of a debtor whose demand (debt?) has been cancelled to the uttermost farthing?" p. 122. This objection is the staple of his book. On p. 100 he represents us as teaching that "the Son of God endured the exact amount of suffering due on legal principles, to sinners." On p. 107 he says, "The amount of Christ's sufferings must consequently be the same as the aggregate sufferings included in the eternal condemnation of all those who are saved by his merit. . . . The agonies which he suffered were equal to the endless misery of all those who will be saved by his interposition in their behalf." On p. 146, he says, "If *one* soul were to be saved by the atonement, Christ must sustain an amount of suffering equal to that involved in the eternal condemnation of that one soul; and if a *thousand* were to be saved, a thousand times that amount, and in the same proportion for any greater number who are to be rescued from perdition and exalted to glory. To this scheme there are insurmountable objections." True enough, but who hold that scheme?

Dr. Beman attributes it to all who believe in the atonement, and do not adopt his scheme, for he says there are but two. This doctrine that the sufferings of Christ amounted to the aggregate sufferings of those who are to be saved, that he endured just so much for so many, is not found in any confession of the Protestant churches, nor in the writings of any standard theologian, nor in the recognized authorities of any church of which we have any knowledge. The whole objection is a gross and inexcusable misrepresentation\* In a more moderate form it was brought forward by the Socinians, and repelled by the writers of that and subsequent ages. De Moor is generally recognized as the theologian of most authority among the churches of Holland, and Turretin is admitted to be one of the strictest of the Geneva school, and they both answer this calumny, by denying that according to their doctrine, there is any necessity for the assumption that Christ's sufferings were equal to the sufferings of all his people. Thus Turretin, after quoting at length the objection from Socinus, answers it, first, by showing that the Scriptures teach that the one death of Christ was a satisfaction for all; that as by the one sin of Adam, many were made sinners, so by the righteous-

\* There was a little anonymous work called Gethsemane, republished some years ago in this country, which taught this *quid pro quo* system of the atonement. But we do not know a single man, now of our church, who adopted the sentiments of that work.

ness of Christ, many are made righteous. 2. By insisting on the distinction between pecuniary and penal satisfaction. A piece of money in the hand of a king is of no more value, than in the hands of a peasant, but the life of a king is of more value than that of a peasant, and one commander is often exchanged for many soldiers. 3. He says the adversaries forget that Christ is God, and therefore, though his sufferings could not be infinite as they were endured by his finite nature, they were of infinite value in virtue of the infinite dignity of his person. Sin, he says, is an infinite evil, because committed against an infinite God, though the act of a finite nature. So the sufferings of Christ, though endured in his human nature, are of infinite value from the dignity of his person.\*

Dr. Beman, under this head, frequently objects that we degrade the atonement into a mere commercial transaction, a payment of a debt, which, from the nature of the case excludes the idea of free remission. Our first remark on this objection is, that the Scriptures use this same figure, and therefore it is right it should be used. When it is said, Christ purchased the church with his own blood, that we are redeemed not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, such language means something. In every metaphor there

\* See in the fourth vol. of his works, the treatise *De Satisfactione Christi*, p. 289. The same answer to the same objection may be seen in *De Moor*, vol. iii. p. 1030.

is a point of comparison; the essential idea involved in the figure, must be found in the subject to be illustrated. To purchase is to acquire, and to acquire, by giving or doing something which secures a title to the thing acquired. When it is said that Christ purchased the church, it is certainly meant that he acquired it, that it is his, and that by his death he has secured a title to it, founded in the justice and promise of God. This does not make redemption a commercial transaction, nor imply that there are not essential points of diversity between acquiring by money, and acquiring by blood. Hence our second remark is, that if Dr. Beman will take up any elementary work on theology, he will find the distinction between pecuniary and penal satisfaction clearly pointed out, and the satisfaction of Christ shown to be of the latter, and not of the former kind. 1. In the one, the demand is upon the thing due, in the other case it is upon the person of the criminal. Hence, 2. The creditor is bound to accept the payment of the debt no matter when or by whom offered; whereas in the case of a crime or sin, the sovereign is bound neither to provide a substitute nor to accept of one when offered. If he does either, it is a matter of grace. 3. Hence penal satisfaction does not *ipso facto* liberate, the acceptance is a matter of arrangement or covenant, and the terms of that covenant must depend on the will of the parties. Dr. Beman lapsed into an important truth, when he said "Christ



suffered by covenant," p. 98. What that covenant is, we learn from Scripture, and from the manner in which it is executed. The Bible teaches that, agreeably to that covenant, the merits of Christ do not avail to the benefit of his people immediately; his children remain under condemnation as well as others until they believe; and when they do believe, they receive but the first fruits of their inheritance, they are but imperfectly sanctified, and are still subject to many evils, but being in a justified state, their sufferings are chastisements and not punishments, that is, they are designed for their own improvement, and not to satisfy justice.

The satisfaction of Christ therefore being for sin and by suffering, is expressly and formally declared not to be of the nature of pecuniary satisfaction. The grace of the gospel is thereby not obscured but rendered the more conspicuous. God is not rendered merciful by the atonement, (as we be slanderously reported, as some affirm that we say); on the contrary, the atonement flows from his infinite love. Dr. Beman writes as a Tritheist, or as against Tritheists, when he speaks of the work of the Son rendering the Father gracious, and attributes that representation to us. The Lord our God is one God. It was his infinite love devised the plan of redemption, and it was so devised, that the exercise of love should be perfectly consistent with holiness, in order that God might be just in justifying sinners. Surely then our

doctrine does not obscure the grace of the gospel, at least as to the origin of the plan of mercy. But it is further objected that if Christ rendered a complete satisfaction to divine justice, then pardon becomes a matter of justice and not of grace. Justice to whom? certainly not to the ungodly, the unrighteous, the utterly undeserving, and hell-deserving sinner. If Christ suffered by covenant, and fulfilled all the conditions of that covenant, then he acquired a right to its promises. If he purchased his church he has a right to it. If it was promised that for his obedience to death, he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, then he, having done all that was required of him, has a right to the promised reward. But what right have we? None in the world; we are poor, and blind, and miserable, having nothing, meriting nothing, our only hope is that we shall be treated, not according to our deserts, but according to the merits of another.

The objection sounds strange to our ears, coming from such a quarter, that we destroy the grace of the gospel. What is salvation by grace, if it is not that God of his mere good pleasure provided redemption, that he determines of his own will who shall be partakers of its benefits; that those who are brought to repentance and faith, are not only justified avowedly on the ground of a righteousness which is not their own, but are made to feel and acknowledge, as the very

condition of their acceptance, their own ill-desert and misery, and not only owe every thing to Christ, but possess every thing simply in virtue of their union with him, which union is kept up only by a self-renouncing, self-emptying faith? The feeblest infant resting on its mother's bosom, a new born lamb carried in the shepherd's arms, might with as much plausibility be suspected of doubting the love that sustains them, as the believer in Christ's having purchased the church with his own blood, of doubting the entire gratuitousness of his own salvation.

It would be easy to retort, and show that it is Dr. Beman's doctrine that destroys the grace of salvation. If Christ only makes pardon possible, if the possibility of forgiveness is all we owe to him, to whom or what do we owe heaven? Is it to ourselves as some of the advocates of his doctrine teach? This is the natural answer. Christ having made pardon possible, then God deals with men according to their works. Whatever answer Dr. Beman himself would give to the above question, it must from the nature of his system, be tame compared with the answer, which flows from the doctrine that we owe the blessed Redeemer, not the possibility of pardon merely, but justification, adoption, sanctification, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. These things, and all the blessedness they include or suppose, are not merely rendered possible, but actually secured and given for Christ's sake alone;

and hence the spirits of the just made perfect, whose robes have been washed and made white in the blood of the lamb, would drown, in their thanksgiving to him that has cleansed them from all sin, the whispered acknowledgments of those who have nothing for which to give thanks but the possibility of pardon.

These objections which Dr. Beman urges in various forms throughout his book, are all old, and have been answered a hundred times. There is indeed one objection which is certainly American. It seems there was no economy in the atonement. It saved nothing and gained nothing. The atonement it is said is "the grand device of heaven for preventing misery and promoting happiness." p. 108. And it is triumphantly urged, (through some eight pages,) that if Christ suffered as much as the redeemed would have endured there is no gain of happiness. It is "a mere *quid-pro-quo* transaction." p. 111. We have already shown that no church, or class of men hold that the blessed Redeemer endured as much suffering as the redeemed would have endured. It is a mere misrepresentation. But dismissing that point, the objection itself is unworthy of a being, gifted with a moral sense. Would it be nothing that unnumbered millions are saved from sin and made perfect in holiness? Supposing there was no absolute gain as to the amount of misery prevented, that Christ had in a few years suffered all that finite beings

through eternity could endure, still would the vast accession to the holy inhabitants of heaven be nothing? Does not the Bible say that he gave himself for his church, to purify and cleanse it? that the promotion of holiness was the design of his death? Has it come to this, that the theory which makes happiness the end of the creation, must represent holiness as nothing, not worth giving thanks for, if gained at the least expense of happiness? This gross, epicurean view of the sublime and awful mystery of redemption, is a disgrace to the age and country that gave it birth.

We have thus endeavored to show that the theory of atonement advocated by Dr. Beman, is founded on the false assumption that the punishment of sin is for the prevention of crime, and not on account of its own intrinsic ill-desert; that it of necessity involves a denial of the justice of God, and makes mere happiness the end of creation; that it is destitute of any semblance or pretence of support from the Scriptures; that it is just as arbitrary, and as much a philosophical speculation as the Socinian theory, the latter asserting that the design of Christ's death was to display the love of God, and thus lead men to repentance; and the former, that it was intended to express his regard for his law, and thus act as a motive to obedience. We further endeavoured to prove that the theory is in direct conflict with the Bible. The Scriptures teach in every possible way, that as man was

under a law or covenant which requires perfect obedience and threatens death in case of transgression, the Son of God was born of a woman and made under that law, fulfilling its conditions of perfect obedience and sustaining its curse for man's redemption. And that his righteousness is freely imputed to all those who receive and rest upon it by faith. In denying this doctrine, which is the common faith of Christendom, Dr. Beman's theory involves the denial of justification, reducing it to mere pardon; destroys the true doctrine of justifying faith; overlooks the union between Christ and his people; tends to banish Christ from view, and to vitiate the very source of all evangelical religion.

We showed that his objections to this doctrine, with one melancholy exception, were the oft repeated and oft refuted calumnies of Socinians; that the common doctrine does not involve the transfer of moral character or represent Christ as a sinner; that so far from obscuring the grace of the gospel, or teaching that the atonement is the cause of the love of God, it represents it as flowing from that love, and presents in the clearest possible light the gratuitous nature of salvation. It is of grace that a Saviour was provided; of grace that the benefits of his death are conferred on one rather than another. And though we rejoice to know that he has acquired a right to his church, having bought it with his own blood, yet his people know, feel, and acknowledge that to them every thing is of grace, their

vocation, justification, and final salvation. This is Christianity, a religion, of which Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the author and the finisher, not the mere cause of the possibility of pardon.

Our discussion of the all-important question respecting the nature of the atonement, has run out to so great a length, that we cannot claim much room for the consideration of its extent. Dr. Beman writes on this whole subject, very much as a man might be expected to write against Calvinism, who got his views of that system, from the furious harangues of itinerant Methodist preachers. He quotes no authorities, establishes no assertions, but coolly goes on attributing just what opinions come into his head to those against whom he writes. Had he taken up any one author, or class of authors, cited from their writings their own exhibitions of doctrine, and proceeded to examine them, his readers would know what credit to give to his statements. He however has preferred to state in general terms that there are but two views of the atonement, his own and another. That other he then most grievously misrepresents. He attributes to all who reject his doctrine, opinions which not one in a million of them ever entertained. As far as relates to the nature of the atonement, these misrepresentations have already been pointed out. He commences and continues his discussion concerning its extent on the same plan. He assumes that the question relates to the limitation in the very nature of

the work of Christ. "If," he says, "the atonement is to be considered as a literal payment of a debt, or, in other words, if it consisted in suffering the exact penalty of the law, in the room of those who will be saved, it is manifest, that it must be limited in its extent. In this case it would be a provision which must be regulated according to the principles of commutative justice. If *one* soul were to be saved "then Christ must suffer so much; if a thousand then a thousand times as much," &c. p. 145. The opposite doctrine, which he adopts, necessarily leads to the conclusion "that an atonement sufficient for one, is sufficient for all," of course those who reject his view, are made to hold an insufficient atonement, p. 147. So Dr. Cox, in his introductory chapter, speaks of "the limitation of the nature" of the atonement, and represents those whom he opposes as holding that it is as "limited in its nature as in its application." p. 16, 17. If these gentlemen would take the trouble to read a little on this subject they would find that this is all a mistake. They are merely beating the air. Those who deny that Christ died for Judas as much as for Paul, for the non-elect as much as for the elect, and who maintain that he died strictly and properly only for his own people, do not hold that there is any limitation in the nature of the atonement. They teach as fully as any men, that "an atonement sufficient for one is sufficient for all." It is a simple question relating to the design, and not to the nature of



Christ's work. That work as far as we know or believe, would have been the same, had God purposed to save but one soul, or the souls of all mankind. We hold that the atonement as to its value is infinite, and as to its nature as much adapted to one man as to another, to all as to one. The whole question is, for what purpose did he die? What was the design which God intended to accomplish by his mission and death? That this is the true state of the question, is obvious from the fact, that the Reformed and Lutherans do not differ at all as to the nature of Christ's satisfaction, though they do differ as to its design. Lutherans, as they deny the doctrine of election, deny that the satisfaction of Christ had special reference to the elect, though they are even more strict than the Reformed, in their views of the vicarious nature of the atonement, i. e. of the imputation of our sins to Christ, and of his obedience to us. Accordingly in all the early defences of Calvinists, their arguments on the necessity, and on the truth or nature of the atonement, are directed against Socinians, and not against either Romanists or Lutherans. But when the question is discussed, "For whom did Christ die?" they address their arguments against the latter. Turretin, for example, in the statement of this question, says, "It is not a question concerning the value and sufficiency of Christ's death, whether it is not, in itself, sufficient for the salvation of all men. That is, on both sides, admitted. His death being of infinite

value, would have been most amply sufficient for the redemption of all men, if God had seen fit to extend it to all. Hence the common distinction made by the fathers, and retained by many theologians, *Christ died sufficiently for all, efficaciously for the elect*, is perfectly true if understood of the worth of Christ's death, but not so accurate if understood of his purpose and design in dying. The question, therefore, properly relates to the purpose of the Father in giving his Son, and the intention of the Son in laying down his life. Did the Father destine his Son for all and every man, and did the Son deliver himself to death with the intention of substituting himself in the place of all and every one, in order to make satisfaction and procure salvation for them? Or, did Christ give himself for the elect alone, who were given to him by the Father, and whose head he was to be? The heart of the question, therefore, comes to this, not what is *the nature or efficacy* of the death of Christ, but what was the design of the Father in giving him up, and the intention of Christ in dying."\*

The simple statement of our doctrine, therefore, answers two-thirds of Dr. Beman's objections against it. This is not a statement got up for the occasion, but made a century and a half before he was born. There is one view in which the question concerning the extent of the atonement is indeed inti-

\* Turretin, vol. ii. p. 498.

mately connected with its nature. If any man holds the doctrine that the atonement was nothing more than a symbolical expression of a truth, and "merely opened the door of mercy," there is of course an end to all question as to its design. If that be its nature, it can have no more reference to the saved than to the lost. And it is probably in order to get rid of all difficulty as to the extent of the atonement, that many have been led to adopt the above mentioned most unscriptural and dangerous view of its nature. But if the true doctrine concerning the nature of the satisfaction is retained, as it was by the Lutherans, and even in a great measure by the early Remonstrants, at least by Grotius, the question as to its extent, resolves itself into a question concerning the purposes of God. It might seem as if this were an entirely useless question. The purposes of God are not the rule of our duty, and whatever God may design to do, we are to act in accordance with his preceptive will. Still there is a right and a wrong in every question, and what is wrong in relation to one point, must tend to produce erroneous views with regard to others.

Dr. Cox intimates with some truth that the difference of opinion on this point, has its origin, or at least implies a difference of view as to the order of the divine purposes. p. 18. As in fact, however, there is no order of succession in the purposes of God, but simply in our mode of conceiving them, all his decrees

being comprehended in one eternal purpose, any question about the order of those decrees, must be a question relating to our own thoughts. Those thoughts, however, may be confused, contradictory, or lead to conclusions in conflict with revealed facts. Even this question, therefore, is not without its importance. If the purposes of God are all one, any mode of conceiving them which prevents their being reduced to unity; which supposes either a change, or uncertainty in the divine plan, must be erroneous. As it is involved in our idea of God as the intelligent ruler of the universe, that he had a design in the creation and redemption of man, all classes of theologians form some theory (if that word may be used) of the plan adopted for the accomplishment of that design. According to one system, God purposed to create man, to permit the fall, to provide salvation for all, to give all sufficient grace, to elect to life those who improve this grace. This is the scheme of the Remonstrants, and of those generally who reject the doctrines of election and efficacious grace. According to another system, God purposed to create man, to permit the fall, to provide for the salvation of all, but foreseeing that none would accept of that salvation, he chose some to everlasting life, and determined by his effectual grace, to give them faith and repentance. This is the scheme proposed by Amyraud, Testard, Camero, and other French theologians of the seventeenth century. According to others,

God purposed to create man, to permit the fall, to choose from the mass of fallen men an innumerable multitude as vessels of mercy, to send his Son for their redemption, and with him to give them every thing necessary for their salvation. This was the common doctrine of all the Reformed churches, from which the two former systems were departures. The common New School system, adopted in this country, lies between the Arminian and the French scheme, containing more truth than the former, and less than the latter.

The question, which of these views of the whole plan of God's dealings with men, is the most correct, must be determined, 1. By ascertaining which is most consistent with itself; which best admits of being reduced to one simple purpose. It would not be difficult to show that the two former include contradictions, and involve the ascription of conflicting purposes to God. 2. By ascertaining which is most in harmony with the admitted character of God, as infinite, independent, and self-sufficient, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things. 3. By ascertaining which is most consistent with revealed facts. The first, or Arminian scheme, breaks down entirely by coming in conflict with the clearly revealed truth of God's sovereignty in election, and of conversion by his mighty power, and not by an influence common to all men. Our present business, however, is with the two latter schemes, so far as they re-

late to the design of Christ's death. Was the Son of God sent into the world, as Dr. Beman says, merely to make the salvation of all men possible, or actually to save all whom God had given him?

Before attempting to answer this question, it is proper to remark that Dr. Beman and those who adopt his theory, seem constantly disposed to forget that **SALVATION IS BY GRACE**. If it is of grace, then it is a matter of grace that God provided salvation at all for guilty men. If this is not so, the gift of Christ, the influences of the Holy Spirit, and every other gift requisite for our salvation, are mere matters of justice, which it would have been unrighteous to withhold. No man can believe that, however, without contradicting every page of the Bible, and the testimony of every true Christian. 2. But if God was not bound to save any, he is at liberty to save whom he pleases. If he need not provide salvation for any, there could be no injustice in providing it for some and not for others. If salvation is of grace, it is of grace that one and not another is saved. And to complain that the mission of Christ was not designed to save all, or even that it did not open the door of mercy for all, if such were actually the case, would be to complain of the gratuitous nature of salvation. And, 3. If salvation is by grace, then those who are saved, are freely called, justified and glorified. The ground of their acceptance, is not to be found in them, but in the good pleasure of

God. This is the plain doctrine of the Bible, to which we must submit; and it is so clearly revealed, and so essential to the very nature of the gospel, that those who are not willing to be saved by grace, cannot be saved at all.

There is therefore no preliminary presumption against the doctrine that the death of Christ had not an equal reference to all men, but had a special relation to his own people. The presumption is all the other way. As the whole plan of salvation is, according to the apostle, arranged with a view "to show the exceeding riches of the grace of God, by his kindness towards us," that view of the economy of redemption, which renders the grace of God the most conspicuous, is the most in harmony with its grand design. What God's actual purpose was in the mission of his Son, we can only learn from his own declarations. He reveals his designs to us, partly by their execution, and partly by the annunciation of them in his word. What God does, is the clearest revelation of what he intended to do. Hence if the satisfaction of Christ actually saves all men, it was certainly designed to save all men; but if it saves only a part of the human race, it was certainly designed only for a part. It cannot be questioned that Christ came to save men from their sins, and if we ask, whom he intended to save? we can get no better answer than by learning whom he does in fact save. If the end of Christ's mission was salvation, it is not conceivable that he died equally for all, un-

less he purposed to save all. Dr. Beman, however, denies that the design of his mission was salvation; it was merely to make salvation possible.

In assuming this ground, he is guilty of the same one-sidedness, the same contracted view, which he exhibits in his doctrine concerning the nature of the atonement. It is conceded that the work of Christ does lay the foundation for the offer of salvation to all men. Dr. Beman hence concludes that this was its only end; that it merely opens the way for the general offer of pardon. His theory is designed to account for one fact, and leaves all the other revealed facts out of view, and unexplained. The Bible teaches, however, a great deal more, in relation to this subject, than that one fact. It teaches, 1. That Christ came in execution of a purpose; that he suffered as Dr. Beman expresses it, by covenant, and ratified that covenant with his own blood. 2. That his mission was the result and expression of the highest conceivable love. 3. That it not merely removes obstacles out of the way, but actually secures the salvation of his people. 4. That it lays the foundation for a free, full, and unrestrained offer of salvation to all men. 5. That it renders just the condemnation of those who reject him as their Saviour; that rejection being righteously the special ground of their condemnation.

Dr. Beman's theory accords only with the last two facts just mentioned. It will account



for the general offer of the gospel, and for the condemnation of those who reject it, but it is inconsistent with all the other facts above stated, which are not less clearly revealed, and not less important. It overlooks in the first place, the fact that Christ came into the world and accomplished the work of redemption, in execution of the covenant of grace. The use of such words as *covenant*, is often convenient, and sometimes unavoidable, as a concise method of expressing several related truths. Wherever there is a promise by one person to another, suspended upon the performance of a condition, there is a covenant. As therefore, the Scriptures expressly speak of a promise made to the Son, suspended upon the condition of his incarnation, obedience, and death, they teach that there was a covenant of grace. The promise made to the Redeemer, was that he should see the travail of his soul; that he should have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; that those whom the Father had given him should come unto him; that they should all be taught of God, receive the Spirit, and be raised up in the last day; that he should be the first-born among many brethren, and be highly exalted as the head of his people, and far above all principalities and powers. It is further expressly taught that he secured all these inestimable blessings, by his obedience unto death. Because he thus humbled himself, God has highly exalted him; on account of the suffer-

ing of death, he was crowned with glory and honour; because he made his soul an offering for sin, therefore God hath divided to him his portion. If these things are so, if Christ had the attainment of these blessings, which involve the salvation of his people, in view, in coming into the world; if the accomplishment of this work was the object of his mission, then it is a contradiction in terms, to say that, as far as the purpose of God and his own intention are concerned, he had not a special reference to his own people and to their salvation in his death. Their salvation was the reward promised, when it was said, "he shall see his seed," and it was for that recompense he died. Dr. Beman's theory denies all this. It assumes that his death, his whole work, had no reference to one class of men more than to another, to the saved more than to the lost. It simply made the pardon of all men possible. This is of course a denial, of what Dr. Beman himself, in an unguarded hour, admitted, viz. that Christ suffered by covenant. What covenant? The Scriptures make mention of no other covenant, in connexion with the Redeemer's death, than that which included the promise of his people to him as a reward, and which was ratified in his blood. Here then is one plain, important, revealed fact, which Dr. Beman's theory overlooks and contradicts. If Christ in his death had regard to the recompense of reward, and if that reward included the holiness and salvation of his people, then

beyond contradiction, his satisfaction had a special reference to them.

In the second place, his theory contradicts the plainly revealed fact, that the mission and death of Christ are the expression of the highest conceivable love. According to Dr. Beman, they are the expression of mere general benevolence. It is admitted that love was the motive which led to the gift of the Son of God. If that love was general benevolence to all men, then he died for all; if it was special love to his own people, then he died for them. That there is such special love in God, is involved in the doctrine of election. According to that doctrine, God of his mere good pleasure, before the foundation of the world, chose some to everlasting life, and for infinitely wise and holy reasons, left others to perish in their sins. To say that the infinite love which led to the mission of Christ, was a benevolence which had equal regard to these two classes, is to deny the doctrine of election. That doctrine, in its very nature supposes a difference in the regard had for the vessels of mercy, and the vessels of wrath; for those in whom God purposed to display the riches of his grace, and those on whom he designed to show his wrath, and make his power known. In teaching this doctrine, therefore, the Scriptures teach, that besides the benevolence with which God regards all men, there is a higher, special, mysterious, unspeakable love which he has to his own children. And to this love they

refer the incarnation and death of the Son of God. The Scriptures are too explicit and too full on this latter point to allow of its being questioned. Greater love, said Christ himself, hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Paul prays that the Ephesians might be strengthened by the Holy Spirit, to be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. "Hereby perceive we the love of *God*, because he laid down his life for us. In this we perceive the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things." In these and in various similar passages, it is distinctly asserted that the love which led to the gift of Christ, was not general benevolence, consistent with the eternal reprobation of its objects, but the highest conceivable love, that would spare nothing to secure the salvation of those on whom it rested.

Again, it is, with equal explicitness and frequency, asserted, that love to his people was the motive of the Son of God, in laying down his life. "For their sakes," said the Redeemer, "I sanctify myself." "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep." "I lay down my life for my sheep." "Christ loved the Church, and

gave himself for it." Do not these passages assert that love for his church, his friends, his sheep, was the motive of Christ in dying? When the Scriptures divide men into classes, the sheep and the goats, the church and those who are not the church, and say that love to his sheep, love to his church, led the Saviour to lay down his life, they expressly assert that it was a peculiar love for them, and not a general benevolence including them and all others alike, that was the motive of Christ in laying down his life. Let it be remembered that this whole question relates, not to the incidental effects of Christ's death, but to his intention in dying. The passages above quoted, and the Scriptures generally, do then teach that besides his general benevolence for men, God has a special love for his own people, and that that special love, for his own, for his friends, for his sheep, led the Saviour to give himself up to death. If this is so, it overturns Dr. Beman's theory, which is in direct conflict with this plain and precious truth. It is not that benevolence which consists with eternal reprobation, i. e. with the eternal purpose to leave men to suffer the just recompense of their sins, that led the Father to give up the Son, and the Son to assume our nature and die upon the cross. Those who admit this, admit all the limitation of the atonement for which we contend; a limitation not as to its nature or value, but as to the purpose of God and intention of Christ. Besides, does it not involve a con-

tradiction, to say that love to those whom God purposed, for wise reasons, not to save, was his motive in providing salvation? Our Saviour teaches that the knowledge of the gospel aggravates the guilt and consequently the misery of those who reject it; then certainly, love to them was not the motive which led either to the adoption or the proclamation of the scheme of redemption. The fact is, this doctrine that Christ died as much for Judas as for Paul, is inconsistent with the doctrine of election; and the two have never for any length of time been held together. Those theologians in the church of Rome, who remained faithful to the doctrine of election, also held that the death of Christ had special reference to his own people. The Lutherans, when they rejected the one doctrine, rejected also the other. So did the Arminians. A few French divines endeavoured, by reversing the natural order of the decrees, for a time to unite the two; but the attempt failed. Both doctrines were soon rejected. The sovereignty of God, election, special love as the motive of redemption, and consequently a special reference to the elect, in the death of Christ, are joined together in the Scriptures, and they cannot long be separated in the faith of God's people.

Another revealed fact which Dr. Beman's theory overlooks and contradicts, is that Christ's death, not only removes obstacles out of the way of the exercise of mercy, but actually secures the salvation of his people. It

has been repeatedly shown that Dr. Beman constantly asserts that the only effect of the atonement is to bring the sinner within the reach of mercy, it merely makes pardon possible. This is the only effect claimed for it, and all that can be attributed to it on his theory. This however is in direct conflict with the Scriptures, because they teach that the death of Christ renders the salvation of his own people certain. This follows from what has already been said. If Christ suffered by covenant; if that covenant promised to him his people as his reward and inheritance, on condition of his obedience and death, then assuredly when he performed that condition, the salvation of all whom the Father had given to him, was rendered absolutely certain. Hence, it is said, that he purchased his church, that is, acquired a right to it. He gave himself for his church, that he might purify and cleanse it. He came into the world to save his people from their sins. He gave himself for our sins that he might redeem us from this present evil world; or, as elsewhere said, to purify a peculiar people unto himself. These and similar declarations teach that the design of Christ's death, was actually to save his people. They are, therefore, so many direct contradictions of the doctrine, that he merely opened the door of mercy. To make salvation possible, is not to save; to make holiness possible, is not to purify; to open the door, is not to bring us near to God.

The Scriptures also ascribe effects to the

death of Christ, irreconcilable with the idea that it is a mere governmental display. We are justified by his blood, we thereby obtain remission of sins, we have peace with God, we are delivered from the wrath to come, and obtain eternal redemption. It is contrary to all scriptural usage, to bring down all these and similar declarations, to mean nothing more than that these blessings are rendered attainable by the work of Christ. This is not what the words mean. To say that we are justified, or reconciled, or cleansed, is not to say that the obstacles in the way of obtaining the blessings mentioned, are merely removed. It is to say that his blood secures those blessings; and secures them in the time and way that God has appointed. No instance can be produced in which a sacrifice, offered and accepted, is said to propitiate God, and be the ground of pardon, when nothing more is meant than that the sacrifice renders pardon possible. The meaning uniformly is, that it secures and renders it certain. The very acceptance of it, is the established way of promising forgiveness to those in whose behalf the sacrifice was offered. Dr. Beman's theory, therefore, in attributing so little to the death of Christ, contradicts the established meaning of scriptural phrases; and is inconsistent with the clearly revealed fact that his death makes salvation not only possible, but certain.

It is further revealed that there is an intimate connexion between the death of Christ



and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was promised to Christ, to be given to his people. The apostle Peter says, He having received the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this, which ye both see and hear. Acts ii. 33. In Tit. iii. 5, 6, God is said to shed on us abundantly the Holy Ghost, through Jesus Christ our Lord. All spiritual blessings are said to be given to us in Christ Jesus, Ep. i. 3; that is, on account of our union with him, a union eternal in the purpose of God, and actual when we believe. This union existing in the divine purpose, this covenant union, is represented as the ground of the gift of regeneration. In Ep. ii. 5, 6, we are said to be quickened with Christ, to be raised up in him. This can only mean that there is a union between Christ and his people, which secures to them that influence by which they are raised from spiritual death. If so, then in the covenant to ratify which Christ died, it was promised that the Holy Spirit should be given to his people, and to secure that promise was one design of his death. And consequently all for whom he died must receive that Spirit, whose influences were secured by his death. He is, therefore, said to have redeemed us from the curse of the law, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, Gal. iii. 13, 14. It obviously contradicts this important truth, to teach that Christ's death had as much reference to one man as another, or that it merely renders mercy possible. If Christ suffered by

covenant, and if that covenant included the promise of the Holy Spirit, to teach, renew, and sanctify his people, then it cannot be denied that those thus taught, renewed and sanctified are those for whom he died.

Dr. Beman's theory, therefore, which denies that the death of Christ had a special reference to his own people, is inconsistent with the plainly revealed facts, 1. That he died in execution of a covenant in which his people were promised to him as his reward, to secure which reward is declared to be his specific and immediate design in laying down his life. 2. That the motive which led to the gift of the Son, and of the Son in dying, was not general benevolence, but the highest conceivable love, love for his sheep and for his friends. 3. That the design of his death was not simply to remove obstacles out of the way of mercy, but actually to secure the salvation of those given to him by the Father; and that it does in fact secure for them the gift of the Holy Ghost, and consequently justification and eternal life. In other words, God having out of his mere good pleasure, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation, by a Redeemer. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man, was made under the law, satisfied, by his obedience and death, all its demands, and thus fulfilled the

conditions of that covenant on which the salvation of his people was suspended, and thereby acquired a right to them as his stipulated reward. Such was the specific design and certain effect of his death. This is the plain doctrine of our standards, and as we fully believe, of the word of God.

It will however, doubtless be asked, admitting that our doctrine of the atonement does accord with the facts above mentioned, can it be reconciled with the no less certain facts that the gospel is to be freely offered to all men, and that those who reject it, are justly condemned for their unbelief? If it cannot, it must be defective. On this score, however, we feel no difficulty.

Our doctrine is, that the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to secure the salvation of his people, and with a specific view to that end, fulfilled the conditions of the law or covenant under which they, and all mankind were placed. Those conditions were, perfect obedience, and satisfaction to divine justice, by bearing the penalty threatened against sin. Christ's righteousness, therefore, consists in his obedience and death. That righteousness is precisely what the law demands of every sinner, in order to his justification before God. It is, therefore, in its nature, adapted to all sinners who are under that law. Its nature is not altered by the fact that it was wrought out for a portion only of such sinners, or that it is secured to them by the covenant between the Father and the Son.

What is necessary for the salvation of one man, is necessary for the salvation of another, and of all. The righteousness of Christ, therefore, consisting in the obedience and death demanded by the law under which all men are placed, is adapted to all men. It is also of infinite value, being the righteousness of the eternal Son of God, and therefore sufficient for all. On these two grounds, its adaptation to all and its sufficiency for all, rests the offer made in the gospel to all. With this its design has nothing to do ; who are to be saved by it we do not know. It is of such a nature and value, that whosoever accepts of it, shall be saved. If one of the non-elect should believe (though the hypothesis is on various accounts unreasonable) to him that righteousness would be imputed to his salvation. And if one of the elect should not believe, or having believed, should apostatize, he would certainly perish. These suppositions, are made, simply to show that according to our doctrine, the reason why any man perishes, is not that there is no righteousness provided suitable and adequate to his case, or that it is not freely offered to all that hear the gospel, but simply because he wilfully rejects the proffered salvation. Our doctrine, therefore, provides for the universal offer of the gospel and for the righteous condemnation of unbelievers, as thoroughly as Dr. Beman's. It opens the door for mercy, as far as legal obstructions are concerned, as fully as his ; while it meets all the other revealed facts of

the case. It is not a theory for one fact. It includes them all ; the fact that Christ died by covenant for his own people ; that love for his own sheep led him to lay down his life ; that his death renders their salvation absolutely certain ; that it opens the way for the offer of salvation to all men, and shows the justice of the condemnation of unbelief. **NO MAN PERISHES FOR THE WANT OF AN ATONEMENT**, is the doctrine of the Synod of Dort ; it is also our doctrine.

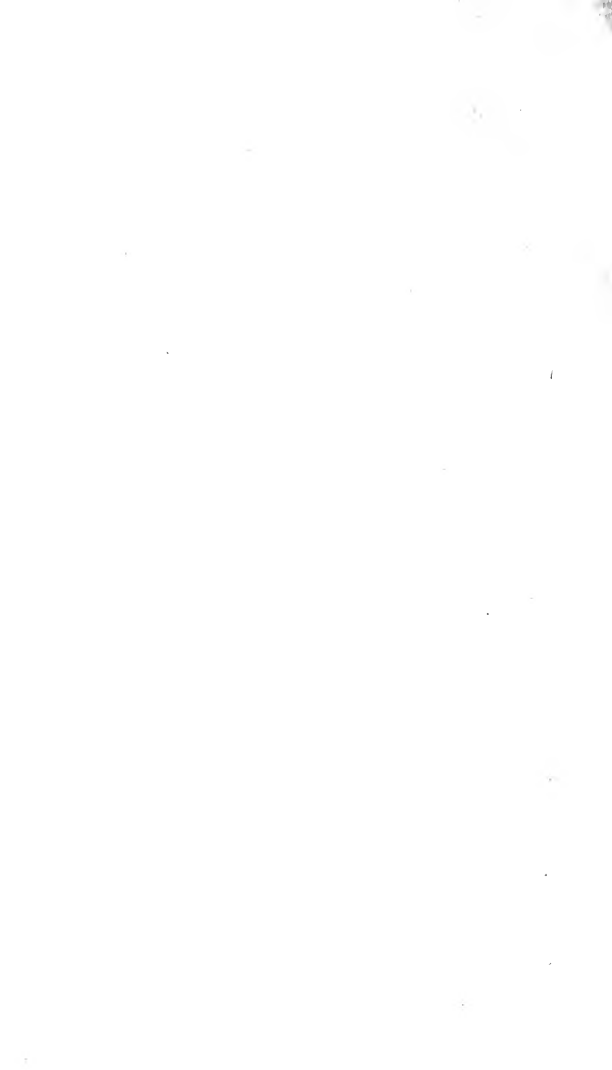
Dr. Cox is pleased to call us "restrictionists." A most inappropriate designation. There is more saving truth in the parings of our doctrine, than in his whole theory. Our doctrine contains all the modicum of truth there is in his, and it contains unspeakably more. His own theory is the most restricted, jejune, meagre, and lifeless, that has ever been propounded. It provides for but one fact ; it teaches a possible salvation, while it leaves out the very soul of the doctrine. It vitiates the essential nature of the atonement, makes it a mere governmental display, a symbolical method of instruction, in order to do what was better done without any such corruption. While we teach that Christ, by really obeying the law, and really bearing its penalty, in the place of his people, and according to the stipulations of the covenant of grace, secured the salvation of all whom the Father had given him ; and at the same time throws open the door of mercy to all who choose to enter it. We retain the life-giving doctrine

of Christ's union with his own people, his obeying and dying in their stead, of his bearing our sins, and of our becoming the righteousness of God in him ; of the necessity of entire self-renunciation and of simple reliance on his righteousness, on the indwelling of his Spirit, and on his strength for our salvation ; while we impose no restriction on the glorious gospel of the grace of God.

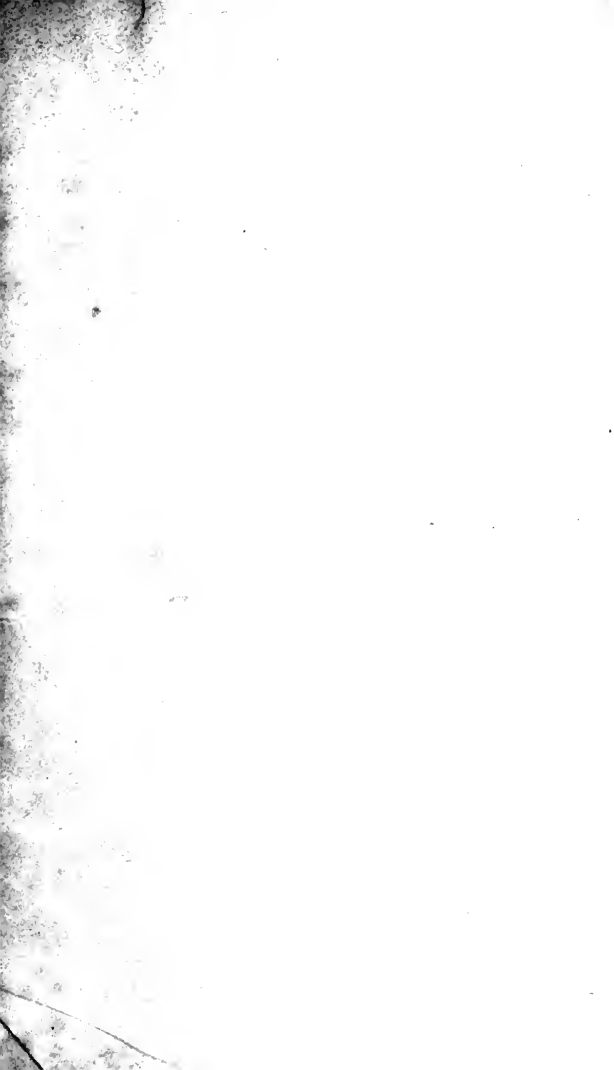
Long as this discussion has become, we have touched only what appeared to us, the most important points of the controversy, and must leave others unnoticed. We trust we have said enough, to show that there is no necessity for surrendering the common faith of Christendom, as to the nature of the atonement, for the miserable theory propounded by Dr. Beman. We cannot close this article without a single remark concerning his book itself. It is a small volume ; sold at a moderate price, and intended for general circulation. It is written in a calm and confident spirit, but without force, discrimination, or learning. It is the very book to do harm. It presents its readers the choice between two doctrines, the one no man can adopt, the other is hardly worth accepting. So far as this book is concerned, the atonement must be rejected either as incredible or as worthless. He represents the one doctrine, as teaching that Christ became personally and morally a sinner, that he suffered just what in kind and degree, all his people throughout eternity, would have en-

dured, and that they by his righteousness became morally innocent. This view of the atonement, no man can believe and be a Christian. His own doctrine makes the atonement a mere symbolical method of instruction, and reduces the whole work of Christ in this matter, to making pardon possible. This again is a doctrine, which we see not how any man can practically believe, and be a Christian. The book in itself is of little consequence. But from its gross and yet confident misrepresentation of the truth, it has more of the power due to falsehood, than any book of the kind we know. As to the author of the book, we have no disposition to sit in judgment on his motives. He has most grievously misrepresented the truth, whether ignorantly or otherwise, it is not for us to say.

THE END.











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