

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

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Lectures
on
Systematic Theology

Volume III

By

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PREFACE.

I HAVE not yet been able to stereotype my theological views, and have ceased to expect ever to do so. The idea is preposterous. None but an omniscient mind can continue to maintain a precise identity of views and opinions. Finite minds, unless they are asleep, or stultified by prejudice, must advance in knowledge. The discovery of new truth will modify old views and opinions, and there is perhaps no end to this process with finite minds in any world. True christian consistency consists, not in stereotyping our opinions and views and in refusing to make any improvement in knowledge lest we should be guilty of change, but it consists in holding our minds open to receive the rays of truth from every quarter, and in changing our views and language and practice as often and as fast as we can obtain further information. I call this christian consistency because this course alone accords with a christian profession. A christian profession implies the profession of candor and of a disposition to know and to obey all truth. It must follow that christian consistency implies continued investigation and change of views and practice corresponding with increasing knowledge. No christian therefore, and no theologian should be afraid to change his views, his language, or his practices in conformity with increasing light. The adoption of an opposite maxim would keep the world, at best, at a perpetual stand-still, on all subjects of science, and all improvements would be precluded.

Hundreds of years since, when intellectual and moral science was a wilderness, an assembly of divines, as they are called, affecting to cast off popery, undertook to stereotype the theology of the church and to think for all future generations, thus making themselves popes in perpetuum. Every uninspired attempt to frame for the church an authoritative standard of opinion which shall be regarded as an unquestionable exposition of the word of God, is not only impious in itself, but it is also a tacit assumption of the fundamental dogma of Papacy. The assembly of divines did more than to assume the necessity of a pope to give law to the opinions of men; they assumed to create an immortal one or rather to embalm their own creed and preserve it as the pope of all generations. That the instrument framed by that assembly should in the nineteenth century be recognized as the standard of the church, or of an intelligent branch of it, is not only amazing but I must say that it is highly ridiculous. It is as absurd in theology as it would be in any other branch of science, and as injurious and stultifying as it is absurd and ridiculous. It is better to have a living than a dead Pope. If we must have an authoritative expounder of the word of God let us have a living one so as not to preclude the hope of improvement. "A living dog is better than a dead lion;" so a living pope is better than a dead and stereotyped confession of faith that holds all men to subscribe to its unalterable dogmas and its unvarying terminology[sic.]. Whether this was ever intended by its authors or not, such is the use made of the instrument in question. In the volume published last year I informed my readers that should I ever publish my course of instruction, as teacher of Systematic Theology, entire, one volume at least would precede that. The present volume will be the third of the series. The reasons for publishing in this order are:

1. The necessities of my classes. They need class books, especially on those topics in theology which are contained in the volume now given to the world. The same is true indeed of points open which I have not yet published; but upon these they more especially needed something more to read than has hitherto appeared. Let it be understood, however, that these volumes are not intended to preclude original investigation but on the contrary to encourage and forward it. They are designed not to forestall and preclude, but to mark out the general outline of the course of discussion pursued in our classes. I hold myself sacredly bound, not to defend these positions at all events, but on the contrary to subject every one of them to the most thorough discussion and to hold and treat them as I would the opinions of any one else; that is, if upon further discussion and investigation I see no cause to change, I hold them fast: but if I can see a flaw in any one of them, I shall amend or wholly reject it, as further light shall demand. Should I refuse or fail to do this, I should need to blush for my folly and inconsistency, for I say again that true christian consistency implies progress in knowledge and holiness, and such changes in theory and in practice as are demanded by increasing light. The opinions advanced in this and the preceding volume, I at present honestly entertain. In reviewing the previous volume, I can already see wherein, in several respects, the phraseology might be improved and the sentiment modified. Should I rewrite it a hundred times, I

have no expectation that I should not continue to see how it might be improved. I have no doubt the same will be true of the present volume. On the strictly fundamental questions in theology my views have not, for many years, undergone any other change than that I have clearer apprehensions of them than formerly and should now state some of them differently from what I formerly should have done.

It is our custom in this Institution to settle every question, especially in theology, by discussion. I have now for twelve years been going annually over my course of instruction in this manner, and owe not a little to my classes, for I have availed myself to the uttermost of the learning and sagacity and talent of every member of my classes in pushing my investigations. I call on them to discuss the questions which I present for discussion, and take my seat among them and help and guide them according to my ability; and not unfrequently, I am happy to say, do I get some useful instruction from them. Thus I sustain the double relation of pupil and teacher.

I am also much indebted to my beloved associates in teaching. My brethren of the Faculty often afford me invaluable aid in many ways. Very full and frequent interchange of views has been of great service to me. The present volume appears at an earlier date than I anticipated. The lectures it contains have hitherto existed only in skeleton form. I sat down last winter to write them out and completed about one half of them and was then induced to leave and spend the remainder of my vacation in Michigan laboring in revivals. I returned much wearied, not intending to write or publish this summer, but was overruled by the solicitations of those who take an interest in their publication, and have, in the midst of much bodily exhaustion and labor, both as Professor and Pastor, written out the remainder of the volume as it now appears. I have done the best I could under the circumstances.

2. Another reason for publishing at this time and in this order is, I have been represented as differing so widely from many who are esteemed orthodox, that it is no more than just that one in my relations should define his position and give to the church the substance of his views, especially if he be reported as not sound in the faith.

3. Because I do not differ so widely from the commonly received views as I have often been represented as doing; and,

4. That by subjecting my views to a more extended criticism than can be had in our circle here, I might have the help of my brethren the world over, (if they will take the trouble to read and write and discuss,) in coming as near as may be, in this state of existence, to the exact truth.

5. That before I die I may see whatever serious errors I may hold in theology and correct them if the Lord will. I do not preserve my views to be published after I am dead, to spare myself the mortification of seeing them severely criticised, and overturned if false; but on the contrary I desire to subject them to the fullest criticism, that whatever is wrong in them may be thoroughly sifted out.

As to the style in which they are written I can say nothing, except that I am aware that it is not in so good taste as I could wish. But it is in vain for me to affect or to claim literary merit. I aim at perspicuity, but am aware that I often fail in this respect. But my readers will bear with me if I do the best I can. As I am writing on christian theology I can hardly be called upon to apologize for making so copious quotations from scripture as I have done. Yet some may think that I have been needlessly prolix in this respect. My object has been, in many cases, to give the student a view rather of the general tenor of scripture upon the points under consideration than to give but few isolated passages. I have sometimes repeatedly quoted the same passages in different connexions. This I have done alone for the sake of perspicuity and to avoid the necessity, in reading, of hesitating to remember the language of the passage referred to. Perhaps I have done this too frequently to edify those who are familiar with their bibles. If so, they can without trouble pass over those passages that are requoted, while those less familiar with their bibles may be edified by finding the living oracles so copiously and so repeatedly spread before their eyes. Indeed there are many parts of scripture that are so striking and always so new and interesting to me that I am never tired of seeing, hearing or reading them.

I trust I shall not be sorry to see any reviews of this or any other volume of mine, when it appears that the reviewer has examined for himself, and understands my work, and is manifestly inquiring after truth. I will not promise to regard cavilers or any who may be disposed to find fault without really knowing "what they say or whereof they affirm." Let us have the truth, come from whomsoever it will.

I have not hesitated in this volume to make free use of what I had before written and published in another form. I have done this when I could, not only to save labor, but to avoid the appearance of affecting to say something new upon the same subjects; but I have found it necessary to change my former phraseology considerably. This, as I have said, I always expect to continue to do while I keep my mind awake to inquiry and open to conviction.

As the reader will perceive I am also indebted to Prof. Morgan for an article on the holiness of christians in this life. With his leave I inserted it, because it will more edify the student than any thing I could say upon that subject. This was prepared to my hand and deserved a most permanent form than that of a mere pamphlet.

THE AUTHOR

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Systematic Theology

Volume III

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Lecture 45

VARIOUS CLASSES OF TRUTHS, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THE HUMAN MIND ATTAINS TO A KNOWLEDGE OF THEM.

Before we proceed further in these investigations, I must call your attention to a subject that properly belongs at the beginning of this course of study, and which will be found there, should these lectures ever be published in their proper order: I allude to the various classes of truths to come under consideration in this course of instruction, with the manner in which we arrive at a knowledge or belief of them. All human investigations proceed upon the assumption of the existence and validity of our faculties, and that their unequivocal testimony may be relied upon. To deny this, is to set aside at once the possibility of knowledge or rational belief, and to give up the mind to universal skepticism. The classes of truths to which we shall be called upon to attend in our investigations, may be divided with sufficient accuracy for our purpose, into truths that need no proof, and truths that need proof. The human mind is so constituted that by virtue of its own laws, it necessarily perceives, recognizes, or knows some truths without testimony from without. It takes direct cognizance of them, and can not but do so.

The first class, that is, truths that need no proof, may be subdivided into truths of the pure reason, and truths of sensation. These two classes are in some sense self-evident, but not in the same sense. Truths of the pure reason are intuitions of that faculty, and truths of sensation are intuitions of the senses. I shall therefore speak of self-evident truths of reason, and self-evident truths of sensation. I must assume that you possess some knowledge of psychology, and take it for granted that you understand the difference between the intuitions of reason, and the intuitions of sense.

By self-evident truths of reason, then, I mean that class of truths that are directly intuited and affirmed by that faculty, in the light of their own evidence, and by virtue of its own laws, whenever they are so stated that the terms of the proposition in which they are conveyed are understood. They are not arrived at by reasoning, or by evidence of any kind except what they have in themselves. As soon as the terms of the propositions in which they are stated, are understood, the reason instantly and positively affirms their truth. It is unnecessary and preposterous to attempt any other proof of this class of truths than to frame a perspicuous statement of them. Nay, it is positively injurious, because absurd, to attempt to prove--in the common acceptation of the term prove--a self-evident truth of reason. All attempts to prove such truths by reasoning, involve an absurdity, and are as much a work of supererogation, as it would be to attempt to prove that you see an object with your eyes fully open and set upon it.

The mathematical axioms belong to this class.

The self-evident truths of reason are truths of certain knowledge. When once so stated, or in any way presented to the mind as to be understood, the mind does not merely believe them, it knows them to be absolutely true. That is, it perceives them to be absolute truths, and knows that it is impossible that they should not be true. Although this class of truths are never arrived at by reasoning, yet much use is made of them in reasoning, since the major premise of a syllogism is often a self-evident truth of reason.

This class of truths are affirmed by a faculty entirely distinct from the understanding, or that power that gains all its knowledges from sense. It takes cognizance of a class of truths that from their nature, forever lie concealed from the senses, and consequently from the understanding. Sensation can never give us the abstract truths of mathematics. It can

never give us the absolute, or the infinite. It can not give moral law, or law at all. Sensation can give facts, but not laws and principles.

That God, and space, and duration, are infinite; that all God's attributes must be infinite, are self-evident truths of reason; that is, they are truths of a priori, affirmation and assumption. They are never arrived at by reasoning, or by induction, and never can be. The mind only knows them by virtue of its own laws, and directly assumes and intuits them, whenever they are suggested. The eye of reason sees them as distinctly as the mind sees objects of vision presented to the fleshly organ of vision. The mind is so constructed that it sees some things with the natural fleshly eye, and some truths it sees directly with its own eye without the use of an eye of flesh. All the self-evident truths of reason belong to this class; that is, they are truths which the mind sees and knows, and does not merely believe. In reasoning, the bare statement of a self-evident truth is enough, provided, as has been said, that it is so perspicuously stated that the terms of the proposition are understood. It should be borne in mind, in reasoning, that all men have minds, and that the laws of knowledge are physical, and, of course, fixed, and common to all men. The conditions of knowledge are in all men the same. We are therefore always to assume that self-evident truths can not but be known, so soon as they are stated with such perspicuity as that the terms in which they are expressed are understood. Our future inquiries will present many illustrations of the truth of these remarks.

It should be also remarked that universality is an attribute of the self-evident truths of reason. That is, they are universal in the sense,

- (1.) That all men affirm them to be true when they understand them; and,
- (2.) They all affirm them to be true in the same way; that is, by direct intuition, or they perceive them in their own light, and not through the medium of reasoning, demonstration, or sense; and,
- (3.) Self-evident truths of reason are true without exception, and in this sense also universal.
- (4.) Necessity is also an attribute of self-evident truths. That is, they are necessarily true, and cannot but be so regarded. And when the conditions which have been named are fulfilled, they can not but be so known to every moral agent.

Self-evident truths of reason may be again divided into truths merely self-evident, and first-truths of reason. This class of truths possess all the characteristics of self-evident truths, to wit: they are universal truths; they are necessary truths; they are truths of direct intuition; they are truths of certain knowledge.

Their peculiarity is this: they are truths that are necessarily and universally known by moral agents. That is, they are not distinguished from mere self-evident truths of reason, except by the fact that from the laws of moral agency they are known universally, and all moral agents do and must possess certain knowledge of them.

They are truths of necessary and universal assumption. Whether they are, at all times, or at any time, directly thought of, or made the particular object of the mind's attention or not, they are nevertheless at all times assumed by a law of universal necessity. Suppose, for example, that the law of causality should not be, at all times or at any time, a subject of distinct thought and attention. Suppose that the proposition in words, should never be in the mind, "that every event must have a cause." Still the truth is there, in the form of absolute knowledge, a necessary assumption, an a priori affirmation, and the mind has so firm a hold of it as to be utterly unable to overlook, or forget, or practically deny it. Every mind has it as a certain knowledge, long before it can understand the language in which it is expressed, and no statement or evidence whatever can give the mind any firmer conviction of its truth, than it had from necessity at first. This is true of all the truths of this class. They are always and necessarily assumed by all moral agents, whether distinctly thought of or not. And for the most part this class of truths are assumed without being frequently, or at least, without being generally the object of thought or direct attention. The mind assumes them without a direct consciousness of the assumption.

For example, we act every moment, and judge, and reason, and believe, upon the assumption that every event must have a cause, and yet we are not conscious of thinking of this truth, nor that we assume it until something calls the attention to it. First-truths of reason, then, let it be distinctly remembered, are always and necessarily assumed, though they may be seldom thought of. They are universally known before the words are understood by which they may be expressed, and

although they may never be expressed in a formal proposition, yet the mind has as certain a knowledge of them as it has of its own existence.

But it is proper to inquire whether there are any conditions of this assumption, and if so, what they are? Does the intelligence make this assumption upon certain conditions, or independent of all or any conditions? The true answer to this inquiry is, that the mind makes the assumption only upon the fulfillment of certain conditions. These conditions being fulfilled, the intelligence instantly and necessarily makes the assumption by a law of its own nature, and makes it whether the assumption be a distinct object of consciousness or not.

The only condition of this assumption that needs to be mentioned, is the perception of that by the mind to which the first truth sustains the relation of a logical antecedent or of a logical condition. For example, to develop and necessitate the assumption that every event must have a cause, the mind only needs to perceive or to have the conception of an event, whereupon the assumption in question instantly follows by a law of the intelligence. This assumption is not a logical deduction from any premise whatever, but upon the perception of an event, or upon the mind's having the idea or notion of an event, the intelligence irresistably, by virtue of its own laws, assumes the first-truth of causality as the logical and necessary condition of the event: that is, it assumes that an event and every event must have a cause.

The condition upon which the first-truths of reason are assumed or developed, is called the chronological condition of their development, because it is prior in time and in the order of nature to their development. The mind perceives an event. It thereupon assumes the first-truth of causality. It perceives body, and thereupon assumes the first-truth. space is, and must be. It perceives succession, and necessarily assumes that time is, and must be. These first-truths, let it be repeated, are not assumed in the form of a proposition, thought of or expressed in words, nor is the mind at the time always, or perhaps ever, at first, distinctly conscious of the assumption, yet the truth is from that moment within the mind's inalienable possession, and must forever after be recognized in all the practical judgments of the mind.

Thus, it should be distinctly said, do the first-truths of reason lie so deep in the mind as perhaps seldom to appear directly on the field of conscious thought, and yet so absolutely does the mind know them, that it can no more forget, or overlook, or practically deny them, than it can forget, or overlook, or in practice deny its own existence.

I have said that all reasoning proceeds upon the assumption of these truths. It must do so of necessity. It is preposterous to attempt to prove first-truths to a moral agent: for if a moral agent, he must absolutely know them already, and if he did not, in no possible way could he be put in possession of them except by presenting to his perception the chronological condition of their development, and in no case could any thing else be needed, for upon the occurrence of this perception, the assumption or development follows by a law of absolute and universal necessity. And until these truths are actually developed, no being can be a moral agent.

There is no reasoning with one who calls in question the first-truths of reason, and demands proof of them. All reasoning must, from the nature of mind and the laws of reasoning, assume the first-truths of reason as certain, and admitted, and as the a priori condition of all logical deductions and demonstrations. Some one of these must be assumed as true, directly or indirectly, in every syllogism and in every demonstration.

In all our future investigations in the line of truth we shall pursue, we shall have abundant occasions for the application and illustration of what has now been said of first-truths of reason. If, at any stage of our progress, we light upon a truth of this class, let it be borne in mind that the nature of the truth is the preclusion, or as lawyers would express it, the estoppel of all controversy.

To deny the reality of this class of truths, is to deny the validity of our most perfect knowledge and of course it is a denial of the validity of our faculties. The only question to be settled in respect to this class of truths, is, does the truth in question belong to this class? There are many of this class that have not been generally recognized as belonging to it. Of this we shall have abundant instances fall in our way as we proceed in our investigations. There are many truths which men, all sane men, certainly know, of which they not only seldom think, but which, in theory, they strenuously deny.

Before I dismiss this branch of our subject, I will mention some of the many truths that undeniably belong to this class, leaving others to be mentioned as we proceed and fall in with them in future investigations.

I have already noticed three of this class, to wit; the truth of causality--the existence of space and of time. That the whole of any thing is equal to all its parts, is also a truth of this class, universally and necessarily known and assumed by every moral agent. Also, that a thing cannot be and not be at the same time.

A third class of self-evident truths are particular truths of reason. The reason directly intuits and affirms them. They are truths of certain knowledge, but have not the attributes of universality or infinity. To this class belong the truths of our own existence, of personal identity, and individuality. These are not truths of sensation, nor are they first or self-evident truths according to the common use of those terms. Yet they are truths of rational intuition, and are seen to be true in the light of their own evidence, and as such are given to us as undoubtable verities by consciousness.

All the truths that come within the pale of our own experience, that is, all our mental exercises and states are truths self-evident to us. We need no proof of them. Whether they are phenomena or states of the Intellect, of the Will, or of the Sensibility. When thus spoken of, in mass, they can not be called self-evident truths, except in the sense that to ourselves they appear on the field of consciousness as facts or realities, and we know or affirm them with undoubting certainty.

Truths of sensation I have said, are in a certain sense, self-evident truths. That is, they are facts of which the mind has direct knowledge through the medium of the senses. In speaking of truths of sensation as in some sense self-evident, I mean of course truths or facts of our own senses, or those revealed directly to us by our own senses. I know it is not common to speak of this class of truths as self-evident; and they are not so in the sense in which simple rational intuitions are. Yet they are facts or truths which need no proof to establish them to us. The fact that I hold this pen in my hand is as really self-evident to me, as that three and two are five. I as really know or perceive the one as the other, and neither the one nor the other needs any proof. It is not my design to exhaust this subject, nor to enter upon nice and highly metaphysical distinctions, but only to give hints and make suggestions that will call your attention to the subject, and meet our necessities during our present course of study, leaving it to your convenience to enter upon a more critical analysis of this subject.

Of truths that require proof, the first class to which I must call attention, is the truths of demonstration. This class of truths admit of so high a degree of proof, that when the demonstration is complete, the intelligence affirms that it is impossible that they should not be true. This class when truly demonstrated, are known to be true with no less certainty than self-evident truths; but the mind arrives not at the perception and knowledge of them in the same way. That class is arrived at universally, directly and a priori, that is, by direct intuition without reasoning. This class is arrived at universally by reasoning. The former are obtained without any logical processes, while this last class is always and necessarily obtained as a result of a logical process. We often get these truths by a process strictly logical without being at all aware of the way in which we came to be possessed of them. This class, then, unlike the other, are not to be communicated and established without reasoning, but by reasoning. In this class of truths the mind from its own laws will not rest, unless they be demonstrated. They admit of demonstration, and from their nature and the nature of the intelligence, they must be demonstrated before they can be known and rested in as certain knowledge. Many of them may be received in the sense of being believed without an absolute demonstration. But the mind cannot properly be said to know them until it has gone through with the demonstration, and then it can not but know them.

To possess the mind of a first-truth of reason you need only to present the chronological condition of its development. To reveal a self-evident truth of reason, you need only to state it in terms of sufficient perspicuity. But to prove a truth belonging to the class now under consideration you must fulfill the logical conditions of the intellect's affirming it. That is, you must demonstrate it.

The next class to be considered are truths of revelation. I mean truths revealed by Divine Inspiration. All truths are in some way revealed to the mind, but not all by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Some of this class are known and some only believed by the mind. That is, some of these truths are objects or truths of knowledge or of intuition, when brought by the Holy Spirit within the field of vision or of intuition. Others of them are only truths of faith or truths to be believed. The divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ is a truth of revelation of the first class, that is, a truth of intuition or of certain knowledge when revealed to the mind by the Holy Spirit. This truth when thus revealed, the pure reason directly intuits. It knows that Jesus is the true God, and eternal life by the same law by which it knows the first truths of reason. The only account the soul can give of this truth is, that it knows it to be true. It sees or perceives it to be true. But this perception or

intuition is conditioned upon the revelation of the Holy Spirit. "He shall take of mine," said Jesus, "and show it unto you." More on this topic in its proper place. The facts and truths connected with the humanity of the Lord Jesus are of the second class of truths of revelation, that is, they are only truths of belief or of faith, as distinct from truths of the pure reason or of intuition.

This class of truths from their nature are not susceptible of intuition. They may be so revealed that the soul will have no doubt of them, and hardly distinguish them from truths of certain knowledge, nevertheless they are only believed and not certainly known as truths of intuition are.

The Bible is not of itself, strictly and properly a revelation to man. It is, properly speaking, rather a history of revelations formerly made to certain men. To be a revelation to us, its truths must be brought by the Holy Spirit within the field of spiritual vision. This is, past question, the condition of our either knowing or properly believing the truths of revelation. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit." "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him." "They shall all be taught of God." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "He that is spiritual, [has the Spirit,] judgeth all things."

But I must not in this place dwell longer upon this subject. I would only add now that those who call in question the divinity of Christ exhibit conclusive evidence that Christ has never been revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. Those who hold his divinity as a theory or opinion, are not at all benefitted by it, for Christ is not savingly known to any except by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

To the classes of truths already considered might be added several others, such as Probable Truths, Possible Truths, &c. But I have carried this discussion far enough to answer the purposes of this course of instruction, and I trust far enough to impress your minds with a sense of the importance of attending to the classifying of truths and of ascertaining the particular class to which a truth belongs as the condition of successfully attempting to gain the possession of it yourself, or of possessing the minds of others with it. As religious teachers you can not be too deeply impressed with the importance of attending to this classification. I am fully convinced that much of the inefficiency of religious teachers is owing to the fact that they do not sufficiently study and comply with the laws of knowledge and belief to carry conviction to the minds of their hearers. They seem not to have considered different classes of truths, and how the mind comes to possess a knowledge or belief of them. Consequently they either spend time in worse than useless efforts to prove first or self-evident truths, or expect truths susceptible of demonstration to be received and rested in, without such demonstration. They often make little or no distinction between the different classes of truths, and seldom or never call the attention of their hearers to this distinction. Consequently they confuse and often confound their hearers by gross violations of all the laws of logic, knowledge, and belief. I have often been pained and even agonized at the faultiness of religious teachers in this respect. Study to show yourself approved, workmen that need not to be ashamed, and able to commend yourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 46

NATURAL ABILITY.

IN discussing this subject I will endeavor to show,

- I. THE EDWARDEAN NOTION OF NATURAL ABILITY.
- II. THAT THIS NATURAL ABILITY IS NO ABILITY AT ALL.
- III. WHAT CONSTITUTES NATURAL INABILITY ACCORDING TO THIS SCHOOL.
- IV. THAT THIS NATURAL INABILITY IS NO INABILITY AT ALL.
- V. THAT NATURAL ABILITY IS PROPERLY IDENTICAL WITH FREEDOM OR LIBERTY OF WILL.
- VI. THAT THE HUMAN WILL IS FREE, AND THEREFORE MEN ARE NATURALLY ABLE TO OBEY GOD.

We next proceed to the examination of the question of man's ability or inability to obey the commandments of God. This certainly must be a fundamental question in morals and religion, and as our views are upon this subject, so, if we are consistent, must be our views of God, of his moral government, and of every practical doctrine of morals and religion. This is too obvious to require proof. The question of ability has truly been a vexed question. In the discussion of it, I shall consider the elder President Edwards as the representative of the common Calvinistic view of this subject, because he has stated it more clearly than any other Calvinistic author with whom I am acquainted. When, therefore, I speak of the Edwardean doctrine of ability and inability, you will understand me to speak of the common view of Calvinistic theological writers as stated, summed up, and defended by Edwards.

I. I AM TO SHOW WHAT IS THE EDWARDEAN NOTION OF NATURAL ABILITY.

Edwards considers freedom and ability as identical. He defines freedom or liberty to consist in "the power, opportunity, or advantage, that any one has, to do as he pleases." "Or in other words his being free from hindrance or impediment in the way of doing or conducting in any respect as he wills."--Works, Vol. ii, page 38.

Again, page 39, he says, "One thing more I should observe concerning what is vulgarly called liberty; namely, that power and opportunity for one to do and conduct as he will, or according to his choice, is all that is meant by it; without taking into the meaning of the word any thing of the cause of that choice; or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition; whether it was caused by some external motive or internal habitual bias; whether it was determined by some internal antecedent volition, or whether it happened without a cause; whether it was necessarily connected with something foregoing or not connected. Let the person come by his choice any how, yet, if he is able, and there is nothing in the way to hinder his pursuing and exerting his will, the man is perfectly free, according to the primary and common notion of freedom." " In the preceding paragraph, he says, "There are two things contrary to what is called liberty in common speech. One is constraint; which is a person's being necessitated to do a thing contrary to his will: the other is

restraint, which is his being hindered, and not having power to do according to his will."

Power, ability, liberty, to do as you will, are synonymous with this writer. The foregoing quotations with many like passages that might be quoted from the same author, show that natural liberty, or natural ability, according to him, consists in the natural and established connexion between volition and its effects. Thus he says in another place, "Men are justly said to be able to do what they can do if they will." His definition of natural ability or natural liberty, as he frequently calls it, wholly excludes the power to will, and includes only the power or ability to execute our volitions. Thus it is evident that natural ability according to him respects external action only, and has nothing to do with willing. When there is no restraint or hindrance to the execution of volition, when there is nothing interposed to disturb and prevent the natural and established result of our volitions, there is natural ability according to this school. It should be distinctly understood that Edwards and those of his school, hold that choices, volitions, and all acts of will, are determined not by the sovereign power of the agent, but are caused by the objective motive, and that there is the same connection, or a connection as certain and as unavoidable between motive and choice as between any physical cause and its effect: "the difference being," according to him, "not in the nature of the connexion, but in the terms connected." Hence, according to his view, natural liberty or ability can not consist in the power of willing or of choice, but must consist in the power to execute our choices or volitions. Consequently this class of philosophers define free or moral agency to consist in the power to do as one wills, or power to execute one's purposes, choices, or volitions. That this is a fundamentally false definition of natural liberty or ability, and of free or moral agency, we shall see in due time. It is also plain that the natural ability or liberty of Edwards and his school, has nothing to do with morality or immorality. Sin and holiness, as we have seen in a former lecture, are attributes of acts of will only. But this natural ability respects, as has been said, outward or muscular action only. Let this be distinctly borne in mind as we proceed.

II. THIS NATURAL ABILITY IS NO ABILITY AT ALL.

1. We know from consciousness that the will is the executive faculty and that we can do absolutely nothing without willing. The power or ability to will is indispensable to our acting at all. If we have not power to will, we have not power or ability to do any thing. All ability or power to do resides in the will, and power to will is the necessary condition of ability to do. In morals and religion, as we shall soon see, the willing is the doing. The power to will is the condition of obligation to do. Let us hear Edwards himself upon this subject. Vol. ii, page 156, he says "the will itself and not only those actions which are the effects of the will, is the proper object of precept or command. That is, such a state or acts of men's wills, are in many cases properly required of them by commands; and not only those alterations in the state of their bodies or minds that are the consequences of volition. This is most manifest; for it is the mind only that is properly and directly the subject of precepts or commands; that only being capable of receiving or perceiving commands. The motions of the body are matters of command only as they are subject to the soul, and connected with its acts. But the soul has no other faculty whereby it can, in the most direct and proper sense, consent, yield to, or comply with any command, but the faculty of the will; and it is by this faculty only that the soul can directly disobey or refuse compliance; for the very notions of consenting, yielding, accepting, complying, refusing, rejecting, &c., are, according to the meaning of terms, nothing but certain acts of will." Thus we see that Edwards himself held that the will is the executive faculty, and that the soul can do nothing except as it wills to do it, and that for this reason a command to do, is strictly a command to will. We shall see by and by, that he held also that the willing and the doing are identical so far as moral obligation, morals, and religion are concerned. For the present, it is enough to say, whether Edwards or any body else ever held it or not, that it is absurd and sheer nonsense to talk of an ability to do when there is no ability to will. Every one knows with intuitive certainty that he has no ability to do what he is unable to will to do. It is, therefore, the veriest folly to talk of a natural ability to do any thing whatever, when we exclude from this ability the power to will. If there is no ability to will, there is, and can be no ability to do; therefore the natural ability of the Edwardean school is no ability at all.

Let it be distinctly understood, that whatever Edwards held in respect to the ability of man to do, ability to will entered not at all into his idea and definition of natural ability or liberty. But according to him, natural ability respects only the connexion that is established by a law of nature between volition and its sequents, excluding altogether the inquiry how the volition comes to exist. This the foregoing quotations abundantly show. Let the impression, then, be distinct, that the Edwardean natural ability is no ability at all, and nothing but an empty name, a metaphysico-theological FICTION.

III. WHAT CONSTITUTES NATURAL INABILITY ACCORDING TO THIS SCHOOL.

Edwards, Vol. ii, page 35, says, "We are said to be naturally unable to do a thing when we can not do it if we will, because what is most commonly called nature does not allow of it, or because of some impeding defect or obstacle that is extrinsic to the Will; either in the faculty of understanding, constitution of body, or external objects." This quotation, together with much that might be quoted from this author to the same effect, shows that natural inability according to him, consists in a want of power to execute our volitions. In the absence of power to do as we will, if the willing exists and the effect does not follow, it is only because we are unable to do as we will, and this is natural inability. We are naturally unable, according to him, to do what does not follow by a natural law from our volitions. If I will to move my arm, and the muscles do not obey volition, I am naturally unable to move my arm. So with any thing else. Here let it be distinctly observed that natural inability as well as natural ability respects and belongs only to outward action or doing. It has nothing to do with ability to will. Whatever Edwards held respecting ability to will, which will be shown in its proper place, I wish it to be distinctly understood that his natural inability had nothing to do with willing, but only with the effects of willing. When the natural effect of willing does not follow volition, its cause, here is a proper natural inability.

IV. THIS NATURAL INABILITY IS NO INABILITY AT ALL.

By this is intended that so far as morals and religion are concerned, the willing is the doing, and therefore where the willing actually takes place, the real thing required or prohibited is already done. Let us hear Edwards upon this subject. Vol. ii, page 164, he says, "If the will fully complies and the proposed effect does not prove, according to the laws of nature, to be connected with his volition, the man is perfectly excused; he has a natural inability to the thing required. For the will itself, as has been observed, is all that can be directly and immediately required by command, and other things only indirectly, as connected with the will. If, therefore, there be a full compliance of will, the person has done his duty; and if other things do not prove to be connected with his volition, that is not criminally owing to him." Here, then, it is manifest that the Edwardean notions of natural ability and inability have no connection with moral law or moral government, and, of course, with morals and religion. That the Bible every where accounts the willing as the deed, is most manifest. Both as it respects sin and holiness, if the required or prohibited act of the will takes place, the moral law and the lawgiver regard the deed as having been done, or the sin committed, whatever impediment may have prevented the natural effect from following. Here, then, let it be distinctly understood and remembered that Edward's natural inability is, so far as morals and religion are concerned, no inability at all. An inability to execute our volitions, is in no case an inability to do our whole duty, since moral obligation, and of course, duty, respect strictly, only acts of will. A natural inability must consist, as we shall see, in an inability to will. It is truly amazing that Edwards could have written the paragraph just quoted, and others to the same effect, without perceiving the fallacy and absurdity of his speculation--without seeing that the ability or inability about which he was writing had no connection with morals or religion. How could he insist so largely that moral obligation respects acts of will only, and yet spend so much time in writing about an ability or inability to comply with moral obligation that respects outward action exclusively? This, on the face of it, was wholly irrelevant to the subject of morals and religion, upon which subjects he was professedly writing.

V. NATURAL ABILITY IS IDENTICAL WITH FREEDOM OR LIBERTY OF WILL.

It has been, I trust, abundantly shown in a former lecture, and is admitted and insisted on by Edwards,

1. That moral obligation respects strictly only acts of will.
2. That the whole of moral obligation resolves itself into an obligation to be disinterestedly benevolent, that is, to will the highest good of being for its own sake.
3. That willing is the doing required by the true spirit of the moral law.

Ability, therefore, to will in accordance with the moral law, must be natural ability to obey God.

But,

4. This is and must be the only proper freedom of the will, so far as morals and religion, or so far as moral law is concerned. That must constitute true liberty of will that consists in the ability or power to will either in accordance with or in opposition to the requirements of moral law. Or in other words, true freedom or liberty of will must consist in the

power or ability to will in every instance either in accordance with, or in opposition to moral obligation. Observe, moral obligation respects acts of will. What freedom or liberty of will can there be in relation to moral obligation, unless the will or the agent has power or ability to act in conformity with moral obligation? To talk of a man's being free to will, or having liberty to will, when he has not the power or ability, is to talk nonsense. Edwards himself holds that ability to do, is indispensable to liberty to do. But if ability to do be a sine qua non of liberty to do, must not the same be true of willing?--that is, must not ability to will be essential to liberty to will? Natural ability and natural liberty to will, must then be identical. Let this be distinctly remembered, since many have scouted the doctrine of natural ability to obey God, who have nevertheless been great sticklers for the freedom of the will. In this they are greatly inconsistent. This ability is called a natural ability because it belongs to man as a moral agent, in such a sense that without it he could not be a proper subject of command, of reward or punishment. That is, without this liberty or ability he could not be a moral agent and a proper subject of moral government. He must then either possess this power in himself as essential to his own nature, or must possess power, or be able to avail himself of power to will in every instance in accordance with moral obligation. Whatever he can do he can do only by willing; he must therefore either possess the power in himself directly to will as God commands, or he must be able by willing it to avail himself of power, and to make himself willing. If he has power by nature to will directly as God requires, or by willing to avail himself of power so to will, he is naturally free and able to obey the commandments of God. Then let it be borne distinctly in mind, that natural ability, about which so much has been said, is nothing more nor less than the freedom or liberty of the will of a moral agent. No man knows what he says or whereof he affirms, who holds to the one and denies the other, for they are truly and properly identical.

VI. THE HUMAN WILL IS FREE, THEREFORE MEN HAVE POWER OR ABILITY TO DO ALL THEIR DUTY,

1. The moral government of God every where assumes and implies the liberty of the human will, and the natural ability of men to obey God. Every command, every threatening, every exhortation and denunciation in the Bible implies and assumes this.

Nor does the bible do violence to the human intelligence in this assumption; for,

2. The human mind necessarily assumes the freedom of the human will as a first-truth of reason.

First-truths of reason, let it be remembered, are those that are necessarily assumed by every moral agent. They are assumed always and necessarily by a law of the intelligence, although they may seldom be the direct objects of thought or attention. It is a universal law of the intelligence, to assume the truths of causality, the existence and the infinity of space, the existence and infinity of duration, and many other truths. This assumption every moral agent always and necessarily takes with him, whether these things are matters of attention or not. And even should he deny any one or all of the first-truths of reason, he knows them to be true notwithstanding, and can not but assume their truth in all his practical judgments. Thus, should any one deny the law and the doctrine of causality, as some in theory have done, he knows and cannot but know, he assumes and cannot but assume its truth at every moment. Without this assumption he could not so much as intend, or think of doing, or of any one else doing any thing whatever. But a great part of his time, he may not and does not make this law a distinct object of thought or attention. Nor is he directly conscious of the assumption that there is such a law. He acts always upon the assumption, and a great part of his time is insensible of it. His whole activity is only the exercise of his own causality and a practical acknowledgement of the truth, which in theory he may deny. Now just so it is with the freedom of the will and with natural ability. Did we not assume our own liberty and ability, we should never think of attempting to do any thing. We should not so much as think of moral obligation, either as it respects ourselves or others, unless we assumed the liberty of the human will. In all our judgments respecting our own moral character and that of others we always and necessarily assume the liberty of the human will or natural ability to obey God. Although we may not be distinctly conscious of this assumption, though we may seldom make the liberty of the human will the subject of direct thought or attention, and even though we may deny its reality and strenuously endeavor to maintain the opposite, we nevertheless in this very denial and endeavor assume that we are free. This truth never was, and never can be rejected in our practical judgments. All men assume it. All men must assume it. Whenever they choose in one direction, they always assume, whether conscious of the assumption or nor, and cannot but assume that they have power to will in the opposite direction. Did they not assume this, such a thing as election between two ways or objects would not nor could not be so much as thought of. The very ideas of right and wrong, of the praise and blameworthiness of human beings, imply the assumption on the part of those who have these ideas of the universal freedom of the human will, or of the natural ability of men as moral agents to obey God. Were not this assumption in the mind, it were

impossible from its own nature and laws that it should affirm moral obligation, right or wrong, praise or blameworthiness of men. I know that philosophers and theologians have in theory denied the doctrine of natural ability or liberty in the sense in which I have defined it, and I know too, that with all their theorizing, they did assume in common with all other men that man is free in the sense that he has liberty or power to will as God commands. I know that but for this assumption the human mind could no more predicate praise or blameworthiness, right or wrong of man, than it could of the motions of a wind-mill. Men have often made the assumption in question without being aware of it--have affirmed right and wrong of human willing without seeing and understanding the conditions of this affirmation. But the fact is, that in all cases and in every case the assumption has lain deep in the mind as a first truth of reason that men are free in the sense of being naturally able to obey God: and this assumption is a necessary condition of the affirmation that moral character belongs to man.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 47

MORAL ABILITY AND INABILITY.

I. WHAT CONSTITUTES MORAL INABILITY ACCORDING TO EDWARDS AND THOSE WHO HOLD WITH HIM.

II. THAT THEIR MORAL INABILITY TO OBEY GOD CONSISTS IN REAL DISOBEDIENCE AND A NATURAL INABILITY TO OBEY.

III. THAT THIS PRETENDED DISTINCTION BETWEEN NATURAL AND MORAL INABILITY IS NONSENSICAL,

IV. WHAT CONSTITUTES MORAL ABILITY ACCORDING TO THIS SCHOOL.

V. THAT THEIR MORAL ABILITY TO OBEY GOD IS NOTHING ELSE THAN REAL OBEDIENCE, AND A NATURAL INABILITY TO DISOBEY.

I. WHAT CONSTITUTES MORAL INABILITY ACCORDING TO EDWARDS AND THOSE WHO HOLD WITH HIM.

I examine their views of moral inability, first in order, because from their views of moral inability we ascertain more clearly what are their views of moral ability. Edwards regards moral ability and inability as identical with moral necessity. Concerning moral necessity he says, Vol. ii, pp. 32,33, "And sometimes by moral necessity is meant that necessity of connection and consequence which arises from such moral causes as the strength of inclination or motives and the connection which there is in many cases between these and such certain volitions and actions. And it is in this sense that I shall use the phrase moral necessity in the following discourse. By natural necessity as applied to men I mean such necessity as men are under through the force of natural causes, as distinguished from what are called moral causes, such as habits and dispositions of the heart, and moral motives and inducements. Thus men placed in certain circumstances are the subjects of particular sensations by necessity. They feel pain when their bodies are wounded; they see the objects presented before them in a clear light when their eyes are open: so they assent to the truth of certain propositions as soon as the terms are understood; as that two and two make four, that black is not white, that two parallel lines can never cross one another; so by a natural necessity men's bodies move downwards when there is nothing to support them. But here several things may be noted concerning these two kinds of necessity. 1. Moral necessity may be as absolute as natural necessity. That is, the effect may be as perfectly connected with its moral cause, as a natural effect is with its natural cause. Whether the will is in every case necessarily determined by the strongest motive, or whether the will ever makes any resistance to such a motive, or can ever oppose the strongest present intention or not; if that matter should be controverted, yet I suppose none will deny, but that, in some cases a previous bias and inclination or the motive presented may be so powerful that the act of the will may be certainly and indissolubly connected therewith. When motives or previous bias are very strong, all will allow that there is some difficulty in going against them. And if they were yet stronger, the difficulty would be still greater. And, therefore, if more were still added to their strength to a certain degree, it would make the difficulty so great that it would be wholly impossible to surmount it, for this plain reason, because whatever power men may be supposed to have to surmount difficulties, yet that power is not infinite, and so goes not beyond certain limits. If a certain man can surmount ten degrees of difficulty of this kind, with twenty degrees of strength because the degrees of strength are beyond the degrees of difficulty, yet if the difficulty be increased to thirty

or an hundred or to a thousand degrees, and his strength not also increased, his strength will be wholly insufficient to surmount the difficulty. As therefore it must be allowed that there may be such a thing as a sure and perfect connection between moral causes and effects; so this only is what I call by the name of moral necessity." Page 35, he says: "What has been said of natural and moral necessity may serve to explain what is intended by natural and moral inability. We are said to be naturally unable to do a thing when we can not do it if we will, because of some impeding defect or obstacle that is extrinsic to the will, either in the faculty of understanding, constitution of body, or external objects. Moral inability consists not in any of these things, but either in a want of inclination; or the want of sufficient motives in view, to induce and excite the act of the will, or the strength of apparent motives to the contrary. Or both these may be resolved into one, and it may be said in one word that moral inability consists in the opposition or want of inclination. For when a person is unable to will or choose such a thing, through a defect of motives or prevalence of contrary motives, it is the same thing as his being unable through the want of an inclination, or the prevalence of a contrary inclination in such circumstances and under the influence of such views."

From these quotations, and much more that might be quoted to the same purpose, it is plain that Edwards, as the representative of his school, holds moral inability to consist either in an existing choice or attitude of the will opposed to that which is required by the law of God; which inclination or choice is necessitated by motives in view of the mind; or in the absence of such motives as are necessary to cause or necessitate the state of choice required by the moral law, or to overcome an opposing choice. Indeed he holds these two to be identical. Observe, his words are, "Or these may be resolved into one, and it may be said in one word that moral inability consists in opposition or want of inclination. For when a person is unable to will or choose such a thing, through a defect of motives, it is the same thing as his being unable through the want of an inclination, or the prevalence of a contrary inclination, in such circumstances and under the influence of such views," that is, in the presence of such motives. If there is a present prevalent contrary inclination, it is, according to him: 1. Because there are present certain reasons that necessitate this contrary inclination, and 2. Because there are not sufficient motives present to the mind to overcome these opposing motives and inclination, and to necessitate the will to determine or choose in the direction of the law of God. By inclination Edwards means choice or volition as is abundantly evident from what he all along says in this connection. This no one will deny who is at all familiar with his writings.

It was the object of the treatise from which the above quotations have been made to maintain that the choice invariably is as the greatest apparent good is. And by the greatest apparent good he means a sense of the most agreeable. By which he means, as he says, that the sense of the most agreeable and choice or volition are identical. Vol. ii, page 20, he says: "And therefore it must be true in some sense, that the will always is as the greatest apparent good is." "It must be observed in what sense I use the term 'good,' namely, as of the same import with agreeable. To appear good to the mind as I use the phrase is the same as to appear agreeable or seem pleasing to the mind." Again, pp. 21 and 22, he says: "I have rather chosen to express myself thus that the will always is as the greatest apparent good is, or as what appears most agreeable, than to say that the will is determined by the greatest apparent good, or by what seems most agreeable, because an appearing most agreeable to the mind and the mind's preferring, seem scarcely distinct. If strict propriety of speech be insisted on, it may more properly be said that the voluntary action which is the immediate consequence of the mind's choice is determined by that which appears most agreeable, than the choice itself." Thus it appears that the sense of the most agreeable and choice or volition, according to Edwards, are the same things. Indeed, Edwards throughout confounds desire and volition, making them the same thing. Edwards regarded the mind as possessing but two primary faculties, the will and the understanding. He confounded all the states of the sensibility with acts of will. The strongest desire is with him always identical with volition or choice, and not merely that which determines choice. When there is a want of inclination, or desire or the sense of the most agreeable, there is a moral inability according to the Edwardean philosophy. This want of the strongest desire, inclination or sense of the most agreeable, is always owing, 1. To the presence of such motives as to necessitate an opposite desire, choice, &c., and, 2. To the want of such objective motives as shall awaken this required desire, or necessitate this inclination or sense of the most agreeable. In other words, when volition or choice, in consistency with the law of God, does not exist, it is, 1. Because an opposite choice exists, and is necessitated by the presence of some motive, and, 2. For want of sufficiently strong objective motives to necessitate the required choice or volition. Let it be distinctly understood and remembered that Edwards held that motive and not the agent is the cause of all actions of the will. Will, with him, is always determined in its choice, by motives as really as physical effects are produced by their causes. The difference with him in the connection of moral and physical causes and effects "lies not in the nature of the connection but in the terms connected."

"That every act of the will has some cause, and consequently (by what has already been proved) has a necessary connection with its cause, and so is necessary by a necessity of connection and consequence, is evident by this, that every act of the will whatsoever is excited by some motive; which is manifest, because, if the mind, in willing after the manner it does, is excited by no motive or inducement, then it has no end which it proposes to itself, or pursues in so doing; it aims at nothing, and seeks nothing. And if it seeks nothing, then it does not go after any thing, or exert any inclination or preference towards any thing. Which brings the matter to a contradiction; because for the mind to will something, and for it to go after something by an act of preference and inclination are the same thing.

"But if every act of the will is excited by a motive, then that motive is the cause of the act. If the acts of the will are excited by motives, then motives are the causes of their being excited; or, which is the same thing, the cause of their existence. And if so, the existence of the acts of the will is properly the effect of their motives. Motives do nothing, as motives or inducements, but by their influence; and so much as is done by their influence is the effect of them. For that is the notion of an effect: something that is brought to pass by the influence of something else.

"And if volitions are properly the effects of their motives, then they are necessarily connected with their motives. Every effect and event being, as was proved before, necessarily connected with that which is the proper ground and reason of its existence. Thus it is manifest, that volition is necessary, and is not from any self-determining power in the will."--Vol. ii. pp. 86,87.

Moral inability, then, according to this school consists in a want or inclination, desire, or sense of the most agreeable, or the strength of an opposite desire or sense of the most agreeable. This want of inclination, &c., or this opposing inclination, &c., are identical with an opposing choice or volition. This opposing choice or inclination, or this want of the required choice, inclination or sense of the most agreeable is owing, according to Edwards, 1. To the presence of such motives as to necessitate the opposing choice; and, 2. To the absence of sufficient motives to beget or necessitate them. Here then we have the philosophy of this school. The will or agent is unable to choose as God requires in all cases when, 1. There are present such motives as to necessitate an opposite choice, and, 2. When there is not such a motive or such motives in the view of the mind as to determine or necessitate the required choice or volition, that is, to awaken a desire, or to create an inclination or sense of the agreeable stronger than any existing and opposing desire, inclination, or sense of agreeable. This is the moral inability of the Edwardeans.

II. THEIR MORAL INABILITY TO OBEY GOD CONSISTS IN REAL DISOBEDIENCE AND A NATURAL INABILITY TO OBEY.

1. If we understand Edwardeans to mean that moral inability consists,

[1.] In the presence of such motives as to necessitate an opposite choice; and,

[2.] In the want or absence of sufficient motives to necessitate choice or volition, or which is the same thing, a sense of the most agreeable, or an inclination, then their moral inability is a proper natural inability.

Edwards says he "calls it a moral inability because it is an inability of will." But by his own showing, the will is the only executive faculty. Whatever a man can do at all he can accomplish by willing, and whatever he can not accomplish by willing, he can not accomplish at all. An inability to will then must be a natural inability.

We are by nature unable to do what we are unable to will to do. Besides, according to Edwards, moral obligation respects strictly only acts of will, and willing is the doing that is prohibited or required by the moral law. To be unable to will then, is to be unable to do. To be unable to will as God requires, is to be unable to do what He requires, and this surely is a proper and the only proper natural inability.

2. But if we are to understand this school as maintaining that moral inability to obey God consists in a want of the inclination, choice, desire, or sense of the most agreeable that God requires, or in an inclination or existing choice, volition, or sense of the most agreeable, which is opposed to the requirement of God, this surely, is really identical with disobedience, and their moral inability to obey consists in disobedience. For, be it distinctly remembered, that Edwards holds as we have seen, that obedience and disobedience properly speaking, can be predicated only of acts of will. If the

required state of the will exists, there is obedience. If it does not exist, there is disobedience. Therefore by his own admission and express holding, if by moral inability we are to understand a state of the will not conformed, or, which is the same thing, opposed to the law and will of God, this moral inability is nothing else than disobedience to God. A moral inability to obey is identical with disobedience. It is not merely the cause of future or present disobedience, but really constitutes the whole of present disobedience.

3. But suppose that we understand his moral inability to consist both in the want of an inclination, choice, volition, &c., or in the existence of an opposing state of the will, and also,

[1.] In the presence of such motives as to necessitate an opposite choice, and,

[2.] In the want of sufficient motives to overcome the opposing state and necessitate the required choice, volition, &c., then his views stand thus: moral inability to choose as God commands consists in the want of this choice, or in the existence of an opposite choice, which want of choice, or which is the same thing with him, which opposite choice is caused.

[1.] By the presence of such motives as to necessitate the opposite choice, and,

[2.] By the absence of such motives as would necessitate the required choice.

Understand him which way you will, his moral inability is real disobedience and is in the highest sense a proper natural inability to obey. The cause of choice or volition he always seeks, and thinks or assumes that he finds in the object or motive, and never for once ascribes it to the sovereignty or freedom of the agent. Choice or volition is an event and must have some cause. He assumed that the objective motive was the cause, when, as consciousness testifies, the agent is himself the cause. Here is the great error of Edwards.

Edwards assumed that no agent whatever, not even God himself, possesses a power of self-determination. That the will of God and of all moral agents is determined, not by themselves, but by an objective motive. If they will in one direction or another, it is not from any free and sovereign self-determination in view of motives, but because the motives or inducements present to the mind, inevitably produce or necessitate the sense of the most agreeable, or choice. If this is not fatalism or natural necessity, what is?

III. THIS PRETENDED DISTINCTION BETWEEN NATURAL AND MORAL INABILITY IS NONSENSICAL.

What does it amount to? Why this:

1. This natural inability is an inability to do as we will, or to execute our volitions.

2. This moral inability is an inability to will.

3. This moral inability is the only natural inability that has or can have anything to do with duty or with morality and religion; or, as has been shown,

4. It consists in disobedience itself. Present moral inability to obey is identical with present disobedience, with a natural inability to obey!

It is amazing to see how so great and good a man could involve himself in a metaphysical fog and bewilder himself and his readers insomuch that such an absolutely senseless distinction as the one now under consideration, should pass into the current phraseology, philosophy, and theology of the church, and a score of theological dogmas be built upon the assumption of this truth. Who does not know that this nonsensical distinction has been in the mouth of the Edwardean school of theologians, from Edward's day to the present? Both saints and sinners have been bewildered, and, I must say, abused by it. Men have been told that they are as really unable to will as God directs, as they were to create themselves, and when it is replied that this inability excuses the sinner, we are directly silenced by the assertion that this is only a

moral inability, or an inability of will, and therefore that it is so far from excusing the sinner, that it constitutes the very ground, and substance, and whole of his guilt. Indeed! Men are under moral obligation only to will as God directs. But an inability thus to will consisting in the absence of such motives as would necessitate the required choice, or the presence of such motives as to necessitate an opposite choice, is a moral inability, and really constitutes the sinner worthy of an "exceeding great and eternal weight" of damnation! Ridiculous! Edwards I revere; his blunders I deplore. I speak thus of this Treatise on the Will because, while it abounds with unwarrantable assumptions, distinctions without a difference, and metaphysical subtleties, it has been adopted as the text book of a multitude of what are called Calvinistic divines for scores of years. It has bewildered the head, and greatly embarrassed the heart and the action of the church of God. It is time, high time that its errors should be exposed and so "shows up" that such phraseology should be laid aside, and the ideas which these words represent should cease to be entertained.

IV. WHAT CONSTITUTES AN ABILITY ACCORDING TO THIS SCHOOL.

It is of course the opposite of moral inability.

Moral ability according to them, consists in willingness with the cause of it. That is, moral ability to obey God consists in that inclination, desire, choice, volition, or sense of the most agreeable which God requires together with its cause. Or it consists in the presence of such motives as do actually necessitate the above named state or determination of the will. Or more strictly it consists in this state caused by the presence of these motives.

This is as exact a statement of their views as I can make.

According to this, a man is morally able to do, as he does, and is necessitated to do, or, he is morally able to will as he does will, and as he can not help willing.

He is morally able to will in this manner simply and only because he is caused thus to will by the presence of such motives as are, according to them, "indissolubly connected" with such willing by a law of nature and necessity. But this conducts us to the conclusion,

V. THAT THEIR MORAL ABILITY TO OBEY GOD IS NOTHING ELSE THAN REAL OBEDIENCE, AND A NATURAL INABILITY TO DISOBEY.

Strictly this moral ability includes both the state of will required by the law of God and also the cause of this state, to wit, the presence of such motives as necessitate the inclination, choice, volition or sense of the most agreeable, that God requires.

The agent is able thus to will because he is caused thus to will. Or more strictly, his ability and his inclination or willing are identical. Or still further, according to Edwards, his moral ability to thus will and his thus willing and the presence of the motives that cause this willing are identical. This is a sublime discovery in philosophy; a most transcendental speculation! I would not treat these notions as ridiculous, were they not truly so, or if I could treat them in any other manner and still do them any thing like justice. If, where the theory is plainly stated, it appears ridiculous, the fault is not in me, but in the theory itself. I know it is trying to you, as it is to me to connect any thing ridiculous with so great and so revered a name as that of President Edwards. But if a blunder of his has entailed perplexity and error on the church, surely his great and good soul would now thank the hand that should blot out the error from under heaven.

Thus, when closely examined, this long established and venerated fog-bank vanishes away; and this famed distinction between moral and natural ability and inability, is found to be "a thing of nought."

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 48

INABILITY.

THERE are yet other forms of the doctrine of inability to be stated and considered before we have done with this subject. In the consideration of the one before me I must,

I. STATE WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE THE FUNDAMENTAL ERROR OF EDWARDS AND HIS SCHOOL ON THE SUBJECT OF ABILITY.

II. STATE THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHEME OF INABILITY WHICH WE ARE ABOUT TO CONSIDER.

III CONSIDER THE CLAIMS.

I. I AM TO STATE WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE THE FUNDAMENTAL ERROR OF EDWARDS AND HIS SCHOOL UPON THE SUBJECT OF ABILITY.

Edwards adopted the Lockean philosophy. He regarded the mind as possessing but two primary faculties, the understanding and the will. He considered all the desires, emotions, affections, appetites, and passions as voluntary, and as really consisting in acts of will. This confounding of the states of the sensibility with acts of the will I regard as the fundamental error of his whole system of philosophy so far as it respects the liberty of the will or the doctrine of ability. Being conscious that the emotions, which he calls affections, the desires, the appetites and passions, were so correlated to their appropriate objects, that they are excited by the presence or contemplation of them, and assuming them to be voluntary states of mind, or actions of the will, he very naturally, and with this assumption, necessarily and justly concluded that the will was governed or decided by the objective motive. Assuming as he did that the mind has but two faculties, understanding and will, and that every state of feeling and of mind that did not belong to the understanding, must be a voluntary state or act of will, and being conscious that his feelings, desires, affections, appetites and passions, were excited by the contemplation of their correlated objects, he could consistently come to no other conclusion than that the will is determined by motives, and that choice always is as the most agreeable is.

Had he not sat down to write with the assumption of the Lockean school of philosophy in his mind, his Treatise on the Will, in any thing like its present form, could never have seen the light. But assuming the truth of that philosophy, a mind like his could arrive at no other conclusions than he did. He took upon trust or assumed without inquiry an error that vitiated his whole system, and gave birth to that injurious monstrosity and misnomer, "Edwards on the Freedom of the Will."

He justly held that moral law legislates and can strictly legislate only over acts of will and those acts that are under the control of the will. This he, with his mental development, could not deny, nor think of denying. Had he but given or assumed a correct definition of the will and excluded from its acts the wholly involuntary states of the sensibility, he never could have asserted that the will is always and necessarily determined by the objective motive.

Assuming the philosophy of Locke, and being conscious that the states of his sensibility, which he called acts of will, were controlled or excited by motives or by the consideration of their correlated objects, his great soul labored to bring

about a reconciliation between the justice of God and this real though not so called slavery of the human will. This led him to adopt the distinction which we have examined between a moral and a natural inability. Thus, as a theologian, he committed a capital error in suffering himself to take upon trust another man's philosophy. Happy is the man who takes the trouble to examine for himself whatever is essential to his system of opinion and belief.

II. I AM TO STATE THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHEME OF INABILITY WHICH WE ARE ABOUT TO CONSIDER.

1. This philosophy properly distinguishes between the will and the sensibility. It regards the mind as possessing three primary departments, powers, or susceptibilities, the intellect, the sensibility and the will. It does not always call these departments or susceptibilities by these names, but if I understand them, the abettors of this philosophy hold to their existence, by whatever name they may call them.
2. This philosophy also holds that the states of the intellect and of the sensibility are passive and involuntary.
3. It holds that freedom of will is a condition of moral agency.
4. It also teaches that the will is free and consequently that man is a free moral agent.
5. It teaches that the will controls the outward life and the attention of the intellect, directly, and many of the emotions, desires, affections, appetites, and passions, or many states of the sensibility, indirectly.
6. It teaches that men have ability to obey God so far forth as acts of will are concerned, and also so far as those acts and states of mind are concerned that are under the direct or indirect control of the will.
7. But they hold that moral obligation may, and in the case of man at least, does extend beyond moral agency and beyond the sphere of ability; that ability or freedom of will is essential to moral agency, but that freedom of will or moral agency, does not limit moral obligation; that moral agency and moral obligation are not co-extensive; consequently that moral obligation is not limited by ability or by moral agency.
8. This philosophy asserts that moral obligation extends to those states of mind that lie wholly beyond or without the sphere or control of the will; that it extends not merely to voluntary acts and states, together with all acts and states that come within the direct or indirect control of the will, but, as was said, it insists that those mental states that lie wholly beyond the will's direct or indirect control, come within the pale of moral legislation and obligation; and that therefore obligation is not limited by ability.
9. This philosophy seems to have been invented to reconcile the doctrine of original sin in the sense of a sinful nature or of constitutional moral depravity with moral obligation. Assuming that original sin in this sense is a doctrine of divine revelation, it takes the bold and uncompromising ground already stated, namely, that moral obligation is not merely co-extensive with moral agency and ability, but extends beyond both into the region of those mental states that lie entirely without the will's direct or indirect control.
10. This bold assertion the abettors of this philosophy attempt to support by an appeal to the necessary convictions of men and to the authority of the Bible. They allege that the instinctive judgments of men as well as the Bible everywhere assume and affirm moral obligation and moral character of the class of mental states in question.
11. They admit that a physical inability is a bar to or inconsistent with moral obligation; but they of course deny that the inability to which they hold, is physical.

III. THIS BRINGS US TO A BRIEF CONSIDERATION OF THE CLAIMS OF THIS PHILOSOPHY OF INABILITY.

1. It is based upon a *petitio principiis*, or a begging of the question. It assumes that the instinctive or irresistible and universal judgments of men, together with the Bible, assert and assume that moral obligation and moral character extend

to the states of mind in question. It is admitted that the teachings of the Bible are to be relied upon. It is also admitted that the first truths of reason, or what this philosophy calls the instinctive and necessary judgments of all men, must be true. But it is not admitted that the assertion in question is a doctrine of the Bible or a first truth of reason. On the contrary, both are denied. It is denied, at least by me, that either reason or divine revelation affirms moral obligation or moral character of any state of mind that lies wholly beyond both the direct and the indirect control of the will. Now this philosophy must not be allowed to beg the question in debate. Let it be shown, if it can be, that the alleged truth is either a doctrine of the Bible or a first truth of reason. Both reason and revelation do assert and assume that moral obligation and moral character extend to acts of will and to all those outward acts or mental states that lie within its direct or indirect control. "But further these deponents say not." Men are conscious of moral obligation in respect to these acts and states of mind, and of guilt when they fail in these respects to comply with moral obligation. But who ever blamed himself for pain, when, without his fault, he received a blow, or was seized with the tooth ache, or a fit of bilious choleric?

2. Let us inquire into the nature of this inability. Observe, it is admitted by this school that a physical inability is inconsistent with moral obligation--in other words, that physical ability is a condition of moral obligation. But what is a physical inability? The primary definition of the adjective physical, given by Webster, is, "pertaining to nature, or natural objects." A physical inability then, in the primary sense of the term physical, is an inability of nature. It may be either a material or a mental inability, that is, it may be either an inability of body or mind. It is admitted by the school whose views we are canvassing, that all human causality or ability resides in the will, and therefore that there is a proper inability of nature to perform any thing that does not come within the sphere of the direct or indirect causality of or control of the will. It is plain, therefore, that the inability for which they contend must be a proper natural inability, or inability of nature. This they fully admit and maintain. But this they do not call a physical inability. But why do they not? Why simply because it would, by their own admissions, overthrow their favorite position. They seem to assume that a physical inability must be a material inability. But where is the authority for such an assumption? There is no authority for it. A proper inability of nature must be a physical inability, as opposed to moral inability, or there is no meaning in language. It matters not at all whether the inability belongs to the material organism or to the mind. If it be constitutional and properly an inability of nature, it is nonsense to deny that this is a physical inability, or to maintain that it can be consistent with moral obligation. It is in vain to reply that this inability, though a real inability of nature, is not physical but moral, because a sinful inability. This is another begging of the question,

The school whose views I am examining maintain, that this inability is founded in the first sin of Adam. His first sin plunged himself and his posterity, descending from him by a natural law, into a total inability of nature to render any obedience to God. This first sin of Adam entailed a nature on all his posterity "wholly sinful in every faculty and part of soul and body." This constitutional sinfulness that belongs to every faculty and part of soul and body, constitutes the inability of which we are treating. But mark, it is not physical inability because it is a sinful inability! Important theological distinction!--as truly wonderful, surely, as any of the subtleties of the Jesuits. But if this inability is sinful, it is important to inquire, Whose sin is it? Who is to blame for it? Why to be sure, we are told that it is the sin of him upon whom it is thus entailed by the natural law of descent from parent to child without his knowledge or consent. This sinfulness of nature, entirely irrespective of and previous to any actual transgression, renders its possessor worthy of and exposed to the wrath and curse of God forever. This sinfulness, observe, is transmitted by a natural or physical law from Adam, but it is not a physical inability! It is something that inheres in, and belongs to every faculty and part of soul and body. It is transmitted by a physical law from parent to child. It is, therefore, and must be a physical thing. But yet, we are told, that it cannot be a physical inability, because first, it is sinful or sin itself, and secondly, because a physical inability is a bar to, or inconsistent with moral obligation. Here, then, we have their reasons for not admitting this to be a physical inability. It would in this case render moral obligation an impossibility; and besides, if a bar to moral obligation, it could not be sinful. But it is sinful, it is said, therefore it can not be physical. But how do we know that it is sinful? Why, we are told, that the instinctive judgments of men and the Bible, every where affirm and assume it. We are told that both the instinctive judgments of men and the Bible affirm and assume both the inability in question and the sinfulness of it; "that we ought to be able, but are not;" that is, that we are so much to blame for this inability of nature entailed upon us without our knowledge or consent by a physical necessity, as to deserve the wrath and curse of God forever. We are under a moral obligation not to have this sinful nature. We deserve damnation for having it. To be sure, we are entirely unable to put it away, and had no agency whatever in its existence. But what of that? We are told that "moral obligation is not limited by ability;" that our being as unable to change our nature as we are to create a world, is no reason why we should not be under obligation to do it, since "moral obligation does not imply ability of any kind to do what we are under obligation to do!" * * * * I was about to expose the folly and absurdity of these assertions, but hush! It is not allowable, we are told, to reason on this subject. We shall deceive ourselves if we listen to the "miserable logic of our understandings." We must

fall back then upon the intuitive affirmations of reason and the Bible. Here, then, we are willing to lodge our appeal. The Bible defines sin to be a transgression of the law. What law have we violated in inheriting this nature? What law requires us to have a different nature from that which we possess? Does reason affirm that we are deserving of the wrath and curse of God forever for inheriting from Adam a sinful nature.

What law of reason have we transgressed in inheriting this nature? Reason can not condemn us unless we have violated some law which it can recognize as such. Reason indignantly rebukes such nonsense. Does the Bible hold us responsible for impossibilities? Does it require of us what we can not do by willing to do it? Nay, verily; but it expressly affirms that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." The plain meaning of this passage is, that if one wills as God directs, he has thereby met all his obligation; that he has done all that is naturally possible to him, and therefore nothing more is required.

In this passage, the Bible expressly limits obligation by ability. This we have repeatedly seen in former lectures. The law also, as we have formerly seen, limits obligation by ability. It requires only that we should love the Lord with all our strength, that is, with all our ability, and our neighbor as ourselves.

Does reason hold us responsible for impossibilities, or affirm our obligation to do or be what it is impossible for us to do and be? No indeed. Reason never did and never can condemn us for our nature, and hold us worthy of the wrath and curse of God forever for possessing it. Nothing is more shocking and revolting to reason, than such assumptions as are made by the philosophy in question. This every man's consciousness must testify.

But is it not true that some, at least, do intelligently condemn themselves for their nature, and adjudge themselves to be worthy of the wrath and curse of God forever for its sinfulness! The framers of the Presbyterian Confession of faith made this affirmation in words, at least; whether intelligently or unintelligently, we are left to inquire. The reason of a moral agent condemning himself and adjudging himself worthy of the wrath and curse of God forever, for possessing a nature entailed on him by a natural law without his knowledge or consent! This can never be.

But is it not true, as is affirmed, that men instinctively and necessarily affirm their obligation to be able to obey God, while they at the same time affirm that they are not able? I answer, no. They affirm themselves to be under obligation simply and only because deeply in their inward being lies the assumption that they are able to comply with the requirements of God.

They are conscious of ability to will and of power to control their outward life directly, and the states of the intellect and of their sensibility, either directly or indirectly, by willing. Upon this consciousness they found the affirmation of obligation, and of praise and blame worthiness in respect to these acts and states of mind. But for the consciousness of ability, no affirmation of moral obligation, or of praise, or blame worthiness, were possible.

But do those who affirm both their inability and their obligation, deceive themselves? I answer, yes. It is common for persons to overlook assumptions that lie, so to speak, at the bottom of their minds. This has been noticed in the first lecture in this volume, and need not be here repeated.

It is true indeed that God requires of men, especially under the Gospel, what they are unable to do directly in their own strength. Or more strictly speaking, he requires them to lay hold on his strength, or to avail themselves of his grace as the condition of being what he requires them to be. With strict propriety, it can not be said that in this, or in any case he requires directly any more than we are able directly to do. The direct requirement in the case under consideration, is to avail ourselves of, or to lay hold upon his strength. This, we have power to do. He requires us to lay hold upon his grace and strength, and thereby to rise to a higher knowledge of himself, and to a consequent higher state of holiness than would be otherwise possible to us. The direct requirement is to believe, or to lay hold upon his strength, or to receive the Holy Spirit, or Christ, who stands at the door, and knocks, and waits for admission. The indirect requirement is to rise to a degree of knowledge of God and to spiritual attainments that are impossible to us in our own strength. We have ability to obey the direct command directly, and the indirect command indirectly. That is, we are able by virtue of our nature, together with the proffered grace of the Holy Spirit to comply with all the requirements of God. So that in fact there is no proper inability about it.

But are not men often conscious of there being much difficulty in the way of rendering to God all that we affirm ourselves under obligation to render? I answer, yes. But, strictly speaking, they must admit their direct or indirect ability as a condition of affirming their obligation. This difficulty, arising out of their physical depravity and the power of temptation from without, is the foundation or cause of the spiritual warfare of which the Scriptures speak and of which all christians are conscious. But the Bible abundantly teaches that through grace we are able to be more than conquerors. If we are able to be this through grace, we are able to avail ourselves of the provisions of grace, so that there is no proper inability in the case. However great the difficulties may be, we are able through Christ to overcome them all. This we must and do assume as the condition of the affirmation of obligation.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 49

GRACIOUS ABILITY.

I. I WILL SHOW WHAT THOSE WHO USE THIS PHRASEOLOGY REALLY MEAN BY A GRACIOUS ABILITY.

II. THAT THE DOCTRINE OF A GRACIOUS ABILITY AS HELD BY THOSE WHO MAINTAIN IT IS AN ABSURDITY.

III. IN WHAT SENSE OF THE TERMS A GRACIOUS ABILITY IS POSSIBLE.

Grace is unmerited favor. Its exercise consists in bestowing that which without a violation of justice might be withheld.

Ability to obey God, as we have seen, is the possession of power adequate to the performance of that which is required. If, then, the terms are used in the proper sense, by a gracious ability must be intended that the power which men at present possess to obey the commands of God, is a gift of grace relatively to the command; that is, the bestowment of power adequate to the performance of the thing required, is a matter of grace as opposed to justice. But let us enter upon an inquiry into the sense in which this language is used.

I. I WILL SHOW WHAT IS INTENDED BY THE TERM GRACIOUS ABILITY.

1. The abettors of this scheme hold that by the first sin of Adam, he, together with all his posterity, lost all natural power and all ability of every kind to obey God; that therefore they were, as a race, wholly unable to obey the moral law, or to render to God any acceptable service whatever; that is, that they became as a consequence of the sin of Adam, wholly unable to use the powers of nature in any other way than to sin. They were able to sin or to disobey God, but entirely unable to obey him; that they did not lose all power to act, but that they had power to act only in one direction, that is, in opposition to the will and law of God. By a gracious ability they intend, that in consequence of the atonement of Christ, God has graciously restored to man ability to accept the terms of mercy, or to fulfil the conditions of acceptance with God--in other words, that by the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit which, upon condition of the atonement, God has given to every member of the human family, all men are endowed with a gracious ability to obey God. By a gracious ability is intended, then, that ability or power to obey God, which all men now possess, not by virtue of their own nature or constitutional powers, but by virtue of the indwelling and gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, gratuitously bestowed upon man, in consequence and upon condition of the atonement of Christ. The inability or total loss of natural and of all power to obey God into which men as a race fell by the first sin of Adam, they call original sin, &c., perhaps more strictly, this inability is a consequence of that original sin into which man fell; which original sin itself consisted in the total corruption of man's whole nature. They hold that by the atonement Christ made satisfaction for original sin in such a sense that the inability resulting from it is removed, and that now men are by gracious aid able to obey and accept the terms of salvation. That is, they are able to repent and believe the gospel. In short they are able by virtue of this gracious ability to do their duty or to obey God. This, if I understand these theologians, is a fair statement of their doctrine of gracious ability. This brings us,

II. TO SHOW THAT THE DOCTRINE OF A GRACIOUS ABILITY AS HELD BY THOSE WHO MAINTAIN IT, IS AN ABSURDITY.

The question is not whether as a matter of fact men ever do obey God without the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit. I hold that they do not. So the fact of the Holy Spirit's gracious influence being exerted in every case of human obedience, is not a question in debate between those who maintain and those who deny the doctrine of gracious ability in the sense above explained. The question in debate is not whether men do, in any case, use the powers of nature in the manner that God requires without the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, but whether they are naturally able so to use them. Is the fact that they never do so use them, without a divine gracious influence to be ascribed to absolute inability, or to the fact that from the beginning they universally and voluntarily consecrate their powers to the gratification of self, and that, therefore they will not, unless they are divinely persuaded, by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, in any case, turn and consecrate their powers to the service of God? If this doctrine of natural inability and of gracious ability be true, it inevitably follows:

1. That but for the atonement of Christ, and the consequent bestowment of a gracious ability, no one of Adam's race could ever have been capable of sinning. For in this case the whole race would have been and remained wholly destitute of any kind or degree of ability to obey God. Consequently they could not have been subjects of moral government, and of course their actions could have had no moral character. It is a first-truth of reason, a truth every where and by all men necessarily assumed in their practical judgments, that a subject of moral government must be a moral agent, or that moral agency is a necessary condition of any one's being a subject of moral government. And in the practical judgment of men, it matters not at all whether a being ever was a moral agent, or not. If by any means whatever he has ceased to be a moral agent, men universally and necessarily assume that it is impossible for him to be a subject of moral government any more than a horse can be such a subject. Suppose he has by his own fault made himself an idiot or a lunatic; all men know absolutely and in their practical judgment assume, that in this state he is not, and can not be a subject of moral government. They know that in this state, moral character can not justly be predicated of his actions. His guilt in thus depriving himself of moral agency may be exceeding great, and, as was said on a former occasion, his guilt in thus depriving himself of moral agency may equal the sum of all the default of which it is the cause, but be a moral agent, be under moral obligation in this state of dementation or insanity, he can not. This is a first-truth of reason, irresistibly and universally assumed by all men. If, therefore, Adam's posterity had by their own personal act cast away and deprived themselves of all ability to obey God, in this state they would have ceased to be moral agents, and consequently they could have sinned no more. But the case under consideration is not the one just supposed, but is one where moral agency was not cast away by the agent himself. It is one where moral agency was never and never could have been possessed. In the case under consideration, Adam's posterity, had he ever had any, would never have possessed any power to obey God or to do any thing acceptable to him. Consequently they never could have sustained to God the relation of subjects of his moral government. Of course they never could have had moral character; right or wrong, in a moral sense, never could have been predicated of their actions.

2. It must follow from this doctrine of natural inability that mankind lost their freedom or the liberty of the human will in the first sin of Adam; that both Adam himself, and all his posterity would and could have sustained to God only the relation of necessary as opposed to free agents, had not God bestowed upon them a gracious ability.

We have seen in a former lecture that natural ability to obey God and the freedom or liberty of will are identical. We have abundantly seen that moral law and moral obligation respect strictly, only acts of will; that hence, all obedience to God consists strictly in acts of will; that power to will in conformity with the requirements of God, is natural ability to obey him; that freedom or liberty of will consists in the power or ability to will in conformity or disconformity to the will or law of God; that, therefore, freedom or liberty of will and natural ability to obey God are identical. Thus we see that if man lost his natural ability to obey God in the first sin of Adam, he lost the freedom of his will, and thenceforth must forever have remained a necessary agent but for the gracious re-bestowment of ability or freedom of will.

But that either Adam or his posterity lost their freedom or free agency by the first sin of Adam, is not only a sheer, but an absurd assumption. To be sure Adam fell into a state of total alienation from the law of God, and lapsed into a state of supreme selfishness. His posterity have unanimously followed his example. He and they have become dead in trespasses and sins. Now that this death in sin either consists in or implies the loss of free agency, is the very thing to be proved by them. But this can not be proved. I have so fully discussed the subject of human moral depravity or sinfulness on a former occasion as to render it unnecessary to enlarge upon this subject here.

3. Again, if it be true, as these theologians affirm, that men have only a gracious ability to obey God and that this gracious

ability consists in the presence and gracious agency of the Holy Spirit, it follows that when the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from man, he is no longer a free agent, and from that moment he is incapable of moral action, and of course can sin no more. Hence should he live any number of years after this withdrawal, neither sin nor holiness, virtue nor vice, praise nor blame worthiness could be predicated of his conduct. The same will and must be true of all his future eternity.

4. If the doctrine in question be true, it follows that from the moment of the withdrawal of the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, man is no longer a subject of moral obligation. It is from that moment absurd and abusive to require the performance of any duty of him. Nay to conceive of him as being any longer a subject of duty; to think or speak of duty as belonging to him, is as absurd as to think or speak of the duty of a mere machine. He has, from the moment of the withholding of a gracious ability, ceased to be a free and become a necessary agent, having power to act but in one direction. Such a being can by no possibility be capable of sin or holiness. Suppose he still possesses power to act contrary to the letter of the law of God: what then? This action can have no moral character, because, act in some way he must, and he can act in no other way. It is nonsense to affirm that such action can be sinful in the sense of blameworthy. To affirm that it can, is to contradict a first-truth of reason. Sinners, then, who have quenched the Holy Spirit, and from whom He is wholly withdrawn, are no longer to be blamed for their enmity against God, and for all their opposition to him. They are, according to this doctrine, as free from blame as are the motions of a mere machine.

5. Again, if the doctrine in question be true, there is no reason to believe that the angels that fell from their allegiance to God ever sinned but once. If Adam lost his free agency by the fall, or by his first sin, there can be no doubt that the angels did so too. If a gracious ability had not been bestowed upon Adam, it is certain, according to the doctrine in question, that he never could have been the subject of moral obligation from the moment of his first sin, and consequently could never again have sinned. The same must be true of devils. If by their first sin they fell into the condition of necessary agents, having lost their free agency, they have never sinned since. That is, moral character can not have been predicable of their conduct since that event, unless a gracious ability has been bestowed upon them. That this has been done cannot with even a show of reason be pretended. The devils, then, according to this doctrine, are not now to blame for all they do to oppose God and to ruin souls. Upon the supposition in question, they cannot help it, and you might as well blame the winds and the waves for the evil which they sometimes do, and blame Satan for what he does.

6. If this doctrine be true, there is not and never will be any sin in hell, for the plain reason that there are no moral agents there. They are necessary agents, unless it be true that the Holy Spirit and a gracious ability be continued there. This is not, I believe, contended for by the abettors of this scheme. But if they deny to the inhabitants of hell freedom of the will, or, which is the same thing, natural ability to obey God, they must admit, or be grossly inconsistent, that there is no sin in hell, either in men or devils. But is this admission agreeable either to reason or revelation? I know that the abettors of this scheme maintain that God may justly hold both men, from whom a gracious ability is withdrawn, and devils, responsible for their conduct, because and upon the ground that they have destroyed their own ability. But suppose this were true--that they had rendered themselves idiots, lunatics, or necessary as opposed to free agents, could God, justly, could enlightened reason still regard them as moral agents, and as morally responsible for their conduct? No, indeed. God and reason may justly blame and render them miserable for annihilating their freedom or their moral agency, but to hold them still responsible for present obedience were absurd.

7. We have seen that the ability of all men of sane mind to obey God, is necessarily assumed by all men as a first truth of reason, and that this assumption is, from the very laws of mind, the indispensable condition of the affirmation, or even the conception that they are subjects of moral obligation; that but for this assumption men could not so much as conceive the possibility of moral responsibility, and of praise and blame worthiness. If the laws of mind remain unaltered, this is and always will be so. In the eternal world, and in hell, men and devils must necessarily assume their own freedom or ability to obey God, as the condition of their obligation to do so, and consequently to their being capable of sin or holiness. Since revelation informs us that men and devils continue to sin in hell, we know that there also it must be assumed as a first-truth of reason, that they are free agents, or that they have natural ability to obey God.

8. But that a gracious ability to do duty or to obey God is an absurdity, will farther appear if we consider that it is a first-truth of reason that moral obligation implies moral agency, and that moral agency implies freedom of will; or in other words, it implies a natural ability to comply with obligation. This ability is necessarily regarded by the intelligence as the sine qua non of moral obligation, on the ground of natural and immutable justice. A just command always implies an ability to obey it. A command to perform a natural impossibility would not and could not impose obligation. Suppose

God should command human beings to fly without giving them power, could such a command impose moral obligation? No, indeed. But suppose he should give them power or promise them power upon the performance of a condition within their reach, then he might in justice require them to fly, and a command to do so would be obligatory. But relatively to the requirement, the bestowment would not be grace, but justice. Relatively to the results or the pleasure of flying, the bestowment of power might be gracious. That is, it might be grace in God to give me power to fly that I might have the pleasure and profit of flying, so that relatively to the results of flying the giving of power might be regarded as an act of grace. But, if God requires me to fly as a matter of duty, he must in justice supply the power or ability to fly. This would in justice be a necessary condition of the commands, imposing moral obligation.

Nor would it at all vary the case if I had ever possessed wings, and by the abuse of them, had lost the power to fly. In this case, considered relatively to the pleasure and profit and results of flying, the restoring of the power to fly might and would be an act of grace. But if God would still command me to fly, he must as a condition of my obligation restore the power. It is vain and absurd to say, as has been said, that in such a case, although I might lose the power of obedience, this can not alter the right of God to claim obedience. This assertion proceeds upon the absurd assumption that the will of God makes or creates law instead of merely declaring and enforcing the law of nature. We have seen in former lectures that the only law or rule of action that is or can be obligatory on a moral agent, is the law of nature, or just that course of willing and acting, which is for the time being, suitable to his nature and relations. We have seen that God's will never makes or creates law, that it only declares and enforces it. If, therefore, by any means whatever, the nature of a moral agent should be so changed that his will is no longer free to act in conformity with or in opposition to the law of nature, if God would hold him still obligated to obey, he must in justice relatively to his requirement, restore his liberty or ability. Suppose one had by the abuse of his intellect lost the use of it, and become a perfect idiot, could he by any possibility be still required to understand and obey God? Certainly not. So neither could he be required to perform anything else that had become naturally impossible to him. Viewed relatively to the pleasure and results of obedience his restoring power would be an act of grace. But viewed relatively to his duty or to God's command, the restoring of power to obey is an act of justice and not of grace. To call this grace were to abuse language and confound terms. But this brings me to the consideration of the next question to be discussed at present, namely,

III. IN WHAT SENSE A GRACIOUS ABILITY IS POSSIBLE.

1. Not, as we have just seen, in the sense that the bestowment of power to render obedience to a command possible can be properly a gift of grace. Grace is undeserved favor, something not demanded by justice, that which under the circumstances, might be withholden without injustice. It never can be just in any being to require that which under the circumstances is impossible. As has been said, relatively to the requirement and as a condition of its justice, the bestowment of power adequate to the performance of that which is commanded, is an unalterable condition of the justice of the command. This I say is a first-truth of reason, a truth every where by all men necessarily assumed and known. A gracious ability to obey a command, is an absurdity and an impossibility.

2. But a gracious ability considered relatively to the advantages to result from obedience is possible.

Suppose, for example, that a servant who supports himself and his family by his wages, should by his own fault render himself unable to labor and to earn his wages. His master may justly dismiss him and let him go with his family to the poor-house. But in this disabled state his master cannot justly exact labor of him. Nor could he do so if he absolutely owned the servant. Now suppose the master to be able to restore to the servant his former strength. If he would require service of him, as a condition of the justice of this requirement, he must restore his strength so far at least as to render obedience possible. This would be mere justice. But suppose he restored the ability of the servant to gain support for himself and his family by labor. This, viewed relatively to the good of the servant--to the results of the restoration of his ability to himself and to his family, is a matter of grace. Relatively to the good or rights of the master in requiring the labor of the servant, the restoration of ability to obey is an act of justice. But relatively to the good of the servant, and the benefits that result to him from this restoration of ability and making it once more possible for him to support himself and his family, the giving of ability is properly an act of grace.

Let this be applied to the case under consideration. Suppose the race of Adam to have lost their free agency by the first sin of Adam and thus to have come into a state in which holiness and consequent salvation were impossible. Now if God would still require obedience of them, he must in justice restore their ability. And viewed relatively to his right to

command, and their duty to obey, this restoration is properly a matter of justice. But suppose he would again place them in circumstances to render holiness and consequent salvation possible to them:--viewed relatively to their good and profit, this restoration of ability is properly a matter of grace.

A gracious ability to obey, viewed relatively to the command to be obeyed, is impossible and absurd.

But a gracious ability to be saved, viewed relatively to salvation, is possible.

There is no proof that mankind ever lost their ability to obey, either by the first sin of Adam, or by their own sin. For this would imply, as we have seen, that they had ceased to be free, and had become necessary agents. But if they had, and God had restored their ability to obey, all that can be justly said in this case, is, that so far as his right to command is concerned, the restoration of their ability was an act of justice. But so far as the rendering of salvation possible to them is concerned, it was an act of grace.

3. But it is asserted or rather assumed by the defenders of this dogma that the Bible teaches the doctrine of a natural inability and of a gracious ability in man to obey the commands of God. I admit indeed that if we interpret Scripture without regard to any just rules of interpretation, this assumption may find countenance in the word of God, just as almost any absurdity whatever may and has done. But a moderate share of attention to one of the simplest and most universal and most important rules of interpreting language whether in or out of the Bible, will strip this absurd dogma of the least appearance of support from the word of God. The rule to which I refer is this, "that language is always to be interpreted in accordance with the subject-matter of discourse."

When used of acts of will, the term "can not" interpreted by this rule, can not be understood to mean a proper impossibility. If I say, I can not take five dollars for my watch, when it is offered to me, every one knows that I do not and can not mean to affirm a proper impossibility. So when God said to Lot, "Haste thee, for I can do nothing until thou be come thither," who ever understood God as affirming a natural or any proper impossibility? All that he could have meant was, that he was not willing to do any thing until Lot was in a place of safety. Just so when the Bible speaks of our inability to comply with the commands of God, all that can be intended is that we are so unwilling that without divine persuasion, we as a matter of fact shall not and will not obey. This certainly is the sense in which such language is used in common life. And in common parlance, we never think of such language, when used of acts of will, as meanin[g] any thing more than an unwillingness, a state in which the will is strongly committed in an opposite direction.

When Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Ye can not serve the Lord, for he is a holy God," the whole context, as well as the nature of the case, shows that he did not mean to affirm a natural, nor indeed any kind of impossibility. In the same connection, he requires them to serve the Lord and leads them to solemnly pledge themselves to serve Him. He undoubtedly intended to say that with wicked hearts they could not render Him an acceptable service, and therefore insisted on their putting away the wickedness of their hearts by immediately and voluntarily consecrating themselves to the service of the Lord. So it must be in all cases where the terms can not and such like expressions (which, when applied to muscular action, would imply a proper impossibility,) are used, in reference to acts of will; they can not, when thus used be understood as implying a proper impossibility without doing violence to every sober rule of interpreting language. What would be thought of a judge or an advocate at the bar of an earthly tribunal who should interpret the language of a witness without any regard to the rule, "that language is to be understood according to the subject-matter of discourse." Should an advocate in his argument to the court or jury, attempt to interpret the language of a witness in a manner that made can not, when spoken of an act of will mean a proper impossibility, the judge would soon rebuke his stupidity and remind him that he must not talk nonsense in a court of justice; and might possibly add, that such nonsensical assertions were allowable only in the pulpit. I say again, that it is an utter abuse and perversion of the laws of language so to interpret the language of the Bible as to make it teach a proper inability in man to will as God directs. The essence of obedience to God consists in willing. Language, then, that is used in reference to obedience must, when properly understood, be interpreted in accordance with the subject-matter of discourse. Consequently when used in reference to acts of will such expressions as can not and the like, can absolutely mean nothing more than a choice in an opposite direction. But it may be asked, Is there no grace in all that is done by the Holy Spirit to make man wise unto salvation? Yes, indeed, I answer. And it is grace and great grace, just because the doctrine of a natural inability in man to obey God is not true. It is just because man is well able to render obedience and unjustly refuses to do so, that all the influence that God brings to bear upon him to make him willing, is a gift and an influence of grace. And the grace is great

just in proportion to the sinner's ability to comply with God's requirements and the strength of his voluntary opposition to his duty. If man were properly unable to obey, there could be no grace in giving him ability to obey when the bestowment of ability is considered relatively to the command. But let man be regarded as free, as possessing natural ability to obey all the requirements of God and all his difficulty as consisting in a wicked heart, or, which is the same thing, in an unwillingness to obey, then an influence on the part of God designed and tending to make him willing, is grace indeed. But strip man of his freedom, render him naturally unable to obey, and you render grace impossible so far as his obligation to obedience is concerned.

But it is urged in support of the dogma of natural inability and of a gracious ability that the Bible every where represents man as dependent on the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit for all holiness and consequently for eternal life. I answer, it is admitted that this is the representation of the Bible, but the question is, In what sense is he dependent? Does his dependence consist in a natural inability to embrace the gospel and be saved? or does it consist in a voluntary selfishness--in an unwillingness to comply with the terms of salvation? Is man dependent on the Holy Spirit to give him a proper ability to obey God? or is he dependent only in such a sense that as a matter of fact he will not embrace the gospel unless the Holy Spirit makes him willing? The latter beyond reasonable question. This is the universal representation of Scripture. The difficulty to be overcome is every where in the Bible represented to be the sinner's unwillingness alone. It can not possibly be any thing else; for the willing is the doing required by God. "If there is but a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath and not according to what he hath not."

But it is said, if man can be willing of himself, what need of divine persuasion or influence to make him willing? I might ask, suppose a man is able but unwilling to pay his debts, what need of any influence to make him willing? Why, divine influence is needed to make a sinner willing or to induce him to will as God directs, just as and for the same reason that persuasion, entreaty, argument, or the rod, is needed to make our children submit their wills to ours. The fact, therefore that the Bible represents the sinner as in some sense dependent upon divine influence for a right heart, no more implies a proper inability in the sinner, than the fact that children are dependent for their good behavior oftentimes upon the thorough and timely discipline of their parents, implies a proper inability in them to obey their parents without chastisement.

The Bible every where and in every way assumes the freedom of the will. This fact lies out in strong relief upon every page of divine inspiration. But this is only the assumption necessarily made by the universal intelligence of man. The strong language often found in Scripture upon the subject of man's inability to obey God, is designed only to represent the strength of his voluntary selfishness and enmity against God, and never to imply a proper natural inability. It is, therefore, a gross and most injurious perversion of Scripture, as well as a contradiction of human reason, to deny the natural ability, or, which is the same thing, the natural free agency of man, and to maintain a proper natural inability to obey God and the absurd dogma of a gracious ability to do our duty.

REMARKS.

1. The question of ability is one of great practical importance. To deny the ability of man to obey the commandments of God, is to represent God as a hard master, as requiring a natural impossibility of his creatures on pain of eternal damnation. This necessarily begets in the mind that believes it hard thoughts of God. The intelligence can not be satisfied with the justice of such a requisition. In fact, so far as this error gets possession of the mind and gains assent just so far it naturally and necessarily excuses itself for disobedience or for not complying with the commandments of God.
2. The moral inability of Edwards is a real natural inability, and so it has been understood by sinners and professors of religion. When I entered the ministry, I found the persuasion of an absolute inability on the part of sinners to repent and believe the gospel almost universal. When I urged sinners and professors of religion to do their duty without delay, I frequently met with stern opposition from sinners, professors of religion, and ministers. They desired me to say to sinners that they could not repent and that they must wait God's, time, that is, for God to help them. It was common for the classes of persons just named to ask me if I thought sinners could be christians whenever they pleased, and whether I thought that any class of persons could repent, believe, and obey God without the strivings and new-creating power of the Holy Spirit. The church was almost universally settled down in the belief of a physical moral depravity, and of course, in a belief in the necessity of a physical regeneration, and also of course in the belief that sinners must wait to be regenerated by divine power while they were passive. Professors also must wait to be revived, until God in mysterious

sovereignty came and revived them. As to revivals of religion they were settled down in the belief to a great extent, that man had no more agency in producing them than in producing showers of rain. To attempt to effect the conversion of a sinner, or to promote a revival, was an attempt to take the work out of the hands of God, to go to work in your own strength, and to set sinners and professors to do so. The vigorous use of means and measures to promote a work of grace was regarded by many as impious. It was getting up an excitement of animal feeling, and wickedly interfering with the prerogative of God. The fact is, that both professors of religion and non-professors were settled down upon their lees, in carnal security. The abominable dogmas of physical moral depravity or a sinful constitution with a consequent natural (falsely called moral) inability, and the necessity of a physical and passive regeneration, had chilled the heart of the church, and lulled sinners into a fatal sleep. This is the natural tendency of such doctrines.

3. Let it be distinctly understood before we close this subject that we do not deny, but strenuously maintain, that the whole plan of salvation and all the influences, both providential and spiritual, which God exerts in the conversion, sanctification and salvation of sinners is grace from first to last, and that I deny the dogma of a gracious ability because it robs God of his glory. It really denies the grace of the gospel. The abettors of this scheme, in contending for the grace of the gospel, really deny it. What grace can there be, that should surprise heaven and earth, and cause "the angels to desire to look into it," in bestowing ability on those who never had any, (and of course who never cast away their ability) to obey the requirements of God? According to them all men lost their ability in Adam, and not by their own act. God still required obedience of them upon pain of eternal death. Now he might, according to this view of the subject, just as reasonably command all men on pain of eternal death to fly or undo all that Adam had done, or perform any other natural impossibility as to command them to be holy, to repent and believe the gospel. Now, I ask again, what possible grace was there or could there be, in his giving them power to obey him? To have required the obedience without giving the power had been infinitely unjust and tyrannical. To admit the assumption that men had really lost their ability to obey in Adam, and call this bestowment of ability for which they contend, grace, is an abuse of language, an absurdity and a denial of the true grace of the gospel not to be tolerated. I reject the dogma of a gracious ability, because it involves a denial of the true grace the gospel. I maintain that the gospel with all its influences including the gift of the Holy Spirit to convict, convert, and sanctify the soul, is a system of grace throughout. But to maintain this, I must also maintain that God might justly have required obedience of men without making these provisions for them. And to maintain the justice of God in requiring obedience, I must admit and maintain that obedience was possible to man. But this the abettors of this scheme deny, and maintain on the contrary that notwithstanding men were deprived of all ability, not by their act, or consent, but by Adam, long before they were born, still God might justly on pain of eternal damnation, require them to be holy, and that the giving them ability to obey is a matter of infinite grace; not, as they hold, the restoring of a power which they had cast away, but the giving of a power which they had never possessed. This power or ability viewed relatively to the command to obey on pain of eternal death a gift of grace! This baffles and confounds and stultifies the human intellect. The reason of a moral agent can not but reject this dogma. It will in spite of himself assume and affirm, the absence of ability being granted, that the bestowment of an ability viewed relatively to the command was demanded by justice, and that to call it a gracious ability is an abuse of language.

Let it not be said, then, that we deny the grace of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, nor that we deny the reality and necessity of the influences of the Holy Spirit to convert and sanctify the soul, nor that this influence is a gracious one; for all these we most strenuously maintain. But I maintain this upon the ground that men are able to do their duty, and that the difficulty does not lie in a proper inability, but in a voluntary selfishness, in an unwillingness to obey the blessed gospel. I say again that I reject the dogma of a gracious ability, as I understand its abettors to hold it, not because I deny, but solely because it denies the grace of the gospel. The denial of ability is really a denial of the possibility of grace in the affair of man's salvation. I admit the ability of man, and hold that he is able, but utterly unwilling to obey God. Therefore I consistently hold that all the influences exerted by God to make him willing, are of free grace abounding through Christ Jesus.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 50

THE NOTION OF INABILITY--PROPER METHOD OF ACCOUNTING FOR IT.

I have represented ability or the freedom of the will as a first-truth of reason. I have also defined first-truths of reason to be those truths that are necessarily known to all moral agents. From these two representations the inquiry may naturally arise, how then is it to be accounted for that so many men have denied the liberty of the will or ability to obey God? That these first-truths of reason are frequently denied is a notorious fact. A recent writer thinks this denial a sufficient refutation of the affirmation that ability is a first-truth of reason. It is important that this denial should be accounted for. That mankind affirm their obligation upon the real though often latent and unperceived assumption of ability, there is no reasonable ground of doubt. I have said that first-truths of reason are frequently assumed and certainly known without being often the direct object of thought or attention; and also that these truths are universally held in the practical judgments of men while they sometimes in theory deny them. They know them to be true and in all their practical judgments assume their truth while they reason against them, think they prove them untrue, and not unfrequently affirm that they are conscious of an opposite affirmation. For example, men have denied, in theory, the law of causality, while they have at every moment of their lives acted upon the assumption of its truth. Others have denied the freedom of the will, who have every hour of their lives assumed and acted and judged upon the assumption that the will is free. The same is true of ability, which, in respect to the commandments of God, is identical with freedom. Men have often denied the ability of man to obey the commandments of God while they have always in their practical judgments of themselves and of others assumed their ability in respect to those things that are really commanded by God. Now, how is this to be accounted for?

1. Multitudes have denied the freedom of the will, because they have loosely confounded the will with the involuntary powers--with the intellect and the sensibility. Locke, as is well known, regarded the mind as possessing but two primary faculties, the understanding and the will. President Edwards, as was said in a former lecture, followed Locke, and regarded all the states of the sensibility as acts of the will. Multitudes, nay the great mass of Calvinistic divines, with their hearers, have held the same views. This confounding of the sensibility with the will has been common for a long time. Now every body is conscious that the states of the sensibility or mere feelings cannot be produced or changed by a direct effort to feel thus or thus. Every body knows from consciousness that the feelings come and go, wax and wane, as motives are presented to excite them. And they know also that these feelings are under the law of necessity and not of liberty; that is, that necessity is an attribute of these feelings in such a sense, that under the circumstances, they will exist in spite of ourselves, and that they can not be controlled by a direct effort to control them. Every body knows that our feelings or the states of our sensibility can be controlled only indirectly, that is, by the direction of our thoughts. By directing our thoughts to an object calculated to excite certain feelings, we know that when the excitability is not exhausted, feelings correlated to that object will come into play of course and of necessity. So when any class of feelings exist, we all know that by diverting the attention from the object that excites them, they subside of course, and give place to a class correlated to the new object that at present occupies the attention. Now it is very manifest how the freedom of the will has come to be denied by those who confound the will proper with the sensibility. These same persons have always known and assumed that the actions of the will proper were free. Their error has consisted in not distinguishing in theory between the action of the proper will and the involuntary states of the sensibility. In their practical judgments, and in their conduct, they have recognized the distinction which they have failed to recognize in their speculations and theories. They have every hour been exerting their own freedom, have been controlling directly their attention and their outward life by the exercise of the freedom of their proper will. They have also, by the free exercise of the same faculty, been indirectly controlling the states of their sensibility. They have all along assumed the absolute freedom of the will

proper, and have always acted upon the assumption, or they would not have acted at all or even attempted to act. But since they did not in theory distinguish between the sensibility and the will proper, they denied in theory the freedom of the will. If the actions of the will be confounded with desires and emotions, as President Edwards confounded them, and as has been common, the result must be a theoretical denial of the freedom of the will. In this way we are to account for the doctrine of inability as it has been generally held. It has not been clearly understood that moral law legislates directly, and, with strict propriety of speech, only over the will proper, and over the involuntary powers only indirectly through the will. It has been common to regard the law and the gospel of God as directly extending their claims to the involuntary powers and states of mind; and as was shown in a former lecture, many have regarded, in theory, the law as extending its claims to those states that lie wholly beyond either the direct or indirect control of the will. Now of course, with these views of the claims of God, ability is and must be denied. I trust we have seen in past lectures, that, strictly and properly speaking, the moral law restricts its claims to the actions of the will proper, in such a sense that if there be a willing mind, it is accepted as obedience; that the moral law and the lawgiver legislate over involuntary states only indirectly, that is, through the will; and that the whole of virtue, strictly speaking, consists in good will or disinterested benevolence. Sane minds never practically deny or can deny the freedom of the will proper, or the doctrine of ability, when they make the proper discriminations between the will and the sensibility, and properly regard moral law as legislating directly only over the will. It is worthy of all consideration that those who have denied ability have almost always confounded the will and the sensibility; and that those who have denied ability have always extended the claims of moral law beyond the pale of proper voluntariness; and many of them even beyond the limits of either the direct or the indirect control of the will.

But the inquiry may arise, how it comes to pass that men have so extensively entertained the impression that the moral law legislates directly over those feelings and over those states of mind which they know to be involuntary? I answer that this mistake has arisen out of a want of just discrimination between the direct and indirect legislation of the law and of the law-giver. It is true that men are conscious of being responsible for their feelings and for their outward actions, and even for their thoughts. And it is really true that they are responsible for them in so far forth as they are under either the direct or indirect control of the will. And they know that these acts and states of mind are possible to them, that is, that they have an indirect ability to produce them. They however loosely confound the direct and indirect ability and responsibility. The thing required by the law directly and presently is benevolence or good will. This is what and all that the law strictly presently or directly requires. It indirectly requires all those outward and inward acts and states that are connected directly and indirectly with this required act of will by a law of necessity; that is, that those acts and states should follow as soon as by a natural and necessary law they will follow from a right action of the will. When these feelings and states and acts do not exist, they blame themselves generally with propriety, because the absence of them is in fact owing to a want of the required act of the will. Sometimes, no doubt, they blame themselves unjustly, not considering that although the will is right, of which they are conscious, the involuntary state or act does not follow because of exhaustion, or because of some disturbance in the established and natural connection between the acts of the will and its ordinary sequents. When this exhaustion or disturbance exists, men are apt, loosely and unjustly, to write bitter things against themselves. They often do the same in hours of temptation when Satan casts his fiery darts at them, lodging them in the thoughts and involuntary feelings. The will repels them, but they take effect, for the time being, in spite of himself in the intellect and sensibility; blasphemous thoughts are suggested to the mind, unkind thoughts of God are suggested, and in spite of one's self, these abominable thoughts awaken their correlated feelings. The will abhors them and struggles to suppress them, but for the time being, finds itself unable to do any thing more than to fight and resist.

Now it is very common for souls in this state to write the most bitter accusations against themselves. But should it be hence inferred that they really are as much in fault as they assume themselves to be? No, indeed. But why do ministers, of all schools, unite in telling such tempted souls, You are mistaken, my dear brother or sister, these thoughts and feelings, though exercises of your own mind, are not yours in such a sense that you are responsible for them. The thoughts are suggested by Satan, and the feelings are a necessary consequence. Your will resists them, and this proves that you are unable, for the time being, to avoid them. You are, therefore, not responsible for them while you resist them with all the power of your will, any more than you would be guilty of murder should a giant overpower your strength and use your hand against your will to shoot a man. In such cases, it is, so far as I know, universally true that all schools admit that the tempted soul is not responsible or guilty for those things which it can not help. The inability is here allowed to be a bar to obligation; and such souls are justly told by ministers, You are mistaken in supposing yourself guilty in this case. The like mistake is fallen into when a soul blames itself for any state of mind whatever that lies wholly and truly beyond the direct or indirect control of the will, and for the same reason inability in both cases is alike a bar to obligation. It is just as absurd in the one case as in the other to infer real responsibility from a feeling or persuasion of responsibility. To hold that men are always responsible because they loosely think themselves to be so, is absurd. In cases of temptation such as

that just supposed, as soon as the attention is directed to the fact of inability to avoid those thoughts and feelings, and the mind is conscious of the will's resisting them and of being unable to banish them, it readily rests in the assurance that it is not responsible for them. Its own irresponsibility in such cases appears self-evident to the mind the moment the proper inability is considered, and the affirmation of irresponsibility attended to. Now if the soul naturally and truly regarded itself as responsible when there is a proper inability and impossibility, the instructions above referred to could not relieve the mind. It would say, To be sure I know that I can not avoid having these thoughts and feelings, any more than I can cease to be the subject of consciousness, yet I know I am responsible, notwithstanding. These thoughts and feelings are states of my own mind and no matter how I come by them or whether I can control or prevent them or not. Inability, you know is no bar to obligation; therefore my obligation and my guilt remain. Wo is me, for I am undone. The idea, then, of responsibility when there is in fact real inability is a prejudice of education, a mistake.

The mistake, unless strong prejudice of education has taken possession of the mind, lies in overlooking the fact of a real and proper inability. Unless the judgment has been strongly biased by education, it never judges itself bound to perform impossibilities nor even conceive of such a thing, who ever held himself bound to undo what is past, to recall past time or to substitute holy acts and states of mind in the place of past sinful ones? No one ever held himself bound to do this; first, because he knows it to be impossible, and secondly, because no one that I have heard of ever taught or asserted any such obligation; and therefore none have received so strong a bias from education as loosely to hold such an opinion. But sometimes the bias of education is so great that the subjects of it seem capable of believing almost any thing, however inconsistent with the intuitions of the reason and consequently in the face of the most certain knowledge. For example, President Edwards relates of a young woman in his congregation that she was deeply convicted of being guilty for Adam's first sin, and deeply repented of it. Now suppose that this and like cases should be regarded as conclusive proof that men are guilty of that sin, and deserve the wrath and curse of God forever for that sin; and that all men will suffer the pains of hell forever, except they become convinced of their personal guilt for that sin, and repent of it as in dust and ashes! President Edward's teaching on the subject of the relation of all men to Adam's first sin, it is well known, was calculated in a degree to pervert the judgment upon that subject; and this sufficiently accounts for the fact above alluded to. But apart from education, no human being ever held himself responsible for or guilty of the first or any other sin of Adam or of any other being, who existed and died before he himself existed. The reason is that all moral agents naturally know that inability or a proper impossibility is a bar to moral obligation and responsibility; and they never conceive to the contrary unless biased by a mystifying education that casts a fog over their primitive and constitutional convictions.

2. Some have denied ability because they have strangely held that the moral law requires sinners to be just in all respects what they might have been had they never sinned. That is, they maintain that God requires of them just as high and perfect a service as if their powers had never been abused by sin, as if they had always been developed by the perfectly right use of them. This they admit to be a natural impossibility; nevertheless they hold that God may justly require it, and that sinners are justly bound to perform this impossible service and that they sin continually in coming short of it. To this sentiment I answer, that it might be maintained with as much show of reason and as much authority from the Bible, that God might and does require of all sinners to undo all their acts of sin, and to substitute holy ones in their places, and that he holds them as sinning every moment by the neglect to do this. Why may not God as well require one as the other! They are alike impossibilities. They are alike impossibilities originating in the sinner's own act or fault. If the sinners rendering himself unable to obey in one case does not set aside the right of God to command, so does it not for the same reason in the other. If an inability resulting from the sinner's own act can not bar the right of God to make the requisition in the one case, neither can it for the same reason in the other. But every one can see that God can not justly require the sinner to recall past time, and to undo past acts. But why? No other reason can be assigned than that it is impossible. But the same reason, it is admitted, exists in its full extent in the other case. It is admitted that sinners who have long indulged in sin or who have sinned at all, are really as unable to render as high a degree of service as they might have done had they never sinned, as they are to recall past time or to undo all their past acts of sin. On what ground then of reason or revelation does the assertion rest that in one case an impossibility is a bar to obligation and not in the other? I answer, There is no ground whatever for the assertion in question. It is a sheer and an absurd assumption, unsupported by any affirmation of reason or any truth or principle of revelation.

But to this assumption I reply again, as I have done on a former occasion, that if it be true, it must follow that no one on earth or in heaven who has ever sinned, will be able to render as perfect a service as the law demands; for there is no reason to believe that any being who has abused his powers by sin will ever in time or eternity be able to render as high a service as he might have done had he at every moment duly developed them by perfect obedience. If this theory is true, I

see not why it does not follow that the saints will be guilty in heaven of the sin of omission. A sentiment based upon an absurdity in the outset, as the one in question is, and resulting in such consequences as this must, is to be rejected without hesitation.

3. A. consciousness of the force of habit in respect to all the acts and states of body and mind has contributed to the loose holding of the doctrine of inability. Every one who is at all in the habit of observation and self-reflection is aware that for some reason we acquire a greater and greater facility in doing any thing by practice or repetition. We find this to be true in respect to acts of will as really as in respect to the involuntary states of mind. When the will has been long committed to the indulgence of the propensities and in the habit of submitting itself to their impulses, there is a real difficulty of some sort in the way of changing its action. This difficulty can not really impair moral agency and accountability. But habit may, and, as every one knows, does interpose an obstacle of some sort in the way of right willing, or on the other hand in the way of wrong willing. That is, men both obey and disobey with greatest facility from habit. Habit strongly favors the accustomed action of the will in any direction. This, as I said, never does or can properly impair the freedom of the will, or render it impossible to act in a contrary direction; for if it could and should, the actions of the will, in that case, being determined by a law of necessity in one direction, would have no moral character. If benevolence became a habit so strong that it were utterly impossible to will in an opposite direction or not to will benevolently, benevolence would cease to be virtuous. So on the other hand with selfishness. If the will came to be determined in that direction by habit grown into a law of necessity, such action would and must cease to have moral character. But, as I said, there is a real conscious difficulty of some sort in the way of obedience when the will has been long accustomed to sin. This is strongly recognized in the language of inspiration and in devotional hymns, as well as in the language of experience by all men. The language of Scripture is often so strong upon this point, that but for a regard to the subject-matter of discourse, we might justly infer a proper inability. For example, Jer. 13:23. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." This and similar passages recognize the influence of habit. "Then may ye who are accustomed to do evil:" custom or habit is to be overcome and in the strong language of the prophet, this is like changing the Ethiop's skin or the leopard's spots. But to understand the prophet as here affirming a proper inability were to disregard one of the fundamental rules of interpreting language, namely, that it is to be understood by reference to the subject of discourse. The latter part of the seventh chapter of Romans, affords a striking instance and an illustration of this. It is, as has just been said, a sound and most important rule of interpreting all language that due regard be had to the subject matter of discourse. When can not and such like terms that express an inability are applied to physical or involuntary actions or states of mind, they express a proper natural inability; but when they are used in reference to actions of free will, they express not a proper impossibility, but only a difficulty arising out of the existence of a contrary choice or the law of habit or both. Much question has been made about the seventh of Romans in its relation to the subject of ability and inability. Let us therefore look a little into this passage, Romans 7:15--23. "For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 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. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Now what did the apostle mean by this language? Did he use language here in the popular sense, or with strictly philosophical propriety? He says he finds himself able to will but not able to do. Is he then speaking of a mere outward or physical inability? Does he mean merely to say that the established connection between volition and its sequents was disturbed so that he could not execute his volitions? This his language, literally interpreted, and without reference to the subject-matter of discourse, and without regard to the manifest scope and design of the writer, would lead us to conclude. But who ever contended for such an interpretation? The apostle used popular language and was describing a very common experience. Convicted sinners and backslidden saints often make legal resolutions, and resolve upon obedience under the influence of legal motives and without really becoming benevolent, and changing the attitude of their wills. They, under the influence of conviction, purpose selfishly to do their duty to God and man, and, in the presence of temptations, they constantly fail of keeping their resolutions. It is true that with their selfish hearts, or in the selfish attitude of their wills, they can not keep their resolutions to abstain from those inward thoughts and emotions nor from those outward actions that result by a law of necessity from a selfish state or attitude of the will. These legal resolutions the apostle popularly calls willings. "To will is present with me, but how to do good I find not. When I would do good, evil is present with me, so that the good I would I do not and the evil I would not that I do. If then I do the evil I would not, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I delight in the law of God after the inner man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my

mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members," &c. Now this appears to me to be descriptive of a very familiar experience of every deeply convicted sinner or backslider. The will is committed to the propensities, to the law in the members, or to the gratification of the impulses of the sensibility. Hence the outward life is selfish. Conviction of sin leads to the formation of resolutions of amendment while the will does not submit to God. These resolutions constantly fail of securing the result contemplated. The will still abides in a state of committal to self-gratification; and hence resolutions to amend in feeling or the outward life, fail of securing those results.

Nothing was more foreign from the apostle's purpose, it seems to me, than to affirm a proper inability of will to yield to the claims of God. Indeed he affirms and assumes the freedom of his will. To will, he says, is present with me; that is, to resolve. But resolution is an act of will. It is a purpose, a design. He purposed, designed to amend. To form resolutions was present with him, but how to do good he found not. The reason why he did not execute his purposes was that they were selfishly made. That is, he resolved upon reformation without giving his heart to God, without submitting his will to God, without actually becoming benevolent. This caused his perpetual failure. This language construed strictly to the letter would lead to the conclusion that the apostle was representing a case where the will is right, but where the established and natural connection between volition and its sequents is destroyed, so that the outward act did not follow the action of the will. In this case all schools would agree that the act of the will constitutes real obedience. The whole passage apart from the subject-matter of discourse and from the manifest design and scope of the writer, might lead us to conclude that the apostle was speaking of a proper inability, and that he did not, therefore, regard the failure as his own fault. "It is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me. O wretched man that I am," &c. Those who maintain that the apostle meant to assert a proper inability in this case to obey, must also admit that he represented this inability as a bar to obligation, and regarded his state as calamitous rather than as properly sinful. But the fact is, he was portraying a legal experience and spoke of finding himself unable to keep selfish resolutions of amendment in the presence of temptation. His will was in a state of committal to the indulgence of the propensities. In the absence of temptation, his convictions, and fears, and feelings were the strongest impulses, and under their influence he would form resolutions to do his duty, to abstain from fleshly indulgences, &c. But as some other appetite or desire came to be more strongly excited, he yielded to that of course and broke his former resolution. Paul writes as if speaking of himself, but was doubtless speaking as the representative of a class of persons already named. He found the law of selfish habit exceedingly strong, and so strong as to lead him to cry out, "O wretched man," &c. But this is not affirming a proper inability of will to submit to God.

4. All men who seriously undertake their own reformation find themselves in great need of help and support from the Holy Spirit, in consequence of the physical depravity of which I have formerly spoken, and because of the great strength of their habit of self-indulgence. They are prone, as is natural, to express their sense of dependence on the Divine Spirit in strong language, and to speak of this dependence as if it consisted in a real inability, when in fact they do not really consider it as a proper inability. They speak upon this subject just as they do upon any and every other subject, when they are conscious of a strong inclination to a given course. They say in respect to many things, I can not, when they mean only, I will not, and never think of being understood as affirming a proper inability. The inspired writers expressed themselves in the common language of men upon such subjects, and are doubtless to be understood in the same way. In common parlance, can not often means will not, and perhaps is used as often in this sense as it is to express a proper inability. Men do not misinterpret this language and suppose it to affirm a proper inability, when used in reference to acts of will, except on the subject of obedience to God; and why should they assign a meaning to language when used upon this subject which they do not assign to it any where else?

But, as I said in a former lecture, under the light of the gospel and with the promises in our hands, God does require of us what we should be unable to do and be but for these promises and this proffered assistance. Here is a real inability to do directly in our own strength all that is required of us upon consideration of the proffered aid. We can only do it by strength imparted by the Holy Spirit. That is, we can not know Christ and avail ourselves of his offices and relations, and appropriate to our own souls his fulness, except as we are taught by the Holy Spirit. The thing immediately and directly required, is to receive the Holy Spirit by faith to be our teacher and guide, to take of Christ's and show it to us. This confidence we are able to exercise. Who ever really and intelligently affirmed that he had not power or ability to trust or confide in the promise and oath of God?

Much that is said of inability in poetry and in the common language of the saints, respects not the subjection of the will to God, but those experiences and states of feeling that depend on the illuminations of the Spirit just referred to. The language that is so common in prayer and in the devotional dialect of the church, respects generally our dependence upon

the Holy Spirit for such divine discoveries of Christ as to charm the soul into a steadfast abiding in him. We feel our dependence upon the Holy Spirit to so enlighten us as to break up forever the power of sinful habit and draw us away from our idols entirely and forever.

In future lectures, I shall have occasion to enlarge much upon the subject of our dependence upon Christ and the Holy Spirit. But this dependence does not consist in a proper inability to will as God directs, but, as I have said, partly in the power of sinful habit, and partly in the great darkness of our souls in respect to Christ and his mediatorial work and relations. All these together do not constitute a proper inability, for the plain reason that through the right action of our will which is always possible to us, these difficulties can all be directly or indirectly overcome. Whatever we can do or be directly or indirectly by willing is possible to us. But there is no degree of spiritual attainment required of us that may not be reached directly or indirectly by right willing. Therefore these attainments are possible. "If any man" says Christ, "will do his will," that is, has an obedient will, "he shall know the doctrine whether it be of God." "If thine eye be single," that is, if the intention or will is right, "thy whole body shall be full of light." "If any man love me, he will keep my words and my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him." The Scriptures abound with assurances of light and instruction, and of all needed grace and help upon condition of a right will or heart, that is, upon condition of our being really willing to obey the light when and as fast as we receive it. I have abundantly shown on former occasions that a right state of the will constitutes, for the time being, all that, strictly speaking, the moral law requires. But I said that it also, though in a less strict and proper sense, requires all those acts and states of the intellect and sensibility which are connected by a law of necessity with the right action of the will. Of course it also requires that cleansing of the sensibility and all those higher forms of christian experience that result from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. That is, the law of God requires that these attainments shall be made when the means are provided and enjoyed, and as soon as in the nature of the case these attainments are possible. But it requires no more than this. For the law of God can never require absolute impossibilities. That which requires absolute impossibilities, is not and can not be moral law. For, as was formerly said, moral law is the law of nature, and what law of nature would that be that should require absolute impossibilities? This would be a mockery of a law of nature. What! a law of nature requiring that which is impossible to nature both directly and indirectly! Impossible.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 51

REPENTANCE AND IMPENITENCE.

In the discussion of this subject I shall show,

I. WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT.

II. WHAT IT IS.

III. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN IT.

IV. WHAT IMPENITENCE IS NOT.

V. WHAT IT IS.

VI. SOME THINGS THAT ARE IMPLIED IN IMPENITENCE.

VII. NOTICE SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OR EVIDENCES OF IMPENITENCE.

I. I AM TO SHOW WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT,

1. The Bible every where represents repentance as a virtue, and as constituting a change of moral character; consequently it can not be a phenomenon of the Intelligence: that is, it cannot consist in conviction of sin, nor in any intellectual apprehension of our guilt or ill-desert. All the states or phenomena of the intelligence are purely passive states of mind, and of course, moral character, strictly speaking, can not be predicated of them.

2. Repentance is not a phenomenon of the Sensibility: that is, it does not consist in a feeling of regret or remorse, of compunction or sorrow for sin, or of sorrow in view of the consequences of sin to self or to others, nor in any feelings or emotions whatever. All feelings or emotions belong to the sensibility, and are, of course, purely passive states of mind, and consequently can have no moral character in themselves.

It should be distinctly understood, and forever borne in mind, that repentance can not consist in any involuntary state of mind, for it is impossible that moral character, strictly speaking, should pertain to passive states.

II. WHAT REPENTANCE IS.

There are two Greek words which are translated by the English word repent.

1. Metamelomai, to care for, or to be concerned for one's self; hence to change one's course, This term seems generally to be used to express a state of the sensibility, as regret, remorse, sorrow for sin, &c. But sometimes it also expresses a change of purpose as a consequence of regret, or remorse, or sorrow; as in Matthew 21:29,--"He answered and said, I will not; but afterwards he repented and went." It is used to represent the repentance of Judas, which evidently consisted of remorse and despair.

2. Metanoeo, to take an after view; or more strictly, to change one's mind as a consequence of and in conformity with a second and more rational view of the subject. This word evidently expresses a change of choice, purpose, intention, in conformity with the dictates of the intelligence.

This is no doubt the idea of evangelical repentance. It is a phenomenon of will, and consists in the turning or change of the ultimate intention from selfishness to benevolence. The term expresses the act of turning; the changing of the heart or of the ruling preference of the soul. It might with propriety be rendered by the terms "changing the heart." The English word repentance is often used to express regret, remorse, sorrow, &c., and is used in so loose a sense as not to convey a distinct idea to the common mind of the true nature of evangelical repentance. A turning from sin to holiness, or more strictly, from a state of consecration to self to a state of consecration to God, is and must be the turning, the change of mind, or the repentance that is required of all sinners. Nothing less can constitute a virtuous repentance, and nothing more can be required.

III. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN REPENTANCE.

1. Such is the correlation of the will to the intelligence, that repentance must imply reconsideration or after thought. It must imply self-reflection, and such an apprehension of one's guilt as to produce self-condemnation. That selfishness is sin, and that it is right and duty to consecrate the whole being to God and his service, are first-truths of reason. They are necessarily assumed by all moral agents. They are, however, often unthought of, not reflected upon. Repentance implies the giving up of the attention to the consideration and self-application of these first-truths and consequently implies conviction of sin, and guilt, and ill-desert, and a sense of shame and self-condemnation. It implies an intellectual and a hearty justification of God, of his law, of his moral and providential government, and of all his works and ways,

It implies an apprehension of the nature of sin, that it belongs to the heart, and does not consist in outward conduct; that it is an utterly unreasonable state of mind, and that it justly deserves the wrath and curse of God forever.

It implies an apprehension of the reasonableness of the law and commands of God, and of the folly and madness of sin. It implies an intellectual and a hearty giving up of all controversy with God upon all and every point.

It implies a conviction that God is wholly right, and the sinner wholly wrong, and a thorough and hearty abandonment of all excuses and apologies for sin. It implies an entire and universal acquittal of God from every shade and degree of blame, a thorough taking of the entire blame of sin to self. It implies a deep and thorough abasement of self in the dust, a crying out of soul against self, and a most sincere and universal, intellectual and hearty exaltation of God.

2. Such also is the connection of the will and the sensibility, that the turning of the will or evangelical repentance implies sorrow for sin as necessarily resulting from the turning of the will, together with the intellectual views of sin which are implied in repentance. Neither conviction of sin nor sorrow for it constitutes repentance. Yet from the correlation which is established between the intelligence, the sensibility, and the will, both conviction of sin and sorrow for it are implied in evangelical repentance, the one as necessarily preceding, and the other as often preceding and as always and necessarily resulting from repentance. During the process of conviction, it often happens that the sensibility is hardened and unfeeling; or if there is much feeling, it is often only regret, remorse, agony, and despair. But when the heart has given way, and the evangelical turning has taken place, it often happens that the fountain of the great deep in the sensibility is broken up, the sorrows of the soul are stirred to the very bottom, and the sensibility pours forth its gushing tides like a volcano. But it frequently happens too, in minds less subject to deep emotion, that the sorrows do not immediately flow in deep and broad channels, but are mild, melting, tender, tearful, silent, subdued, quiet.

Self-loathing is another state of the sensibility implied in evangelical repentance. This state of mind may, and often does exist where repentance is not, just as outward morality does. But like outward morality, it must exist where true repentance is. Self-loathing is a natural and a necessary consequence of those intellectual views of self that are implied in repentance. While the intelligence apprehends the utter, shameful guilt of self, and the heart yields to the conviction, the sensibility necessarily sympathizes; and a feeling of self-loathing and abhorrence is the inevitable consequence.

2. It implies a loathing and abhorrence of the sins of others, a most deep and thorough feeling of opposition to sin--to all sin, in self and every body else. Sin has become, to the penitent soul, the abominable thing which it hates.

3. It implies a holy indignation toward all sin and all sinners, and a manifest opposition to every form of iniquity.

Repentance also implies peace of mind. The soul that has full confidence in the infinite wisdom and love of God, and in his universal providence, can not but have peace. And further, the soul that has abandoned all sin and turned to God is no longer in a state of warfare with itself nor with God. It must have peace of conscience--and peace with God.

It implies heart-complacency in God and in all the holy. This must follow from the very nature of repentance.

It implies confession of sin to God and to man, as far as sin has been committed against men. If the heart has thoroughly renounced sin, it has become benevolent, and is of course disposed so far as possible to undo the wrong it has committed, to confess sin and humble self on account of it before God and our neighbor whom we have injured. Repentance implies humility or a willingness to be known and estimated according to our real character. It implies a disposition to do right and to confess our faults to God and man so far as man has a right to know them. Let no one who has refused and still refuses or neglects to confess his sins to God and those sins to men that have been committed against them, profess repentance unto salvation; but let him remember that God has said, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy," and again, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed."

Repentance implies a willingness to make restitution, and the actual making of it so far as ability goes. He is not just and of course is not penitent who has injured his neighbor in his person, reputation, property, or in any thing, and is unwilling to make restitution. And he is unwilling to make restitution who neglects to do so whenever he is able. It is impossible that a soul truly penitent should neglect to make all practicable restitution, for the plain reason that penitence implies a benevolent and just attitude of the will, and the will controls the conduct by a law of necessity.

Repentance implies reformation of outward life. This follows from reformation of heart by a law of necessity. It is naturally impossible that a penitent soul remaining penitent should indulge in any known sin. If the heart be reformed, the life must be as the heart is.

It implies a universal reformation of life, that is, a reformation extending to all outward sin. The penitent does not, and, remaining penitent, can not, reform in respect to some sins only. If penitent at all, he must have repented of sin as sin, and of course of all sin. If he has turned to God and consecrated himself to God, he has of course ceased from sin, from all sin as such. Sin, as we have seen on a former occasion, is a unit, and so is holiness. Sin consists in selfishness, and holiness in disinterested benevolence: it is therefore sheer nonsense to say that repentance can consist with indulgence in some sins. What are generally termed little as well as what are termed great sins are alike rejected and abhorred by the truly penitent soul, and this from a law of necessity, he being truly penitent.

4. It implies faith or confidence in God in all things. It implies not only the conviction that God is wholly right in all his controversy with sinners, but also that the heart has yielded to this conviction and has come fully over to confide most implicitly in him in all respects, so that it can readily commit all interests for time and eternity to his hands. Repentance is a state of mind that implies the fullest confidence in all the promises and threatenings of God.

IV. WHAT IMPENITENCE IS NOT.

1. It is not a negation or the mere absence of repentance. Some seem to regard impenitence as a nonentity, as the mere absence of repentance; but this is a great mistake.

2. It is not mere apathy in the sensibility in regard to sin and a mere want of sorrow for it.

3. It is not the absence of conviction of sin, nor the consequent carelessness of the sinner in respect to the commandments of God.

4. It is not an intellectual self-justification, nor does it consist in a disposition to cavil at truth and the claims of God. These may and often do result from impenitent, but are not identical with it.

5. It does not consist in the spirit of excuse-making so often manifested by sinners. This spirit is a result of impenitence, but does not constitute it.

6. Nor does it consist in the love of sin for its own sake, nor in the love of sin in any sense. It is not a constitutional appetite, relish, or craving for sin. If this constitutional craving for sin existed, it could have no moral character in as much as it would be a wholly involuntary state of mind. It could not be the crime of impenitence.

V. WHAT IMPENITENCE IS.

1. It is every where in the Bible represented as a heinous sin, as in Matt. 11:20--24. "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. And thou Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee." Here, as else where, impenitence is represented as most aggravated wickedness.

2. Impenitence is a phenomenon of will and consists in the will's cleaving to self-indulgence under light. It consists in the will's pertinacious adherence to the gratification of self in the face and in despite of all the light with which the sinner is surrounded. It is not, as has been said, a passive state nor a mere negation; it is an active and obstinate state of the will, a determined holding on to sin. This under light is of course aggravated wickedness. Considered in this light, it is easy to account for all the woes and denunciations that the Savior uttered against it. When the claims of God are revealed to the mind, it must necessarily yield to them or strengthen itself in sin. It must as it were gird itself up and struggle to resist the claims of duty. This strengthening self in sin under light is the particular form of sin which we call impenitence. All sinners are guilty of it because all have some light, but some are vastly more guilty of it than others.

VI. NOTICE SOME THINGS THAT ARE IMPLIED IN IMPENITENCE.

As it essentially consists in a cleaving to self-indulgence under light, it implies,

1. That the impenitent sinner willfully prefers his own petty and momentary gratification to all the other and higher interests of God and the universe; that because these gratifications are his own, or the gratification of self, he therefore gives them the preference over all the infinite interests of all other beings.

2. It implies the deliberate and actual setting at naught, not only of the interests of God, and of the universe, as of no value, but it implies also a total disregard of and even contempt for the rights of all other beings. It is a practical denial that they have any rights or interests to be promoted.

3. It implies a rejection of and contempt for the authority of God and a spurning of his law and gospel.

4. It implies a bidding defiance to God and a virtual challenge to him to do his worst.

5. It implies the utmost fool-hardiness and a state of utter recklessness of consequences.

6. It implies the utmost injustice and disregard of all that is just and equal, and this, be it remembered, under light.

7. It implies a present justification of all past sin. The sinner who holds on to his self-indulgence in the presence of the light of the gospel, really in heart justifies all his past rebellion.

8. Consequently present impenitence, especially under the light of the glorious gospel, is a heart-justification of all sin. It is a deliberate taking sides with sinners against God and is a virtual endorsing of all the sins of earth and hell. This principle is clearly implied in Christ's teaching, Matt. 23:34--36. "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues. and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."

9. Present impenitence under all the light and experience which the sinner now has, involves the guilt of all his past sin. If he still holds on to it, he in heart justifies it. If he in heart justifies it, he virtually recommitts it. If in the presence of accumulated light he holds on to present sin, he virtually endorses, recommitts, and is again guilty of all past sin.

10. Impenitence is a charging God with sin; it is self-justification, and consequently it condemns God. It is a direct controversy with God and a denial of his right to govern and of the sinners duty to obey.

11. It is a deliberate rejection of mercy and a virtual insisting that God is a tyrant, and that he ought not to govern, but that he ought to repent.

12. It implies a total want of confidence in God; want of confidence in his character and government; in his works and ways. It virtually charges God with usurpation, falsehood, and selfishness in all its odious forms. It is a making war on every moral attribute of God, and it is utter enmity against him. It is mortal enmity, and would of course always manifest itself in sinners as it did when Christ was upon the earth. When he poured the light upon them, they hardened themselves until they were ripe for murdering him. This is the true nature of impenitence. It involves the guilt of a mortal enmity against God.

VII. NOTICE SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OR EVIDENCES OF IMPENITENCE.

1. A manifested indifference to the sins of men is evidence of an impenitent and sin-justifying state of mind. It is impossible that a penitent soul should not be deeply and heartily opposed to all sin; and if heartily opposed to it, it is impossible that he should not manifest this opposition, for the heart controls the life by a law of necessity.

2. Of course a manifest heart-complacency in sin or in sinners is sure evidence of an impenitent state of mind. "He that will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God." Heart-complacency in sinners is that friendship of the world that is enmity against God.

3. A manifest want of zeal in opposing sin and in promoting reformation, is a sure indication of an impenitent state of mind. The soul that has been truly convinced of sin, and turned from sin to the love and service of God, can not but manifest a deep interest in every effort to reform sin out of the world. Such a soul can not but be zealous in opposing sin and in building up and establishing righteousness in the earth.

4. A manifest want of sympathy with God in respect to his government, providential and moral, is an evidence of impenitence of heart. A penitent soul, as has been said, will and must of course justify God in all his ways. This is implied in genuine repentance. A disposition to complain of the strictness and rigor of God's commandments--to speak of the providence of God in a complaining manner--to murmur at its allotments, and repine at the circumstances in which it has placed a soul, is to evince an impenitent and rebellious state of mind.

5. A manifest want of confidence in the character, faithfulness and promises of God, is also sure evidence of an impenitent state of mind. A distrust of God in any respect can not consist with a penitent state of heart.

6. The absence of peace of mind is sure evidence of an impenitent state. The penitent soul must have peace of conscience because impenitence[should be: penitence] is a state of conscious rectitude. It also must have peace with God. Repentance is the turning from an attitude of rebellion against God, to a state of universal submission and embracing of his will. This must of course bring peace to the soul. When, therefore, there is a manifest want of peace, there is evidence

of impenitence of heart.

7. Every unequivocal manifestation of selfishness is a conclusive evidence of present impenitence. Repentance, as we have seen, consists in the turning of the soul from selfishness to benevolence. It follows of course that the presence of selfishness in the soul is proof conclusive of the absence of repentance.

8. A spirit of self-indulgence is conclusive evidence of an impenitent state of mind. Repentance implies the denial of self; the denial or subjection of all the appetites, passions, and propensities to the law of the intelligence. Therefore a manifest spirit of self-indulgence, a disposition to seek the gratification of the appetites and passions, such as the subjection of the will to the use of tobacco, of alcohol, or to any of the natural or artificial appetites under light and in opposition to the law of the reason, is conclusive evidence of present impenitence.

9. A spirit of self-justification is another evidence of impenitence. This manifestation must be directly the opposite of that which the truly penitent soul will make.

10. A spirit of excuse-making for neglect of duty is also a conclusive evidence of an impenitent heart. Repentance implies the giving up of all excuses for disobedience and a hearty obedience in all things. Of course, where there is a manifest disposition to make excuses for not being what and all God requires us to be, it is certain that there is and must be an impenitent state of mind. It is war with God.

11. A fearfulness that implies a want of confidence in the perfect faithfulness of God or that implies unbelief in any respect, is an indication of an impenitent state of mind.

12. A want of candor upon any subject also betrays an impenitent heart. A penitent state of the will is committed to know and to embrace all truth. Therefore a prejudiced, uncandid state of mind must be inconsistent with penitence, and a manifestation of prejudice must evince present impenitence.

13. An unwillingness to be searched, and to have all our words and ways brought into the light of truth, and to be reproved when we are in error, is a sure indication of an impenitent state of mind. "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

14. Only partial reformation of life, also indicates that the heart has not embraced the whole will of God. When there is a disposition manifested to indulge in some sin, no matter how little, it is sure evidence of impenitence of heart. The penitent soul rejects sin as sin; of course every kind or degree of iniquity is put away, loathed, and abhorred. "Whoso keepeth the whole law and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all;" that is, if a man in one point unequivocally sins or disobeys God, it is certain that he truly from the heart obeys him in nothing. He has not an obedient state of mind. If he really had supreme respect to God's authority, he could not but obey him in all things. If therefore it be found that a professor of penitence does not manifest the spirit of universal obedience, if in some things he is manifestly self-indulgent, it may be known that he is altogether yet in sin, and that he is still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.

15. Neglect or refusal to confess and make restitution so far as opportunity and ability are enjoyed, is also a sure indication of an unjust and impenitent state of mind. It would seem impossible for a penitent soul not at once to see and be impressed with the duty of making confession and restitution to those who have been injured by him. When this is refused or neglected, there must be impenitence. The heart controls the life by a law of necessity; when therefore there is a heart that confesses and forsakes sin, it is impossible that this should not appear in outward confession and restitution.

16. A spirit of covetousness or grasping after the world is a sure indication of impenitence. "Covetousness is idolatry." It is a hungering and thirsting after, and devotion to this world. Acquisitiveness indulged must be proof positive of an impenitent state of mind. If any man love the world, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

17. A want of interest in and compassion for sinners, is a sure indication of impenitence. If one has seen his own guilt and

ruin, and has found himself sunk in the horrible pit and miry clay of his own abominations, and has found the way of escape, it is natural as his breath to feel deeply for sinners, and to manifest a great compassion and concern for them, and a zeal for their salvation. If this sympathy and zeal are not manifested, it may be relied upon that there is still impenitence. There is a total want of that love to God and souls that is always implied in repentance. Seest thou a professed convert to Christ whose compassions are not stirred and whose zeal for the salvation of souls is not awakened? Be assured that you behold a hypocrite.

18. A disposition to apologize for sin, to take part with sinners, or a want of fulness and clearness in condemning them and taking sides altogether with God, is evidence of an impenitent state of mind. A hesitancy or want of clearness in the mind's apprehension of the justice of God in condemning sinners to an eternal hell, shows that the eyes have not yet been thoroughly open to the nature, guilt, and desert of sin, and consequently this state of spiritual blindness, is sad evidence of an impenitent heart.

19. A want of moral or spiritual perception, is also an indication of impenitence. When an individual is seen to have little or no conscience on many moral questions, can use tobacco, alcohol and such like things under the present light that has been shed on these practices, when self can be indulged without compunctions, this is a most certain indication of an impenitent heart. True repentance is infallibly connected with a sensitive and discriminating conscience. When, therefore, there is a seared conscience, you may know there is a hard and impenitent heart.

20. Spiritual sloth or indolence is another evidence of an impenitent heart. The soul that thoroughly turns to God and consecrates itself to him and wholly commits itself to promote his glory in the building up of his kingdom, will be must be any thing but slothful. A disposition to spiritual idleness, or to lounging or indolence of any kind, is an evidence that the heart is impenitent. I might pursue this subject to an indefinite length; but what has been said must suffice for this course of instruction, and is sufficient to give you the clew[sic.] by which you may detect the windings and delusions of the impenitent heart.

I must conclude this discussion with several

REMARKS.

1. Many mistake conviction of sin with the necessarily resulting emotions of remorse, regret, and sorrow for evangelical repentance. They give the highest evidence of having fallen into this mistake.

2. Considering the current teaching upon this subject and the great want of discrimination in public preaching, and in writings on the subject of repentance, this mistake is natural. How few divines sufficiently discriminate between the phenomena of the Intelligence, the Sensibility and the Will. But until this discrimination is thoroughly made, great mistakes upon this subject may be expected both among the clergy and the laity, and multitudes will be self-deceived.

3. It is of the highest importance for the ministry to understand, and constantly insist in their teaching, that all virtuous exercises of mind are phenomena of the will, and in no case merely passive states of mind; that, therefore, they are connected with the outward life by a law of necessity, and that therefore, when there is a right heart, there must be a right life.

4. It is a most gross, as it is a very common delusion, to separate religion from a pure morality, and repentance from reformation. "What God," by an unalterable law of necessity, "has joined together let not man put asunder."

5. It is also common to fall into the error of separating devotion from practical benevolence. Many seem to be striving after a devotion that is not piety. They are trying to work their sensibility into a state which they suppose to be devotion, while they retain selfishness in their hearts. They live in habitual self-indulgence and yet observe seasons of what they call devotion. Devotion is with them mere emotion, a state of feeling, a phenomenon of the sensibility, a devotion without religion. This is a horrible delusion.

6. The doctrine of repentance or the necessity of repentance as a condition of salvation, is as truly a doctrine of natural as

of revealed religion. It is a self evident truth that the sinner can not be saved except he repents. Without repentance God can not forgive him, and if he could and should, such forgiveness could not save him, for, in his sins, salvation is naturally impossible to him. Without just that change which has been described, and which the bible calls repentance, and which it makes a condition of pardon and salvation, it is plainly naturally and governmentally impossible for any sinner to be saved.

7. Repentance is naturally necessary to peace of mind in this life. Until the sinner repents he is at war with himself and at war with God. There is a mutiny and a struggle and a controversy going on within him. His conscience will not be satisfied. Though cast down from the throne of government and trampled under foot, it will mutter and sometimes thunder its remonstrances and rebukes; and although it has not the power to control the will, still it will assert the right to control. Thus there is war within the breast of the sinner himself, and until he repents he carries the elements of hell within him; and sooner or later they will take fire and burst upon his soul in a universal and eternal conflagration.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 52

FAITH AND UNBELIEF

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V. WHAT IT IS.

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IX. NATURAL AND GOVERNMENTAL RESULTS OF EACH.

I. WHAT EVANGELICAL FAITH IS NOT,

1. The term faith, like most other words, has diverse significations, and is manifestly used in the Bible sometimes to designate a state of the intelligence, in which cases it means an undoubting persuasion, a firm conviction, an unhesitating intellectual assent. This, however, is not its evangelical sense. Evangelical faith cannot be a phenomenon of the intelligence, for the plain reason that when used in an evangelical sense, it is always regarded as a virtue. But virtue can not be predicated of intellectual states, because these are involuntary or passive states of mind. Faith is a condition of salvation. It is something which we are commanded to do upon pain of eternal death. But if it be something to be done--a solemn duty, it can not be a merely passive state, a mere intellectual conviction. The Bible distinguishes between intellectual and saving faith. There is a faith of devils, and there is a faith of saints. James clearly distinguishes between them, and also between an antinomian and a saving faith. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."--James ii:17--26. The distinction is here clearly marked, as it is elsewhere in the Bible, between intellectual and saving faith.

One produces good works or a holy life; the other is unproductive. This shows that one is a phenomenon of the intellect

merely and does not of course control the conduct. The other must be a phenomenon of the will because it manifests itself in the outward life. Evangelical faith then is not a conviction, a perception of truth. It does not belong to the intelligence.

2. It is not a feeling of any kind; that is, it does not belong to and is not a phenomenon of the sensibility. The phenomena of the sensibility are passive states of mind and therefore have no moral character in themselves. Faith, regarded as a virtue, can not consist in any involuntary state of mind whatever. It is represented in the Bible as an active and most efficient state of mind. It works and "works by love." It produces "the obedience of faith." Christians are said to be sanctified by the faith that is in Christ.

Indeed the Bible in a great variety of instances and ways represents faith in God and in Christ as a cardinal form of virtue and as the mainspring of an outwardly holy life. Hence it can not consist in any involuntary state or exercise of mind whatever.

II. WHAT EVANGELICAL FAITH IS.

1. Since the Bible uniformly represents saving or evangelical faith as a virtue, we know that it must be a phenomenon of will. It must consist too in something more than a mere executive volition, as distinguished from choice or intention. It is an efficient state of mind, and therefore it must consist in the heart or will's embracing the truth. It is the will's closing in with the truths of the gospel. It is the soul's act of yielding itself up or committing itself to the truths of the evangelical system. It is a trusting in Christ, a committing the soul and the whole being to him in his various offices and relations to men. It is a confiding in him and in what is revealed of him in his word and providence, and by his Spirit.

[2.] The same word that is so often rendered faith in the New Testament is also rendered commit; as in John ii:24--"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men." Luke xvi:11--"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" In these passages the word rendered commit is the same word as that which is rendered faith. It is a confiding in God and in Christ as revealed in the Bible and in reason. It is a receiving of the testimony of God concerning Himself and concerning all things of which he has spoken. It is a receiving of Christ for just what he is represented to be in his gospel and an unqualified surrender of the will and of the whole being to Him.

III. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN EVANGELICAL FAITH.

1. It implies an intellectual perception of the things, facts and truths believed. No one can believe that which he does not understand. It is impossible to believe that which is not so revealed to the mind that the mind understands it. It has been erroneously assumed that faith did not need light, that is, that it is not essential to faith that we understand the doctrines or facts that we are called on to believe. This is a false assumption; for how can we believe, trust, confide in what we do not understand? I must first understand what a proposition, a fact, a doctrine or a thing is, before I can say whether I believe or whether I ought to believe or not. Should you state a proposition to me in an unknown tongue and ask me if I believe it, I must reply I do not, for I do not understand the terms of the proposition. Perhaps I should believe the truth expressed and perhaps I should not, I can not tell until I understand the proposition. Any fact or doctrine not understood is like a proposition in an unknown tongue: it is impossible that the mind should receive or reject it, should believe or disbelieve it, until it is understood. we can receive or believe a truth or fact or doctrine no farther than we understand it. So far as we do understand it, so far me[we] may believe it, although we may not understand all about it. For example: I can believe in both the proper divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. That he is both God and man is a fact that I can understand. Thus far I can believe. But how his divinity and humanity are united I can not understand. Therefore, I only believe the fact that they are united; the *quo modo* of their union I know nothing about and I believe no more than I know. So I can understand that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God. That the Father is God, that the Son is God, that the Holy Spirit is God, that these three, are Divine persons, I can understand as a fact, that each possesses all Divine perfection. I can also understand that there is no contradiction or impossibility in the declared fact that these three are one in their substratum of being; that is, that they are one in a different sense from that in which they are three; that they are three in one sense and one in another. I understand that this may be a fact and therefore I can believe it. But the *quo modo* of their union I neither understand nor believe. That is, I have no theory, no idea, no data on the subject, have no opinion and consequently no faith as to the manner in which they are united. That they are three, is as plainly taught upon the face of inspiration as that Peter, James and John were three. That each of the three is God is as plainly revealed as that Peter,

James and John were men. These are revealed facts, and facts that any one can understand. That these three are one God, is also a revealed fact. The *quo modo* of this fact is not revealed, I can not understand it, and have no belief as to the manner of this union. That they are one God is a fact that reason can neither affirm nor deny. The fact can be understood although the how is unintelligible to us in our present state. It is not a contradiction because they are not revealed as being one and three in the same sense, nor in any sense that reason can pronounce to be impossible. Faith, then, in any fact or doctrine implies that the intellect has an idea or that the soul has an understanding, an opinion of that which the heart embraces or believes.

2. Evangelical faith implies the appropriation of the truths of the gospel to ourselves. It implies an acceptance of Christ as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. The soul that truly believes, believes that Christ tasted death for every man and of course for it. It apprehends Christ as the Savior of the world, as offered to all, and embraces and receives him for itself. It appropriates his atonement and his resurrection and his intercession and his promises to itself. Christ is thus presented in the gospel, not only as the Savior of the world, but also to the individual acceptance of men. He is embraced by the world no farther than he is embraced by individuals. He saves the world no farther than he saves individuals. He died for the world because he died for the individuals that compose the race. Evangelical faith, then, implies the belief of the truths of the Bible, the apprehension of the truths just named, and a reception of them, and a personal acceptance and appropriation of Christ to meet the necessities of the individual soul.

3. It implies the unreserved yielding up of the mind to Christ in the various relations in which he is presented in the gospel. These relations will come under review at another time; all I wish here to say is that faith is a state of committal to Christ, and of course it implies that the soul will be unreservedly yielded to him in all his relations to it so far and so fast as[;] as these are apprehended by the intelligence.

4. Evangelical faith implies an evangelical life. This would not be true if faith were merely an intellectual state or exercise. But since, as we have seen, faith is of the heart, since it consists in the committal of the will to Christ, it follows by a law of necessity that the life will correspond with faith.

5. Evangelical faith implies repentance towards God. Evangelical faith particularly respects Jesus Christ and his salvation. It is an embracing of Christ and his salvation. Of course it implies repentance towards God, that is, a turning from sin to God. The will can not be submitted to Christ, it can not receive him as he is presented in the gospel while it neglects repentance toward God; while it rejects the authority of the Father, it can not embrace and submit to the Son.

6. Evangelical faith implies a renunciation of self-righteousness. Christ's salvation is opposed to a salvation by law or by self-righteousness. It is therefore impossible for one to embrace Christ as the Savior of the soul any further than he renounces all hope or expectation of being saved by his own works, or righteousness.

7. It implies the renunciation of the spirit of self-justification. The soul that receives Christ must have seen its lost estate. It must have been convinced of sin and of the folly and madness of attempting to excuse self. It must have renounced and abhorred all pleas and excuses in justification or extenuation of sin. Unless the soul ceases to justify self, it can not justify God, and unless it justifies God, it can not embrace the plan of salvation by Christ. A state of mind therefore that justifies God and condemns self, is always implied in evangelical faith.

8. Disinterested benevolence, or a state of good will to being, is implied in evangelical faith.

Evangelical faith is the committal of the soul to God and to Christ in all obedience. It must, therefore, imply fellowship or sympathy with Him in regard to the great end upon which his heart is set and for which he lives. A yielding up of the will and the soul to Him must imply the embracing of the same end that He embraces.

9. It implies a state of the sensibility corresponding to the truths believed. It implies this, because this state of the sensibility is a result of faith by a law of necessity, and this result follows necessarily upon the intellect's perceiving and the heart's embracing Christ and his gospel.

10. Of course it implies peace of mind. In Christ the soul finds its full and present salvation. It finds justification or a sense of pardon and acceptance. It finds sanctification or grace to deliver from the reigning power of sin. It finds all its

wants met and all needed grace proffered for its assistance. It sees no cause for disturbance, nothing to ask or desire that is not treasured up in Christ. It has ceased to war with God--with itself. It has found its resting place in Christ, and rests in profound peace under the shadow of the Almighty.

11. It implies hope, as soon as the believing soul considers, that is, a hope of eternal life in and through Christ. It is impossible that the soul should embrace the gospel for itself and really accept of Christ without a hope of eternal life resulting from it by a necessary law.

12. It implies joy in God and in Christ. Peter speaks of joy as the unfailing accompaniment of faith, as resulting from it. Speaking of christians he says, 1 Pet., i,5--9, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time: wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

13. It implies zeal in the cause of Christ. Faith in Christ implies fellowship with Him in the great work of man's redemption, and of course must imply zeal in the same cause for which Christ gave up his life.

14. Evangelical faith must imply a general sympathy with Christ in respect to the affairs of his government. It must imply sympathy with his views of sin and of holiness--of sinners and of saints. It must imply a deep affection for and interest in Christ's people.

15. It must imply a deep interest in his gospel and in its spread and reception among men.

16. It must imply a consecration of heart, of time, of substance, and of all to this great end.

17. It must imply the existence in the soul of every virtue, because it is a yielding up of the whole being to the will of God. Consequently all the phases of virtue required by the gospel must be implied as existing either in a developed or in an undeveloped state, in every heart that truly receives Christ by faith. Certain forms or modifications of virtue may not in all cases have found the occasions of their development, but certain it is that every modification of virtue will manifest itself as its occasion shall arise if there be a true and a living faith in Christ. This follows from the very nature of faith.

18. Present evangelical faith implies a state of present sinlessness. Observe: Faith is the yielding and committal of the whole will and of the whole being to Christ. This and nothing short of this is evangelical faith. But this comprehends and implies the whole of present, true obedience to Christ. This is the reason why faith is spoken of as the condition and as it were the only condition, of salvation. It really implies all virtue. Faith may be contemplated either as a distinct form of virtue. and as an attribute of love, or as comprehensive of all virtue. When contemplated as an attribute of love, it is only a branch of sanctification. When contemplated in the wider sense of universal conformity of will to the will of God, it is then synonymous with entire present sanctification. Contemplated in either light its existence in the heart must be inconsistent with present sin there. Faith is an attitude of the will, and is wholly incompatible with present rebellion of will against Christ. This must be true, or what is faith?

19. Faith implies the reception and the practice of all known or perceived truth. The heart that embraces and receives truth as truth and because it is truth, must of course receive all known truth. For it is plainly impossible that the will should embrace some truth perceived for a benevolent reason and reject other truth perceived. All truth is harmonious. One truth is always consistent with every other truth. The heart that truly embraces one, will for the same reason embrace all truth known. If out of regard to the highest good of being any one revealed truth is truly received, that state of mind continuing, it is impossible that all truth should not be received as soon as known.

IV. WHAT UNBELIEF IS NOT.

1. It is not ignorance of truth. Ignorance is a blank; it is the negation or absence of knowledge. This certainly can not be

the unbelief every where represented in the Bible as a heinous sin. Ignorance may be a consequence of unbelief, but can not be identical with it. We may be ignorant of certain truths as a consequence of rejecting others, but this ignorance is not, and, as we shall see, can not be unbelief.

2. Unbelief is not the negation or absence of faith. This were a mere nothing--a nonentity. But a mere nothing is not that abominable thing which the Scriptures represent as a great and a damning sin.

3. It can not be a phenomenon of the intelligence or an intellectual skepticism. This state of the intelligence may result from the state of mind properly denominated unbelief, but it can not be identical with it. Intellectual doubts or unbelief often does result from unbelief properly so called, but unbelief when contemplated as a sin, should never be confounded with theoretic or intellectual infidelity. They are as entirely distinct as any two phenomena of mind whatever.

4. It cannot consist in feelings or emotions of incredulity, doubt, or opposition to truth. In other words unbelief as a sin, can not be a phenomenon of the sensibility. The term unbelief is sometimes used to express or designate a state of the intelligence and sometimes of the sensibility. It sometimes is used to designate a state of intellectual incredulity, doubt, distrust, skepticism. But when used in this sense moral character is not justly predicable of the state of mind which the term unbelief represents.

Sometimes the term expresses a mere feeling of incredulity in regard to truth. But neither has this state of mind moral character; nor can it have, for the very good reason that it is involuntary. In short, the unbelief that is so sorely denounced in the Bible as a most aggravated abomination, can not consist in any involuntary state of mind whatever.

V. WHAT UNBELIEF IS.

1. The term as used in the Bible, in those passages that represent it as a sin, must designate a phenomenon of will. It must be a voluntary state of mind. It must be the opposite of evangelical faith. Faith is the will's reception and unbelief is the will's rejection of truth. Faith is the soul's confiding in truth and in the God of truth. Unbelief is the soul's withholding confidence from truth and the God of truth. It is the heart's rejection of evidence and a refusal to be influenced by it. It is the will in the attitude of opposition to truth perceived, or evidence presented. It must be a voluntary state or attitude of the will as distinguished from a mere volition or executive act of the will. Volition may and often does give forth through words and deeds, expressions and manifestations of unbelief. But the volition is only a result of unbelief and not identical with it. Unbelief is a deeper and more efficient state of mind than mere volition. It is the will in its profoundest opposition to the truth and will of God.

VI. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN UNBELIEF.

1. Unbelief implies light or the perception of truth. If unbelief were but a mere negation an absence of faith a quiescent or inactive state of the will, it would not imply the perception of truth. But since unbelief consists in the will's rejection of truth, the truth rejected must be perceived. For example: the heathen who have never heard of the gospel are not properly guilty of unbelief in not embracing it. They are indeed guilty of unbelief in rejecting the light of nature. They are entirely without the light of the gospel; that, therefore, they can not reject. The unbelief so much complained of in the Bible, is not ignorant, but a rejection of truth revealed.

2. It implies obstinate selfishness. Indeed it is only one of the attributes of selfishness as we have seen on a former occasion. Selfishness is a spirit of self-seeking. It consists in the will's committing itself to self-gratification or self-indulgence. Now unbelief is only selfishness contemplated in its relations to the truth of God. It is only the resistance which the will makes to those truths that are opposed to selfishness. It is the will's stern opposition to them. When these truths are revealed to the intelligence, the will must either yield to them and relinquish selfishness, or it must resist them. Remain indifferent to them it can not. Therefore unbelief always implies selfishness, because it is only selfishness manifesting itself or acting like itself in the presence of truth opposed to it.

3. Unbelief implies a state of present total depravity. Surely there can be nothing but sin in a heart that rejects the truth for selfish reasons. It is naturally impossible that there should be any conformity of heart to the will and law of God when unbelief or resistance to know truth is present in the soul.

4. Unbelief implies the rejection of all truth perceived to be inconsistent with selfishness. The unbelieving soul does not, and remaining selfish, can not receive any truth but for selfish reasons. Whatever truth is received and acted upon by a selfish soul is received for selfish reasons. But this is not faith. Whatever truth the selfish soul can not apply to selfish purposes, it will reject. This follows from the very nature of selfishness.
5. On a former occasion it was shown that where any one attribute of selfishness is, there must be the presence of every other attribute either in a developed state or in waiting for the occasion of its development. All sinners are guilty of unbelief and have this attribute of selfishness developed in proportion to the amount of light which they have received. Heathen reject the light of nature and sinners in christian lands reject the light of the gospel. The nature of unbelief proves that the unbelieving heart is not only void of all good, but that every form of sin is there. The whole host of the attributes of selfishness must reside in the unbeliever's heart and only the occasion is wanting to bring forth into development and horrid manifestation every form of iniquity.
6. The nature of unbelief implies that its degree depends on the degree of light enjoyed. It consists in a rejection of truth perceived. Its degree or greatness must depend upon the degree of light rejected.
7. The same must be true of the guilt of unbelief. The guilt must be in proportion to light enjoyed. But as the guilt of unbelief is to come up for distinct consideration, I will waive the further discussion of it here.
8. Unbelief implies impenitence. The truly penitent soul will gladly embrace all truth when it is revealed to it. This follows from the nature of repentance. Especially will the true penitent hail with joy and embrace with eagerness the blessed truths of the glorious gospel. This must be from the very nature of repentance. When unbelief is present in the heart, there must be impenitence also.
9. Unbelief is enmity against God. It is resistance to truth and of course to the character and government of the God of Truth.
10. It implies mortal enmity against God. Unbelief rejects the truth and authority of God and is of course and of necessity opposed to the very existence of the God of Truth. It would annihilate truth and the God of truth were it possible. We have an instance and an illustration of this in the rejection and murder of Jesus Christ. What was this but unbelief. This is the nature of unbelief in all instances. All sinners who hear and reject the gospel, reject Christ, and were Christ personally present to insist upon their reception of him and to urge his demand, remaining unbelieving, they would of course and of necessity sooner murder him than receive him. So that every rejecter of the gospel is guilty of the blood and murder of Christ.
11. Unbelief implies supreme enmity to God. This follows from the nature of unbelief. Unbelief is the heart's rejection of and opposition to truth. Of course the greater the light, unbelief remaining, the greater the opposition. Since God is the fountain of truth opposition to him must be supreme. That is it must be greater to him than to all other beings and things.
12. Unbelief implies a degree of wickedness as great as is possible for the time being. We have seen that it is resistance to truth; that it implies the refusal to receive for benevolent reasons any truth. Entire holiness is the reception of and conformity to all truth. This is, at every moment, the highest degree of virtue of which the soul for the time being is capable. It is the entire performance of duty. Sin, is the rejection of the whole truth, this is sin in the form of unbelief. The rejection of all known truth, or of all truth perceived to be inconsistent with selfishness, and for that reason, must be present perfection in wickedness. That is, it must be the highest degree of wickedness of which the soul with its present light is capable. It is the rejection of the whole of duty. It is a tramping down of all moral obligation.
13. Unbelief implies the charging God with being a liar. "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar because he hath not believed the record that God gave of his Son." Unbelief is the treatment of truth as if it were falsehood, and of falsehood as if it were truth. It is the virtual declaration of the heart that the gospel is not true and therefore that the author of the gospel is a liar. It treats the record as untrue and of course God the author of the record as a liar.

14. Unbelief implies lying. It is itself the greatest of lies. It is the heart's declaration, and that too in the face of light, and with the intellectual apprehension of the truth, that the gospel is a lie and the author of it a liar. What is lying if this is not?

15. It implies a most reckless disregard of all rights and of all interests but those of self.

16. It implies a contempt for and a trampling down of the law and demands of the intelligence. Intelligence in its relations to moral truths is only a trouble to the unbeliever. His conscience and his reason he regards as enemies.

17. But before I dismiss this part of the subject, I must not omit to say that unbelief also implies the will's embracing an opposite error and a lie. It consists in the rejection of truth or in the withholding confidence in truth and in the God of truth. But since it is naturally impossible that the will should be in a state of indifference to any known error or truth that stands connected with its duty or its destiny, it follows that a rejection of any known truth implies an embracing of an opposing error.

There are multitudes of other things implied in unbelief; but I can not with propriety and profit notice them in this brief outline of instruction. I have pursued this subject thus far for the purpose of showing the true and philosophical nature of unbelief; that whosoever will steadily contemplate its nature, will perceive, that, being what it is, it will and must develop as occasions occur in the providence of God every form of iniquity of which man is capable, or in other words that where unbelief is, there is the whole of sin.

VII. CONDITIONS OF BOTH FAITH AND UNBELIEF,

1. The possession of Reason. Reason is the intuitive faculty of the soul. It is that power of the mind that makes those a priori affirmations concerning God which all moral agents do and must make from the very nature of moral agency, and without which neither faith as a virtue, nor unbelief as a sin were possible. For example: Suppose it were admitted that the Bible is a revelation from God. The question might be asked, why should we believe it? Why should we receive and believe the testimony of God? The answer must be, because truth is an attribute of God and his word is to be accredited because he always speaks the truth. But how do we know this? This we certainly can not know barely upon his testimony, for the very question is why is his testimony worthy of credit. There is no light in his works or providence that can demonstrate that truth is an attribute of God. His claiming this attribute does not prove it, for unless his truthfulness be assumed his claiming this attribute is no evidence of it. There is no logical process by which the truth of God can be demonstrated. The major premise from which the truthfulness of God could be deduced by a syllogistic process must itself assume the very truth which we are seeking to prove. Now there is no way for us to know the truthfulness of God but by the direct assumption, affirmation, or intuition of reason. The same power that intuits or seizes upon a major premise from which the truthfulness of God follows by the laws of logic, must and does directly, irresistably, necessarily and universally assume and affirm the fact that God is truth and that truth must be an attribute of God.

But for this assumption the intelligence could not affirm our obligation to believe him. This assumption is a first-truth of reason, every where, at all times, by all moral agents necessarily assumed and known. This is evident from the fact, that it being settled that God has declared any thing whatever, is an end of all questioning in all minds whether it be true or not. So far as the intelligence is concerned, it never did and never can question the truthfulness of God. It knows with certain and intuitive knowledge that God is true and therefore affirms universally and necessarily that He is to be believed. This assumption and the power that makes it are indispensable conditions of Faith as a virtue or of unbelief as a vice. It were no virtue to believe or receive any thing as true without sufficient evidence that it is true. So it were no vice to reject that which is not supported by evidence. A mere animal, or an idiot or lunatic are not capable either of faith or of unbelief, for the simple reason that they do not possess reason to affirm the truth and obligation to receive it.

2. A revelation, in some way, to the mind, of the truth and will of God must be a condition of unbelief. Be it remembered that neither faith nor unbelief is consistent with total ignorance. There can be unbelief no farther than there is light.

3. In respect to that class of truths which are discerned only upon condition of Divine illumination, such illumination must be a condition both of faith and unbelief. It should be remarked that when a truth has been once revealed by the Holy Spirit to the soul, the continuance of the Divine light is not essential to the continuance of unbelief. The truth once known and lodged in the memory may continue to be resisted when the agent that revealed, is withdrawn.

4. Intellectual perception is a condition of the heart's unbelief. The intellect must have evidence of truth as the condition of a virtuous belief of it. So the intellect must have evidence of the truth as a condition of a wicked rejection of it. Therefore intellectual light is the condition both of the heart's faith and unbelief. By the assertion that intellectual light is a condition of unbelief is intended, not that the intellect should at all times admit the truth in theory; but that the evidence must be such that by virtue of its own laws the mind or intelligence could justly admit the truth rejected by the heart. It is a very common case that the unbeliever denies in words and endeavors to refute in theory that which he nevertheless assumes as true in all his practical judgments.

VIII. THE GUILT AND ILL-DESERT OF UNBELIEF.

1. We have seen on a former occasion that the guilt of sin is conditioned upon and graduated by the light under which it is committed. The amount of light is the measure of guilt in every case of sin. This is true of all sin. But it is peculiarly manifest in the sin of unbelief; for unbelief is the rejection of light; it is selfishness in the attitude of rejecting truth. Of course the amount of light rejected and the degree of guilt in rejecting it are equal. This is every where assumed and taught in the bible and is plainly the doctrine of reason.

Light is truth, light received is truth known or perceived. The first-truths of reason are universally known by moral agents, and whenever the will refuses to act in accordance with any one of them, it is guilty of unbelief. The reason of every moral agent intuitively and assumes the infinite value of the highest well-being of God and of the universe, and of course the infinite obligation of every moral agent, to embrace the truth as the necessary condition of promoting this end. Viewed in this light, unbelief always implies infinite guilt and blame-worthiness.

But it is a doctrine of mathematics that infinities may differ. The meaning of the term infinite is simply the negation of finite. It is boundlessness, unlimitedness. That is, that which is infinite is unlimited or boundless in the sense in which it is infinite. But infinities may differ in amount. For example: the area contained between two lines of infinite length must be infinite in amount, however near these lines are to each other. There is no estimating the superficial amount of this area for in fact there is no whole to it. But we may suppose parallel lines of infinite length to be placed at different distances from each other; but in every case the enlargement or diminution of the distances between any two such lines would accordingly vary the space contained between them. The superficial contents would in every case be infinite and yet they would differ in amount according to the distances of the lines from each other.

In every case unbelief involves infinite guilt in the sense just explained; and yet the guilt of unbelief may differ and must differ in different cases indefinitely in amount.

The guilt of unbelief under the light of the gospel must be indefinitely greater than when merely the light of nature is rejected. The guilt of unbelief in cases where special Divine illumination has been enjoyed must be vastly and incalculably greater than where the mere light of the gospel has been enjoyed without a special enlightening of the Holy Spirit.

The guilt of unbelief in one who has been converted and has known the love of God must be greater beyond comparison than that of an ordinary sinner. Those things that are implied in unbelief show that it must be one of the most trying abominations to God in the universe. It is the perfection of all that is unreasonable, unjust, ruinous. It is infinitely slanderous and dishonorable to God and destructive to man and to all the interests of the kingdom of God.

IX. NATURAL AND GOVERNMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF BOTH FAITH AND UNBELIEF

By natural consequences are intended consequences that flow from the constitution and laws of mind by a natural necessity. By governmental consequences are intended those that result from the constitution, laws, and administration of moral government.

1. One of the natural consequences of faith is peace of conscience. When the will receives the truth and yields itself up to conformity to it, the conscience is satisfied with its present attitude, and the man becomes at peace with himself. The soul

is then in a state to really respect itself, and can as it were behold its own face without a blush. But faith in truth perceived, is the unalterable condition of a man's being at peace with himself.

A governmental consequence of faith is peace with God:

(I.) In the sense that God is satisfied with the present obedience of the soul. It is given up to be influenced by all truth, and this is comprehensive of all duty. Of course God is at peace with the soul so far as its present obedience is concerned.

(2.) Faith governmentally results in peace with God in the sense of being a condition of pardon and acceptance. That is, the penalty of the law for past sins, is remitted upon condition of true faith in Christ. The soul not only needs present and future obedience as a necessary condition of peace with self; but it also needs pardon and acceptance on the part of the government for past sins as a condition of peace with God. But since the subject of justification or acceptance with God is to come up as a distinct subject for consideration, I will not enlarge upon it here.

2. Self-condemnation is one of the natural consequences of unbelief. Such are the constitution and laws of mind, that it is naturally impossible for the mind to justify the heart's rejection of truth. On the contrary, the conscience necessarily condemns such rejection and pronounces judgment against it.

Legal condemnation is a necessary governmental consequence of unbelief. No just government can justify the rejection of known truth. But on the contrary all just governments must utterly abhor and condemn the rejection of truths and especially those truths that relate to the obedience of the subject, and the highest well-being of the rulers and ruled. The government of God must condemn and utterly abhor all unbelief: as a rejection of those truths that are indispensable to the highest well-being of the universe.

3. A holy or obedient life results from faith by a natural or necessary law. Faith is an act of will which controls the life by a law of necessity. It follows that when the heart receives or obeys the truth, the outward life must be conformed to it, of course.

4. A disobedient and unholy life results from unbelief also by a law of necessity. If the heart rejects the truth, the life will not be conformed to it of course.

5. Faith will develop every form of virtue in the heart and life as their occasions shall arise. It consists in the committing of the will to truth and to the God of truth. Of course as different occasions arise, faith will secure conformity to all truth on all subjects, and then every modification of virtue will exist in the heart and appear in the life as circumstances in the providence of God shall develop them.

6. Unbelief may be expected to develop resistance to all truth upon all subjects that conflict with selfishness; and hence nothing but selfishness in some form can restrain its appearing in any other and every other form possible or conceivable. It consists, be it remembered, in the heart's rejection of truth and of course implies the cleaving to error. The natural result of this must be the development in the heart and the appearance in the life of every form of selfishness that is not prevented by some other form. For example, avarice may restrain amativeness, intemperance, and many other forms of selfishness.

7. Faith governmentally results in obtaining help of God. God may and does gratuitously help those who have no faith. But this is not a governmental result or act in God. But to the obedient He extends his governmental protection and aid.

8. Faith is a necessary condition of, and naturally results in heart-obedience to the commandments of God. Without confidence in a governor, it is impossible honestly to give up the whole being in obedience to him. But implicit and universal faith must result in implicit and universal obedience.

9. Unbelief naturally because necessarily results in heart disobedience to God.

10. Faith naturally and necessarily results in all those lovely and delightful emotions and states of feeling of which they

are conscious whose hearts have embraced Christ. I mean all those emotions that are naturally connected with the action of the will and naturally result from believing the blessed truths of the gospel.

11. Unbelief naturally results in those emotions of remorse, regret, and of pain and agony which are the frequent experience of the unbeliever.

12. Faith lets God into the soul to dwell and reign there. Faith receives not only the atonement and mediatorial work of Christ as a redeemer from punishment, but it also receives Christ as king to set up his throne and reign in the heart. Faith secures to the soul communion with God.

13. Unbelief shuts God out of the soul in the sense of refusing his reign in the heart.

It also shuts the soul out from an interest in his mediatorial work. This results not from an arbitrary appointment, but is a natural consequence. Unbelief shuts the soul out from communion with God.

These are hints at some of the natural and governmental consequences of Faith and Unbelief. They are designed not to exhaust the subject, but merely to call attention to topics which any one who desires may pursue at his pleasure. It should be here remarked that none of the ways, commandments, or appointments of God are arbitrary. Faith is a naturally indispensable condition of salvation, which is the reason of its being made a governmental condition. Unbelief renders salvation naturally impossible: it must therefore render it governmentally impossible.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 53

OFFICES AND RELATIONS OF CHRIST.

CHRIST is represented in the gospel as sustaining to men three classes of relations.

1. Those which are purely governmental.
2. Those which are purely spiritual.
3. Those which unite both these.

We shall at present consider Him as Christ our Justification. I shall show,

I. WHAT GOSPEL JUSTIFICATION IS NOT.

II. WHAT IT IS.

III. POINT OUT THE CONDITIONS OF GOSPEL JUSTIFICATION.

IV. SHOW WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION OF GOSPEL JUSTIFICATION.

I. I AM TO SHOW WHAT GOSPEL JUSTIFICATION IS NOT.

There is scarcely any question in theology that has been encumbered with more fiction and technical mysticism than that of justification.

Justification is the pronouncing of one just. It may be done in words, or practically by treatment. Justification must be in some sense a governmental act; and it is of importance to a right understanding of gospel justification to inquire whether it be an act of the judicial, the executive, or the legislative department of government; that is, whether gospel justification consists in a strictly judicial or forensic proceeding, or whether it consists in pardon, or setting aside the execution of an incurred penalty and is therefore properly either an executive or a legislative act. We shall see that the settling of this question is of great importance in theology; and as we view this subject, so, if consistent, we must view many important and highly practical questions in theology. This leads me to say,

1. That gospel justification is not to be regarded as a forensic or judicial proceeding. Dr. Chalmers and those of his school hold that it is. But this is certainly a great mistake, as we shall see.

The term forensic is from forum, a court. A forensic proceeding belongs to the judicial department of government, whose business it is to ascertain the facts and declare the sentence of the law. This department has no power over the law, but to pronounce judgment in accordance with its true spirit and meaning. Courts never pardon, or set aside the execution of penalties. This does not belong to them, but either to the executive or to the law-making department. Oftentimes, this power in human governments, is lodged in the head of the executive department, who is generally at least, a branch of the legislative power of government. But never is the power to pardon exercised by the judicial department. The condition of

a judicial or forensic justification invariably is and must be, universal obedience to law. If but one crime or breach of law is alledged and proved, the court must inevitably condemn, and can in no such case justify or pronounce the accused just. Gospel justification is the justification of sinners; it is, therefore, naturally impossible and a most palpable contradiction to affirm that the justification of a sinner or of one who has violated the law, is a forensic or judicial justification. That only is or can be a legal or forensic justification that proceeds upon the ground of its appearing that the justified person is guiltless, or, in other words, that he has not violated the law, that he has done only what he had a legal right to do. Now it is certainly nonsense to affirm that a sinner can be pronounced just in the eye of law; that he can be justified by deeds of law or by the law at all. The law condemns him. But to be justified judicially or forensically is to be pronounced just in the judgment of law. This certainly is an impossibility in respect to sinners. The Bible is as express as possible on this point. Romans iii:20; "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

It is proper to say here that Dr. Chalmers and those of his school do not intend that sinners are justified by their own obedience to law, but by the perfect and imputed obedience of Jesus Christ. They maintain that by reason of the obedience to law which Christ rendered when on earth being set down to the credit of sinners and imputed to them, the law regards them as having rendered perfect obedience in him, or regards them as having perfectly obeyed by proxy, and therefore pronounces them just upon condition of faith in Christ. This they insist is properly a forensic or judicial justification. But this subject will come up more appropriately under another head.

II. WHAT IS GOSPEL JUSTIFICATION.

1. It consists not in the laws pronouncing the sinner just, but in his being ultimately governmentally treated as if he were just, that is, it consists in a governmental decree of pardon or amnesty--in arresting and setting aside the execution of the incurred penalty of law--in pardoning and restoring to favor those who have sinned and those whom the law had pronounced guilty and upon whom it had passed the sentence of eternal death. It is an act either of the law-making or executive department of government, and is an act entirely aside from and contrary to the forensic or judicial power or department of government. It is an ultimate treatment of the sinner as just, a practical not a literal pronouncing of him just. It is treating him as if he had been wholly righteous when in fact he has greatly sinned. In proof of this position I remark,

(1.) That this is most unequivocally taught in the Old Testament scriptures. The whole system of sacrifices taught the doctrine of pardon upon the conditions of Atonement, Repentance, and Faith. This under the old dispensation is constantly represented as a merciful acceptance of the penitents and never as a forensic or judicial acquittal or justification of them. The mercy seat covered the law in the ark of the covenant. Paul informs us what justification was in the sense in which the Old Testament saints understood it, in Romans iv:6--8; "Even also as David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." This quotation from David shows both what David and what Paul understood by justification, to wit, the pardon and acceptance of the penitent sinner.

(2.) The New Testament fully justifies and establishes this view of the subject as we shall abundantly see under another head.

(3.) Sinners can not possibly be justified in any other sense. Upon certain conditions they may be pardoned and treated as just. But for sinners to be forensically pronounced just is impossible and absurd.

III. CONDITIONS OF JUSTIFICATION.

As has been already said there can be no justification in a legal or forensic sense, but upon condition of universal, perfect, and uninterrupted obedience to law. This is of course, denied by those who hold that gospel justification or the justification of penitent sinners, is of the nature of a forensic or judicial justification. They hold to the legal maxim that what a man does by another he does by himself, and therefore the law regards Christ's obedience as ours on the ground that he obeyed for us. To this I reply,

1. The legal maxim just repeated does not apply except in cases where one acts in behalf of another by his own consent, which was not the case with the obedience of Christ; and,

2. The doctrine of an imputed righteousness or that Christ's obedience to the law was accounted as our obedience, is founded on a most false and nonsensical assumption; to wit, that Christ owed no obedience to the law in his own person, and that therefore his obedience was altogether a work of supererogation, and might be made a substitute for our own obedience; that it might be set down to our credit, because he did not need to obey for himself.

I must here remark that justification respects the moral law; and that it must be intended that Christ owed no obedience to the moral law, and therefore his obedience to this law being wholly a work of supererogation, is set down to our account upon condition of faith in him. But surely this is an infinite mistake. We have seen that the spirit of the moral law requires good will to God and the universe. Was Christ under no obligation to do this? Nay, was he not rather under infinite obligation to be perfectly benevolent? Was it possible for him to be more benevolent than the law requires God and all beings to be? Did he not owe entire consecration of heart and life to the highest good of universal being? If not, then benevolence in him were no virtue for it would not be a compliance with moral obligation. It was naturally impossible for him, and is naturally impossible for any being to perform a work of supererogation, that is, to be more benevolent than the moral law requires him to be. This is and must be as true of God as it is of any other being. Would not Christ have sinned had he not been perfectly benevolent? If he would, it follows that he owed obedience to the law as really as any other being. Indeed a being that owed no obedience to the moral law must be wholly incapable of virtue, for what is virtue but obedience to the moral law?

But if Christ owed personal obedience to the moral law, then his obedience could no more than justify himself. It can never be imputed to us. He was bound for himself to love God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and his neighbor as himself, He did no more than this. He could do no more. It was naturally impossible, then, for him to obey in our behalf. This doctrine of the imputation of Christ's obedience to the moral law to us, is based upon the absurd assumptions, (1.) That the moral law is founded in the arbitrary will of God, and (2.) That of course Christ, as God, owed no obedience to it; both of which assumptions are absurd. But if these assumptions are given up, what becomes of the doctrine of an imputed righteousness as a condition of a forensic justification? "It vanishes into thin air."

There are, however, valid conditions of justification. The vicarious sufferings or atonement of Christ is a condition of justification or of the pardon and acceptance of penitent sinners. That Christ's sufferings and especially his death was vicarious, has been abundantly shown when treating the subject of atonement. I need not repeat here what I said there. Although Christ owed perfect obedience to the moral law for himself and could not, therefore, obey as our substitute, yet since he perfectly obeyed, he owed no suffering to the law or to the Divine government on his own account. He could therefore suffer for us. That is, he could to answer governmental purposes substitute his death for the infliction of the penalty of the law on us. He could not perform works of supererogation, but he could endure sufferings of supererogation in the sense that he did not owe them for himself. The doctrine of substitution in the sense just named appears every where in both Testaments. It is the leading idea, the prominent thought lying upon the face of the whole scriptures. Let the few passages that follow serve as specimens of the class that teach this doctrine:

Lev. 17:11. For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

Is. 53:5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Matt. 20:18. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

26:28. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Jn. 3:14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; 15. That

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

6:51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Acts 20:28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Rom. 3:24. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation. through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26. To declare, I say at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

5:6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9. Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 11. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. 18. Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

1 Cor. 5:7. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

15:3. Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

Gal. 2:20. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

3:13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree; 14. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Eph. 2:13. But now, in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

5:2. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.

Heb. 9:12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 22. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 21. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26. For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; 28. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.

10:10. By the which we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till

his enemies be made his foot-stool. 14. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 19. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh.

1 Pet. 1:18. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19. But with the precious blood of Christ.

2;24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye are healed.

3:18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

1 Jn. 1:7. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

3:5. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins.

4:9. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

These and many such like passages establish the fact beyond question that the vicarious atonement of Christ is a condition of our pardon and acceptance with God.

2. Repentance is also a condition of our justification. It must be certain that the government of God can not pardon sin without repentance. This is as truly a doctrine of natural as of revealed religion. It is self-evident that until the sinner breaks off from sins by repentance or turning to God, he can not be justified in any sense. This is every where assumed, implied, and taught in the Bible and in every part of it. No reader of the Bible can call this in question, and it were a useless occupancy of your time to quote passages as they every where abound.

3. Faith in Christ is another condition of justification. We have already examined into the nature and necessity of faith. I fear that there has been much of error in the conceptions of man upon this subject. They have talked of justification by faith as if they supposed that by an arbitrary appointment of God faith was the condition and the only condition of justification. This seems to be the antinomian view. The class of persons alluded to speak of justification by faith as if it were by faith and not by Christ through faith that the penitent sinner is justified; as if faith and not Christ were our justification. They seem to regard faith not as a natural, but as a mystical condition of justification; as bringing us into a covenant and mystical relation to Christ, in consequence of which his righteousness or personal obedience is imputed to us. We have seen that repentance as well as faith is a condition of justification. We shall see that sanctification and perseverance in obedience to the end of life are also conditions of justification. Faith is often spoken of in scripture as if it were the sole condition of salvation, because, as we have seen, from its very nature it implies repentance and every virtue.

That faith is a naturally necessary condition of justification we have seen. Let the following passages of scripture serve as examples of the manner in which the scriptures speak upon this subject:

Mark 16:15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 19. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.

Jn. 1:12. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

3:16. For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not

see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

6:28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. 40. This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

8:24. If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. 44. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth; because there is no truth in him. 47. He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

11:25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; 26. And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.

Acts 10:43. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

16:31. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Rom. 4:5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

10:4. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Gal. 2:16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

2 Th. 2:10. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; 12. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Heb. 11:6. Without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

1 Jn 2: 23. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; (but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.)

1 Jn 5:10. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. 12. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. 13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

4. Sanctification is another condition of justification. Some theologians have made justification a condition of sanctification instead of making sanctification a condition of justification. But this we shall see is an erroneous view of the subject. The mistake is founded in a misapprehension of the nature both of justification and of sanctification. They make sanctification to consist in something else than in the will's entire subjection or consecration to God; and justification they regard as a forensic transaction conditioned on the first act of faith in Christ. Whole-hearted obedience to God or entire conformity to his law they regard as a very rare, and many of them, as an impractical attainment in this life. Hence they conditionate justification upon simple faith, not regarding faith as at all implying present conformity of heart to the law of God. It would seem from the use of language that they lay very little stress upon personal holiness as a condition of acceptance with God. But, on the contrary, they suppose the mystical union of the believer with Christ obtains for him access and acceptance by virtue of an imputed righteousness and not at all upon condition of his personal

present entire obedience induced by the spirit of Christ living and reigning within him. If this view of the subject be correct, it follows that God justifies sinners, not upon condition of their ceasing to sin, but while they continue to sin by virtue of their being regarded by the law as perfectly obedient in Christ the covenant and mystical head; that is, that although they indulge in more or less sin continually and are never at any moment in this life entirely obedient to his law, yet God accounts them righteous because Christ obeyed for them. Another class of theologians hold, not to an imputed righteousness, but that God pardons and accepts the sinner not upon condition of present entire obedience, which obedience is induced by the indwelling spirit of Christ, but upon the condition that he believe in Christ. Neither of these classes make sanctification, or entire, present obedience a condition of justification, but on the contrary both regard and represent justification as a condition of sanctification. We have seen what justification is, let us enquire in a few words what sanctification is. To sanctify is to set apart, to consecrate to a particular use. To sanctify any thing to God is to set it apart to his service, to consecrate it to him. To sanctify one's self is to voluntarily set one's self apart, to consecrate one's self to God. To be sanctified is to be set apart, to be consecrated to God. Sanctification is an act or state of being sanctified or set apart to the service of God. It is a state of consecration to him. This is present obedience to the moral law. It is the whole of present duty and is implied in Repentance, Faith, Regeneration, as we have abundantly seen.

Sanctification is sometimes used to express a permanent state of obedience to God, or of consecration. In this sense it is not a condition of present justification or of pardon and acceptance. But it is a condition of continued and permanent acceptance with God. It certainly can not be true that God accepts and justifies the sinner in his sins. I may safely challenge the world for either reason or scripture to support the doctrine of justification in sin, in any degree of present rebellion against God. The Bible every where represents justified persons as sanctified and always expressly or impliedly conditionates justification upon sanctification. 1 Cor. 6:11. 'And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.' This is but a specimen of the manner in which justified persons are spoken of in the Bible. Also, Rom. 8:1. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' They only are justified who walk after the Spirit. Should it be objected, as it may be, that the scriptures often speak of saints or truly regenerate persons as needing sanctification and of sanctification as something that comes after regeneration and as that which the saints are to aim at attaining, I answer, that when sanctification is thus spoken of, it is doubtless used in the higher sense already noticed; to wit, to denote a state of being settled, established in faith, rooted and grounded in love, being so confirmed in the faith and obedience of the gospel as to hold on in the way steadfastly, unmovably, always abounding in the work of the Lord. This is doubtless a condition of permanent justification, as has been said, but not a condition of present justification.

By sanctification's being a condition of justification, the following things are intended.

- (1.) That present, full, and entire consecration of heart and life to God and his service is an unalterable condition of present pardon of past sin, and of present acceptance with God.
- (2.) That the penitent soul remains justified no longer than this full hearted consecration continues.

But since this is a fundamental question in theology, I have obtained leave of Prof. Morgan to insert in this place his article on the holiness acceptable to God. This will be more satisfactory perhaps than any thing I could say inasmuch as I should be obliged to quote the same scriptures, and about in the same order.

"'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the High God?' This has in all ages been the solemn and anxious inquiry of earnest souls. It is the question of one who has sinned--the question, however, of hope and not of despair--the question of one who conceives that perhaps the High and Holy One may be acceptably approached. But the inquiry presupposes, that whatever God may have done, may be doing, or ready to do for his salvation, the inquirer has a personal responsibility which he must meet, that there are conditions which he must fulfill. What shall I do to inherit life? The question recognizes the moral agency of the inquirer, and the necessity of its appropriate exercise.

It is admitted by all, except utter antinomians, that some degree of holiness or conformity to the divine law, is indispensable to acceptance with God. No one, we think, would refuse to unite with the venerable Westminster Confession in the statement that 'repentance, by which a sinner so grieves for and hates his sins as to turn from them all to God, purposing and endeavoring to walk with him in all the ways of his commandments, is of such necessity to sinners,

that none may expect pardon without it.' Still the majority of the church would doubtless, with the Larger Westminster Catechism, maintain that the 'best works' of God's accepted saints, 'are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God.' The celebrated Dr. Beecher in his recent letter on Perfection, exhibits the theory which he has embraced on the subject. We will quote a few of his questions and answers.

'Question 1. What takes place in regeneration?

Answer. The reconciliation of an enemy to God; submission to his will; love to God more than to all creatures and all things. In its commencement, this love is feeble compared with 'all the heart, mind, soul and strength,' according to the moral law; and to qualify for heaven, must be progressively augmented through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Q.2. How can the help of Christ be obtained, to secure our growth in grace?

A. By renouncing all reliance upon our own strength and merits, and relying entirely on the sufficiency and willingness of Christ to help us, sought by filial supplication, and the diligent use of the appointed means of grace; striving, as the Puritan writers say, as if all depended on ourselves, and looking to Christ as if all depended on him.

Q.3. What will be the effect of such a prayerful reliance upon Christ, in the diligent use of the means of grace?

A. Not perfection; for faith can be no more perfect than the love which animates it; and not including love with all the heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, is always an implication of defect needing an advocate and pardon. The child who cannot go a step alone, may as well exult in the claim of perfect manhood, as those who can do nothing without Christ, in the claim of perfection. But the result will be that they will grow in grace till they die, going from strength to strength, till they all appear in Zion before God.'

The doctrine of these extracts clearly is, not simply that the love of a new-born saint is feeble compared with that of an advanced Christian, but that it is less than the moral law requires, and therefore sinfully defective. These extracts also teach that 'the most prayerful reliance on Christ, and the most diligent use of the means of grace' ever practised in this life, never produce an obedience which does not itself, on account of sinful defect, need pardon. In these views Dr. B. coincides with the representation of the Westminster Confession, that 'they who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, * * fall short in much which in duty they are bound to do.'

We propose in the present article to seek a scriptural answer to the inquiry, Is any degree of holiness acceptable to God, which, for the time being, falls short of full obedience to the divine law? We put the question into the most general form, intending it to apply to both the accepted holiness of the new-born soul and the holiness of the most mature Christian.

1. In order to an intelligent answer to this inquiry, we must first determine what the requirements of the law are, and in what phraseology they are couched.

(1.) In Deut. 6:5, we find the first table of the law expressed in the fullest form that occurs in the Old Testament: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' It is remarkable that this emphatic mode of expression occurs, in the form of a command, no where else in the Old Testament; but it is once strikingly referred to in the historic account of the character of Josiah, 2 Kings 23:25. The passage is quoted, Matt. 22:37, Mark 12:3, and Luke 10:27, with some difference of words, but manifestly with no modification of meaning. The emphasis obviously lies in the words which we have marked by italic.

(2.) We have, Deut. 10:12,13, somewhat different language: 'And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?' The whole spirit of this passage would be expressed in the words: 'What doth the Lord thy God require of thee but

to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?' The rest is added to make the passage more impressive, and perhaps also to indicate the important truth that inward obedience manifests itself in the external conduct. It is the doctrine of Paul, Rom. 13:8--10, that 'he that loveth hath fulfilled the law;' and this is the doctrine also, so far as we know, of the whole Christian church. The above-quoted passage omits the expression, 'with all thy might,' and yet the introductory words show that the whole content of the law is given. The phraseology, 'with all thy heart and with all thy soul,' is employed, we believe, where emphasis is intended, more frequently than any other formula, to designate the demand of the law.

(3.) We find, 1 Sam. 12:20--24, the words, 'Turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart.--Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart.' Here the phrases, 'with all your might,' and 'with all your soul,' are both omitted, and yet who can reasonably doubt that the prophet meant, in the use of the phrase, 'with all the heart,' to enjoin full obedience to the law?

It is, perhaps, worth noticing, that in passages which exhibit the emphatic phraseology before us, wherever any of the phrases are omitted, it is always those that come last. It is always, 'with all the heart and soul,' or, 'with all the heart,'--never, 'with all the might,'--'with all the soul,' or 'with all the soul and might,'--which may perhaps lead us to conclude that the omitted words were in the writer's or speaker's mind, and in the minds of his Israelitish readers or hearers, just as with us, the whole of a familiar verse or even hymn is frequently referred to, when we mention only the first line.

(4.) In Micah 6:8, all duty is denoted without the use of any emphatic phraseology: 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!' The first part of the concluding interrogation, plainly shows that the whole compass of the divine commands is exhibited.

(5.) The above-cited passages present the divine law chiefly in its relations to God. The precept, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' occurs in the Old Testament only Lev. 19:18. In the New Testament it is quoted as containing the sum of all the law with respect to our fellow men. But though in the ten commandments and in the other precepts of the law, the language of equality and impartiality is omitted, it is always to be understood--an affirmation, which in relation to the second table of the ten commandments, we presume no one will deny. For an equally cogent reason, in the first table, and in all other commands which relate to the Most High, the expressions are to be understood which denote the engagement of all our powers of heart, soul, and might. David adopted this rule of interpretation in his charge to Solomon, 1 Kings 2:2--4. Referring to the promise and its conditions, recorded Ps. 132:12, and elsewhere in similar language, the dying prophet says, 'I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man, and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways * * that the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel.' The original condition of the promise did not contain the emphatic expression, 'with all the heart and with all the soul,' but the inspired interpreter supplies it as being understood. Indeed, it is an obviously just rule of construction, that when several passages refer to the same thing, some of them in more, and others in less specific language, the more specific passages should govern the interpretation of the less specific.

Perhaps some of the preceding observations might have been spared, inasmuch as it is generally admitted that the formulas, 'with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the might,' 'with all the heart and with all the soul,' and 'with all the heart,' universally have the meaning contended for. They are considered as equivalent, though more or less emphatic modes of expressing the full requirement of the law. To make the less emphatic expressions mean less than the others, is to ascribe to them an utter indefiniteness, not to say that it would make them involve a license to commit some degree of sin.

The language of the law plainly shows that it concerns itself with nothing else than the voluntary inward state or actions of men. If it makes mention of external actions, it is only as the necessary manifestations of the inward voluntary state. When the voluntary state or action of the heart is right, the law has no further demand. It commands nothing but love,--it forbids nothing but its opposite. It knows nothing of any other holiness than love, under it, behind it, or causative of it. It has no complacency in any thing but love, be it found in whatever being it may, man or angel. Nor is there any depravity, corruption, bias, evil nature, or any thing else of whatever name, with which it is offended or displeased, in man or devil, except the voluntary exclusion of love, or the indulgence of its opposite. Disobedience on the one hand, and obedience on the other, are the only moral entities known to the Scriptures, or of which the law of God takes the least cognizance. It

demands nothing but cordial obedience--it forbids nothing but cordial disobedience. We say not that there may not be inward occasions of sin as well as outward temptations; nor do we say there may not be inward influences impelling to holiness as well as external persuasives; but we do say that the law of God takes no cognizance of either the one or the other. It concerns itself with nought but the inward voluntary state or action of the moral agent. We are aware that we might have said all this in a single sentence; but we chose to say over and over again in different words, what we deem a very important and obvious Scripture doctrine, because it is denied or misunderstood by many good man.

The doctrine we have thus laid down, agrees with that which President Edwards urges in his Treatise on the Will, Part III. Sec. IV. 'If there be any sort of act or exertion of the soul, prior to all free acts of the will or acts of choice in the case, directing and determining what the acts of the will shall be, that act or exertion of the soul cannot properly be subject to command or precept in any respect whatsoever, either directly or indirectly, immediately or remotely. Such acts cannot be subject to commands directly, because they are no acts of the will; being by the supposition prior to all acts of the will, determining and giving rise to all its acts: they not being acts of the will, there can be in them no consent to, or compliance with, any command. Neither can they be subject to command indirectly or remotely; for they are not so much as the effect or consequences of the will, being prior to its acts. So that if there be any obedience in that original act of the soul, determining all volitions, it is an act of obedience wherein the will has no concern at all; it preceding every act of will. And therefore, if the soul either obeys or disobeys in this act, it is wholly involuntary; there is no willing obedience or rebellion, no compliance or opposition of will in the affair: and what sort of obedience or rebellion is this?

Well would it have been for theology, if all that the great and good Edwards wrote had been in harmony with the manifest good sense of this passage.

2. Having thus considered the various phraseology in which the law of God is delivered, we proceed more directly to the question, whether full obedience to its requisitions, is a condition of acceptance with God. Those who believe that 'the best works of justified persons are defiled in the sight of God,' cannot believe that full obedience to the divine law is a present condition of the divine favor. They may believe that the law has various salutary uses to the saints, but, on their scheme of doctrine, one of those uses cannot be to tell them what they must do to inherit eternal life.

But inasmuch as some of these passages manifestly speak of the holiness they enjoin as a condition of justification before God, it may be imagined by some that they treat not of the justification of those who have ever sinned, but of legal justification for those only who practise from the beginning of life an unbroken obedience, in order that sinners may see their need of mercy and grace, and flee for refuge to Christ.

(1.) But nothing can be plainer than it is, that such passages as Micah 6:8, speak of a condition on which sinners may approach God acceptably. A serious inquirer is introduced as asking, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with tens of thousands of rivers of oil! Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' Can any thing be more manifest than it is, that these are the questions of a sinner?

Let us hear again the answer of the inspired prophet; 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' He presents to him the whole compass of duty, and encourages him with no hint that he may come before the Lord and bow himself before the High God with a partial performance of it. What a strange change would be introduced into such passages if qualifying words were to be inserted. 'What doth the Lord require of thee but partially to do justice, to love mercy with sinful defect, and in an imperfect degree to walk humbly with thy God?' Are we to construe Is. 1:16--17, thus: 'If you would have your worship accepted, wash you in part, make you in some good degree clean; put away in the greater part the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease partly to do evil--learn in some good degree to do well?' Does Is. 55:7, mean, 'Let the wicked in great measure forsake his way, and the unrighteous man partially his thoughts, and let him return with the greater part of his heart to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him?' Since these passages and innumerable others like them contain no intimation that less than entire obedience will do for acceptance, those who teach that God will accept less from us, are bound to substantiate their doctrine by irrefragable proofs, or to abandon it.

(2.) Such passages as 1 Sam. 12:20--24, obviously treat of the condition of a sinner's justification. The people of Israel

had committed the great wickedness of rejecting the Lord from being their king, and asking for a human king to reign over them; and God, at Samuel's instance, had sent upon them miraculous tokens of his displeasure. The affrighted people entreat the prophet to pray for them. Samuel replies, 'Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your hearts, * * * Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your heart. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.' Here the condition of even their temporal salvation was that they should serve the Lord with all their heart. Persistence in wickedness--in their refusal to serve the Lord with all their heart--would ensure their destruction.

In Deut. 11:13, obedience 'with all the heart and with all the soul' is spoken of as the condition of even the common temporal blessings promised to the Israelites in their land. 'And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you rain of your land in its due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn and thy wine and thy oil; and I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.' The Israelites were already sinners, and to proclaim to them the terms of a strict, legal justification would have been the same thing as to denounce their destruction. The terms of the passage are terms of mercy and suited to their wants as members of the guilty human family. The holiness here demanded, too, was to be practised in this life; for it would have been most absurd to condition the bestowment of temporal blessings, the blessings of this state of existence, on a holiness subsequent to their enjoyment, and not to be attained till the promisees had passed or were just passing into the invisible world. In the nature of the case, the condition must be performed ere the blessing can be bestowed in fulfillment of the promise.

The same observations might in substance be made respecting the condition of the promise made to David, mentioned by him, 1 Kings, 2:4. Here the blessing, though ultimately relating to the eternal throne of the spotless Messiah, was also in part to be given to mortals who had sinned. The condition was that 'they should take heed to their way to walk before the Lord in truth, with all their heart and with all their soul.'

(3.) Full obedience is the condition on which God promises to remove from sinners, judgments under which they are suffering. Deut. 4:29--"But if from thence, [the land of captivity,] thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.' Deut. 30:1--3,9,10,--'And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God and shalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.' 'The Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers, if thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.' Joel 2:13--14. "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God?' Jer. 29:13. 'And ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart.' The first and last of these quotations especially evince that the mentioned condition was an indispensable one. No seeking would regain the Lord's favor, but seeking with all the heart and all the soul. It is observable in these passages also, that some, at least, of the blessings promised, pertain to this state of existence. We infer therefore that the full obedience required, was, if it would gain these blessings, to be exhibited in the present life. If the first act or exercise of full obedience was delayed till the last moment of life, it could not place or secure the agent on an earthly throne, or make grass grow for his cattle, or feed him with 'the fat of the kidneys of wheat,' or deliver him from an earthly captivity. But if whole-hearted repentance, full obedience, was thus an indispensable condition of promised temporal blessings, how much more must it be a condition of eternal salvation, of citizenship in the New Jerusalem, of the palms and white robes of the celestial state, of a seat with Christ on his heavenly throne!

(4.) The inspired Solomon ventured to ask mercy for Israel supposed to be driven into captivity for sin on no less condition than a return to full obedience. 1 Kings, 8:46--49, 2 Chron. 6:36--39,--'If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives

unto the land of the enemy, far or near; yet if they shall bethink themselves, * * * * and so return unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul, * * * * then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven, thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause.' If God would have accepted from his exiled people less than a return to him with all the heart and with all the soul, the tender interest of Solomon, in behalf of Israel, would have impelled him to found his intercession on the supposed performance of that more favorable condition. The wise Solomon would have been a very unskillful advocate, if he had failed to seize and urge the easiest possible terms. Not thus did Abraham manage his suit even in behalf of the reprobate cities of the plain. He pressed peradventure after peradventure, till he had reached the lowest which he deemed it fit to urge. But Solomon knew that the word of God in the writings of Moses, (Deut. 4:29, 30:2--10,) had proposed no lower terms of deliverance, and so dared not plead that God should dispense with or abate the conditions on which alone he had promised to forgive and restore his banished people.

(5.) Israel, with God's sanction, entered into covenant with him to render full obedience. Before the Lord had given the law from Sinai, he said to the people by Moses, Ex. 19:5,--'If ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine.' 'And all the people answered together and said, (v. 9,) 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.' At the giving of the law, the people, filled with awe at the presence and voice of Jehovah, say to Moses, Deut. 5:27--'Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall say unto thee, and we will hear it and do it.' 'And the Lord, (Moses says, v. 28,) heard the voice of your words when ye spoke unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee; they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever." Twice after the giving of the ten commandments and the report of Moses respecting 'all the words of the Lord and all the judgments,' Israel confirm the covenant, Ex. 24:3--7--'All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do. All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient.' And solemn covenant-sacrifices seal the sacred engagement. In a subsequent age, in the time of Asa king of Judah, and at the instance of the prophet Oded, all Judah, with strangers out of Ephraim and Manasseh and Simeon, (2 Chron. 15:12,) 'entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul.' At the time of the great revival and reformation under Josiah, Judah, led by their pious monarch, renewed the covenant, 2 Kings 23:3; 2 Chron. 34: 31, 'And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all their heart and with all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.' Under Nehemiah, the restored captives of Judah, (Ne. 10:29,) 'clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord their Lord, and his judgments and his statutes.' There was no such thing known to the ancient people of God as a covenant to do less than the full import of the divine requirements. God on his part proposed his law in its uncompromising strictness, demanding all the heart and all the soul, and they not only voluntarily assent to the obligation to obey, but covenant on their part, confirming their promise with oaths and the blood of sacrifices, to render full obedience. Nor would any thing less have been a consent on their part to the covenant enjoined by the Most High. No one can reasonably imagine that he would have accepted a vow to yield him partial obedience. But can it ever be right, not only to vow but swear full, whole-hearted allegiance, unless the inferior covenanting party has a reasonable prospect of keeping his vow and oath? Could he do it honestly if he knew with absolute certainty that he would violate his covenant during his whole subsequent earthly existence? Could he do it with the divine approbation if he even knew that at the very time of his oath he was in his heart commencing its violation? Would not this be the most awful lying and perjury that could be committed? For aught we can see, the vows and covenant oaths of the people of God must have contemplated a partial or less than whole-hearted and whole-souled obedience--a covenant which God never enjoined--or they must have had a fair prospect and hope of fulfilling their vows--a prospect and hope which they could not have had if they knew absolutely that they would live all their lives in partial disobedience.

(6.) Individual inspired saints have made the same vows of whole-hearted service. Ps. 9:1; 111:1; 138:1; 119:34--69; 'I will praise thee O Lord, with my whole heart. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. The proud have forged a lie against me; but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.' All the observations under the last head might be repeated here. We would state more explicitly a principle involved in them, that since God, on his part, in the covenant, never proposed partial obedience, and a promise of such obedience would have been no assent to his covenant, all the acceptable vows of the saints recorded in the Bible, however expressed, are to be understood as contemplating obedience with all the heart and with all the soul.

(7.) The Bible declares of saints that they have actually rendered full obedience. It is said of Caleb, Nu. 14:24, 'My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went.' Deut. 1:36, 'To him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the Lord.' Of Joshua and Caleb, (Nu. 32:12,) it is said.[:] 'They have wholly followed the Lord.' The same language is employed, 1 Kings 11:6, with respect to David. God sentences the Israelites in the wilderness, Nu. 32:11, 'Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me.' Solomon is sentenced (1 Kings, 11:11, compare verse 11) to lose his kingdom because 'he went not after the Lord fully as did David his father,' and thus failed 'to keep the Lord's covenant.' The original Hebrew phrase in all these places is the same, though translated into somewhat different English. Gesenius, surpassed by no one in Hebrew lexicography, explains the phrase to mean 'to yield God full obedience.' Leopold in his lexicon renders it 'integra obedientia Jovam sequi,' that is, to follow Jehovah with entire obedience. In reference to David, God says to Jeroboam 1 Kings 14:8, 'Thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes.' It is recorded of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. 22:9, that 'he sought the Lord with all his heart.' Of Josiah the inspired record is, 2 Kings 23:25, 'And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses, neither after him arose there any like him.'" On this remarkable passage we observe,

[1.] Its language is manifestly copied from Deut. 6:2, where the mode of expression is the most emphatic known to the writers of the Old Testament in proclaiming the law of the Lord, and therefore the design of the writer of this book is to declare that Josiah 'turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might' according to the requisition of that emphatic passage.

[2.] The expressions, 'like unto him was there no king before him, neither after him arose there any like him,' are to be understood, not of his turning to the Lord with all his heart, but of the comprehensive reformation he effected, extending to all the institutions of Moses. As Matthew Henry has well expressed it, 'he was a none-such as a reformer;' he had the abilities and influence which qualified him for that work. But Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:5,) received the praise of a none-such in faith, as the same venerable commentator says: 'He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.' In the fearful invasion of Sennacherib, he was placed in circumstances to call for the manifestation of an exalted faith such as the circumstances of no other pious king demanded. The piety of every saint will have its type and direction determined by the original cast of his constitution, and the influences and emergencies among which He is situated. If he meets the particular responsibilities which God has imposed on him, he is accepted; but if He fails to meet them, he sins and falls under condemnation.

With reference to the covenant entered into by Judah in the time of king Asa, it is recorded, 2 Chron. 15:15, 'And all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart and sought [the Lord] with their whole desire. We have seen that all the people stood with Josiah to the covenant to walk after the Lord with all their heart and with all their soul. In 2 Chron. 34:32, in immediate connexion with this transaction, it is declared, 'that the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.' Now we have seen that this covenant was not merely an engagement to serve the Lord in some degree, but to do it with their whole heart.

(8.) Bible saints professed this entire obedience. Thus Caleb says to Joshua, Josh. 14:8, 'My brethren that went up with me, made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the Lord my God.' 'I beseech thee O Lord,' says Hezekiah 2 Kings 20:3, 'remember how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart.' It is remarkable that the lexicographers Gesenius, Leopold, and Gibbs in explaining the word shaulem, give both the general signification, perfect, entire, consummate, and in reference to the relation of men to God make it signify at peace or on good terms with him.

Ps. 119:10,58,145, the Psalmist professes, 'With my whole heart have I sought thee; O let me not wander from thy commandments. I entreated thy favor with my whole heart; be merciful unto me according to thy word. I cried with my whole heart; hear me; I will keep thy statutes.' It may be thought that historians or poets in describing the characters or conduct of others would resort to the language of hyperbole; but do the modest, humble saints employ hyperbolic expressions in telling of their own conduct and exercises? Do they magnify their own earnestness and faithfulness--or use the words of simple truth? Two remarks we will make on the passages from the Psalmist: 1. He founds on his whole-hearted seeking and prayers a covenant claim to be heard, to be made a subject of mercy and grace. 2. His belief of his

own whole-heartedness did not make him self-confident or presumptuous. 'O let me not wander from thy commandments,' is any thing rather than the language of a self-confident spirit.

In the times of Samuel the prophet, when the ark had long been absent from its place, the sacred historian tells us, 1 Sam. 7:2, 'that all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.' 'And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.' The prophet seems to take it for granted that if they looked for divine favor, they professed to return to the Lord with all their hearts, and he expects them to bring forth the appropriate fruits, by casting away idols, and preparing or rather establishing their hearts to the Lord so as in future to serve Him only, and promises that then they shall experience deliverance from their enemies.

(9.) Those who did not yield full obedience are either branded as hypocrites or spoken of as the objects of the divine displeasure. 'Surely,' says God, Nu. 32:11, 'none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore unto Abraham and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, because they have not wholly followed me.' It is of these men that the Psalmist speaks, Ps. 78:34--37, 'When He slew them, then they sought Him; and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the High God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast [or true] in his covenant.' It is true that as the next verse tells us, God 'being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity and destroyed them not,' immediately. He forgave them in the same sense in which He might forgive the murderers of Christ, that is, he did not at once and forever shut the door of mercy against them; but in the sense in which he 'keeps covenant and mercy with his servants who walk before him with all their heart,' (1 King 8:23,) he did not forgive them or show them mercy. God finally swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest; and the epistle to the Hebrews holds them up as the great warning example of unbelief and consequent subjection to divine wrath.--Heb. 3:7--19; 4:1--7.

God had said to Solomon, (1 Kings 8:4,5,) 'If thou wilt walk before me as David thy father walked, in integrity [tom--entireness] of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee * * * * then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom for ever.' But by and by through the influence of his foreign wives, Solomon's heart was not perfect, [shalem] with the Lord his God as was the heart of David his father. * * * * And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord as did David his father. * * * And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel.' 1 Kings 11:1,6,9. The external conduct of the renowned king was abominable, but it was traced to the swerving of his heart from 'entireness and uprightness.' And it was with this inward defection that the Holy One was displeased.

When Hezekiah, who could, when he was sick, appeal to God 'that he had walked before him with a perfect heart,' fell into pride, and ostentatiously displayed his treasures to the Babylonish ambassadors, 'there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Nevertheless Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, (both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,) so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.'--2 Chron. 32:35,26. In like manner God dealt with David when he sinned in the matter of Uriah, and in numbering the people. His heart was no more 'perfect with the Lord' when he was perpetrating those crimes than Solomon's was when he was worshipping the abomination of the Sidonians. Nor did the heart of Hezekiah remain a perfect one when 'it was lifted up with pride.' The Bible knows nothing of a 'perfect heart' which retires in its perfection somewhere into the recesses of the inward being and goes to sleep, while the members of the body are employed in adultery or murder, and the thoughts are full of pride. Nor does the Bible make the ways of God so unequal that every sin in one man who has never experienced the grace of God, shall incur the danger of eternal damnation, and that no sin, not even murder, in another whose sins are aggravated by the rupture of all the endearing ties of intimate filial communion and glorious discoveries never made to his sinning brother, shall incur the danger of no severer penalty than God's fatherly displeasure and the withdrawal of the light of his countenance. If 'Christ in the gospel does not dissolve, but much strengthen the obligation' of the law with respect to all men: much more so does he do this with respect to those who have received the richest blessings. If other sinners incur the danger of damnation by their sins, than when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity--since 'there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation,' and such iniquity is crimsoned with the deepest hues of guilt--what peril short of exclusion from mercy on repentance, shall not such a sinner incur? If he incurs not the peril of death, then with respect to him, the law, as to its penalty, is utterly abrogated, and when he is forgiven, he is not released from

the danger of perdition, but merely from further manifestations of God's paternal displeasure.

It is sometimes argued that the sins of persons who have been converted, do not bring them into a state of condemnation or forfeit their justification, because the discipline of the Lord is to bring them to repentance. But the true question which determines the relation of the sins of such persons to the divine wrath is, what would they incur if the perpetrators were to persist in them--or were their probation at once closed? The fact that they are brought to repentance by divine chastisements and are then forgiven, no more proves that their sins did not expose them to damnation, than the same fact proves that the unconverted who will yet be saved, have not hanging over their guilty heads the poised thunderbolts of divine indignation. 'When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.' Ez. 18:26. 'The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression--neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.' Ez. 33:12. And if a wicked man would save his soul alive, he must 'turn from his sin and walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity.' Ez. 33:14,16. In the day that he commits iniquity--the least degree of it for aught the scriptures any where say--his righteousness shall not deliver him from death. If he is spared and space is allowed him for repentance, it is not because he had the least personal covenant claim on favor, but because God pleases in his own sovereign goodness to spare him, not willing that he should perish, just as he spares the countless hosts of sinners who crowd the broad road. After him he cries as after them, Turn, turn, for why wilt thou die?

3. The texts which we have hitherto quoted, have been almost exclusively from the Old Testament. We have chosen to present its testimony chiefly by itself, in order that our readers may be enabled, with less effort, to see the harmony of both parts of divine revelation. On some points we shall have occasion to bring forward a number of other texts. We wished also to expose the falsity of a notion entertained by some believers in the doctrine of Christian perfection, namely, that to those who live under the new dispensation entire sanctification is attainable, but that Old Testament saints were generally, throughout the whole of life, sinfully imperfect. The many texts already adduced appear to us to show very clearly, that under the ancient dispensation, the standard of acceptable piety was nothing lower than entire conformity to the divine law. The covenant blessings belonged to none others than those who 'kept God's testimonies and sought him with the whole heart.'--Ps. 119:2,3.

But if, under the Old Testament, saints could be accepted on no less condition than present sinless holiness, much more must this be true under the new dispensation. For it would be most preposterous to suppose that the gospel, with its higher and fuller communications of the Spirit, has lowered the conditions of mercy. We might safely conclude, then, without further inquiry, that the standard of the New Testament is at least as high as that of the Old. But for the sake of exhibiting the harmony of the two Testaments, and of further impressing the views already presented, and for other reasons which will appear in the progress of the discussion, we shall take into consideration some classes of texts, which we believe support our position.

(1.) We commence with the Sermon on the Mount. 'Think not,' says Christ, 'that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil[1]. * * Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.' The Savior then proceeds to give his exposition of some of the most important of the ten commandments, freeing them from the pernicious glosses of the Jewish scribes. Indeed it is the general opinion of Christian commentators, that whatever other objects the Son of God had in view in the delivery of this sermon, it was one of his main objects to show forth the spirituality of the divine law. Among the precepts he utters are such as these, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.' 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.' But does he represent, that obedience to his instructions in this sermon, uncompromising as they are, is a condition of eternal salvation? The solemn conclusion is the best reply that we can give: 'Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded on a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it.' Nor is there an intimation that any degree of iniquity, unforsaken, would escape the awful ruin.

(2.) We invite particular attention to Luke 10:24--28, 'And behold a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying,

Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.'

The lawyer--that is, a Jewish divine or theologian--to try the theological skill of the great teacher of Galilee, and to determine whether he taught a different doctrine from Moses and the prophets, asks him what are the conditions of salvation. The Savior refers him to the law; and when the lawyer quotes its most emphatic moral precepts, the two which comprehended the whole law in their sweeping import, as containing those conditions, the Savior declares that his answer is correct, and that these are in truth the conditions of eternal life, and that if he would live, he must comply with them.

On this passage we remark: (1.) The fact that the Savior refers him to the Mosaic writings for an answer to his question, evinces that He taught, himself, the same conditions of life that Moses did. (2.) His remark on the lawyer's quotations, shows that in Christ's view, the lawyer had not selected erroneously the two all-comprehensive commands of the law. (3.) The parable of the good Samaritan, told in reply to the lawyer's question about the word neighbor, in which Christ gives us a practical embodiment of the fulfilment of the second command, demonstrates that Christ meant in truth to lay down obedience to the law as an indispensable condition of mercy. His closing injunction on the lawyer, 'Go thou and do likewise,' is a further proof of the same thing. We know of none who do not admit that we must do as the good Samaritan did in order to be saved. Not an intimation is given in this whole passage or its context, that less would do than full compliance with the holy rule.

(3.) We request our readers to consider attentively such passages as declare, that we cannot serve God and Mammon (a)--that we must hate our nearest friends and forsake all that we have in order to be Christ's disciples (b)--that we must sell all that we have in order to buy the field with the treasure hid in it, or to obtain the pearl of great price, (c)--that the violator of one commandment is guilty of all (d)--that the accepted Christian is free from sin, dead and buried to sin--that he is risen to righteousness, (e)--that to him who is in Christ Jesus old things are passed away and all things become new. (f) Let these passages be examined with their context, and it will be seen that they entirely harmonize with the numerous texts quoted from the Old Testament.

(a) Mat. 6:24; (b) Lu. 14:26,43; (c) Mat. 13:44,45; (d) Ja. 2:10; (e) Rom. 6:2,4,7,18,22; (f) 2 Cor. 5:17.

On Mat. 5:24, we quote from the Commentary of Calvin, one of the ablest and most spiritual of expositors, and on the whole, decidedly our own favorite. The extracts are instructive, both as showing the force with which such passages strike pious minds, in theory opposed to their teachings, and as giving a specimen of the best shifts by which they try to dispose of their natural import. 'Christ denies that it can be that any one should obey God and his flesh at the same time. *
* Since God every where commends sincerity, while a double heart is abominable, all those are deceived who think he will be contented with half of their heart. All, in deed, confess with the mouth, that God is not truly worshipped except with entire affection, but they deny it in reality, while they study to reconcile things contrary to each other. I will not cease, says the ambitious man, to serve God, although I apply a good part of my mind to the chase of honors. * * It is true, indeed, that believers themselves never are so entirely given to obedience to God, but that they are drawn from it by the vicious desires of the flesh. But because they groan under this miserable bondage, and are displeased with themselves, and do not serve the flesh otherwise than unwilling and reluctant (*inviti et reluctantes*)--they are not said to serve two masters, because their purposes and efforts are approved by the Lord, just as if they rendered him an entire obedience. But here the hypocrisy of those persons is exposed, who flatter themselves in vices, as if they could conjoin light with darkness.' We ask, where, in the whole compass of the Bible, are saints said to be thus distinguishable from sinners? Where are they said to sin --'unwilling and reluctant'--while none of the ungodly are reluctant about it? We know of no texts which can under any pretence be cited to sustain such a view, except the contested passages in Rom. 7th and Gal. 5th--with respect to the first of which we cannot but concur with Tholuck in the remark that 'if the least attention is paid to the connection of this section of ch. 7th with that which precedes and that which follows, it is not possible to explain it of any other than a person standing under the law.' More on this passage by and by. Of Gal. 5:17, we shall, in the sequel, have a word or two to say. If every man is a saint who sins reluctantly, Julius Caesar must have been a good saint, when, about to annihilate the liberties of his country, he reluctantly crossed the Rubicon; and Macbeth, when he reluctantly murdered his benefactor and king. With great reluctance did the last named villain drag himself to the deed of blood--with quite as much reluctance, according to the great poet, as David debauched his neighbor's wife, and then murdered her

generous husband. The plea of reluctance on any other ground than that on which a Macbeth might plead it, resembles a little too much the defence of an ingenious poltroon, that his heart was as bold as a lion's, but his cowardly legs would run away.

President Edwards (on the Will, Pt. III, Sec. V.) remarks most justly, ["]that it is a great mistake and gross absurdity, that men may sincerely choose and desire those spiritual duties of love, acceptance, choice, rejection, &c., consisting in the exercise of the will itself, in the disposition and inclination of the heart, and yet not be able to perform or exert them. This is absurd, because it is absurd to suppose that a man should directly, properly and sincerely incline to have an inclination, which at the same time is contrary to his inclination; for that is to suppose him not to be inclined to that which he is inclined to. If a man, in the state and acts of his will and inclination, does properly and directly fall in with those duties, he therein performs them; for the duties themselves consist in that very thing; they consist in the state and acts of the will being so formed and directed. * * That which is called a desire and willingness for these inward duties in such as do not perform, has respect to those duties only indirectly and remotely, and is improperly represented as a willingness for them."

The great Edwards is not always consistent with himself, nor are his professed disciples. Thus, they all insist that no one can be a good Christian who does not intend or aim at sinless perfection, or, as the Westminster Confession has it, 'purpose and endeavor to walk with God in all the ways of his commandments,' and yet they also insist that it is dangerous error, if not heresy, to believe that any one ever really fully obeys God. All Christians have the will for it, but never do it. 'If there be a full compliance of will,' says Edwards, 'the person has done his duty; and if other things do not prove to be connected with his volition, that is not owing to him.'

(4.) The apostle Paul appears to us to teach very explicitly, Rom. 8: 6--7,13, the necessity of conformity to the law in order to exemption from death. 'To be carnally minded is death; * * because the carnal mind is enmity against God for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh [carnally minded] cannot please God.' 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [that is, put to death, not partially subdue, or half kill, according to the modern sense of the English word, mortify] the deeds of the body, ye shall live? Of how great a degree of sin is death the wages? Do the Scriptures any where teach us that there is any degree of it so small that it does not deserve, and will not receive death as its wages, unless it is put away? It would appear that in the apostle's view, we must be conformed to the law in order to please God. And how shall He 'who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and who cannot look upon sin,' be pleased with less than full conformity to it?

(5.) The whole argument of Paul, in the 6th, 7th and 8th chapters of Romans, proceeds on the supposition that the entire subjugation of sin is indispensable to justification. In vain does a man hope that he may yield himself as a servant to sin, and escape condemnation, because he has taken refuge with Christ. Death (6:16,21,23; 7:5,9,11,13,24; 8:2;6,8,13) is the inevitable result of sin, its wages, its fruit. Legal influences do not avail to rescue the sinner from the power of sin--they rather aggravate his bondage to it, and while sin remains, the sword of vengeance threatens the sinner's life. Now how, according to the apostle, does he escape? By betaking himself to a Savior who will make a partial obedience answer? Or by flying to one who gives him the victory over sin itself? Not a syllable is dropped in these interesting chapters about a partial obedience to the law, a partial conquest of iniquity. The believer has no condemnation hanging over him or inwardly harassing him, because he walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The law of the Spirit of life [salvation] in Christ Jesus, has made him free from the law of sin, (and therefore of death,) which has warred in his members and brought him into captivity. God, by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as a sin-offering, has destroyed sin by a capital condemnation, that the former transgressor may inwardly fulfil the righteousness of the law. He is married (7:4) to the risen Son of God, 'so that he brings forth fruit, not to death, (7:5,) but to God. His fruit is unto holiness, (6:22,) and the end is everlasting life. While faith stands, tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present and things to come, and every creature in the universe, may assault him with the utmost fury, and in all these things he more than conquers through him that loved him. While his eye is on Jesus, though he walk a tempestuous sea, threatened by all its roaring waves, it shall do no more than touch the soles of his feet.

We are well aware of the interpretation of Rom. 7:7--25 still current among Calvinistic writers in England and America. It is an interpretation, which, beginning with Augustine, spread, through his great influence, extensively in the church, and gained still further vogue by the adoption and sanction of the reformers Calvin and Luther. But till Augustine broached it, so far as history informs us, the church knew nothing of it. By the whole early church, learned and unlearned,

the passage was referred to the experience of a sinner under the law. Notwithstanding the venerable authority of the Reformers, and the high esteem in which they are held by evangelical men the world over, the whole body of pious German commentators, several of the most distinguished in Scotland and England, and Professors Stuart and Robinson in America, have been compelled, by the apostle's argument, in spite of theological bias, to return to the ancient interpretation.

With the exception of the Methodist commentators, we see not how these learned men can be plausibly charged with adopting their views from theological prejudice, inasmuch as they all, so far as we know, held or hold the doctrine of the constant moral imperfection of Christians. Hence Professor Hodge of Princeton, in his able work on Romans, while he tenaciously cleaves to the current view among Calvinists, says: 'There is nothing in this opinion which implies the denial or disregard of any of the fundamental principles of evangelical religion.' But how strong must be the internal evidence in favor of this view, when it has brought over the great body of the most able commentators in the world! To ourselves it seems amazing that any man can resist the force of argument with which Prof. Stuart has assailed the modern view, and sustained that, which, before Augustine, was, for aught history informs us, the universal view of the church. We feel, we confess, an intense interest in the establishment of the true interpretation of this important passage; for we believe that the current false view has done more to hinder the saints and to flatter the hopes of hypocrites than any other single error that has ever prevailed among good men.

(6.) We should like to make some observations on the declarations respecting himself of that apostle and Christian of whose experience and character the Scriptures tell us the most--the abundant and most humble confessions of past sin, and the entire absence of any word respecting present sin or sinful defect--his modest and yet full profession of consecration to Christ, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of his Lord, of faithfulness in his ministry, and of his having exhibited so holy, righteous and unblamable an example, that he had in his own life showed his converts all things, especially the very spirit of the all-comprehensive saying of the Lord Jesus, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' so that in the most opposite circumstances and temptations, he, in the practical sense could do all things in Christ who strengthened him--having no need to tell his brethren to shun his faults, while they imitated his virtues. We must rather refer to the apostle's solemn saying, 1 Cor. 7:27, 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.' The impartiality of the Lord's rule of judgment, the same apostle declares, 1 Cor. 11:32, where he gives the ground of the chastisements with which the Corinthians had been visited, 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' Had these chastisements failed to produce the desired effect, condemnation with the world would have been the inevitable doom of the offending Corinthians. The apostle John, who, 1 Jn. 3:20 tells us that 'if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things,' told also the backslidden Laodiceans, though rebuked and chastened out of love, that only earnest repentance could save them from being spued out of Christ's mouth. The Ephesians too, because they had left their first love, are threatened with the utter removal of their candlestick. Repentance alone could avert the stroke. 'Verily I say unto you,' said Christ to his emulous disciples, 'except ye be converted, and become as little children--[not, ye will incur God's paternal displeasure, but] ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' The rule, as we understand it to be laid down in both Testaments, is the same, that 'the Lord keepeth covenant and mercy with his servants that walk before him with all their hearts'--so that even Christians who enjoy the blessings of the new dispensation, which many kings and righteous men desired to enjoy, but did not enjoy them--are thus exhorted by Peter, 1 Peter, 1:17, 'Since ye call on him as your Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.'["]

Dr. Beecher supposes that the new-born soul is not qualified for heaven; but that in order to its being qualified for it, its holy love must be progressively augmented through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. We see not how this doctrine agrees with those texts which require us to be continually ready for the coming of Christ, and to be watching for his arrival. Such passages are among the most solemn and striking in the Bible, and their doctrine appears plainly to be, that Christ grants us no time for advancement to a state in which we shall be fitted for his coming, but holds us practically to the responsibility of being constantly ready to welcome his appearing and render up our account.

On the above citations from the New Testament, we remark, that some of them are almost as explicit as words could make them, in favor of the doctrine we are advocating, while not one text of those whose language is less definite, contains a syllable that would lead to a less strict interpretation. Nor can we recall a single passage in either division of the Scriptures, which treats of the question of what is acceptable, and what unacceptable to God, which hints that the

Holy One will accept a divided heart, or a service stained with sin.

4. We now proceed to say, that in our opinion, whatever has been the speculative theory of the true church of Christ, its real, practical standard has been the same as that for which we contend in this article.

We never, until recently, heard a discourse addressed to sinners, laying down the conditions of acceptance, which did not insist that a full surrender, an entire consecration must, be made, that all other confidences must be utterly abandoned, and Christ alone become the object of faith and trust. The sermons addressed to backsliders were of exactly the same character, demanding that all idols should be put away, and that there should be a full return to the Lord. We recently asked an aged clergyman who sat before us while we were, in a sermon, making a similar statement, and whom we had not till then even seen, whether this was not the character of all the preaching he had ever heard, and his reply accorded with our own views. Another clergyman, nearly ninety years old, who remarkably retains the vigor of his mind, spontaneously told us that he had himself often insisted, in his ministry, as all other ministers did, on the same unqualified obedience, and then, like as not, on the next Sabbath, preached a discourse teaching, unwittingly, a totally inconsistent doctrine.

We shall now present our readers with a number of quotations from evangelical divines, chiefly from the renowned and pious Pres. Edwards, showing that we make no rash assertion. Indeed, some of the language of Edwards is stronger than we have thought it expedient to use. We do not pretend that Edwards and other evangelical divines are self-consistent. Like our aged friend above referred to, they have preached one thing at one time and another thing at another, and even palpable contradictions in the same sermon, and even in the same paragraph. But the spirit and soul of their faith we believe to be embodied in such passages as the following, rather than in those of an opposite character.

We begin with Dr. Beecher speaking in the very extracts cited in the commencement of this article. We doubt not that if Dr. B. should publish unaltered the sermons which have been instrumental in converting sinners and reclaiming backsliders, they would furnish us with much more explicit statements.

'Question 2, How can the help of Christ be obtained to secure our growth in grace?

Answer. By renouncing all reliance on our own strength and merits, and relying entirely on the sufficiency and willingness of Christ to help us, sought by filial supplication and the diligent use of the appointed means of grace: striving, as the Puritan writers say, as if all depended on ourselves, and looking to Christ as if all depended on him.'

What if the Doctor says that this is a faith and striving sinfully defective? Does God command us to do any thing more than 'to strive as if all depended on ourselves and look to Christ as if all depended on him?' When a man does this, his conscience in its inner depths is at peace, though false theory may disturb the surface with shallow rufflings.

We quote a single passage from Baxter, whose writings are full enough of the sinfulness of the saints:

'If you would be truly converted, be sure that you make an absolute resignation of yourselves and all that you have to God.'--Orme's Life of Baxter, Vol. 2, p. 82.

We translate a passage from Calvin, on Matt. 13:44--46, which will show where the practical heart of the great and good reformer was, notwithstanding the contrary teachings which he wrote elsewhere.

'We now have the sum of both parables, that those are fit to apprehend the grace of the Gospel, who, postponing to it all other objects of desire, (* Qui ad eam potiendam sua studia et se totos addicunt.) apply their zealous efforts and their whole being to gaining possession of it. * * Still, it is asked, whether we must renounce all other good things that we may enjoy eternal life. I reply, briefly, that this is the simple sense of the words, that the Gospel is not regarded with just honor, unless with us it excels all the wealth, delight, honor and advantages of the world, and indeed, to that degree, that for the sake of the spiritual good which it promises us, we contentedly neglect whatever things draw us away from it: for it behoves those who aspire to heaven to be freed from all hindrances. Therefore Christ exhorts his faithful ones to nothing else than the surrender of those things which are adverse to piety. Meanwhile, he concedes that they may use and

enjoy God's temporal benefits, as if they did not use them.'

The excellent Doddridge gives the following as part of a proper form for entering into covenant with the Lord:--

'This day do I, with the utmost solemnity, surrender myself to Thee. I renounce all former lords that have had dominion over me; and I consecrate to Thee all that I am, and all that I have; the faculties of my mind, the members of my body, my worldly possessions, my time and my influence over others; to be all used entirely for thy glory, and resolutely employed in obedience to Thy commands, as long as Thou continuest me in life; with an ardent desire and humble resolution to be Thine through the endless ages of eternity; ever holding myself in an attentive posture to observe the first intimations of Thy will, and ready to spring forward with zeal and joy to the immediate execution of it.

To thy direction also I resign myself, and all I am and have, to be disposed of by thee in such a manner as thou shalt in thine infinite wisdom judge most subservient to the purposes of thy glory. To thee I leave the management of all events, and say without reserve, not my will, but thine be done.'--Rise and Prog. ch. 17.

We now proceed to our citations froth Pres. Edwards, from whom we give more than from any other author because we find him to be more full and explicit on this subject than any other writer we have consulted, and because his authority and influence are greater among American Calvinists.

'If ever men come to have any true hope, they must take sin, which is the troubler, and all which belongs to it, even that which seems most dear and precious, though it be as choice as Achan's silver and wedge of gold, and utterly destroy them, and burn them with fire, to be sure to make an utter end of them,--as it were, bury them and raise over them a great heap of stones, to lay a great weight upon them to make sure of it that they shall never rise more. Yea, and thus they must serve all his sons and daughters. They must not save some of the accursed brood alive. All the fruits of sin must be destroyed. There must not be some dear sinful enjoyment, some pleasant child of sin spared; but all must be stoned and burned.

Sin is slain in the godly after trouble and darkness, and before the renewing of comfort in these three ways:

1. It is slain as to former degrees of it. All remains of corruption are not extirpated. Sin does not cease to be in the heart; but it ceases to be in such strength as it has been. * * * * *

3. It is totally and perfectly slain in his will and inclination. There is that renewed opposition made against it, which implies a mortal inclination and design against it. What the saint seeks, when he comes to himself after a time of great declension, is to be the death of sin, which has been so prevalent in him, and perfectly to extirpate it. He acts in what he does as a mortal enemy: and if he does not perfectly destroy it at one blow, it is not for want of inclination, but for want of strength.'--Works, Vol. 8, pp. 77,87. We find here a noticeable instance of those strange contradictions of which we have spoken; and yet how does the Christian heart of the erring theologian shine through his false philosophy! The sermon from which we take the preceding extracts, was written before his Treatise on the Will. From this famous Treatise we select a short passage as the best antidote to the mixture of false philosophy in the eloquent extracts from the earlier sermon.

'If there be such a sincerity, and such a degree of it as there ought to be, and there be any thing further which the man is not able to perform, or which does not prove to be connected with his sincere desires and endeavors, the man is wholly excused and acquitted in the sight of God; his will shall surely be accepted for his deed: and such a sincere will and endeavor is all that in strictness is required of him by any command of God.'--Works, Vol. 2, pp. 171.

Now in the case supposed in our previous citations, 'sin was totally and perfectly slain in the will and inclination.' This is, according to Edwards himself, all that any command of God requires.

The following passages from the work on the Affections, we present without note or comment. They will speak for themselves. They may all be found under the Twelfth Sign of Gracious Affections.

"They that are God's true servants, do give up themselves to his service, and make it as it were their whole work, therein employing their whole hearts, and the chief of their strength; Phil. 3;13--"This one thing I do."

'What makes men partial in religion is, that they seek themselves, and not God, in their religion, not for its own excellent nature, but only to serve a turn. He that closes with religion only to serve a turn, will close with no more of it than he imagines serves that turn; but he that closes with religion for its own excellent and lovely nature, closes with all that has that nature: he that embraces religion for its own sake, embraces the whole of religion.'

'The Holy Scriptures do abundantly place sincerity and soundness in religion, in making a full choice of God as our only Lord and portion, forsaking all for Him, and in a full determination of the will for God and Christ, on counting the cost; in our hearts closing and complying with the religion of Jesus Christ, with all that belongs to it, embracing it with all its difficulties; as it were hating our dearest earthly enjoyments, and even our own lives, for Christ; giving up ourselves, with all that we have, wholly and forever, unto Christ, without keeping back any thing, or making any reserve; or, in one word, in the great duty of self-denial for Christ; or in denying, that is, as it were, disowning and renouncing ourselves for Him, making ourselves nothing that He may be all.'

'Moses insisted that Israel's God should be served and sacrificed to; Pharaoh was willing to consent to that; but would have it done without his parting with the people; Go sacrifice to your God in the land, says he, Ex. 8;25. So, many sinners are for contriving to serve God, and enjoy their lusts too. Moses objected against complying with Pharaoh's proposal, that serving God and yet continuing in Egypt under their task-masters, did not agree together and were inconsistent one with another; (there is no serving God, and continuing slaves to such enemies of God at the same time.) After this, Pharaoh consented to let the people go, provided they would not go far away: he was not willing part with them finally, and therefore would have them within reach. So do many hypocrites with respect to their sins. Afterwards pharaoh consented to let the men go, if they would leave the women and children, Ex. 10:8--10. And then after that, when God's hand was yet harder upon him, he consented that they should go, even women and children, as well as men, provided they would leave their cattle behind; but he was not willing to let them go, and all that they had, Ex. 10;54. So it oftentimes is with sinners; they are willing to part with some of their sins, but not all; they are brought to part with the more gross acts of sin, but not to part with their lusts, in their lesser indulgences of them. Whereas we must part with all our sins, little and great; and all that belongs to them, men, women, children and cattle. they must all be let go; with their young, and with their old, with their sons, and with their daughters, with their flocks, and with their herds, there must not be an hoof left behind; as Moses told Pharaoh, with respect to the children of Israel.'

'Thus it is essential to Christianity that we repent of our sins, that we be convinced of our sinfulness, and that we are sensible we have justly exposed ourselves to God's wrath, and that our hearts do renounce all sin, and that we love Him above all, and are willing for his sake to forsake all, and that we do give up ourselves to be entirely and forever his, &c. Such things as these do as much belong to the essence of Christianity, as the belief of any of the doctrines of the gospel: and therefore the profession of them does as much belong to a Christian profession.

'They should profess their faith in Jesus Christ, and that they embrace Christ, and rely upon Him as their Savior, with their whole hearts, and that they do joyfully entertain the gospel of Christ. Thus Philip, in order to baptizing the eunuch, required that he should profess that he believed with all his heart."

'For persons to profess those things wherein the essence of Christianity lies, is the same thing as to profess that they experience those things. Thus for persons solemnly to profess, that, in a sense and full conviction of their own utter sinfulness, misery, and impotence, and totally undone state as in themselves, and their just desert of God's utter rejection and eternal wrath, without mercy, and the utter insufficiency of their own righteousness, or any thing in them, to satisfy divine justice, or recommend them to God's favor, they do only and entirely depend on the Lord Jesus Christ, and his satisfaction and righteousness; that they do with all their hearts believe the truth of the gospel of Christ; and that in a full conviction and sense of his sufficiency and perfect excellency as a Savior, as exhibited in the gospel, they do with their whole souls cleave to Him, and acquiesce in Him, as the refuge and rest of their souls, and fountain of their comfort; that they repent of their sins, and utterly renounce all sin, and give up themselves wholly to Christ, willingly subjecting themselves to Him as their King; that they give Him their hearts and their whole man: * * * * * I say, for persons solemnly to profess such things as these, as in the presence of God, is the same thing, as to profess that they are conscious of, or do experience such thing in their hearts.'

5. We shall now offer our readers a few quotations from hymns which are favorites with the saints, not merely as showing the sentiments of their authors, but as expressing the hearts of the people of God.

'Love so amazing, so divine,

Demands my soul, my life, my all.'

'Thee my new Master now I call,

And consecrate to Thee my all.'

'Creatures no more divide my choice,

I bid them all depart.'

'Here, Lord, I give myself away,

'Tis all that I can do.

'Welcome, welcome, dear Redeemer,

Welcome to this heart of mine;

Lord, I make a full surrender,

Every power and thought be thine:

Thine entirely,--

Through eternal ages thine.'

'Had I a thousand hearts to give,

Lord, they should all be thine.'

Is this the language of truth, or of fulsome flattery? Do the saints tell the Lord that they would give him a thousand hearts if they had them, and yet not give him the whole of the single heart they really have? We believe they tell him the simple truth, and that, therefore, they are not in sin when this is their natural language. We might, as every one knows, quote much more Christian, devotional poetry in the same strain; but we have quoted enough to show what is the breathing of the hearts of God's saints in spite of preposterous theories.

OBJECTIONS.

1. We shall first consider the passages of scripture which are supposed to be against the doctrine defended in this article. The doctrine with which we are at present concerned is not that of the simplicity of moral actions, nor that of the constant sinlessness of such as have been converted, but simply this, that nothing short of present entire conformity to the divine law is accepted of God. Now, we admit, that if it could be made out that the Scriptures represent the saints as constantly sinful, this would be fatal to our view, though then we should be at a loss to interpret the numerous texts we have cited so as to make them harmonize with the texts adduced against us. But no texts proving or appearing to prove that converted

persons sometimes sin or that they always continue to possess some degree of holiness, would lie at all against the views we defend in this article.

We think that candid, impartial persons, after reading and pondering the multitude of seemingly decisive texts which we have cited, would conclude that it was beforehand improbable that passages should be found in the word of God declaring beyond the possibility of mistaking their meaning the continual sinfulness of the saints. Such minds would naturally inquire whether the laws of interpretation would not admit of a different explanation of such passages, especially as, at least at first view, it appears much more consonant with the character of God that he should forgive only such as put away all their sin.

(1.) In 1 Kings 8:46, we find the passage, 'If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them and deliver them to the enemy,' &c. This text cannot teach the perpetual sinfulness of the saints; for (v, 48,) the offenders are supposed to repent 'with all their heart and with all their soul' of the very sin here spoken of. It is therefore ridiculous to quote such a text in support of that dogma. Besides, the conditional particle if at the beginning, shows that the sin is not spoken of as what would certainly take place, and favors the view of those who think that the parenthesis ought to be rendered, 'for there is no man who may not sin,' a translation which the hebrew equally admits. And finally, the very terms of this passage itself incontestably show, that while men continue in such sin as is here spoken of, God is angry with them, so that they are liable to be delivered up to their enemies; and Solomon asks that they may be restored to the divine favor only if they return to God from such sin "with all their heart and with all their soul." How far does such a passage as this prove that the saints are in a state of acceptance even when polluted with present sin?

(2.) 'There is not a just man that liveth on the earth that doeth good and sinneth not.' Ec. 7: 20. Gesenius, in his Lexicon (p. 858, Prof. Robinson's translation) explains 'There is not a just man on the earth that doeth good and never sinneth.' Thus understood, (and who can show that the interpretation is not sound?) the text is far distant from opposition to the doctrine of this article.

(3.) 'I know it is so of a truth; but how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.'--Job 9:2,3. These are the words of Job, not speaking by inspiration, but expressing his opinion, as any pious man of the present day might do. If therefore the words meant all that the objector supposes they do, they would possess no more authority than the words of Eliphaz the Temanite, or Zophar the Naamathite, or Bildad the Shuite, except as he was a better and wiser man than any of them; for he too could 'darken counsel by words without knowledge.' The sayings of each of these worthies are not seldom quoted as if they possessed divine authority, and even the sayings in the Bible of a less respectable personage, who shall be nameless. The doctrine of the Book of Job taken as a whole, is of divine authority, but the utterances of the different interlocutors, except God himself; are no more divine than the words of Luther, Calvin, Whitefield, or Wesley. Thus much in general on citations from Job. But the words cited say nothing at all on the question of constant sinfulness. They speak only of the numberless sins of which every man in the course of his life has been guilty, so that on the ground of law, which requires sinless perfection from the commencement of moral agency, no man can be just with God. The words might be properly employed by a saint who had been a thousand years in heaven.

In a similar manner we are to interpret Ps. 130:3, 'If thou Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness in thee that thou mayest be feared.' Who, uninfluenced by a theory in need of support, would resort to such a text as this! Not a syllable is dropped from which we could gather that the Psalmist refers to present sin. Is it for present, and of course, unrepented sin, that there is forgiveness with the Lord?

'May one be pardoned and retain the offence?'

Ps. 143:2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' What word is here which tells us that the suppliant speaks of present sin? It is God's way to grant mercy to those who 'confess and forsake their sins;' does the Psalmist ask the Holy One to deal with him, as to part of his sin, on an opposite principle?

(4.) 'But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.'--Is. 64:6. The prophet here speaks in the name of the backslidden Jews, who, as he says in the immediate context, 'were all fading like a leaf, and whose iniquities, like the wind, had taken them away--from whom God had hidden his face, and whom he had consumed

because of their iniquities.' Does such a passage as this prove that the saints are always more or less in sin? Yet in this sense it is often cited, and it is deemed orthodox for those who, like Enoch, walk with God, to say, 'All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags!' Nothing can be plainer than it is that the prophet is speaking, not of those who enjoy God's favor, but of such as suffer the most terrific judgments for their sins. On the other hand vs. 4,5, speak of the manner in which God deals with those who obey Him according to his requirement. 'For from the beginning men have not heard, nor given ear to, nor hath eye seen a god besides Thee, who doeth such things for those who trust in Him. Thou makest peace with him that rejoices to practice righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways.'--(Barnes on v. 4, Gesenius on v. 5.) Thus this text, instead of disproving the doctrine we advocate, appears, when taken with its context, decidedly to sustain it.

(5.) 'And it [see vs. 36,37,] shall be upon Aaron's forehead that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts.'--Ex. 28:38. The true meaning of this text may be more satisfactorily ascertained by comparing Nu. 18:1; Lev. 10:17; Isa. 53:6,11; Jn. 1:29; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24. We adopt the interpretation suggested by these references found in Bagster's Bible. According to this, 'the iniquity of the holy things,' is not the iniquity practised in offering them, but the iniquity for which, by means of them, typical atonement was to be made. The priests and the victims were both necessary to constitute a type of the Great High Priest and Sacrifice who makes real atonement for the people of God, and they were both therefore said 'to bear the iniquity of the congregation of the Lord.' 'The iniquity of the sanctuary and the iniquity of the priesthood,'--Nu. 18:1, may be likewise the iniquity for which the rites of the Sanctuary and the services of the priests made atonement. Other references in Bagster's middle column indicate another interpretation, namely, that, as Aaron and his sons offered the holy things in behalf of the people, if they sinned in so sacred a service, with 'Holiness to the Lord' written on their foreheads, they must bear their iniquity, that is, be visited with judgments for it, even if they repented. But while this explanation suits well Nu. 18:1; Lev. 22:9; Ex. 29:43, and other similar passages, we think the other is much preferable for Ex. 28:38. But neither explanation gives the least support to the doctrine of the constant sinfulness of the saints. The passage contains no intimation that sin is always mixed with holy duties. When, therefore, persons pray 'Forgive us the iniquity of our holy things,' meaning iniquity mixed even with the utterance of these very words, they pray thus without warrant from the word of God.

(6.) 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?'--Prov. 20:9. This text sounds as if it were much more in point than any other text which we have ever heard quoted. No one can intelligently deny that such interrogative sentences are often intended as a form to express a universal negative, including an appeal for the universal negative answer to the common sense and common candor of the reader. But that this is not always the import of such questions is plain from an example in this very book, 31:10, 'Who can find a virtuous woman?' The context renders it plain that the writer did not mean to intimate that there were no virtuous women, nor even that there were not many, but that they were scarce in comparison with the multitude of women of a different character. In like manner the passage we are considering, may not mean that there are no persons in the world who have 'cleansed their hearts and washed their hands in innocence,' (Ps. 73:13,) but only that such persons are comparatively rare--that 'strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' In other very emphatic ways the prophets set forth the fewness of the righteous, especially in times of declension. Thus Jeremiah, at a time when certainly a few righteous might have been found in Jerusalem, says, 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.'

Another explanation may be suggested. There is a sense in which none but God is good, and certainly the goodness of the saints, though it be sinless, is in this world but a frail, weak thing compared with what it will be ages hence. The hurt done by sin to the adjustments of the passions and appetites, the power of habit, and the associative and cognitive nature, must be great and must take long to heal. Fact shows how often good men are tempted and fall into sin--the dangers which lodge in them and beset them are imminent. It is not for them yet to sing the song of everlasting triumph, and, as if a final victory, certainly never to be followed by the least disaster, were achieved, to shout, 'I have made my heart clean--I am pure from my sin!' The Red Sea is crossed--Jordan is passed--the last Canaanite is slain--and I am settled in eternal peace in the promised land.

We have heard another explanation still, which supposes that the sacred writer refers to the obligations of God's saints to grace--to the fact that God is the great author of their purification and not they themselves. 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am [therefore] pure from my sin?' Were the emphatic I in the original, this explanation would have much to

recommend it. We do not say that the absence of the emphatic pronoun is decisive against it; but to us it seems less probable than either of the preceding interpretations. Any one of the three which we have given, renders the passage entirely consonant with our views;

(7.) 'If I justify myself my own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse,'--Job 9:20. The observations made on a passage previously cited from Job, apply also here, that did the citation mean what the objector supposes it does, it would contain no divine testimony to his doctrine. The words are Job's and are entitled only to the weight of a wise and good man's opinion uttered at the very dawn of revelation, and therefore not nearly so likely to be sound as the opinion of an equally wise and good man of the present incomparably more enlightened age. But be this as it may, the passage before us can, we think, be satisfactorily shown to contain no such meaning as the objector's cause demands. The current interpretation evinces an utter ignorance or forgetfulness of the established use of the word here rendered perfect. It is used Job 1:1; 8:20; 9:20,21,22; Ps. 37:37; and Gen. 25:27, in which last passage, as Gesenius in his lexicon remarks, it seems to designate the character of Jacob as contrasted with the wilder and more ferocious character of Esau. In all the other texts it denotes substantially the same as the words upright, righteous, and is never used to denote a character to which a good man at peace with God might not lay claim. Thus the writer of the book, 1:1, calls Job perfect; Bildad speaks of good men whom God will not cast away as perfect; and Job himself in the immediate context of our passage says of God, 'He destroys the perfect and the wicked,' by which classes he plainly means simply the upright and the wicked. The Psalmist says, 'Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.' Here plainly real living saints are mentioned under the designation of perfect. Why such a word (and all its cognates) is so used, the objector might, perhaps, do well to ponder. What then does the passage mean? Mr. Barnes has, in our judgment, entirely missed its import both in his translation and commentary, excellent as his work in general is. Rosenmuller on the other hand in his Compendium has hit it exactly. Job represents that in a judicial contest with God, the great and dreadful and infinitely wise One--frail man would have no chance. Should he please so to employ his infinite powers, he could confound him if his cause were ever so good, and turn every thing to his disadvantage. In his awful presence he would not know his soul, he would despise his life. Therefore he would not answer him--he would rather humbly make supplication to his Judge. In that imagined unequal contest, says Job,

If I should be righteous, my own mouth would condemn me;

If I should be perfect, it would make me perverse;

If I should be perfect, I should not know my soul--I should look upon my life with contempt.

The citation in Rosenmuller from the celebrated Albert Schultens, is so striking, that we will venture a translation of it. 'Even if I were righteous, yet I should not recognize my soul, I should disapprove my life, that is, even if I were plainly sound and conscious to myself of no stain, yet that bright consciousness could not sustain me against the infinite splendor of divine exaltation and majesty, but, however well known to myself, I should be compelled to be ignorant of my own soul, and to disapprove, condemn, and despise a life passed in virtue and integrity.'

Did Job really mean that in the fancied trial, his cause would be actually a bad one, and not merely made to appear bad by the infinite superiority of his imagined opponent, the uniform import of the word here rendered perfect, and that of its cognates, would compel us to conclude that here Job confesses that his three friends are in the right in their controversy, that he is indeed an arrant hypocrite, and that the afflictions he suffers are the overwhelming divine testimony to his masked baseness. But neither with this, nor with any other interpretation than the one we have given from Rosenmuller and Schultens, can the words translated in the English Bible, 'If I justify myself,' be made to agree. These words, by the laws of the hebrew language, never can mean, If I pretend to be righteous, or If I try to make out that I am righteous, but must mean, If I am really righteous, if I really have a good cause. Our English version, if the translators knew what they were about, must mean, 'If I should really make out my case, my resistless opponent would turn even my good arguments against me.' And since the words rendered 'If I say I am perfect,' merely resume the same idea in possibly somewhat stronger terms, they cannot be meant of pretended but must refer to real perfection, whatever may be the sense of the word translated perfect.

(8.) 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' This text is relied on as confidently by objectors as any text in the Bible; but, in our apprehension, for no solid reason. The meaning turns upon the signification of the word 'sin,' or rather the original word so translated. The principal significations given in Robinson's Lexicon of the New Testament are as follows: '1. Aberration from the truth, error. 2. Sin, that is, aberration from a prescribed law or rule of duty, either in general, or spoken of particular sins. 3. From the Hebrew, the imputation or consequences of sin, the guilt and punishment of sin. * * So 'to have sin,' that is, to be guilty and liable to punishment, Jn. 9:41; 15:22,24; 1 Jn. 1:8; 1 Cor. 15:17, 'Ye are yet in your sins.' that is, are still under the guilt and exposed to the punishment of your sins.' So Bretschneider: 'To have sin, culpam habere,' that is to be blameworthy or justly liable to punishment. This writer also refers to [1] Jn. 1:8. If the views of these masterly lexicographers are correct, 1 Jn 1:8, has nothing to do with the question whether the saints are perpetually in sin in the sense of moral pollution. The passage means simply, If we say that we have no blameworthiness [on account of sins no matter when committed] needing atoning blood and pardoning mercy, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Thus the first part of the verse means the same with the first part of verse 10th while the concluding members have quite different imports: 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Not only so, but if we say if we have not sinned, we commit the awful crime of making God a liar, and his word is not in us.' Even Calvin says on this text, 'By the name of sin not only depraved and vicious inclination is here denoted, but blameworthiness, [culpa] which truly renders us guilty before God.' The learned lexicographers and critics before quoted, justly exclude from their definition 'depraved and vicious inclination,' and confine the sense wholly to desert of punishment, guilt, which may exist and will exist, aside from mercy in Christ, in all the redeemed saints, sinless in heaven, to all eternity.

"When I rise to worlds unknown,

And behold Thee on Thy throne,

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in Thee."

The context demands the interpretation we have given. In vs. 6,7, the apostle says, 'If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, [that is, in sin,] we lie and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, [that is, God and we have fellowship,] and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' The last clause relates, not to moral purification, but to the atoning blood which makes purification for the guilt of the soul--in other words, it refers to the justifying, and not the sanctifying efficacy of the Savior's work. This is the view of Calvin. 'This,' says he, 'is an illustrious passage, from which we learn, that the expiation obtained by the blood of Christ properly belongs to us, when we cultivate righteousness with a right affection of heart.' But if we say that we have no sin, no sin in the sense of guilt, ill-desert, needing cleansing by that blood, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If, on the other hand, we confess the sins by which we have contracted this ill-desert, God is faithful and righteous to forgive them, and thus, by not imputing it, to cleanse us from all iniquity. The use of 'sins,' in v. 6, instead of 'sin,' proves that sin is used in v. 8 in the sense of ill-desert; for though we may commit a sin in one moment, we presume the objector will not contend that the apostle meant to teach that every man is self-deceived and destitute of the truth, who thinks that he is not every moment committing sins. The whole context appears to us, to treat, not of moral defilement and sanctification, but of guilt and forgiveness, and the conditions on which forgiveness is exercised. The phrase, then, to have sin, in v. 8, refers, not to present moral defilement, but guilt, ill-desert, resulting from sin or sins, committed,--when, the phrase does not at all determine.

(9.) 'In many things we offend all.' --Ja. 3: 2. It is no part of the object of this article to prove that Christian never sin, nor to prove that they do not often sin. The text before us will possess no force to support the objectors' cause. till he points out in it some word signifying continually, all the time, or constantly, or till he proves that men may not become sinless, and then again fall into iniquity. This last mentioned notion he cannot establish, unless he proves that the first sin of Adam and the fallen angels, was owing to a germ in them of undeveloped depravity. Nor even then will his case be made

out, till he shows that his particular instances fall under a universal law.

(10.) 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'--Phil. 3:12--14. An erroneous translation of one word has alone occasioned this glorious passage to be cited to prove the dogma of constant moral imperfection in the saints. Prof. Robinson, in his *Lexicon*, p. 812, has corrected this mistake. His interpretation is, 'Not that I have already completed my course, and arrived at the goal, so as to receive the prize.' We will paraphrase slightly according to the true sense. 'I do not act as if I had already received the prize, or had completed my course; but I follow after if that I may lay hold on that, in order that I might gain which, I have been laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, while I am in the race, I do not act as if I had gained the crown; but this one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Thus understood, the passage exhibits the apostle as an illustrious example of the full performance of all the duties of the Christian race--one of which cannot be, to be all the time at the goal. But he who runs lawfully, will receive the prize whenever the great Judge shall be pleased to terminate the race.

(11.) 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot [more literally, in order that ye may not] do the things that ye would.'--Gal. 5:16,17. It is characteristic of impenitent sinners, that they 'fulfil the desires [margin, wills, that is, wouldings, thelemata] of the flesh.' But, in order that his people may not do this, God has placed his Spirit in them, to oppose and govern these desires. 'Walk in the Spirit,' says the apostle, and ye shall not fulfil[1] them; for, for this very end God has given you the Holy Ghost." But how strange Paul's argument appears, if we suppose it to run thus: 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil[1] the lusts of the flesh; for there is such a struggle within you, between the flesh and the Spirit, that it is impossible for you to obey the Spirit's monitions.' To say the least, the first view presents a little greater encouragement to a soul that would be holy. Macknight, who in the main supports the current view, insists, however, that the apostle cannot mean 'so that you can at no time do the things that ye would;' for 'how absurd,' says he, 'would it have been for the apostle to command the Galatians not to fulfil[1] the lusts of the flesh, for this reason, that they could not at any time do the things which their reason and conscience inclined!' This view of Macknight is not opposed to the argument we are presenting; but still, we think it quite evident that the explanation first given is the true one. It is not new, but was adopted by Storr, one of the great bulwarks of the Gospel in Germany, against Neology. (See Flatt, *Vorlesungen ueber die Briefe an die Galater &c.*)

(12.) 'If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?'--Heb. 12:7, and see the context. The argument of the objector is, that chastening implies sinfulness, and that therefore, the children of God are always in some degree of sin. But what is the case when the pain of the discipline has passed away, and it has 'yielded the happy fruit of righteousness?' The saints are sometimes (if need be) in heaviness through manifold trials; but not always are they in heaviness with a discipline which chastises their present faults. We deny that chastening always implies present sin, though it may exert upon the soul a salutary disciplinary influence. David's sin had been put away when he lost his child, and when Absalom was permitted to drive him from his throne, as a chastisement for his crimes in the matter of Uriah. It was so too, when the pestilence was sent to scourge him and his people. In fact, our own sufferings, as well as the witnessed sufferings of others, may confirm us in a virtue already attained and unmixed with sin. 'It is plainly conceivable,' says Bishop Butler, 'that creatures without blemish as they came out of the hands of God, may be in danger of going wrong, and so may stand in need of the security of virtuous habits, additional to the moral principles, wrought into their natures by him. * * And as they are naturally capable of being raised and improved by discipline, it may be a thing fit and requisite, that they should be placed in circumstances with an eye to it--in circumstances peculiarly fitted to be, to them, a state of discipline for their improvement in virtue. * * Upright creatures may want to be improved.'--*Analogy*, Part 1, ch. 5. If these observations of the great Butler are true even of creatures who never have fallen, how much more are they true of beings, the adjustments of whose mental and animal constitution have been disturbed by sin, even though that sin may exist no longer in their hearts! Prest. Edwards, speaking even of the angels, (*Works*, vol. 8, p. 524,) says, 'They had their hearts confirmed in obedience by habit and custom, having long persevered in perfect obedience, and having often overcome under trials which they had.'

(13.) 'Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.'--2 Peter, 3:18. If this passage proves the

constant sinfulness of Christians, it must mean, 'Gradually leave off sin and gradually increase in holiness, till you become perfect, or sinless. But who cannot see that such a command would involve a license to sin in some degree? Our Lord Jesus Christ himself is said to have grown in favor [grace] with God and man, which could not have been, unless his moral excellence had really advanced. But his progress, surely, was not from more to less sin, but from a lower to a higher sinless perfection. Prest. Edwards, in the Miscellaneous Observations in vol. 8 of his works, endeavors to show that all the developments of the divine character in providence and grace, will advance all the holy creatures of God in holiness and happiness. Speaking of the general conflagration, p. 584, he observes, 'Such a wonderful and terrible display of the holiness and justice of God, will be a great means of further sanctifying all the elect universe, setting them at a vastly greater distance from sin against this holy God, and a means of vastly exalting the purity and sanctity of their minds.' Those who fall in with these truly sublime words, will not think that the command, Grow in grace, implies the present sinfulness of those to whom it is addressed.

2. It is said that we might as well interpret such expressions as 'following the Lord wholly,' 'walking before Him with all the heart, or with a perfect heart,' of the sinlessness of the whole life, as explain them as we have done, and that our argument, therefore, proves too much. But it is a plainly just rule of interpretation, that we are to depart no farther from the natural, literal import of words than we are compelled to do. When we say, a man is a person of perfect veracity, facts might show that we did not mean to assert that he never swerved in the least from the truth; but strange would it seem to those who should find out that our meaning involved the idea, that in every word he uttered there was some mixture of lying. When we call a person good natured, we do not mean that he is never irritated or petulant, but we do mean that good nature is his habitual character. In like manner; the above remarkable expressions naturally denote at least the habitual character of the person is spoken of, and, so understood, call for no dilution of their native strength. It would be strange indeed if they were used of men who in not a solitary act of their lives ever 'followed the Lord wholly,' or served Him 'with the whole heart.' Strange would it be for God's truth, to say of a man, that he 'turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might,' when not a single man since the fall ever for one moment did any such thing.

The passage in 2 Chron., chs. 15,16, respecting King Asa, is instructive, as showing that the expressions under consideration, do indeed refer to the habitual character. It is said of this king, that 'his heart was perfect all his days.' But the seer Hanani rebukes him for his sin and folly in a certain transaction, and the faithful rebuke puts Asa into a rage. The angry monarch goes so far as to imprison the prophet, and at the same time oppresses some of the people, perhaps persons who applauded the courageous seer. Hanani employs expressions in his rebuke which imply that Asa had, in the transaction alluded to, fallen from his habitual perfection, 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him.' These words plainly intimate, that Asa's heart was not perfect, and threaten him with the withdrawal of the protection of that strong arm which had hitherto defended him from mighty hosts of foes.

3. We have heard the objection urged, that the strong language used of some of the ancient saints, refers, not to their whole character at the time spoken of, but to some particular parts of their conduct, as their devotion to monotheism in opposition to idolatry. But it is to be noted, that the passages speak not of external doings, but of the heart. We not only admit, but contend, that the religion of the heart, will, both inwardly and in its outward manifestations, be modified by the circumstances of the subject. But that a man should be perfect in some things and partial in others, we never can believe till the pregnant saying of the apostle James--Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all--shall be blotted from the Bible. In whatever degree there is a heart for the practice of one virtue, there must be a heart for the practise of all. Even the heathen Aristotle held that all virtues must be possessed by him who possesses one virtue; and this is the doctrine of every theologian of whose writings we have any knowledge. Prof. Hodge of Princeton, does but express the common doctrine of philosophers and divines, when he says in his 'Way of Life,' p. 303, 'The man who is renewed in the spirit of his mind after the image of God, is one who has that moral excellence which expresses itself, according to its different objects and occasions, in all the graces of the Spirit.'

4. It is objected, that our doctrine makes all the saints equal, except that some may be more constantly sinless than others. This objection implies, that the holiness of the heavenly world is at an eternal stand-still. The holiness of perfect finite beings, on the other hand, must be everlastingly progressive, because they will forever advance in knowledge and in the discipline of good habits, if not in capacity. Sinlessness, it is true, does not admit of degrees; but positive perfection in holiness does. From the holiness of the pious child of five years old to that of Gabriel, the distance must be immense; and

the strength of the archangel's virtue must be inconceivably greater than that of the infant soul that worships with him in heaven. So, likewise, had Paul, after his long career of discipline amidst toils and trials, and a man of equal capacity, but only just born to God, been both transferred together to the spirit-world, the holiness of the apostle would have far surpassed that of his new-born brother. Were the Creator now to give being to an archangel equal in capacity to Gabriel, Gabriel in holiness must still be his superior, by reason of the confirming influence of countless ages of virtuous habits, and the superior extent, accuracy and familiarity of his knowledge. We are, our readers will perceive, only echoing the before-quoted sentiments of Bishop Butler and President Edwards.

5. The consciousness of the most eminent saints, is said to be against this doctrine. The consciousness of holy men, rightly interpreted, is good evidence, though we should be far from setting the alleged consciousness of any human being against the manifest testimony of the Scriptures. But the citations from Edwards and from familiar hymns, will tell us what the consciousness of God's accepted children is in reality. The saints, according to Edwards, are 'conscious that they do only and entirely depend on the Lord Jesus Christ and his satisfaction and righteousness; that they do, with all their hearts, believe the Gospel of Christ; that they do with all their souls, cleave to him and acquiesce in him as the refuge and rest of their souls, and fountain of their comfort; that they repent of their sins, entirely renounce all sin, and give up themselves wholly to Christ, willingly subjecting themselves to him as their king; that they give him their hearts and their whole man.'--(Works, V. p. 282.) The hymns tell us the saints profess 'that if they had a thousand hearts, they would give them all to the Lord.' We never met with a saint who appeared to be truly walking with God, and blessed with the joy of his salvation, who would decline singing this beautiful couplet. Now, when men are conscious, truly conscious of all this, their holy, humble lives attesting their sincerity, their philosophy may tell them that sin is mixed with it all; their theological system and confession of faith may persuade them that the law of God is so wonderfully high, that it is horrible presumption for them to think that they really ever obey it fully; they may endeavor, with Edwards, formally to prove that the holiest saints have in them more sin than holiness; but the Bible and emancipated common sense will decide that their consciousness is not against the doctrine of this article.

6. Another objection is, that this doctrine leaves no room, on the part of accepted persons, for the confession of present sin. What is the Bible evidence that the saints in their acceptable approaches to God, are expected to confess present sin, or that it was the custom of Bible saints to do so? With a view to determine this question, we have examined the whole book of Psalms and the most remarkable penitential prayers in the other books of Scripture, and we have found no such confession. To say the least, they are few and far between, while confessions of past sins and of ill-desert on account of them, are as abundant as could be wished. Indeed, how could sin in the very act of prayer be confessed by persons who believed that 'if they regarded iniquity in their heart the Lord would not hear them.' They knew that they must put it fully away before they could reasonably expect an answer, instead of keeping enough of it in them 'to damn a whole world,' as the way of expressing it sometimes is.

7. The doctrine of this article, it is alleged, necessarily leads to the conclusion, that the saints do not need the constant advocacy of Christ, and that the Scripture doctrine of remission of sins is false. This objection is partly contained in the extracts from Dr. Beecher, and partly in the following passage translated from Calvin's comment on Lu. 1:6--'In brief, Luke has embraced in these two words, [commandments and ordinances] the whole law. But, if in observing the law, Zacharias and Elizabeth were irreprehensible, they had no need of the grace of Christ; for a full observance of the law, confers life, and where there is not transgression of it, guilt also ceases. I reply that those praises with which the servants of God are so splendidly adorned, are to be taken with some exception. For we ought to consider how God acts with them, namely, according to the covenant which he has made with them, whose first head is gratuitous reconciliation, and the daily pardon by which He remits their sins. They are, therefore, reckoned just and irreprehensible, since their whole life being a sort of exemplar of sanctity, testifies that they are devoted to righteousness, that the fear of God reigns in them. But since their pious zeal is far distant from perfection, it cannot, without pardon, please God. Wherefore, the righteousness which is praised in them, depends on God's gratuitous indulgence by which it takes place, that he does not impute what unrighteousness remains in them. It is necessary thus to expound whatever is contained in the Scriptures respecting the righteousness of men, that it may not upset the remission of sins, on which it rests as a building on its foundation." When we read such passages as this, and the extract from Dr. Beecher, we feel strongly inclined to fall in with a saying we have met with somewhere, that it takes great men to put forth great nonsense. For about what, pray, is the advocacy of Christ employed? About sin, of which men repent, or which they retain? 'Hereby,' says John, speaking of Christ as our Advocate, 'do we know that we know Him, if we keep his commandments; he that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' And what sin is remitted? That which is 'broken off

by righteousness'--or that which still remains in the heart? Or, does God forgive both kinds? Is it the Bible doctrine, that if a man will put away the greater part of his sin, God will, for Christ's sake, forgive him the whole? How, in principle, does this differ from the Romish doctrine of indulgences, against which the great and excellent Calvin was as unmerciful as even his heroic compeer, Luther? The Scriptures always conjoin repentance with remission; and what is repentance of sin but its abandonment? The remission can be no broader than the repentance. To suppose that Christ pardons unrepented iniquity, and covers it with his own spotless robe, is to make him the enemy of the law and the minister of sin. Would not the law have a right to complain if a totally impenitent soul were forgiven? Could the blood and righteousness of even the Son of God make such a procedure square with rectitude? But the least sin is hostility to the law; and were there a race of sinners in the universe none of whom were guilty of any more than the least iniquity possible, how could one of them be pardoned without repentance? But were they to remain impenitent they would, by the supposition, each cherish no more sin than what false theory places in the bosom of the purest saint on earth. On what principle, then, could one be forgiven, and the other be sent to hell forever? We believe that all would decide, that such a race of sinners must be lost, if they failed to put away their sin, that is, to become sinless; for the supposition is, that their sin is the least possible. On the same principle we argue that there is no righteous ground to excuse mankind from complete repentance. The doctrine of Calvin and Beecher appears to us, to be fundamentally the same with the monstrous supralapsarian dogma of the justification of the elect from all eternity.

8. Another objection, not absolutely distinct from the last mentioned, is, that this doctrine makes grace void, and introduces justification by law. We reply, that we fully believe in gratuitous justification by faith, and that our doctrine only requires that faith, in order to justify, should not be alone; but, as the Westminster Confession speaks, 'ever be accompanied with all the saving graces, yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God, for this life and that which is to come.' Legal righteousness is unremitted obedience to the law of God from the commencement of moral agency. Hence legal justification is justification on the ground of merit, a just claim on reward,--a justification to which no one who has ever sinned can have any title whatever. On the other hand, as Paul tells us, Rom. 4:6--8; David, Ps. 32, describes gracious justification, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven. whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile'--[remisness, slackness, sloth.] At no height of holiness to which he will ever attain on earth or in heaven, will the pardoned sinner ever forget, that for his past sins he deserves to be in hell, and that he stands by faith in the Lamb of God, that bore the sin of the world. Forever will the redeemed of Christ sing,

'Should my tears forever flow,

Should my zeal no languor know,

This for sin could not atone;

Thou must save, and Thou alone.'

9. The last objection which we shall at present consider, is, that the doctrine of this article does away the need of Christ's continual spiritual aid. This objection, which is one of Dr. Beecher's, proceeds on the supposition, that the sole ground of our dependence on Christ, is present sinfulness. But this is not our view, nor is it the view of most evangelical divines. The orthodox doctrine is, that all creatures are dependent on God for holiness, free agents though they be; and that the saints will be everlastingly kept holy in heaven, through the indwelling Spirit of Christ. To be consistent, Dr. Beecher must maintain, that when the saints get to heaven, they derive no more spiritual supplies in the way of aid from the Son of God. Thenceforward they are independent, or derive their aid from God out of Christ, whose spiritual connection with them is sundered forever. But, according to our doctrine, it will be eternally true, that the saints will be holy through their oneness in the participation of the Spirit with the Son of God, he being the vine, and they the branches. And fit it is, that those who have sinned, should everlastingly stand accepted only in the Beloved, and in Him receive all the sanctifying influences and joyous communications by which they forever go onward and upward in holiness and bliss.

Our article has grown on our hands to a greater length than we expected. We wished to remark on a number of additional topics--on the tendency of the doctrine we oppose, to discourage and sadden the hearts of the righteous whom God hath not made sad,--on its adaptedness to nourish the hopes of hypocrites,--on its tendency to lead sinners to return to the Lord, like treacherous Judah, feignedly, and not with all the heart--and on some professed principles of objectors, which necessarily involve the very doctrine they deny.

In conclusion, we cannot think it arrogant to say, that those who venture to maintain, that the many passages of God's word, which in so strong language demand the whole heart, in order to acceptance, are to be taken with qualifications, are solemnly bound, either to point out those qualifications in the Holy Scriptures, and not merely to refer us to the deductions of a doubtful human theology,--or to abandon a position apparently so dangerous to souls, nor continue to proclaim a doctrine which mars the Gospel, and in principle makes void the law. If the Bible can be shown to be against us, we trust that we shall bow with humble submission to its authority, nor proceed further to darken counsel by words without knowledge. But while the Bible appears plainly to teach us these views, we dare not abandon them, nor dare we cease proclaiming them, though all the Augustines, Luthers, Calvins, Westminster Assemblies, Theological Seminaries, and learned Theologians in the universe against us. 'Let God be true, but every man a liar.' But it is delightful to us, to think, that however in appearance divided on this great subject, the church of the living God are in heart and aim 'perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.' May God hasten the day when the wood, hay and stubble which any of us may have unwittingly placed in the edifice of truth, may be burned away by the salutary fires of faithful, fraternal discussion, and naught be left in its strong and beautiful walls, but gold, silver, and precious stones."

5. Perseverance in faith and obedience or in consecration to God, is also an unalterable condition of justification or of pardon and acceptance with God. By this language in this connection, you will of course understand me to mean that perseverance in faith and obedience is a condition, not of present, but of final or ultimate acceptance and salvation.

Those who hold that justification by imputed righteousness is a forensic proceeding, take a view of final or ultimate justification according with their view of the nature of the transaction. With them, faith is the condition of receiving imputed righteousness and a judicial justification. The first act of faith, according to them, introduces the sinner into this relation and obtains for him a perpetual justification. They maintain that after this first act of faith, it is impossible for the sinner to come into condemnation, but that he being once justified, is always thereafter justified whatever he may do; indeed that he is never justified upon condition that he ceases to sin; that Christ's righteousness, and not his own present obedience, is the condition of his justification, so that in fact his own present or future obedience to the law of God, is in no case and in no sense a condition of his justification present or ultimate.

Now this is certainly another gospel from the one I am inculcating. It is not a difference merely upon some speculative or theoretic point. It is a point fundamental to the gospel and to salvation if any one can be. Let us therefore see which of these is the true gospel.

I object to this view of justification:

1. That it is antinomianism. Observe: they hold that upon the first exercise of faith the soul enters into such a relation to Christ, that with respect to it the penalty of the Divine law is forever set aside, not only as it respects all past, but also as it respects all future acts of disobedience; so that sin does not thereafter bring the soul under the condemning sentence of the law of God. But a precept without a penalty, is no law. Therefore if the penalty is in their case permanently set aside or repealed, this is and must be a virtual repeal of the precept, for without a penalty it is only counsel or advice, and no law.

2. But again: it is impossible that this view of justification should be true; for God is not the author of the moral law. It did not originate in his arbitrary will, and he can not abrogate it either as to its precept or its penalty. He may for good and sufficient reasons dispense in certain cases with the execution of the penalty. But set it aside in such a sense that sin would not incur it, or that the soul that sins shall not be condemned by it, he can not. It is naturally impossible. The Law is as unalterable and unrepealable both as to its precept and its penalty as the nature of God. It can not but be, in the very nature of things, that sin in any being, in any world, and at any time, will and must incur the penalty of the moral law. God may pardon as often as the soul sins, but to prevent real condemnation where there is sin, is not at the option of any being.

3. But again: I object to the view of justification in question, that it is of course inconsistent with forgiveness or pardon. If justified by imputed righteousness, why pardon him whom the law accounts as already and perpetually and perfectly righteous? Certainly it were absurd and impossible--for the law and the lawgiver to judicially justify a person on the ground of the perfect obedience of his substitute, and at the same time pardon him who is thus regarded as perfectly righteous. Especially must this be true of all sin committed subsequently to the first and justifying act of faith. If when once the soul has believed, it can no more come into condemnation, it certainly can no more be forgiven. Forgiveness implies condemnation, and consists in setting aside the execution of an incurred penalty.

4. If the view of justification, I am opposing be true, it is altogether out of place for one who has once believed to ask for the pardon of sin. It is a downright insult to God and apostacy from Christ. It amounts according to their view of justification, to a denial of perpetual justification by imputed righteousness and to an acknowledgment of being condemned. It must, therefore, imply a falling from grace to pray for pardon after the soul has once believed.

5. According to this view of justification, all the prayers offered by the saints for the pardon of sins committed after their first act of faith, not even excepting the Lord's prayer, have all been wrong and impious, and have all been a virtual denial of a fundamental truth of the gospel. Shame on a theory from which such consequences irresistibly follow! The soul can not be pardoned unless it be condemned; for pardon is nothing else than setting aside the condemning sentence of the Divine law.

6. But this view of justification is at war with the whole bible. This every where represents christians as condemned when they sin--teaches them to repent, confess, and pray for pardon--to betake themselves afresh to Christ as their only hope. The bible in almost every variety of manner represents perseverance in faith and obedience to the end as a condition of ultimate justification and final salvation. Let the following passages serve as examples of the manner in which the bible represents this subject:

Ez. 18:24. But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

33:13. When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

Matt. 10:22. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

[Mat. 24:13.]

Jn. 15:6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Rom 2:4. Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7. To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honor, and immortality; eternal life.

1 Cor. 9:27. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.

10:12. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

2 Cor. 6:1. We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

Col. 1:23. If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.

Heb. 3:6. But Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. 12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

4:1. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 11. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

2 Pet. 1:10: Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

Rev. 2:10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death. 17. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. 26. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; 27. (And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers;) even as I received of my Father.

21:7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Observe: I am not here calling in question the fact that all true saints do persevere in faith and obedience to the end; but am showing that such perseverance is a condition of salvation or of ultimate justification. The subject of the perseverance of the saints will come under consideration in its proper place.

The view of justification which I am opposing is contradicted by the consciousness of the saints. I think I may safely affirm that the saints in all time, are very conscious of condemnation when they fall into sin. This sense of condemnation may not subject them to the same kind and degree of fear which they experienced before regeneration, because of the confidence they have that God will pardon their sin. Nevertheless, their remorse, shame, and consciousness of condemnation, do in fact, if I am not much deceived, greatly exceed, as a general thing, the remorse, shame, and sense of condemnation, experienced by the impenitent. But if it be true that the first act of faith brings the soul into a state of perpetual justification so that it can not fall into condemnation thereafter, do what it will, the experience of the saints contradicts facts, or, more strictly, their consciousness of condemnation is a delusion. They are not in fact condemned by the moral law as they conceive themselves to be.

8. Christ has taught the saints to pray for forgiveness, which implies that when they sin they are condemned. There can be no pardon except there be condemnation. Pardon, as has been said, consists in setting aside the execution of the penalty of law upon the sinner. If therefore the law and the lawgiver do not condemn him, it is absurd to pray for pardon. The fact, therefore, that inspired saints prayed repeatedly for the pardon of sin committed subsequent to their regeneration; that Christ taught his disciples to pray for forgiveness; that it is natural to saints as their breath to pray for pardon when they have sinned; also that the bible expressly asserts that if a righteous man forsake his righteousness and sin, his righteousness shall not be remembered but he shall be condemned for sin; and also that the human intelligence affirms that this must be so; these facts render it plain that perseverance in faith and obedience must be a condition of final justification and of eternal life.

9. If I understand the framers of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, they regarded justification as a state resulting from the relation of an adopted child of God, which state is entered into by faith alone, and held that justification is not conditioned upon obedience for the time being, but that a person in this state may, (as they hold that all in this life in fact do,) sin daily, and even continually, yet without condemnation by the law, their sin bringing them only under his fatherly displeasure and subjecting them to the necessity of repentance as a condition of his fatherly favor, but not as a condition of pardon or of ultimate salvation. They seem to have regarded the child of God as no longer under moral government in such a sense that sin was imputed to him, this having been imputed to Christ and Christ's righteousness so

literally imputed to him that, do what he may after the first act of faith, he is accounted and treated in his person as wholly righteous. If this is not antinomianism, I know not what is; since they hold that all who once believe will certainly be saved, yet that their perseverance in holy obedience to the end is in no case a condition of final justification, but that this is conditioned upon the first act of faith alone. They support their positions with quotations from Scripture about as much in point as is common for them. When I read that Confession of Faith I am ashamed, not to say indignant at the loose and often ridiculous manner in which its framers and abettors quote scripture in support of some of its nonsensical positions. They often rely on proof-texts that in their meaning and spirit have not the remotest allusion to the point in support of which they are quoted. I have tried to understand the subject of justification as it is taught in the Bible without going into labored speculations or to theological technicalities. If I have succeeded in understanding it, the following is a succinct and a true account of the matter. Upon condition of the mediatorial death and work of Christ, the penitent and believing soul is freely pardoned and received to favor as if he had not sinned, while he remains penitent and believing, subject however to condemnation and eternal death unless he holds fast the beginning of his confidence to the end of life. The doctrine of a literal imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity, of the literal imputation of all the sins of the elect to Christ, and of his suffering for them the exact amount due to the transgressors, of the literal imputation of Christ's righteousness or obedience to the elect, and the consequent perpetual justification of all that are converted from the first exercise of faith, whatever their subsequent life may be--I say that these dogmas are fabulous, and better befitting a romance than a system of theology.

But it is said that the bible speaks of the righteousness of faith. 'What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.'--Rom. 9:30. '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 which is of God by faith.[]'--Phil. 3:9. These, and similar passages, are relied upon as teaching the doctrine of an imputed righteousness; and such as these: 'The Lord our righteousness;' 'Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' By the Lord our righteousness we may understand either that we are justified, that is, that our sins are atoned for, and that we are pardoned and accepted by or on account of the Lord, that is, Jesus Christ; or we may understand that the Lord makes us righteous, that is, that he is our sanctification, working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure; or both, that is, he atones for our sins, brings us to repentance and faith, works sanctification or righteousness in us, and then pardons our past sins and accepts us. By the righteousness of faith, or of God by faith, I understand the method of making sinners holy, and of securing their justification or acceptance by faith as opposed to mere works of law or self-righteousness. *Dikaiosune*, rendered righteousness, may be with equal propriety and often is rendered justification. So undoubtedly it should be rendered in 1 Cor. 1:30. 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.' The meaning here doubtless is that he is the author and finisher of that scheme of redemption whereby we are justified by faith as opposed to justification by our own works. Christ our righteousness is Christ the author or procurer of our justification. But this does not imply that he procures our justification by imputing his obedience to us. The doctrine of a literal imputation of Christ's obedience or righteousness is supported by those who hold it, by such passages as the following: Rom. 4:5--8. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputed righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." But here justification is represented only as consisting in forgiveness of sin or in pardon and acceptance. Again, 2 Cor. 5:19,21. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here again the apostle is teaching only his much-loved doctrine of justification by faith in the sense that for the sake of the death and mediatorial interference and work of Christ penitent believers in Christ are forgiven and treated as if they were righteous.

IV. FOUNDATION OF THE JUSTIFICATION OF PENITENT BELIEVERS IN CHRIST. That is, what is the ultimate ground or reason of their justification.

1. It is not founded in Christ's literally suffering the exact penalty of the law for them, and in this sense literally purchasing their justification and eternal salvation. The Presbyterian Confession of Faith affirms as follows: Chapter on Justification, Section 3--'Christ by his obedience and death did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, inasmuch as he 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."["] What is to be understood here by exact justice and by a real, full satisfaction to his Father's justice? I suppose all orthodox christians to hold that every sinner and every sin, strictly on the score of justice, deserves eternal death or endless suffering. Did the framers of this confession hold that Christ bore the literal penalty of the law for all the saints? or did they hold that by virtue of his nature and relations, his suffering, though indefinitely less in amount than was deserved by the transgressors, was a full equivalent to public justice, or governmentally considered, for the execution of the literal penalty upon the transgressors? If they meant this latter, I see no objection to it. But if they meant the former, namely, that Christ suffered in his own person the full amount strictly due to all the elect, I say,

(1.) That it was naturally impossible.

(2.) That his nature and relation to the government of God was such as to render it wholly unnecessary to the safe forgiveness of sin, that he should suffer precisely the same amount deserved by sinners.

(3.) That if, as their substitute, Christ suffered for them the full amount deserved by them, then justice has no claim upon them, since their debt is fully paid by the surety, and of course the principal is, in justice, discharged.

(4.) If he satisfied justice for them in the sense of literally and exactly obeying for them, why should his suffering be imputed to them as a condition of their salvation.? Surely they could not need both the imputation of his perfect obedience to them so as to be accounted in law as perfectly righteous, and also the imputation of his sufferings to them; as if he had not obeyed for them. Is God unrighteous? Does he exact of the surety first, the literal and full payment of the debt, and secondly, perfect personal obedience for and in behalf of the sinner? Does he first exact full and perfect obedience and then the same amount of suffering as if there had been no obedience? And this, too, of his beloved Son?

2. Our own works or obedience to the law or to the gospel, are not the ground or foundation of our justification. That is, neither our faith, nor repentance, nor love, nor life, nor any thing done by us or wrought in us, is the ground of our justification. These are conditions of our justification, but not the ground of it. We are justified upon condition of our faith, but not for our faith; upon condition of our repentance, love, obedience, perseverance to the end, but not for these things. These are the conditions but not the reason, ground, or procuring cause of our justification. We can not be justified without them, neither are we or can we be justified by them. None of these things must be omitted on pain of eternal damnation. Nor must they be put in the place of Christ upon the same penalty. Faith is so much insisted on in the gospel as the sine qua non of our justification that some seem disposed or at least to be in danger of making faith the procuring cause, or of substituting faith in the place of Christ; of making faith instead of Christ the Saviour.

3. Neither is the atonement of Christ the foundation of our justification. This too is a condition and means of our justification, but not the foundation of it.

4. Nor is any thing in the mediatorial work of Christ the foundation of our justification. The work and death and resurrection and advocacy of Christ are indispensable conditions, but not the fundamental reason of our justification.

5. Nor is the work of the Holy Spirit in converting and sanctifying the soul the foundation of our justification. This is only a condition or means of bringing it about, but is not the fundamental reason.

6. But the disinterested and infinite love of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the true and only foundation of the justification and salvation of sinners. God is love, that is, He is infinitely benevolent. All he does, or says, or suffers, permits or omits, is for one and the same ultimate reason, namely, to promote the highest good of universal being.

7. Christ, the Second Person in the glorious Trinity is represented, in Scripture, as taking so prominent a part in this work that the number of offices and relations which He sustains to God and man in it are truly wonderful. For example, He is represented as being: 1. King. 2. Judge. 3. Mediator. 4. Advocate. 5. Redeemer. 6. Surety. 7. Wisdom. 8. Righteousness. 9. Sanctification. 10. Redemption. 11. Prophet. 12. Priest. 13. Passover or Lamb of God. 14. The bread and water of life. 15. True God and eternal life. 16. Our life. 17. Our all in all. 18. As the repairer of the breach. 19. As dying for our sins; 20. As rising for our justification. 21. As the resurrection and the life. 22. As bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows. 23. As he by whose stripes we are healed. 24. As the head of his people. 25. As the bridegroom or husband of his church.

26. As the shepherd of his flock. 27. As the door by which they enter. 28. As the way to salvation. 29. As our salvation. 30. As the truth. 31. As being made sin for us. 32. That we are made the righteousness of God in him. 33. That in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead. 34. That in him all fulness dwells. 35. All power in heaven and earth are said to be given to him. 36. He is said to be the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 37. Christ in us the hope of Glory. 38. The true vine of which we are the branches. 39. Our brother. 40. Wonderful. 41. Counsellor. 42. The mighty God. 43. The everlasting Father. 44. The Prince of peace. 45. The captain of salvation. 46. The captain of the Lord's host.

These are among the official relations of Christ to his people and to the great work of our justification. I shall have frequent occasion to consider Him in some of these relations as we proceed in this course of study. Indeed, the office, relations, and work of Christ, are among the most important topics of Christian theology.

Christ is our Justification in the sense that He carries into execution the whole scheme of redemption devised by the adorable Godhead. To Him the Scripture every where directs the eyes of our faith and of our intelligence also. The Holy Spirit is represented not as glorifying himself, but as speaking of Jesus, as taking of the things of Christ and showing them to his people, as glorifying Christ Jesus, as being sent by Christ, as being the Spirit of Christ, as being Christ himself dwelling in the hearts of his people. But I must forbear at present. This subject of Christ's relations needs elucidation in future lectures.

REMARKS

The relations of the Old School view of justification to their view of depravity is obvious. They hold, as we have seen, that the constitution in every faculty and part is sinful. Of course, personal, present holiness, in the sense of entire conformity to the law, can not with them be a condition of justification. They must have a justification while yet at least in some degree of sin. This must be brought about by imputed righteousness. The intelligence revolts at a justification in sin. So a scheme is devised to divert the eye of the law and of the lawgiver from the sinner to his substitute who has perfectly obeyed the law. But in order to make out the possibility of his obedience being imputed to them, it must be assumed that He owed no obedience for himself; than which a greater absurdity can not be conceived. Constitutional depravity or sinfulness being once assumed, physical regeneration, physical sanctification, physical Divine influence, imputed righteousness, and justification while personally in the commission of sin, follow of course. Shame on a theology that is incumbered with such absurdities.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 54

SANCTIFICATION.

In discussing this subject I will,

I. GIVE SOME ACCOUNT OF THE RECENT DISCUSSIONS THAT HAVE BEEN HAD UPON THIS QUESTION.

II. REMIND YOU OF SOME POINTS THAT HAVE BEEN SETTLED IN THIS COURSE OF STUDY.

III. DEFINE THE PRINCIPAL TERMS TO BE USED IN THIS DISCUSSION.

IV, SHOW WHAT THE REAL QUESTION NOW AT ISSUE IS.

V. THAT ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION IS ATTAINABLE IN THIS LIFE.

VI. POINT OUT THE CONDITIONS OF THIS ATTAINMENT.

VII. ANSWER OBJECTIONS.

VIII, CONCLUDE WITH REMARKS.

I. I AM TO GIVE SOME ACCOUNT OF THE RECENT DISCUSSIONS THAT HAVE BEEN HAD UPON THE SUBJECT OF ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION IN THIS LIFE.

When lecturing and writing on polemic theology, it is important and even indispensable that we should entertain just ideas of the views and arguments of our opponents. In entering upon the discussion of the question before us, it seems impossible to proceed in the discussion without noticing the recent discussions that have been had, and without giving you the substance of the principal things that have been said of late in opposition to our views. This will prepare the way for a fuller and more intelligent examination of the question under consideration than could be otherwise had. I shall, therefore, make no apology for introducing in this place a brief history of the discussions alluded to, although they have so recently appeared in print.

About the year 1832 or 1833, the sect called Antinomian Perfectionists sprung up at about the same time, in several places in New York and New England. We have in their leading organ, The Perfectionist, published at New Haven, Ct., their articles of belief or their confession of faith, as it professes to have been, carefully prepared and published by request. It is as follows:

'WHAT WE BELIEVE.'

1. We believe, that God is the only rightful interpreter of the Bible, and teacher of theological truth--hence,
2. We believe, that no doctrine can become an article of true faith, which is not recognized by the believer as an

immediate revelation to him from God--yet,

3. We believe that God, 'who worketh all in all,' can and does teach his own truth, through his written word, and through the testimony of his sons--therefore,
4. We believe it is proper, that we should state, as witnesses for God, the fundamental articles of our own faith.
5. We believe, 'there is none good but one, that is God,' that all the righteousness in the universe is God's righteousness
6. We believe, that God's righteousness may be revealed in his creatures, as a man's spirit is revealed in the motions of his body.
7. We believe, that 'the works of the flesh, [that is, human nature] are adultery, uncleanness, envyings, strife, and such like' only.
8. We believe, that all attempts to produce better results from human nature, by instruction and legal discipline, only increase the evil--inasmuch as they refine and disguise without removing it.
9. We believe, that the Son of God was manifested in human nature for the purpose of destroying, (not reforming,) the works of the flesh, and revealing the righteousness of God.
10. We believe, that the righteousness of God was never revealed in human nature, till the birth of Jesus Christ.
11. We believe, that the object of all God's dealings with the human race, before the birth of Christ, was, not to promote the righteousness of the flesh, that is, self-righteousness, that is, the perfection of sin; but to prepare the way for the manifestation of his own righteousness through Jesus Christ.--hence,
12. We believe, that the righteousness of the saints, under the law before Christ, was only 'a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things,' bearing a relation to the true righteousness of God, like that of a type to its anti-type.
13. We believe, that the servants of God under the law, by submission to the discipline of the dispensation in which they lived, were prepared for, and became heirs of the righteousness of God, afterward revealed by Jesus Christ.
14. We believe, that, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,'--that the union of human and divine nature in him, made the righteousness of God accessible to all men.
15. We believe, that Christ is properly called the second Adam, and as the human race in spirit is one body, that he became, by his incarnation, 'the light that lighteth every man.'
16. We believe, that all who are apprized by the gospel of the fact, that the Son of God has come, are thereby called to choose whether they will hold the fallen or the risen Adam as their head.
17. We believe, that faith alone receives, and unbelief rejects the blessings given to man by the second Adam--by faith men awake to a perception of the truth as it is in Christ --unbelief is the devil's dream.
18. We believe, that Christ, as he is in his resurrection and glory, is given to every member of the human race.
19. We believe, that all the faith, righteousness, liberty and glory of the risen Son of God, are given to every man.
20. We believe, that Christ in his incarnation was 'made under the law,' and that the Christian dispensation did not commence, in any sense, till he ascended up on high.

21. We believe, that none are Christians, in any sense, till they receive Christ in his resurrection--hence,
22. We believe, that the disciples of Christ, during his personal ministry in the flesh, were not Christians.
23. We believe, that Christ in the resurrection is free from sin, from the law, from all ordinances, and from death, hence all who are subject to any of these, are not properly called Christians, as not having attained the hope of their calling.
24. We believe, that the history which the Bible contains of the church after Christ's ascension, commonly called the primitive church, is a history rather of the latter-day glory of Judaism, than of the commencement of Christianity.
25. We believe, that the apostles and primitive believers, so far as they were subject to sin, law and death, were Jews and not Christians.
26. We believe, that Christ plainly and repeatedly promised to his disciples, that he would come to them a second time, and complete their salvation within the life-time of some of his immediate followers.
27. We believe that the primitive church, living in the transition period from the first to the second coming of Christ, were more or less partakers of the resurrection, holiness, liberty, and glory of Christ according to their faith.
28. We believe, that at the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the Jewish dispensation, Christ came to believers the second time according to his promise.
29. We believe, that, at the period of the second coming of Christ, Christianity, or the kingdom of heaven properly began.
30. We believe, that this was the period of the full development of the NEW COVENANT, (Heb. viii,) which secures to believers perfect and eternal salvation from sin, full freedom from written law and human instruction.
31. We believe, that the whole body of Christ, that is the church, attained the perfect resurrection of the spiritual body at his second coming.
32. We believe, that Antichrist, at the same period, attained the perfect resurrection of damnation.
33. We believe, that this was the period of the commencement of the judgment, (CRISIS, see the Greek,) of this world.
34. We believe, that after this period, the salvation given to all men in Jesus Christ, included nothing less than a perfect and eternal salvation from sin, a perfect redemption from the law and legal instruction--a perfect resurrection of the spiritual body, and a standing on the plain of eternity beyond the judgment.'

In the winter of 1836--7, I preached a course of lectures to Christians in the church of which I was then pastor in the city of New York, which were reported by the editor of the New York Evangelist and published in his paper. Soon after they were published in that form, they were published in a volume, and went into extensive circulation both in Europe and America. Among these lectures were two on the subject of christian perfection or entire sanctification, from Matthew 5:48--'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.'

In the first of these lectures I endeavored to show,

- I. What perfection the text does not and what it does require.
- II. That this perfection is a duty.
- III. That this perfection is attainable in this life.

IV. I proceeded to answer objections.

I regarded the perfection demanded by the text as consisting in entire obedience of heart and life to the law of God. And so I taught. I then proceeded to show that this state of obedience is attainable in this life. The remainder of this and the following lecture were occupied in answering objections to the doctrine of the first discourse. These lectures were soon spread before thousands of readers. Whatever was thought of them, I heard not a word of objection to the doctrine from any quarter. If any was made, it did not, to my recollection, come to my knowledge.

In the year 1840, President Mahan published a small work on the subject of christian perfection. Several pieces had previously been published by him and myself in the Oberlin Evangelist upon the same subject. Prof. Cowles about the same time published a series of articles in the Oberlin Evangelist upon the subject of the holiness of christians in this life which were soon after their first appearance collected and published in a small volume. Nearly at the same time I published a course of lectures in the same paper, which were soon also put into a volume by themselves. All three of us gave a definition of christian perfection or entire sanctification, amounting in substance to the same thing, making it to consist in entire consecration to God, and entire obedience to the law, and supported the attainability of this state in this life by substantially the same course of argument. We agreed in stating the attainability of this state as the thing which we proposed to prove, and to the proof of which we shaped our whole course of argument. The attainability of this state we attempted to establish by many arguments, among which are the following:

1. We argued the possibility of attaining this state from the fact that God expressly commands it.
2. From the fact that man by virtue of his moral agency is naturally able fully to obey God.
3. From the fact that provisions are made in the gospel for the entire sanctification of believers in this life.
4. From the fact that we are commanded to pray in faith for the entire sanctification of believers in this life.
5. From the fact that Christ and the apostles prayed for this.
6. From the fact that the entire sanctification of believers in this life is expressly promised in Scripture.

Pres. Mahan and myself, especially, urged the attainability of this state, not only from the foregoing and many other considerations, but also from the fact that this state has been attained, and instanced Paul the apostle as an example of this attainment.

Immediately upon the publication of the above named works, the public journals opened a battery upon us, strangely, and I must say, unaccountably confounding our views with those of the antinomian perfectionists. What analogy was discernible between our views as set forth in our writings and those of the antinomian perfectionists as expressed in their own formula of doctrine, as above given, I am utterly at a loss to understand. But it was insisted that we were of that school and denomination, notwithstanding the greatest pains-taking on our part to make the public acquainted with our views. Many honest ministers and laymen in this country and in Europe were doubtless misled by the course pursued by the public press. Some of the leading religious journals refused to publish our articles, and kept their readers in ignorance of our real views. They gave to the public, oftentimes, the grossest misrepresentations of our views, and refused to allow our replies a place in their columns. The result for sometime was a good deal of misapprehension and alarm on the part of many of the friends of Zion who had been among our warmest friends. Soon after the publication of Pres. Mahan's work above alluded to, it was reviewed by Dr. Leonard Woods, of Andover Theological Seminary. Dr. Woods committed in his review four capital errors which laid his review open to a blow of annihilation, which was in due time leveled against it by Pres. Mahan. The President had defined what he intended by christian perfection or entire sanctification, and had also stated what he did not understand it as implying. He defined it to consist in a state of entire conformity of heart and life to the law of God, or in consecration of the whole being to God. He very expressly took issue upon the question of the attainability of this state in this life, and was at special pains to guard against the true point at issue being mistaken, and protested against any one's making a false issue. Dr. Woods noticed this and his first error consisted in assuming that the real point at issue between him and Pres. Mahan was just what he (Dr. Woods) chose to make it. Hence, secondly, Dr. Woods proceeded to take issue with the author he was reviewing, not upon the possibility of attaining the state in

question in this life, which was the proposition stated and defended by his author, but upon the fact of this state having been attained in this life. This was the Doctor's second error. His third error consisted in the fact that having made a false issue, he replied to the arguments of his opponent as if they had been designed by him to establish, not the attainability, but the actual attainment of this state in this life.

He certainly had a right to controvert if he chose the fact of actual attainment, or to deny any other argument Pres. Mahan used to prove the attainability of this state. But he had no right, and it was utterly absurd and unjust, to make a false issue, to take issue upon the fact of attainment and represent the President's argument as adduced to sustain that position, when in fact it was framed in support of a totally different position; and this Dr. Woods knew full well.

But the Doctor fell into a fourth error as fatal to his object as either of the preceding. He did not at all define his views of what constitutes christian perfection or entire sanctification, nor did he notice his opponent's definition. We are therefore left to the necessity of inferring what he understands by entire sanctification or christian perfection from his course of argument.

From this we learn that he founded his argument against the fact of attainment, which was the point that he aimed to overthrow, upon a grossly false assumption in respect to the nature of christian perfection. The following are specimens of his course of reasoning: He denied that any Christian had ever attained to a state of entire sanctification in this life, because the Bible requires Christians in all their earthly course to grow in grace. Now it will be seen at once that this argument is good for nothing, unless it be assumed as a major premise that christian perfection or entire sanctification implies the impossibility of further progress in holiness. The argument in syllogistic form would stand thus:

'Christian perfection or entire sanctification implies the impossibility of further progress in holiness. The bible requires all christians in all time to progress in holiness, which implies the possibility of their doing so. Therefore no christian is in this life entirely sanctified.'

The assumption of a grossly false major premise alone gives his argument the color of relevancy or plausibility. But suppose any one should pursue the same course of argument in respect to total depravity and insist that no sinner is ever totally depraved in this life because the bible represents wicked men and seducers as waxing worse and worse; would Dr. Woods or those who agree with him acknowledge the conclusiveness of such an argument? But if total depravity does not imply, as every one knows that it does not, the impossibility of further progress in sin, so neither for the same reason does entire or total sanctification imply the impossibility of further progress in holiness.

But President Mahan had expressly excluded from his definition of christian perfection the idea of its implying a state in which no higher attainments in holiness were possible. He had insisted that the saints may not only always in this life grow in holiness, but that they must forever grow in grace or holiness as they grow in knowledge. How strange, then, that Dr. Woods should not only make a false issue, but also proceed to sustain his position by assuming as true what his author had expressly denied! There was not even the shadow of disagreement between him and his opponent, assuming as he did, that christian perfection implied the impossibility of further progress in holiness. President Mahan as much abhorred the idea of the actual or possible attainment of such a state in this or any other life, as the Doctor did himself. The Doctor had no right to represent him as holding to Christian Perfection in any such sense as that he was controverting. In the face of President Mahan's disavowal of such a sentiment, the Doctor shaped his argument to overthrow a position which the President never maintained. Having created his own issue, and supported it by his own assumption, he was pronounced by multitudes to have gained a complete victory.

Again, Dr. Woods denied that christian perfection ever was or ever will be attained in this life, because the Bible represents christians in all time as engaged in the christian warfare. Here again we get at the Doctor's view of christian perfection, to wit, that it implies the cessation of the christian warfare. But what is the christian warfare?

The Doctor plainly assumes that it consists in warring with present sin. Yet he holds all sin to be voluntary. His assumption then that the christian warfare consists in a warfare with present sin, represents the will as opposing its present choice. Choice warring with choice. But the christian warfare implies no such thing. It is a warfare or contest with temptation. No other warfare is possible in the nature of the case. Christ was a subject of it. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. While our circumstances remain what they will always be in this world, we shall be subject to

temptation, of course, from the world, the flesh, and Satan. But christian perfection is not at all incompatible with the existence of this strife with temptation. This argument of the Doctor was based wholly like the preceding upon the begging or assumption of a totally false major premise. He made an issue between himself and Pres. Mahan, when there was none. The President no more held than he did that such a state ever was or will be attained in this life as implies the cessation of the christian warfare, properly so called. Thus Dr. Woods set out without giving his readers any definition of christian perfection, and stumbled and blundered through his whole argument, totally misrepresenting the argument of the author whom he reviewed, and sustaining several of his own positions by sheer assumptions.

The applause with which this review was received by the great mass of ministers and by many laymen, shows the deep darkness in which this whole question was and had been for a long time enveloped. We shall see in its proper place, that the erroneous view of nearly the whole church upon this subject was the legitimate result of a totally false philosophy of moral depravity. The review of Dr. Woods was looked upon very extensively as a complete using up of President Mahan's book. It was soon published, by request, in a separate volume. But the President's answer appeared in due time, and so far as I know, was universally regarded by those who candidly read it, as a complete refutation of Dr. Wood's review.

The Doctor admitted in his review that entire sanctification was attainable in this life both on the ground of natural ability, and also because the gospel has made sufficient provision for this attainment. But with his assumed definition of entire sanctification, he should not have admitted the possibility of such attainment. For surely it is not possible on the ground of natural ability to attain such a state either in this life or in any other, that no farther advances can be made. Nor has the gospel made provision to render such attainment possible in this life. Nor is it possible, either on the ground of natural ability or through the provisions of grace, to attain a state in this life in which the warfare with temptation will cease. It is difficult to conceive how Dr. Woods with his ideal of entire sanctification could admit the possibility of attaining this state in this life. Certainly there was no consistency in making both the assumption and the admission. If he assumed the one he should have denied the other. That it, if in his view entire sanctification implied a state in which there could be no farther advances in holiness, or in which there could be no farther war with temptation, he should have denied the possibility of the attainment in this life at least.

Nearly at the same time with the review of Dr. Woods, just named, the presbytery of Troy, New York, by a committee appointed for that purpose, issued a review of our views, and, as I suppose, intended especially as a reply to my work already alluded to.

The letter or review of the presbytery was published in the New York Evangelist, and I believe in most of the leading public journals of the day. I replied, but my reply was not admitted into the columns of the journals that published the review. This fact seems to demand that both the letter of the presbytery and my reply should have a place in this account of the discussion. I therefore here give them to you entire.

Action of the Troy Presbytery.

STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE.

"In the progress of human investigation, it not unfrequently happens, that truth and error are so connected, that the work of distinction becomes as indispensable as that of refutation. In this form, error is always the most dangerous, not only because it is the least likely to be perceived, but because from its relation, it is liable to share in that confidence which the mind is accustomed to assign to admitted truth. In this form, also, it is often, relatively to our perceptions, the same as truth; but the moment this unnatural union of repellent elements is sundered, both assume their distinctive and peculiar marks.

These prefatory thoughts find an ample illustration in the present state of opinion, in some sections of the church, relative to the doctrine of 'Christian Perfection.' That all the sentiments of this system are false, it would be difficult to show; and as difficult to show their entire truth. The system is a subtle combination of truth and error. Any partial prevalence that it may have had, is easily explained on this principle. Where the truth is made most prominent, the whole assumes an imposing aspect; but an inversion of this error will as signally mark its defects. The work, therefore, of exposing the one, without injury to the other, becomes a duty with every devout and honest inquirer. This is what your committee purpose

to undertake; and for this purpose it will be sufficient to answer the two following questions:

1. What is the controverted point in this system?
2. What is truth in relation to that point?

Let us take up these questions in the above order.

I. In the first place, What is the controverted point--what is the real issue?

That there is some issue, admits of no doubt. What is it? It is not, whether by the requirement of the moral law, or the injunction of the gospel, men are commanded to be perfectly holy; not whether men are under obligations to be thus holy; not whether, as moral agents, such a state is to them a possible state; not whether the gospel system is competent to secure actual perfection in holiness, if its entire resources be applied; not whether it is the duty and privilege of the church, to rise much higher in holy living, than it has ever yet done in our world. To join issue on any or all of these points, is to make a false issue; it is to have the appearance of a question without its reality. Some or all of these points, form a part of the scheme of 'Christian Perfection;' but certainly they do not invest it with any peculiar character, for they involve no new sentiment differing from the ground taken by the great body of orthodox Christians in every age. It cannot be supposed that their advocacy has led to the various and fearful solitudes of learned and pious men in regard to the truth and tendency of this system. It must therefore be fraught with some other element. What is that element? The assertion that Christian men do attain in some cases during the present life, to a state of perfect holiness, excluding sin in every form, and that for an indefinite period they remain in this state. This position requires a moment's analysis, that it may neither suffer nor gain by an ambiguous use of terms.

1. A state of perfect holiness is the general thing affirmed under several relations--such holiness, as leaves not a solitary point of the divine requirements, either in kind or degree, that is not absolutely and completely met by the subject of this predicate--such holiness as involves entire conformity to God's law, and excludes all sin. Any thing short of this, is not perfect holiness, even at the time when its possession is alledged; such a state would be one of imperfect or incomplete sanctification. In establishing the reality of this assumed attainment, it is not allowable to abate or decrease the purity and rigor of the divine law--this would at once change the nature of both categories involved in this question, that is, sin and holiness. We must take the law as it is, and use it as the infallible standard of measurement.

2. This affirmation of a fact is made under several relations. The first is one of speciality, that is, that some Christians have reached this state. It is not contended that it is the state of all Christians, and by consequence, that none are Christians but those who are perfectly sanctified. The second involves two relations of time, that is, that this attainment has been made in the present life, and that it has remained the permanent state for a period more or less indefinite--a day, a week, a month, a year, or years. It is not denied that it is a state in which defection is possible; hence a Christian in this state may relapse into one of imperfect sanctification. Such a phenomenon would be apostacy from perfect to imperfect holiness, and might be succeeded by a return to the former state. These relapses and restorations may be of an indefinite number, for they admit of no necessary limitation but the life of the individuals. They are not however to be confounded with that theory of moral actions, which regards each as wholly good or wholly bad, for they contemplate a longer period of time than is assigned to the production of any given moral act.

Such is the real question at issue--such is the import of 'Christian Perfection,' so far as it has any peculiarity. This is the question to be decided; to argue any other, is to lose sight of the real one--it is to meet an opponent where there is no debate, but entire agreement.

II. In the second place it is proposed to inquire--What is truth in relation to this point?

It is obvious that the burden of proof lies with him who affirms the truth of this sentiment. He must moreover direct his proof to the very thing affirmed, and not to something else. It is easy to carry a question by stating one proposition and proving another. If the proposition in debate be established, the discussion is at an end--the doctrine of christian perfection must be acknowledged.

1. It may be well, therefore, in the first place, to insist on our logical rights, and inquire--'has the proposition yet been proved?' This question involves a variety of subordinate ones, a brief allusion to which is all that can be made.

(a.) It has sometimes been urged, that because perfection in holiness is attainable in this life, therefore it is actually attained. How much validity this argument possesses, we shall be able to judge, if we state it in a syllogistic form. It would be thus: Whatever is attainable in this life, is actually attained in this life; a state of perfect holiness is attainable in this life; therefore it is actually attained in this life. It must be confessed that this syllogism has the attribute of logical conclusiveness, but ere we grant the truth of the inference, it may be well to decide the truth of the premises. Is the first or major premise true? If so, then every sinner who hears the gospel, must attain to actual salvation; then not some, but all believers must be perfectly sanctified in the present life: then every man actually reaches in the present life, the highest possible intellectual and moral good of his being. It must be palpable to every discriminating mind, that this reason takes for granted a false premise; and although conformable to the rules of logic, it is liable to prove an untruth; it confounds the broad distinction between what is merely possible and what is actual.

(b.) Again, it is urged in defence of this system, that the gospel contains adequate provisions for the perfect sanctification of believers in this life, and therefore some believers are thus sanctified. The logical formula will place this reasoning in its true light. It would stand thus: Whatever is possible by the provisions of the gospel in this life, will take place in this life; the perfect sanctification of some believers in this life is possible by these provisions; therefore it will take place in this life. This is a most extraordinary method of reasoning. With some slight changes, it will prove what even the advocate of Perfection will be slow to admit. In the second or minor proposition, substitute the word 'all' for 'some,' and then it proves that all believers are perfectly sanctified in this life. Again, in place of some or all believers, insert the words all men, then it proves that all are perfectly sanctified in this life. There must therefore be some radical difficulty in the first or major proposition. What is that difficulty? It lies in a limitation which is not expressed, but which, the moment it is seen, overturns the whole argument. The provisions of the gospel are sufficient for perfect sanctification at any time and place, if they be fully applied, and not otherwise. Their partial or full application contemplates the action of a rational and voluntary agent. Hence, while competent, they may fail of this effect, owing to the non-application, and not to any fault in the provisions themselves. Before, therefore, this argument is entitled to the least weight, it must be proved that some believers, or all, fully appropriate these provisions in the present life. This being done, then all is clear. This has never yet been done; but it has been lately assumed, as if it were an undisputed truth. The main argument of President Mahan on Perfection is embarrassed with this very fallacy.

(c.) Again, in support of this scheme, much use has been made of the commands, promises and prayers recorded in the Bible.

In relation to the commands, it will be sufficient to say that although the Bible does command a state of perfect holiness in this life, it does not follow that the command is in any instance fully obeyed on earth. Before we can arrive at this conclusion, we must adopt the following principle; that is, that whatever is commanded in the Bible is actually performed by the subjects of that command. This would exclude the existence of all sin from the world; it would prove all men to be holy, without a single exception; it would establish the perfect sanctification not of some, but of all believers. It is certainly a most formidable engine of demonstration, too potent for an ordinary hand to wield.

So also the argument based on the promises of God involves fallacies of reasoning not less apparent. It is a glorious truth that God has promised to all believers a final victory over sin, which undoubtedly will be accomplished at some period of their history. But does it follow then, because believers are to be perfectly sanctified at some time and somewhere, the present life will be the time and place of this perfect sanctification? Let a promise be adduced, if it can be, that fixes the period of this event to the present life. The divine promises, like the provisions of the gospel, are conditioned as to the degree of their results, by appropriative acts on the part of the believer. Hence the fallacy of the argument is apparent, in that it takes for granted that some believers in the present life do fully comply with all the conditions contemplated in the promises themselves. Without this assumption, it proves nothing. Besides, it is not to be forgotten that the promises are general, addressed alike to all believers; and hence the rules of reasoning by which they are made to prove the perfect sanctification of some Christians in the present life, equally prove that of all in every period of time, past, present and future. The argument from promises has no relation to, or limitation by, any specific time. But two alternatives seem to be possible; either the reasoning must be abandoned as not valid, or we must admit that every regenerated man is sinless, and that too from the moment of his conversion.

Similar defects characterize the arguments drawn from the prayers which the Bible records, as well as those which it authorizes Christians to make. It is true that Christ prayed for his disciples in language the most elevated--'Sanctify them through thy truth.' The same may be said of the great apostle when he prayed--'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.' We are directed to pray that God's will may be done on earth as in heaven; and in general authorized to pray for a perfect victory over all sin at every time. These are the facts;--now what is the inference? The advocate of perfection responds--that some believers are perfectly sanctified in the present life. These and kindred facts we offer, to prove this conclusion. Is there then between the two a certain connection? If we admit the one, must we logically admit the other? Facts speak a very different language. Were those included in the prayer of Christ thus sanctified, and that from the moment of its utterance? Was the same true of all the Christians of Thessalonica? Has the will of God yet been done on earth as perfectly as in Heaven? Has every believer who has hungered and thirsted after righteousness attained to sinless perfection in this life? Did not Paul most fervently pray for the salvation of Israel, and have not thousands of Jews died since, in their sins? Did he not pray that the thorn in his flesh might be removed? and was it removed? The grand mistake in this reasoning is, that it fixes what the nature and terms of prayer do not fix; that is, the time when and the place where the sought blessing shall be obtained. Applied as evidence to any believer who claims to be wholly sanctified, it would prove his sanctification an hour, a week, month, or year, before he was thus sanctified, as really as at the moment in which he professed to have made this high attainment. Contemplated in its most general form, it would prove that every thing which is a proper object of prayer, and which will be obtained in some state of being, will actually be obtained in the present life. There is a vast abyss between the facts and conclusion, which the utmost ingenuity is unable to remove.

(d.) Finally, on this branch of the argument, a variety of proof-texts has been summoned to the service of this system. A critical examination of all these, is inconsistent with the limits of the present statement. It will be sufficient to advert to the false principles of interpretation to which they have been subjected. These are three in number:

(1.) The first consists in a misapplication of passages; as when Paul says, 'I take you to record this day, that I am free from the blood of all men'--or when Zacharias and Elizabeth are spoken of as 'walking in all the commandments and ordinances blameless.'

(2.) The second consists in regarding certain terms as proofs of perfection in holiness, which are merely distinctive of Christian character, as contrasted with the state of the unregenerate. These are such words as 'holy, saints, sanctified, blameless, just, righteous, perfect, entire,' &c. That these and kindred terms are designed to be characteristic, and not descriptive of the degrees of holiness, is proved by the fact that they are indiscriminately appropriated to all Christians, and that in many cases they are applied, when the context absolutely charges sin upon their subjects.

(3.) The third false principle consists in interpreting certain passages in an absolute and unrestricted sense, where evidently they are designed to have a qualified sense. This error may perhaps be illustrated by a single passage. Take that remarkable saying of the Apostle John: 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God.' Stronger language or a better proof text can not well be conceived. In an unrestricted sense, it affirms not only that every regenerated man is sinless, but an impossibility that it should be otherwise; it dislodges all sin and moral agency from a converted mind at a single blow. What will the Advocate of Perfection do with this passage? Will he acknowledge either or both of these consequences? This can hardly be supposed. How then will he escape them? There is but one way for him--this lies in placing a restricted and qualified sense upon the passage, and in a moment all is plain and harmonious. But why subject so plain a passage to this law of interpretation, and deny it to others less harmonious and decisive? No reason can be perceived but the one which grows out of the necessities of a favorite theory. Indeed, there is logically no stopping place to this system short of the bold affirmation that all believers are perfectly sinless from the moment of conversion. Every argument in its last analysis must terminate in this extraordinary result. To arrest the inference at any other point is to betray a logical inconsistency. Are the advocates of Perfection prepared for this bold and unbiblical doctrine? If not, it is time they had reviewed their arguments, and abandoned principles fraught with such a conclusion. Their weapons of defense are not less destructive than constructional in their character.

2. Having tried the merits of the positive testimony of this subject, we remark in the second place, that in the present state of the question, the position is absolutely incapable of proof. When a man affirms his own sinless perfection for any given period, as a day, a week, or a year, he affirms his own infallible knowledge on two points; that is, that at the present

moment he can recall every moral exercise during that period, every thought, feeling, desire, purpose, and that he does infallibly judge of the moral character of each exercise. Will any pretend to this knowledge? To do so, manifests the last degree of presumption, as well as ignorance, both of facts and the truths of mental science. 'Every effort to recall the whole of our mental exercises for a single day, must always be a failure; it can only be partially successful. This shows how little weight is due to the testimony of a man who asserts his own perfection; he may be honest, but this is no proof of the truth of his statement. If a case of 'perfection' were admitted to be real, still it is impossible, in the present state of our faculties, to find and predicate certain knowledge of it. The evidences of 'Christian Perfection,' are then not only inconclusive, but its main proposition is absolutely unknowable to us.

3. In the third place we remark, that this proposition is disproven by an amount of evidence that ought to be conclusive. To secure the greatest brevity of statement, this evidence may be condensed into the following series of propositions:-- The Bible records defects in the characters of the most eminent saints, whose history it gives; it speaks in moderate terms of the attainments of the pious, when put in contrast with those of Christ, who hence is an exception to our race; it points the believer to the heavenly world as the consummation of his hopes, and exemption from all sin and sorrow; it describes the work of grace as going forward by successive and progressive stages, and fixes no limit to these stages, antecedent to the period of death; it speaks of those as being self-deceived who deny their own sinfulness--'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;' it represents Christians here as in an imperfect state--'For in many things we offend all' [the word 'all' in the original qualifies 'we' and not 'things;'] it exhorts Christians to lowly and humble views of their own attainments; it declares Christians in the present life to be under a process of providential discipline, the object of which is to make them more fully partakers of God's holiness; the most eminent saints that have ever lived since the days of the Apostles, have uniformly expressed a painful consciousness of remaining sin, and spoken of their attainments in language far different from that of self-confidence; the higher Christians have risen in holiness, the more deeply have they been humbled with their own sinful imperfections, owing to a clearer discernment both of God and themselves. These propositions might each of them be amplified into as many arguments. Taken together, they seem conclusively to set aside the pretensions of any class of men who claim for themselves sinless perfection in the present life. We can not but think, that however sincere such persons may be, they labor under a most dangerous delusion. With them we have no controversy; our controversy is with their system. It appears to us in no other light than that of a system, totally disconnected with its proposed evidence, demonstrably unknowable by the present state of our faculties, and in direct contravention to an amount of proof, biblical and experimental, that must forever discredit its claims.

RESOLUTIONS.

1. Resolved; That in the judgment of this Presbytery, the doctrine of 'Christian Perfection' in this life, is not only false, but calculated in its tendencies, to engender self-righteousness, disorder, deception, censoriousness and fanaticism.
2. Resolved, That it is contrary to the Confession of Faith adopted by the Presbyterian church in the United States. See chap. 12, Sec. 2.
3. Resolved, That it is the duty of all orthodox ministers to acquaint themselves with this error, and at such times and in such measures as may seem to them most expedient, to instruct the people on this point.
4. Resolved, That we view with regret and sorrow, the ground taken on this subject by the Theological Professors at Oberlin.
5. Resolved, That we hail with joy every improvement in human opinion that conforms to the Bible, and promises, in its practical tendency, to decrease the sins or increase the moral purity of the church.
6. Resolved, That the above statement and resolutions be signed by the Moderator and Stated Clerk, and published in the New York Evangelist, New York Observer, the Christian Observer, and the Presbyterian.

Fayette Shipherd requested that his dissent from the above report of the Committee be appended to it, entered on the records of the Presbytery, and published with it. All the other members present voted in the affirmative.

Thomas J. Haswell, Moderator.

N. S. S. Beman, Stated Clerk.

Troy, June 29, 1841.

To the Troy [N. Y.] Presbytery.

DEAR BRETHREN:

Permit me to make a few remarks upon your report on the subject of Christian perfection. I have read with attention most that has come to hand upon the subject of your report, and have thought it of little use to reply, until some opponent of our views should throw his objections into a more tangible form than any one had hitherto done. Your report embraces, in a condensed form, almost all that has been said in opposition to our views. For this reason, as well as for the reason that I have a high respect and fervent love for those of your number with whom I am acquainted, I beg leave to be heard in reply.

What I have said was prepared for, and should have been published in the New York Evangelist. I wrote to the editor, making the request to be heard through his columns; to which he made no reply. I still hope he will not fail to do me, yourselves, and the church the justice to give this article a place in his columns. The truth demands it. For no other reason, I am sure, than to subserve the interests of truth would I say one word. Without further preface, I quote your statement of the real point at issue. You say:

'That there is some issue, admits of no doubt. What is it? It is not, whether by the requirements of the moral law, or the injunctions of the gospel, men are commanded to be perfectly holy; not whether men are under obligations to be thus holy; not whether as moral agents, such a state is to them a possible state; not whether the gospel system is competent to secure actual perfection in holiness, if its entire resources be applied; not whether it is the duty and privilege of the church to rise much higher in holy living, than it has ever yet done in this world. To join issue on any, or all of these points, is to make a false issue; it is to have the appearance of a question without its reality. Some, or all of these points, form a part of the scheme of 'Christian Perfection:' but certainly they do not invest it with any peculiar character, for they involve no new sentiment differing from the ground taken by the great body of orthodox Christians in every age. It can not be supposed that their advocacy has led to the various and fearful solitudes of learned and pious men in regard to the truth and tendency of this system. It must therefore be fraught with some other element. What is that element? The assertion that Christian men do attain in some cases, during the present life, to a state of perfect holiness, excluding sin in every form, and that for an indefinite period they remain in this state.'

Upon this I remark:

I. You have made a false issue. Proof:

1. What our position is. It is, and always has been, that entire sanctification is attainable in this life, in such a sense as to render its attainment a rational object of pursuit, with the expectation of attaining it.

This proposition, it would seem, you admit; but on account of 'the various and fearful solitudes of learned and pious men,' you take it for granted, there must be a heresy somewhere, and accordingly proceed to take issue with us, upon one of the arguments we have used in support of our proposition; and reply to our other arguments, as if they had been adduced by us in support of the proposition, upon which you have erroneously made up the issue.

2. Some of the arguments by which we have attempted to establish this proposition are--

(1.) That men are naturally able to obey all the commandments of God.

(2.) That this obedience is unqualifiedly demanded of men in this life.

(3.) That the gospel proffers sufficient grace to secure their entire sanctification in this life; and that nothing is wanting but 'appropriate acts,' on the part of Christians, to realize this result.

(4.) That the entire sanctification of Christians in this life was made the subject of prayer by inspired men, and also that Christ taught his disciples to pray for it.

(5.) That this state has actually been attained.

These are among our arguments; and as they are the only ones to which you have professed to reply, I will mention no others.

3. I will put our arguments in the form of syllogisms in their order.

First argument. Whatever is attainable in this life, on the ground of natural ability, may be aimed at with a rational hope of success. A state of entire sanctification in this life is attainable on the ground of natural ability. Therefore, it may be aimed at with a rational hope of success.

Again, whatever men are naturally able to do in this life, they may aim at doing with a rational hope of success. Men are naturally able to do all their duty, which is to be entirely sanctified. Therefore, they may aim at entire sanctification with a rational hope of being entirely sanctified.

You admit both the major and minor premises in these syllogisms. Can the conclusion be avoided?

Second argument. Whatever God commands to be done by men in this life, may be done by them. God commands men to be entirely holy in this life. Therefore a state of entire holiness in this life is possible. You admit both the major and minor premises. Can the conclusion be avoided?

Third argument. Whatever attainment the gospel proffers sufficient grace to secure in this life, may be made. The gospel proffers sufficient grace, should any one 'apply its entire resources,' to secure a state of entire sanctification in this life. Therefore, this state may be secured, or this attainment may be made. Here again, you admit both premises. Can the conclusion be denied?

Fourth argument. Whatever was made the subject of prayer by the Spirit of inspiration may be granted. The entire sanctification of the saints in this life was prayed for by the Spirit of inspiration. Therefore, Christians may aim at and pray for this state, with the rational expectation of being entirely sanctified in this life.

Again. What Christ has made it the universal duty of the church to pray for, may be granted. He has made it the duty of all Christians to pray for the entire sanctification of the saints in this life. Therefore these petitions may be presented, and Christians may expect to be entirely sanctified in this life. Both premises in these syllogisms are admitted. Are not the conclusions inevitable?

Fifth argument. Whatever men have done, men can do. Men have been entirely sanctified in this life. Therefore they may be so sanctified. The minor premise in this syllogism you deny; and, strange to tell, you affirm, over and over again, that this one argument of ours is the main proposition to be established. And you reply to all our other arguments in support of the main proposition as if they had been adduced to prove this! Now it would have been equally fair, and just as much in point, so far as our argument in support of the main proposition is concerned, if you had made an issue with us on any other argument adduced by us in support of that proposition--insisted that that was the main question--and replied to our arguments as if they had been adduced in support of that.

You misrepresent our logic. Assuming that the fact of actual attainment is the main proposition which we are laboring to establish, and in support of which we adduce the fact of actual attainment only as an argument, you misrepresent our reasoning. To put this matter in the clearest light, I will place side by side, the syllogisms which you put in our mouths and our own syllogisms.

YOUR SYLLOGISMS IMPUTED TO US.

1. "Whatever is attainable in this life, is actually attained in this life. A state of perfect holiness is attainable in this life; therefore it is actually attained."
2. "Whatever is possible by the provisions of the gospel in this life, will take place in this life; the perfect sanctification of some believers is possible by those provisions; therefore it will actually take place in this life."
3. "In relation to the commands it will be sufficient to say, that although the Bible does command a state of perfect holiness in the present life, it does not follow that the command is in any instance obeyed fully on earth. Before we can arrive at this conclusion, we must adopt the following principle: that is, that whatever is commanded in the Bible is actually performed by the subjects of that command."

The syllogism would stand thus:

Whatever is commanded by God, is actually performed;
perfect holiness is commanded; therefore all men are perfectly holy.

5. What your logic must be to meet our argument as we have stated it. If you would state in syllogistic form an argument that shall meet and set aside our reasoning, it must stand thus: That a thing is attainable in this life, is no proof that it can be attained. This must be assumed as a major premise, by any one who would answer our logic. But who does not see, that this amounts to a denial of an identical proposition? The same as to say--that a thing being attainable in this life, is no proof that it is attainable in this life. But to waive this consideration, and state the argument as it must stand in syllogistic form; to meet and refute our logic, it must stand thus: "That a thing is attainable in this life is no proof that it can be attained. Entire sanctification is attainable in this life. Therefore, its attainability is no proof that it can be attained.' Who does not see, that the major premise is false, and that therefore the conclusion is? Now observe, we admit, that its attainability is no proof that it will be attained. But we insist, that its attainability is proof that the attainment may be aimed at with a rational hope of success.

Again, would you meet our second argument with a syllogism, it must stand thus: 'That God commands a state of entire sanctification in this life, is no proof that such a state is attainable in this life. God does command a state of entire sanctification in this life. Therefore the command is no proof that such a state is attainable.' Brethren, this argument would have the attribute of logical conclusiveness, if the major premise were not false. The very same course must be pursued by you, would you meet and set aside our reasoning in respect to our other arguments. This is so manifest, that I need not state the syllogisms.

II. In respect to our inference in favor of the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, drawn from the prayers of inspiration, and the fact that all Christians are commanded to pray for the entire sanctification of believer in this life, you say as follows:

'Similar defects characterize the arguments drawn from the prayers which the Bible records, as well as those which it

OUR OWN SYLLOGISMS.

1. Whatever is attainable in this life may be aimed at, with the rational hope of attaining it; entire sanctification is attainable in this life; therefore the attainment of this state may be aimed at with a rational hope of success.
2. Whatever attainment is possible, by the provisions of the gospel in this life, may be aimed at by those under the gospel, with a rational hope of attaining it; the perfect sanctification of believers is possible by these provisions; therefore believers may aim at making this attainment, with a rational hope of success.
3. Whatever the Bible commands to be done in this life may be done; the Bible commands Christians to be perfect in this life; therefore, they may be perfect in this life.

Now, brethren, I ask if you will deny the major premise, the minor premise, or the conclusion in either of the above syllogisms? You cannot deny either. I beseech you then, to consider what injustice you have done to yourselves, to us, your brethren, and to the cause of truth, by such an evasion and misrepresentation of our logic.

authorizes Christians to make. It is true, that Christ prayed for his disciples in language the most elevated: 'Sanctify them through the truth.' The same may be said of the great Apostle, when he prayed: 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.' We are directed to pray that God's will may be done on earth as in heaven, and in general authorized to pray for a perfect victory over all sin at every time. These are the facts. Now, what is the inference? The advocate of 'Perfection' responds--that some believers are perfectly sanctified in the present life. These and kindred facts we offer, to prove this conclusion. Is there then between the two a certain connection? If we admit the one must we logically admit the other? Facts speak a very different language. Were those included in the prayer of Christ, thus sanctified, and that from the moment of its utterance? Was the same true of all the Christians of Thessalonica? Has the will of God yet been done on earth as perfectly as in heaven? Has every believer who has hungered and thirsted after righteousness, attained to sinless perfection in this life? Did not Paul most fervently pray for the salvation of Israel, and have not thousands of Jews since died in their sins? Did he not pray that the thorn in his flesh might be removed, and was it removed? The grand mistake in this reasoning is that it fixes what the nature and terms of prayer do not fix; that is, the time when and the place where, the sought blessing shall be obtained.'

On this I remark:

This appears to me a most remarkable paragraph. Here you quote a part of 1 Thess. 5:23: 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly,' and then stop, assuming that nothing can be affirmed in respect to the time when the Apostle prayed that this blessing might be granted. Now, beloved brethren, why did you not quote the whole passage, when it would have been most manifest, that the Apostle actually prayed for the blessing to be granted in this life? I will quote it and see if this not so: 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

As the sanctification of the 'body,' as well as the soul, and spirit, is prayed for, and that the whole being may be 'preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' how can you say as you do--'The grand mistake in this reasoning is that it fixes what the nature and the terms of prayer do not fix, that is, the time when and place where the sought blessing shall be obtained.' Does not this prayer contemplate the bestowment of this blessing in this life? Who can reasonably deny it? Again: You say, 'We are directed to pray that God's will may be done on earth as in heaven, and in general authorized to pray for a victory over all sin at every time.' Now how can you make this admission, and still add the assertion just quoted, that 'prayer does not fix the time when this blessing is to be expected?' Certainly, the time when is, in this prayer, limited to this life. In order to meet our argument, based upon the prayer of the Apostles, and the injunction of Christ, to pray for the entire sanctification of believers in this life, you must argue as follows. Here again I put the syllogisms into separate columns, that you may see them in contrast.

YOUR REASONING PUT IN SYLLOGISTIC FORM.

That the Spirit of inspiration prayed for the entire sanctification of believers in this life, is no evidence that an answer to this prayer may be expected by saints in this life. Paul, under the spirit of inspiration, did pray for the entire sanctification of the saints in this life. Therefore, this prayer is no evidence that saints may aim at being entirely sanctified in this life, with a rational hope of being so sanctified.

Again: That Christ has made it the universal duty of saints to pray for the entire sanctification of Christians in this life, is no evidence that they may offer this prayer, with a rational expectation of being answered. Christ has made it the universal duty of Christians to pray for entire sanctification in this life.--Therefore, this is no evidence that they may offer this prayer with the rational hope of being heard and answered.

OUR SYLLOGISMS.

Whatever state was prayed for by the Spirit of inspiration, Christians may aim at with a rational hope of attaining: the Spirit of inspiration prayed for the entire sanctification of saints in this life: therefore, Christians may aim at this attainment with the expectation of success.

Again: Whatever state Christians are required to pray for in this life, they may pray for with the expectation of being heard and answered. Christians are required to pray for a state of entire sanctification in this life. Therefore, they may pray for this attainment with the expectation of being heard and answered in this life.

Now brethren, whose logic is most conclusive?

III. In one paragraph of your report you admit and deny at the same breath, that entire sanctification is promised in this life. You say--

'It is a glorious truth, that God has promised to all believers a final victory over sin, which undoubtedly will be accomplished in some period of their history. But does it follow, that because believers are to be perfectly sanctified at sometime and somewhere, the present life will be the time and place of this perfect sanctification? Let a promise be adduced, if it can be, that fixes the period of this event to the present life. The divine promises, like the provisions of the gospel, are conditioned as to the degree of their results, by appropriative acts on the part of the believer. Hence, the fallacy of the argument is apparent, in that it takes for granted that some believers in the present life do fully comply with all the conditions contemplated in the promises themselves. Without this assumption it proves nothing.'

In the first part of this paragraph, you deny that God, anywhere in the Bible, promises a state of entire sanctification in this life, and request that one promise be adduced, that fixes this event to the present life. And then you seem immediately to admit that the blessing is promised, on the condition of 'appropriative acts on the part of the believer.' This you must intend to admit, inasmuch as you have before admitted that 'should a believer avail himself of all the resources of the gospel, 'he might make this attainment.' Certainly you will not pretend to have any authority for such an admission, unless the promises when fairly interpreted do proffer such a state to christians upon condition of 'appropriative acts.' How shall we understand such a denial and admission at the same breath as this paragraph contains?

But you request that one promise may be adduced that fixes the period of entire sanctification to the present life. I might quote many: but as you ask for only one, I will quote one, and the one, a part of which you have quoted--1 Thess. 2:23,24; 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.'

That this prayer and promise relate to this life, I think can not consistently be questioned. The prayer is that the 'body,' as well as the 'spirit and soul,' be wholly sanctified, and 'be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Then the promise--'Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.' Does not this relate to this life?

IV. You deny that christians can know that they are in a state of entire sanctification.

You say 'If a case of perfection were admitted to be real, still it is impossible, in the present state of our faculties, to find and predicate certain knowledge of it.'

Here, assuming as you do that the main proposition respects the fact of actual attainment, you insist that this fact, did such cases exist, would be entirely insusceptible of proof. Indeed! Does God command man to do what he can not know that he does, even if he does it? This would be passing strange. You admit that God requires men to be entirely sanctified--condemns them if they are not--but yet deny that they could know that they obeyed, if they did. This would indeed be a singular requirement--to command a man on pain of eternal death to do that which he could not possibly know that he did, even if he did it. This denial of ability to know, whether we are in a state of entire sanctification, is a total denial of the doctrine of natural ability as I presume it is held by every member of your body. Do not every one of you, my brethren, hold that natural ability to obey a command is the sine qua non of moral obligation to obey it? Do not you hold that a man can not be under a moral obligation to do what he can not understand--to use a power which he does not know himself to possess--to employ his faculties in any kind or degree of service which he cannot know to be his duty? Now if a man does all that he is able to know himself capable of doing, is he under a moral obligation to do anything more? But if he is unable to know that he falls short of his duty, does he fall short of it? Brethren, will you give us light upon this subject? Do you,--will you seriously maintain that a man is naturally unable to know whether he obeys the commands of God, and yet, that he is condemned and liable to be damned for coming short, when he could not know that he came short? Brethren, will you maintain this?

V. Your answer to our proof texts is a very summary one. It consists simply in affirming that we have misapplied them -- that we regard certain terms as proofs of perfection, which are only distinctive of Christian character,--and, that we interpret them in an absolute and unrestricted sense--without so much as naming one of them. You have indeed, quoted

one passage, and affirmed that 'a better proof text can not well be conceived.' Bnt[But] we have never regarded nor quoted it as a proof text at all. Your disposal of our proof texts is really a short hand method of getting over them. But there was one difficulty in the way of your quoting and answering them, which was--that had you quoted them, it would have appeared to every body, that they were used by us to prove another proposition than that which you were controverting.

VI. Our arguments in support of the fact of attainment, you have passed over almost in silence. At the same time you have taken our arguments adduced to prove the practical attainability, and replied to them as if adduced to prove the fact of actual attainment. Brethren, we think we have reason to feel grieved with this.

VII. You find yourselves obliged to be exceedingly indefinite in regard to the measure of attainment which Christians may rationally hope to make in this life. You say 'the question is not whether it is the duty and privilege of the church to rise much higher in holy living than it has ever yet done in this world.' Now, brethren, I ask how much higher attainments Christians may make in this world than they have ever yet made? This is, with us, and must be with the church, a question of all-absorbing interest. Do you answer to this question, that Christians may make indefinitely higher attainments than they have yet made? I ask again, on what authority is this affirmation made? Do you argue it from the fact that the gospel has promised sufficient grace to Christians on condition of appropriative acts, to secure in them a higher state of holiness than has yet been attained? But if Christians may rationally hope to attain a higher state of holiness than has ever yet been attained, by appropriating to themselves promises which proffer entire sanctification in this life, why may they not rationally aim at attaining all that the gospel has promised to them? Brethren, will you answer this question?

Appended to your report is a resolution, expressing 'regret and sorrow at the ground taken on this subject by the Theological Professors at Oberlin.' Will you permit us to reciprocate your regret and sorrow, and express our deep grief that the Presbytery of Troy have taken such ground upon this subject, and so misapprehended, and of course misrepresented the arguments of their brethren?

I must close this communication with a few

REMARKS.

1. We admit you had a right to take issue with us on the question of actual attainment, if you were dissatisfied with our course of argument on that position. But you had no right to represent our argument in support of another position, as you have done. You had no right to represent our argument in favor of the practical attainability, as having been adduced in support of the fact of actual attainment. This you have done, and by so doing, you have done your brethren and the cause of truth great injustice.

2. To what I have said in this article, you may reply, that you never denied the practical attainability of a state of entire sanctification, and that, therefore, on that question, you have no controversy with us. Why then, my brethren, did you not admit, that in our main position you agree with us, and that you only deny one of the arguments by which we attempted to support that position? This, as Christian men, you were bound to do. But instead of this, you have said nothing about admitting our main position; but made the transfer of our arguments to the support of the one upon which you take issue, and thus represent our logic as absurd and ridiculous.

We shall be happy to discuss the question of actual attainment with our brethren, when they ingenuously admit that the main position we have taken, (namely, the practical attainability of a state of entire sanctification in this life,) is a truth of the Bible.

3. Permit me to ask, my brethren, what opponent or course of argument might not be rendered ridiculous by the course you have taken--that is, by stating another proposition than that intended to be supported, and then representing the whole course of argument as intended to support the substituted proposition?

4. Should you say that your report was not intended as a reply to our argument, I ask, who has ever argued in support of this doctrine in the manner you represent? Who ever inferred, that because men have natural power to obey God, therefore they do obey Him? I have read with attention almost every thing that has come to hand upon this subject, and I

never saw or heard of any such mode of argumentation as that to which you profess to reply.

5. Will your Presbytery, in reply to what I have written, excuse themselves by saying, that their treatment of our argument was an oversight--that they had supposed us to reason in the way they have represented us as reasoning? To this I must reply, that you were bound to understand our argument before you replied to it, in your public or any other capacity. And especially were you under this obligation, inasmuch as I had twice written to a leading member of your body, beseeching him, in the bowels of Christian love, to examine this subject, and to be sure he did it in a spiritual frame of mind, before he committed himself at all upon the question.

6. Will you, dear brethren, permit me to ask how long the opposers of the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, expect to retain the confidence of the church, and prevent their understanding and believing this doctrine, by such a course of procedure as this? You are no doubt aware that your course is not a novel one, but that it has been substantially pursued by several other opposers of this doctrine.

And now, beloved brethren in the Lord, do not understand me as entering into a war of words with you, or as entertaining the least unkind feeling in my heart towards you. I most cheerfully leave to your deliberate and prayerful consideration, the remarks I have freely made on your report. I cannot however refrain from saying, that when I saw the name of one whom I greatly loved, and with whom I had often taken sweet counsel, attached to that report, my heart felt a kind of spontaneous gushing, and I almost involuntarily exclaimed, 'Et tu, Brute!'

Yours in the bonds of Christian love,

C. G. Finney.

Since these replies were published, nothing worthy of notice has appeared in opposition to them that has fallen under my observation, but the policy seems to have been adopted of preventing further inquiry upon the subject. Nevertheless the agitation of the question in the minds and hearts of private Christians and of many ministers, is going steadily and in many places rapidly forward, as I have good reason to know. Indeed it is manifest that there is increasing light and interest upon the subject, and it is beginning, or, I should say, fast coming to be better understood and its truthfulness and its importance appreciated. No thanks however are due to some of the leading journalists of the day, if this blessed and glorious truth be not hunted from the world as most pernicious error. Nothing could have been more unfair and unjust than the course pursued by some of them has been. May the blessed Lord bring them to see their error and forgive them, not laying this sin to their charge.

It may doubtless appear unaccountable to the public in general, both in this country and elsewhere, that no objection was made to the doctrine of entire sanctification when published in the New York Evangelist, and afterwards in the form of a volume, and so extensively circulated, and that the same doctrine should excite so much alarm when published in the Oberlin Evangelist. It may also appear strange that such pains should have been taken to confound our views with those of antinomian perfectionists, when every one can see that there is no more analogy between their views, as set forth in their Confession of Faith, and our views, than between them and any thing else. This they have all along alledged, and consequently have been amongst our bitterest opposers. Perhaps it is not best that the public should be made acquainted with the springs of influence that have stirred up and put in motion all this hurricane of ecclesiastical and theological opposition to Oberlin. It is unpleasant to us to name and disclose it, and perhaps the cause of truth does not at present, at least, demand it."

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 55

SANCTIFICATION.

II. I AM TO REMIND YOU OF SOME POINTS THAT HAVE BEEN SETTLED IN THIS COURSE OF STUDY.

1. The true intent and meaning of the law of God has been, as I trust, ascertained in the lectures on moral government. Let this point, if need be, be examined by reference to that volume.
2. We have also seen in that volume what is not and what is implied in entire obedience to the moral law.
3. In that volume, Lecture, XII, and also in the lecture justification and repentance in this volume, it has been shown that nothing is acceptable to God as a condition of justification and of consequent salvation but a repentance that implies a return to full obedience to the moral law.
4. It has also been shown that nothing is holiness short of full obedience, for the time being, to the moral law.
5. It has also been shown that regeneration and repentance consist in the heart's return to full obedience for the time being to this law.
6. We have also seen in the lecture on justification, that the saints under both the old and the new dispensation not only claimed to render entire obedience for the time being. but also that God expressly testifies of them that they did actually render this obedience.
7. We have also examined the doctrine of depravity and seen that moral depravity or sin consists in selfishness, and not at all in the constitution of men; that selfishness does consist in the involuntary appetites, passions, and propensities, but that it consists alone in the committal of the will to, the gratification of the propensities.
8. We have seen that holiness consists, not at all in the constitution of body or mind; but that it belongs, strictly, only to the will or heart, and consists in obedience of will to the law of God as it lies revealed in the intelligence; that it is expressed in one word, love; that this love is identical with the entire consecration of the whole being to the glory of God and to the highest well-being of the universe; or in other words, that it consists in disinterested benevolence.
9. We have seen that all true saints, while in a state of acceptance with God, do actually render for the time being full obedience to all the known requirements of God; that is, that they do for the time being their whole duty--all that God, at this time, requires of them.
10. We have seen that this obedience is not rendered, independent of the grace of God, but is induced by the indwelling Spirit of Christ received by faith, and reigning in the heart. This fact will be more fully elucidated in this discussion than it has been in former lectures. A former lecture was devoted to it; but a fuller consideration of it remains to be entered upon hereafter.

III. DEFINE THE PRINCIPAL TERMS TO BE USED IN THIS DISCUSSION.

1. Here let me remark, that a definition of terms in all discussions is of prime importance. Especially is this true of this subject. I have observed that, almost without an exception, those who have written on this subject dissenting from the views entertained here, do so upon the ground that they understand and define the terms Sanctification and Christian Perfection differently from what we do. Every one gives his own definition, varying materially from others and from what we understand by the terms; and then they go on professedly opposing the doctrine as inculcated here. Now this is not only utterly unfair, but palpably absurd. If I oppose a doctrine inculcated by another man, I am bound to oppose what he really holds. If I misrepresent his sentiments, "I fight as one that beateth the air." I have been amazed at the diversity of definitions that have been given to the terms Christian Perfection, Sanctification, &c.; and to witness the diversity of opinion as to what is, and what is not, implied in these terms. One objects wholly to the use of the term Christian Perfection, because its his estimation it implies this and that and the other thing, which I do not suppose are at all implied in it. Another objects to our using the term Sanctification, because that implies, according to his understanding of it, certain things that render its use improper. Now it is no part of my design to dispute about the use of words. I must, however, use some terms; and I ought to be allowed to use Bible language in its Scriptural sense, as I understand it. And if I should sufficiently explain my meaning and define the sense in which I use the terms, and the sense in which the Bible manifestly uses them, this ought to suffice. And I beg that nothing more or less may be understood by the language I use than I profess to mean by it. Others may, if they please, use the same terms and give a different definition of them. But I have a right to hope and expect, if they feel called upon to oppose what I say, that they will bear in mind my definition of the terms, and not pretend, as some have done, to oppose my views, while they have only differed from me in their definition of the terms used, giving their own definition varying materially and, I might say, infinitely from the sense in which I use the same terms, and then arraying their arguments to prove that according to their definition of it, Sanctification is not really attainable in this life, when no one here or any where else, that I ever heard of, pretended that in their sense of the term, it ever was or ever will be attainable in this life, and I might add, or in that which is to come.

Sanctification is a term of frequent use in the Bible. Its simple and primary meaning is a state of consecration to God. To sanctify is to set apart to a holy use--to consecrate a thing to the service of God. This is plainly both the old and the new testament use of the term. The Greek word *hagiazō* means to sanctify, to consecrate or devote a person or thing to a particular, especially to a sacred use. This word is synonymous with the Hebrew *kadash*. This last word is used in the old testament to express the same thing that is intended by the Greek *hagiazō*, namely, to consecrate, devote, set apart, sanctify, purify, make clean or pure. *Hagiasmos*, a substantive from *hagiazō*, means sanctification, devotion, consecration, purity, holiness.

From the Bible use of these terms it is most manifest,

1. That sanctification does not imply any constitutional change either of soul or body. It consists in the consecration or devotion of the constitutional powers of body and soul to God, and not in any change wrought in the constitution itself.
2. It is also evident from the scriptural use of the term that sanctification is not a phenomenon or state of the intelligence. It belongs to neither the reason, conscience, nor understanding. In short it can not consist in any state of the intelligence whatever. All the states of this faculty are purely passive states of mind; and of course, as we have abundantly seen, holiness is not properly predicable of them.
3. It is just as evident that sanctification, in the scripture and proper sense of the term, is not a mere feeling of any kind. It is not a desire, an appetite, a passion, a propensity, an emotion, nor indeed any kind or degree of feeling. It is not a state or phenomenon of the sensibility. The states of the sensibility are, like those of the intelligence, purely passive states of mind, as has been repeatedly shown. They of course can have no moral character in themselves.
4. The Bible use of the term when applied to persons, forbids the understanding of it as consisting in any involuntary state or attitude of mind whatever.
5. The inspired writers evidently used the terms which are translated by the English word sanctify, to designate a phenomenon of the will, or a voluntary state of mind. They used the term *hagiazō* in Greek, and *kadash* in hebrew, to represent the act of consecrating one's self, or any thing else to the service of God and to the highest well-being of the universe. The term manifestly not only represents an act of the will, but an ultimate act or choice as distinguished from a mere volition or executive act of the will. Thus the terms rendered sanctified are used as synonymous with loving God

with all the heart and our neighbor as ourselves. The Greek *hagiasmos*, translated by the word sanctification, is evidently intended to express a state or attitude of voluntary consecration to God, a continued act of consecration; or a state of choice as distinct from a mere act of choice, an abiding act or state of choice, a standing and controlling preference of mind, a continuous committal of the will to the highest well-being of God and of the universe. Sanctification, as a state differing from a holy act is a standing, ultimate intention, and exactly synonymous or identical with a state of obedience or conformity to the law of God. We have repeatedly seen that the will is the executive or controlling faculty of the mind. Sanctification consists in the will's devoting or consecrating itself and the whole being, all we are and have, so far as powers, susceptibilities, possessions are under the control of the will, to the service of God, or, which is the same thing, to the highest interests of God and of being. Sanctification, then, is nothing more or less than entire obedience for the time being to the moral law.

Sanctification may be entire in two senses: (1.) In the sense of present, full obedience or entire consecration to God; and, (2.) In the sense of continued, abiding consecration or obedience to God. Entire sanctification when the terms are used in this sense consists in being established, confirmed, preserved, continued in a state of sanctification or of entire consecration to God.

In this discussion then I shall use the term entire sanctification to designate a state of confirmed and entire consecration of body, soul and spirit or of the whole being to God--confirmed, not in the sense, (1.) That a soul entirely sanctified can not sin, but that as a matter of fact, he does not and will not sin. (2.) Nor do I use the terms entire sanctification as implying that the entirely sanctified soul is in no such danger of sinning as to need the thorough use and application of all the means of grace to prevent him from sinning and to secure his continued sanctification. Nor, (3.) Do I mean by entire sanctification a state in which there will be no farther struggle or warfare with temptation, or in which the christian warfare will cease. This certainly did not cease in Christ to the end of life, nor will it with any being in the flesh. (4.) Nor do I use the terms as implying a state in which no farther progress in holiness is possible. No such state is or ever will be possible to any creature, for the plain reason, that all creatures must increase in knowledge; and increase of knowledge implies increase of holiness in a holy being. The saints will doubtless grow in grace or holiness to all eternity. (5.) Nor do I mean by the terms entire sanctification that the entirely sanctified soul will no longer need the continual grace and indwelling spirit of Christ to preserve it from sin and to secure its continuance in a state of consecration to God. It is amazing that such men as Dr. Beecher and others should suppose that a state of entire consecration implies that the entirely sanctified soul no longer needs the grace of Christ to preserve it. Entire sanctification instead of implying no further dependence on the grace of Christ, implies the constant appropriation by faith of Christ as the sanctification of the soul.

But since entire sanctification, as I understand the term, is identical with entire and continued obedience to the law of God, and since I have in lectures on moral government fully shown what is not and what is implied in full obedience to the law of God, to avoid much repetition in this place, I must refer you to what I have there said upon the topics just named.

IV. SHOW WHAT THE REAL QUESTION NOW AT ISSUE IS.

1. It is not whether a state of present full obedience to the divine law is attainable in this life. For this has I trust been clearly established in former lectures.
2. It is not whether a state of permanent, full obedience has been attained by all or by any of the saints on earth.
3. But the true question at issue is: Is a state of entire, in the sense of permanent sanctification, attainable in this life.

If in this discussion I shall insist upon the fact that this state has been attained, let it be distinctly understood that the fact that the attainment has been made, is only adduced in proof of the attainability of this state; that it is only one of the arguments by which the attainability of this state is proved. Let it also be distinctly borne in mind that if there should be in the estimation of any one a defect in the proof that this state has been attained, still the integrity and conclusiveness of the other arguments in support of the attainability will not thereby be shaken. It is no doubt true that the attainability of this state in this life may be abundantly established entirely irrespective of the question whether this state has ever been attained.

Let me, therefore, be distinctly understood as maintaining the attainability of this state as the true question at issue, and that I regard the fact that this state has been attained only as one method of proving or as a fact that demonstrates its attainability. Dr. Woods admitted the attainability of a state of entire sanctification in this life, and contested only the fact of its actual attainment. But he should not have admitted the attainability with his idea of what is implied in it, as has been shown. For example, if, as he supposed, entire sanctification is a state in which no farther progress in grace or holiness is possible or in which there is and can be no christian warfare or struggle with temptation, he had no right to admit that any such state as this is attainable in this life. I do not admit, but utterly deny that any such state is at all attainable in this life, even if it is in any state of existence whatever.

But again: While Dr. Woods admitted that entire sanctification is attainable in this life, he denied that it is attainable in any practical sense, in such a sense that it is rational to expect or hope to make the attainment. He says we may attain it, but holds it to be dangerous error to expect to attain it. We may or might attain it, but we must not hope to attain it in this life. But how does he know? Does the Bible reveal the fact that we never shall? We shall see.

The true question is, Is a state of entire, established, abiding consecration to God attainable in this life in such a sense that we may rationally expect or hope to become thus established in this life? Are the conditions of attaining this established state in the grace and love of God such that we may rationally expect or hope to fulfil[1] them and thus become established or entirely sanctified in this life? This is undoubtedly the true and the greatly important question to be settled.

Let no one throw fog and embarrass our enquiries by doing as Dr. W. has done, that is, by admitting and denying the attainability of this state at the same breath; admitting it, to save his orthodoxy with the New School, who maintain the doctrine of natural ability, and denying it as a practical or practicable thing, to save himself from the charge of perfectionism. It is certainly a grave and most important question whether we may rationally hope or expect ever in this life to attain to such an established state of grace and faith and love, or, which is the same thing, to such an established state of entire consecration as to have done with slipping and falling and sinning against the blessed God. Certainly the bleeding, yearning, agonized spirit of the saint recently recovered from a fall, ought not to be tantalized with metaphysical or theological quibbles when it asks with agonizing interest, How long, Lord? Is there no hope that I can or shall arrive, in this life, at a state in which, through mighty reigning grace, I shall have done with abusing thee? It appears to me monstrous and barbarous to answer such a soul, as has been done by saying to him, You may attain such a state, but it is dangerous error to expect ever to cease abusing God while you live in this world. I can conceive of no temptation to take one's own life greater than this. The almost irresistible reply of the soul to such an announcement under such circumstances would be, Why then, in the name of the Lord I will cease to live. If I may not hope to live without abusing God, I will not live at all.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 56

SANCTIFICATION.

V. THAT ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION IS ATTAINABLE IN THIS LIFE.

I will here introduce some things which I have said under this head in former lectures on this subject.

I. It is self-evident that entire obedience to God's law is possible on the ground of natural ability. To deny this, is to deny that a man is able to do as well as he can. The very language of the law is such as to level its claims to the capacity of the subject, however great or small that capacity may be, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Here then it is plain, that all the law demands, is the exercise of whatever strength we have, in the service of God. Now, as entire sanctification consists in perfect obedience to the law of God, and as the law requires nothing more than the right use of whatever strength we have, it is of course forever settled that a state of entire sanctification is attainable in this life on the ground of natural ability.

This is generally admitted by those who are called new school divines. Or perhaps I should say, it generally has been admitted by them, though at present some of them seem inclined to give up the doctrine of natural ability, and to take refuge in physical depravity, rather than admit the attainableness of a state of entire sanctification in this life. But let men take refuge where they will, they can never escape from the plain letter and spirit and meaning of the law of God. Mark with what solemn emphasis it says, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." This is its solemn injunction, whether it be given to an angel, a man or a child. An angel is bound to exercise an angel's strength; a man, the strength of a man; and a child, the strength of a child. It comes to every moral being in the universe just as he is, and where he is, and requires, not that he should create new powers, or possess other powers than he has, but that such as his powers are, they should all be used with the utmost perfection and constancy for God. And to use again the language of a respected brother, "If we could conceive of a moral pigmy, the law levels its claims to his capacities, and says to him, 'Love the Lord thy God with all THY heart, and with all THY strength.'" And should a man by his own fault render himself unable to use one of his hands, one eye, one foot, or any power of body or mind, the law does not say to him in such a case, use all the powers and all the strength you might have had, but only use what powers and what strength remain. It holds him guilty and condemns him for that act or neglect which diminished his ability; but it no longer in any instance requires the use of that power of body or mind which has been destroyed by that act.

For a fuller development of this truth see Lectures on Ability, No. xlvi, xlvii, xlvihi, of this course. Also Lecture i, on Moral Government, pp. 5--11.

2. The provisions of grace are such as to render its actual attainment in this life, the object of reasonable pursuit. It is admitted that the entire sanctification of the Church is to be accomplished. It is also admitted that this work is to be accomplished "through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth." It is also universally agreed that this work must be begun here; and also that it must be completed before the soul can enter heaven. This then is the inquiry:

Is this state attainable as a matter of fact before death?

It is easy to see that this question can be settled only by a reference to the word of God. And here it is of fundamental

importance that we understand the rules by which scripture declarations and promises are to be interpreted. I have already given several rules in the light of which we have endeavored to interpret the meaning of the law. I will now state several plain common sense rules by which the promises are to be interpreted. The question in regard to the rules of biblical interpretation, is fundamental to all religious inquiries. Until the Church are agreed to interpret the scriptures in accordance with certain fixed and undeniable principles, they can never be agreed in regard to what the Bible teaches. I have often been amazed at the total disregard of all sober rules of biblical interpretation. On the one hand the threatenings, and on the other the promises, are either thrown away, or made to mean something entirely different from that which was intended by the Spirit of God. At present, I will only mention a few plain, common-sense, and self-evident rules for the interpretation of the promises. In the light of these, we may be able to settle the inquiry before us, viz: whether the provisions of grace are such as to render entire and permanent sanctification, in this life, an object of reasonable pursuit.

(1.) The language of a promise is to be interpreted by a reference to the known character of him who promises, where this character is known in other ways than by the promise itself; for example:

[1.] If the promisor is known to be of a very bountiful disposition, or the opposite of this, these considerations should be taken into the account in interpreting the language of his promise. If he is of a very bountiful disposition, he may be expected to mean all that he seems to mean in the language of his promise, and a very liberal construction should be put upon his language. But if his character is known to be the opposite of bountifulness, and it is known that whatever he promised would be given with great reluctance, his language should be construed strictly.

[2.] His character for hyperbole and extravagance in the use of language should be taken into the account in interpreting his promises. If it be well understood that the promisor is in the habit of using extravagant language--of saying much more than he means, this circumstance should, in all justice, be taken into the account in the interpretation of the language of his promises. But on the other hand, if he be known to be an individual of great accuracy, and to use language with great circumspection and propriety, we may freely understand him to mean what he says. His promise may be in figurative language and not to be understood literally, but in this case even, he must be understood to mean what the figure naturally and fully implies.

[3.] The fact should be taken into the account, whether the promise was made deliberately or in circumstances of great but temporary excitement. If the promise was made deliberately, it should be interpreted to mean what it says. But if it was made under great but temporary excitement, much allowance is to be made for the state of mind which led to the use of such strong language.

(2.) The relation of the parties to each other should be duly considered in the interpretation of the language of a promise; for example, the promise of a father to a son admits of a more liberal and full construction than if the promise were made to a stranger, as the father may be supposed to cherish a more liberal and bountiful disposition towards a son than towards a person in whom he has no particular interest.

(3.) The design of the promisor in relation to the necessities of the promisee or person to whom the promise is made, should be taken into the account. If it be manifest that the design of the promisor was to meet the necessities of the promisee, then his promise must be so understood as to meet these necessities.

(4.) If it be manifest that the design of the promisor was to meet the necessities of the promisee, then the extent of these necessities should be taken into the account in the interpretation of the promise.

(5.) The interest of the promisor in the accomplishment of his design, or in fully meeting and relieving the necessities of the promisee, should be taken into the account. If there is the most satisfactory proof, aside from that which is contained in the promise itself, that the promisor feels the highest interest in the promisee and in fully meeting and relieving his necessities, then his promise must be understood accordingly.

(6.) If it is known that the promisor has exercised the greatest self-denial and made the greatest sacrifice for the promisee, in order to render it proper or possible for him to make and fulfill his promises, in relation to relieving his necessities, the state of mind implied in this conduct, should be fully recognized in interpreting the language of the promise. It would be

utterly unreasonable and absurd in such a case to restrict and pare down the language of his promise so as to make it fall entirely short of what might reasonably be expected of the promisor, from those developments of his character, feelings, and designs, which were made by the great self-denial he has exercised and the sacrifices he has made.

(7.) The bearing of the promise upon the interests of the promisor should also be taken into the account. It is a general and correct rule of interpretation, that when the thing promised has an injurious bearing upon the interests of the promisor, and is something which he cannot well afford to do, and might therefore be supposed to promise with reluctance, the language in such a case is to be strictly construed. No more is to be understood by it than the strictest construction will demand.

(8.) But if on the other hand the thing promised will not impoverish, or in any way be inimical to the interests of the promisor, no such construction is to be resorted to.

(9.) Whenever the thing promised is that which the promisor has the greatest delight in doing or bestowing; and when he accounts it "more blessed to give than to receive;" and where it is well known by other revelations of his character, had by his own express and often repeated declarations, that he has the highest satisfaction and finds his own happiness in bestowing favors upon the promisee, in this case the most liberal construction should be put upon the promise, and he is to be understood to mean all that he says.

(10.) The resources and ability of the promisor to meet the necessities of the promisee without injury to himself, are to be considered. If a physician should promise to restore a patient to perfect health, it might be unfair to understand him as meaning all that he says. If he so far restored the patient as that he recovered in a great measure from his disease, it might be reasonable to suppose that this was all he really intended, as the known inability of a physician to restore an individual to perfect health might reasonably modify our understanding of the language of his promise. But when there can be no doubt as to the ability, resources, and willingness of the physician to restore his patient to perfect health, then we are, in all reason and justice, required to believe he means all that he says. If God should promise to restore a man to perfect health who was diseased, there can be no doubt that his promise should be understood to mean what his language would import.

(11.) When commands and promises are given by one person to another, in the same language, in both cases it is to be understood alike, unless there be some manifest reason to the contrary.

(12.) If neither the language, connection, nor circumstances, demand a diverse interpretation, we are bound to understand the same language alike in both cases.

(13.) I have said we are to interpret the language of law so as to consist with natural justice. I now say, that we are to interpret the language of the promises so as to consist with the known greatness, resources, goodness, bountifulness, relations, design, happiness, and glory of the promisor.

(14.) If his bountifulness is equal to his justice, his promises of grace must be understood to mean as much as the requirements of his justice.

(15.) If he delights in giving as much as in receiving, his promises must mean as much as the language of his requirements.

(16.) If he is as merciful as he is just, his promises of mercy must be as liberally construed as the requirements of his justice.

(17.) If "he delighteth in mercy," if himself says "judgment is his strange work," and mercy is that in which he has peculiar satisfaction, his promises of grace and mercy are to be construed even more liberally, if any thing, than the commands and threatenings of his justice. The language in this case is to be understood as meaning quite as much as the same language would in any supposable circumstances.

(18.) Another rule of interpreting and applying the promises, which has been extensively overlooked, is this, that the promises are all "yea and amen in Christ Jesus.['"] They are all founded upon and expressive of great and immutable principles of God's government. God is no respecter of persons. He knows nothing of favoritism. But when He makes a promise, He reveals a principle of universal application to all persons in like circumstances. Therefore the promises are not restricted in their application to the individual or individuals to whom they were first given, but may be claimed by all persons in similar circumstances. And what God is at one time, He always is. What He has promised at one time or to one person, He promises at all times to all persons under similar circumstances. That this is a correct view of the subject is manifest from the manner in which the New Testament writers understood and applied the promises of the Old Testament. Let any person, with a reference Bible, read the New Testament with a design to understand how its writers applied the promises of the Old Testament, and he will see this principle brought out in all its fulness. The promises made to Adam, Noah, Abraham, the Patriarchs, and to the inspired men of every age, together with the promises made to the Church, and indeed all the promises of spiritual blessings--it is true of them all, that what God has said and promised once, He always says and promises, to all persons and at all times, and in all places, where the circumstances are similar.

Having stated these rules, in the light of which we are to interpret the language of the promises, I will say a few words in regard to the question when a promise becomes due, and on what conditions we may realize its fulfillment. I have said some of the same things in the first volume of the Oberlin Evangelist. But I wish to repeat them in this connection, and add something more.

[1.] All the promises of sanctification in the Bible, from their very nature, necessarily imply the exercise of our own agency in receiving the thing promised. As sanctification consists in the right exercise of our own agency, or in obedience to the law of God, a promise of sanctification must necessarily be conditioned upon the exercise of faith in the promise. And its fulfillment implies the exercise of our own powers in receiving it.

[2.] It consequently follows, that a promise of sanctification, to be of any avail to us, must be due at some certain time, expressed or implied in the promise: that is, the time must be so fixed, either expressly or impliedly, as to put us into the attitude of waiting for its fulfillment, for if the fulfillment of the promise implies the exercise of our agency, the promise is a mere nullity to us, unless we are able to understand when it becomes due in such a sense that we may wait for and expect its fulfillment. The promise of Christ to the Apostles concerning the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, may illustrate my meaning. He had promised that they should receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit not many days hence. This was sufficiently definite to bring them into an attitude of continual waiting upon the Lord, with the expectation of receiving the promise. And as the baptism of the Holy Spirit involved the exercise of their own agency, it is easy to see that this expectation was indispensable to their receiving the blessing. But had they understood Christ to promise this blessing at a time so indefinitely future as to leave them without the daily expectation of receiving it, they might, and doubtless would have gone about their business until some further intimation on his part that he was about to bestow it, had brought them into an attitude of waiting for its fulfillment.

[3.] A promise in the present tense is on demand. In other words, it is always due, and its fulfillment may be plead and claimed by the promisee at any time.

[4.] A promise due at a future specified time, is after that time on demand, and may at any time thereafter be plead as a promise in the present tense.

[5.] A great many of the Old Testament promises became due at the advent of Christ. Since that time they are to be considered and used as promises in the present tense. The Old Testament saints could not plead their fulfillment to them; because they were either expressly or impliedly informed, that they were not to be fulfilled until the coming of Christ. All that class of promises, therefore, that became due "in the last days," are to be regarded as now due or as promises in the present tense.

[6.] Notwithstanding these promises are now due, yet they are expressly or impliedly conditioned upon the exercise of faith, and the right use of the appropriate means, by us, to receive their fulfillment.

[7.] When a promise is due, we may expect the fulfillment of it at once or gradually, according to the nature of the blessing. The promise that the world shall be converted in the latter day, does not imply that we are to expect the world to

be converted at any one moment of time; but that the Lord will hasten it in its time, according to the faith and efforts of the Church. On the other hand, when the thing promised may in its nature be fulfilled at once, and when the nature of the case makes it necessary that it should be, then its fulfillment may be expected whenever we exercise faith.

[8.] There is a plain distinction between promises of grace and of glory. Promises of glory are of course not to be fulfilled until we arrive at heaven. Promises of grace, unless there be some express or implied reason to the contrary, are to be understood as applicable to this life.

[9.] A promise also may be unconditional in one sense, and conditional in another; for example, promises made to the Church as a body may be absolute and their fulfillment be secure and certain, sooner or later, while their fulfillment to any generation of the Church, may be and must be conditioned upon their faith and the appropriate use of means. Thus the promise of God, that the Church should possess the land of Canaan was absolute and unconditional in such a sense as that the Church, at some period, would, and certainly must take possession of that land. But the promise was conditional in the sense that the entering into possession, by any generation, depended entirely upon their own faith and the appropriate use of means. So the promise of the world's conversion, and the sanctification of the Church under the reign of Christ, is unconditional in the sense, that it is certain that those events will at some time occur, but when they will occur--what generation of individuals shall receive this blessing,--is necessarily conditioned upon their faith. This principle is plainly recognized by Paul in Heb. 4:6,11: "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief;" "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 57

SANCTIFICATION.

BIBLE ARGUMENT.

I COME now to consider the question directly, and wholly as a Bible question, whether entire sanctification is in such a sense attainable in this life as to make its attainment an object of rational pursuit.

1. It is evident from the fact, expressly stated, that abundant means are provided for the accomplishment of this end. Eph. 4:15--19; "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love." Upon this passage I remark:

- (1.) That what is here spoken of is plainly applicable only to this life. It is in this life that the apostles, evangelists, prophets and teachers exercise their ministry. These means, therefore, are applicable, and so far as we know, only applicable to this life.
- (2.) The Apostle here manifestly teaches that these means are designed, and adequate to perfecting the whole Church as the body of Christ, "till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Now observe:
- (3.) These means are for the perfecting of the saints, till the whole church, as a perfect man, "has come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." If this is not entire sanctification, what is? That this is to take place in this world, is evident from what follows. For the Apostle adds: "That we henceforth be no more tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive."
- (4.) It should be observed that this is a very strong passage in support of the doctrine, inasmuch as it asserts that abundant means are provided for the sanctification of the church in this life. And as the whole includes all its parts, there must be sufficient provision for the sanctification of each individual.
- (5.) If the work is ever to be effected, it is by these means. But these means are used only in this life. Entire sanctification then must take place in this life.
- (6.) If this passage does not teach a state of entire sanctification, such a state is no where mentioned in the Bible. And if believers are not here said to be wholly sanctified by these means, and of course in this life, I know not that it is any where taught that they shall be sanctified at all.

(7.) But suppose this passage to be put into the language of a command, how should we understand it? Suppose the saints commanded to be perfect, and to "grow up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" could any thing less than entire sanctification be understood by such requisitions? Then by what rule of sober criticism, I would inquire, can this language, used in this connection, mean any thing less than I have supposed it to mean?

2. But let us look into some of the promises. It is not my design to examine a great number of scripture promises, but rather to show that those which I do examine, fully sustain the positions I have taken. One is sufficient, if it be full and its application just, to settle this question forever. I might occupy many pages in the examination of the promises, for they are exceedingly numerous, and full, and in point. But my design is at present to examine somewhat critically a few only out of the many. This will enable you to apply the same principles to the examination of the scripture promises generally.

(1.) I begin by referring you to the law of God, as given in Deut. 10:12; "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." Upon this passage I remark:

[1.] It professedly sums up the whole duty of man to God --to fear and love Him with all the heart and all the soul.

[2.] Although this is said of Israel, yet it is equally true of all men. It is equally binding upon all, and is all that God requires of any man in regard to himself.

[3.] Continued obedience to this requirement is entire sanctification, in the sense in which I use those terms.

See Deut. 30:6; "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Here we have a promise couched in the same language as the command just quoted. Upon this passage I remark:

a. It promises just what the law requires. It promises all that the first and great commandment any where demands.

b. Obedience to the first commandment always implies obedience to the second. It is plainly impossible that we should "love God, whom we have not seen," and "not love our neighbor whom we have seen."

c. This promise, on its very face, appears to mean just what the law means--to promise just what the law requires.

d. If the law requires a state of entire sanctification. or if that which the law requires is a state of entire sanctification, then this is a promise of entire sanctification.

e. As the command is universally binding upon all and applicable to all, so this promise is universally applicable to all who will lay hold upon it.

f. Faith is an indispensable condition of the fulfillment of this promise. It is entirely impossible that we should love God with all the heart, without confidence in him. God begets love in man, in no other way, than by so revealing himself as to inspire confidence--that confidence which works by love. In Rules 10 and 11, for the interpretation of the promises, it is said, that "Where a command and a promise are given in the same language, we are bound to interpret the language alike in both cases, unless there be some manifest reason for a different interpretation." Now here there is no perceivable reason why we should not understand the language of the promise as meaning as much as the language of the command. This promise appears to have been designed to cover the whole ground of the requirement.

g. Suppose the language in this promise to be used in a command, or suppose that the form of this promise were changed into that of a command. Suppose God should say as he does elsewhere, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul:" who would doubt that God designed to require a state of entire sanctification or consecration to himself. How then are we to understand it when used in the form of a promise? See Rules 14 and 15: "If his bountifulness equal his justice, his promises of grace must be understood to mean as much as the requirements of his justice." "If he delights in giving as much as in receiving, his promises must mean as much as the language of his

requirements."

h. This promise is designed to be fulfilled in this life. The language and connection imply this: "I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." This in some sense takes place in regeneration, but more than simple regeneration seems here to be promised. It is plain I think that this promise relates to a state of mind and not merely to an exercise.

i. This promise as it respects the church, at some day, must be absolute and certain. So that God will undoubtedly at some period, beget this state of mind in the church. But to what particular individuals and generation this promise will be fulfilled must depend upon their faith in the promise.

j. Since the promise is as full as the command, and since the law requires perpetual obedience, we are to understand the promise as pledging a state of permanent obedience. This also is implied in the language of the promise. To circumcise the heart, implies establishing the soul in love.

(2.) See Jer. 31: 31--34: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord;) but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall by[be] my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Upon this passage, I remark:

[1.] It was to become due, or the time when its fulfillment might be claimed and expected, was at the advent of Christ. This is unequivocally settled in Heb. 8: 8--12, where this passage is quoted at length as being applicable to the gospel day.

[2.] This is undeniably a promise of entire sanctification. It is a promise that the "law shall be written in the heart." It means that the very temper and spirit required by the law shall be begotten in the soul. Now if the law requires entire sanctification or perfect holiness, this is certainly a promise of it; for it is a promise of all that the law requires. To say that this is not a promise of entire sanctification, is the same absurdity as to say, that perfect obedience to the law is not entire sanctification; and this last is the same absurdity as to say that something more is our duty than what the law requires; and this again is to say that the law is imperfect and unjust.

[3.] A permanent state or entire sanctification is plainly implied in this promise.

a. The reason for setting aside the first covenant was, that it was broken; "Which my covenant they brake." One grand design of the New Covenant is, that it shall not be broken, for then it will be no better than the first.

b. Permanency is implied in the fact, that it is to be engraven in the heart.

c. Permanency is plainly implied in the assertion, that God will remember their sin no more. In Jer. 32:39,40, where the same promise is in substance repeated, you will find it expressly stated that the covenant is to be "everlasting;" and that he will so "put his fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from him." Here permanency is as expressly promised as it can be.

d. Suppose the language of this promise to be thrown into the form of a command. Suppose God to say, "Let my law be within your hearts, and let it be in your inward parts, and let my fear be so within your hearts that you shall not depart from me. Let your covenant with me be everlasting." If this language were found in a command, would any man in his senses doubt that it meant to require perfect and permanent sanctification? If not, by what rule of sober interpretation does he make it mean any thing else when found in a promise? It appears to be profane trifling, when such language is found in a promise, to make it mean less than it does when found in a command. See Rule 17.

e. This promise as it respects the church, at some period of its history, is unconditional, and its fulfilment certain. But in respect to any particular individuals or generations of the Church, its fulfilment is necessarily conditioned upon their faith.

f. The Church, as a body, have certainly never received this new covenant. Yet doubtless multitudes, in every age of the Christian dispensation, have received it. And God will hasten the time when it shall be so fully accomplished, that there shall be no need for one man to say to his brother, "Know ye the Lord, for all shall know him from the least to the greatest."

g. It should be understood that this promise was made to the Christian Church and not at all to the Jewish Church. The saints, under the old dispensation, had no reason to expect the fulfillment of this and kindred promises to themselves, because their fulfillment was expressly deferred until the commencement of the Christian dispensation.

h. It has been said, that nothing more is promised than regeneration. But were not the Old Testament saints regenerated? Yet it is expressly said that they received not the promises. Heb. 11:13,39,40: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were stranger's and pilgrims on the earth." "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Here we see that these promises were not received by the Old Testament saints. Yet they were regenerated.

i. It has also been said that the promise implies no more than the final perseverance of the saints. But I would inquire, did not the Old Testament saints persevere? And yet we have just seen, that the Old Testament saints did not receive these promises in their fulfillment.

(3.) I will next examine the promise in Ezek. 36: 25--27: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within your[you,] and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Upon this I remark:

[1.] It was written within nineteen years after that which we have just examined in Jeremiah. It plainly refers to the same time, and is a promise of the same blessing.

[2.] It seems to be admitted, nor can it be denied, that this is a promise of entire sanctification. The language is very definite and full. "Then," referring to some future time when it should become due, "will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." Mark, the first promise is, "ye shall be clean." If to be "clean" does not mean entire sanctification, what does it mean?

The second promise is, "from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." If to be cleansed "from all filthiness and all idols," be not a state of entire sanctification, what is?

The third promise is, "a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh." If to have a "clean heart," a "new heart," a "heart of flesh," in opposition to a "heart of stone," be not entire sanctification, what is?

The fourth promise, is "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."

[3.] Let us turn the language of these promises into that of command, and understand God as saying, "Make you a clean heart, a new heart, and a new spirit; put away all your iniquities, all your filthiness, and all your idols; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them[.]" Now what man in the sober exercise of his reason, would doubt whether God meant to require a state of entire sanctification in such commands as these? The rules of legal interpretation would demand that we should so understand him. Rule 5: concerning the interpretation of promises, says, "The interest of the promisor in the accomplishment of his design or in fully meeting and relieving the necessities of the promisee, should

also be taken into the account. If there is the most satisfactory proof, aside from that which is contained in the promise itself, that the promisor feels the highest interest in the promisee, and in fully meeting and relieving his necessities, then his promise must be understood accordingly."

If this is so, what is the fair and proper construction of this language when found in a promise? I do not hesitate to say that to me it is amazing that any doubt should be left on the mind of any man whether, in these promises, God means as much as in his commands, couched in the same language; for example, see Ezek. 18:30,31: "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed: and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will you die, O house of Israel?" Now that the language in the promise under consideration, should mean as much as the language of this command, is demanded by every sober rule of interpretation. And who ever dreamed, that when he required his people to put away all their iniquities, he only meant that they should put away a part of them.

[4.] This promise respects the Church, and it cannot be pretended that it has ever been fulfilled according to its proper import, in any past age of the Church.

[5.] As it regards the Church, at a future period of its history, this promise is absolute, in the sense that it certainly will be fulfilled.

[6.] It was manifestly designed to apply to Christians under the new dispensation, rather than to the Jews under the old dispensation. The sprinkling of clean water and the outpouring of the Spirit, seem plainly to indicate that the promise belonged more particularly to the Christian dispensation. It undeniably belongs to the same class of promises with that in Jet. 31: 31--34, Joel 2:28, and many others, that manifestly look forward to the gospel day as the time when they shall become due. As these promises have never been fulfilled, in their extent and meaning, their complete fulfillment remains to be realized by the Church as a body. And those individuals and that generation will take possession of the blessing, who understand and believe and appropriate them to their own case.

(4.) I will next examine the promise in 1 Thess. 5:23,24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Upon this I remark:

[1.] It is admitted, that this is a prayer for and a promise of entire sanctification.

[2.] The very language shows, that both the prayer and the promise refer to this life, as it is a prayer for the sanctification of the body as well as the soul; also that they might be preserved, not after, but unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[3.] This is a prayer of inspiration, to which is annexed an express promise that God will do it.

[4.] Its fulfillment is, from the nature of the case, conditioned upon our faith, as sanctification without faith is naturally impossible.

[5.] Now if this promise, with those that have already been examined, does not, honestly interpreted, fully settle the question of the attainability of entire sanctification in this life, it is difficult to understand how any thing can be settled by an appeal to scripture.

There are great multitudes of promises of the same import to which I might refer you, and which if examined in the light of the foregoing rules of interpretation, would be seen to heap up demonstration upon demonstration, that this is a doctrine of the Bible. Only examine them in the light of these plain, self-evident principles, and it seems to me, that they cannot fail to produce conviction.

I will no longer occupy your time in the examination of the promises, but having examined a few of them in proof of the position that a state of entire sanctification is attainable in this life, I will now proceed to mention other considerations in support of this doctrine.

3. Christ prayed for the entire sanctification of saints in this life. "I pray not," he says, "that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." He did not pray that they should be kept from persecution or from natural death, but he manifestly prayed, that they should be kept from sin. Suppose Christ had commanded them to keep themselves from the evil of the world; what should we understand him to mean by such a command?

4. Christ has taught us to pray for entire sanctification in this life: "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Now, if there is entire sanctification in heaven, Christ requires us to pray for its existence on earth. And is it probable that he has taught us to pray for that which he knows never can be or will be granted?

5. The Apostles evidently expected Christians to attain this state in this life. See Col. 3:12: "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Upon this passage I remark:

(1.) It was the object of the efforts of Epaphras, and a thing which he expected to effect, to be instrumental in causing those Christians to be "perfect and complete in all the will of God."

(2.) If this language does not describe a state of entire in the sense of permanent sanctification, I know of none that would. If "to be perfect and complete in all the will of God," be not Christian Perfection, what is?

(3.) Paul knew that Epaphras was laboring to this end, and with this expectation; and he informed the Church of it in a manner that evidently showed his approbation of the views and conduct of Epaphras.

6. That the Apostles expected Christians to attain this state is farther manifest, from 2 Cor. 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness, in the fear of God."

Now does not the Apostle speak in this passage as if he really expected those to whom he wrote "to perfect holiness in the fear of God?" Observe how strong and full the language is, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." If "to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and all filthiness of the spirit, and to perfect holiness," be not entire sanctification, what is? That he expected this to take place in this life, is evident from the fact that he requires them to be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh as well as of the spirit. This passage plainly contemplates a state as distinguished from an act of consecration or sanctification, that is, it evidently expresses the idea of entire in the sense of continued sanctification.

7. All the intermediate steps can be taken. Therefore the end can be reached. There is certainly no point in our progress towards entire sanctification, where it can be said we can go no farther. To this it has been objected, that though all the intermediate steps can be taken, yet the goal can never be reached in this life, just as five may be divided by three, ad infinitum, without exhausting the fraction. Now this illustration deceives the mind that uses it, as it may the minds of those who listen to it. It is true that you can never exhaust the fraction in dividing five by three, for the plain reason that the division may be carried on, ad infinitum. There is no end. You cannot in this case take all the intermediate steps, because they are infinite. But in the case of entire sanctification, all the intermediate steps can be taken; for there is an end, or state of entire sanctification, and that, too, at a point infinitely short of infinite.

8. That this state may be attained in this life, I argue from the fact that provision is made against all the occasions of sin. Men sin only when they are tempted, either by the world, the flesh, or the devil. And it is expressly asserted that in every temptation, provision is made for our escape. Certainly if it is possible for us to escape without sin, under every temptation, then a state of entire and permanent sanctification is attainable.

9. Full provision is made for overcoming the three great enemies of our souls, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

(1.) The world--"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ."

(2.) The flesh--"If ye walk in the Spirit, ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

(3.) Satan--"The shield of faith shall quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." "And God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

Now all sober rules of Biblical criticism require us to understand the passages I have quoted, in the sense in which I have used them.

10. God is able to perform this work in and for us. Eph. 3:14--19: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Upon this passage I remark:

(1.) Paul evidently prays here for the entire sanctification of believers in this life. It is implied in our being "rooted and grounded in love," and being "filled with all the fulness of God," that we be as perfect in our measure and according to our capacity, as he is. If to be filled with the fulness of God, does not imply a state of entire sanctification, what does?

(2.) That Paul did not see any difficulty in the way of God's accomplishing this work, is manifest from what he says in the twentieth verse--"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, &c."

11. The Bible nowhere represents death as the termination of sin in the saints, which it could not fail to do, were it true that they cease not to sin until death. It has been the custom of the Church, for a long time, to console individuals, in view of death, by the consideration that it would be the termination of all their sin. And how almost universal has been the custom in consoling the friends of deceased saints, to mention this as a most important fact, that now they had ceased from sin! Now if death is the termination of sin in the saints, and if they never cease to sin until they pass into eternity, too much stress never has been or can be laid upon that circumstance; and it seems utterly incredible that no inspired writer should ever have noticed the fact. The representations of scripture are all right over against this idea. It is said, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Here it is not intimated that they rest from their sins, but from their good works in this life; such works as shall follow, not to curse, but to bless them. The representations of scripture are that death is the termination of the saint's sufferings and labors of love in this world, for the good of men and the glory of God. But nowhere in the Bible is it intimated that the death of a saint is the termination of his serving the devil.

But if it be true that Christians continue to sin till they die, and death is the termination, and the only termination of their sin, it seems to me impossible that the scripture representations on the subject should be what they are.

12. The Bible representations of death are utterly inconsistent with its being an indispensable means of sanctification. Death is represented as an enemy in the Bible. But if death is the only condition upon which men are brought into a state of entire sanctification, its agency is as important and as indispensable as the influence of the Holy Ghost. When death is represented in the Bible as any thing else than an enemy, it is because it cuts short the sufferings of the saints, and introduces them into a state of eternal glory--not because it breaks them off from communion with the devil! How striking is the contrast between the language of the Church and that of inspiration on this subject! The Church is consoling the Christian in view of death, that it will be the termination of his sins--that he will then cease to serve the devil and his own lusts. The language of inspiration, on the other hand, is that he will cease, not from wicked, but from good works, and labors and sufferings for God in this world. The language of the Church is, that then he will enter upon a life of unalterable holiness--that he shall then, and not till then, be entirely sanctified. The language of inspiration is, that because he is sanctified, death shall be an entrance into a state of eternal glory.

13. Ministers are certainly bound to set up some definite standard, to which as the ministers of God, they are to insist upon complete conformity. And now I would ask, what other standard can they and dare they set up than this? To insist upon any thing less than this, is to turn Pope and grant an indulgence to sin. But to set up this standard, and then inculcate

that conformity to it is not, as a matter of fact, attainable in this life, is as absolutely to take the part of sin against God, as it would be to insist upon repentance in theory, and then avow that in practice it is not attainable.

And here let me ask Christians what they expect ministers to preach? Do you think they have a right to connive at any sin in you, or to insist upon any thing else as a practicable fact than that you should abandon every iniquity? It is sometimes said, that with us entire sanctification is a hobby. But I would humbly ask what else can we preach? Is not every minister bound to insist in every sermon that men shall wholly obey God? And because they will not compromise with any degree or form of sin, are they to be reproached for making the subject of entire obedience a hobby? I ask, by what authority can a minister preach any thing less? And how shall any minister dare to inculcate the duty as a theory, and yet not insist upon it as a practical matter, as something to be expected of every subject of God's kingdom.

14. A denial of this doctrine has the natural tendency to beget the very apathy witnessed in the Church. Professors of religion go on in sin, without much conviction of its wickedness. Sin unblushingly stalks abroad even in the Church of God, and does not fill Christians with horror, because they expect its existence as a thing of course. Tell a young convert that he must expect to backslide, and he will do so of course, and with comparatively little remorse, because he looks upon it as a kind of necessity. And being led to expect it, you find him, in a few months after his conversion, away from God, and not at all horrified with his state. Just so, inculcate the idea among Christians that they are not expected to abandon all sin, and they will of course go on in sin with comparative indifference. Reprove them for their sin, and they will say, "O, we are imperfect creatures; we do not pretend to be perfect, nor do we expect we ever shall be in this world." Many such answers as these will show you at once the God-dishonoring and soul-ruining tendency of a denial of this doctrine.

15. A denial of this doctrine prepares the minds of ministers to temporize and wink at great iniquity in their churches. Feeling as they certainly must, if they disbelieve this doctrine, that a great amount of sin in all believers is to be expected as a thing of course, their whole preaching, and spirit, and demeanor, will be such as to beget a great degree of apathy among Christians, in regard to their abominable sins.

16. If this doctrine is not true, how profane and blasphemous is the covenant of every church of every evangelical denomination. Every church requires its members to make a solemn covenant with God and with the church, in the presence of God and angels, and with their hands upon the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of the blessed Jesus, "to abstain from all ungodliness and every worldly lust, to live soberly and righteously in this present world." Now if the doctrine of the attainability of entire sanctification in this life is not true, what profane mockery is this covenant. It is a covenant to live in a state of entire sanctification, made under the most solemn circumstances, enforced by the most awful sanctions, and insisted upon by the minister of God standing at the altar. Now what right has any minister on earth to require less than this?

And again, what right has any minister on earth to require this, unless it is a practicable thing, and unless it is expected of him who makes the vow?

Suppose when this covenant was proposed to a convert about to unite with the church, he should take it to his closet, and spread it before the Lord, and inquire whether it would be right for him to make such a covenant--and whether the grace of the gospel can enable him to fulfill it.

Do you suppose the Lord Jesus would reply, that if he made that covenant, he certainly would, and must as a matter of course live in the habitual violation of it as long as he lives, and that his grace was not sufficient to enable him to keep it? Would he in such a case have any right to take upon himself this covenant? No, no more than he would have a right to lie to the Holy Ghost.

17. It has long been maintained by orthodox divines, that a person is not a Christian who does not aim at living without sin--that unless he aims at perfection, he manifestly consents to live in sin; and is therefore impenitent. It has been said, and I think truly, that if a man does not in the fixed purpose of his heart, aim at total abstinence from sin, and at being wholly conformed to the will of God, he is not yet regenerated, and does not so much as mean to cease from abusing God. In Barnes' Notes upon 2 Cor. 7:1, we have the following:

"The unceasing and steady aim of every Christian should be perfection--perfection in all things--in the love of God, of Christ, of man; perfection of heart, and feeling, and emotion; perfection in his words, and plans, and dealings with men; perfection in his prayers, and in his submission to the will of God. No man can be a Christian who does not sincerely desire it, and who does not constantly aim at it. No man is a friend of God who can acquiesce in a state of sin, and who is satisfied and contented that he is not as holy as God is holy. And any man who has no desire to be perfect as God is, and who does not make it his daily and constant aim to be as perfect as God, may set it down as demonstrably certain that he has no true religion."

Now if this is so, I would ask how a person can aim at, and intend to do what he knows to be impossible. Is it not a contradiction to say that a man can intend to do what he knows he cannot do? To this it has been objected, that if true, it proves too much--that it would prove that no man ever was a Christian who did not believe in this doctrine. To this I reply:

(1.) A man may believe in what is really a state of entire sanctification, and aim at attaining it, although he may not call it by that name. This I believe to be the real fact with Christians; and they would much more frequently attain what they aim at, did they know how to appropriate the grace of Christ to their own circumstances. Mrs. President Edwards, for example, firmly believed that she could attain a state of entire consecration. She aimed at and manifestly attained it, and yet, such were her views of physical depravity, that she did not call her state one of entire sanctification. It has been common for Christians to suppose that a state of entire consecration is attainable; but while they believe in physical depravity, they would not of course, call even entire consecration, entire sanctification. Mrs. Edwards believed in, aimed at, and attained, entire consecration. She aimed at what she believed to be attainable, and she could aim at nothing more. She called it by the same name with her husband who was opposed to the doctrine of christian perfection as held by the Wesleyan Methodists, manifestly on the ground of his notions of physical depravity. I care not what this state is called, if the thing be fully explained and insisted upon, together with the conditions of attaining it. Call it what you please, christian perfection, heavenly mindedness, the full assurance of faith or hope, or a state of entire consecration; by all these I understand the same thing. And it is certain, that by whatever name it is called, the thing must be aimed at to be attained. The practicability of its attainment must be admitted, or it can not be aimed at.

And now I would humbly inquire whether to preach any thing short of this is not to give countenance to sin?

18. Another argument in favor of this doctrine is that the gospel as a matter of fact, has often, not only temporarily, but permanently and perfectly overcome every form of sin, in different individuals. Who has not seen the most beastly lusts, drunkenness, lasciviousness, and every kind of abomination, long indulged and fully ripe, entirely and forever slain by the power of the grace of God? Now how was this done? Only by bringing this sin fully into the light of the gospel, and showing the individual the relation which the death of Christ sustained to that sin.

Nothing is wanting to slay any and every form of sin, but for the mind to be fully baptized into the death of Christ, and to see the bearings of one's own sins upon the sufferings, and agonies, and death of the blessed Jesus. Let me state a fact to illustrate my meaning. A habitual and most inveterate smoker of tobacco, of my acquaintance, after having been plied with almost every argument to induce him to break the power of the habit and relinquish its use in vain, on a certain occasion lighted his pipe, and was about to put it to his mouth, when the inquiry was started, did Christ die to purchase this vile indulgence for me? The perceived relation of the death of Christ to this sin instantly broke the power of the habit, and from that day he has been free.

I could relate many other facts more striking than this, where a similar view of the relation of a particular sin to the atonement of Christ, has in a moment, not only broken the power of the habit, but destroyed entirely and forever, the appetite for similar indulgences. And in multitudes of cases when the appetite has not been entirely slain, the will has been endowed with abundant and abiding efficiency effectually to control it.

If the most inveterate habits of sin, and even those that involve physical consequences, and have deeply abased the physical constitution, and rendered it a source of overpowering temptation to the mind, can be, and often have been utterly broken up, and forever slain by the grace of God, why should it be doubted that by the same grace, a man can triumph over all sin, and that for ever.

19. If this doctrine is not true, what is true upon the subject? It is certainly of great importance that ministers should be definite in their instructions, and if Christians are not expected to be wholly conformed to the will of God in this life, how much is expected of them? Who can say, hitherto canst thou, must thou come, but no farther? It is certainly absurd, not to say ridiculous, for ministers to be forever pressing Christians up to higher and higher attainments, saying at every step you can and must go higher, and yet all along informing them that they are expected to fall short of their whole duty--that they can as a matter of fact, be better than they are, far better, indefinitely better; but still it is not expected that they will do their whole duty. I have often been pained to hear men preach who are afraid to commit themselves in favor of the whole truth; and who are yet evidently afraid of falling short, in their instructions, of insisting that men shall stand "perfect and complete in all the will of God." They are evidently sadly perplexed to be consistent, and well they may be, for in truth there is no consistency in their views and teachings. If they do not inculcate as a matter of fact, that men ought to do and are expected to do their whole duty, they are sadly at a loss to know what to inculcate. They have evidently many misgivings about insisting upon less than this, and still they fear to go to the full extent of apostolic teaching on this subject. And in their attempts to throw in qualifying terms and caveats, to avoid the impression that they believe in the doctrine of entire sanctification, they place themselves in a truly awkward position. Cases have occurred in which ministers have been asked, how far we may go, must go, and are expected to go, in dependence upon the grace of Christ, and how holy men may be, and are expected to be, and must be, in this life. They could give no other answer to this, than that they can be a great deal better than they are. Now this indefiniteness is a great stumbling block to the Church. It cannot be according to the teachings of the Holy Ghost.

20. The tendency of a denial of this doctrine is, to my mind, conclusive proof that the doctrine itself must be true. Many developments in the recent history of the Church throw light upon this subject. Who does not see that the facts developed in the temperance reformation, have a direct and powerful bearing upon this question? It has been ascertained that there is no possibility of completing the temperance reformation, except by adopting the principle of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks. Let a temperance lecturer go forth as an Evangelist to promote revivals on the subject of temperance--let him inveigh against drunkenness, while he admits and defends the moderate use of alcohol, or insinuates, at least, that total abstinence is not expected or practicable. In this stage of the temperance reformation every one can see that such a man could make no progress; that he would be employed like a child in building dams of sand to obstruct the rushing of mighty waters. It is as certain as that causes produce their effects, that no permanent reformation could be effected without adopting and insisting on the total abstinence principle.

And now if this is true as it respects the temperance reformation, how much more so when applied to the subjects of holiness and sin. A man might by some possibility, even his own strength, overcome his habits of drunkenness, and retain what might be called the temperate use of alcohol. But no such thing is possible in a reformation from sin. There is no temperate indulgence in sin. Sin, as a matter of fact, is never overcome by any man in his own strength. If he admits into his creed the necessity of any degree of sin, or he allows in practice any degree of sin, he becomes impenitent---consents to live in sin--and of course grieves the Holy Spirit, the certain result of which is a relapsing into a state of legal bondage to sin. And this is probably a true history of many professed christians in the Church. It is just what might be expected from the views and practice of the Church upon this subject.

The secret of backsliding is, that reformations are not carried deep enough. Christians are not set with all their hearts to aim at a speedy deliverance from all sin. But on the contrary are left, and in many instances taught, to indulge the expectation that they shall sin as long as they live. I probably never shall forget the effect produced on my mind by reading, when a young convert, in the diary of David Brainerd, that he never expected to make any considerable attainments in holiness in this life. I can now easily see that this was a natural inference from the theory of physical depravity which he held. But not perceiving this at the time, I doubt not that this expression of his views had a very injurious effect upon me for many years. It led me to reason thus: If such a man as David Brainerd did not expect to make much advancement in holiness in this life, it is vain for me to expect such a thing.

The fact is, if there be any thing that is important to high attainments in holiness, and to the progress of the work of sanctification in this life, it is the adoption of the principle of total abstinence from sin. Total abstinence from sin, must be every man's motto, or sin will certainly sweep him away as with a flood. That cannot possibly be a true principle in temperance, that leaves the causes which produce drunkenness to operate in their full strength. Nor can that be true in regard to holiness which leaves the root unextracted, and the certain causes of spiritual decline and backsliding at work in the very heart of the Church. And I am fully convinced that until Evangelists and Pastors adopt, and carry out in practice,

the principle of total abstinence from all sin, they will as certainly find themselves, every few months, called to do their work over again, as a temperance lecturer would who should admit the moderate use of alcohol.

21. Again, the tendency of the opposite view of this subject, shows that that cannot be true. Who does not know, that to call upon sinners to repent, and at the same time to inform them that they will not, and cannot, and are not expected to repent, would for ever prevent their repentance. Suppose you say to a sinner, you are naturally able to repent; but it is certain that you never will repent in this life, either with or without the Holy Spirit. Who does not see that such teaching would as surely prevent his repentance as he believed it? So, say to a professor of religion, you are naturally able to be wholly conformed to the will of God; but it is certain that you never will be in this life, either in your own strength or by the grace of God. If this teaching be believed, it will just as certainly prevent his sanctification as the other teaching would the repentance of the sinner. I can speak from experience on this subject. While I inculcated the common views, I was often instrumental in bringing christians under great conviction, and into a state of temporary repentance and faith. But falling short of urging them up to a point where they would become so acquainted with Christ, as to abide in him, they would of course soon relapse again into their former state. I seldom saw, and can now understand that I had no reason to expect to see, under the instructions which I then gave, such a state of religious principle, such steady and confirmed walking with God among Christians, as I have seen since the change in my views and instructions.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 58

SANCTIFICATION.

PAUL ENTIRELY SANCTIFIED.

I might urge a great many other considerations, and as I have said, fill a book with scriptures, and arguments, and demonstrations, of the attainability of entire sanctification in this life.

But I forbear, and at present will present only one more consideration, a consideration which has great weight in some minds. It is a question of great importance, at least in some minds, whether any actually ever did attain this state. Some who believe it attainable, do not consider it of much importance to show that it has actually been attained. Now I freely admit that it may be attainable, even if it never has been attained. Yet it appears to me that as a matter of encouragement to the church, it is of great importance whether, as a matter of fact, a state of entire and continued holiness has been attained in this life. This question covers much ground. But for the sake of brevity, I design to examine but one case, and see whether there is not reason to believe that in one instance at least it has been attained. The case to which I allude is that of the Apostle Paul. And I propose to take up and examine the passages that speak of him, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there is evidence that he ever attained to this state in this life.

And here let me say that to my own mind it seems plain, that Paul and John, to say nothing of the other Apostles, designed and expected the church to understand them as speaking from experience, and as having received of that fulness which they taught to be in Christ and in his gospel.

And I wish to say again and more expressly, that I do not rest the practicability of attaining a state of entire and continued holiness at all upon the question, whether any ever have attained it any more than I would rest the question, whether the world ever will be converted, upon the fact whether it ever has been converted. I have been surprised, when the fact that a state of entire holiness has been attained, is urged as one argument among a great many to prove its attainability, and that too, merely as an encouragement to Christians to lay hold upon this blessing--that objectors and reviewers fasten upon this as the doctrine of sanctification, as if by calling this particular question into doubt, they could overthrow all the other proof of its attainability. Now this is utterly absurd. When, then, I examine the character of Paul with this object in view, if it should not appear clear to you that he did attain this state, you are not to overlook the fact, that its attainability is settled by other arguments, on grounds entirely independent of the question whether it has been attained or not; and that I merely use this as an argument, simply because to me it appears forcible, and fitted to afford great encouragement to Christians to press after this state.

I will first make some remarks in regard to the manner in which the language of Paul, when speaking of himself, should be understood; and then proceed to an examination of the passages which speak of his christian character.

1. His revealed character, demands that we should understand him to mean all that he says, when speaking in his own favor.
2. The spirit of inspiration would guard him against speaking too highly of himself.
3. No man ever seemed to possess greater modesty, and to feel more unwilling to exalt his own attainments.

4. If he considered himself as not having attained a state of entire sanctification, and as often, if not in all things, falling short of his duty, we may expect to find him acknowledging this in the deepest self-abasement.

5. If he is charged with living in sin, and with being wicked in any thing, we may expect him, when speaking under inspiration, not to justify, but unequivocally to condemn himself in those things if he was really guilty.

Now in view of these facts, let us examine those scriptures in which he speaks of himself, and is spoken of by others.

(1.) 1 Thess. 2:10: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe." Upon this text I remark:

[1.] Here he unqualifiedly asserts his own holiness. This language is very strong, "How holily, justly, and unblamably." If to be holy, just, and unblamable, be not entire sanctification, what is?

[2.] He appeals to the heart-searching God for the truth of what he says, and to their own observation; calling on God and on them also to bear witness, that he had been holy and without blame.

[3.] Here we have the testimony of an inspired Apostle, in the most unqualified language, asserting his own entire sanctification. Was he deceived? Can it be that he knew himself all the time to have been living in sin? If such language as this does not amount to an unqualified assertion that he had lived among them without sin, what can be known by the use of human language?

(2.) 2 Cor. 6:3--7: "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions[,] in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." Upon these verses I remark:

Paul asserts that he gave no offence in any thing, but in all things approved himself as a minister of God. Among other things, he did this, "by pureness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned," and "by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." How could so modest a man as Paul speak of himself in this manner, unless he knew himself to be in a state of entire sanctification, and thought it of great importance that the church should know it?

(3.) 2 Cor. 1:12: "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." This passage plainly implies the same thing, and was manifestly said for the same purpose--to declare the greatness of the grace of God as manifested in himself.

(4.) Acts 24:16: "And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." Paul doubtless at this time had an enlightened conscience. If an inspired Apostle could affirm, that he "exercised himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men," must he not have been in a state of entire sanctification?

(5.) 2 Tim. 1:3: "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with a pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day." Here again he affirms that he serves God with a pure conscience. Could this be, if he was often, and perhaps every day, as some suppose, violating his conscience?

(6.) Gal. 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." This does not assert, but strongly implies that he lived without sin, and also that he regarded himself as dead to sin in the sense of being permanently sanctified.

(7.) Gal. 6:14: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is

crucified unto me, and I unto the world." This text also affords the same inference as above.

(8.) Phil. 1:21: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Here the Apostle affirms that for him to live was as if Christ lived in the church, that is, by his doctrine illustrated by his life, it was as if Christ lived again and preached his own gospel to sinners and to the church; or for him to live was to make Christ known as if Christ lived to make himself known. How could he say this, unless his example, and doctrine, and spirit, were those of Christ?

(9.) Acts 20:26: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men." Upon this I remark:

[1.] This passage, taken in its connection, shows clearly, the impression that Paul desired to make upon the minds of those to whom he spake.

[2.] It is certain that he could in no proper sense be "pure from the blood of all men," unless he had done his whole duty. If he had been sinfully lacking in any grace, or virtue, or labor, could he have said this? Certainly not.

(10.) 1 Cor. 2:16,17: "Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." I remark:

[1.] Here Paul manifestly sets himself up as an example to the church. How could he do this if he were living in sin?

[2.] He sent Timotheus to them to refresh their memories in regard to his doctrine and practice; implying that what he taught in every church, he himself practiced.

(11.) 1 Cor. 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Here Paul commands them to follow him, "as he followed Christ;" not so far as he followed Christ, as some seem to understand it, but to follow him because he followed Christ. How could he in this unqualified manner, command the Church to copy his example, unless he knew himself to be blameless?

(12.) Phil. 3:47[17],20: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we also look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Here again, Paul calls upon the Church to follow him, and particularly to notice those that did copy his example, and assigns as the reason, "for our conversation is in heaven."

(13.) Phil. 3:9: "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." The Phillipians[sic.] were commanded to "do those things which they had learned, and received and SEEN in him." And then he adds, that if they "do those things, the God of peace shall be with them." Now can it be that he meant that they should understand any thing less, than that he lived without sin among them?

I will next examine those passages which are supposed by some to imply that Paul was not in a state of entire sanctification.

(14.) Acts 15:36--40: "And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other; and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed to Cyprus: and Paul chose Silas, and departed being recommended by the brethren, unto the grace of God." Upon this passage I remark:

[1.] This contention between Paul and Barnabas was founded upon the fact, that John, who was a nephew of Barnabas, had once abruptly left them in their travels, it would seem, without any justifiable reason, and had returned home.

[2.] It appears that the confidence of Barnabas in his nephew was restored.

[3.] That Paul was not as yet satisfied of the stability of his character, and thought it dangerous to trust him as a traveling companion and fellow laborer. It is not intimated, nor can it fairly be inferred that either of them sinned in this contention.

[4.] Being men of principle, neither of them felt it to be his duty to yield to the opinion of the other.

[5.] If either was to be blamed, it seems that Barnabas was in fault, rather than Paul, inasmuch as he determined to take John with him without having consulted Paul. And he persisted in this determination until he met with such firm resistance on the part of Paul, that he took John and sailed abruptly for Cyprus; while Paul choosing Silas as his companion, was recommended by the brethren to the grace of God, and departed. Now certainly there is nothing in this transaction, that Paul or any good man, or an angel, under the circumstances, needs to have been ashamed of, that we can discover. It does not appear, that Paul ever acted more from a regard to the glory of God and the good of religion, than in this transaction. And I would humbly inquire what spirit is that which finds sufficient evidence in this case to charge an inspired Apostle with rebellion against God? But even admitting that he did sin in this case, where is the evidence that he was not afterwards sanctified when he wrote the epistle?--for this was before the writing of any of his epistles.

(15.) Acts 23:1--5: "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not brethren that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." In this case sinful anger has been imputed to Paul; but so far as I can see, without any just reason. To my mind it seems plain, that the contrary is to be inferred. It appears that Paul was not personally acquainted with the then officiating high priest. And he manifested the utmost regard to the authority of God in quoting from the Old Testament, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people"--implying, that notwithstanding the abuse he had received, he should not have made the reply, had he known him to be the high priest.

(16.) Rom. 7: from the fourteenth to the twenty-fifth verse, has by many been supposed to be an epitome of Paul's experience at the time he wrote the epistle. Upon this I remark:

[1.] The connection and drift of Paul's reasoning show that the case of which he was speaking, whether his own or the case of some one else, was adduced by him to illustrate the influence of the law upon the carnal mind.

[2.] This is a case in which sin had the entire dominion, and overcame all his resolutions of obedience.

[3.] That his use of the singular pronoun and in the first person, proves nothing in regard to the point whether or not he was speaking of himself, for this is common with him, and with other writers, when using illustrations.

[4.] He keeps up the personal pronoun and passes into the eighth chapter; at the beginning of which, he represents himself or the person of whom he is speaking, as being not only in a different but is an exactly opposite state of mind. Now if the seventh chapter contains Paul['s] experience, whose experience is this in the eighth chapter? Are we to understand them both as the experience of Paul? If so, we must understand him as first speaking of his experience before and then after he was sanctified. He begins the eighth chapter by saying, "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" and assigns as a reason, that "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The law of sin and death was that law in his members, or the influence of the flesh, of which he had so bitterly complained in the seventh chapter. But now it appears that he has passed into a state in which he is made free from this influence of the flesh--is emancipated and dead to the world, and to the flesh, and in a state in which "there is no condemnation." Now if there was no condemnation in the state in which he was, it must have been, either because he did not sin; or, if he did sin, because the law did not condemn him; or because the law of God was repealed or abrogated. Now if the penalty of the law was so set aside in his case, that he could sin without condemnation, this is a real abrogation of the law. For a law without a penalty is no law, and if the law is set aside, there is no longer any standard, and he was neither sinful nor holy. But as the law was not and could not be set aside, its penalty was not and could not be so abrogated as not to condemn every sin. If Paul lived without condemnation, it must be because he lived without sin.

To me it does not appear as if Paul speaks of his own experience in the seventh chapter of Romans, but that he merely supposes a case by way of illustration, and speaks in the first person and in the present tense, simply because it was convenient and suitable to his purpose. His object manifestly was, in this and in the beginning of the eighth chapter, to contrast the influence of the law and of the gospel--to describe in the seventh chapter the state of a man who was living in sin, and every day condemned by the law, convicted and constantly struggling with his own corruptions, but continually overcome,--and in the eighth chapter to exhibit a person in the enjoyment of gospel liberty, where the righteousness of the law was fulfilled in the heart by the grace of Christ. The seventh chapter may well apply either to a person in a backslidden state, or to a convicted person who had never been converted. The eighth chapter can clearly be applicable to none but to those who are in a state of entire sanctification.

I have already said that the seventh chapter contains the history of one over whom sin has dominion. Now to suppose that this was the experience of Paul when he wrote the epistle, or of any one who was in the liberty of the gospel, is absurd and contrary to the experience of every person who ever enjoyed gospel liberty. And farther, this is as expressly contradicted in the sixth chapter as it can be. As I said, the seventh chapter exhibits one over whom sin has dominion; but God says, in the sixth chapter and fourteenth verse, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

I remark finally upon this passage, that if Paul was speaking of himself in the seventh chapter of Romans, and really giving a history of his own experience, it proves nothing at all in regard to his subsequent sanctification: for,

[1.] If this was his experience at the time he wrote the epistle, it would prove nothing in regard to what afterwards occurred in his own experience.

[2.] The eighth chapter shows conclusively, that it was not his experience at the time he wrote the epistle. The fact that the 7th and 8th chapters have been separated since the translation was made, as I have before said, has led to much error in the understanding of this passage. Nothing is more certain than that the two chapters were designed to describe not only different experiences, but experiences opposite to each other. And that both these experiences should belong to the same person at the same time, is manifestly impossible. If therefore Paul is speaking in this connection of his own experience, we are bound to understand the eighth chapter as describing his experience at the time he wrote the epistle; and the seventh chapter as descriptive of a former experience.

Now therefore, if any one understands the seventh chapter as describing a christian experience, he must understand it as giving the exercises of one in a very imperfect state; and the eighth chapter as descriptive of a soul in a state of entire sanctification. So that this epistle, instead of militating against the idea of Paul's entire sanctification, upon the supposition that he was speaking of himself, fully establishes the fact that he was in that state. What do those brethren mean who take the latter part of the seventh chapter as entirely disconnected with what precedes and follows it, and make it tell a sad story on the subject of the legal and sinful bondage of an inspired Apostle? What can not be proved from the Bible in this way? Is it not a sound and indispensable rule of biblical interpretation, that a passage is to be taken in its connection, and that the scope and leading intention of the writer is to be continually borne in mind in deciding upon the meaning of any passage? Why then, I pray, are the verses that precede, and those that immediately follow in the eighth chapter, entirely overlooked in the examination of this important passage?

(17.) Phil. 3:10--15: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." Upon this passage I remark:

[1.] Here is a plain allusion to the Olympic games, in which men ran for a prize, and were not crowned until the end of the race, however well they might run.

[2.] Paul speaks of two kinds of perfection here, one of which he claims to have attained, and the other he had not. The perfection which he had not attained, was that which he did not expect to attain until the end of his race, nor indeed until he had attained the resurrection from the dead. Until then he was not and did not expect to be perfect, in the sense that he should "apprehend all that for which he was apprehended of Christ Jesus." But all this does not imply that he was not living without sin, any more than it implies that Christ was living in sin when he said, "I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." Here Christ speaks of a perfection which he had not attained.

Now it is manifest that it was the glorified state to which Paul had not attained, and which perfection he was pressing after. But in the fifteenth verse, he speaks of another kind of perfection which he professed to have attained. "Let us therefore," he says, "as many as be perfect, be thus minded;" that is, let us be pressing after this high state of perfection in glory, "if by any means we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead." The figure of the games should be kept continually in mind in the interpretation of this passage. The prize in those races was the crown. This was given only at the end of the race. And besides, a man was "not crowned except he ran lawfully," that is, according to rule. Paul was running for the prize, that is, the crown, not as some suppose, for entire sanctification, but for a crown of glory. This he did not expect until he had completed his race. He exhorts those who were perfect, that is, those who were running lawfully or according to rule, to forget the things that were behind, and press to the mark, that is, the goal, for the prize, or the crown of glory which the Lord, the righteous judge, who was witnessing his race to award the crown to the victor, would give him at that day.

Now it is manifest to my mind, that Paul does not in this passage, teach expressly or impliedly that he was living in sin, but the direct opposite--that he meant to say as he had said in many other places, that he was unblamable in respect to sin, but that he was aspiring after higher attainments, and meant to be satisfied with nothing short of eternal glory.

Again Phil. 4:11--13: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Here Paul undoubtedly meant to affirm, not merely his abstract ability to do all his duty, but that he had learned by experience that as a matter of fact and reality he found himself able to do all things required of him.

In relation to the character of Paul, let me say:

- a. If Paul was not sinless, he was an extravagant boaster, and such language used by any minister in these days would be considered as the language of all extravagant boasting.
- b. This setting himself up as an example so frequently and fully, without any caution or qualification, was highly dangerous to the interests of the Church, if he was not in a state of entire sanctification.
- c. It was as wicked as it was dangerous.
- d. His language in appealing to God, that in life and heart he was blameless, was blasphemous, unless he was really what he professed to be; and if he was what he professed to be, he was in a state of entire sanctification.
- e. There is no reason for doubting his having attained this state.
- f. It is doing dishonor to God, to maintain, under these circumstances, that Paul had not attained the blessing of entire sanctification.
- g. He no where confesses sin after he became an Apostle, but invariably justifies himself, appealing to man and to God, for his entire integrity and blamelessness of heart and life.
- h. To accuse him of sin in these circumstances, without evidence, is not only highly injurious to him, but disgraceful to the cause of religion.

i. To charge him with sin, when he claims to have been blameless, is either to accuse him of falsehood or delusion.

j. To maintain the sinfulness of this Apostle, is to deny the grace of the gospel, and charge God foolishly. And I can not but inquire, why is this great effort in the Church to maintain that Paul lived in sin, and was never wholly sanctified till death?

Two things have appeared wonderful to me:

1. That so many professed christians should seem to think themselves highly honoring God in extending the claims of the law, and yet denying that the grace of the gospel is equal to the demands of the law.

2. That so many persons seem to have an entirely self-righteous view of the subject of sanctification. With respect to the first of these opinions. much pains has been taken to extend to the utmost the claims of the law of God. Much has been said of its exceeding and infinite strictness, and the great length, and breadth, and height, and depth of its claims. Multitudes are engaged in defending the claims of the law, as if they greatly feared that the purity of the law would be defiled--its strictness and spirituality overlooked--and its high and holy claims set aside, or filtered down somehow to the level of human passion and selfishness. And while engaged in their zeal to defend the law, they talk, and preach, and write, as if they supposed it indispensable in order to sustain the high claims of the law, to deny the grace and power of the gospel, and its sufficiency to enable human beings to comply with the requisitions of the law. Thus they seem to me, unwittingly, to enter the lists against the grace of Christ, and with the utmost earnestness and even vehemence, to deny that the grace of Christ is sufficient to overcome sin, and to fulfill in us the righteousness of the law. And in their zeal for the law, they appear to me either to overlook, or flatly to deny the grace of the gospel.

Now let the law be exalted. Let it be magnified and made honorable. Let it be shown to be strict, and pure, and perfect, as its Author--spread its claims over the whole field of human and angelic accountability--carry it like a blaze of fire to the deepest recess of every human heart. Exalt it as high as heaven. And thunder its authority and claims to the depths of hell. Stretch out its line upon the universe of mind. And let it, as it well may, and as it ought, thunder death and terrible damnation against every kind and degree of iniquity. Yet let it be remembered forever, that the grace of the gospel, is co-extensive with the claims of the law. Let no man, therefore, in his strife to maintain the authority of the law, insult the Savior, exercise unbelief himself, or fritter away and drown the faith of the Church, by holding out the profane idea, that the glorious gospel of the blessed God--sent home and rendered powerful by the efficacious application of the Holy Spirit, is not sufficient to fulfill in us "the righteousness of the law," and cause us "to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

With respect to the second thing which appears wonderful to me, namely, that so many seem to have an entirely self-righteous view of the doctrine of sanctification, let me say, that they seem afraid to admit that any are entirely and perfectly sanctified in this life, lest they should flatter human pride, seeming to take it for granted that if any are entirely sanctified, they have whereof to glory, as if they had done something, and were in themselves better than others. Whereas, the doctrine of entire sanctification utterly abhors the idea of human merit, disclaims and repudiates it as altogether an abomination to God and to the sanctified soul. This doctrine, as taught in the Bible, and as I understand it. is as far as possible from conniving in the least degree at the idea of any thing naturally good in saints or sinners. It ascribes the whole of salvation and sanctification from first to last, not only till the soul is sanctified, but at every moment while it remains in that state, to the indwelling Spirit, and influence, and grace of Christ.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 59

SANCTIFICATION.

VI. POINT OUT THE CONDITIONS OF THIS ATTAINMENT.

I. A state of entire sanctification can never be attained by an indifferent waiting of God's time.

2. Nor by any works of law, or works of any kind performed in your own strength, irrespective of the grace of God. By this I do not mean that, were you disposed to exert your natural powers aright, you could not at once obey the law in the exercise of your natural strength, and continue to do so. But I do mean, that as you are wholly indisposed to use your natural powers aright without the grace of God, no efforts that you will actually make in your own strength or independent of his grace, will ever result in your entire sanctification.

3. Not by any direct efforts to feel right. Many spend their time in vain efforts to force themselves into a right state of feeling. Now it should be for ever understood, that religion does not consist in a mere feeling, emotion, or involuntary affection of any kind. Feelings do not result from a direct effort to feel. But on the contrary, they are the spontaneous actings of the mind when it has under its direct and deep consideration the objects, truths, facts, or realities that are correlated to these involuntary emotions. They are the most easy and natural state of mind possible under such circumstances. So far from its requiring an effort to put them forth, it would rather require an effort to prevent them, when the mind is intensely considering those objects and considerations which have a natural tendency to produce them. This is so true that when persons are in the exercise of such affections, they feel no difficulty at all in their exercise, but wonder how any one can help feeling as they do. It seems to them so natural, so easy, and I may say, so almost unavoidably, that they often feel and express astonishment that any one should find it difficult to exercise the feelings of which they are conscious. The course that many persons take on the subject of religion has often appeared wonderful to me. They make themselves, their own state and interests, the central point, around which their own minds are continually revolving. Their selfishness is so great, that their own interests, happiness, and salvation, fill their whole field of vision. And with their thoughts and anxieties, and whole souls clustering around their own salvation, they complain of a hard heart--that they cannot love God--that they do not repent and cannot believe. They manifestly regard love to God, repentance, faith and all religion as consisting in mere feelings. Being conscious that they do not feel right, as they express it, they are the more concerned about themselves, which concern but increases their embarrassment and the difficulty of exercising what they call right affections. The less they feel, the more they try to feel--the greater efforts they make to feel right without success, the more are they confirmed in their selfishness, and the more are their thoughts glued to their own interests; and they are of course at a greater and greater distance from any right state of mind. And thus their selfish anxieties beget ineffectual efforts, and these efforts but deepen their anxieties. And if in this state, death should appear in a visible form before them, or the last trumpet sound, and they should be summoned to the solemn Judgment, it would but increase their distraction, confirm and almost give omnipotence to their selfishness, and render their sanctification morally impossible. It should never be forgotten that all true religion consists in voluntary states of mind, and that the true and only way to attain to true religion is to look at and understand the exact thing to be done, and then to put forth at once the voluntary exercise required.

4. Not by any efforts to obtain grace by works of law. In my lecture on Faith, in the first volume of the Evangelist, I said the following things:

(1.) Should the question be proposed to a Jew, "What shall I do that I may work the work of God?"--he would answer,

keep the law, both moral and ceremonial, that is, keep the commandments.

(2.) To the same inquiry an Arminian would answer, Improve common grace, and you will obtain converting grace, that is, use the means of grace according to the best light you have, and you will obtain the grace of salvation. In this answer it is not supposed, that the inquirer already has faith; but that he is in a state of unbelief, and is inquiring after converting grace. The answer, therefore, amounts to this; you must get converting grace by your impenitent works; you must become holy by your hypocrisy; you must work out sanctification by sin.

(3.) To this question, most professed Calvinists would make in substance the same reply. They would reject the language, while they retained the idea. Their direction would imply, either that the inquirer already has faith, or that he must perform some works to obtain it, that is, that he must obtain grace by works of law.

A late Calvinistic writer admits that entire and permanent sanctification is attainable, although he rejects the idea of the actual attainment of such a state in this life. He supposes the condition of attaining this state or the way to attain it, is by a diligent use of the means of grace and that the saints are sanctified just so far as they make a diligent use of the means of sanctification. But as he denies that any saints ever did or will use all the means with suitable diligence, he denies also of course that entire sanctification ever is attained in this life. The way of attaining it according to his teaching is by the diligent use of means. If then this writer were asked "what shall I do that I may work the works of God,"--or in other words, what shall I do to obtain entire and permanent sanctification, his answer, it seems, would be: "Use diligently all the means of grace," that is, you must get grace by works, or, with the Arminian, improve common grace and you will secure sanctifying grace.

Neither an Arminian, nor a Calvinist would formally direct the inquirer to the law, as the ground of Justification. But nearly the whole Church would give directions that would amount to the same thing. Their answer would be a legal, and not a gospel answer. For whatever answer is given to this question, that does not distinctly recognize faith, as the condition of abiding holiness in christians, is legal. Unless the inquirer is made to understand, that this is the first, grand, fundamental duty, without the performance of which all virtue, all giving up of sin, all acceptable obedience, is impossible, he is misdirected. He is led to believe that it is possible to please God without faith, and to obtain grace by works of law. There are but two kinds of works--works of law, and works of faith. Now if the inquirer has not the "faith that works by love," to set him upon any course of works to get it, is certainly to set him to get faith by works of law. Whatever is said to him that does not clearly convey the truth, that both justification and sanctification are by faith, without works of law, is law, and not gospel. Nothing before or without faith, can possibly be done by any one, but works of law. His first duty, therefore, is faith; and every attempt to obtain faith by unbelieving works, is to lay works at the foundation, and make grace a result. It is the direct opposite of gospel truth.

Take facts as they arise in every day's experience, to show that what I have stated is true of almost all professors and non-professors. Whenever a sinner begins in good earnest to agitate the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" he resolves as a first duty, to break off from his sins, that is, in unbelief. Of course, his reformation is only outward. He determines to do better--to reform in this, that, and the other thing, and thus prepare himself to be converted. He does not expect to be saved without grace and faith, but he attempts to get grace by works of law.

The same is true of multitudes of anxious Christians, who are inquiring what they shall do to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. They overlook the fact, that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," that it is with "the shield of faith" that they are "to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." They ask, Why am I overcome by sin? Why can I not get above its power? Why am I thus the slave of my appetites and passions, and the sport of the devil? They cast about for the cause of all this spiritual wretchedness and death. At one time, they think they have discovered it in the neglect of one duty; and at another time in the neglect of another. Sometimes they imagine they have found the cause to lie in yielding to one sin, and sometimes in yielding to another. They put forth efforts in this direction, and in that direction, and patch up their righteousness on one side, while they make a rent in the other side. Thus they spend years in running around in a circle, and making dams of sand across the current of their own habitudes and tendencies. Instead of at once purifying their hearts by faith, they are engaged in trying to arrest the overflowing of the bitter waters of their own propensities. Why do I sin? they inquire; and casting about for the cause, they come to the sage conclusion, It is because I neglect such a duty, that is, because I do sin. But how shall I get rid of sin? Answer: by doing my duty, that is by ceasing from sin. Now the real inquiry is, Why do they neglect their duty? Why do they commit sin at all? Where is the

foundation of all this mischief? Will it be replied, the foundation of all this wickedness is in the force of temptation--in the weakness of our hearts--in the strength of our evil propensities and habits? But all this only brings us back to the real inquiry again, How are these things to be overcome? I answer, by faith alone. No works of law have the least tendency to overcome our sins; but rather to confirm the soul in self-righteousness and unbelief.

The great and fundamental sin, which is at the foundation of all other sin, is unbelief. The first thing is, to give up that--to believe the word of God. There is no breaking off from one sin without this. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Thus we see, that the backslider and convicted sinner, when agonizing to overcome sin, will almost always betake themselves to works of law to obtain faith. They will fast, and pray, and read, and struggle, and outwardly reform, and thus endeavor to obtain grace. Now all this is in vain and wrong. Do you ask, shall we not fast, and pray, and read, and struggle? Shall we do nothing--but sit down in Antinomian security and inaction? I answer, You must do all that God commands you to do: but begin where he tells you to begin, and do it in the manner in which he commands you to do it; that is, in the exercise of that faith that works by love. Purify your hearts by faith. Believe in the Son of God. And, say not in your heart, "Who shall ascend into heaven, that is, to bring Christ down from above; or who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach."

Now these facts show, that even under the gospel, almost all professors of religion, while they reject the Jewish notion of justification by works of law, have after all adopted a ruinous substitute for it, and suppose that, in some way they are to obtain grace by their works.

5. A state of entire sanctification cannot be attained by attempting to copy the experience of others. It is very common for convicted sinners, or for Christians inquiring after entire sanctification, in their blindness, to ask others to relate their experience, to mark minutely the detail of all their exercises, and then set themselves to pray for and make direct efforts to attain the same class of exercises--not seeming to understand that they can no more exercise feelings in the detail like others, than they can look like others. Human experiences differ as human countenances differ. The whole history of a man's former state of mind, comes in of course to modify his present and future experience. So that the precise train of feelings which may be requisite in your case, and which will actually occur, if you are ever sanctified, will not in all its details, coincide with the exercises of any other human being. It is of vast importance for you to understand, that you can be no copyist in any true religious experience: and that you are in great danger of being deceived by Satan, whenever you attempt to copy the experience of others. I beseech you, therefore, to cease from praying for or trying to obtain the precise experience of any person, whatever. All truly christian experiences are, like human countenances, in their outline so much alike as to be readily known as the lineaments of the religion of Jesus Christ. But no farther than this are they alike, any more than human countenances are alike.

But here let it be remembered that sanctification does not consist in the various affections or emotions of which christians speak, and which are often mistaken for or confounded with true religion; but that sanctification consists in entire consecration, and consequently it is all out of place for any one to attempt to copy the feelings of another, inasmuch as feelings do not constitute religion. The feelings of which christians speak do not constitute true religion, but often result from a right state of heart. These feelings may properly enough be spoken of as Christian experience, for, although involuntary states of mind, they are experienced by true Christians. The only way to secure them is to set the will right, and the emotions will be a natural result.

6. Not by waiting to make preparations before you come into this state. Observe that the thing about which you are inquiring is a state of entire consecration to God. Now do not imagine that this state of mind must be prefaced by a long introduction of preparatory exercises. It is common for persons when inquiring upon this subject with earnestness, to think themselves hindered in their progress by a want of this or that or the other exercise or state of mind. They look every where else but at the real difficulty. They assign any other and every other but the true reason for their not being already in a state of sanctification. The true difficulty is voluntary selfishness or voluntary consecration to self-interest and self-gratification. This is the difficulty and the only difficulty to be overcome.

7. Not by attending meetings, asking the prayers of other christians, or depending in any way upon the means of getting

into this state. By this I do not intend to say that means are unnecessary, or that it is not through the instrumentality of truth, that this state of mind is induced. But I do mean that while you are depending upon any instrumentality whatever, your mind is diverted from the real point before you, and you are never like to make this attainment.

8. Not by waiting for any particular views of Christ. When persons, in the state of mind of which I have been speaking, hear those who live in faith describe their views of Christ, they say, O, if I had such views, I could believe; I must have these before I can believe. Now you should understand that these views are the result and effect of faith in the promise of the Spirit to take of the things of Christ and show them to you. Lay hold of this class of promises, and the Holy Spirit will reveal Christ to you in the relations in which you need him from time to time. Take hold, then, on the simple promise of God. Take God at his word. Believe that he means just what he says; and this will at once bring you into the state of mind after which you inquire.

9. Not in any way which you may mark out for yourself. Persons in an inquiring state are very apt, without seeming to be aware of it, to send imagination on before them, to stake out the way, and set up a flag where they intend to come out. They expect to be thus and thus exercised--to have such and such peculiar views and feelings, when they have attained their object. Now there probably never was a person who did not find himself disappointed in these respects. God says, "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not. I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." This suffering your imagination to mark out your path is a great hindrance to you, as it sets you upon making many fruitless and worse than fruitless, attempts to attain this imaginary state of mind, wastes much of your time, and greatly wearies the patience and grieves the Spirit of God. While he is trying to lead you right to the point, you are hauling off from the course, and insisting that this which your imagination has marked out is the way, instead of that in which he is trying to lead you. And thus in your pride and ignorance you are causing much delay, and abusing the long-suffering of God. He says, "This is the way, walk ye in it." But you say, no--this is the way. And thus you stand and parley and banter while you are every moment in danger of grieving the Spirit of God away from you, and of losing your soul.

10. Not in any manner, or at any time or place, upon which you may in your own mind lay any stress. If there is any thing in your imagination that has fixed definitely upon any particular manner, time, or place, or circumstance, you will in all probability either be deceived by the devil, or be entirely disappointed in the result. You will find that in all these particular items on which you had laid any stress, that the wisdom of man is foolishness with God--that your ways are not his ways, nor your thoughts his thoughts. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than your ways, and his thoughts higher than your thoughts." But,

11. This state is to be attained by faith alone. Let it be forever remembered, that "without faith it is impossible to please God," and "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin."

Both justification and sanctification are by faith alone. Rom, 3:30; "Seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith;" and 5:1: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Also 9:30,31: "What shall we say then? that the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law."

12. But let me by no means be understood as teaching sanctification by faith as distinct from and opposed to sanctification by the Holy Spirit or Spirit of Christ, or, which is the same thing, by Christ our sanctification, living and reigning in the heart. Faith is rather the instrument or condition than the efficient agent that induces a state of present and permanent sanctification. Faith simply receives Christ, as king, to live and reign in the soul. It is Christ in the exercise of his different offices and appropriated in his different relations to the wants of the soul, by faith, who secures our sanctification. This he does by Divine discoveries to the soul of his Divine perfections and fulness. The condition of these discoveries is faith and obedience. He says, Jno. 14:21--23,--"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, (not Iscariot,) Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." But I must call your attention to Christ as our sanctification more at large

hereafter.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 60

SANCTIFICATION.

VI. CONDITIONS OF ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.--Continued.

To ascertain the conditions of entire sanctification in this life we need to consider what the temptations are that overcome us. When first converted we have seen that the heart or will consecrates itself and the whole being to God. We have also seen that this is a state of disinterested benevolence or a committal of the whole being to the promotion of the highest good of being. We have also seen that all sin is selfishness, or that all sin consists in the will's seeking the indulgence or gratification of self; that it consists in the will's yielding obedience to the propensities instead of obeying God, as his law is revealed in the reason. Now who can not see what needs to be done to break the power of temptation and let the soul go free? The fact is that the department of our sensibility that is related to objects of time and sense has received an enormous development and is tremblingly alive to all its correlated objects, while by reason of the blindness of the mind to spiritual objects, it is scarcely developed at all in its relations to them. Those objects are seldom thought of by the carnal mind, and when they are, they are only thought of. They are not clearly seen, and of course they are not felt.

The thought of God, of Christ, of sin, of holiness, of heaven, and hell, excites little or no emotion in the carnal mind. The carnal mind is alive and awake to earthly and sensible objects, but dead to spiritual realities. The spiritual world needs to be revealed to the soul. The soul needs to see and clearly apprehend its own spiritual condition, relations, wants. It needs to become acquainted with God and Christ, to have spiritual and eternal realities made plain, and present, and all-absorbing realities to the soul. It needs such discoveries of the eternal world, of the nature and guilt of sin, and of Christ, the Remedy of the soul, as to kill or greatly mortify lust, or the appetites and passions in their relations to objects of time and sense, and to thoroughly develop the sensibility in its relations to sin and to God, and to the whole circle of spiritual realities. This will greatly abate the frequency and power of temptation to self-gratification, and break up the voluntary slavery of the will. The developments of the sensibility need to be thoroughly corrected. This can only be done by the revelation by the Holy Spirit, to the inward man, of those great and solemn and overpowering realities of the "spirit land," that lie concealed from the eye of flesh.

We often see those around us whose sensibility is so developed in some one or more directions, that they are led captive by appetite and passion in that direction in spite of reason and of God. The inebriate is an example of this. The glutton, the licentious, the avaricious man, &c., are examples of this kind. We sometimes, on the other hand, see by some striking providence such a counter development of the sensibility produced as to slay and put down those particular tendencies, and the whole direction of the man's life seems to be changed; and outwardly at least, it is so. From being a perfect slave to his appetite for strong drink, he can not without the utmost loathing and disgust so much as hear the name of his once loved beverage mentioned. From being a most avaricious man he becomes deeply disgusted with wealth, and spurns and despises it. Now this has been effected by a counter development of the sensibility, for in the case supposed religion has nothing to do with it. Religion does not consist in the states of the sensibility, nor in the will's being influenced by the sensibility; but sin consists in the will's being thus influenced. One great thing that needs to be done to confirm and settle the will in the attitude of entire consecration to God, is to bring about a counter development of the sensibility, so that it will not draw the will away from God. It needs to be mortified or crucified to the world, to objects of time and sense by so deep, and clear, and powerful a revelation of self to self and of Christ to the soul as to awaken and develop all its susceptibilities in their relations to him and to spiritual and divine realities. This can easily be done through and by the Holy Spirit who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us. He so reveals Christ that the soul receives him to the throne of the heart and to reign throughout the whole being. When the will, the intellect, and the sensibility are yielded to

him, he develops the intelligence and the sensibility by clear revelations of himself in all his offices and relations to the soul, confirms the will, mellows and chastens the sensibility by these divine revelations to the intelligence.

1. It is plain that men are naturally able to be entirely sanctified in the sense of rendering entire and continual obedience to God; for the ability is the condition of the obligation to do so. But what is implied in ability to be as holy as God requires us to be?

The ready and plain answer to this question is:

(1.) The possession of the powers, and susceptibilities of moral agents.

(2.) Sufficient knowledge or light to reveal to us the whole of duty.

(3.) And also to reveal to us clearly the way and means of overcoming any and every difficulty or temptation that lies in our way.

The first we all possess. The second we also possess, for nothing strictly is or can be duty that is not revealed or made known to us. The third is proffered to us upon condition that we receive the Holy Spirit who offers himself as an indwelling light and guide, and who is received by simple faith.

The light and grace which we need and which it is the office of the Holy Spirit to supply, respects mainly the following things:

1. Knowledge of ourselves, our past sins, their nature, aggravation, guilt, and desert of dire damnation.

2. Knowledge of our spiritual helplessness or weakness in consequence of,

(1.) The physical depravity of our natures.

(2.) Of the strength of selfish habit.

(3.) Because of the power of temptation from the world, the flesh, and Satan.

3. We need the light of the Holy Spirit to teach us the character of God, the nature of his government, the purity of his law, the necessity and fact of atonement.

4. To teach us our need of Christ in all his offices and relations governmental, spiritual, and mixed.

5. We need the revelation of Christ to our souls in all these relations, and in such power as to induce in us that appropriating faith without which Christ is not and can not be our salvation.

6. We need to know Christ, for example, in such relations as the following:

(1.) As King, to set up his government and write his law in our hearts; to establish his kingdom within us; to sway his sceptre over our whole being. As king he must be spiritually revealed and received.

(2.) As our Mediator, to stand between the offended justice of God and our guilty souls, to bring about a reconciliation between our souls and God. As mediator he must be known and received.

(3.) As our Advocate or Paracletos, our next or best friend to plead our cause with the Father, our righteous and all prevailing advocate to secure the triumph of our cause at the bar of God. In this relation he must be apprehended and embraced.

- (4.) As our Redeemer, to redeem us from the curse of the law and from the power and dominion of sin; to pay the price demanded by public justice for our release and to overcome and break up forever our spiritual bondage. In this relation also we must know and appreciate him by faith.
- (5.) As our Justification, to procure our pardon and acceptance with God. To know him and embrace him in this relation is indispensable to peace of mind and to release from the condemnation of the law.
- (6.) As our Judge, to pronounce sentence of acceptance, and to award to us the victor's crown.
- (7.) As the Repairer of the Breach, or as the one who makes good to the government of God our default, or in other words, who, by his obedience unto death, rendered to the public justice of God a full governmental equivalent for the infliction of the penalty of the law upon us.
- (8.) As the Propitiation for our sins, to offer himself as a propitiatory or offering for our sins. The apprehension of Christ as making an atonement for our sins seems to be indispensable to the entertaining of a healthy hope of eternal life. It certainly is not healthy for the soul to apprehend the mercy of God without regarding the conditions of its exercise. It does not sufficiently impress the soul with a sense of the justice and holiness of God, with the guilt and desert of sin. It does not sufficiently awe the soul and humble it in the deepest dust to regard God as extending pardon without regard to the sternness of his justice, as evinced in requiring that sin should be recognized in the universe as worthy of the wrath and curse of God, as a condition of its forgiveness. It is remarkable and well worthy of all consideration that those who deny the atonement make sin a comparative trifle, and seem to regard God's benevolence or love as good nature rather than, as it is, "a consuming fire" to all the workers of iniquity. Nothing does or can produce that awe of God, that fear and holy dread of sin--that sense of self-abasement--that self-abasing, God-justifying, spirit that a thorough apprehension of the atonement of Christ will do. Nothing like this can beget that spirit of self-renunciation, of cleaving to Christ, of taking refuge in his blood. In these relations Christ must be revealed to and apprehended and embraced by us as the condition of our entire sanctification.
- (9.) As the Surety of a better than the first covenant, that is, as Surety of a gracious covenant founded on better promises; as an underwriter or endorser of our obligation; as one who undertakes for us and pledges himself as our security to fulfil [I] for and in us all the conditions of our salvation. To apprehend and appropriate Christ by faith in this relation is no doubt a condition of our entire sanctification. I should greatly delight to enlarge, and write a whole course of lectures on the offices and relations of Christ, the necessity of knowing and appropriating him in these relations as the condition of our entire, in the sense of continued sanctification. This would require a large volume at least. All that I can do is to merely suggest a skeleton outline of this subject in this place.
- (10.) We need to apprehend and appropriate Christ as dying for our sins. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to thus reveal his death in its relations to our individual sins, and as related to our sins as individuals. The soul needs to apprehend Christ as crucified for us. It is one thing for the soul to regard the death of Christ merely as the death of a martyr, and an infinitely different thing, as every one knows who has had the experience, to apprehend his death as a real and veritable vicarious sacrifice for our sins, as being truly a substitute for our death. The soul needs to apprehend Christ as suffering on the cross for it, or as its substitute; so that it can say, that sacrifice is for me, that suffering and that death are for my sins. That Blessed Lamb is slain for my sins. If thus fully to apprehend and to appropriate Christ can not kill sin in us, what can?
- (11.) We also need to know Christ as risen for our justification. He arose and lives to procure our certain acquittal or our complete pardon and acceptance with God. That he lives and is our justification we need to know, to break the bondage of legal motives and to slay all selfish fear; to break and destroy the power of temptation from this source. The clearly convinced soul is often tempted to despondency and unbelief, to despair of its own acceptance with God, and it would surely fall into the bondage of fear, were it not for the faith of Christ as a risen, living, justifying Savior. In this relation the soul needs clearly to apprehend and fully to appropriate Christ in his completeness, as a condition of abiding in a state of disinterested consecration to God.
- (12.) We need also to have Christ revealed to us as bearing our griefs and as carrying our sorrows. The clear apprehension of Christ as being made sorrowful for us, and as bending under sorrows and griefs that in justice belonged to us, tends at

once to render sin unspeakably odious and Christ infinitely precious to our souls. The idea of Christ our substitute, needs to be thoroughly developed in our minds. And this relation of Christ needs to be so clearly revealed to us as to become an every where present reality to us. We need to have Christ so revealed as to so completely ravish and engross our affections, that we would sooner cut our own throats or suffer others to cut them than to sin against him. Is such a thing impossible? Indeed it is not. Is not the Holy Spirit able, and willing, and ready to thus reveal him upon condition of our asking it in faith? Surely he is.

(13.) We also need to apprehend Christ as the one by whose stripes we are healed. We need to know him as relieving our pains and sufferings by his own, as preventing our death by his own, as sorrowing that we might eternally rejoice, as grieving that we might be unspeakably and eternally glad, as dying in unspeakable agony that we might die in deep peace and in unspeakable triumph.

(14.) "As being made sin for us." We need to apprehend him as being treated as a sinner and even as the chief of sinners on our account, or for us. This is the representation of scripture that Christ on our account was treated as if he were a sinner. He was made sin for us, that is, he was treated as a sinner or rather as being the representative or as it were the embodiment of sin for us. O! this the soul needs to apprehend--the holy Jesus treated as a sinner, and as if all sin were concentrated in him, on our account! We procured this treatment of him. He consented to take our place in such a sense as to endure the cross, and the curse of the law, for us. When the soul apprehends this, it is ready to die with grief and love. O, how infinitely it loaths self under such an apprehension as this! In this relation he must not only be apprehended, but appropriated by faith.

(15.) We also need to apprehend the fact that "he was made sin for us that we might be made[made] the righteousness of God in him;" that Christ was treated as a sinner that we might be treated as righteous; that we might also be made personally righteous by faith in him; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; that we might inherit and be made partakers of God's righteousness as that righteousness exists and is revealed in Christ; that we might in and by him be made righteous as God is righteous. The soul needs to see that his being made sin for us, was in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. It needs to embrace and lay hold by faith upon that righteousness of God which is brought home to saints in Christ, through the atonement and indwelling Spirit.

(16.) We also need him revealed to the soul as one upon whose shoulders is the government of the world; who administers the government moral and providential of this world for the protection, discipline and benefit of believers. This revelation has a most sin-subduing tendency. That all events are directly or indirectly controlled by him who has so loved us as to die for us; that all things absolutely are designed for and will surely result in our good--these and such like considerations when revealed to the soul and made living realities by the Holy Spirit tend to kill selfishness and confirm the love of God in the soul.

(17.) We also need Christ revealed to the inward being as Head over all things to the church. All these relations are of no avail to our sanctification only in so far forth as they are directly and inwardly and personally revealed to the soul by the Holy Spirit. It is one thing to have thoughts and ideas and opinions concerning Christ, and an entirely different thing to know Christ as he is revealed by the Holy Spirit. All the relations of Christ imply corresponding necessities in us. When the Holy Spirit has revealed to us the necessity and Christ as exactly suited to fully meet that necessity, and urged his acceptance in that relation until we have appropriated him by faith, a great work is done. But until we are thus revealed to ourselves and Christ is thus revealed to us and accepted by us, nothing is done more than to store our heads with notions or opinions and theories, while our hearts are becoming more and more, at every moment, like an adamant stone.

I have often feared that many professed christians knew Christ only after the flesh, that is, they have no other knowledge of Christ than what they obtain by reading and hearing about him without any special revelation of him to the inward being by the Holy Spirit. I do not wonder that such professors and ministers should be totally in the dark upon the subject of entire sanctification in this life. They regard sanctification as brought about by the formation of holy habits instead of resulting from the revelation of Christ to the soul in all his fulness and relations, and the soul's renunciation of self and appropriation of Christ in these relations. Christ is represented in the bible as the Head of the church. The church is represented as his body. He is to the church what the head is to the body. The head is the seat of the intelligence, the will, and in short, of the living soul. Consider what the body would be without the head, and you may understand what the church would be without Christ. But as the church would be without Christ, so each believer would be without Christ.

But we need to have our necessities in this respect clearly revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, and this relation of Christ made plain to our apprehension. The utter darkness of the human mind in regard to its own spiritual state and wants, and in regard to the relations and fulness of Christ, is truly wonderful. His relations as mentioned in the bible are overlooked almost entirely until our wants are discovered. When these are made known and the soul begins in earnest to inquire after a remedy, it needs not inquire in vain. "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend up to heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above; or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart."

(18.) Christ as having all power, or authority in heaven and earth, needs also to be revealed to the soul, and received by faith, to dwell in and rule over it. The corresponding want must of necessity be first known to the mind before it can apprehend and appropriate Christ by faith in this or any other relation. The soul needs to see and feel its weakness, its need of protection, of being defended, and watched over, and controlled. It needs to see this, and also the power of its spiritual enemies, its besetments, its dangers and its certain ruin unless the Almighty One interpose in its behalf. It needs thus truly and deeply to know itself and then, to inspire it with confidence, it needs a revelation of Christ as God, as the Almighty God, to the soul, as one who possesses absolute and infinite power, and as presented to the soul to be accepted as its strength and as all it needs of power.

O how infinitely blind he is to the fulness and glory of Christ who does not know himself and know Christ as both are revealed by the Holy Spirit. When we are led by the Holy Spirit to look down into the abyss of our own emptiness--to behold the horrible pit and miry clay of our own habits, and fleshly, and worldly, and infernal entanglements; when we see in the light of God that our emptiness and necessities are infinite; then, and not till then, are we prepared wholly to cast off self and to put on Christ. The glory and fulness of Christ are not discovered to the soul until it discovers its need of him. But when self, in all its loathsomeness and helplessness, is fully revealed, until hope is utterly extinct as it respects every kind and degree of help in ourselves; and when Christ, the all and in all, is revealed to the soul as its all-sufficient portion and salvation, then, and not until then does the soul know its salvation. This knowledge is the indispensable condition of appropriating faith, or of that act of receiving Christ or that committal of all to him that takes Christ home to dwell in the heart by faith and to preside over all its states and actions. O, such a knowledge and such a reception and putting on of Christ is blessed. Happy is he who knows it by his own experience.

It is indispensable to a steady and implicit faith that the soul should have a spiritual apprehension of what is implied in the saying of Christ that all power was delivered unto him. The ability of Christ to do all and even exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, is what the soul needs clearly to apprehend in a spiritual sense, that is, to apprehend it, not merely as a theory or as a proposition, but to see the true spiritual import of this saying. This is also equally true of all that is said in the bible about Christ, of all his offices and relations. It is one thing to theorize and speculate and opine about Christ, and an infinitely different thing to know him as he is revealed by the Holy Spirit. When Christ is fully revealed to the soul by the Comforter, it will never again doubt the attainability and reality of entire sanctification in this life.

(19.) Another necessity of the soul is to know Christ spiritually as the Prince of Peace. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you" said Christ. What is this peace? And who is Christ in the relation of the Prince of Peace? What is it to possess the peace of Christ--to have the peace of God rule in our hearts? Without the revelation of Christ to the soul by the Holy Spirit, it has no spiritual apprehension of the meaning of this language. Nor can it lay hold on and appropriate Christ as its peace, as the Prince of Peace. Whoever knows and has embraced Christ as his peace and as the Prince of Peace., knows what it is to have the peace of God rule in his heart. But none else at all understand the true spiritual import of this language, nor can it be so explained to them as that they will apprehend it unless it be explained by the Holy Spirit.

(20.) The soul needs also to know Christ as the Captain of salvation, as the skillful conductor, guide and captain of the soul in all its conflicts with its spiritual enemies, as one who is ever at hand to lead the soul on to victory and make it more than a conqueror in all its conflicts with the world, the flesh, and Satan. How indispensable to a living and efficient faith it is and must be for the soul to clearly apprehend by the Holy Spirit this relation of Captain of Salvation and Captain of the Lord's Host. Without confidence in the Leader and Captain, how shall the soul put itself under his guidance and protection in the hour of conflict? It can not.

The fact is that when the soul is ignorant of Christ as a Captain or Leader, it will surely fall in battle. If the church as a body but knew Christ as the Captain of the Lord's Host; if he were but truly and spiritually known to them in that relation,

no more confusion would be seen in the ranks of God's elect. All would be order and strength and conquest. They would soon go up and take possession of the whole territory that has been promised to Christ. The heathen should soon be given to him for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the world for a possession. Joshua knew Christ as the Captain of the Lord's Host. Consequently he had more courage, and efficiency, and prowess than all Israel besides. Even so it is now. When a soul can be found who thoroughly knows and has embraced and appropriated Christ, he is a host of himself. That is, he has appropriated the attributes of Christ to himself; and his influence is felt in Heaven, and earth, and hell.

(21.) Another affecting and important relation in which the soul needs to know Christ, is that of our Passover.

It needs to understand that the only reason why it has not been or will not assuredly be slain for sin is that Christ has sprinkled, as our Paschal Lamb, the lintel and door posts of our souls with his own blood, and that therefore the destroying angel passes us by. There is a most deep and sin-subduing or rather temptation-subduing spirituality in this relation of Christ to the soul when revealed by the Holy Spirit. We must apprehend our sins as slaying the Lamb, and apply his blood to our souls by faith--his blood as being our protection and our only trust. We need to know the security there is in this being sprinkled with his blood, and the certain and speedy destruction of all who have not taken refuge under it. We need to know also that it will not do for a moment to venture out into the streets and from under its protection, lest we be slain there.

(22.) To know Christ as our Wisdom in the true spiritual sense is doubtless indispensable to our entire in the sense of continued sanctification. He is our wisdom in the sense of being the whole of our religion. That is, when separated from him we have no spiritual life whatever. He is at the bottom of, or the inducing cause of all our obedience. This we need clearly to apprehend. Until the soul clearly understands this, it has learned nothing to the purpose of its helplessness and of Christ's spiritual relations to it.

(23.) Very nearly allied to this is Christ's relation to the soul as its Sanctification. I have been amazed at the ignorance of the church and of the ministry respecting Christ as its Sanctification. He is not its Sanctifier in the sense that he does something to the soul that enables it to stand and persevere in holiness in its own strength. He does not change the structure of the soul, but he watches over and works in it to will and to do continually, and thus becomes its Sanctification. His influence is not exerted once for all, but constantly. When he is apprehended and embraced as the soul's sanctification, he rules in and reigns over the soul in so high a sense that he, as it were, develops his own holiness in us. He, as it were, swallows us up, so enfolds (if I may so say,) our wills and our souls in his that we are willingly led captive by him. We will and do as he wills within us. He charms the will into a universal bending to his will. He so establishes his throne in, and his authority over us that he subdues us to himself. He becomes our sanctification only in so far forth as we are revealed to ourselves, and he revealed to us, and as we receive him and put him on. What! has it come to this, that the church doubt and reject the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life? Then, it must be that they have lost sight of Christ as their sanctification. Is not Christ perfect in all his relations? Is there not a completeness and fulness in him? When embraced by us, are we not complete in him? The secret of all this doubting about and opposition to the doctrine of entire sanctification is to be found in the fact that Christ is not apprehended and embraced as our sanctification. The Holy Spirit sanctifies only by revealing Christ to us as our sanctification. He does not speak of himself, but takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us.

Two among the most prominent ministers in the Presbyterian church have said to me within a few years, that they had never heard of Christ as the sanctification of the soul. O, how many of the ministry of the present day overlook the true spiritual gospel of Christ.

(24.) Another of Christ's spiritual relations is that of the Redemption of the soul; not merely as the Redeemer considered in his governmental relation, but as a present Redemption. To apprehend and receive Christ in this relation, the soul needs to apprehend itself as sold under sin; as being the voluntary but real slave of lust and appetite, except as Christ continually delivers us from its power by strengthening and confirming our wills in resisting and overcoming the flesh.

(25.) Christ our Prophet is another important spiritual relation in which we need to apprehend Christ by the Holy Spirit as a condition of entire sanctification. He must be received as the great teacher of our souls, so that every word of his, will be received as God speaking to us. This will render the bible precious and all the words of life efficient to the sanctification of our souls.

(26.) As our High Priest we need also to know Christ. I say we need to know him in this relation, as really ever living and ever sustaining this relation to us, offering up, as it were, by a continual offering, his own blood and himself as a propitiation for our sins; as being entered within the veil and as ever living to make intercession for us. Much precious instruction is to be gathered from this relation of Christ. We need, perishingly need, to know Christ in this relation, as a condition of a right dependence upon him. I all the while feel embarrassed with the consideration that I am not able in this course of instruction to give a fuller account of Christ in these relations. We need a distinct revelation of him in each of these relations in order to a thorough understanding and clear apprehension of that which is implied in each and all of the relations of Christ.

When we sin, it is because of our ignorance of Christ. That is, whenever temptation overcomes us, it is because we do not know and avail ourselves of that relation of Christ that would meet at the time our necessities. One great thing that needs to be done is to correct the developments of our sensibility. The appetites and passions are enormously developed in their relations to earthly objects. In relation to things of time and sense our propensities are greatly developed and are alive; but in relation to spiritual truths and objects and eternal realities, we are naturally as dead as stones. When first converted, if we knew enough of ourselves and of Christ to thoroughly develop and correct the action of the sensibility and confirm our wills in a state of entire consecration, we should not fall. In proportion as the law-work preceding conversion has been thorough and the revelation of Christ at or immediately subsequent to conversion, full and clear, just in that proportion do we witness stability in converts. In most, if not in all instances, however, the convert is too ignorant of himself, and, of course, knows too little about Christ, to be established in permanent obedience. He needs renewed conviction of sin, to be revealed to himself and to have Christ revealed to him, and be formed in him the hope of glory, before he will be steadfast, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Before I close this lecture, I must remark and shall have occasion to repeat the remark, that from what has been said, it must not be inferred that the knowledge of Christ in all these relations is a condition of our coming into a state of entire consecration to God or of present sanctification. The thing insisted on is that the soul will abide in this state in the hour of temptation only so far forth as it betakes itself to Christ in such circumstances of trial, and apprehends and appropriates him by faith from time to time in those relations that meet the present and pressing necessities of the soul. The temptation is the occasion of revealing the necessity, and the Holy Spirit is always ready to reveal Christ in the particular relation suited to the newly developed necessity. The perception and appropriation of him in this relation, under these circumstances of trial, is the sine qua non of our remaining in the state of entire consecration.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 61

SANCTIFICATION.

CHRIST OUR SANCTIFICATION.

(27.) We need also to know ourselves as starving souls, and Christ as the "Bread of Life," as "the Bread that came down from Heaven.["] We need to know spiritually and experimentally what it is to "eat of his flesh and to drink of his blood," to receive him as the bread of life, to appropriate him to the nourishment of our souls as really as we appropriate bread, by digestion, to the nourishment of our bodies. This I know is mysticism to the carnal professor. But to the truly spiritually minded, "this is the bread of God that came down from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall never die." To hear Christ talk of eating his flesh and of drinking his blood was a great stumbling block to the carnal Jews, as it now is to carnal professors. Nevertheless this is a glorious truth that Christ is the constant sustenance of the spiritual life as truly and as literally as food is the sustenance of the body. But the soul will never eat this bread until it has ceased to attempt to fill itself with the husks of its own doings, or with any provision this world can furnish. Do you know, christian, what it is to eat of this bread? If so, then you shall never die.

(28.) Christ also needs to be revealed to the soul as the Fountain of the water of life. "If any man thirst," says he, "let him come unto me and drink." "I am the Alpha and Omega, and to him that is athirst will I give to drink of the fountain of the water of life freely." The soul needs to have such discoveries made to it, as to beget a thirst after God, that can not be allayed except by a copious draft at the fountain of the water of life. It is indispensable to the establishing of the soul in perfect love, that its hungering after the bread and its thirsting for the water of life should be duly enkindled and that the spirit should pant and struggle after God, and "cry out for the living God," that it should be able to say with truth: "My soul panteth after God as the hart panteth for the water brooks;["] "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God;" "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath after thee at all times." When this state of mind is induced by the Holy Spirit so that the longing of the soul after perpetual holiness is irrepressible, it is prepared for a revelation of Christ in all those offices and relations that are necessary to secure its establishment in love. Especially is it then prepared to apprehend, appreciate and appropriate Christ as the bread and water of life, to understand what it is to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God. It is then in a state to understand what Christ meant when he said, "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." They not only understand what it is to hunger and thirst, but also what it is to be filled; to have the hunger and thirst allayed, and the largest desire fully satisfied. The soul then realizes, in its own experience, the truthfulness of the apostle's saying that Christ "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Many stop short even of any thing like intense hunger and thirst; others hunger and thirst, but have not the idea of the perfect fulness and adaptedness of Christ to meet and satisfy the longing of their souls. They, therefore, do not plead and look for the soul-satisfying revelation of Christ. They expect no such Divine fulness and satisfaction of soul. They are ignorant of the fulness and perfection of the provisions of the "glorious gospel of the blessed God," and consequently they are not encouraged to hope from the fact that they hunger and thirst after righteousness that they shall be filled; but they remain unfed, unfilled, unsatisfied, and after a season through unbelief, fall into indifference and remain in bondage to lust.

(29.) The soul needs also to know Christ as the true God, and the eternal life. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord save by the Holy Spirit." The proper Divinity of Christ is never and never can be held otherwise than as a mere opinion, a tenet, a speculation, an article of a creed, until he is revealed to the inner man by the Holy Spirit. But nothing short of an apprehension of Christ as the supreme and living God to the soul can inspire that confidence in him that is essential to its established sanctification. The soul can have no apprehension of what is intended by his being the "Eternal Life," until it

spiritually knows him as the True God. When he is spiritually revealed as the true and living God, the way is prepared for the spiritual apprehension of him as the eternal life. "As the living Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." "In him was life and the life was the light of men." "I give unto them eternal life." "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "I am the resurrection and the life." These and similar passages the soul needs spiritually to apprehend, to have a spiritual and personal revelation of them within. Most professors seem to me to have no right idea of the condition upon which the bible can be made of spiritual use to them. They seem not to understand that in its letter it is only a history of things formerly revealed to men; that it is in fact a revelation to no man except upon the condition of its being personally revealed, or revealed to us in particular by the Holy Spirit. The mere fact that we have in the gospel the history of the birth, the life, the death of Christ, is no such revelation of Christ to any man as meets his necessities and as will insure or render his salvation possible. Christ and his doctrine, his life, and death, and resurrection, need to be revealed personally by the Holy Spirit, to each and every soul of man to effect his salvation. So it is with every spiritual truth; without an inward revelation of it to the soul, it is only a savor of death unto death. It is in vain to hold to the proper Divinity of Christ as a speculation, a doctrine, a theory, an opinion, without the revelation of his Divine nature and character to the soul by the Holy Spirit. But let the soul know him and walk with him as the True God, and then it will no longer question whether, as our sanctification, he is all sufficient and complete. Let no one object to this that if this is true, men are under no obligation to believe in Christ and to obey the gospel without or until they are enlightened by the Holy Spirit. To such an objection, should it be made, I would answer,

[1.] Men are under an obligation to believe every truth so far as they can understand or apprehend it, but no farther. So far as they can apprehend the spiritual truths of the gospel without the Holy Spirit, so far, without his aid they are bound to believe it. But Christ has himself taught us that no man can come to him except the Father draw him. That this drawing is teaching is evident from what Christ proceeds to say. "For it is written," said he, "they shall all be taught of God. Every one therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh to me." That this learning of the Father is something different from the mere oral or written instructions of Christ and the apostles, is evident from the fact that Christ assured those to whom he preached with all the plainness with which he was able, that they still could not come to him except drawn, that is, taught of the Father. As the Father teaches by the Holy Spirit, Christ's plain teaching in the passage under consideration is, that no man can come to him except he be specially enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Paul unequivocally teaches the same thing. "No man," says he, "can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit." Notwithstanding all the teaching of the apostles, no man by merely listening to their instruction could so apprehend the true Divinity of Christ as to honestly and with spiritual understanding say that Jesus is the Lord. But what spiritual or true christian does not know the radical difference between being taught of man and of God, between the opinions that we form from reading, hearing and study, and the clear apprehensions of truths that are communicated by the direct and inward illuminations of the Holy Spirit.

[2.] I answer that men under the gospel are entirely without excuse for not enjoying all the light they need from the Holy Spirit, since he is in the world, has been sent for the very purpose of giving to all[,] all the knowledge of themselves and of Christ which they need. His aid is freely proffered to all, and Christ has assured us that the Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. All men under the gospel know this and all men have light enough to ask in faith for the Holy Spirit, and of course all men may know of themselves and of Christ all that they need to know. They are therefore able to know and to embrace Christ as fully and as fast as it is their duty to embrace him. They are able to know Christ in his governmental and spiritual relations just as fast as they come into circumstances to need to know him in these various relations. The Holy Spirit, if he is not quenched and resisted, will surely reveal Christ in all his relations and fulness in due time, so that in every temptation a way of escape will be open, so that we shall be able to bear it. This is expressly promised, 1 Cor. 10:13. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Men are able to know what God offers to teach them upon a condition within the compass of their ability. The Holy Spirit offers, upon condition of faith in the express promise of God, to lead every man into all truth. Every man is therefore under obligation to know and do the whole truth so far and so fast as it is possible for him to do so with the light of the Holy Spirit.

(30.) But be it remembered that it is not enough for us to apprehend Christ as the True God and the eternal life, but we need also to lay hold upon him as our life. It can not be too distinctly understood that a particular and personal appropriation of Christ in such relations is indispensable to our being rooted and grounded, established and perfected in love. When our utter deficiency and emptiness in any one respect or direction is deeply revealed to us by the Holy Spirit

with the corresponding remedy and perfect fulness in Christ, it then remains for the soul in this respect and direction to cast off self and put on Christ. When this is done, when self in that respect and direction is dead, and Christ is risen and lives and reigns in the heart in that relation, all is strong, and whole, and complete in that department of our life and experience. For example, suppose we find ourselves constitutionally, or by reason of our relations and circumstances, exposed to certain besetments and temptations that overcome us. Our weakness in this respect we observe in our experience. But upon observing our exposedness and experiencing something of our weakness we begin with piling resolution upon resolution. We bind ourselves with oaths, and promises, and covenants, but all in vain. When we purpose to stand, we invariably, in the presence of the temptation, fall. This process of resolving and falling brings the soul into great discouragement and perplexity, until at last the Holy Spirit reveals to us fully that we are attempting to stand and to build upon nothing. The utter emptiness and worse than uselessness of our resolutions and self-originated efforts, is so clearly seen by us as to annihilate forever self-dependence in this respect. Now the soul is prepared for the revelation of Christ to meet this particular want. Christ is revealed and apprehended as the soul's substitute, surety, life and salvation in respect to the particular besetment and weakness of which it has had so full and so humiliating a revelation. Now if the soul utterly and forever cast off and renounce self, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ as he is seen to be needed to meet his necessity, then all is complete in him. Thus far Christ is reigning within us. Thus far we know what is the power of his resurrection, and are made conformable to his death.

But I said that we need to know and to lay hold upon Christ as our life. Too much stress can not be laid upon our personal responsibility to Christ, our individual relation to him, our personal interest in him and obligation to him. To sanctify our own souls, we need to make every department of religion a personal matter between us and God, to regard every precept of the bible and every promise, saying, exhortation, threatening, and in short, we need to regard the whole bible as given to us and earnestly seek the personal revelation of every truth it contains to our own souls. No one can too fully understand or too deeply feel the necessity of taking home the bible with all it contains as a message sent from heaven to him, nor can he too earnestly desire or seek the promised Spirit to teach him the true spiritual import of all its contents. O, he must have the bible become a personal revelation of God to his own soul. It must become his own book. He must know Christ for himself. He must know him in his different relations. He must know him in his blessed and infinite fulness or he can not abide in him, and unless he abide in Christ, he can bring forth none of the fruits of holiness. "Except a man abide in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered."

Apprehending and embracing Christ as our life implies the apprehension of the fact that we of ourselves are dead in trespasses and in sins, that we have no life in ourselves, that death has reigned and will eternally reign in and over us unless Christ become our life. Until man knows himself to be dead, and that he is wholly destitute of spiritual life in himself, he will never know Christ as his life. It is not enough to hold the opinion that all men are by nature dead in trespasses and sins. It is not enough to hold the opinion that we are in common with all men, in this condition in and of ourselves. We must see it. We must know what such language means. It must be made a matter of personal revelation to us. We must be made fully to apprehend our own death and Christ as our life, and we must fully recognize our death and him as our life by personally renouncing self in this respect and laying hold on him as our own spiritual and eternal life. Many persons, and strange to say, some eminent ministers, are so blinded as to suppose that a soul entirely sanctified does not any longer need Christ, assuming that such a soul has spiritual life in and of himself; that there is in him some foundation or efficient occasion of continued holiness, as if the Holy Spirit had changed his nature or infused physical holiness or a holy principle into him. O, when will such men cease to darken counsel by words without knowledge upon the infinitely important subject of sanctification! When will such men--when will the church, understand that Christ is our sanctification; that we have no life, no holiness, no sanctification except as we abide in Christ and he in us; that, separate from Christ, there never is any moral excellence in any man; that Christ does not change the constitution of man in sanctification, but that he only, by our own consent, gains and keeps the heart; that he enthrones himself, with our consent, in the heart and through the heart he extends his influence and his life to all our spiritual being; that he lives in us as really and truly as we live in our own bodies; that he as really reigns in our will and consequently in our emotions, by our own free consent, as our wills reign in our bodies? Can not our brethren understand that this is sanctification, and that nothing else is? that there is no degree of sanctification that is not to be thus ascribed to Christ? and that entire sanctification is nothing else than the reign of Jesus in the soul? nothing more nor less than Christ, the resurrection and the life, raising the soul from spiritual death and reigning in it through righteousness unto eternal life? I must know and embrace Christ as my life; I must abide in him as a branch abides in the vine; I must not only hold this as an opinion; I must know and act on it in practice. O, when the ministry of reconciliation all know and embrace a whole Christ for themselves; when they preach Jesus in all his fullness and present vital power to the church; when they testify what they have seen and their hands have handled of the word of life--then and not till then will there be a general resurrection of

the dry bones of the house of Israel. Amen. Lord, hasten the day.

(30.)[31.] We need especially to know Christ as the "All in all." Col. 3:11: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all." Before the soul will cease to be overcome by temptation, it must renounce self-dependence in all things. It must be as it were self-annihilated. It must cease to think of self as having in it any ground of dependence in the hour of trial. It must wholly and in all things renounce self and put on Christ. It must know self as nothing in the matter of spiritual life and Christ as all. The Psalmist could say "all our springs are in thee." He is the fountain of life. Whatever of life is in us flows directly from him as the sap flows from the vine to the branch, or as a rivulet flows from its fountain. The spiritual life that is in us is really Christ's life flowing through us. Our activity, though properly our own, is nevertheless stimulated and directed by his presence and agency within us. So that we can and must say with Paul, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."--Gal. 2:20. It is a good thing for a self-conceited sinner to suffer even in his own view, self-annihilation, as it respects the origination of any spiritual obedience to God, or any spiritual good whatever. But this must be before he will learn on all occasions and in all things to stand in Christ, to abide in him as his "ALL." O, the infinite folly and madness of the carnal mind! It would seem that it will always make trial of its own strength before it will depend on Christ. It will look first for resources and help within itself before it will renounce self and make Christ its "all in all." It will betake itself to its own wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. In short, there is not an office or relation of Christ that will be recognized and embraced until the soul has first come into circumstances to have its wants in relation to that office of Christ developed by some trial and often by some fall under temptation, then and not until in addition to this Christ is clearly and prevailingly revealed by the Holy Spirit insomuch that self is put down and Christ is exalted in the heart. Sin has so becrazed and befooled mankind that when Christ tells them "without me ye can do nothing, and if any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered," they neither apprehend what or how much he means and how much is really implied in these and similar sayings, until one trial after another fully develops the appalling fact that they are nothing so far as spiritual good is concerned, and that Christ is "all and in all."

(32.) Another relation in which the soul must know Christ, before it will steadily abide in him, is that of "the Resurrection and the Life." Through and by Christ the soul is raised from spiritual death. Christ as the resurrection and the life, is raised in the soul. He arises or revives the Divine image out of the spiritual death that reigns within us. He is begotten by the Holy Spirit and born within us. He arises through the death that is within us and develops his own life within our own being. Will any one say "this is a hard saying, who can hear it?" Until we know by our own experience the power of this resurrection within us we shall never understand "the fellowship of his sufferings and be made conformable to his death." He raises our will from its fallen state of death in trespasses and sins, or from its state of committal and voluntary enslavement to lust and to self, to a state of conformity to the will of God. Through the intelligence, he pours a stream of quickening truth upon the soul. He thus quickens the will into obedience. By making fresh discoveries to the soul, he strengthens and confirms the will in obedience. By thus raising, and sustaining, and quickening the will, he rectifies the sensibility and quickens and raises the whole man from the dead, or rather builds up a new and spiritual man upon the death and ruins of the old and carnal man. He raises the same powers and faculties that were dead in trespasses and sins to a spiritual life. He overcomes their death and inspires them with life. He lives in saints and works in them to will and to do and they live in him according to the saying of Christ in his address to his Father, Jno. 17:21. "As thou, Father art in me and I in thee that they also may be one in us;" and again 23: "I in them and thou in me that they may be made perfect in one." He does not raise the soul to spiritual life in any such sense that it has life separate from him for one moment. The spiritual resurrection is a continual one. Christ is the resurrection in the sense that he is at the foundation of all our obedience at every moment. He, as it were, raises the soul or the will from the slavery of lust to a conformity to the will of God, in every instance and at every moment of its consecration to the will of God. But this he does only upon condition of our apprehending and embracing him in this relation. In reading the bible, I have often been struck with the fact that the inspired writers were so far ahead of the great mass of professed believers. They write of the relations in which Christ had been spiritually revealed to them. All the names and titles and official relations of Christ must have had great significancy with them. They spoke not from theory or from what man had taught them, but from experience, from what the Holy Spirit taught them. As the risen Christ is risen and lives and is developed in one relation after another in the experience of believers, how striking the writings of inspiration appear! As the necessities of our being are developed in experience, and as Christ is revealed as in all new circumstances and relations just that and all that we need, who has not marvelled to find, in the bible, way-marks and guide-boards and mile-stones, and all the evidences that we could ask or desire that inspired men have gone this way and have had substantially the same experiences that we have. We are often also struck with the fact that they are so far ahead of us. At every stage in our progress we seem to have, as it were, a new and improved edition of the bible. We discover worlds of truth before unnoticed by us--come to know Christ in precious

relations in which we had known nothing of him before. And ever, as our real wants are discovered, Christ is seen to be all that we need, just the thing that exactly and fully meets the necessities of our souls. This is indeed "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

(33.) Another precious and most influential relation of Christ in the affair of our sanctification, is that of the Bridegroom or Husband of the soul. The individual soul needs to be espoused to Christ, to enter this relation personally by its own consent. Mere earthly and outward marriages are nothing but sin, unless the hearts are married. True marriage is of the heart, and the outward ceremony is only a public manifestation or profession of the union or marriage of the souls or hearts.

All marriage may be regarded as typical of that union into which the spiritual soul enters with Christ. This relation of Christ to the soul is frequently recognized both in the old and the new testament. It is treated of by Paul as a great mystery. The seventh and eighth chapters of Romans present a striking illustration of the results of the soul's remaining under the law on the one hand and of its being married to Christ on the other. The seventh chapter begins thus, "Know ye not brethren (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth. For the woman who hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if her husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man. Therefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ: that ye should be married to another, even to Christ who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The apostle then proceeds to show the results of these two marriages or relations of the soul. When married to the law he says of it, "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." But when married to Christ, he proceeds to say, "we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." The remaining part of this (7th) chapter is occupied with an account of the soul's bondage while married to the law, of its efforts to please its husband, with its continual failures, its deep convictions, its selfish efforts, its consciousness of failures and its consequent self-condemnation and despondency. It is perfectly obvious, when the allegory with which the Apostle commences this chapter is considered, that he is portraying a legal experience for the purpose of contrasting it with the experience of one who has attained to the true liberty of perfect love.

The eighth chapter represents the results of the marriage of the soul to Christ. It is delivered from its bondage to the law and from the power of the law of sin in the members. It brings forth fruit unto God. Christ has succeeded in gaining the affections of the soul. What the law could not do, Christ has done, and the righteousness of the law is now fulfilled in the soul. The representation is as follows. The soul is married to the law and acknowledges its obligation to obey its husband. The husband requires perfect love to God and man. This love is wanting, the soul is selfish. This displeases the husband, and he denounces death against her if she does not love. She recognizes the reasonableness of both the requisition and the threatening, and resolves upon full obedience. But being selfish, the command and threatening but increases the difficulty. All her efforts at obedience are for selfish reasons. The husband is justly firm and imperative in his demands. The wife trembles, and promises, and resolves upon obedience. But all in vain. Her obedience is only feigned, outward, and not love. She becomes disheartened and gives up in despair. As sentence is about to be executed, Christ appears. He witnesses the dilemma. He reveres, and honors, and loves the husband. He entirely approves his requisition and the course he has taken. He condemns in most unqualified terms the wife. Still he pities and loves her with deep benevolence. He will consent to nothing which shall have the appearance of disapproving the claims or the course of her husband. His rectitude must be openly acknowledged. Her husband must not be dishonored. But on the contrary he must be "magnified and made honorable." Still Christ so much pities the wife, as to be willing to die as her substitute. This he does, and the wife is regarded as dying in and by him her substitute. Now since the death of either of the parties is a dissolution of the marriage covenant, and since the wife in the person of her substitute has died under and to the law, her husband, she is now at liberty to marry again. Christ rises from the dead. This striking and overpowering manifestation of disinterested benevolence on the part of Christ in dying for her, subdues her selfishness and wins her whole heart. He proposes marriage and she consents with her whole soul. Now she finds the law of selfishness or of self-gratification broken, and the righteousness of the law of love fulfilled in her heart. The last husband requires just what the first required, but having won her whole heart. she no longer needs to resolve to love, for love is as natural and spontaneous as her breath. Before, the 7th of Romans was the language of her complaint. Now the eighth is the language of her triumph. Before she found herself unable to meet the demands of her husband, and equally unable to satisfy her own conscience. Now she finds it

easy to obey her husband and that his commandments are not grievous, although they are identical with those of the first husband. Now this allegory of the Apostle is not a mere rhetorical flourish. It represents a reality, and one of the most important and glorious realities in existence, namely, the real spiritual union of the soul to Christ, and the blessed results of this union, the bringing forth of fruit unto God. This union is, as the apostle says, a great mystery; nevertheless it is a glorious reality. "He that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit."--1 Cor. 6:17.

Now until the soul knows what it is to be married to the law and is able to adopt the language of the 7th of Romans, it is not prepared to see and appreciate and be properly affected by the death and the love of Christ. Great multitudes rest in this first marriage, and do not consent to die and rise again in Christ. They are not married to Christ and do not know that there is such a thing, and expect to live and die in this bondage, crying out, "O wretched man that I am?" They need to die and rise again in Christ to a new life founded in and growing out of a new relation to Christ. Christ becomes the living head or husband of the soul, its surety, its life. He gains and retains the deepest affection of the soul, thus writing his law in the heart, and engraving it in the inward parts.

But not only must the soul know what it is to be married to the law with its consequent thralldom and death, but it must also for itself enter into the marriage relation with a risen, living Christ. This must not be a theory, an opinion, a tenet; nor must it be an imagination, a mysticism, a notion, a dream. It must be a living, personal, real entering into a personal and living union with Christ, a most entire and universal giving of self to him and receiving of him in the relation of spiritual husband and head. The Spirit of Christ and our spirit must embrace each other and enter into an everlasting covenant with each other. There must be a mutual giving of self and receiving of each other, a blending of spirits in such a sense as is intended by Paul in the passage already quoted: "He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit."

My brother, my sister, do you understand this? Do you know what both these marriages are, with their diverse results? If you do not, make no longer pretence to being sanctified, for you are still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. "Escape for thy life."

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 62

SANCTIFICATION.

(34.) Another interesting and highly important relation which Christ sustains to his people, is that of Shepherd. This relation presupposes the helpless and defenseless condition of christians in this life and the indispensable necessity of guardianship and protection. Christ was revealed to the Psalmist in this relation, and when on earth, he revealed himself to his disciples in this relation. It is not enough, however, that he should be revealed merely in the letter or in words as sustaining this relation. The real spiritual import of this relation and what is implied in it, needs to be revealed, by the Holy Spirit, to give this relation efficiency and beget that universal trust in the presence, care, and protection of Christ that is often essential to preventing a fall in the hour of temptation. Christ meant all that he said when he professed to be the Good Shepherd, that cared for his sheep, that would not flee, but that would lay down his life for them. In this relation as in all others, there is infinite fullness and perfection. If the sheep do thoroughly know and confide in the shepherd, they will follow him, will flee to him for protection in every hour of danger, will at all times depend on him for all things. Now all this is received and possessed in theory by all professors of religion. And yet how few comparatively seem to have had Christ so revealed to them as to have secured the actual embracing of him in this relation and a continual dependence on him for all that is implied in it. Now either this is a vain boast of Christ, or else he may be and ought to be depended upon, and the soul has a right to throw itself upon him for all that is implied in the relation of Good Shepherd. But this relation with all the other relations of Christ implies a corresponding necessity in us. This necessity we must see and feel, or this relation of Christ will have no impressive significancy. We need, then, in this case as in all others the revelation of the Holy Spirit to make us thoroughly to apprehend our dependence, and to reveal Christ in the spirit and fullness of this relation, and to urge our acceptance home upon us until our souls have thoroughly closed with him. Some fall into the mistake of supposing that when their necessities and the fullness of Christ have been revealed to the mind by the Spirit, the work is done. But unless they actually receive him and commit themselves to him in this relation, they will soon find to their shame that nothing has been done to purpose so far as their standing in the hour of temptation is concerned. He may be clearly revealed in any of his relations, the soul may see both its necessities and his fullness, and yet forget or neglect to actively and personally receive him in these relations. It should never be forgotten that this is in every case indispensable. The revelation is designed to secure our acceptance of him; if it does not do this, it has only greatly aggravated our guilt without at all securing to us the benefits of these relations. It is amazing to see how common it is and has been for ministers to overlook this truth, and of course neither to practice it themselves, nor urge it upon their hearers. Hence Christ is not known to multitudes and is not in many cases received even when he is revealed by the Holy Spirit. If I am not greatly mistaken, thorough inquiry would show that error upon this subject exists to a most appalling extent. The personal and individual acceptance of Christ in all his offices and relations as the sine qua non of entire sanctification seems to me to be seldom either understood or insisted on by ministers of the present day, and of course little thought of by the church. The idea of accepting for ourselves a Whole Savior, of appropriating to our own individual selves all the offices and relations of Jesus seems to be a rare idea in this age of the church. But for what purpose does he sustain these relations? Is the bare apprehension of those truths and of Christ in these relations enough without our own activity being duly excited by the apprehension, to lay hold and avail ourselves of his fullness? What folly and madness for the church to expect to be saved by a rejected Savior! To what purpose is it for the Spirit to make him known to us unless we as individuals embrace him and make him our own? Let the soul but truly and fully apprehend and embrace Christ in this relation of shepherd, and it shall never perish neither shall any pluck it out of his hand. The knowing of Christ in this relation, secures the soul against following strangers. But thus knowing him is indispensable to securing this result. If we know him as shepherd, we shall follow him but not else. Let this be well considered.

(35.) Christ is also the Door by and through which the soul enters the fold and finds security and protection among the

sheep. This needs also to be spiritually apprehended, and the door needs to be spiritually and personally entered to secure the guardianship of the Good Shepherd. Those who do not spiritually and truly apprehend Christ as the door and enter by and through him and yet hope for salvation, are surely attempting to climb up some other way, and are therefore thieves and robbers. This is a familiar and well known truth, in the mouth, not only of every minister and christian, but of every sabbath school child. Yet how few really apprehend and embrace its spiritual import. That there is no other means or way of access to the fold of God, is admitted by all the orthodox; but who really perceives and knows through the personal revelation of the Holy Spirit what and all Christ meant in the very significant words, "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep;" "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture?" He who truly discovers this door and gains access by it, will surely realize in his own experience the faithfulness of the Good Shepherd, and will go in and out and find pasture. That is, he will surely be fed, be led into green pastures and beside the still waters.

But it is well to inquire what is implied in this relation of Christ?

[1.] It implies that we are shut out from the protection and favor of God except as we approach him through and by Christ.

[2.] It implies that we need to know and clearly to apprehend and appreciate this fact.

[3.] That we need to discover the door and what is implied both in the door and in entering it.

[4.] That entering it implies the utter renunciation of self and of self-righteousness and self-protection and, support and a putting ourselves entirely under the control and protection of the Shepherd.

[5.] That we need the revelation of the Holy Spirit to make us clearly apprehend the true spiritual import of this relation and what is implied in it.

[6.] That when Christ is revealed in this relation, we need to embrace him and for ourselves to enter by and through him into the enclosure that every where surrounds the children of God.

It is an inward and not a mere outward revelation that we need. It is an inward, a heart entering, and not a mere notion, idea, theory, dream of the imagination. It is really an intelligent act of the mind; as much and as real an entering into the fold or favor of God by and through Christ as we ever entered the house of God on the Sabbath-day by the door. When the soul enters by the door, it finds an infinitely different reception and treatment from that of those who climb up into the church upon a ladder of mere opinion, a scaling ladder of mere orthodoxy. This last class are not fed. They find no protection from the Good Shepherd. They do not know the Shepherd and follow him, because they have climbed up another way. They have not confidence in him, can not approach him with boldness and claim his guardianship and protection. Their knowledge of Christ is but an opinion, a theory, a heartless and fruitless speculation. O how many give the saddest proof that they have never entered by the door, and consequently have no realization in their own life and experience of the blessed and efficient protection and support of the Good Shepherd. Here I must not forget again to insist upon the necessity of a personal revelation of our relations to God as being excluded from all access to him and his favor save through Christ the door; and also the necessity of the personal revelation to us by the Holy Spirit of Christ as the door, and of what is implied in this; and lastly and emphatically upon the indispensable necessity of a personal, responsible, active, and full entering in at this door and gaining access for ourselves to the inclosure of the love and favor of God. Let this never for one moment be forgotten or overlooked. I must enter for and by myself. I must truly enter. I must be conscious that I enter. I must be sure that I do not misapprehend what is implied in entering; and at my peril I must not forget or neglect to enter.

And here it is important to inquire, have you had this personal and spiritual revelation? Have you clearly seen yourself without the fold exposed to all the unrelenting cruelty of your spiritual enemies and shut out forever by your sin from the favor and protection of God? When this has been revealed, have you been made clearly to apprehend Christ as the door? Have you understood what is implied in his sustaining this relation? And last, but not least, have you entered this door by faith? Have you seen the door open, and have you entered for yourself, and have you daily this evidence that you follow the Shepherd and find all you need?

(36.) Christ is also the Way of Salvation.

Observe: he is not a mere teacher of the way, as some vainly imagine and teach. Christ is truly "the way," itself, or he is himself "the way." Works are not the way whether these works are legal or gospel works, whether works of law or works of faith. Works of faith are a condition of salvation. But they are not "the way." Faith is not the way. Faith is a condition of entering and abiding in this way, but it is not "the way." Christ is himself "the way." Faith receives him to reign in the soul, and to be its salvation. But it is Christ himself who is "the way." The soul is saved by Christ himself, not by doctrine, not by the Holy Spirit, not by works of any kind, not by faith, or love, or by any thing whatever but by Christ himself. The Holy Spirit reveals and introduces Christ to the soul, and the soul to Christ. He takes of Christ's and shows to us. But he leaves it to Christ to save us. He urges and induces us to accept of Christ, to receive him by appropriating faith as he reveals him to us. But Christ is the way. It is his being received by us, that saves the soul. But we must perceive the way. We must enter this way by our own act. We must proceed in this way. We must continue in this way to the end of life and to all eternity as indispensable conditions of our salvation. "Whither I go ye know and the way ye know," said Christ. "Thomas said unto him, Lord we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and, how sayest thou show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" Here Christ so identifies himself with the Father as to insist that he who had seen one had seen the other. When, therefore, he says, no man cometh to the Father but by him, we are to understand that no man need expect to find the true God elsewhere than in him. The visible Christ embodied the true Godhead. He is the way to God, for and because he is the true God and the eternal life and salvation of the soul. Many seem to understand Christ in this relation as nothing more than a teacher of a system of morality by the observance of which we may be saved. Others regard this relation as only implying that he is the way in the sense of making an atonement and thus rendering it possible for us to be forgiven. Others still understand this language as implying not only that Christ made an atonement and opened up a way of access through his death and mediation to God, but also that he teaches us the great truths essential to our salvation. Now all this in my apprehension falls entirely, and I may say, infinitely short of the true spiritual meaning of Christ and the true spiritual import of this relation. The above is implied and included in this relation beyond question, but this is not all nor the essential truth intended in this declaration of Christ's. He did not say, I came to open the way, nor to teach the way, nor to call you into the way, but "I am the way." Suppose he had intended merely that his instructions pointed out the way, or that his death was to open the way, and his teaching point it out, would he not have said: What! have I so long taught you, and have you not understood my doctrine? Would he not have said, I have taught you the way, instead of saying, I am the way? The fact is, there is a meaning in these words, more profoundly spiritual than his disciples then, and than many now seem capable of understanding. He is himself the way of salvation because he is the salvation of the soul. He is the way to the Father because he is in the Father and the Father is in him. He is the way to eternal life because he is himself the very essence and substance of eternal life. The soul that finds him needs not to look for eternal life, for it has found it already. These questions of Thomas and Philip show how little they really knew of Christ previous to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Vast multitudes of the professed disciples of the present day seem not to know Christ as "the way." They seem not to have known Christ in this relation as he is revealed by the Holy Spirit. This revelation by the Comforter of Christ as "the way," is indispensable to our so knowing him as to retain our standing in the hour of temptation. We must know and enter and walk and abide in this true and living way for ourselves. It is a living way and not a mere speculation.

Do you, my brother, know Christ by the Holy Spirit as the "living way?" Do you know Christ for yourself by a personal acquaintance? or do you know him only by report, by hearsay, by preaching, by reading and by study? Do you know him as in the Father and the Father as in him? Philip seemed not to have had a spiritual and personal revelation of the proper deity of Christ to his own soul. Have you had this revelation? And when he has been revealed to you as the true and living way, have you by faith personally entered this way? Do you abide steadfast in it? Do you know by experience what it is to live and move and have your very being in God? Be ye not deceived; he that does not spiritually discern, and enter this way, and abide in it unto the end, can not be saved. Do see to it then that you know the way to be sanctified, to be justified, to be saved. See to it that you do not mistake the way and betake yourself to some other way. Remember, works are not the way. Faith is not the way. Doctrine is not the way. All these are conditions of salvation, but Christ in his own person, is "the way." His own life living in and united to you, is the way and the only way. You enter this way by faith; works of faith result from and are a condition of abiding in this way; but the way itself is the indwelling, living,

personally embraced and appropriated Christ, the true God and the eternal life.

Amen, Lord Jesus; the way is pleasant, and all its paths are peace.

(37.) Christ is also "the Truth," and as such he must be apprehended and embraced to secure the soul from falling in the hour of trial. In this relation many have known Christ merely as one who declared the truth, as one who revealed the true God and the way of salvation. This is all they understand by this assertion of Christ, that he is the Truth.

But if this is all, why may not the same with equal truth be said of Moses, and of Paul and John? They taught the truth. They revealed the true God so far as holy lives and true doctrine are concerned; and yet who ever heard of John, or Paul, or Moses as being the way or the truth? They taught the way and the truth, but they were neither the way nor the truth, while Christ is truth. What, then, is truth? Why, Christ is the truth. Whoever knows Christ spiritually, knows the truth. Words are not the truth. Ideas are not the truth. Both words and ideas may be signs or representatives of the truth. But the truth lives and has a being and a home in Christ. He is the embodiment and the essence of truth. He is reality. He is substance and not shadow. He is truth revealed. He is elementary, essential, eternal, immutable, necessary, absolute, self-existent, infinite Truth. When the Holy Spirit reveals truth, he reveals Christ. When Christ reveals truth, he reveals himself. Philosophers have found it difficult to define truth. Pilate asked Christ, what is truth, but did not wait for an answer. The term is doubtless used in a double sense. Sometimes the mere reflection or representation of things in signs, such as words, actions, writings, pictures, and diagrams, &c., is called truth; and this is the popular understanding of it. But all things that exist are only signs, reflections, symbols, representations or types of the Author of all things. That is, the universe is only the objective representation of the subjective truth, or is the reflection or reflector of God. It is the mirror that reflects the essential truth or the true and living God.

But I am aware that none but the Holy Spirit can possess the mind of the import of this assertion of Christ. It is full of mystery and darkness, and is a mere figure of speech to one unenlightened by the Holy Spirit in respect to its true spiritual import. The Holy Spirit does not reveal all the relations of Christ to the soul at once. Hence there are many to whom Christ has been revealed in some of his relations while others are yet veiled from the view. Each distinct name and office and relation needs to be made the subject of a special and personal revelation to the soul, to meet its necessities, and to confirm it in obedience under all circumstances. When Christ is revealed and apprehended as the essential, eternal, immutable truth, and the soul has embraced him as such, as he of whom all that is popularly called truth is only the reflection, as he of whom all truth in doctrine whether of philosophy in any of its branches, or revelation in any of its departments; I say, when the mind apprehends him as that essential truth of which all that men call truth is only the reflection, it finds a rock, a resting place, a foundation, a stability, a reality, a power in truth of which before it had no conception. If this is unintelligible to you I can not help it. The Holy Spirit can explain and make you see it, I can not. Christ is not truth in the sense of mere doctrine, nor in the sense of a teacher of true doctrine, but as the substance or essence of truth. He is that of which all truth in doctrine treats. True doctrine treats of him, but is not identical with him. Truth in doctrine is only the sign, or declaration, or representation of truth in essence, of living, absolute, self-existent truth in the Godhead. Truth in doctrine or true doctrine is a medium through which substantial or essential truth is revealed. But the doctrine or medium is no more identical with truth than light is identical with the objects which it reveals. Truth in doctrine is called light and is to essential truth what light is to the objects that radiate or reflect it. Light coming from objects is at once the condition of and the medium through which they are revealed. So true doctrine is the condition and the means of knowing Christ the essential truth. All truth in doctrine is only a reflection of Christ or is a radiation upon the intelligence from Christ. When we learn this spiritually, we shall learn to distinguish between doctrine and him whose radiance it is--to worship Christ as the essential truth and not the doctrine that reveals him--to worship God instead of the Bible. We shall then find our way through the shadow to the substance. Many no doubt mistake and fall down and worship the doctrine, the preacher, the bible, the shadow, and do not look for the ineffably glorious substance of which this bright and sparkling truth is only the sweet and mild reflection or radiation.

Dearly beloved, do not mistake the doctrine for the thing treated of by the doctrine. When you find your intellect enlightened and your sensibility quickened by the contemplation of doctrine, do not confound this with Christ. Look steadily in the direction from which the light emanates until the Holy Spirit enables you to apprehend the essential truth, and the true light that enlighteneth every man. Do not mistake a dim reflection of the sun for the sun himself. Do not fall down at a pool and worship the sun dimly reflected from its surface, but lift your eye and see where he stands glorious in essential and eternal and ineffable brightness. It is beyond question that multitudes of professed christians know nothing

farther than the doctrine of Christ; they never had Christ himself personally revealed or manifested to them. The doctrine of Christ as taught in the gospel is intended to direct and draw the mind to him. The soul must not rest in the doctrine, but receive the living, essential person and substance of Christ. The doctrine makes us acquainted with the facts concerning Christ and presents him for acceptance. But do not rest in the story of Christ crucified and risen and standing at the door, but open the door and receive the risen, living and Divine Savior as the essential and all-powerful truth to dwell within you forever.

(38.) Christ is "the TRUE LIGHT." John says of him, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but he came to bear witness of that Light. That was the TRUE LIGHT which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world." Jesus says, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." And again, "While ye have the light, believe in the light." "I am come a light into the world." Again, it is said of Saul on his way to Damascus, "And there shined around him a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun." It is said of Christ in his transfiguration on the mount, "that his raiment became white as the light." Paul speaks of Christ as dwelling in light which no man can approach unto. Peter says of him, "who called you into his marvelous light." John says, "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." Of the New Jerusalem it is said, that the inhabitants have no need of the sun, nor of the moon to enlighten it, "for the glory of God and the Lamb are the light thereof."

Light certainly appears to be of two kinds, as every spiritual mind knows, physical and spiritual. Physical or natural light reveals or makes manifest physical objects through the fleshly organ, the eye. Spiritual light is no less real light than physical. In the presence of spiritual light the mind directly sees spiritual truths and objects, as, in the presence of material or natural light, it distinctly sees material objects. The mind has an eye or seeing faculty which uses the material eye and natural light to discern material objects. It is not the eye that sees. It is always the mind that sees. It uses the eye merely as an instrument of vision by which it discerns material objects. The eye and the light are conditions of seeing the material universe, but it is always the mind that sees.

So the mind directly sees spiritual realities in the presence of spiritual light. But what is light? What is natural, and what is spiritual light? Are they really identical, or are they essentially different? It is not my purpose here to enter into any philosophical speculations upon this subject; but I must observe, that, whatever spiritual light is, the mind under certain circumstances can not discern the difference, if difference there is, between them. Was that spiritual or physical light which the disciples saw on the mount of transfiguration? Was that spiritual or physical light which Paul and his companions saw on their way to Damascus? What light is that which falls upon the mental eye of the believer when he draws so near to God as not at the moment to at all distinguish the glory that surrounds him from material light? What was that light which made the face of Moses shine with such brightness that the people were unable to behold it? And what is that light which lights up the countenance of a believer when he comes direct and fresh from the mount of communion with God? There is often a visible light in his countenance. What is that light which often shines upon the pages of the bible making its spiritual meaning as manifest to the mind as the letters and words are. In such seasons the obscurity is removed from the spirit of the bible just as really and as visibly as the rising sun would remove the obscurity of midnight from the letter. In one case you perceive the letter clearly in the presence of natural light. You have no doubt, you can have no doubt that you see the letters and words as they are. In the other, you apprehend the spirit of the bible just as clearly as you see the letter. You can no more doubt at the time that you see the true spiritual import of the words than that you see the words themselves. Both the letter and the spirit seem to be set in so strong a light that you know that you see both. Now what light is this in which the spirit of the bible is seen? That it is light, every spiritual man knows. He calls it light. He can call it nothing else. At other times the letter is as distinctly visible as before and yet there is no possibility of discerning the spirit of the bible. It is then only known in the letter. We are then left to philologize, and philosophise, and theorize, and theologize, and are really all in the dark as to the true spiritual import of the bible. But when "the true light that lighteth every man" shines upon the word, we get at once a deeper insight into the real spiritual import of the word than we could have gotten in a life-time without it. Indeed the true spiritual import of the bible is hid from the learning of this world, and revealed to the babes who are in the light of Christ. I have often been afflicted with the fact that true spiritual light is rejected and contemned, and the very idea of its existence rejected by many men who are wise in the wisdom of this world. But the bible every where abounds with evidence that spiritual light exists, and that its presence is a condition of apprehending the reality and presence of spiritual objects. It has been generally supposed that the natural sun is the source of natural light. Sure it is that light is a condition of our beholding the objects of the

material universe. But what is the source of spiritual light? The bible says Christ is. But what does this mean? When it is said that he is the true light, does it mean only that he is the teacher of true doctrine? Or does it mean that he is the light in which true doctrine is apprehended, or its spiritual import understood, that he shines through and upon all spiritual doctrine, and causes its spiritual import to be apprehended, and that the presence of his light, or, in other words, his own presence, is a condition of any doctrine's being spiritually understood? He is no doubt the essential light. That is, light is an attribute of his Divinity. Essential, uncreated light is one of the attributes of Christ as God. It is a spiritual attribute of course. But it is an essential and a natural attribute of Christ, and whoever knows Christ after the Spirit, or whoever has a true, spiritual, and personal acquaintance with Christ, as God, knows that Christ is light, that his being called light is not a mere figure of speech; that his "covering himself with light as with a garment;" his enlightening the heavenly world with so ineffable a light, that no man can approach thereunto and live, that the strongest seraphim are unable to look with unveiled face upon his overpowering effulgence:--I say, to a spiritual mind, these are not mere figures of speech; they are understood by those who walk in the light, or who walk in the light of Christ, to mean what they say.

I dwell upon this particular relation of Christ because of the importance of its being understood, that Christ is the real and true light who alone can cause us to see spiritual things as they are. Without his light we walk in the midst of the most overpowering realities without being at all aware of their presence. Like one surrounded with natural darkness, or as one deprived of natural light gropes his way and knows not at what he stumbles, so one deprived of the presence and light of Christ, gropes his way and stumbles at he knows not what. To attain to true spiritual illumination and to continue and walk in this light, is indispensable to entire sanctification. O, that this were understood. Christ must be known as the true and only light of the soul. This must not be held merely as a tenet. It must be understood and spiritually experienced and known. That Christ is in some undetermined sense the light of the soul and the true light is generally admitted just as multitudes of other things are admitted without being at all spiritually and experimentally understood. But this relation or attribute of Christ must be spiritually known by experience as a condition of abiding in him. John says, "this then is the message which we have heard of him, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This light is come into the world, and if men do not love darkness rather than light, they will know Christ as the true light of the soul and will so walk in the light as not to stumble.

I desire much to amplify upon this relation of Christ, but must forbear or I shall too much enlarge this course of instruction. I would only endeavor to deeply impress you with the conviction that Christ is light and that this is no figure of speech. Rest not, my brother, until you truly and experimentally know him as such. Bathe your soul daily in his light so that when you come from your closet to your pulpit, your people shall behold your face shine as if it were the face of an angel.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 63

SANCTIFICATION.

(39.) Another relation which Christ sustains to the believer, and which it is indispensable that he should recognize and spiritually apprehend as a condition of entire sanctification is that of "Christ within us."

"Know ye not," says the Apostle "that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates."--2 Cor. 13:5. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit if the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."--Ro. 8:9,10. "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."--Gal. 4:19. "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."--Gal. 2:20. Now it has often appeared to me that many know Christ only as an outward Christ, as one who lived many hundred years ago, who died, and arose, and ascended on high, and who now lives in heaven. They read all this in the bible, and in a certain sense they believe it. That is they admit it to be true historically. But have they Christ risen within them? living within the veil of their own flesh and there ever making intercession for them and in them? This is quite another thing. Christ in heaven making intercession is one thing; this is a great and glorious truth. But Christ in the soul, there also living "to make intercession for us with groanings, that can not be uttered," is another thing. The Spirit that dwells in the saints is frequently in the Bible represented as the Spirit of Christ and as Christ himself. Thus in the passage just quoted from the eighth of Romans, the apostle represents the Spirit of God that dwells in the saints as the Spirit of Christ and as Christ himself. Ro. 8:9,10; "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." This is common in the Bible. The Spirit of Christ then, or the real Deity of Christ dwells in the truly spiritual believer. But this fact needs to be spiritually apprehended and kept distinctly and continually in view. Christ not only in heaven, but Christ within us, as really and truly inhabiting our bodies as we do, as really in us as we are in ourselves, is the teaching of the bible, and must be spiritually apprehended by a divine, personal, and inward revelation, to secure our abiding in him. We not only need the real presence of Christ within us, but we need his manifested presence to sustain us in hours of conflict. Christ may be really present within us as he is without us, without our apprehending his presence. His manifesting himself to us as with and in us is by himself conditioned upon our faith and obedience. His manifesting himself within us and thus assuring us of his constant and real presence, confirms and establishes the confidence and obedience of the soul. To know Christ after the flesh or merely historically as an outward Savior, is of no spiritual avail. We must know him as an inward Savior, as Jesus risen and reigning in us, as having arisen and established his throne in our hearts, and as having written and established the authority of his law there. The old man dethroned and crucified, Christ risen within us and united to us in such a sense that we "twain are one spirit," is the true and only condition and secret of entire sanctification. O that this were understood. Why, many ministers talk and write about sanctification just as if they supposed that it consisted in and resulted from a mere self-originated formation of holy habits. What infinite blindness this for spiritual guides! True sanctification consists in entire consecration to God; but be it ever remembered that this consecration is induced and perpetuated by the Spirit of Christ. The fact that Christ is in us needs to be so clearly apprehended by us as to annihilate the conception of Christ as only afar off, in heaven. The soul needs so to apprehend this truth as to turn within and not look without for Christ, so that it will naturally seek communion with him in the closet of the soul, or within, and not let the thoughts go in search of him without. Christ promised to come and take up his abode with his people, to manifest himself unto them, &c., that the Spirit whom he would send, (which was his own Spirit as abundantly appears from the bible) should abide with them forever, that he should be with them and in them. Now all this language needs to be spiritually apprehended, and Christ needs to be recognized as by his Spirit as really present with us as we are with ourselves, and really as near to us as we are to ourselves, and as infinitely more interested in us than we are in ourselves.

This spiritual recognition of Christ present with and in us, has an overpowering charm in it. The soul rests in him and lives, and walks, and has its being in his light, and drinks at the fountain of his love. It drinks also of the river of his pleasures. It enjoys his peace, and leans upon his strength.

Many professors have not Christ formed within them. The Galatian christians had fallen from Christ. Hence the apostle says: "My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Have you a spiritual apprehension of what this means?

(40.) We must spiritually know Christ as "our Strength," as a condition of entire sanctification. Says the Psalmist Ps. 18:1: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength;" and again 19:14: "O Lord my strength;" and again, 31:4: "Pull me out of the net, for thou art my strength;" and again, 43:2: "Thou art the God of my strength;" and again, 59:17: "To thee, O my strength, will I sing;" and again, 144:1: "Blessed be the Lord my strength." In Is. 27:5: "The Lord says, Let him take hold of my strength and he shall make peace with me." Jeremiah says, Jer. 16:19: "O Lord, my Strength." Hab. 3:9: "God is my Strength." In 2 Cor. 12:9; Christ says to Paul, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." We are commanded to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, that is, to appropriate his strength by faith. We are exhorted to take hold on his strength, and doing this is made a condition of making peace with God. That God is in some sense our strength, is generally admitted. But I fear it is rare to apprehend the true spiritual sense in which he is our strength. Many take refuge, not in his strength by faith, but in the plea that he is their strength, and that they have none of their own while they continue in sin. But this class of persons neither truly understand nor believe that God is their strength. It is with all who hold this language and yet live in sin, an opinion, a tenet, a say-so, but by no means a spiritually apprehended and embraced truth. If the real meaning of this language were spiritually apprehended and embraced with the heart, the soul would no more live in sin. It would no more be overcome with temptation while appropriating Christ than God would be overcome.

The conditions of spiritually apprehending Christ as our strength are,

[1.] The spiritual apprehension of our own weakness, its nature and degree.

[2.] The revelation of Christ to us as our strength by the Holy Spirit.

When these revelations are truly made, and self-dependence is therefore forever annihilated, the soul comes to understand wherein its strength lies. It renounces forever its own and relies wholly on the strength of Christ. This it does not in the antinomian, do-nothing, sit-still sense of the term; but on the contrary it actively takes hold of Christ's strength and uses it in doing all the will of God. It does not sit down and do nothing, but on the contrary it takes hold of Christ's strength and sets about every good word and work as one might lean upon the strength of another and go about doing good. The soul that understands and does this as really holds on to and leans upon Christ as a helpless man would lean upon the arm or shoulder of a strong man to be borne about in some benevolent enterprise. It is not a state of quietism. It is not a mere opinion, a sentiment, a humbug. It is, with the sanctified soul, one of the clearest realities in existence that he leans upon and uses the strength of Christ. He knows himself to be constantly and perseveringly active in thus availing himself of the strength of Christ; and being perfectly weak in himself or perfectly emptied of his own strength, Christ's strength is made perfect in his weakness. This renunciation of his own strength is not a denial of his natural ability in any such sense as virtually to charge God with requiring what he is unable to perform. It is a complete recognition of his ability were he disposed to do all that God requires of him, and implies a thorough and honest condemnation of himself for not using his powers as God requires. But while it recognizes its natural liberty or ability and its consequent obligation, it at the same time clearly and spiritually sees that it has been too long the slave of lust ever to assert or to maintain its spiritual supremacy as the master instead of the slave of appetite. It sees so clearly and affectingly that the will or heart is so weak in the presence of temptation that there is no hope of its maintaining its integrity unsupported by strength from Christ, that it renounces forever its dependence on its own strength and casts itself wholly and forever on the strength of Christ. Christ's strength is appropriated only upon condition of a full renunciation of one's own. And Christ's strength is made perfect in the soul of man only in its entire weakness; that is, only in the absence of all dependence on its own strength. Self must be renounced in every respect in which we appropriate Christ. He will not share the throne of the heart with us, nor will he be put on by us except in so far forth as we put off ourselves. Lay aside all dependence on yourself in every respect in which you would have Christ. Many reject Christ by depending on self, and seem not to be aware of their error.

Now, do let it be understood and constantly borne in mind that this self-renunciation and taking hold on Christ as our strength, is not a mere speculation, an opinion, an article of faith, a profession, but must be one of the most practical realities in the world. It must become to the mind an omnipresent reality in so much that you shall no more attempt any thing in your own strength than a man who never could walk without crutches would attempt to arise and walk without thinking of them. To such an one his crutches become a part of himself. They are his legs. He as naturally uses them as we do the members of our body. He no more forgets them or attempts to walk without them than we attempt to walk without our feet. Now just so it is with one who spiritually understands his dependence on Christ. He knows he can walk and that he must walk, but he as naturally uses the strength of Christ in all his duties as the lame man uses his crutches. It is as really an omnipresent reality to him that he must lean upon Christ as it is to the lame man that he must lean upon his crutch. He learns on all occasions to keep hold of the strength of Christ and does not even think of doing any thing without him. He knows that he need not attempt any thing in his own strength; and if he should, he knows it will result in failure and disgrace just as really and as well as the man without feet or legs knows that for him to attempt to walk without his crutch would insure a fall. This is a great, and, I fear, a rarely learned lesson with professed christians, and yet how strange that it should be so, since, in every instance since the world began attempts to walk without Christ have resulted in complete and instantaneous failure. All profess to know their own weakness and their remedy, and yet how few give evidence of knowing either.

(41.) Christ is also the Keeper of the soul; and in this relation he must be revealed to and embraced by each soul as the condition of its abiding in Christ, or, which is the same thing, as a condition of entire sanctification. Ps. 121: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore." This Psalm with a great many other passages of scripture represent God as exerting an efficient influence in preserving the soul from falling. This influence he exerts, of course not physically or by compulsion, but it is and must be a moral influence, that is, an influence entirely consistent with our own free agency. But it is efficient in the sense of being a prevailing influence.

But in this relation as in all others, Christ must be apprehended and embraced. The soul must see and well appreciate its dependence in this respect and commit itself to Christ in this relation. It must cease from its own works and from expecting to keep itself and commit itself to Christ and abide in this state of committal. Keeping the soul implies watching over it to guard it against being overcome with temptation. This is exactly what the christian needs. His enemies are the world, the flesh, and Satan. By these he has been enslaved. To them he has been consecrated. In their presence he is all weakness in himself. He needs a keeper to accompany him, just as a reformed inebriate sometimes needs one to accompany and strengthen him in scenes of temptation. The long established habitudes of the drunkard render him weak in the presence of his enemy, the intoxicating bowl. So the christian's long cherished habits of self-indulgence render him all weakness and irresolution if left to himself in the presence of excited appetite or passion. As the inebriate needs a friend and brother to warn and expostulate to suggest considerations to strengthen his purposes, so the sinner needs the Parakletos to warn and suggest considerations to sustain his fainting resolutions. This Christ has promised to do; but this like all the promises is conditioned upon our appropriating it to our own use by faith. Let it, then, be ever borne in mind that as our keeper, the Lord must be spiritually apprehended and cordially embraced and depended upon as a condition of entire sanctification. This must not be a mere opinion. It must be a thorough and honest closing in with Christ in this relation.

Brother, do you know what it is to depend on Christ in this relation in such a sense that you as naturally hold fast to him as a child would cling to the hand or the neck of a father when in the midst of perceived danger? Have you seen your need of a keeper? If so, have you fled to Christ in this relation? As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. that is, abide in him and he will abide in you and keep you from falling. The apostle certifies or rather assumes that he is able to keep you from falling. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy--to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, amen."--Jude 24,25. Paul also says: "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

(42.) The soul also needs to know Christ, not merely as a master but as a Friend. Jno. 15:13--15: "Greater love hath no

man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

Christ took the utmost pains to inspire his disciples with the most implicit confidence in him. He does the same still. Most christians seem not to have apprehended the condescension of Christ sufficiently to appreciate fully, not to say at all, his most sincere regard for them. They seem afraid to regard him in the light of a friend, one whom they may approach on all occasions with the utmost confidence and holy familiarity, one who takes a lively interest in every thing that concerns them, one who sympathizes with them in all their trials and feels more tenderly for them than we do for our nearest earthly friends. Observe, what emphasis he gives to this relation or to the strength of his friendship. He lays down his life for his friends. Now imagine yourself to have an earthly friend who loved you so much as to lay down his life for you; to die, too, for a crime which you had committed against himself. Were you assured of the strength of his friendship, and did you know withal his ability to help you in all circumstances to be absolutely unlimited, with what confidence would you unbosom yourself to him! How would you rest in his friendship and protection! Now even christians are slow to apprehend Christ in the relation of a friend. They stand in so much awe of him that they fear to take home to their hearts the full import and reality of the relation when applied to Christ. Yet Christ takes the greatest pains to inspire them with the fullest confidence in his undying and most exalted friendship.

I have often thought that many professed christians had never really and spiritually apprehended Christ in this relation. This accounts for their depending upon him so little in seasons of trial. They do not realize that he truly feels for and sympathizes with them, that is, his feeling for and sympathy with them, his deep interest in and pity for them, are not apprehended spiritually as a reality. Hence they stand aloof, or approach him only in words or at most with deep feeling and desire, but not in the unwavering confidence that they shall receive the things which they ask of him. But to prevail they must believe. "Let not that man that wavereth think to receive any thing of the Lord." The real, and deep, and abiding affection of Christ for us and his undying interest in us personally, must come to be a living and an omnipresent reality to our souls, to secure our own abiding in faith and love in all circumstances. There is perhaps no relation of Christ in which we need more thoroughly to know him than this.

This relation is admitted in words by almost every body, yet duly realized and believed by almost no body. Yet how infinitely strange that Christ should have given so high evidence of his love to and friendship for us, and that we should be so slow of heart to believe and realize it! But until this truth is really and spiritually apprehended and embraced, the soul will find it impossible to fly to him in seasons of trial with implicit confidence in his favor and protection. But let Christ be really apprehended and embraced as a friend who has laid down his life for us and would not hesitate to do it again, were it needful--and rely upon it, our confidence in him will secure our abiding in him.

(43.) Christ is also to be regarded and embraced in the relation of an Elder Brother: Heb. 2:10--18; "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same: that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Matt. 28:10:--"Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." John 20:17:--"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Rom. 8:29:--"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." These and other passages present Christ in the relation of a brother. So he is not merely a friend, but a brother. He is a brother possessing the attributes of God. And is it not of great importance that in this relation we should know and embrace him? It would seem as if all possible pains were taken by him to inspire us with the most implicit confidence in him. He is not ashamed to call us brethren; and shall we refuse or neglect to embrace him in this relation and avail ourselves of all that is

implied in it? I have often thought that many professed christians really regard the relations of Christ as only existing in name and not at all in reality and fact. Am I not a man and a brother? he says to the desponding and tempted soul. Himself hath said, A brother is made for adversity. He is the first-born among many brethren, and yet we are to be heirs with him, heirs of God and joint heirs with him to all the infinite riches of the Godhead. "O fools and slow of heart" not to believe and receive this brother to our most implicit and eternal confidence. He must be spiritually revealed, apprehended, and embraced in this relation as a condition of our experiencing his fraternal truthfulness.

Do let me inquire whether many christians do not regard such language as pathetic and touching, but after all as only a figure of speech, as a pretence rather than as a serious and infinitely important fact. Is the Father really our Father? Then Christ is our brother, not in a figurative sense merely, but literally and truly our brother. My brother? Ah truly, and a brother made for adversity. O Lord, reveal thyself fully to our souls in this relation.

(44.) Christ is the True Vine and we are the branches. And do we know him in this relation, as our parent stock, as the fountain from whom we receive our momentary nourishment and life? This union between Christ and our souls is formed by implicit faith in him. By faith the soul leans on him, feeds upon him, and receives a constantly sustaining influence from him. John 15:1--8:--"I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." Now it is important for us to understand what it is to be in Christ in the sense of this passage. It certainly is to be so united to him as to receive as real and as constant spiritual support and nourishment from him as the branch does natural nourishment from the vine. "If a man abide not in me," he says, "he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." Now to be in him implies such a union as to keep us spiritually alive and fresh. There are many withered professors in the church. They abide not in Christ. Their religion is stale. They can speak of former experience. They can tell how they once knew Christ, but every spiritual mind can see that they are branches fallen off. They have no fruit. Their leaves are withered, their bark is dried; and they are just fit to be gathered and cast into the fire. O, this stale, last year's religion. Why will not professors that live on an old experience, understand that they are cast off branches, and that their withered, fruitless, lifeless, loveless, faithless, powerless condition testifies to their faces and before all men that they are fit fuel for the flames?

It is also of infinite importance that we should know and spiritually apprehend the conditions of abiding in Christ in the relation of a branch to a vine. We must apprehend our various necessities and his infinite fullness, and lay hold upon and appropriate the whole that is implied in these relations to our own souls and wants as fast as he is revealed. Thus we shall abide in him and receive all the spiritual nourishment we need. But unless we are thus taught by the Spirit, and unless we thus believe, we shall not abide in him, nor he in us. If we do thus abide in him, he says we shall bear much fruit. Much fruit, then, is evidence that we do abide in him, and fruitlessness is positive evidence that we do not abide in him. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." Great prevalence in prayer, then, is an evidence that we abide in him. But a want of prevalence in prayer is conclusive evidence that we do not abide in him. No man sins while he properly abides in Christ. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new."

But let it not be forgotten that we have something to do to abide in Christ. "Abide in me," says Christ: this is required of us. We neither at first come to sustain the relation of a branch to Christ without our own activity, nor do or can we abide in him without a constant cleaving to him by faith. The will must of necessity be ever alive. It must cleave to Christ or to something else. It is one thing to hold this relation in theory, and an infinitely different thing to understand it spiritually and really cleave to Christ in the relation of the constant fountain of spiritual life.

(45.) Christ is also the "Fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness;" Zec. 13:1. Christ, (let it be ever remembered, and spiritually understood and embraced,) is not only a justifying, but also a purifying Savior. His name is Jesus because he saves his people from their sins.

(46.) As Jesus, therefore, he must be spiritually known and embraced. Jesus, Savior! He is called Jesus or Savior, we are informed, because he saves his people, not only from hell, but also from their sins. He saves from hell only upon condition of his saving from sin. He has no Savior, who is not in his own experience saved from sin? Of what use is it to call Jesus Lord and Savior unless he is really and practically acknowledged as our Lord and as our Savior from sin. Shall we call him Lord, Lord, and do not the things which he says? Shall we call him Savior, and refuse to so embrace him as to be saved from our sins?

(47.) We must know him as one whose blood cleanses us from all sin. Heb. 9:14:--"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" 1 Peter 1:19:--"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1:2:--"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Rev. 1:5:--"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." When the shedding of Christ's blood is rightly apprehended and embraced, when his atonement is properly understood and received by faith, it cleanses the soul from all sin; or rather, I should say, that when Christ is received as one to cleanse us from sin by his blood, we shall know what James B. Taylor meant when he said, "I have been into the fountain and am clean," and what Christ meant when he said "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." "Who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." It is of the last importance that language like this, relating to our being cleansed from sin by Christ should be elucidated to our souls by the Holy Spirit, and embraced by faith, and Christ truly revealed in this relation. Nothing but this can save us from sin. But this will fully and effectually do the work. It will cleanse us from all sin. It will cleanse us from all our filthiness and from all our idols. It will make us "CLEAN."

(48.) "His name shall be called wonderful." No inward or audible exclamation is more common to me of late years than the term Wonderful. When contemplating the nature, the character, the offices, the relations, the salvation of Christ, I find myself often mentally and frequently audibly exclaiming, WONDERFUL. My soul is filled with wonder, love, and praise, as I am led by the Holy Spirit to apprehend Christ sometimes in one and sometimes in another relation as circumstances and trials develop the need I have of him. I am more and more "astonished at the doctrine of the Lord" and at the Lord himself from year to year. I have come to the conclusion that there is no end to this either in time or in eternity. He will no doubt to all eternity continue to make discoveries of himself to his intelligent creatures that shall cause them to exclaim "WONDERFUL." I find my wonder more and more excited from one stage of christian experience to another. Christ is indeed wonderful contemplated in every point of view, as God, as man, as God-man, mediator. Indeed I hardly know in which of his many relations he appears most wonderful when in that relation he is revealed by the Holy Spirit. All, all, is wonderful when he stands revealed to the soul in any of his relations. The soul needs to be so acquainted with him as to excite and constantly keep awake its wonder and adoration. Contemplate Christ in any point of view and the wonder of the soul is excited. Look at any feature of his character, at any department of the plan of salvation, at any part that he takes in the glorious work of man's redemption, look steadfastly at him as he is revealed through the gospel by the Holy Spirit at any time and place, in any of his works or ways--and the soul will instantly exclaim WONDERFUL! Yes, he shall be called Wonderful!

(49.) "Counsellor." Who that has made Jesus his wisdom, does not and has not often recognized the fitness of calling him "counsellor?" Until he is known and embraced in this relation, it is not natural or possible for the soul to go to him with implicit confidence in every case of doubt. Almost every body holds in theory the propriety and necessity of consulting Christ in respect to the affairs that concern ourselves and his church. But it is one thing to hold this opinion, and quite another to so spiritually apprehend and embrace Christ in the relation of counsellor as naturally to call him counsellor when approaching him in secret, and as naturally to turn and consult him on all occasions and in respect to every thing that concerns us; and to consult him too with implicit confidence in his ability and willingness to give us the direction we need. Thoroughly and spiritually to know Christ in this relation is undoubtedly a condition of abiding steadfast in him. Unless the soul knows and duly appreciates its dependence upon him in this relation, and unless it renounces its own wisdom and substitutes his in the place of it by laying hold of Christ by faith as the counsellor of the soul, it will not continue to walk in his counsel, and consequently will not abide in his love.

(50.) The Mighty God. My Lord and my God, exclaimed Thomas when Christ stood spiritually revealed to him. It was

not merely what Christ said to Thomas on that occasion that caused him to utter the exclamation just quoted. Thomas saw indeed that Christ was raised from the dead, but so had Lazarus been raised from the dead. The mere fact, therefore, that Christ stood before him as one raised from the dead could not have been proof that he was God. No doubt the Holy Spirit discovered to Thomas at the moment the true Divinity of Christ, just as the saints in all ages have had him spiritually revealed to them as the Mighty God. I have long been convinced that it is in vain, so far forth as any spiritual benefit is concerned, to attempt to convince Unitarians of the proper Divinity of Christ. The scriptures are as plain as they can be upon this subject, and yet it is true that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit. As I have said in substance often, the personal revelation of Christ to the inward man by the Holy Spirit, is a condition of his being known as the "Mighty God." What is Christ to one who does not know him as God? To such a soul, he can not be a Savior. It is impossible that the soul should intelligently and without idolatry commit itself to him as a Savior unless it knows him to be the true God. It can not innocently pray to him nor worship him, nor commit the soul to his keeping and protection until it knows him as the Mighty God. To be orthodox merely in theory, in opinion, is nothing to the purpose of salvation. The soul must know Christ as God--must believe in or receive him as such. To receive him as any thing else is an infinitely different thing from coming and submitting to him as the true, and living, and mighty God.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 64

SANCTIFICATION.

(51.) Christ is our Shield. By this name or in this relation he has always been known to the saints. God said to Abraham, I am thy Shield.--Gen. 15:1. Ps. 33:20: The Lord is my Shield. Prov. 30:5: He is a Shield to them that put their trust in him. A shield is a piece of defensive armor used in war. It is a broad plate made of wood or metal, and borne upon the arm and hand, and in conflict presented between the body and the enemy to protect it against his arrows or his blows. God is the christian's shield in the spiritual warfare. This is a most interesting and important relation. He who does not know Christ in this relation, and has not embraced and put him on as one would buckle on a shield, is all exposed to the assaults of the enemy and will surely be wounded if not slain by his fiery darts. This is more than a figure of speech. No fact or reality is of more importance to the christian than to know how to hide himself behind and in Christ in the hour of conflict. Unless the christian has on his shield and knows how to use it, he will surely fall in battle. When Satan appears, the soul must present its shield, must take refuge behind and in Christ or all will be defeat and disgrace. When faith presents Christ as the shield, Satan retires vanquished from the field in every instance. Christ always makes way for our escape and never did a soul get wounded in conflict who made the proper use of this shield. But Christ needs to be known as our protection, as ready on all occasions to shield us from the curse of the law and from the artillery of the enemy of our souls. Be sure to truly know him and put him on in this relation, and then you may always sing of victory.

(52.) The Lord is "the Portion" of his people.

"I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward," said God to Abraham. As the reward or portion of the soul we need to know and embrace Christ as the condition of abiding in him. We need to know him as "our exceeding great portion," a present, all-satisfying portion. Unless we so know Christ as to be satisfied with him as all we can ask or desire, we shall not of course abstain from all forbidden sources of enjoyment. Nothing is more indispensable to our entire sanctification than to apprehend the fullness there is in Christ in this relation. When the soul finds in him all its desires and all its wants fully met, when it sees in him all that it can conceive of as excellent and desirable, and that he is its portion, it remains at rest. It has little temptation to go after other lovers or after other sources of enjoyment. It is full. It has enough. It has an infinitely rich and glorious inheritance. What more can it ask or think? The soul that understands what it is to have Christ as its portion, knows that he is an infinite portion, that eternity can never exhaust or even diminish it in the least degree; that the mind shall to all eternity increase in the capacity of enjoying this portion, but that no increase of capacity and enjoyment can diminish ought of the infinite fullness of the Divine Portion of our souls.

(53.) Christ is our Hope. 1 Tim. 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our Hope." Col. 1:27. "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory." Our only rational expectation is from him. Christ in us is our hope of glory. Without Christ in us we have no good or well-grounded hope of glory. Christ in the gospel, Christ on the cross, Christ risen, Christ in heaven is not our hope; but Christ in us, Christ actually present, living and reigning in us as really as he lives and reigns in glory, is our only well-grounded hope. We can not be too certain of this, for unless we despair of salvation in ourselves or in any other, we do not truly make Christ our hope. The soul that does not know and spiritually know Christ in this relation has no well-grounded hope. He may hope that he is a christian. He may hope that his sins are forgiven--that he shall be saved. But he can have no good hope of glory. It can not be too fully understood or too deeply realized that absolute despair of help and salvation in any other possible way except by Christ in us, is an unalterable condition of our knowing and embracing Christ as our hope. Many seem to have conceived of Christ as their hope only in his outward relation, that is, as an atoning Savior, as a risen and ascended Savior. But the

indispensable necessity of having Christ within them ruling in their hearts and establishing his government over their whole being, is a condition of salvation of which they have not thought. Christ can not be truly and savingly our hope any farther than he is received into and reigns in our souls. To hope in merely an outward Christ is to hope in vain. To hope in Christ with the true christian hope implies,

[1.] The ripe and spiritual apprehension of our hopeless condition without him. It implies such an apprehension of our sins and governmental relations as to annihilate all hope of salvation upon legal grounds.

[2.] Such a perception of our spiritual bondage to sin as to annihilate all hope of salvation without his constant influence and strength to keep us from sin.

[3.] Such a knowledge of our circumstances of temptation as to empty us of all expectation of fighting our own battles or of in the least degree making headway against our spiritual foes in our own wisdom and strength.

[4.] A complete annihilation of all hope from any other source.

[5.] The revelation of Christ to our souls as our hope by the Holy Spirit.

[6.] The apprehension of him as one to dwell in us and to be received by faith to the supreme control of our souls.

[7.] The hearty and joyful reception of him in this relation. The dethroning of self or the utter denial or rejection of self and the enthroning and crowning of Christ in the inner man. When Christ is clearly seen to be the only hope of the soul, and when he is spiritually received in this relation, the soul learns habitually and constantly to lean upon him, to rest in him, and make no efforts without him.

(54.) Christ is also our Salvation. Ex. 15:2: "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation, he my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." Ps. 27:1: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Ps. 38:22: "Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation." Ps. 62:7: "In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God." Ps. 114: "The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation." Isa. 12:2: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." Isa. 49:6: "And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." Luke 2:30: "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." These and multitudes of similar passages present Christ not only as our Savior, but as our Salvation. That is, he saves us by becoming himself our salvation. Becoming our salvation includes and implies the following things:

[1.] Atonement for our sins.

[2.] Convincing us of and converting us from our sins.

[3.] Sanctifying our souls.

[4.] Justifying or pardoning and accepting or receiving us to favor.

[5.] Giving us eternal life and happiness.

[6.] The bestowment of himself upon us as the portion of our souls.

[7.] The everlasting union of our souls with God.

All this Christ is to us and well he may be regarded not only as our Savior, but as our salvation.

Nothing is or can be more important than for us to apprehend Christ in the fulness of his relations to us. Many seem to have but extremely superficial apprehensions of Christ. They seem in a great measure blind to the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of their infinite necessities. Hence they have never sought for such a remedy as is found in Christ. The great mass of christian professors seem to conceive of the salvation of Christ as consisting in a state of mind resulting not from a real union of the soul with Christ, but resulting merely from understanding and believing the doctrines of Christ. The doctrine of Christ as taught in the bible was designed to gain for Christ a personal reception to dwell within and to rule over us. He that truly believes the gospel, will receive Christ as he is presented in the gospel, that is, for what he is there asserted to be to his people, in all the relations he sustains to our souls, as fast as these relations are revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.

The newly converted soul knows Christ in but few relations. He needs trials and experience to develop his weakness and to reveal to him his multiplied necessities and thus lead him to a fuller knowledge of Christ. The new convert embraces Christ so far as he knows him, but at first he knows but little of his need of him except in his governmental relations. Subsequent experience is a condition of his knowing Christ in all his fullness. Nor can he be effectually taught the fulness there is in Christ any faster than his trials develop his real necessities. If he embraces all he understands of Christ, this is the whole of present duty in respect to him; but as trials are in his way he will learn more of his own necessities, and must learn more of Christ and appropriate him in new relations, or he will surely fall.

(55.) Christ is also the Rock of our Salvation:

Ps. 19:14: Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength [margin, Rock,] and my Redeemer.

28:1: Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock; be not silent to me; lest if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.

31:2. Bow down thine ear to me, deliver me speedily, be thou my strong rock, for a house of defence to save me. 3. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore, for thy name's sake, lead me, and guide me.

42:9. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

61:2. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.

73:26. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength [margin, Rock,] of my heart, and my portion for ever.

78:35. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer.

89: 26. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.

94:22. But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge.

95:1. O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.

Isa. 17:10. Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength, therefore shall thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips.

32:2. And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

It is deeply interesting and affecting to contemplate the relations in which Christ revealed himself to the Old Testament saints. He is a rock of salvation, a strong hold or place of refuge. In this relation the soul must know him, and must take

hold of him or take shelter in him.

(56.) He is also a rock cleft from which the waters of life flow. 1 Cor. 10:14. "And did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." As such the soul must know and embrace him.

(57.) He is a Great Rock that is higher than we, rising amid the burning sands of our pilgrimage, under the cooling shadow of which the soul can find repose and comfort. He is like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. To apprehend Christ in this relation the soul needs to be brought into sharp and protracted trials until it is faint and ready to sink in discouragement. When the struggle is too severe for longer endurance and the soul is on the point of giving up in despair, then when Christ is revealed as a great rock standing for its defense against the heat of its trials, and throwing over it the cooling, soothing influence of his protection, it finds itself at rest and refreshed, and readily adopts the language of a numerous class of passages of scripture, and finds itself to have apprehended Christ as inspired men apprehended and embraced him. It is truly remarkable that in all our experiences we can find that inspired writers have had the like, and in every trial and in every deliverance, in every new discovery of our emptiness, and of Christ's fulness we find the language of our hearts most fully and aptly expressed in the language of the living oracles. We readily discover that inspired men had fallen into like trials, had Christ revealed to them in the same relations and had similar exercises of mind; insomuch that no language of our own can so readily express all that we think and feel and see.

(58.) He is the Rock from which the soul is satisfied with honey. Ps. 81:16: "He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat; and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." The spiritual mind apprehends this language spiritually as it is doubtless really intended to be understood. It knows what it is to be satisfied with honey from the Rock, Christ. The Divine Sweetness that often refreshes the spiritual mind when it betakes itself to the Rock Christ, reminds it of the words of this passage of scripture.

(59.) He is the Rock or Foundation upon which the church as the temple of the living God is builded.

Matt. 16:18. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Ro. 9:33. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and a rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

1 Pet. 2:8. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed.

He is a sure foundation. He is an eternal rock or the rock of ages--the corner stone of the whole spiritual edifice. But we must build for ourselves upon this rock. It is not enough to understand as a tenet, a theory, an opinion, an article of our creed, that Christ is the rock in this sense. We must see that we do not build upon the sand. Matt. 7:26,27: "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; And the rain descended, and the floods came, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it."

(60.) He is the "strength of our heart." He is not only our refuge and strength in our conflicts with outward temptations and trials in the sense expressed in Ps. 46:1: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble;" but he is also the strength of our heart and our portion forever in the sense of Ps. 73:26: "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." He braces up and confirms the whole inner man in the way of holiness. What christian has not at times found himself ready to halt and faint by the way. Temptation seems to steal upon him like a charm. He finds his spiritual strength very low, his resolution weak, and he feels as if he should give way to the slightest temptation. He is afraid to expose himself out of his closet, or even to remain within it lest he should sin. He says with David, "I shall fall by the hand of Saul." He finds himself empty--all weakness and trembling. Were it not that the strength of his heart interposes in time he would doubtless realize in his experience his worst fears. But who that knows Christ, has not often experienced his faithfulness under such circumstances, and felt an immortal awaking, reviving, and strength taking possession of his whole being? What spiritual minister has not often dragged himself into the pulpit so discouraged and faint as to be hardly able to stand, or to hold up his head? He is so weak that his spiritual knees smite one

against the other. He is truly empty, and feels as if he could not open his mouth. He sees himself to be an empty vine, an empty vessel, a poor helpless, strengthless infant lying in the dust before the Lord, unable to stand, or go, or preach, or pray, or do the least thing for Christ. But lo! at this juncture, his spiritual strength is renewed. Christ the strength of his heart develops his own almightiness within him. His mouth is open. He is strong in faith, giving glory to God. He is made at once a sharp threshing instrument to beat down the mountains of opposition to Christ and his gospel. His bow is renewed in his hand and abides in strength. His mouth is opened and Christ has filled it with arguments. Christ has girded him to the battle and made strong the arms of his hands with the strength of the Mighty God of Jacob.

The same is true of every christian in substance. He has his seasons of being empty that he may feel his dependence; and anon he is girded with strength from on high, and an immortal and superhuman strength takes possession of his soul. The enemy gives way before him. In Christ he can run through a troop, and in his strength he can leap over a wall. Every difficulty gives way before him, and he is conscious that Christ has strengthened him with strength in his soul. The will seems to have the utmost decision, so that temptation gets an emphatic no! without a moment's parley.

(61.) Christ is he through whom we may reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God. This we are exhorted and commanded to do. That is we may and ought to account or reckon ourselves through him as dead unto sin and alive unto God. But what is implied in this liberty to reckon ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord? Why certainly,

[1.] That through and in him we have all the provision we need, to keep, us from sin.

[2.] That we may and ought to expect to live without sin.

[3.] That we ought to account ourselves as having nothing more to do with sin than a dead man has with the affairs of this world.

[4.] That we may and ought to lay hold on Christ for this full and present death unto sin and life unto God.

[5.] That if we do thus reckon ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God in the true spiritual sense of this text we shall find Christ unto our souls all we expect of him in this relation. If Christ can not or will not save us from sin, upon condition of our laying hold of him and reckoning ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God through him, what right had the apostle to say, Reckon yourselves indeed dead unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord? What! does the apostle tell us to account or reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, and shall D. D.'s tell us that such reckoning or expectation is a dangerous delusion!

Now certainly nothing less can be meant by reckoning ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ, than that through Christ we should expect to live without sin. And not to expect to live without sin through Christ is unbelief. It is a rejection of Christ in this relation. Through Christ we ought to expect to live to God as much as we expect to live at all. He that does not expect this, rejects Christ as his sanctification and as Jesus who saves his people from their sins.

The foregoing are some of the relations which Christ sustains to us as our salvation. I could have enlarged greatly as you perceive upon each of these, and easily have swelled this part of our course of study to a large volume. I have only touched upon these sixty-one relations as specimens of the manner in which he is presented for our acceptance in the bible and by the Holy Spirit. Do not understand me as teaching that we must first know Christ in all these relations before we can be sanctified. The thing intended is that coming to know Christ in these relations is a condition or is the indispensable means of our steadfastness or perseverance in holiness under temptation--that when we are tempted from time to time, nothing can secure us against a fall but the revelation of Christ to the soul in these relations one after another, and our appropriation of him to ourselves by faith. The gospel has directly promised, in every temptation, to open a way of escape so that we shall be able to bear it. The spirit of this promise pledges to us such a revelation of Christ as to secure our standing; if we will lay hold upon him by faith, as revealed. Our circumstances of temptation render it necessary that at one time we should apprehend Christ in one relation and at another time in another. For example, at one time we are tempted to despair by Satan's accusing us of sin and suggesting that our sins are too great to be forgiven. In this case we need a revelation and an appropriation of Christ as having been made sin for us; that is, as having atoned for

our sins--as being our justification or righteousness. This will sustain the soul's confidence and preserve its peace.

At another time we are tempted to despair of ever overcoming our tendencies to sin and to give up our sanctification as a hopeless thing. Now we need a revelation of Christ as our sanctification, &c.

At another time the soul is harassed with the view of the great subtlety and sagacity of its spiritual enemies, and greatly tempted to despair on that account. Now it needs to know Christ as its wisdom.

Again, it is tempted to discouragement on account of the great number and strength of its adversaries. On such occasions it needs Christ revealed as the Mighty God, as its strong tower, its hiding place, its munition of Rocks.

Again, the soul is oppressed with a sense of the infinite holiness of God and the infinite distance there is between us and God on account of our sinfulness and his infinite holiness, and on account of his infinite abhorrence of sin and sinners. Now the soul needs to know Christ as its righteousness, and as a mediator between God and man.

Again, the christian's mouth is closed with a sense of guilt, so that he can not look up nor speak to God of pardon and acceptance. He trembles and is confounded before God. He lies along on his face, and despairing thoughts roll a tide of agony through his soul. He is speechless and can only groan out his self-accusations before the Lord. Now as a condition of rising above this temptation to despair, he needs a revelation of Christ as his Advocate, as his High-Priest, as ever living to make intercession for him. This view of Christ will enable the soul to commit all to him in this relation, and maintain its peace and hold on to its steadfastness.

Again, the soul is led to tremble in view of its constant exposedness to besetments on every side, oppressed with such a sense of its own utter helplessness in the presence of its enemies as almost to despair. Now it needs to know Christ as the Good Shepherd who keeps a constant watch over the sheep and carries the lambs in his bosom. He needs to know him as a Watchman and a Keeper.

Again, it is oppressed with a sense of its own utter emptiness, and is forced to exclaim, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. It sees that it has no life, or unction, or power, or spirituality in itself. Now it needs to know Christ as the True Vine from which it may receive constant and abundant spiritual nourishment. It needs to know him as the fountain of the water of life, and in those relations that will meet its necessities in this direction. Let these suffice as specimens to illustrate what is intended by entire or permanent sanctification being conditioned on the revelation and appropriation of Christ in all the fulness of his official relations.

It is not intended, as has been said, that Christ must previously be known in all these relations before a soul can be sanctified at all; but that when tried from time to time, a new revelation of Christ to the soul, corresponding to the temptation, or as the help of the soul in such circumstances, is a condition of its remaining steadfast. This gracious aid or revelation is abundantly promised in the bible, and will be made in time, so that by laying hold on Christ in the present revealed relation, the soul may be preserved blameless, though the furnace of temptation be heated seven times hotter than it is wont to be.

In my estimation the church as a body, I mean the nominal church, have entirely mistaken the nature and means or conditions of sanctification. They have not regarded it as consisting in a state of entire consecration, nor understood that continual entire consecration was entire sanctification. They have regarded sanctification as consisting in the annihilation of the constitutional propensities instead of the controlling of them. They have erred equally in regard to the means or conditions of entire sanctification. They seem to have regarded sanctification as brought about by a physical cleansing in which man was passive; or to have gone over to the opposite extreme, and regarded sanctification as consisting in the formation of habits of obedience. The Old School have seemed to be waiting for a physical sanctification in which they are to be in a great measure passive, and which they have not expected to take place in this life. Holding, as they do, that the constitution of both soul and body is defiled or sinful in every power and faculty, they of course can not hold to entire sanctification in this life. If the constitutional appetites, passions, and propensities are in fact, as they hold, sinful in themselves, why, then the question is settled that entire sanctification can not take place in this world nor in the next, except as the constitution is radically changed, and that of course by the creative power of God. The New School rejecting the doctrine of constitutional moral depravity and physical regeneration and sanctification, and losing sight of

Christ as our sanctification, have fallen into a self-righteous view of sanctification, and have held that sanctification is effected by works or by forming holy habits, &c. Both the Old and the New School have fallen into egregious errors upon this fundamentally important subject.

The truth is, beyond all question, that sanctification is by faith as opposed to works. That is, faith receives Christ in all his offices and in all the fulness of his relations to the soul; and Christ when received, works in the soul to will and to do of all his good pleasure, not by a physical, but by a moral or persuasive working. Observe, he influences the will. This must be by a moral influence, if its actings are intelligent and free, as they must be to be holy. That is, if he influences the will to obey God, it must be by a Divine moral suasion. The soul never in any instance obeys in a spiritual and true sense, except it be thus influenced by the indwelling Spirit of Christ. But whenever Christ is apprehended and received in any relation, in that relation he is full and perfect; so that we are complete in him. For it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and that we might all receive of his fullness until we have grown up into him in all things, "Until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 65

SANCTIFICATION.

VII. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

To the doctrine we have been advocating it is objected that the real practical question is not,

1. Whether this state is attainable on the ground of natural ability; for this is admitted.
2. It is not whether it is rational to hope to make this attainment, provided we set our hearts upon making it, and persevere in aiming to attain it; for this is admitted.
3. It is not whether this state is a rational object of pursuit, provided any are disposed to pursue it. But,
4. Is it rational for christians to hope that they shall pursue it, and shall perseveringly set their hearts upon it? Is it rational for christians to hope that they shall so endeavor to attain it as to fulfil[] the conditions of the promises wherein it is pledged?

To this I reply,

(1.) That it makes a new issue. It yields the formerly contested ground and proposes an entirely new question. Hitherto the question has been, is this state an object of rational pursuit, provided any are disposed to pursue it? May christians aim at this attainment with the rational hope of making it? This point is now yielded, if I understand the objection, and one entirely distinct is substituted, namely: Is it rational for christians to hope that they shall pursue after this attainment? or that they shall aim at and set themselves to make this attainment? This, I say, is quite another question than the one heretofore argued.

It is, however, an important one, and I am quite willing to discuss it, but with this distinct understanding that it is not the question upon which issue has been heretofore taken. This question, as we shall see, calls up a distinct enquiry. In this discussion I shall pursue the following outline:

1. What constitutes hope?
2. What is implied in a rational hope?
3. The grounds of rational hope may vary indefinitely in degree.
4. Wrong views may inspire an irrational hope.
5. Wrong views may prevent a rational hope.

6. Hope is a condition of the attainment in question.
7. What the objection under consideration admits.
8. What I understand it to deny.
9. What it amounts to.
10. What it must assume in reference to the provisions of grace.
11. What these provisions are not.
12. What they are.
13. What real grounds of hope there are in respect to the question under consideration.
14. Consider the tendency of denying that there are valid grounds of hope in this case.

1. I am to show what hope is.

Hope in common parlance, and as I shall use the term in this discussion, is not a phenomenon of will, or it is not a voluntary state of mind. It includes a phenomenon both of the intellect and the sensibility. It is a state of mind compounded of desire and expectation. Desire alone is not hope. A man may desire an event ever so strongly yet if he has no degree of expectation that the desired event will occur he can not justly be said to hope for it.

Expectation is not hope, for one may expect an event ever so confidently, yet if he does not at all desire it, he can not be truly said to hope for it. Hope comprehends both desire and expectation. There must be some degree of both of these to compose hope.

2. What is implied in a rational hope?

(1.) The desire must be reasonable; that is, in accordance with reason. The thing desired must be such as reason sanctions or approves. If the desire is an unreasonable one the fact that there is good ground for expecting the desired end will not make the hope rational. The expectation might in this case be rational in the sense that there is valid reason for the expectation. But expectation alone is not hope. A rational hope must include a rational desire or a desire in accordance with reason, and a rational expectation, that is, an expectation in accordance with reason.

(2.) The expectation to be rational must have for its foundation at least some degree of evidence. Hope may be, and often is, indulged barely on the ground that the desired event is possible in the absence of all evidence that it is likely to occur. Thus we say of one who is at the point of death, and whose life is despaired of by all but his nearest friends, "where there is life there is hope." When events are so greatly desired men are wont to indulge the hope that the event will occur, even in the absence of all evidence, that it will occur, and in the face of the highest evidence that it will not occur. But such hope can hardly be said to be rational. Hope to be rational must have for its support, not a bare possibility that the desired event may occur, but at least some degree of evidence that it will occur. This is true of hope in general. When an event is conditioned upon the exercise of our own agency and upon an agency which we are able either in our own strength or through grace to exert, it may be more or less rational to expect the occurrence of the event in proportion as we more or less desire it. Hope includes desire; there can be no hope without desire. There may be a good ground of hope when there is in fact no hope. There may be a reason and a good reason for desire where there is no desire. There may be and is good reason for sinners to desire to be christians when they have no such desire. Again, there may be good reason for both desire and expectation when in fact there is neither. The thing which it is reasonable to desire may not be desired, and there may be good reason for expecting that an event will occur, when no such expectation is indulged. For example, a

child may neither desire nor expect to comply with the wishes of a parent in a given instance. Yet it may be very reasonable for him to desire to comply in this instance with parental authority, and the circumstances may be such as to afford evidence that he will be brought to compliance, and yet there may be in this case no hope exercised by the child that he shall comply. There may be then a rational ground for hope when there is no hope. A thing may be strongly desired and yet the evidence that it will occur may not be apprehended, and therefore, although such evidence may exist, it may not be perceived by the mind, or the mind may be so occupied with contemplating opposing evidence or with looking at discouraging circumstances as not to apprehend the evidence upon which a rational hope may be or might be grounded.

Again, when the event in question consists in the action of the will in conformity with the law of the reason, the probability that it will thus act depends upon the states of the sensibility or upon the desires. It may therefore be more or less rational to expect this conformity of the will to the law of the intelligence, in proportion as this state of the will is more or less strongly desired. I merely make this remark in this place; we shall see its application hereafter. I also add in this place that a man may more or less rationally expect to make the attainment under consideration, that is to obtain in this life a complete victory over sin, in proportion as he more or less ardently desires it. This we shall see hereafter. The indulgence of hope implies existing desire, and, as I said, the hope to be rational must have some degree of evidence that the thing hoped for will occur.

3. The grounds of rational hope may vary indefinitely in degree.

I have said that there may be rational grounds of hope when there is no hope. A sinner under terrible conviction of sin and in present despair, may have grounds and strong grounds of hope, while he has no hope.

Again, the grounds of hope may be more or less strong in proportion as hope is more or less strong. For example, an event which is dependent upon the exercise of our own agency may be more or less likely to occur, in proportion to the strength or weakness of our hope that it will occur. Hope is compounded as we have said of desire and expectation. An event dependent upon our agency may be more or less likely to occur in proportion as we desire its occurrence, and entertain the confident expectation that it will occur. In such a case, although the evidence may be really but slight upon which the expectation is at first founded, yet the very fact that the mind has become confident that a strongly desired event will take place, which event depends upon the energetic and persevering exercise of our own agency, I say the strength of the confidence as well as the strength of the desire may render the event all the more probable and thus the grounds of hope may be increased by the increase of hope. For it should be remembered that hope is possible and common when there are no good grounds for it, and the very fact that a hope at present with slight grounds does exist, may increase the grounds of rational hope. Suppose, for example, that an Indian in our western forests, who had never heard the gospel, should come in some way to have the idea and the desire and expectation of finding out a way of salvation. Now before he had this hope there could not be said to have been but slight rational ground for it. But since he has the idea, the desire, and the expectation, he may from these facts have a rational ground of hope that he shall discover a way of salvation. The desire and the expectation may render it highly probable that he will in some manner discover the right way.

Again, the rational ground of hope in respect to at least a certain class of events may be greatly increased by the fact that there is a present willingness that the desired and expected event should occur, and an endeavor to secure it. Hope does not necessarily imply a willingness. For example a sinner may desire to be converted and he may expect that he shall be and yet not at present be willing to be; that is, he may conceive rightly of what constitutes conversion or turning to God, and he may for the sake of his own salvation desire to turn, that is, to turn as a condition of his own salvation, and he may expect that he shall in future turn; and yet he is not by the supposition as yet willing to turn; for willing is turning, and if he is willing he has turned already. If the event hoped for consists in or is dependent upon future acts of our own will, the grounds of hope that the event will occur may be indefinitely strengthened by the fact that we have the present consciousness of not only hoping for its occurrence, but also that our will or heart is at present set upon it.

Myriads of circumstances may be taken into the account in balancing and weighing the evidence for or against the occurrence of a given event. The event may depend in a great measure upon our desires, and when it really does depend under God upon our desires, present willingness and efforts, the grounds of confidence or of hope must vary as our hopes and endeavors vary. There may be, as I have said, ground for hope when there is no hope, and the ground of hope may be

indefinitely increased by the existence of hope. There may be a strong hope and a weak hope, strong grounds or reasons for hope or weak grounds of hope. When there is any degree of present evidence that an event will occur, there is some ground of rational hope.

4. Wrong views may inspire an irrational hope.

This follows from the nature of hope. A thing may be desired--wrong views may inspire confidence or beget expectation when there is not the slightest ground for expectation. The hope of the Universalist is a striking instance of this. The same is true of false professors of religion. They desire to be saved. False views inspire confidence that they are christians and that they shall be saved.

5. Wrong views may prevent a rational hope.

This is also common, as every one knows. A thing may be desired, and there may be the best grounds for confidence or expectation, which is an element of hope. But false views may forbid the expectation to be entertained. In this case, one element of hope exists, that is, desire, but the other, to wit, expectation is rendered impossible by erroneous views.

Again, expectation may exist, yet false views may prevent desire. For example, I may expect to see a certain individual whom, from false impressions respecting him, I have no desire to see. It is indispensable to hope that the views be such as to beget both desire and expectation.

6. Hope is a condition of the attainment in question.

(1.) The attainment implies and consists in the right future exercise of our own agency.

(2.) The right future exercise of our own agency in respect to the state in question depends under God or is conditioned upon the previous use of means to secure that result.

(3.) Those means will never be used unless there is hope; that is, unless there is both desire and expectation. If therefore any false instruction shall forbid the expectation of attaining the state in question, the attainment will not be sought, it will not be aimed at. There may be ever so good grounds or reasons to expect to make this attainment, yet if these grounds are not discovered and the expectation is not intelligent the attainment will be delayed. There must be hope indulged in this case as a condition of making this attainment.

7. What I understand the objection to admit.

(1.) That the state in question is a possible state or a possible attainment both on the ground of natural ability and through grace.

(2.) That this attainment is provided for in the promises of the gospel; that is, that the promises of the gospel proffer grace to every believer sufficient to secure him against sin, in all the future, on condition that he will believe and appropriate them.

(3.) That all the necessary means are provided and brought within the christian's reach to secure this attainment, and that there is no insurmountable difficulty in the way of this attainment, provided he is willing and does use these necessary means in the required manner.

(4.) There is rational ground for hoping of making this attainment if any will set their heart to make it.

(5.) Consequently that this attainment is a rational object of pursuit; that is, that it is rational to hope to make it, provided we are disposed to make it or to aim to make it.

8. What I understand the objection to deny.

1. That it is rational for any christian to hope so to use the means as to secure the attainment in question, that is, that no christian can rationally hope to exercise such faith, and so to use the means of grace and so to avail himself of the proffered grace of the gospel, and so to fulfill the conditions of the promises as to receive their fulfillment and make the attainment in question in this life. The objection, as I understand it, denies that we can rationally hope by present faith and the present use of our powers to render it probable that we shall in future use them aright; or in other words the objection denies that we can, by any thing whatever that we can at present do, gain any evidence, or lay a foundation for any rational hope, that in future we shall obey God; or it denies that our present desire, or will, or faith, or efforts, have through grace any such connection with our future state in this life as to render it in any degree probable that we shall receive the fulfillment of such promises as the following: 1 Thes. 5:23,24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth. you, who also will do it." It denies that it is rational for us to hope by the improvement of present grace to secure future grace; that it is rational for us to expect by a present laying hold on such promises as the one just quoted to secure its present or its future fulfillment to us. It denies that it is rational for us to lay hold of such promises as that just quoted with the expectation that they will be fulfilled to us; that is, we can not at present do any thing, whatever, however much we may will and desire it, that shall render it in the least degree probable that these promises will ever be fulfilled to us in this life. The objection must proceed upon denying this for it is certain that christians do desire this attainment and will it too; that is, they will at least that it might be so. If all christians do not hope for it, it is because they regard it as not attainable.

9. What the objection really amounts to.

(1.) That although the promise just quoted is undeniably a promise of the very state in question in this life, yet it is irrational to hope, by any thing that we can at present do, however much we may at present will and desire it, to secure to ourselves either its present or its future fulfillment in this life.

(2.) It amounts to a denial that at any future time during this life it will be rational for us to hope by any thing that we can at that time do to secure either at that or any other time, the fulfillment of the promise to us.

(3.) It amounts to a denial that we can rationally hope, at any time in this life, to believe or do any thing that will render it in the least degree probable that this promise will be fulfilled to us; that, however much we may at present desire and will to secure the thing promised, we can at present or at any future time rationally hope to secure the thing promised.

(4.) It amounts to a denial that it is rational to expect under any circumstances that this class of promises will ever be fulfilled to the saints.

(5.) The principles assumed and lying at the foundation of this objection must, if sound, prove the gospel a humbug. If it is true that by no present act of faith we can secure to us the present or the future fulfillment of the promise of entire sanctification, I see not why it is not equally true in respect to all the promises. If there is no such connection between our present and future faith and obedience as to render it even in the least degree probable that the promises of persevering grace shall be vouchsafed to us, then what is the gospel but a humbug? Where is the ground of a rational hope of salvation? But suppose it should be replied to this that in respect to other promises, and especially in respect to promises of salvation and of sufficient grace to secure our salvation, there is such a connection between present faith and future faith and salvation as to render the latter at least probable, and as therefore to afford a rational ground of hope of perseverance, in such a sense as to secure salvation; but that this is not the case with the promises of entire sanctification. Should this be alledged, I call for proof. Observe, I admit the connection contended for as just stated between present faith and obedience, and future perseverance, and final salvation, that the former renders the latter at least probable; but I also contend that the same is true in respect to the promises of entire sanctification. Let the contrary be shown, if it can be. Let the principle be produced, if it can be, either from scripture or reason, that will settle and recognize the difference contended for, to wit, that present faith and obedience does lay a rational foundation of hope, that we shall persevere to the end of life in such a sense as that we shall be saved, and yet that present faith in the promises of entire sanctification does not render it in the least degree probable that we shall ever receive the fulfillment of those promises. Let it be shown if it can be, that the present belief of certain promises renders it certain or probable that they will be fulfilled to us, but that no such connection obtains in respect to other promises. Let it be shown if it can be, that present faith in the promises

of perseverance and salvation renders it either certain or probable that these promises will be fulfilled to us, while present faith in the promise of entire sanctification, in this life, renders it neither certain nor in the least degree probable that these promises will ever, in this life be fulfilled to us.

Suppose a Calvinist should alledge that the first act of faith renders it certain that the new believer will be saved, and therefore it renders it certain that he will persevere to the end of life, but that the same is not true of promises of entire sanctification in this life. I ask for his proof of the truth of this assertion; that is, I ask him to prove that faith in the latter promises does not sustain as real and as certain a relation to the reception of the thing promised as does faith in the former promises. Suppose him to answer that God has revealed his design to save all christians, and from hence we know that if they once believe they shall certainly persevere and be saved. But in answer to this I ask, is it not as expressly revealed as possible, that God will wholly sanctify all christians, spirit, soul, and body, and preserve them blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? The language in 1 Thes. 5:23,24, may be regarded either as an express promise or as an express declaration: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Here, observe, Paul expressly affirms that God will do it. Now where in the bible is there a more express promise or a more express revelation of the will and design of God than this? No where. But suppose it should be replied to this, that if we take this view of the subject, it follows that all saints have been wholly sanctified in this life. I answer, they no doubt have, for there is not a word in the bible of their being sanctified in any other life than this, and if they have gone to heaven, they were no doubt sanctified wholly in this life.

But secondly, it would not follow that they have all been wholly sanctified until at or near the close of life, because many of them have probably never understood and appropriated this and similar promises by faith, and consequently have failed to realize in their own experience their fulfillment for any considerable length of time before their death. The exact question here is, If the soul at present apprehends and lays hold on the promises of entire sanctification in this life, is there not as real and as certain a connection between present faith and the future fulfillment of the promise as there is between present faith in any other promises, and the future fulfillment of those promises. If this is not so, let the contrary be shown, if it can be. The burden of proof lies on the objector. If to this any one should reply that present faith in any promise does not sustain any such relation to the fulfillment of the promise as to render it rational to hope for its fulfillment, I answer that if this is so, then the gospel is a mere nullity and sheer nonsense. Nay, it is infinitely worse than nonsense.

I will not at present contend that present faith in any promise of future good sustains such a relation to its fulfillment that its fulfillment to us is absolutely certain; but upon this I do insist that present faith in any promise of God does render it at least in some degree probable that the promise will be fulfilled to us, and that therefore we have ground of rational hope when we are conscious of desiring a promised blessing, and of laying hold by faith upon the promise of it, and of setting our hearts upon obtaining it; I say when we are conscious of this state of mind in regard to any promised blessing, we have rational ground of hope that we shall receive the thing promised. And it matters not at all what the blessing promised is. If God has promised it, he is able to give it, and we have no right to say that the nature of the thing promised forbids the rational expectation that we shall receive it. It is plain that the principle on which this objection is based amounts to a real denial of the gospel, and makes all the promises a [m]ere nullity.

10. What this objection must assume in reference to the provisions of grace.

(1.) That grace has made no provisions for securing the fulfillment of the conditions of the promises. This must certainly be assumed in relation to the promises of entire sanctification in this life; that grace has made no such provisions as to render the fulfillment of the conditions of this class of promises in any degree probable; that the grace of God in Jesus Christ does not even afford the least degree of evidence that real saints will ever, in this life, so believe those promises as to secure the blessing promised; that therefore it is irrational for the saints to hope through any provisions of grace to fulfill the conditions and secure the blessing promised; the grace of God is not sufficient for the saints in the sense that it is rational for them to hope to so believe the promises of entire sanctification as to secure the thing promised. The gospel and the grace of God then are a complete failure, so far as the hope of living in this life without rebellion against God is concerned. His name is called Jesus in vain, so far as it respects salvation from sin in this life. There is then no rational ground of hope that, by any thing we can possibly do while in the present exercise of faith and love and zeal, we can render it, through grace, in the least degree probable that we shall persevere in seeking this blessing until we have

fulfilled the condition of the promise and secured the blessing. Nothing that we can now do, while in faith and love, will render it through grace in the least degree probable that we shall at any future time believe or do any thing that will secure to us the promised blessing. Christians do at present desire this attainment and have a heart or will to it. This objection must assume that grace has made no such provision as to render the hope rational that this desire and will exist in future, do what we may at present to secure it.

11. What the provisions of grace are not.

(1.) Grace has made no provision to save any one without entire holiness of heart.

(2.) It has made no provision to secure holiness without the right exercise of our own will or agency, for all holiness consists in this.

(3.) It has made no provision to save any one who will not fulfill the conditions of salvation.

(4.) It has made no provision for the bestowment of irresistible grace, for the very terms imply a contradiction. A moral agent can not be forced or necessitated to act in any given manner, and still remain a moral agent. That is, he can not be a moral agent in any case in which he acts from necessity.

(5.) Grace has made no provision to render salvation possible without hope; that is, without desire and expectation.

12. What these provisions are.

In this place, I can only state what I understand them to be; and to avoid much repetition, I must request the reader to consult foregoing and subsequent lectures where these different points are developed and discussed at length.

(1.) God foresaw that all mankind would fall into a state of total alienation from him and his government.

(2.) He also foresaw that by the wisest arrangement, he could secure the return and salvation of a part of mankind.

(3.) He resolved to do so, and "[]chose them to eternal salvation' through []sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.'

(4.) He has instituted a system of means to effect this end; that is, with design to effect it.

(5.) These means are,

[1.] The revelation of his law.

[2.] The atonement and mediatorial work of Christ.

[3.] The publication of the gospel and the institution of all the means of grace.

[4.] The administration of providential and moral governments.

[5.] The gift and agency of the Holy Spirit to excite in them desire, and to work in them to will and to do in so far as to secure in them the fulfillment of the conditions, and to them the fulfillment of the promises.

(6.) Grace has made sufficient provisions to render the salvation of all possible, and such as will actually secure the salvation of a portion of mankind.

(7.) Grace has brought salvation so within the reach of all who hear the gospel as to leave them wholly without excuse if

they are not saved.

(8.) Grace has made the salvation of every human being secure who can be persuaded by all the influences that God can wisely bring to bear upon him to accept the offers of salvation.

(9.) Grace has provided such means and instrumentalities as will actually secure the conviction, conversion, perseverance, entire sanctification, and final salvation of a part of mankind.

(10.) Grace has not only provided the motives of moral government, but the influence necessary to secure the saving influence of this government over all the elect.

(11.) Grace has not only made promises to be fulfilled upon certain conditions, but it has provided an influence which will, in every case of the elect unto salvation, secure in them the fulfillment of the conditions of these promises.

(12.) Grace has not only given commands, but has provided the requisite influence to secure obedience to them in such a sense as to secure the perseverance, sanctification, and full salvation of all the elect unto salvation.

This I understand to be a summary statement of the doctrine of grace as it is taught in the bible.

13. What are the real grounds of hope in respect to the question now under consideration?

Here it is necessary to state again distinctly what is not and what is the real question to be decided.

It is not what christians have hoped upon this subject, for they may have entertained groundless expectations and irrational hopes; or they may have had no hope or expectation when there have been good grounds of hope. Let it be distinctly understood then, that the true point of inquiry is, Have christians a right to expect to obtain in this life a complete victory over sin? Not, do they expect it? But, have they a right to indulge such a hope! Provided they have such a hope, is it irrational? Or provided they have not such a hope, have they good and sufficient ground for such hope revealed in the bible? This brings us to inquire what are not, and what are the grounds of rational hope.

(1.) They are not in the mere natural ability of man, for the bible abundantly reveals the fact, that if man is left to himself, he will never so exert his agency as to comply with the conditions of salvation. This is equally true of all men.

(2.) They are not in the gospel or in the means of grace aside from the agency of the Holy Spirit, for the bible reveals the fact that no one will ever be sanctified by these means without the agency of the Holy Spirit.

In prosecuting inquiry upon this subject, I remark:

[1.] That the inquiry now before us respects real christians. It might be interesting and useful to look into the subject in its bearings upon the impenitent world, but this would occupy too much time and space in this place. It might be useful to inquire what ground of rational hope any sinner may have that he shall actually be converted and saved when the gospel is addressed to him. It certainly can not be denied with any show of reason that every sinner to whom the gospel call is addressed has some reason to hope that God has designs of mercy toward him, and that he shall be converted, and kept, and sanctified, and saved. He must have some ground to hope for this result upon the bare presentation to him of the offers of mercy. He has all the evidence he can ask or desire that God is ready and willing to save him, provided that he is willing to accept of mercy and comply with the conditions of salvation. So that if he is disposed to accept it, he need not raise any question about the grounds of hope. There is nothing in his way but his own indisposition: if this is removed, he may surely hope to be saved. But the offers of mercy also afford some ground of hope that the Holy Spirit will strive with him and overcome his reluctance, so that he may rationally hope to be converted.

The ground of this hope may be more or less strong in the case of sinners as they find the providence and Spirit of God working together for the accomplishment of this result. If, for example, the sinner finds, in addition to the offers of salvation by the word of the gospel, that the Holy Spirit is striving with him, convincing him of sin and trying to induce

him to turn and live, he has of course increased grounds for the hope that he shall be saved.

But as I said the inquiry now before us respects the grounds of hope in christians.

[2.] I remark that christians, of course from the very nature of their religion, have come strongly to desire a complete and lasting victory over sin. I need not in this place attempt to prove this.

[3.] Christians not only desire this, but in fact so far forth as they are christians, they will to obtain this victory. That is, when they have the heart of a child of God, and are in a state of acceptance with him, they will to render to God a present, full, universal, and endless obedience. This is implied in the very nature of true religion.

[4.] The inquiry before us respects future acts of will. The state under consideration consists in an abiding consecration to God. The christian is at present in this state, and the inquiry respects his grounds of hope that he shall ever attain to a state in this life in which he shall abide steadily and uniformly in this state, and go no more into voluntary rebellion against God. Has grace made no such provisions as to render the hope rational that we shall in this life ever cease to sin? Or has it pleased God to make no such provisions, and are we to expect to sin as long as we live in this world? Has the christian any rational ground for a hope that he shall be sanctified in this life; that is, that he shall obtain a complete and final victory over sin in this life? The question here is, not whether christians do hope for this, but, may they rationally hope for this? Have they good reason for such a hope, did they apprehend or understand this ground? They have desire, which is an element of hope--have they grounds for a rational expectation? I do not here inquire whether they do expect it, but whether they have good and valid reason for such an expectation? Is the difficulty owing to a want in the provisions of grace, or in a misconception of these provisions? Some christians do hope for this attainment. Are they mad and irrational, or have they good reason for this hope?

In replying to these inquiries, I remark, that the Holy Spirit is given to the saints for the express purpose revealed in such passages as the following: 1 Thes. 5:23,24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." With this and similar promises and express declarations in his hands, is it rational or irrational in him to expect to receive the fulfillment of such promises? If it be answered that these promises are conditioned upon his faith, and it is irrational for him to hope to fulfill the condition, I reply that the Holy Spirit is given to him and abides in him to draw him into a fulfillment of the conditions of the promises. It is nowhere so much as hinted in the bible that the Holy Spirit will not do this until the close of life. Observe that this is the very office work of the Spirit to work in us to fulfill the conditions of the promises of entire sanctification, and thus to secure this end. His business with and in us is to procure our entire sanctification; and, as I said, there is not so much as a hint in the bible that he does not desire or design to secure this before death. Now, suppose we lay aside all knowledge of facts in relation to the past experience of the church and look into the bible. From reading this, would any man get the idea that God did not expect, desire, and intend that saints should obtain an entire victory over sin in this life? When we read such promises and declarations as abound in the bible, should we not see rational ground for hope that we shall obtain a complete victory over sin in this life?

But here it may be said that the past history of the church shows what are the real promises of grace; that grace has not in fact secured this attainment at least to a great part of the church until at or near the close of life, and therefore grace in fact made no provision for this attainment in their case.

But if this objection has any weight, it proves equally that grace has made in no case any provision for any one's being any better than he really is and has been, and that it had been irrational in any one to have expected to be any better than in fact he has turned out to be. If he had at any time expected to be any better at any future time than he turned out to be, this, upon the principle of the objection in question, would prove that he had no rational ground for the expectation: that grace, in fact, had made no such provision as to render any such hope rational. If this be true, we shall all see when we get into the eternal world that in no case could we have indulged a rational hope of being any better than we have been, and that when we did indulge any such hope we had no ground for it.

But again, if what the church has been settles the question of what it is rational for her to hope in time to be, why then we must dismiss the hope of any improvement. This objection proves too much, therefore it proves nothing.

But again, since the Holy Spirit is given to and abides in Christians for the very purpose of securing their entire and permanent sanctification, and since there is no intimation in the Bible that this work is to be delayed until death, but on the contrary express declarations and promises, that as fully and expressly as possible teach the contrary, it is perfectly rational to hope for this, and downright unbelief not to expect it. What can be more express to this point than the promises and declarations that have been already quoted upon this subject?

Now the question is, not whether these promises and declarations have inspired hope, but might they not reasonably have done so? The question is not whether these promises have been understood and relied upon, but might they not reasonably have inspired confidence that we should, or that they should gain a complete and lasting victory over sin in this life? Do not let us be again diverted by the objection that the provisions of grace and what is rational to hope is settled by what has been accomplished. We have seen that this objection is not valid.

Desire has existed, why has not expectation also existed? We shall see in its place. I said that the Bible represents the design of God to be to wholly sanctify Christians in this life and nowhere so much as intimates that this work is not to be complete in this life. Let such passages as the following be consulted upon this question: Titus 2:11--14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12. Teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; 13. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This passage teaches that this state is to be expected; it also teaches that it is to be expected before death, verse 12; that Christ gave himself to secure this result, verse 14. The chapter concludes with this direction to Titus, "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." Now suppose Titus to have taught as some now teach, that it is dangerous error to hope to live in this life according to the teaching of this passage. Suppose he had told them that although Christ had given himself expressly to secure this result, yet there was no rational ground of hope that they would ever do this in this present evil world; would he have complied with the spirit of the apostle's injunction in verse 15?

Again, the thing spoken of in this passage is no doubt a state of entire sanctification in the sense that it implies a complete victory over sin in this present evil world.

Again: 2 Cor. 6:17,18. "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Now in view of these promises, the apostle immediately adds the following injunction, 7:1. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Did the apostle think it irrational to expect or hope to make this attainment in this life? Suppose he had added to the injunction just quoted, that it was dangerous for them to expect to make the attainment which he exhorted them to make. Suppose he had said, you have no right to infer from the promises I have just quoted that it is rational in you to hope to make this attainment in this life. But suppose the Corinthians to have inquired, Do not these promises relate to this life? Yes, says the apostle. And does not your injunction to perfect holiness in the fear of God relate to this life? Yes. Did you not utter this injunction seeing that we have the promises? Yes. Is it not rational, seeing we have these promises, to hope to avail ourselves of them, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God in this life? Now suppose that to this last question the apostle had answered, No. Would not this have placed the apostle and the promises and his injunction in a most ridiculous light? To be sure it would. Would not any honest mind feel shocked at such an absurdity? Certainly.

Again: 1 Thes. 5:23,24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Now suppose that immediately upon making this declaration, the apostle had added, you can not rationally hope that God will do what I have just expressly affirmed that he will do.

Suppose he had said the declaration in the 24th verse is only a promise, and made upon a condition with which you can not rationally hope to comply, and therefore, as a matter of fact, you can not rationally hope to be sanctified wholly and preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. How shocking and ridiculous would such a prayer, with such a promise, accompanied with such a conclusion, appear.

Again, a christian is supposed not only to desire to make this attainment, but also to be at present willing to make it, and at present to have his heart set upon obedience to God, and upon attaining to such a degree of communion with God as to abide in Christ and sin no more.

A christian is supposed at present to be disposed to make this attainment; not only to desire it, but also to will it. Now may he rationally aim at it and rationally intend or hope to make this attainment? or must he calculate to sin so long as he lives, and is it irrational for him to expect or hope to have done with rebelling against God, and with unbelief and accusing him of lying as long as he lives?

If he is at present desirous and willing to have done with sin, is it rational for him to hope by any means within his reach, and which he is at present disposed to use, to attain a state in which he shall have a permanent victory over sin, in which he shall abide in Christ in such a sense as to have done with rebellion against God. By present willingness, desire and effort, is it rational for him to hope to secure a future desire and willingness, and an abiding state of heart-conformity to God? Are there any means within his reach and which he can at present, while he has the will and desire, rationally hope so to use them as to secure to him either at present or at some future time in this life, a complete and lasting victory over sin? May he hope through present faith to secure future faith? through present love, and faith, and effort, to secure future faith and love and successful effort? For it is not contended by me that the christian will or can ever stand fast in the will of God without effort. This I have sufficiently insisted on. The question is exactly this, May a christian, who is conscious of being at present willing to attain and desirous of attaining a state of abiding consecration to God in this life, rationally hope to make such an attainment? Has the grace of God made any such provision as to render such a hope rational? Not, can he rationally hope to make it without desire and effort; but with both present desire and effort? Not whether he could rationally hope to make such an attainment if he is at present neither willing nor desirous to make it, but whether provided he at present has both the will and desire, he may rationally hope to secure so rich an anointing of the Holy Spirit, and to be so thoroughly baptized into the death of Christ as to remain thereafter in a state of abiding consecration to God?

I care not to speculate upon abstractions and upon the grounds of hope where there is neither desire nor will; that is, where there is no religion. But I have been amazingly anxious myself to have the question here put answered in relation to myself, and I know that many others are intensely anxious to have this question answered. Must I always expect to be overcome by temptation? May I not rationally hope to obtain a permanent victory over sin in this life? Must I carry with me the expectation of going more or less frequently into rebellion against God so long as I live? Is there no hope in the case? Has grace made no such provision that it is rational for me, in this state of intense interest and anxiety, to hope for complete deliverance from the overcoming power of sin in this life? Is there no foundation any where upon which I can build a rational hope that I shall make this attainment? Are all the commands and exhortations, and promises, and declarations in the bible touching this subject, a humbug? Are they no warrant for the expectation in question? May I never rationally expect to be more than a conqueror in this life? Must I expect to succumb to Satan ever and anon, so long as I live, and is every other expectation irrational?

The Holy Spirit is given to christians, to abide with and in them, for the express purpose of procuring their entire sanctification in this life. It is said Ro. 8:26,27: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Now it is a fact that the Holy Spirit often stirs up, in the souls of all christians, intense desire for this attainment. He as manifestly begets within them a longing for this attainment as he does for ultimate salvation. Now why is it not as rational to expect the one as the other? Their ultimate salvation they do expect, and receive the drawings of the Spirit after the grace of perseverance as an earnest or evidence that God intends to secure their perseverance and salvation. They regard it as rational to indulge this desire excited by the Holy Spirit and to hope for the thing which they desire. The thing is promised, and they feel stirred up to take hold on these promises. Now it is perfectly rational to hope for the fulfillment of them.

And is not the same true of the promises of entire sanctification in this life? These are among the most full and express promises in the bible. The Holy Spirit excites in all christians the most earnest desire for the thing promised. Now why is it not rational to hope for the thing which we desire? I do not here say that all do hope for it. All christians do desire it; this is one element of hope; but why do not all entertain the expectation of making this attainment, and thus hope for it? Is it because there is no rational ground of hope? But why is there not? It is expressly promised. God has no where intimated

that it is not his design to fulfill this class of promises. The Spirit leads us to pray for it. Now would it be rational to believe that these promises will be fulfilled to us? Why not? The difficulty and the only difficulty that can exist in this case is that human speculation and false teaching have forbidden confidence or expectation, so that while there is intense desire, there is no real hope indulged of receiving the blessing. The blessing is delayed because there is no hope. There is ground of hope, but false teaching has forbidden hope to be indulged. The church are told by men in high places that such a hope is irrational. Thus the Holy Spirit is resisted, and grieved and, quenched, when he is striving to inspire hope that this blessing will be obtained. This is just as the devil would have it.

The fact is there are precisely as good ground for the hope of obtaining a complete victory over sin in this life, as there are for the hope of perseverance and salvation. But in one case these grounds are recognized and acknowledged, and in the other they are denied. In one case the hope is encouraged by teachers, and in the other it is discouraged. But there is not, that I can see, the least ground for this distinction. If there is ground for the one hope, so is there for the other. Suppose the ground for hope in both cases were denied as it is in one, what would be the result?

But again: Has grace established any such connection between the present belief of the promises, and their fulfillment as to render it certain, or in any degree probable that they will be fulfilled to us?

I have already said that the objection we are considering must proceed upon the assumption that there is no such connection.

But let us look at this.

Suppose that God has expressly promised any blessing whatever, upon condition that I believe the promise. I am led by the Holy Spirit to a present laying hold by faith upon that promise. Now, does not this render it rational in me to hope that I shall receive the thing promised? If not, why not? Is it replied that a farther condition of the promise is that I persevere in faith and in the use of the appropriate means, and I have no ground for rational hope that I shall continue to believe and to use the means? Then the fact that the Holy Spirit at present stirs me up to present faith affords no degree of evidence that he will continue to do so, and the fact that I at present lay hold of the promise, does not afford the least reason for the hope that I shall keep hold and use the means in any such sense as to secure the blessing promised. Well, if this were so, the bible were the greatest humbug that was ever palmed upon mankind.

The fact is, there must be at least a connection of high probability if not of certainty between the present actual belief of the promise, and the future fulfillment of them to us, or the bible and the whole gospel is nonsense.

But again: I say that this is as true of the promises of entire sanctification in this life, as of any other promises whatever. If it is not, I say again, let the contrary be shown if it can be.

But again: When Christians are stirred up by the Holy Spirit to lay hold upon any class of promises in prayer and faith they have good ground for the hope that it is the design of God to grant the blessing promised them. Now it is plainly in accordance with the revealed will of God that christians should be wholly sanctified and kept from sin. And suppose the Holy Spirit stirs up the soul to great longings and wrestlings for complete deliverance' from sin, and to plead and believe such promises as the following:

1 Thes. 6:23: And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Jer. 31:31: Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; 32. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord;) 33. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

32:40: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Eze. 36:25: Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. 27. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Ro. 5:12: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

6:11: Like wise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 14. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

1 Thes. 4:3: For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.

If the Holy Spirit perform his work in the soul according to Ro. 8:26,27: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God;" I say, if the Holy Spirit leads christians to pray for the fulfillment of such promises as those just quoted, and to believe those promises, have they no reasonable ground for the hope that the blessing will be granted? Indeed they have the best of reasons for such an expectation.

Suppose it be objected that many christians have been led thus to pray, who have not received the blessing sought. I answer, that it remains to be proved that they were led by the Holy Spirit to plead any promise in faith, where they have not received, or will not receive an answer according to the true spirit and meaning of the promise which they plead and believed. Suppose they may have thought at some time, or that they have often thought that they had become so established that they should sin no more, and that the event has proved that they were mistaken; this does not prove that it is irrational for them to expect that their prayers shall yet be fully answered. Suppose a parent is led by the Holy Spirit to pray in faith for the conversion of a child, and that this child appears if you please, from time to time to be converted, but that the event shows that he was mistaken; that is, that he was not truly converted; this is no reason for his despairing of his conversion. He is still warranted to hope, and is bound, if he is conscious of having prayed in faith for his conversion, still to expect his conversion, and to use the appropriate means to secure this result. Just so, if a christian has been led to plead the promises of deliverance from all sin, for example, such an one as 1 Thes. 5:23,24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it;" I say if any saint on earth is conscious of being or having been led to pray in faith for the fulfillment of this promise, he is warranted to expect its fulfillment to him according to its true spirit and meaning; and this he is bound to expect, although he may have supposed that he had entered upon this state, and found himself mistaken a hundred times. The fact that he has not yet received the fulfillment of the promise in extenso, no more proves that he will not, than the delay in the case of the promise that Abraham should have a son, proved that it was irrational in him to expect the promise to be fulfilled to him. It has been objected that it was irrational to expect to attain to a state in this life in which we should sin no more, because many have supposed they had made the attainment and found at length that they were mistaken. But there is no force in this objection. Suppose this is granted, what then? Does this prove that the prayer of faith will not be answered? Suppose many such mistakes have been made; does this disprove the word of God? In no wise. God will still fulfil[l] his promises, and "is not slack concerning them as some men count slackness." If such a promise has been plead in faith, heaven and earth shall pass away before the answer shall fail. But suppose it should be alledged that evidence is wanting that any ever did or will plead those promises in faith. To this I answer, that the soul may be as conscious of exercising faith in these promises, as it is of its own existence; and although one might think he believed, when he did not, still it would be true, that when one actually did believe, he would know and be sure of it.

Many christians can as confidently affirm that they plead these promises in faith, as that they are christians. Now, is it irrational for them to expect the fulfillment of them? No indeed, any more than it is irrational to expect to be saved. If the

one expectation is irrational, so is the other.

Will it be replied, that the one is less probable than the other? I ask, what have probabilities to human view to do with rendering it irrational to believe God and expect him to fulfill his word? Suppose it is less likely to human view that we shall ever, in this life, arrive at a point in christian attainment, beyond which we shall sin no more, than it is that we shall ultimately be saved: I say, suppose this to be granted, what then? Can not God as truly, and, so far as we know, as easily secure the one as the other? It may be that God foresees that the final salvation of some or of many souls turns altogether upon the fact that such a work be accomplished upon them as shall settle and confirm them in obedience before certain trials overtake them.

But suppose, again, it be said that few or none have given evidence of this attainment before death, and yet many have been saved; there is therefore little or no reason to believe that the elect are entirely sanctified in this life. I answer, that it is certain from the bible that the saints are sanctified wholly in this life; that is, at some period in this life.

I have no doubt, though I do not expect this to have weight with an objector, that great multitudes have been sanctified and preserved agreeably to 1 Thess. 5:23,24. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

But again, I say that the past experience and observation of the church, whatever it may be in respect to the subject under consideration, is not the test of what it is reasonable to expect in future. If it is, it is unreasonable to expect any improvement in the state of the church and the world. If past experience is to settle the question of what it is rational to expect in future, then at no period of the church's past history, was it rational to expect any improvement in her condition. It is not to past experience, but to the promises and the revealed design of God and to the Holy Spirit, that we are to look for a ground of rational hope in regard to the future.

I suppose that it will not be denied by any one, that most christians might rationally hope to be indefinitely better than they are; that is, to be much more stable than they are. But if they might rationally hope to be much better than they are, on what ground can they rationally hope for this? The ground of this hope must be the indwelling and influence of the Holy Spirit; that "exceeding great and precious promises are given to us whereby we may be made partakers of the Divine Nature and escape the corruptions which are in the world through lust;" that the Holy Spirit is struggling within us to secure in us the fulfillment of the conditions of those promises, and therefore we may reasonably hope to make indefinitely higher attainments in this life than we have yet made: I say, I suppose that no christian will deny this. But some of these promises expressly pledge the state of entire sanctification in this life. This is not only true in fact, but is plainly implied in the saying of Peter just quoted. Observe Peter says, 2 Peter 1:4; "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." This plainly implies that those promises cover the whole ground of entire sanctification. Now with such promises in our hands, why should it be thought unreasonable to hope for entire and permanent victory over sin in this world any more than it is irrational to hope for indefinite improvement in this life? Will it be said that it is easier to keep us from sin generally than uniformly. But who can know that God can not as easily give us a complete victory, as to suffer us to sin, and then recover us again? At any rate the promises of entire sanctification are made, and it is just as rational, that is, just as truly rational to expect them to be fulfilled to us, and to expect that we shall be led to fulfill the conditions of them, as that we shall fulfill the conditions of the promises of perseverance. If there be not the same degree of reason to hope for one as for the other, still there is real ground of rational hope in both cases. This can not reasonably be denied. It is therefore rational to hope for both.

Now the fact is that christians find themselves disposed to attain this state. If they are disposed to aim at it and to pray and struggle for such a victory, is it rational for them to expect or hope to obtain such a victory? The question is not really whether it is rational to hope that christians will be disposed to attain this state. The fact of their being christians implies that they are thus disposed; and the inquiry is, being thus disposed, is it rational for them to expect to make the attainment? I answer, yes. It is perfectly rational for any and every christian who finds himself disposed to aim at and struggle after this state, to expect to obtain the blessing which he seeks; and every christian is drawn by the Holy Spirit to desire this attainment. He has in the very fact of his being led to desire and pray after it, and to pray and struggle after a complete and lasting victory over sin, the best of evidence that he may rationally expect to make the attainment. It is just

as rational to expect this under such circumstances, as it is to expect to persevere to the end of life in grace; or as rational as it is to expect to make indefinitely higher advances in holiness. If it is rational to hope to make indefinitely higher attainments than we have made because of, or upon the conditions of the promises, and of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to stir us up to fulfill the conditions of the promises, it is just as rational to hope for a permanent victory over sin upon the same conditions. If the Holy Spirit leads on to indefinitely higher attainments, it is rational to expect to make them. If he leads on to the fulfillment of the conditions of the promises of complete and permanent victory over sin, it is just as rational to expect to attain this state as it is to expect to make indefinite advances toward it.

How can this be denied? I can not see why one expectation should be irrational, if the other is not.

Now observe, the question respects acts of will. Religion, as we have seen, consists in the consecration of the will or heart to God. A christian is supposed to have consecrated his heart and himself to God. The will is influenced either by light in the intelligence or by the impulses of the sensibility. Selfishness or sin consists in the will's being governed by the desires, appetites, passions or propensities of the sensibility. Temptation finds its way to and exerts its influence upon the will through the sensibility. Now can a christian expect or rationally hope by aiming to do so, to attain to such a state of mind, that he shall be no more overcome by temptation and led into sin?

We have seen that the end upon which benevolence fixes is the highest good of being in general. This is the christian's ultimate end or intention. We have also seen that the elements of this intention are,

(1.) Entireness; that is, the whole will or heart is devoted to this end.

(2.) Present time; that is, the soul enters now, and at present makes this consecration.

(3.) The consecration is designed to be entire, and everlasting; that is, the consecrated soul does not enlist as an experiment nor for a limited time, but true consecration or devotion to God is comprehensive, so far as present intention goes, of all the future. This consecration to be real is comprehensive of all future duration, and of all space. That is, the soul in the act of true consecration enlists in the service of God for life, to be wholly God's servant in all places, at all times, and to all eternity. These are the true elements of all acceptable consecration to God. The soul in the act of consecration makes no reserves of time, or place, or powers; all are surrendered to God. It does not intend nor expect to sin at the moment of consecration. It fully intends to be and remain wholly the Lord's. It chooses the great end upon which benevolence fixes, and designs to relinquish it no more forever. But experience teaches the christian his own weakness, and that if left to himself, he is easily overcome by temptation. His sensibility has been so little developed in its relations to eternal realities; his will has so long been in the habit of being led by the feelings and desires of the sensibility, that when the propensities are strongly excited, he finds to his confusion and unspeakable grief that he is weak, and that if left to himself, he invariably yields to temptation, or that he is at least very liable to do so, and that he frequently sins. Now the question is, Is there no ground of rational hope that he may attain such an established state as uniformly to have the victory over temptation? Is there no ground of rational hope in this respect until after this life? Has grace made no such provision as to render it rational in the true saints to expect or hope to gain so complete a victory that Rom. 5: 21, shall be realized in their own experience: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord;" Also 6:14: "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace." Also, [1] Thess. 5:23,24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Also, Jeremiah 32:40: "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Also, Col., 4:12: "That you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." I say the true question is, Is there no hope for the christian that these and such like passages shall be fulfilled to him, and realized in his own experience in this life? Can he not rationally hope that the developments of his sensibility may be so corrected, that he may be thoroughly and constantly enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and enjoy so constant and so deep an anointing, may be so baptised into Christ and made so thoroughly acquainted with him in his various offices and relations as to break effectually and permanently, the power of temptation, and so confirm the soul in its consecration as that, through the indwelling of Christ by his Spirit, he shall be more than conqueror in every conflict with the world, the flesh, and Satan? Is there no hope? This is the agonizing inquiry of every soul who has felt the galling and fascinating power of temptation. Observe, in the case supposed, the soul is at present willing and deeply solicitous to avoid all sin in future. Thus far grace has prevailed;

the soul has committed itself to God. Is there no hope that it can abide in this state of committal? Is it irrational for it, in the midst of its anxieties to stand fast forever, to hope that it shall ever in this life find itself practically able to do so? If not, what do the scriptures mean? If I may not rationally hope to stand in every hour of temptation what can this passage mean? 1st Cor., 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Does this only mean that we shall have the natural ability to bear temptation? Does it not mean that such Divine help shall be vouchsafed as that we may rationally hope and expect to stand in the hour of trial? Indeed it does.

There certainly is not in the philosophy of mind any thing to forbid the entertaining of a rational hope of making the attainment in question; but on the contrary, every thing both in the Bible and the philosophy of mind to warrant such an expectation. The mind only needs to be brought into such a state of developement and to be so constantly under the influence of Divine illumination as to set the Lord always before it, and as to have the sensibility duly developed in its relations to divine things, to secure the uniform action of the will in conformity with the law of God.

The great difficulty with all classes of unsanctified persons is that their desires are too strong for their reason. That is, their sensibility is so developed that their excited propensities control their will in opposition to the law of God as it is revealed in the reason. Now if a counter developement can be effected that shall favor instead of oppose the right action of the will, it will break the power of temptation and let the soul go free. If desires to please God, if desires after spiritual objects shall be developed, if the sensibility shall be quickened and drawn to God, and to all spiritual truths and realities, these desires instead of tending to draw the will away from God, will tend to confirm the will in its consecration to God. In this case the desires going in the same direction with the reason, the power of temptation is broken. The sensibility in this case rather favors the right action of the will. That such a developement of the sensibility is needed and possible, every christian knows.

That the Holy Spirit, by enlightening the mind, often creates the most intense desires after God and universal and unalterable holiness, is a matter of common experience. It is a matter of common experience that while those desires continue, the soul walks in unbroken consecration to and communion with God. It is when counter desires are awakened, and the feelings and emotions toward God and divine things are quenched and suppressed, that the will is seduced from its allegiance. Now there is, there can be, nothing in the philosophy of mind to forbid the hope of attaining to such a state of develop[e]ment of the sensibility that it shall become as it were dead to every object that tends to draw the heart from God, and so alive to God as to respond instantly to truth and light, and as to be mellow and tender towards God and Christ and divine things as the apple of the eye. When this is effected, it is perfectly philosophical to look for permanent consecration of will to God in obedience not to the sensibility, but in obedience to the reason. The feelings are then such that the reason demands their indulgence, and that the objects upon which they fasten shall be sought. The whole mind is then going forth in one direction. Observe, I do not say that it is impossible for the will to abide steadfast in opposition to the feelings, desires, and emotions; but I do say, that all experience proves that until the sensibility is developed in its relations to God and divine realities, the steady and undeviating action of the will in its devotion to God can not be depended upon. Now the great work of the Holy Spirit in the soul consists, at least very much, in so enlightening the mind in respect to God and Christ and Divine realities as to render the soul dead to things of time and sense, and alive to God and eternal things; to crucify the old man; and to develop a new class of desires and emotions that will favor instead of oppose the right action of the will.

Now observe, when the Spirit begets this hungering and thirsting after the universal and complete conformity of the whole being to God; when he stirs up the soul to an intense effort and to a tearful agony and travail for deliverance from the power of temptation; is it irrational for the soul to make these efforts? Does reason or revelation forbid the expectation that the blessing sought should be obtained? Is the soul mad, and irrationally aiming at an impossibility, or is it irrationally engaged in striving to get loose and to rise permanently above the power of temptation? If it is irrational to expect to make the attainment in question, it is irrational to aim at it. Nay, it is impossible to truly aim at it except it be regarded as possible. The soul must think it reasonable to expect to make this attainment, or it can not think it reasonable to try to make it. But is it deceived in thinking his attainment practicable? If so, but convince it that the expectation is irrational, and it will aim at making it no longer. It must by a law of its own nature give up the pursuit, in despair of ever living without being, at least frequently, overcome by temptation while it abides in the flesh. But does the bible encourage this despair? Does not the bible denounce this state of mind as unbelief and sin? What are the promises--what is the

gospel--and what are the provisions of grace, if, after all, there is practically no remedy for the agonized christian in such circumstances? Is there no rational ground of hope or help for him in God? Then surely the gospel is a vain boast and a humbug.

Observe, the question before us is whether the christian who is actually willing and most earnestly desirous of rising permanently above the power of sin and temptation, and who is stirred up to lay hold on the promises of complete deliverance, and to plead them in faith before God, can rationally hope to make the attainment in this life at which he is aiming? Is such a soul mad and deluded, or is it rationally employed; and are its expectations in accordance with reason and revelation? Undoubtedly they are in accordance with both.

But before I dismiss this objection I trust not fail to glance at the future prospects of the church. It is, and long has been, the belief of the great body of orthodox christians that the church is destined at a future period of her earthly history to rise to a state answerable to the representations of the prophets and apostles--a state in which she shall come forth "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." In proof of the fact of a future millenium on earth, let such passages as the following be consulted.

Gen. 22:18. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Ps. 22:27. All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

37:11. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

72:6. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. 7. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. 11. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. 17. His name shall endure forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

86:9. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.

Isa. 2:2. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 4. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares: and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 17. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. 20. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles, and to the bats.

25:6. And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. 7. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. 8. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.

22:13. Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars, yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: 15. Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. 16. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. 17. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. 18. And my people shall dwell in a peaceful habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.

45:22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. 23. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

49:6. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

59:19. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory., from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. 20. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob saith the Lord.

66:18. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. 21. Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

66:23. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.

Dan. 7:27. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Mic. 4:1. But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. 2. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Heb. 2:14. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Mal. 1:11. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles: and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

John 12:31. Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Rom. 11:25. For I would not, brethren that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits,) that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26: And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come onto Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. 27. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Rev. 11:15. And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

20:2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. 3. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

These things are said of the extension and state of the church undeniably at some period of its history in this world. That is, they are said of the church; not in a glorified state, but of her in her state of earthly prosperity. At least this is and has long been held by the great mass of christians.

The following things are said of her holiness at the time specified:

Isa. 60:21. Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work

of my hands, that I may be glorified.

Jer. 31:33. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 31. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Ez. 36:25. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. 27. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. 28. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. 29. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses; and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you,

37:23. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgression, but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. 24. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

Zeph. 3:13. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

Zech. 14:20. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar.

Ro. 11:25. For I would not brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceit,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. 26. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. 27. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

These things are said of the holiness of the church at that time.

The following, among other passages represent the spirit of peace and unanimity that shall prevail at that time.

Ps. 29:11. The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

37:11. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

72:3. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. 7. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

Isa. 52:8. Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.

60:17. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron; I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. 18. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.

66:12. For thus saith the Lord, Behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream; then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.

Micah 4:3. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords

into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 4. But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.

The following passages speak of the great intelligence of the church at that period:

Isa. 11:9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

29:18. And in that day shall the deaf bear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. 24. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

33:6. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is his treasure.

Jer. 1:15. And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Heb. 8:11. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

The following passages describe the temporal prosperity of the church at that time, and show clearly that the state of which mention is made belongs to a temporal and not to a glorified state, as I understand them:

Ps. 72:7. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. 16. There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

Isa. 60:5, Then thou shalt see and flow together, and their heart shall fear, and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. 6. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. 7. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee; and they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory. 13. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

Joel 2:21. Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things. 22. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field; for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig-tree and the vine do yield their strength. 23. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for he hath given you the former rain, moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain the former rain and the latter rain in the first month. 24. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. 25. And I will restore to you the years that the locusts hath eaten, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm, my great army which I sent among you. 26. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you; and my people shall never be ashamed.

3:18. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

Isa. 25:6. And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

Is. 35:1. The wilderness and the solitary place, shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the

rose. 2. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. 3. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. 4. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance even God with a recompense he will come and save you. 5. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. 7. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes. 8. And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. 10. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

41:18. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

Again: the church at that period shall have great enjoyment:

Isa. 25:8. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it.

35:10: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

52:9. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

65:18. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

Zeph. 3:14. Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. 15. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. 16. In that day shall it be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thy hands be slack. 17. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

Let the following passages be viewed in contrast with the past history of the church:

Isa. 11:6. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den.

40:4. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. 5. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

41:18. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. 19. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together. 20. That they may see and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

55:13. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off.

These passages are, as every reader of the bible knows, specimens of the manner in which the bible represents the state of the church in future. I have quoted thus copiously to lay before the reader the general tenor of scripture upon this subject.

It is also a matter of common knowledge that nearly all orthodox christians are expecting the church to enter upon this state soon. But how is this state to be attained if it is irrational for christians to hope to be entirely sanctified in this life? If the above passages do not describe a state of complete and continued holiness, what language could describe such a state? These promises and prophecies will be fulfilled at some time. They are, as it respects individuals, and as respects the whole church, conditioned upon faith. But this faith will actually be exercised. The church will enter into this state. Now is it unreasonable for the church, and for any and every christian, to hope at this age of the world to enter upon this state? Would it be irrational for the church to arise and aim at making these attainments in holiness during the present century?

How is it possible for the church as a body to arrive at this state, while it is regarded as unreasonable and as dangerous error for christians to hope or expect to get into a state of abiding consecration to God in this life?

It must be, I think, evident to every one that if the objection under consideration has any weight, the prophecies can never be fulfilled; and that while the theological schools insist, and ministers insist that the expectation of making the attainment in question is irrational and dangerous, the prophecies and promises will not be fulfilled to the church. While such a sentiment is insisted on, the seminaries and the ministry are in the way of the onward movement of the ark of holiness and of truth.

The objection that it is irrational to expect to make such attainments in this life as to get a complete victory over temptation and sin, must be groundless, or both the bible and the Holy Spirit are found false witnesses; but this can never be.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 66

SANCTIFICATION.

14. I come now to the consideration of the tendency of a denial that christians have valid grounds of hope that they shall obtain a victory over sin in this life.

(1.) We have seen that true religion consists in benevolence or in heart obedience to God. It consists essentially in the will's being yielded to the will of God, in embracing the same end that he embraces, and yielding implicit obedience to him in all our lives or in our efforts to secure that end. This constitutes the essence of all true religion. The feelings or affections or the involuntary emotions are rather a consequence than strictly a part of true religion. Since religion consists essentially in yielding the will to God in implicit obedience, it follows that faith or implicit confidence is a condition or rather an essential element of true religion.

(2.) We have in former lectures also seen what faith is, that it consists in committing the soul to God, in trust, confidence. It is not an involuntary, but a voluntary state of mind. We have also seen that intellectual conviction is an indispensable condition of faith; that this conviction is not evangelical faith, but is only a condition of it. Faith essentially consists in the will's embracing the truths perceived by the intellect; and this intellectual perception is of course indispensable to faith. We have seen that faith can not exist any further than truth is apprehended, understood, and intellectually believed. This intellectual apprehension, understanding, and belief, I say again is not itself saving or evangelical faith, but only a condition of it. When truth is apprehended, understood and intellectually embraced or believed, then and so far true faith is possible, and no farther. Then and not till then, can the will embrace and commit itself to truth.

(3.) Of course, as we have heretofore seen, faith is a condition of all heart obedience to the will of God. The will can not consistently, and ought not to be yielded to any being in whose wisdom and goodness we have not the best perceived and understood grounds of confidence. The intellect must apprehend the grounds of confidence before we have a right to trust in, or commit our will to the direction of any being. We ought to have the fullest intellectual conviction of the wisdom and uprightness of a being, before we can innocently yield up to him the direction of our powers, and commit ourselves to him in implicit and universal obedience.

(4.) Again faith is also a condition of prevailing prayer. Without faith it is impossible to please God in any thing. It is, as every reader of the Bible knows, the every where expressed or implied condition of the fulfillment of the promises of God, and we are expressly assured that he who wavers and does not implicitly believe or trust in God, must not expect to receive any thing in answer to prayer.

(5.) Implicit confidence or faith is also a condition of sanctification, as we have fully seen. Indeed faith is indispensable to any progress in religion. Not a step is taken from first to last in the real and true service of God without faith or heart confidence in him. The very nature of religion forbids the expectation and the possibility of progress in religion without faith.

(6.) Implicit confidence or faith is of course, and as every one knows, a condition of salvation. Without faith a preparation for heaven is naturally impossible, and of course without faith salvation is naturally impossible.

(7.) We have also seen what hope is; that it is compounded of desire and expectation; that it includes a feeling and some

degree of expectation. As we have seen, both these elements are essential to hope. That which is not desired, can not be hoped for, although it may be expected. So, that which is desired can not be hoped for unless it is also expected. Both expectation and desire are always essential to hope.

It has also been seen that a thing may be truly desirable, which is not desired. A thing may be ever so excellent and desirable in itself, yet from false views of its nature it may not be desired.

So also a thing may be desired which is not expected; and there may be good reason to expect an event which is desired, and yet expectation may be prevented for want of a knowledge of the reason, or grounds of expectation. There may be never so good and substantial evidence that an event will occur, and yet we may not expect it for want of an apprehension of it. Since desire and expectation are both essential elements of hope, it follows that whatever seems to inspire desire and expectation, tends to produce hope. And so on the other hand, whatever tends to prevent desire and expectation, tends to prevent hope.

(8.) From what has been said, it is plain that hope is a condition of the beginning of religion and of all progress in it. Desire and expectation must both exist as a condition of true religion. If there be no desire there will of course be no attention to the subject, and no effort. But if there be desire and no expectation or intellectual conviction, there can be no faith. Both desire and expectation are conditions of all religion, and of all salvation. Hope is a condition of all effort on almost every subject. Without both desire and expectation, the very sinews of effort are wanting.

Whatever therefore tends to prevent hope, tends to prevent religion. There is, as every one must see, a difference between a hope of eternal life founded upon a consciousness of being a christian and a hope founded upon the mere offer of salvation. The difference, however, does not consist in the nature of hope, but only in the evidence upon which expectation is based. The offer of salvation, as has been said, lays a good foundation for a rational hope that we shall be converted and saved. But finding ourselves in the way of obedience, and drawn by the Holy Spirit, we have a higher evidence upon which to base expectation. Both desire and expectation are greatly increased in the latter case, but they may justly exist in a lower degree in the former case.

The foregoing remarks prepare the way for saying,

(9.) That there are two effectual ways of opposing religion.

[1.] By so misrepresenting it as to prevent desire.

When God and his government and service are so represented as to prevent desire, this is one of the most effectual ways of opposing religion. If such representations are accredited, this is an effectual bar to religion in every case. This is a common way in which Satan and his emissaries oppose the religion of the Bible. They misrepresent God and religion, and hold it up to contempt, or so misrepresent it in multitudes of ways as to cause the human mind necessarily to regard it as undesirable, as rather injurious than beneficial to the world, and to individuals. They represent religion either as unnecessary, or as something that can not be desired upon any other principle than as the less of two evils--as something to be submitted to, rather than to go to hell, but as being far from any thing desirable and lovely in itself. This I say again, is one of the most common and most fatal methods of opposing religion. Many men who think they are promoting religion, are among the most efficient agents of Satan in preventing it by the false representations they make of it.

They by their spirit and manner throw around and over it a fanatical or a melancholic or a superstitious cant, whining and grimace, or a severity and a hatefulness that necessarily disgust rather than attract the enlightened mind. Thus the soul is repelled instead of attracted; disgust instead of desire, is awakened. Such representations are among Satan's most efficient instrumentalities for opposing God and ruining souls.

[2.] Another frequent and most successful method of opposing God and his government is by discouraging expectation. This was the devil's first successful experiment with mankind. He succe[e]ded in undermining confidence in God; this he did by suggesting that God is selfish in his requisitions and prohibitions. Ever since the fall of our first parents, unbelief has been the easily besetting sin of our race. God has therefore taken, and is taking, all possible pains to restore confidence in himself and in his government, as a condition of saving the souls of fallen men.

We have seen, and Satan and his emissaries know that intellectual expectation or conviction is a condition of faith, and that faith is a condition of all holiness and of salvation. It has therefore always been, and still is, one of the principal objects of Satan to prevent faith. To do this, he must destroy hope or expectation, and desire. Men are exceedingly prone to discredit the Divine testimony and character, and it would seem that unbelief is the most common, as well as the most unreasonable abomination in the world. It is remarkable with what readiness and with what credulity a hint or an insinuation against the testimony of God will be received. It would seem that the human mind is in such an attitude towards God, that his most solemn declarations and his oath can be discredited upon the bare denial of man, and even of the devil. Man seems to be more prone to unbelief than to almost any other form of sin. Whatever, therefore, tends to beget distrust or to prevent expectation in regard to the promises and truth of God, tends, of course, in the most direct and efficient manner to oppose God and religion. Now suppose ministers should set themselves so to caricature and misrepresent religion, as to render it undesirable and even odious to the human mind; so that, as the human mind is constituted, it would be impossible to desire it. Who can not see that such a ministry were infinitely worse than none, and would be the most successful and efficient instrumentality that Satan could devise to oppose God and build up the influence of hell? If those who are supposed to know by experience, and who are the leaders in, and teachers of religion, represent it as undesirable, in just so far as they have influence, they are the most successful opposers of it. The result would be the same, whether they did this through misapprehension or design. If they mistook the nature of religion, and without designing to misrepresent it, did nevertheless actually do so, the consequence must be just as fatal to the interests of religion as if they were its real, but disguised enemies. This, as I have said, is no uncommon thing for ministers, through misapprehension to misrepresent so grossly the gospel as to repel rather than attract the human mind. In so doing, they of course render hope impossible, by preventing the possibility of one of its essential elements, desire. There is of course no effort made on the part of the hearers of such ministers to obtain what they are prevented from desiring. Such ministers preach on and ascribe to the sovereignty of God their want of success, not considering' that the fault is in their grossly misrepresenting God and his claims and the nature of his religion. It were perfectly easy, were this the place to do so, to show that the representations of God, and of his claims, and of religion, which are sometimes made in the pulpit and through the press, are calculated in a high degree to repel and disgust, rather than attract the human mind. When such misrepresentations are complained of, we are told that the carnal mind will of course repel true representations of the character of God and of religion; and the fact that disgust is produced, is regarded as evidence that the truth is held forth to the people.

I know it is true that the carnal or selfish mind is enmity against God. But what does this mean? Why it means that the carnal heart is selfishness, that the will is committed to self-gratification, which is a state of heart or an attitude of the will directly opposite to that which God requires. It is also true that this selfish state of will does often beget emotions of opposition to God, when God is contemplated as opposed to the sinner on account of his selfishness. But it is also true that the human intelligence can not but approve the character and government of God when they are rightly apprehended; and further, when the true character of God, of his government and religion is properly represented to, and apprehended by the human mind, from a law of necessity the mind pronounces the character of God to be lovely, and his government and religion infinitely desirable. Such being the nature of the human mind, the Holy Spirit by thoroughly enlightening the intellect arouses the desires, and develops the feelings in their relations to God. The desires thus come into harmony with the law of God, and favor the consecration of the will, and the whole man is renewed in the image and favor of God.

Men are susceptible of conversion by the truth as presented by the Holy Spirit upon condition of their nature being such that a true representation of God rather attracts than repels them. But since I have dwelt so much at large upon this particular in lectures on depravity and regeneration, I must not enlarge upon it in this place.

It is very plain that when through mistake or design, God, his government, and religion are so represented as naturally to repel rather than attract men, this is the most efficient method of opposing the progress of religion since it prevents desire which is an essential element of hope, and hope is indispensable to successful effort.

But suppose that the teachers of religion set themselves to prevent the expectation of becoming religious, or of making progress in religion. Suppose they represent to sinners that there is no rational ground of hope in their case--that men can not rationally expect to be saved or to be converted, however much they may desire it. What must be the effect of such teaching? Every body knows that in just so far forth as such teachers had any influence, hell could not desire a more efficient instrumentality to dishonor God and ruin souls. This would be just what the devil would himself inculcate. It

would prevent hope and of course prevent faith, and render salvation impossible, and damnation certain, unless the lie could be contradicted and the spell of error broken.

Suppose also, that religious teachers should instruct the church that they have no rational ground for the expectation that their prayers will be answered. Suppose they should tell them that present faith has no connection whatever with future faith, or no such connection as to render future faith probable; that present faith in any promise is so far from having any certain connection with its fulfillment, that it affords no ground whatever for rational hope that the promises at present believed will ever be fulfilled. Suppose they are told that prayer for the grace of perseverance and a present desire and determination to persevere, had no such connection with the desired end as to afford the least ground of rational hope that they should persevere.

Suppose that ministers should take this course to render expectation, and of course hope and faith impossible, what must be the result? Every one can see. Take any class of promises you please and let the ministry in general present it as a dangerous error for christians to expect or hope to realize their fulfillment, and what must the consequence be? Why in so far forth as they had influence they would exert the very worst influence possible. Apply this principle to the promises of the world's conversion, and what would be done for missions? Apply it to parents in relation to their children, and what would become of family religion?

Now take the class of promises that pledge a victory over sin in this life. Let for example, ministers explain away 1st Thess. 5:23,24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it:" and this whole class of promises; or let them teach, as some of them do, that it is a dangerous error to expect that these promises will be fulfilled to christians, and what must the result be? This would be just as the devil would have it. "Ha, hath God said, he will sanctify you wholly, spirit, soul, and body, and preserve you blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Ye shall not surely be so sanctified and kept, and the Lord doth know this, and it is dangerous to trust him."

This surely is the devil's teaching; and when he can get the ministers of Christ to take this course, what more can be done? Suppose the ministers admit, as many of them do, that the blessing we have been considering is fully promised in the Bible, but at the same time inculcate that it is promised upon a condition with which it is irrational for us to hope to comply. What must result from such teaching as this? Such teaching represents God and his gospel in a most revolting and ridiculous light. The provision, say such teachers, is adequate, and proffered upon conditions with which you might comply, but with which you can not rationally hope to comply. Well, then, what remains but to regard the gospel as a failure? The fact is, every man and every soul may rationally hope to comply with the conditions of salvation and with the conditions of the promises, or what are they?

But the point we are now considering is, the tendency of such teaching; the tendency of teaching the church that it is irrational for them to expect to fulfill the conditions of the promises. I care not what class, any class. God has written them, and holds them out to inspire desire and expectation--to beget hope, and faith, and effort, and thus to secure their fulfillment to his people. Now what an employment for the leaders and instructors of the people, to be engaged in teaching them not to expect the fulfillment of these promises to them--that such an expectation or hope is a dangerous error--that it is irrational for them to hope to so fulfill the conditions of these promises as to secure the blessings promised, however much they may at present desire to do so. I say again the devil himself could not do worse than this. Hell itself could not wish for a more efficient opposition to God and religion than this. This is indeed a most sublime employment for the ministers of God, to be zealous in their private and public, in their individual and in their associated capacities, in season and out of season, in persuading the people that the grace of God is sufficient for them if they would believe the promises and appropriate this proffered grace to themselves, but that it is "dangerous error" for them to expect even by grace divine so to fulfill the conditions of the promises, as to avail themselves of this proffered grace, however willing and desirous they now are to do so. They might be saved, but it is dangerous to expect to be saved. They might obtain answers to prayer, but it is dangerous error to expect them. They might obtain a victory over sin in this world, but it is "dangerous error" to expect to do so, however much they may desire it. This is sublime religious instruction; or rather a most gross contradiction and denial of the grace and truth of God. I will not of course say, nor do I think, that it is intentional, but I must expose its tendency and its true nature.

Such instruction is in its very nature a libel upon the glorious gospel of the blessed God; and it tends as directly and as efficiently as possible to infidelity and to the ruin of the church of God. Why, in just so far forth as such teaching is believed, it renders hope and faith impossible.

There are good and sufficient grounds of hope in the case under consideration, but these grounds are strenuously denied by multitudes of ministers, and pains are taken in every way to discourage faith in the class of promises that pledge deliverance from the bondage of sin in this life. Those who plead for God and his promises and inculcate expectation and faith and effort, are branded as heretics, and proscribed and treated as the enemies of religion. O, tell it not in Gath. For my life I would not say this were it not already a matter of common knowledge.

Why may not a man as well caricature God and religion and so represent both as to render them odious, and thus render desire impossible, as to exclaim against their being any ground of rational hope that the promises will be fulfilled to us? Why may not a man as well be employed in preventing desire as in preventing expectation? One certainly is equally as fatal to the interests of religion and to souls as the other. I do not complain of designed misrepresentation in regard to the truth we have been considering; but O, what a mistake! What an infinitely ruinous misapprehension of the gospel and of the grounds of hope! God has endeavored by every means to inspire desire and expectation, to secure confidence and effort, but alas! alas! how many ministers have fallen into the infinite mistake of laying a stumbling block before the church! How many are crying, There is no reason to hope, no ground for rational expectation that you shall so fulfill the conditions of the promises as to secure their fulfillment. You must expect to live in sin so long as you are in this world. It is dangerous to entertain any other expectation.

Who does not know that faith is a sine qua non of all progress in religion? Nothing can be more fatal to the progress of the gospel and to its influence over individuals and over masses of men than to destroy expectation, and thus render faith impossible. Observe, hope is composed of desire and expectation. The very nature of hope shows beyond controversy its relation to effort and to faith. Expectation is itself intellectual faith, or belief. It is capable of indefinite degrees. In many instances hope in relation to a desired event is very weak; we greatly desire it, but our expectation is very slight, so that we can hardly say that we hope, and yet we are aware that we do hope. Now in this case, hope will increase as expectation increases. If expectation is slight it is difficult to believe with the heart, that is, to rest confidently in, or confidently to look for the occurrence of the event. It is difficult when intellectual faith or expectation is but slight, to commit the will and trust calmly that the desired object will be obtained. It is a common experience in regard to objects of desire, to find ourselves unable to rest or trust with the heart in the confidence that the event will be as we desire. Now the thing needed in this case is, to have expectation or intellectual faith increased. The mind needs to be more thoroughly convinced; it wants more evidence or to apprehend more clearly the reasons for rational expectation. Now if the occurrence of the event depends in any measure upon our hope or faith, as all events do that are dependent upon our diligent attention and use of appropriate effort and instrumentalities, who does not see that we need encouragement and evidence instead of discouragement? Discouragement in such a case is ruinous to what slight hope we have.

Now God has made to us exceeding great and precious promises, and held them out to our faith, and said, "All things are possible to him that believeth." "If thou canst believe, thou shalt see the glory of God." "Be it unto thee according to thy faith." "If ye will not believe, ye shall not be established." But why should I quote passages; every reader of the bible knows that every where the greatest stress is laid upon faith, and that nothing is too hard for God to do when his people will believe. Now what must be the influence of a religious teacher who discourages faith? Suppose he explains away the promises to parents in reference to their children. Who has not observed the influence of a teacher that is himself stumbling through unbelief in regard to that class of promises. You will universally find that so far as his influence extends, it is death to the expectation, and of course to the faith of parents, in regard to the conversion of their children. Of course their children grow up in sin, and the families of the members of his church are filled with impenitent children. The same will be true in reference to revivals of religion. Let the pastor be himself unbelieving; let him have little or no hope of having religion revived; let him cast the stumbling block of his own iniquity or unbelief before the church, and the influence is death. It were much better that a church had no minister, than for them to have one who has so much unbelief as to preach unbelief instead of faith to the people, who is forever throwing out discouraging suggestions in regard to the efficacy of prayer and faith in the promises of God. What would be the influence of a minister who should from year to year hold out to his people the doctrine that the promises are made upon conditions which they had no rational ground of hope of fulfilling? that they might have a revival if they would use the appropriate means in the appropriate manner, but it was dangerous error for them to expect to do so? that the children of the members of his church

might be converted if the parents would appropriate to themselves, and rest in, and plead the promises made to parents, but that these promises were made upon conditions that they had no rational ground for hope that they should fulfill, and that therefore it was dangerous error to expect to fulfill them and to have their children converted? Who does not see what the influence of such a pastor must be?

It must be death and ruin. He preaches unbelief instead of faith to the people.

Precisely the same is true in respect to the doctrine of holiness in this life. Suppose a pastor to read to his congregation such passages as the following:

2 Cor. 6:16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. 18. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

7:1. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1 Thess. 5:23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Now suppose that he explains away, or suggests that these passages are interpolations; or that they are not correctly translated; or affirms that at any rate they have no rational ground of hope that these promises will be fulfilled to them; that they might be fulfilled to them if they would believe them, but that they have no reason to expect that they shall believe them; that very few, if any, have in fact believed them; and that many who have thought they believed them and that they had received the fulfillment of them, have found themselves mistaken; that it is very difficult to get a permanent victory over sin in this world; that they might fall into fanaticism if they should expect these promises to be fulfilled to them; and that such an expectation were dangerous error.

Now I ask, how could a minister more directly serve the devil than by such teaching as this? He could hardly be more injuriously employed. The fact is that an unbelieving minister is the greatest of all stumbling blocks to the church. I have had occasion to witness enough of this to make any man's heart sick. It matters not at all in what particular form his unbelief develops itself; in that direction all will be ruin. Suppose he loses, or never had any confidence in revivals of religion, and is always letting out his unbelief upon his church. He is the greatest stumblingblock that could be laid before them. Suppose he neither understands nor believes the promises of God made to parents respecting their children, and that in this respect he lets out his ignorance and unbelief: he is the ruin of their children. Suppose he is in the dark, and filled with error or unbelief in respect to every thing where faith and energetic action are concerned, and throws doubt and discouragement in the way:--his influence is death.

What! a leader in the host of God's elect disheartening the church of God by his unbelief! It is in vain to say that entire sanctification in this life is not promised; for it really and plainly is, and nothing is more expressly promised in the word of God. These promises like all others are conditioned upon faith, and it is as rational to hope to believe them, and to expect them to be fulfilled to us, as it is to hope to believe any other class of promises, and to have them fulfilled to us. We have the same Spirit to help our infirmities and to make intercession for us in one case as in the other; but the ruin is that false teaching has forbidden expectation and crippled faith, and therefore the blessing is delayed. It would be just so in regard to every thing else whatever. Now suppose that this course should be taken in regard to family religion and to revivals of religion until centuries should pass without revivals, and without the faithfulness of God being manifested to parents in the conversion of their children; and then suppose that the fact that there had been so few or no revivals, or so few children converted in answer to the parents' prayers, should be urged as proving that parents had no rational ground for the hope that their children would be converted; or that the church had any rational ground for the hope that religion would be revived, what would be the effect of all this?

The fact is, that nothing can be more disastrous and death-dealing than for religious teachers to throw discouragements in the way of christians taking hold of and appropriating the promises. It is ruin and death. God presents promises and calls

the church to believe them at once, and without hesitation to cast themselves upon them, to appropriate them and make them their own, and to lay hold on the blessings promised. Now what an employment for a minister to stand before the people and cry out, It is dangerous error for you to expect these promises to be fulfilled to you. Surely this is the devil's work.

Let facts be searched out, and it will be found to be true that the influence of a minister is as his confidence in God and in his promises is. Let search be made, and it will be found that those ministers who by precept and example encourage the faith of their churches, are producing a healthful influence in proportion as they do so. But on the contrary, when they by example and precept discourage the faith of their churches, the influence is disastrous in proportion as they do so.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 67

SANCTIFICATION.

FARTHER OBJECTIONS ANSWERED,

2. It is objected to the foregoing argument that the passages adduced to prove Paul's entire sanctification do not sustain the position that he had attained a state of entire, in the sense of permanent sanctification. To this objection I reply,

(1.) That an examination of all the passages will, if I mistake not, show that he speaks of his holiness or sanctification as a state and as an abiding state, as distinguished from a temporary obedience. To me it is quite manifest that Paul intended that his converts to whom he addressed his epistles, should understand him as professing to have experienced what he enjoined upon them. How could an inspired apostle write the following passage in his letter to the Thessalonians if he did not know by experience what the state was of which he was speaking, and the truth of the promise or declaration which he appended to his prayer. 1 Thes. 5:23,24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." How could he write, believing it himself, without knowing what he said by having experienced his preserving grace.

(2.) I was aware when I wrote of the sanctification of Paul, and am now that the evidence of his permanent sanctification is not such as to render it perfectly certain that he in no instance committed sin of heart or life. Being aware of this, I said then, and I here repeat the remark, that the question of his being entirely, in the sense of permanently sanctified, is not the great question at issue, nor is it essential to the argument in support of the practical attainability of this state. It is only one of the arguments in its support; but in my apprehension, the argument is complete without it.

(3.) The testimony in Paul's case appears to me to be satisfactory in the absence of all counter evidence.

[1.] It covers at least a large part if not the whole of his apostolic life.

[2.] He had frequent occasion to speak of his own attainments by way of encouragement, to those to whom he wrote to aspire after the attainments which he recommended to them, and also as an illustration of the provision and meaning of the gospel which he preached.

[3.] He in no instance speaks as if he were guilty of sin during the period of his apostleship. He publishes in the face of saints and sinners, of friends and enemies, those unqualified assertions and profession, which I have quoted, and more than all, he appeals to God for the truth of what he says, and in no instance confesses sin.

[4.] His language in several instances as we have seen, seems clearly to imply that his holiness was permanent or continual and not intermittent.

[5.] The evidence is such as plainly to throw the burden of proof upon the objector. Such language as plainly implies that his holiness was continual and was rather a permanent state than an act or a temporary series of acts, must manifestly change the onus, and throw it upon the objector to prove the contrary, or to show that no such thing is fairly inferable from his language. It is not pretended that the permanency of his sanctification is demonstrated by the passages that have

been quoted. Nor is demonstration to be expected in a case of this kind. It were to be sure very marvellous if so humble and so simple-hearted a man as Paul the apostle should make so many unqualified professions of entire holiness of heart and life without intimating that he at any time sinned during this period, if he in fact knew that he had done so at least in some instances. One can hardly avoid the conviction in view of his repeated professions, that if at any time he had fallen into sin, candor would have required him to confess it.

[6.] The rules of evidence and proof when applied to this case, will clearly show where the burden of proof rests. These rules are more rigid in criminal cases than in civil. When a man is accused of a crime his innocence is assumed until he is proven to be guilty. It is however admitted that in the case under consideration, the assumption is reversed, and that, since all men are known to be sinners unless they have been sanctified by grace, the assumption is that every man is a sinner unless he is proven to be otherwise. He therefore who asserts that any human being is sinless, must prove it, and the burden of proof is upon him. But here it is important to remark that in making out his proof he is not held to making out the same kind and degree of proof as would be the case if he had asserted that a man was guilty of a crime against a human government. He is not in this case arraying a commonwealth against an individual and leaving it for the commonwealth by certain individuals of their number to sit in judgment in a case in which they are in a sense a party. When a man is arrayed before a court and jury of his county and accused of a crime against the commonwealth, the commonwealth is a party on the record and the judge and jury are a part of that commonwealth. In this case the rules of proof are properly rigid and inflexible; the commonwealth must fully establish by the most convincing testimony the very crime of which they complain. But even in this case and when the charge is of a capital crime and one punishable with death, the complainant is not held to make out a demonstration, but only to present such a kind and degree of evidence as will leave no ground for reasonable doubt in regard to the guilt of the accused. The kind and degree of evidence are demanded that might be reasonably expected in case the accused is guilty and nothing more. This throws the burden of proof upon the accused. The case is made out unless the accused can impeach, or explain, or contradict the evidence on the other side. He is called upon to reply to the evidence against him, and in case he fails to meet and in some way to shake its credibility he stands convicted.

I know it is said that this case of Paul is one where a universal proposition is affirmed, and that therefore the case is not made out until it is proved that he arrived at a point in his religious experience after which he did not sin at all. It is admitted that in a sense this proposition is universal, but the inquiry is, when is this so proved as to change the onus? Must it be shown by direct and positive evidence, and such as can have no other possible construction, that he arrived at this state, or is it sufficient to change the burden of proof, to show that the most fair and natural interpretation of the evidence conducts to the conclusion in support of which the evidence is produced? The latter is undoubtedly the correct rule. If the former were the rule it were useless to talk or think of a defence, or of making good a charge in one case in many. If the affirmant must absolutely demonstrate his position before the onus is in any case changed, why then defence or reply is out of the question; and further it is in no case of any use to bring a charge except where the evidence amounts to a demonstration.

If the proof amounts to a demonstration, it is impossible that the demonstrated proposition should not be true, and therefore all answer is out of the question.

Therefore in almost no case do courts of law and equity demand this kind and degree of evidence, but on the contrary, even in cases of the highest importance, they require no more than sufficient evidence in kind and degree to warrant the reasonable conclusion that the alleged proposition is true, and then they hold the onus to be changed and call for the defence. When the evidence is such as to produce or as should produce conviction in the absence of counter evidence they hold the case to be made out and throw the onus upon the respondent.

Numerous examples might be cited from theological writers to show what are regarded as correct rules of evidence, and of proof upon theological subjects. For example, in the controversy upon the subject of baptism, the immersing Baptists lay down the universal proposition that baptizo means only to immerse. In support of this proposition they attempt to show from classic usage and from various sources, that immersion is its primary signification and that it properly means immersion.

This is allowed by theological writers to be sufficient to change the onus and to call upon the Pedo-Baptists to rebut this testimony by showing that immersion is not the only sense at least in which the inspired writers use the term baptizo. The

whole course of this controversy shows that theological writers never pretended to hold the immersing baptists to a proving of their universal proposition in extenso; for if they had, this controversy must long since have terminated. Indeed it were impossible for them to prove positively their proposition because it would amount to proving a negative. It would require them to prove that baptizo never means any thing else than immersion, to make out which, they must bring forward every instance of its use and show that it means nothing else in any instance. Instead of this, it is at least practically held to be sufficient for them to prove that the word is used to signify immersion by numerous writers. This sufficiently establishes their position in the absence of counter evidence. The Pedo-Baptists are then called upon to reply, and shew that immersion is not its universal and only signification. This case and the one under consideration are parallel in the material point. They are both cases where the a priori assumption is against them. The assumption is that all words have more than one signification. But it is held sufficient for the Baptists to make out a general signification in proof of the assertion of a universal signification. Their making out that baptizo generally means immerse, is held to be sufficient in the absence of counter testimony. The burden of proof is then changed and the respondent is called upon to produce examples, or an example of contrary usage.

So in the case under consideration, it is sufficient to prove that Paul lived at least habitually, without sin. That is that he in general terms is said to have lived without sin. This changes the onus, and the assumption then is that he lived altogether without sin unless the contrary be shown. Or more strictly it is sufficient to show that Paul lived a considerable period during the latter part of his life without sin. This throws the burden of proof upon him who would deny that he continued in this state until death.

However I have repeatedly said, I care not to contend for the sanctification of Paul, or of any other man, in support of the practical attainability of this state. If such cases had been frequent in the early ages of christianity, they would not in all probability have been recorded unless it was done after their death. It is the fact of practical attainability and not of actual attainment for which I contend.

3. Another objection to the doctrine we have been considering has been stated as follows:

The promises of entire sanctification are conditioned upon faith. We have no right to expect the fulfillment of the promises to us, until we believe them. To believe and appropriate them is to believe that they will be fulfilled to us. But of this we have no evidence until after we have believed that they will be fulfilled to us, which is the condition of their fulfillment. Therefore we have no reason to expect their fulfillment to us. To this objection I reply,

(1.) That it applies equally to all the promises made to the saints, and if this objection is good and a bar to rational hope in respect to the promises of entire sanctification it is equally so in respect to all the promises.

(2.) The objection represents the gospel and its promises as a mere farce. If this objection has any weight, the matter stands thus: God has promised us certain things upon condition that we will believe that he will give them to us. But the condition of the promise is such as to render it impossible for us to fulfill it. We really, in this case, have no promise, until after we have believed that we shall receive the thing promised. We must believe that he will give the thing promised to us. But of this, we can have no evidence until we have believed this, since this belief is the condition of the promise. This reduces us to the necessity of believing without a promise that God will give us the promised blessings; for this belief is the condition of the promises in which the blessing is pledged. We must first believe that we shall receive the thing promised before we have a right to expect to receive, or before we can rationally believe that we shall receive it. Thus the promises are all made upon a condition that renders them all a mere nullity in the estimation of this objection.

This objection was once stated to me by a celebrated minister of New England as applicable to the prayer of faith. It has probably occurred to many minds and deserves a moment's attention. In further remarking upon it I would say,

(3.) That the objection is based upon a misapprehension of the condition of the promises. The objection assumes that the promises are conditioned not upon confidence in the veracity of God, but upon our believing that he will give to us the thing which he has promised. But he has promised this blessing upon condition that we believe that he will give it to us, of which we have no promise, until after we have believed that we shall receive it. The objection assumes that God's veracity is not pledged to grant the thing promised in any case until we have believed that we shall have the thing promised, and so we must believe that God will do what his veracity is not pledged to do and what we have no evidence

that he will do until we truly believe that he will. But we have no right to claim the thing promised until we have believed that we shall have it, for it is promised only upon this condition. Thus we have no foundation for faith. God's veracity is not pledged to give the blessing until after we have believed without evidence that he will give it to us. So that we are shut up to believe that he will give it to us before his veracity is pledged to do so. We must first believe without a promise as a condition of having a promise or any rational ground of confidence that we shall receive the thing promised. This view of the subject would render the gospel and its promises a ridiculous tantalizing of the hopes and solitudes of the people of God. This objection supposes that we have no evidence upon which to rest but the promises, and the promise affords no evidence that we shall receive the thing promised until we believe that we shall receive it, for upon this condition the promise is made. I say again that the objection misapprehends the condition of the promises. The fact is, the promises are all made upon condition that we believe in or trust in the veracity of God. Of this we have other evidence than that contained in the promises. We can trust in the promise of no being any farther than we have confidence in his veracity. We can have ground for confidence in his promises no further than we have ground for confidence in his veracity. Now if we had no ground for confidence in the veracity of God except what we have in the promises themselves, and were they conditioned upon our belief of them, they must all be to us a mere nullity. But the truth is, we have infinitely good reason for confidence in the veracity of God and consequently for believing his promises and of expecting them to be fulfilled to us. We have in the intuitive affirmations of our own reason, in the revelations which God has made of himself in his works and word and by his Holy Spirit, the highest evidence of the veracity of God. When we confide in his veracity, we can not but confide in his promises so far as we understand them. Confidence in the veracity of God is both the condition of the promises and a condition of confiding in them and of expecting to receive the things pledged in them. Confidence in God's universal truthfulness and faithfulness is a condition of our expecting to receive the fulfillment of his promises. We could not rationally expect to receive the things promised, had we no reason for confiding in the universal truthfulness of God. Hence the Holy Spirit is given to inspire confidence in the veracity of God and thus enable us to lay hold upon and appropriate the promises to ourselves. Now if, as the objection we are considering assumes, the promises were made only upon condition that we believe that we shall receive the thing promised, that is, if the thing is promised only upon condition that we first believe that we receive it, then surely the promises were vain; for this would suspend the fulfillment of the promise upon an impossible condition. But if the promises are conditioned upon our confiding in the veracity of God, then they are made to a certain class of persons, and as soon as we are conscious of exercising this confidence in him, we can not but expect him to fulfill all his promises. Thus a confidence in his veracity at once fulfills the conditions of the promises and renders the expectation that we shall receive the things promised rational and necessary.

We may appropriate the promises and expect their fulfillment when we are conscious of confidence in the veracity of God; for upon this condition they were made, and upon no other condition is confidence in their fulfillment to us possible. That is, we can not expect God to fulfill his promises to us except upon the condition that we confide in his universal truthfulness. For this confidence we have the best of all reasons, and to secure this confidence the Holy Spirit is given. God requires us to expect to receive the things promised simply because he has promised to bestow them upon condition of faith in his veracity, and because faith in his veracity implies and includes the expectation of receiving the things which we know he has promised, upon condition of this faith. If we have good reason for confidence in the veracity of God we have good reason for the expectation that he will fulfill to us all his promises; for confidence in his veracity is the condition of them. Confidence in his veracity must imply confidence in his promises so far as they are known.

God requires faith in his promises only because he requires faith in his universal veracity, and when he conditionates his promises upon our confidence in them it is only because he conditionates them upon our confidence in his veracity, and because confidence in his veracity implies confidence in his promises, and confidence in his promises implies confidence in his veracity. When therefore he conditionates his promises upon our believing them, and that we shall receive the things promised in them, the spirit and meaning of the condition is, that we confide in his truthfulness, which confidence is implied in the expectation of receiving the things promised. It should be distinctly understood then that faith in the promises implies faith in the divine veracity, and faith in the divine veracity implies faith in all the known promises. In the order of nature confidence in the divine veracity precedes confidence in a specific divine promise. But where the latter is there the former must always be. The general condition of all the promises is confidence in the character and truthfulness of God. This also implies confidence in his promises, and hence the expressed condition is faith in the promise, because faith in his veracity implies confidence in his promises, and confidence in his promises implies confidence in his veracity.

But here it may be asked, does not this reasoning prove too much, and will it not follow from this that all the promises must be and are really due and fulfilled to all true saints, for all true saints have true confidence in the veracity of God? If faith in the veracity of God is the true condition of all the promises, it follows that every true believer has fulfilled the conditions of all the promises; then the veracity of God is pledged for the fulfillment of all of them to every true believer. To this I answer, that the promises are made to believers in Christ, or in other words, to all true saints. Their being true saints is the condition of their right to appropriate them and claim the fulfillment of them to themselves. True confidence in God is the condition of the promises in the sense not that they will all be fulfilled to us of course upon the bare condition that we confide in the general and universal veracity of God without either pleading, appropriating, or using means to secure the fulfillment of certain specific promises to us. But confidence in the veracity of God is the condition of our having a right to appropriate the promises to ourselves and to expect their fulfillment to ourselves. A consciousness that we confide in the veracity of God gives us the right to consider every promise as made to us which is applicable to our circumstances and wants, and to lay hold upon and plead it and expect it to be fulfilled to us. Observe, the promises are not merely conditioned upon confidence in the veracity of God, but also upon our pleading them with entire confidence in the veracity of God and in the fact that he will fulfill them to us, and also upon the diligent use of means to secure the promised blessing. God says, "I will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do these things for them." By trusting the veracity of God, we become personally and individually interested in the promises, and have a title to the things promised in such a sense as to have a right through grace to claim the fulfillment to us of specific promises upon the further condition of our pleading them with faith in the veracity of God and using the necessary means to secure their fulfillment to us. Most, not to say all, of the promises of specific blessings have several conditions. An implicit faith or confidence in God as a hearer and answerer of prayer, and as a God of universal sincerity and veracity, as true and faithful to all his word, is the general condition of all the promises.

The promises are made to this class of persons. The promises of particular things are addressed to this class for their individual use and benefit as circumstances shall develop their necessities. By the exercise of implicit confidence in God they have fulfilled the conditions of the promises in such a sense as to entitle them to appropriate any specific promise and claim through grace its fulfillment to them as their circumstances demand. This laying hold of and appropriating the promises of specific blessings and using the means to secure the thing promised, are also conditions of receiving the promised blessing.

The holy spirit is given to all who have confidence in the veracity of God to lead them to a right use and appropriation of the specific promises, and when we are drawn to wrestle for the fulfillment to us of any particular promise we have the best of reason to expect its fulfillment to us. What christian does not know this? And what christian has not had frequent examples and instances of this in his own experience?

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 68

SANCTIFICATION.

FARTHER OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

4. I will next consider those passages of scripture which are by some supposed to contradict the doctrine we have been considering.

1. Kings 8:46: "If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near," &c. On this passage I remark:

(1.) That this sentiment in nearly the same language, is repeated in 2 Chron. 6:26, and in Eccl. 7:20, where the same original word in the same form is used.

(2.) These are the strongest passages I know of in the Old Testament, and the same remarks are applicable to the three.

(3.) I will quote, for the satisfaction of the reader, the note of Dr. Adam Clarke upon this passage, and also that of Barclay, the celebrated and highly spiritual author of "An apology for the True Christian Divinity." And let me say, that they appear to me to be satisfactory answers to the objection founded upon these passages.

CLARKE: "If they sin against thee.--This must refer to some general defection from truth; to some species of false worship, idolatry, or corruption of the truth and ordinances of the Most High; as for it, they are here stated to be delivered into the hands of their enemies, and carried away captive, which was the general punishment of idolatry; and what is called, [verse 47,] acting perversely, and committing wickedness.

"If they sin against thee, for there is no man that sinneth not. The second clause, as it is here translated, renders the supposition, in the first clause, entirely nugatory; for, if there be no man that sinneth not, it is useless to say, IF they sin; but this contradiction is taken away by reference to the original *ki yechetau lak*, which should be translated, IF they shall sin against thee; or should they sin against thee, *ki ein adam asher lo yecheta*; 'For there is no man that may not sin;' that is, there is no man impeccable, none infallible; none that is not liable to transgress. This is the true meaning of the phrase in various parts of the Bible, and so our translators have understood the original, for even in the thirty-first verse of this chapter, they have translated *yecheta*, IF a man TRESPASS; which certainly implies he might or might not do it; and in this way they have translated the same word, IF a soul SIN, in Lev. 5:1, and 6:2, 1 Sam. 2:25, 2 Chron. 4:22, and in several other places. The truth is, the Hebrew has no mood to express words in the permissive or optative way, but to express this sense it uses the future tense of the conjugation *kal*.

"This text has been a wonderful strong-hold for all who believe that there is no redemption from sin in this life; that no man can live without committing sin; and that we can not be entirely freed from it till we die:

"[1.] The text speaks no such doctrine, it only speaks of the possibility of every man's sinning; and this must be true of a state of probation.

"[2.] There is not another text in the divine records that is more to the purpose than this.

"[3.] The doctrine is flatly in opposition to the design of the gospel; for Jesus came to save his people from their sins, and to destroy the works of the devil.

"[4.] It is a dangerous and destructive doctrine, and should be blotted out of every Christian's creed. There are too many who are seeking to excuse their crimes by all means in their power; and we need not embody their excuses in a creed, to complete their deception, by stating that their sins are unavoidable."

BARCLAY: "Secondly--Another objection is from two passages of scripture, much of one signification. The one is 1 Kings 8:46: "For there is no man that sinneth not." The other is Eccl. 7:20: For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.

"I answer,

"[1.] These affirm nothing of a daily and continual sinning, so as never to be redeemed from it; but only that all have sinned, that there is none that doth not sin, though not always so as never to cease to sin; and in this lies the question. Yea, in that place of the Kings he speaks within two verses of the returning of such with all their souls and hearts; which implies a possibility of leaving off sin.

"[2.] There is a respect to be had to the seasons and dispensations; for if it should be granted that in Solomon's time there were none that sinned not, it will not follow that there are none such now, or that it is a thing not now attainable by the grace of God under the gospel.

"[3.] And lastly, this whole objection hangs upon a false interpretation; for the original Hebrew word may be read in the Potential mood, thus, There is no man who may not sin; as well as in the indicative, so both the old Latin, Junius, and Tremellius, and Vatablus have it, and the same word is so used, Psalm 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee--in the Potential Mood, and not in the Indicative; which being more answerable to the universal scope of the scriptures, the testimony of the truth, and the sense of almost all interpreters, doubtless ought to be so understood, and the other interpretation rejected as spurious."

(4.) Whatever may be thought of the views of these authors, to me it is a plain and satisfactory answer to the objection founded upon these passages, that the objection might be strictly true under the Old Testament dispensation, and prove nothing in regard to the attainability of a state of entire sanctification under the new. What! does the New Testament dispensation differ nothing from the Old in its advantages for the acquisition of holiness? If it be true that no one under the comparatively dark dispensation of Judaism, attained a state of permanent sanctification, does that prove such a state is not attainable under the Gospel? It is expressly stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that "the Old Covenant made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." Under the Old Covenant, God expressly promised that He would make a new one with the house of Israel, in "writing the law in their hearts," and in, engraving it in their inward parts." And this New Covenant was to be made with the house of Israel, under the christian dispensation. What then do all such passages in the Old Testament prove in relation to the privileges and holiness of Christians under the New dispensation?

(5.) Whether any of the Old Testament saints did so far receive the New Covenant by way of anticipation, as to enter upon a state of permanent sanctification, it is not my present purpose to inquire. Nor will I inquire, whether, admitting that Solomon said in his day, that "there was not a just man upon the earth that liveth and sinneth not," the same could with equal truth have been asserted of every generation under the Jewish dispensation?

(6.) It is expressly asserted of Abraham and multitudes of the Old Testament saints, that they "died in faith, not having received the promises." Now what can this mean? It cannot be that they did not know the promises, for to them the promises were made. It cannot mean that they did not receive Christ, for the Bible expressly asserts that they did--that "Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day"--that Moses, and indeed all the Old Testament saints, had so much knowledge of Christ as a Savior to be revealed, as to bring them into a state of salvation. But still they did not receive the promise of the Spirit as it is poured out under the Christian dispensation. This was the great thing all along promised, first to Abraham, or to his seed, which is Christ: Gal. 3:14,16: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus

Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as one, and to thy seed, which is Christ;" and afterwards to the Christian church, by all the prophets. Acts 2:16--21: "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy; and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come; and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Acts 2:38,39: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 3:24,26: "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." "Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities;" and lastly by Christ himself, which he expressly styles the promise of the Father. Acts 1:4,5: "And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." They did not receive the light and the glory of the Christian dispensation, nor the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And it is asserted in the Bible, that "they without us," that is, without our privileges, "could not be made perfect."

5. The next objection is founded upon the Lord's Prayer. In this, Christ has taught us to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Here it is objected that if a person should become entirely sanctified, he could no longer use this clause of this prayer, which it is said, was manifestly designed to be used by the Church to the end of time. Upon this prayer I remark:

(1.) Christ has taught us to pray for entire, in the sense of perpetual sanctification. "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

(2.) He designed that we should expect this prayer to be answered, or that we should mock him by asking what we do not believe is agreeable to his will, and that too which we know could not consistently be granted; and that we are to repeat this insult to God as often as we pray.

(3.) The petition for forgiveness of our trespasses, it is plain, must apply to past sins, and not to sins we are committing at the time we make the prayer; for it would be absurd and abominable to pray for the forgiveness of a sin which we are then in the act of committing.

(4.) This prayer cannot properly be made in respect to any sin of which we have not repented; for it would be highly abominable in the sight of God, to pray for the forgiveness of a sin of which we did not repent.

(5.) If there be any hour or day in which a man has committed no actual sin, he could not consistently make this prayer in reference to that hour or that day.

(6.) But at the very time, it would be highly proper for him to make this prayer in relation, [to] all his past sins, and that too although he may have repented of, and confessed them, and prayed for their forgiveness, a thousand times before. This does not imply a doubt whether God has forgiven the sins of which we have repented; but it is only a renewal of our grief and humiliation for our sins, and a fresh acknowledgment of, and casting ourselves upon his mercy. God may forgive when we repent before we ask him, and while we abhor ourselves so much as to have no heart to ask for forgiveness, but his having forgiven us does not render the petition improper.

(7.) And although his sins may be forgiven, he ought still to confess them--to repent of them both in this world and in the world to come. And it is perfectly suitable, so long as he lives in the world, to say the least, to continue to repent and repeat the request for forgiveness. For myself I am unable to see why this passage should be made a stumbling block; for if it be improper to pray for the forgiveness of past sins of which we have repented, then it is improper to pray for forgiveness at all. And if this prayer cannot be used with propriety in reference to past sins of which we have already

repented, it cannot properly be used at all, except upon the absurd supposition, that we are to pray for the forgiveness of sins which we are now committing, and of which we have not repented. And if it be improper to use this form of prayer in reference to all past sins of which we have repented, it is just as improper to use it in reference to sins committed to-day or yesterday, of which we have repented.

6. Another objection is founded on James 3:1,2: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Upon this passage I remark:

(1.) The term rendered masters here, may be rendered teachers, critics, or censors, and be understood either in a good or bad sense. The Apostle exhorts the brethren not to be many masters, because if they are so, they will incur the greater condemnation; "for," says he, "in many things we offend all." The fact that we all offend is here urged as a reason why we should not be many masters; which shows that the term masters is here used in a bad sense. "Be not many masters," for if we are masters, "we shall receive the greater condemnation," because we are all great offenders. Now I understand this to be the simple meaning of this passage; do not many [or any] of you become censors, or critics and set yourselves up to judge and condemn others. For in as much as you have all sinned yourselves, and we are all great offenders, we shall receive the greater condemnation, if we set ourselves up as censors. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

(2.) It does not appear to me that the Apostle designs to affirm any thing at all of the present character of himself or of those to whom he wrote; nor to have had the remotest allusion to the doctrine of entire sanctification, but simply to affirm a well established truth in its application to a particular sin; that if they became censors, and injuriously condemned others, inasmuch as they had all committed many sins, they should receive the greater condemnation.

(3.) That the Apostle did not design to deny the doctrine of Christian perfection or entire sanctification, as maintained in these lectures, seems evident from the fact that he immediately subjoins, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body."

7. Another objection is founded upon 1st John 1:8: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Upon this I remark:

(1.) Those who make this passage an objection to the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life assume that the Apostle is here speaking of sanctification instead of justification; whereas an honest examination of the passage, if I mistake not, will render it evident that the Apostle makes no allusion here to sanctification, but is speaking solely of justification. A little attention to the connection in which this verse stands, will, I think, render this evident. But before I proceed to state what I understand to be the meaning of this passage, let us consider it in the connection in which it stands, in the sense in which they understand it who quote it for the purpose of opposing the sentiment advocated in these lectures.

They understand the Apostle as affirming that if we say we are in a state of entire sanctification and do not sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Now if this were the Apostle's meaning, he involves himself in this connection in two flat contradictions.

(2.) This verse is immediately preceded by the assertion that the "blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Now it would be very remarkable, if immediately after this assertion, the Apostle should mean to say, (as they suppose he did,) that it does not cleanse us from all sin, and if we say it does, we deceive ourselves; for he had just asserted that the blood of Jesus Christ does cleanse us from all sin. If this were his meaning it involves him in as palpable a contradiction as could be expressed.

(3.) This view of the subject then represents the Apostle in the conclusion of the seventh verse, as saying, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin; and in the eighth verse, as saying, that if we suppose ourselves to be cleansed from all sin, we deceive ourselves, thus flatly contradicting what he had just said. And in the ninth verse he goes on to say that "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" that is, the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin; but if we say it does, we deceive ourselves. "But if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Now, all unrighteousness is sin. If we are

cleansed from all unrighteousness, we are cleansed from sin. And now suppose a man should confess his sin, and God should in faithfulness and justice forgive his sin and cleanse him from all unrighteousness, and then he should confess and profess that God had done this; are we to understand that the Apostle would then affirm that he deceives himself in supposing that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin?

But as I have already said, I do not understand the Apostle as affirming any thing in respect to the present moral character of any one, but as speaking of the doctrine of justification.

This then appears to me to be the meaning of the whole passage. If we say that we are not sinners, that is, have no sin to need the blood of Christ; that we have never sinned, and consequently need no Savior, we deceive ourselves. For we have sinned, and nothing but the blood of Christ cleanseth from sin, or procures our pardon and justification. And now, if we will not deny but confess that we have sinned, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "But if we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and his word is not in us."

6. It has been objected to the view I have given of Jer. 31:31--34, that if that passage is to be considered as a promise of entire sanctification, it proves too much. Inasmuch as it is said, "they shall all know the Lord from the least to the greatest;" therefore, says the objector, it would prove that all the Church has been in a state of entire sanctification ever since the commencement of the New Testament dispensation. To this objection I answer:

(1.) I have already, I trust, shown that this promise is conditioned upon faith, and that the blessing cannot possibly be received but by faith.

(2.) It is doubtless true that many may have received this covenant in its fulness.

(3.) A promise may be unconditional or absolute, and certain of a fulfillment in relation to the whole Church as a body in some period of its history, which is nevertheless conditional in relation to its application to any particular individuals or generation of individuals.

(4.) I think it is in entire keeping with the prophecies to understand this passage as expressly promising to the Church a day, when all her members shall be sanctified, and "Holiness to the Lord shall be written upon the bells of the horses." Indeed it appears to be abundantly foretold that the Church as a body shall, in this world, enter into a state of entire sanctification, in some period of her history; and that this will be the carrying out of the promises of the New Covenant, of which we are speaking. But it is by no means an objection to this view of the subject, that all the church have not yet entered into this state.

It has been maintained, that this promise in Jeremiah has been fulfilled already. This has been argued,

[1.] From the fact that the promise has no condition, expressed or implied, and the responsibility therefore rests with God.

[2.] That the Apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews, quotes it as to be fulfilled at the advent of Christ. Now to this I answer:

It might as well be argued that all the rest of the promises and prophecies relating to the gospel day were fulfilled, because the time had come when the promise is due. Suppose it were denied that the world would ever be converted, or that there ever would be any more piety in the world than there has been and is at present; and when the promises and prophecies respecting the latter day glory, and the conversion of the world, should be adduced in proof that the world is to be converted, it should be replied that these promises had already been fulfilled--that they were unconditional--and that the advent of the Messiah, was the time when they became due. But suppose, that in answer to this, it should be urged that nothing has ever yet occurred in the history of this world that seems at all to have come up to the meaning of these promises and prophecies--that the world has never been in the state which seems to be plainly described in these promises and prophecies--and that it cannot be that any thing the world has yet experienced is what is meant by such language as is used in the Bible in relation to the future state of the world. Now suppose to this it should be replied, that the event has shown what the promises and prophecies really meant--that we are to interpret the language by the fact--that as the promises and prophecies were unconditional, and the gospel day has really come when they were to be fulfilled, we

certainly know, whatever their language may be, that they meant nothing more than what the world has already realized? This would be precisely like the reasoning of some persons in relation to Jer. 31:31--34. They say,

a. The promises are without condition.

b. The time has come for their fulfillment. Therefore the world has realized their fulfillment, and all that was intended by them; that the facts in the case settle the question of construction and interpretation; and we know that they never intended to promise a state of entire sanctification, because as a matter of fact no such state has been realized by the Church. Indeed! Then the Bible is the most hyperbolic, not to say ridiculous book in the universe. If what the world has seen in regard to the extension and universal prevalence of the Redeemer's kingdom, is all that the promises relating to these events really mean, then the Bible of all books in the world is the most calculated to deceive mankind. But who, after all, in the exercise of his sober senses, will admit any such reasoning as this? Who does not know, or may not know, if he will use his common sense, that although these promises and prophecies are unconditionally expressed, yet that they are as a matter of fact really conditioned upon a right exercise of human agency, and that a time is to come when the world shall be converted; and that the conversion of the world implies in itself a vastly higher state of religious action in the Church, than has for centuries, or perhaps ever been witnessed--and that the promise of the New Covenant is still to be fulfilled in a higher sense than it ever has been? If any man doubts this, I must believe that he does not understand his bible.

Faith, then, is an indispensable condition of the fulfillment of all promises of spiritual blessings, the reception of which involves the exercise of our own agency.

Again, it is not a little curious, that those who give this interpretation to these promises imagine that they see a very close connection, if not an absolute identity of our views with those of modern Antinomian Perfectionists. Now it is of importance to remark, that this is one of the leading peculiarities of that sect. They [the Antinomian Perfectionists] insist that these are promises without condition, and that consequently their own watchfulness, prayers, exertions, and the right exercise of their own agency, are not at all to be taken into the account, in the matter of their perseverance in holiness--that the responsibility is thrown entirely upon Christ, inasmuch as his promises are without condition. The thing he has promised, say they, is, that without any condition, he will keep them in a state of entire sanctification--that therefore, for them to confess sin, is to accuse Christ of breaking his promises. For them to make any efforts at perseverance in holiness is to set aside the gospel and go back to the law. For them even to fear that they shall sin, is to fear that Christ will tell a lie.

These sayings are not found in their Confession of Faith, but they are held at least by many of them as every one knows who is at all familiar with their views.

The fact is that this, and their setting aside the moral law, are the two great errors of their whole system. It would be easy to show that the adoption of this sentiment--that these promises are without condition, expressed or implied--has led to some of their most fanatical and absurd opinions and practices. They take the ground that no condition is expressed, and that therefore none is implied; overlooking the fact, that the very nature of the thing promised, implies that faith is the condition upon which its fulfillment must depend. It is hoped therefore, that our brethren who charge us with perfectionism, will be led to see that to themselves, and not to us, does this charge belong.

These are the principal passages that occur to my mind, and those I believe upon which the principal stress has been laid by the opposers of this doctrine. And as I do not wish to protract the discussion, I shall omit the examination of other passages.

There are many objections to the doctrine of entire sanctification, besides those derived from the passages of scripture which I have considered. Some of these objections are doubtless honestly felt, and deserve to be considered. I will then proceed to notice such of them as now occur to my mind.

9. It is objected that the doctrine of entire and permanent sanctification in this life, tends to the errors of modern perfectionism. This objection has been urged by some good men, and, I doubt not honestly urged. But still I cannot believe that they have duly considered the matter. It seems to me that one fact will set aside this objection. It is well

known that the Wesleyan Methodists have, as a denomination, from the earliest period of their history, maintained this doctrine in all its length and breadth. Now if such is the tendency of the doctrine, it is passing strange that this tendency has never developed itself in that denomination. So far as I can learn, the Methodists have been in a great measure, if not entirely, exempt from the errors held by modern perfectionists. Perfectionists, as a body, and I believe with very few exceptions, have arisen out of those denominations that deny the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life.

Now the reason of this is obvious to my mind. When professors of religion, who have been all their life subject to bondage, begin to inquire earnestly for deliverance from their sins, they have found neither sympathy nor instruction in regard to the prospect of getting rid of them in this life. Then they have gone to the Bible, and there found, in almost every part of it, Christ presented as a Savior from their sins. But when they proclaim this truth, they are at once treated as heretics and fanatics by their brethren, until, being overcome of evil, they fall into censoriousness; and finding the Church so decidedly and utterly wrong, in her opposition to this one great important truth, they lose confidence in their ministers and the church, and, being influenced by a wrong spirit, Satan takes the advantage of them, and drives them to the extreme of error and delusion. This I believe to be the true history of many of the most pious members of the Calvinistic churches. On the contrary, the Methodists are very much secured against these errors. They are taught that Jesus Christ is a Savior from all sin in this world. And when they inquire for deliverance, they are pointed to Jesus Christ as a present and all-sufficient Redeemer. Finding sympathy and instruction, on this great and agonizing point, their confidence in their ministers and their brethren remains, and they walk quietly with them.

It seems to me impossible that the tendency of this doctrine should be to the peculiar errors of the modern perfectionists, and yet not an instance occur among all the Methodist ministers, or the thousands of their members, for one hundred years.

And here let me say, it is my full conviction, that there are but two ways in which ministers of the present day can prevent members of their churches from becoming perfectionists. One is, to suffer them to live so far from God, that they will not inquire after holiness of heart; and the other is, most fully to inculcate the glorious doctrine of entire consecration, and that it is the high privilege as well as the duty of Christians, to live in a state of entire consecration to God.

I have many additional things to say upon the tendency of this doctrine, but at present this must suffice.

By some it is said to be identical with Perfectionism; and attempts are made to show in what particulars Antinomian Perfectionism and our views are the same. On this I remark:

(1.) It seems to have been a favorite policy of certain controversial writers for a long time, instead of meeting a proposition in the open field of fair and Christian argument, to give it a bad name, and attempt to put it down, not by force of argument, but by showing that it is identical with or sustains a near relation to Pelagianism, Antinomianism, Calvinism, or some other ism, against which certain classes of minds are deeply prejudiced. In the recent controversy between what are called Old and New School Divines, who has not witnessed with pain the frequent attempts that have been made to put down the New School Divinity, as it is called, by calling it Pelagianism, and quoting certain passages from Pelagius, and other writers, to show the identity of sentiment that exists between them.

This is a very unsatisfactory method of attacking or defending any doctrine. There are, no doubt, many points of agreement between Pelagius and all truly orthodox divines, and so there are many points of disagreement between them. There are also many points of agreement between modern Perfectionists and all Evangelical Christians, and so there are many points of disagreement between them and the Christian Church in general. That there are some points of agreement between their views and my own, is no doubt true. And that we totally disagree in regard to those points that constitute their great peculiarities, is, if I understand them, also true.

But did I really agree in all points with Augustine or Edwards, or Pelagius, or the modern Perfectionists, neither the good nor the ill name of any of these would prove my sentiments to be either right or wrong. It would remain after all, to show that those with whom I agreed were either right or wrong, in order, on the one hand, to establish that for which I contend, or on the other to overthrow that which I maintain. It is often more convenient to give a doctrine or an argument a bad name, than it is soberly and satisfactorily to reply to it.

(2.) It is not a little curious that we should be charged with holding the same sentiments with the Perfectionists; while yet they seem to be more violently opposed to our views, since they have come to understand them, than almost any other persons whatever. I have been informed by one of their leaders, that he regards me as one of the master-builders of Babylon. And I also understand that they manifest greater hostility to the Oberlin Evangelist than almost any other class of persons.

(3.) I will not take time, nor is it needful, to go into an investigation or a denial even of the supposed or alledged points of agreement between us and the Perfectionists. But for the present it must be sufficient to request you to read and examine for yourselves. You have, at the commencement of these lectures upon this subject, their confession of faith drawn up with care, by their leader in compliance with particular request; let a comparison of that with what is here taught settle the question of our agreement or disagreement with that sect.

With respect to the modern Perfectionists, those who have been acquainted with their writings, know that some of them have gone much farther from the truth than others. Some of their leading men, who commenced with them and adopted their name, stopped far short of adopting some of their most abominable errors; still maintaining the authority and perpetual obligation of the moral law; and thus have been saved from going into many of the most objectionable and destructive notions of the sect. There are many more points of agreement between that class of Perfectionists and the orthodox church, than between the church and any other class of them. And there are still a number of important points of difference, as every one knows who is possessed of correct information upon this subject.

I abhor the practice of denouncing whole classes of men for the errors of some of that name. I am well aware that there are many of those who are termed Perfectionists, who as truly abhor the extremes of error into which many of that name have fallen, as perhaps do any persons living.

10. Another objection is, that persons could not live in this world, if they were entirely sanctified. Strange! Does holiness injure a man? Does perfect conformity to all the laws of life and health, both physical and moral, render it impossible for a man to live? If a man break off from rebellion against God, will it kill him? Does there appear to have been any thing in Christ's holiness inconsistent with life and health? The fact is, that this objection is founded in a gross mistake in regard to what constitutes entire sanctification. It is supposed by those who hold this objection, that this state implies a continual and most intense degree of excitement, and many things which are not at all implied in it. I have thought, that it is rather a glorified than a sanctified state, that most men have before their minds whenever they consider this subject. When Christ was upon earth, he was in a sanctified but not in a glorified state. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master." Now what is there in the moral character of Jesus Christ as represented in his history, that may not and ought not to be fully copied into the life of every christian? I speak not of his knowledge, but of his spirit and temper. Ponder well every circumstance of his life that has come down to us, and say, beloved, what is there in it that may not, by the grace of God, be copied into your own? and think you, that a full imitation of him in all that relates to his moral character would render it impossible for you to live in the world?

11. Again it is objected that should we become entirely in the sense of permanently sanctified, we could not know it and should not be able intelligently to profess it.

Answer. All that a sanctified soul needs to know or profess is that the grace of God in Christ Jesus is sufficient for him, so that he finds it to be true as Paul did that he can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him, and that he does not expect to sin, but that on the contrary, he is enabled through grace "to reckon himself dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." A saint may not know that he shall never sin again; he may expect to sin no more because of his confidence, not in his own resolutions or strength or attainments, but simply in the infinite grace and faithfulness of Christ. He may come to look upon, to regard, account, reckon himself as being dead indeed and in fact unto sin, and as having done with it, and as being alive unto God, and to expect henceforth to live wholly to God as much as he expects to live at all; and it may be true that he will thus live without his being able to say that he knows that he is entirely in the sense of permanently sanctified. This he need not know, but this he may believe upon the strength of such promises as 1 Thess. 5:23,24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." It is also true that a christian may attain a state in which he will really fall no more into sin as a matter of fact, while at the same time he may not be able to express even a thorough persuasion that he shall never fall again. All he may

be able intelligently to say is, "God knoweth, I hope to sin no more, but the event will show. May the Lord keep me; I trust that he will."

12. Another objection is, that the doctrine tends to spiritual pride. And is it true indeed that to become perfectly humble tends to pride? But entire humility is implied in entire sanctification. Is it true that you must remain in sin, and of course cherish pride in order to avoid pride? Is your humility more safe in your own hands, and are you more secure against spiritual pride in refusing to receive Christ as your helper, than you would be in at once embracing him as a full Savior?

I have seen several remarks in the papers of late, and have heard several suggestions from various quarters, which have but increased the fear which I have for some time entertained, that multitudes of Christians and indeed many ministers have radically defective views of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. To the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, as believed and taught by some of us, it has been frequently of late objected, that prayers offered in accordance with this belief, and by a sanctified soul, would savor strongly of spiritual pride and self-righteousness. I have seen this objection stated in its full force of late, in a religious periodical, in the form of a supposed prayer of a sanctified soul--the object of which was manifestly to expose the shocking absurdity, self-righteousness, and spiritual pride, of a prayer, or rather thanksgiving, made in accordance with a belief that one is entirely sanctified. Now I must confess, that that prayer, together with objections and remarks which suggest the same idea, have created in my mind no small degree of alarm. I not a little fear, that many of our divines, in contending for the doctrines of grace, have entirely lost sight of the meaning of the language they use, and have in reality but very little practical understanding of what is intended by salvation by grace, in opposition to salvation by works. If this is not the case, I know not how to account for their feeling and stating such an objection as this to the doctrine of entire sanctification.

Now, if I understand the doctrine of salvation by grace, both sanctification and justification are wrought by the grace of God, and not by any works or merits of our own, irrespective of the grace of Christ through faith. If this is the real doctrine of the Bible, what earthly objection can there be to our confessing, professing, and thanking God for our sanctification, any more than for our justification. It is true, indeed, that in our justification our own agency is not concerned, while in our sanctification it is. Yet I understand the doctrine of the Bible, to be, that both are brought about by grace through faith, and that we should no sooner be sanctified without the grace of Christ than we should be justified without it. Now who pretends to deny this? And yet, if it is true, of what weight is that class of objections to which I have alluded! These objections manifestly turn upon the idea, no doubt latent and deep seated in the mind, that the real holiness of Christians, in whatever degree it exists, is in some way to be ascribed to some goodness originating in themselves, and not in the grace of Christ. But do let me ask, how is it possible that men who entertain, really and practically, right views upon this subject, can by any possibility feel as if it must be proof conclusive of self-righteousness and Pharisaism to profess and thank God for sanctification? Is it not understood on all hands, that sanctification is by grace; and that the gospel has made abundant provision for the sanctification of all men? This certainly is admitted by those who have stated this objection. Now if this is so, which is the most honorable to God, to confess and complain of our sins' triumphing and having dominion over us, or to be able truly and honestly to thank him for having given us the victory over our sins. God has said, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

Now, in view of this and multitudes of kindred promises, suppose we come to God and say, "O Lord, thou hast made these great and precious promises, but as a matter of fact they do not accord with our own experience. For sin does continually have dominion over us. Thy grace is not sufficient for us. We are continually overcome by temptation, notwithstanding thy promise that in every temptation thou wilt make a way for us to escape. Thou hast said, the truth shall make us free, but we are not free. We are still the slaves of our appetites and lusts."

Now which, I inquire, is the most honorable to God, to go on with a string of confessions and self-accusations, that are in flat contradiction to the promises of God, and almost, to say the least, a burlesque upon the grace of the gospel, or to be able, through grace, to confess that we have found it true in our own experience, that his grace is sufficient for us--that as our day is so our strength is, and that sin does not have dominion over us, because we are not under the law but under grace?

To this I know it will be answered that in this confessing of our sins we do not impeach the grace or faithfulness of God inasmuch as all these promises are conditioned upon faith, and consequently that the reason of our remaining in sin is to be ascribed to our unbelief, and is therefore no disparagement to the grace of Christ. But I beg that it may be duly

considered that faith itself is of the operation of God--is itself produced by grace; and therefore the fact of our being obliged to confess our unbelief is a dishonor to the grace of Christ. Is it honorable or dishonorable to God that we should be able to confess that even our unbelief is overcome, and that we are able to testify from our own experience that the grace of the gospel, is sufficient for our present salvation and sanctification? There is no doubt a vast amount of self-righteousness in the church, which, while it talks of grace, really means nothing by it. For a man to go any farther than to hope that he is converted, seems to many minds to savor of self-righteousness. Now why is this, unless they themselves entertain self-righteous notions in regard to conversion? Many persons would feel shocked to hear a man in prayer unqualifiedly thank God that he had been converted and justified. And they might just as well feel shocked at this, and upon precisely the same principle, as to feel shocked if he should unqualifiedly thank God that he had been sanctified by his grace.

But again, I say, that the very fact that a man feels shocked to hear a converted or a sanctified soul unqualifiedly thank God for the grace received, shows that down deep in his heart lies concealed a self-righteous view of the way of salvation, and that in his mind all holiness in Christians is a ground of boasting; and that if persons have become truly and fully sanctified they really have a ground of boasting before God. I know not how else to account for this wonderful prejudice. For my own part I do not conceive it to be the least evidence of self-righteousness when I hear a man sincerely and heartily thank God for converting and justifying him by his grace. Nor should I feel either shocked, horrified, or disgusted, to hear a man thank God that he had sanctified him wholly by his grace; if in either or both cases I had the corroborative evidence of an apparently holy life; I should bless God, take courage, and feel like calling on all around to glorify God for such an instance of his glorious and excellent grace.

The feeling seems to be very general that such a prayer or thanksgiving is similar in fact and in the principle upon which it rests with that of the Pharisee noticed by our Savior. But what reason is there for this assumption? We are expressly informed that that was the prayer of a Pharisee. But the Pharisees were self-righteous and expressly and openly rejected the grace of Christ.

The Pharisee then boasted of his own righteousness originating in and consummated by his own goodness and not in the grace of Christ. Hence he did not thank God that the grace of Christ had made him unlike other men. Now this prayer was designed to teach us the abominable folly of any man's putting in a claim to righteousness and true holiness irrespective of the grace of God by Jesus Christ. But certainly this is an infinitely different thing from the thanksgiving of a soul who fully recognizes the grace of Christ, and attributes his sanctification entirely to that grace. And I cannot see how a man can suppose these two prayers to be analogous in their principle and spirit, who has entirely divested himself of Pharisaical notions in respect to the doctrine of sanctification.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 69

SANCTIFICATION.

FARTHER OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

13. AGAIN it is objected that many who have embraced this doctrine, really are spiritually proud. To this I answer:

(1.) So have many who believed the doctrine of regeneration been deceived and amazingly puffed up with the idea that they have been regenerated when they have not been. But is this a good reason for abandoning the doctrine of regeneration, or any reason why the doctrine should not be preached?

(2.) Let me inquire, whether a simple declaration of what God has done for their souls, has not been assumed as of itself sufficient evidence of spiritual pride on the part of those who embrace this doctrine, while there was in reality no spiritual pride at all? It seems next to impossible, with the present views of the Church, that an individual should really attain this state, and profess to live without known sin in a manner so humble as not of course to be suspected of enormous spiritual pride. This consideration has been a snare to some who have hesitated and even neglected to declare what God had done for their souls, lest they should be accused of spiritual pride. And this has been a serious injury to their piety.

14. But again it is objected that this doctrine tends to censoriousness. To this I reply:

(1.) It is not denied that some who have professed to believe this doctrine have become censorious. But this no more condemns this doctrine than it condemns that of regeneration. And that it tends to censoriousness, might just as well be urged against every acknowledged doctrine of the Bible as against this doctrine.

(2.) Let any Christian do his whole duty to the Church and the world in their present state--let him speak to them and of them as they really are, and he would of course incur the charge of censoriousness. It is therefore the most unreasonable thing in the world, to suppose that the church, in its present state, would not accuse any perfect christian of censoriousness. Entire sanctification implies the doing of all our duty. But to do all our duty, we must rebuke sin in high places and in low places. Can this be done with all needed severity, without in many cases giving offence and incurring the charge of censoriousness? No; it is impossible, and to maintain the contrary, would be to impeach the wisdom and holiness of Jesus Christ himself.

15. It is objected that the believers in this doctrine lower the standard of holiness to a level with their own experience.

To this I reply that it has been common to set up a false standard, and to overlook the true spirit and meaning of the law, and to represent it as requiring something else than what it does require; but this notion is not confined to those who believe in this doctrine. The moral law requires one and the same thing of all moral agents, namely, that they shall be universally and disinterestedly benevolent; in other words, that they shall love the Lord their God with all their heart, and their neighbor as themselves. This is all that it does require of any. Whoever has understood the law as requiring less or more than this, has misunderstood it. Love is the fulfilling of the law. But I must refer the reader to what I have said upon this subject when treating of Moral Government.

The law, as we have seen on a former occasion, levels its claims to us as we are, and a just exposition of it, as I have

already said, must take into consideration all the present circumstances of our being. This is indispensable to a right apprehension of what constitutes entire sanctification.

There may be, as facts show, danger of misapprehension in regard to the true spirit and meaning of the law in the sense that by theorizing and adopting a false philosophy, one may lose sight of the deepest affirmations of his reason in regard to the true spirit and meaning of the law; and I would humbly inquire whether the error has not been in giving such an interpretation of the law, as naturally to beget the idea so prevalent, that if a man should become holy he could not live in this world? In a letter lately received from a beloved, and useful, and venerated minister of the gospel, while the writer expressed the greatest attachment to the doctrine of entire consecration to God, and said that he preached the same doctrine which we hold to his people every Sabbath, but by another name, still he added that it was revolting to his feelings to hear any mere man set up the claim of obedience to the law of God. Now let me inquire, why should this be revolting to the feelings of piety? Must it not be because the law of God is supposed to require something of human beings in our state, which it does not and cannot require? Why should such a claim be thought extravagant, unless the claims of the living God be thought extravagant? If the law of God really requires no more of men than what is reasonable and possible, why should it be revolting to any mind to hear an individual profess to have attained to entire obedience? I know that the brother to whom I allude, would be almost the last man deliberately and knowingly to give any strained interpretation to the law of God; and yet, I cannot but feel that much of the difficulty that good men have upon this subject, has arisen out of a comparison of the lives of saints with a standard entirely above that which the law of God does or can demand of persons in all respects in our circumstances, or indeed of any moral agent whatever.

16. Another objection is, that as a matter of fact the grace of God is not sufficient to secure the entire sanctification of saints in this life. It is maintained, that the question of the attainability of entire sanctification in this life, resolves itself after all into the question, whether christians are sanctified in this life? The objectors say that nothing is sufficient grace that does not as a matter of fact, secure the faith and obedience and perfection of the saints; and, therefore, that the provisions of the gospel are in fact to be measured by the results; and that the experience of the church decides both the meaning of the promises and the extent of the provisions of grace. Now to this I answer:

If this objection be good for any thing in regard to entire sanctification, it is equally true in regard to the spiritual state of every person in the world. If the fact that men are not perfect, proves that no provision is made for their perfection, their being no better than they are proves that there is no provision for their being any better than they are, or that they might not have aimed at being any better, with any rational hope of success. But who, except a fatalist, will admit any such conclusion as this? And yet I do not see but this conclusion is inevitable from such premises. As well might an impenitent sinner urge that the grace of the gospel is not, as a matter of fact, sufficient for him because it does not convert him; as well might he resolve every thing into the sovereignty of God, and say, The sovereignty of God must convert me, or I shall not be converted; and since I am not converted, it is because the grace of God has not proved itself sufficient to convert me. But who will excuse the sinner, and admit his plea that the grace and provisions of the gospel are not sufficient for him?

Let ministers urge upon both saints and sinners the claims of God. Let them insist that sinners may, and can, and ought immediately to become christians, and that christians can, and may, and ought to live wholly to God. Let them urge christians to live without sin, and hold out the same urgency of command and the same encouragement that the New School hold out to sinners; and we shall soon find that christians are entering into the liberty of perfect love as sinners have found pardon and acceptance. Let ministers hold forth the same gospel to all, and insist that the grace of the gospel is as sufficient to save from all sin as from a part of it; and we shall soon see whether the difficulty has not been that the gospel has been hid and denied until the churches have been kept weak through unbelief. The church has been taught not to expect the fulfillment of the promises to them; that it is dangerous error to expect the fulfillment to them, for example, of the promise in 1 Thes. 5:23,24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." When God says he will sanctify us wholly, and preserve us blameless unto the coming of the Lord, masters in Israel tell us that to expect this is dangerous error.

17. Another objection to this doctrine is, that it is contrary to the views of some of the greatest and best men in the Church,--that such men as Augustine, Calvin, Doddridge, Edwards, &c., were of a different opinion. To this I answer:

(1.) Suppose they were;--we are to call no man father in such a sense as to yield up to him the forming of our views of

Christian doctrine.

(2.) This objection comes with a very ill grace from those who wholly reject their opinions on some of the most important points of Christian doctrine.

(3.) Those men all held the doctrine of physical moral depravity, which was manifestly the ground of their rejecting the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life. Maintaining as they seem to have done, that the constitutional susceptibilities of body and mind were sinfully depraved, consistency of course led them to reject the idea that persons could be entirely sanctified while in the body. Now I would ask what consistency is there in quoting them as rejecting the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life, while the reason of this rejection in their minds, was founded in the doctrine of physical moral depravity, which notion is entirely denied by those who quote their authority?

18. But again it is objected, that if we should attain this state of continual consecration or sanctification, we could not know it until the day of Judgment, and that to maintain its attainability is vain, inasmuch as no one can know whether he has attained it or not. To this I reply:

(1.) A man's consciousness is the highest and best evidence of the present state of his own mind. I understand consciousness to be the mind's recognition of its own existence and exercises, and that it is the highest possible evidence to our own minds of what passes within us. Consciousness can of course testify only to our present sanctification, but,

(2.) With the law of God before us as our standard, the testimony of consciousness in regard to whether the mind is conformed to that standard or not, is the highest evidence which the mind can have of a present state of conformity to that rule.

(3.) It is a testimony which we cannot doubt any more than we can doubt our existence. How do we know that we exist? I answer: by our consciousness. How do I know that I breathe, or love, or hate, or sit, or stand, or lie down, or rise up--that I am joyful or sorrowful--in short, that I exercise any emotion, or volition, or affection of mind--How do I know that I sin, or repent, or believe? I answer: by my own consciousness. No testimony can be "so direct and convincing as this."

Now in order to know that my repentance is genuine, I must know what genuine repentance is. So if I would know whether my love to God and man, or obedience to the law is genuine, I must have clearly before my mind the real spirit, and meaning, and bearing of the law of God. Having the rule before my mind, my own consciousness affords "the most direct and convincing evidence possible" whether my present state of mind is conformed to the rule. The Spirit of God is never employed in testifying to what my consciousness teaches, but in setting in a strong light before my mind the rule to which I am to conform my life. It is His business to make me understand, to induce me to love and obey the truth; and it is the business of consciousness to testify to my own mind, whether I do or do not obey the truth when I apprehend it. When God so presents the truth as to give the mind assurance that it understands his mind and will upon any subject, the mind's consciousness of its own state in view of that truth, is "the highest and most direct possible;" evidence of whether it obeys or disobeys.

(4.) If a man cannot be conscious of the character of his own supreme or ultimate choice, in which choice his moral character consists, how can he know when and of what he is to repent? If he has committed sin of which he is not conscious, how is he to repent of it? And if he has a holiness of which he is not conscious, how could he feel that he has peace with God?

But it is said that a man may violate the law not knowing it, and consequently have no consciousness that he sinned, but that afterwards a knowledge of the law may convict him of sin. To this I reply, that if there was absolutely no knowledge that the thing in question was wrong, the doing of that thing was not sin, inasmuch as some degree of knowledge of what is right or wrong is indispensable to the moral character of any act. In such a case there may be a sinful ignorance which may involve all the guilt of those actions that were done in consequence of it; but that blame-worthiness lies in that state of heart that has induced this, and not at all in the violation of the rule of which the mind was at the time entirely ignorant.

(5.) The Bible every where assumes, that we are able to know, and unqualifiedly requires us to know what the moral state of our mind is. It commands us to examine ourselves, to know and to prove our own selves. Now how can this be done

but by bringing our hearts into the light of the law of God, and then taking the testimony of our own consciousness, whether we are or are not in a state of conformity to the law? But if we are not to receive the testimony of our own consciousness in regard to our present sanctification, are we to receive it in respect to our repentance or any other exercise of our mind whatever? The fact is that we may deceive ourselves, by neglecting to compare ourselves with the right standard. But when our views of the standard are right, and our consciousness bears witness of a felt, decided, unequivocal state of mind, we cannot be deceived any more than we can be deceived in regard to our own existence.

(6.) But it is said our consciousness does not teach us what the power and capacities of our minds are, and that therefore if consciousness could teach us in respect to the kind of our exercises, it cannot teach us in regard to their degree, whether they are equal to the present capability of our mind. To this I reply:

[1.] Consciousness does as unequivocally testify whether we do or do not love God with all our heart, as it does whether we love him at all. How does a man know that he lifts as much as he can, or runs, or walks as fast as he is able? I answer: By his own consciousness. How does he know that he repents or loves with all his heart? I answer: By his own consciousness. This is the only possible way in which he can know it.

[2.] The objection implies that God has put within our reach no possible means of knowing whether we obey him or not. The Bible does not directly reveal the fact to any man, whether he obeys God or not. It reveals his duty, but does not reveal the fact whether he obeys. It refers for this testimony to his own consciousness. The Spirit of God sets our duty before us, but does not directly reveal to us whether we do it or not; for this would imply that every man is under constant inspiration.

But it is said the Bible directs our attention to the fact, whether we outwardly obey or disobey, as evidence whether we are in a right state of mind or not. But I would inquire, how do we know whether we obey or disobey? How do we know any thing of our conduct but by our consciousness? Our conduct as observed by others is to them evidence of the state of our hearts. But, I repeat it, our consciousness of obedience to God, is to us the highest and indeed the only evidence of our true character.

[3.] If a man's own consciousness is not to be a witness, either for or against him, other testimony can never satisfy him of the propriety of God's dealing with him in the final Judgment. There are cases of common occurrence, where the witnesses testify to the guilt or innocence of a man contrary to the testimony of his own consciousness. In all such cases, from the very laws of his being, he rejects all other testimony: and let me add, that he would reject the testimony of God, and from the very laws of his being must reject it, if it contradicted his own consciousness. When God convicts a man of sin, it is not by contradicting his consciousness; but by placing the consciousness which he had at the time in the clear strong light of his memory, causing him to discover clearly, and to remember distinctly, what light he had, what thoughts, what convictions, what intention or design; in other words, what consciousness he had at the time. And this, let me add, is the way and the only way in which the Spirit of God can convict a man of sin, thus bringing him to condemn himself. Now suppose that God should bear testimony against a man, that at such a time he did such a thing --that such and such were all the circumstances of the case--and suppose that, at the same time, the individual's consciousness unequivocally contradicts him. The testimony of God in this case, could not satisfy the man's mind, or lead him into a state of self-condemnation. The only possible way in which this state of mind could be induced, would be to annihilate his opposing consciousness and to convict him simply upon the testimony of God.

(7.) Men may overlook what consciousness is. They may mistake the rule of duty--they may confound consciousness with a mere negative state of mind, or that in which a man is not conscious of a state of opposition to the truth. Yet it must for ever remain true, that to our own minds "consciousness must be the highest possible evidence" or what passes within us. And if a man does not by his own consciousness know whether he does the best that he can, under the circumstances--whether he has a single eye to the glory of God--and whether he is in a state of entire consecration to God--he can not know it in any way whatever. And no testimony whatever, either of God or man, could, according to the laws of his being, satisfy him, and beget in him either conviction of guilt on the one hand, or self-approbation on the other.

(8.) Let me ask, how those who make this objection know that they are not in a sanctified state? Has God revealed it to them? Has he revealed it in the Bible? Does the Bible say to A. B., by name, you are not in a sanctified state, or does it lay down a rule, in the light of which his own consciousness bears this testimony against him? Has God revealed directly

by his Spirit, that he is not in a sanctified state, or does he hold the rule of duty strongly before the mind and thus awaken the testimony of consciousness, that he is not in this state?

Now just in the same way, consciousness testifies of those that are sanctified, that they are in this state. Neither the Bible nor the Spirit of God, makes any new or particular revelation to them by name. But the Spirit of God bears witness to their spirits, by setting the rule in a strong light before them. He induces that state of mind that conscience pronounces to be conformity to the rule. This is as far as possible from setting aside the judgment of God in the case, for conscience under these circumstances is the testimony of God, and the way in which he convinces of sin on the one hand, and of entire consecration on the other.

By some, it is still objected that consciousness alone is not evidence even to ourselves, of our being or not being in a state of entire sanctification--that the judgment of the mind is also employed in deciding the true intent and meaning of the law, and is therefore as absolutely a witness in the case as consciousness is. "Consciousness," it is said, "gives us the exercises of our own mind, and the judgment decides whether these exercises are in accordance with the law of God." So then it is the judgment rather than the consciousness, that decides whether we are, or are not in a state of entire sanctification; and therefore, if in our judgment of the law we happen to be mistaken, than which nothing is more common, in such case we are utterly deceived, if we think ourselves in a state of entire sanctification. To this I answer:

[1.] It is indeed our judgment that decides upon the intent and meaning of the law.

[2.] We may be mistaken in regard to its true application in certain cases as it respects outward conduct, but let it be remembered that neither sin nor holiness is to be found in the outward act. They both belong only to the ultimate intention. No man, as was formerly shown, can mistake his real duty. Every one knows, and cannot but know that disinterested benevolence is his duty. This is, and nothing else is his duty. This he can know, and about this we need not mistake. And sure it is that if man can be certain of any thing he can be certain in respect to the end for which he lives or in respect to his supreme ultimate intention.

[3.] I deny that it is the judgment which is to us the witness in respect to the state of our own minds. There are several powers of the mind called into exercise in deciding upon the meaning of, and in obeying the law of God; but it is consciousness alone that gives us these exercises. Nothing but consciousness can possibly give us any exercise of our own minds, that is, we have no knowledge of any exercise but by our own consciousness. Suppose then the judgment is exercised, the will is exercised, and all the involuntary powers are exercised. These exercises are revealed to us only and simply by consciousness; so that it remains an invariable truth, that consciousness is to us the only possible witness of what our exercises are, and consequently of the state of our own minds.

When therefore I say that by consciousness a man may know whether he is in a state of sanctification, I mean that consciousness is the real and only evidence that we can have of being in this state.

Again, the objection that consciousness cannot decide in regard to the strength of our powers, and whether we really serve God with all our strength, seems to be based upon the false supposition that the law of God requires every power of body and mind to be excited at every moment in its full strength, and that too without any regard to the nature of the subject about which our powers for the time being are employed. On a former occasion I endeavored to show, and trust I did show, that perfect obedience to the law of God requires no such thing. Sanctification is consecration. Entire consecration, is obedience to the law of God; and all that the law requires is, that our whole being be consecrated to God; and the amount of strength to be expended in his service at any one moment of time, must depend upon the nature of the subject about which the powers are for the time being employed. And nothing is farther from the truth than that obedience to the law of God requires every power of body and mind to be constantly on the strain, and in the highest possible degree of excitement and activity. Such an interpretation of the law of God as this, would be utterly inconsistent with life and health, and would write MENE TEKEL upon the life and conduct of Jesus Christ himself; for his whole history shows that he was not in a state of constant excitement to the full extent of his powers.

This objection is based upon a misapprehension of that which constitutes entire or continued sanctification. It consists, as has been shown, in abiding consecration to God, and not as the objection assumes, in involuntary affections and feelings. When it is considered that entire sanctification consists in an abiding good will to God and to being in general, in living to

one end, what real impossibility can there be in knowing whether we are supremely devoted to this end, or supremely devoted to our own interest?

20. Again, it is objected that if this state were attained in this life, it would be the end of our probation. To this I reply, that probation since the fall of Adam, or those points on which we are in a state of probation or trial, are,

(1.) Whether we will repent and believe the gospel;

(2.) Whether we will persevere in holiness to the end of life.

Some suppose that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, sets aside the idea of being at all in a state of probation after conversion. They reason thus: If it is certain that the saints will persevere, then their probation is ended; because the question is already settled, not only that they are converted, but that they will persevere to the end, and the contingency in regard to the event, is indispensable to the idea of probation. To this I reply:

That a thing may be contingent with man that is not at all so with God. With God, there is not, and never was any contingency in the sense of uncertainty with regard to the final destiny of any being. But with men, almost all things are contingent. God knows with absolute certainty whether a man will be converted, and whether he will persevere. A man may know that he is converted, and may believe that by the grace of God he shall persevere. He may have an assurance of this in proportion to the strength of his faith. But the knowledge of this fact is not at all inconsistent with the idea of his continuance in a state of trial till the day of his death, inasmuch as his perseverance depends upon the exercise of his own voluntary agency; and also because his perseverance is the condition of his final salvation.

In the same way some say, that if we have attained a state of entire or permanent sanctification, we can no longer be in a state of probation. I answer, that perseverance in this depends upon the promises and grace of God, just as the final perseverance of the saints does. In neither case can we have any other assurance of our perseverance than that of faith in the promise and grace of God; nor any other knowledge that we shall continue in this state, than that which arises out of a belief in the testimony of God, that He will preserve us blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. If this be inconsistent with our probation, I see not why the doctrine of the saint's perseverance is not equally inconsistent with it. If any one is disposed to maintain that for us to have any judgment or belief grounded on the promises of God in regard to our final perseverance, is inconsistent with a state of probation, all I can say is, that his views of probation are very different from my own, and so far as I understand, from those of the Church of God.

Again: there is a very high and important sense in which every moral being will remain on probation to all eternity. While under the moral government of God, obedience must forever remain a condition of the favor of God. And the fact of continued obedience will forever depend on the faithfulness and grace of God; and the only knowledge we can ever have of this fact, either in heaven or on earth, must be founded upon the faithfulness and truth of God.

Again, if it were true, that entering upon a state of permanent sanctification in this life, were, in some sense, an end of our probation, that would be no objection to the doctrine; for there is a sense in which probation often ends long before the termination of this life. Where, for example, a person has committed the unpardonable sin, or where, from any cause, God has given sinners up to till up the measure of their iniquity, withdrawing forever his Holy Spirit from them, and sealing them over to eternal death; this, in a very important sense, is the end of their probation, and they are as sure of hell as if they were already there. So on the other hand, when a person has received, after that he believes, the sealing of the Spirit unto the day of redemption, as an earnest of his inheritance, he may regard and is bound to regard this as a solemn pledge on the part of God of his final perseverance and salvation, and as no longer leaving the final question of his destiny in doubt.

Now it should be remembered, that in both these cases the result depends upon the exercise of the agency of the creature. In the case of the sinner given up of God, it is certain that he will not repent, though his impenitence is voluntary and by no means a thing naturally necessary. So on the other hand, the perseverance of the saints is certain though not necessary. If in either case there should be a radical change of character, the result would differ accordingly.

21. Again, while it is admitted by some that entire sanctification in this life is attainable, yet it is denied that there is any

certainty that it will be attained by any one before death; for, it is said, that as all the promises of entire sanctification are conditioned upon faith. they therefore secure the entire sanctification of no one. To this I reply,

That all the promises of salvation in the Bible are conditioned upon faith and repentance. and therefore it does not follow on this principle, that any person ever will be saved. What does all this arguing prove? The fact is, that while the promises of both salvation and sanctification. are conditioned upon faith, yet the promises that God will convert and sanctify the elect, spirit, soul, and body, and preserve and save them, must be fulfilled and will be fulfilled by free grace drawing and securing the concurrence of free will. With respect to the salvation of sinners, it is promised that Christ shall have a seed to serve him, and the Bible abounds with promises to Christ that secure the salvation of great multitudes of sinners. So the promises that the Church as a body, at some period of her earthly history, shall be entirely sanctified, are, as it regards the Church, unconditional, in the sense that they will assuredly be accomplished. But, as I have already shown, as it respects individuals, the fulfillment of these promises must depend upon the exercise of faith. Both in respect to the salvation of sinners and the sanctification of Christians, God is abundantly pledged to bring about the salvation of the one and the sanctification of the other, to the extent of his promise to Christ.

22. It is also objected that the sanctification of the saints depends upon the Sovereignty of God. To this I reply that both the sanctification of the saints and the conversion of sinners is in some sense dependent upon the sovereign grace of God. But who but an antinomian would for this reason hesitate to urge it upon sinners to repent immediately and believe the gospel? Would any one think of objecting to the doctrine or the fact of repentance, that repentance and the conversion of sinners were dependent upon the sovereignty of God?

And yet, if the sovereignty of God can be justly urged as a bar to the doctrine of entire sanctification, it may, for ought I see, with equal propriety be urged as a bar to the doctrine and fact of repentance. We have no controversy with any one upon the subject of entire sanctification who will as fully and as firmly hold out the duty and the possibility and the practical attainability of entire sanctification as of repentance and salvation. Let them both be put, where the bible puts them, upon the same ground so far as the duty and the practicability of both are concerned.

Suppose any one should assert that it were irrational and dangerous for sinners to hope or expect to be converted, and sanctified, and saved, because all this depends upon the sovereignty of God and they do not know what God will do. Who would say this? But why not as well as to make the objection to sanctification which we are now considering?

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 70

SANCTIFICATION.

REMARKS.

1. THERE is an importance to be attached to the sanctification of the body, of which very few persons appear to be aware [.] Indeed unless the bodily appetites and powers be consecrated to the service of God--unless we learn to eat and drink, and sleep and wake, and labor, and rest, for the glory of God, permanent sanctification as a practical thing is out of the question.

It is plain, that very few persons are aware of the great influence which their bodies have over their minds, and of the indispensable necessity of bringing their bodies under, and keeping them in subjection.

Few people seem to keep the fact steadily in view, that unless their bodies be rightly managed, they will be so fierce and over-powering a source of temptation to the mind, as inevitably to lead it into sin. If they indulge themselves in a stimulating diet, and in the use of those condiments that irritate and rasp the nervous system, their bodies will be of course and of necessity the source of powerful and incessant temptation to evil tempers and vile affections. If persons were aware of the great influence which the body has over the mind, they would realize that they cannot be too careful to preserve the nervous system from the influence of every improper article of food or drink, and preserve that system as they would the apple of their eye, from every influence that could impair its functions.

No one who has opportunity to acquire information in regard to the laws of life and health, and the best means of sanctifying the whole spirit, soul, and body, can be guiltless if he neglects these means of knowledge. Every man is bound to make the structure and laws of both body and mind the subject of as thorough investigation as his circumstances will permit, to inform himself in regard to what are the true principles of perfect temperance, and in what way the most can be made of all his powers of body and mind for the glory of God.

2. From what has been said in these lectures, the reason why the church has not been entirely sanctified is very obvious. As a body the church has not believed that such a state was attainable until near the close of life. And this is a sufficient reason, and indeed the best of all reasons for her not having attained it.

3. From what has been said, it is easy to see that the true question in regard to entire sanctification in this life is, Is it attainable as a matter of fact? Some have thought the proper question to be, Are Christians entirely sanctified in this life? Now certainly this is not the question that needs to be discussed. Suppose it to be fully granted that they are not; this fact is sufficiently accounted for, by the consideration that they do not know or believe it to be attainable until the close of life. If they believed it to be attainable, it might no longer be true that they do not attain it. But if provision really is made for this attainment, it amounts to nothing, unless it be recognized and believed. The thing needed then is to bring the church to see and believe, that this is her high privilege and her duty. It is not enough, as has been shown, to say that it is attainable, simply on the ground of natural ability. This is as true of the devil, and the lost in hell, as of men in this world. But unless grace has put this attainment so within our reach, as that it may be aimed at with the reasonable prospect of success, there is, as a matter of fact, no more provision for our entire sanctification in this life than for the devil's. As has been said it seems to be trifling with mankind, merely to maintain the attainability of this state on the ground of natural ability only, and at the same time to tell them that they certainly never will exercise this ability unless disposed to do so by the grace of God, and furthermore that it is dangerous error for us to expect to receive grace from God to secure this

result; that we might by natural possibility make this attainment, but it is irrational and dangerous error to expect or hope to make it or hope to receive sufficient grace to secure it.

The real question is, Has grace brought this attainment so within our reach, that we may reasonably expect by aiming at it, to experience it in this life? It is admitted, that on the ground of natural ability both wicked men and devils have the power to be entirely holy. But it is also admitted, that their indisposition to use this power aright is so complete that as a matter of fact, they never will, unless influenced to do so by the grace of God. I insist, therefore, that the real question is, whether the provisions of the gospel are such, that, did the church fully understand and lay hold upon the proffered grace, she might attain this state? Are we as fully authorized to offer this grace to christians, as we are the grace of repentance and pardon to sinners? May we as consistently urge christians to lay hold on sanctifying grace sufficient to keep them from all sin, as to urge sinners to lay hold of Christ for justification? May we insist upon the one as really and as honestly as the other?

4. We see how irrelevant and absurd the objection is, that as a matter of fact the church has not attained this state, and therefore it is not attainable. Why, if they have not understood it to be attainable, it no more disproves its attainableness, than the fact that the heathen have not embraced the gospel proves that they will not when they know it. Within my memory it was thought to be dangerous to call sinners to repent and believe the gospel, and on the contrary they were told by Calvinists that they could not repent, that they must wait God's time; and it was regarded as dangerous error for a sinner to think that he could repent. But who does not know that the thorough inculcation of an opposite doctrine has brought scores of thousands to repentance? Now the same course needs to be pursued with christians. Instead of being told that it is dangerous to expect to be entirely sanctified in this life, they ought to be taught to believe at once, and take hold on the promises of perfect love and faith.

5. You see the necessity of fully preaching and insisting upon this doctrine, and of calling it by its true scriptural name. It is astonishing to see to what an extent there is a tendency among men to avoid the use of scriptural language, and to cleave to the language of such men as Edwards and other great and good divines. They object to the terms perfection and entire sanctification, and prefer to use the terms entire consecration, and other such terms as have been common in the church.

Now, I would by no means contend about the use of words; but still it does appear to me, to be of great importance, that we use scripture language, and insist upon men being "perfect as their Father in Heaven is perfect," and being "sanctified wholly, body, soul, and spirit." This appears to me to be the more important for this reason, that if we use the language to which the church has been accustomed upon this subject, she will, as she has done, misunderstand us, and will not get before her mind that which we really mean. That this is so is manifest from the fact that the great mass of the church will express alarm at the use of the terms perfection and entire sanctification, who will neither express or feel any such alarm if we speak of entire consecration. This demonstrates, that they do not, by any means, understand these terms as meaning the same thing. And although I understand them as meaning precisely the same thing; yet I find myself obliged to use the terms perfection and entire sanctification to possess their minds of my real meaning. This is Bible language. It is unobjectionable language. And inasmuch as the church understands entire consecration to mean something less than entire sanctification or christian perfection, it does seem to me of great importance, that ministers should use a phraseology which will call the attention of the church to the real doctrine of the Bible upon this subject. And I would submit the question with great humility to my loved brethren in the ministry, whether they are not aware, that christians have entirely too low an idea of what is implied in entire consecration, and whether it is not useful and best to adopt a phraseology in addressing them that shall call their attention to the real meaning of the words which they use?

6. Young converts have not been allowed so much as to indulge the thought that they could live even for a day wholly without sin. They have as a general thing no more been taught to expect to live even for a day without sin, than they have been taught to expect immediate translation, soul and body, to Heaven. Of course they have not known that there was any other way, than to go on in sin; and however shocking and distressing the necessity has appeared to them in the ardor of their first love, still they have looked upon it as unalterable fact, that to be in a great measure in bondage to sin is a thing of course while they live in this world. Now with such an orthodoxy as this, with the conviction in the church and ministry so ripe, settled, and universal, that the utmost that the grace of God can do for men in this world is to bring them to repentance and to leave them to live and die in a state of sinning and repenting, is it at all wonderful that the state of religion should be as it really has been?

In looking over the results of preaching the doctrine in question, to christians, I feel compelled to say, that so far as all observation can go, I have the same evidence, that it is truth, and as such is owned and blessed of God to the elevation of the holiness of christians, that I have, that those are truths which I have so often preached to sinners, and which have been so often blessed of God to their conversion This doctrine seems as naturally calculated to elevate the piety of christians, and as actually to result in the elevation of their piety under the blessing of God, as those truths that I have preached to sinners, were to their conversion.

7. Christ has been in a great measure lost sight of in some of his most important relations to mankind. He has been known and preached as a pardoning and justifying Savior; but as an actually indwelling and reigning Savior in the heart, he has been but little known. I was struck with a remark, a few years since, of a brother whom I have from that time greatly loved, who had been for a time in a desponding state of mind, borne down with a great sense of his own vileness, but seeing no way of escape. At an evening meeting the Lord so revealed himself to him as entirely to overcome the strength of his body, and his brethren were obliged to carry him home. The next time I saw him, he exclaimed to me with a pathos I shall never forget, "Brother Finney, the Church have buried the Savior." Now it is no doubt true, that the church have become awfully alienated from Christ--have in a great measure lost a knowledge of what he is and ought to be to her--and a great many of her members, I have good reason to know, in different parts of the country, are saying with deep and overpowering emotion, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

8. With all her orthodoxy, the Church has been for a long time much nearer to Unitarianism than she has imagined. This remark may shock some of my readers, and you may think it savors of censoriousness. But, beloved, I am sure it is said in no such spirit. These are "the words of truth and soberness." So little has been known of Christ, that, if I am not entirely mistaken, there are multitudes in the orthodox churches, who do not know Christ, and who in heart are Unitarians, while in theory they are orthodox. They have never known Christ in the sense of which I have spoken of him in these lectures.

I have been, for some years, deeply impressed with the fact, that so many professors of religion are coming to the ripe conviction, that they never knew Christ. There have been in this place almost continual developments of this fact, and I doubt whether there is a minister in the land who will present Christ as the gospel presents him, in all the fulness of his official relations to mankind, who will not be struck and agonized with developments that will assure him that the great mass of professors of religion do not know the Savior. It has been to my mind a painful and a serious question, what I ought to think of the spiritual state of those who know so little of the blessed Jesus. That none of them have been converted, I dare not say. And yet, that they have been converted, I am afraid to say. I would not for the world "quench the smoking flax or break the bruised reed," or say any thing to stumble or weaken the feeblest lamb of Christ; and yet my heart is sore pained, my soul is sick; my bowels of compassion yearn over the Church of the blessed God. O, the dear Church of Christ! What does she in her present state know of gospel rest, of that "great and perfect peace which they have whose minds are stayed on God?" The church in this place is composed, to a great extent, of professors of religion from different parts of the world who have come hither for educational purposes and from religious considerations. And as I said, I have sometimes been appalled at the disclosures which the Spirit of God has made of the real spiritual state of many who have come here and were considered by others before they came and by themselves as truly converted to God.

9. If I am not mistaken, there is an extensive feeling among Christians and ministers, that much that ought to be known and may be known of the Savior, is not. Many are beginning to find that the Savior is to them "as a root out of dry ground, having neither form nor comeliness:" that the gospel which they preach and hear is not to them "the power of God unto salvation" from sin; that it is not to them "glad tidings of great joy;" that it is not to them a peace-giving gospel; and many are feeling that if Christ has done for them, all that his grace is able to do in this life, the plan of salvation is sadly defective, that Christ is not after all a Savior suited to their necessities--that the religion which they have is not suited to the world in which they live--that it does not, can not make them free, but leaves them in a state of perpetual bondage. Their souls are agonized and tossed to and fro without a resting place. Multitudes also are beginning to see that there are many passages, both in the Old and New Testaments, which they do not understand; that the promises seem to mean much more than they have ever realized, and that the gospel and the plan of salvation as a whole, must be something very different from that which they have as yet apprehended. There are, if I mistake not, great multitudes all over the country, who are inquiring more earnestly than ever before, after a knowledge of that Jesus who is to save his people from their sins.

A fact was related in my hearing, some time since, that illustrates, in an affecting manner, the agonizing state of mind in which many Christians are, in regard to the present state of many of the ministers of Christ. I had the statement from the brother himself, who was the subject of his narrative. A sister in the church to which he preached became so sensible that he did not know Christ, as he ought to know him, that she was full of unutterable agony, and on one occasion, after he had been preaching, fell down at his feet with tears and strong beseechings that he would exercise faith in Christ. At another time, she was so impressed with a sense of his deficiency in this respect, as a minister, that she addressed him in the deepest anguish of her soul, crying out--"O, I shall die, I shall certainly die, unless you will receive Christ as a full Savior," and attempting to approach him, she sunk down helpless, overcome with agony and travail of soul, at his feet.

There is manifestly a great struggle in the minds of multitudes, that the Savior may be more fully revealed to the Church, that the present ministry especially may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable to his death.

10. If the doctrine of these lectures is true, you see the immense importance of preaching it clearly and fully in revivals of religion. When the hearts of converts are warm with their first love, then is the time to make them fully acquainted with their Savior, to hold him up in all his offices and relations, so as to break the power of every sin--to lead them to break off forever from all self-dependence and to receive Christ as a present, perfect, everlasting Savior, so far as this can possibly be done with their limited experience.

11. Unless this course be taken, their backsliding is inevitable. You might as well expect to roll back the waters of Niagara with your hand, as to stay the tide of their former habitudes of mind, surrounded as they are with temptation, without a deep, and thorough, and experimental acquaintance with the Savior. And if they are thrown upon their own watchfulness and resources, for strength against temptation, instead of being directed to the Savior, they are certain to become discouraged and fall into dismal bondage.

12. But before I conclude these remarks, I must not omit to notice the indispensable necessity of a willingness to do the will of God, in order rightly to understand this doctrine. If a man is unwilling to give up his sins, to deny himself all ungodliness and every worldly lust--if he is unwilling to be set apart wholly and forever to the service of the Lord, he will either reject this doctrine altogether, or only intellectually admit it, without receiving it into his heart. It is an eminently dangerous state of mind to assent to this or any other doctrine of the gospel, and not reduce it to practice.

13. Much evil has been done by those who have professedly embraced this doctrine in theory, and rejected it in practice. Their spirit and temper have been such as to lead those who saw them to infer, that the tendency of the doctrine itself is bad. And it is not to be doubted that some who have professed to have experienced the power of this doctrine in their hearts, have greatly disgraced religion by exhibiting any other spirit than that of an entirely sanctified one. But why in a christian land, should this be a stumbling block? When the heathen see persons from christian nations who professedly adopt the Christian system, exhibit on their shores and in their countries, the spirit which many of them do, they infer that this is the tendency of the Christian religion. To this our Missionaries reply that they are only nominal Christians, only speculative, not real believers. Should thousand of our church members go among them, they would have the same reason to complain, and might reply to the Missionaries, these are not only nominal believers, but profess to have experienced the Christian religion in their own hearts. Now what would the Missionaries reply? Why, to be sure, that they were professors of religion; but that they really did not know Christ; that they were deceiving themselves with a name to live, while in fact they were dead in trespasses and sins.

It has often been a matter of astonishment to me, that in a Christian land, it should be a stumbling block to any, that some, or if you please, a majority of those who profess to receive and to have experienced the truth of this doctrine, should exhibit an unchristian spirit. What if the same objection should be brought against the Christian religion; against any and every doctrine of the gospel, that the great majority, of all the professed believers and receivers of those doctrines were proud, worldly, selfish, and exhibited any thing but a right spirit? Now this objection might be made with truth to the professed Christian Church. But would the conclusiveness of such an objection be admitted in Christian lands? Who does not know the ready answer to all such objections as these, that the doctrines of Christianity do not sanction such conduct, and that it is not the real belief of them that begets any such spirit or conduct; that the Christian religion abhors all these objectionable things. And now suppose it should be replied to this, that a tree is known by its fruits, and that so great a majority of the professors of religion could not exhibit such a spirit, unless it were the tendency of Christianity itself to

beget it. Now who would not reply to this, that this state of mind and course of conduct of which they complain, is the natural state of man uninfluenced by the gospel of Christ; that in these instances, on account of unbelief, the gospel has failed to correct what was already wrong, and that it needed not the influence of any corrupt doctrine to produce that state of mind? It appears to me, that these objectors against this doctrine on account of the fact that some and perhaps many who have professed to receive it, have exhibited a wrong spirit, take it for granted that the doctrine produces this spirit, instead of considering that a wrong spirit is natural to men, and that the difficulty is that through unbelief the gospel has failed to correct what was before wrong. They reason as if they supposed the human heart needed something to beget within it a bad spirit, and as if they supposed that a belief in this doctrine had made men wicked, instead of recognizing the fact, that they were before wicked and that through unbelief, the gospel has failed to make them holy.

14. But let it not be understood, that I suppose or admit that the great mass who have professed to have received this doctrine into their hearts, have exhibited a bad spirit. I must say that it has been eminently otherwise so far as my own observation extends. And I am fully convinced, that if I have ever seen Christianity in the world, and the spirit of Christ, that it has been exhibited by those, as a general thing, who have received this doctrine into their hearts.

15. How amazingly important it is, that the ministry and the Church should come fully to a right understanding and embracing of this doctrine. O, it will be like life from the dead. The proclamation of it is now regarded by multitudes as "good tidings of great joy." From every quarter, we get the gladsome intelligence, that souls are entering into the deep rest and peace of the gospel, that they are awaking to a life of faith and love--and that instead of sinking down into Antinomianism, they are eminently more benevolent, active, holy, and useful than ever before--that they are eminently more prayerful, watchful, diligent, meek, sober-minded and heavenly in all their lives. This is the character of those, to a very great extent at least, with whom I have been acquainted, who have embraced this doctrine, and professed to have experienced its power. I say this for no other reason than to relieve the anxieties of those who have heard very strange reports, and whose honest fears have been awakened in regard to the tendency of this doctrine.

16. Much pains have been taken to demonstrate that our views of this subject are wrong. But in all the arguing to this end hitherto, there has been one grand defect. None of the opponents of this doctrine have yet showed us "a more excellent way and told us what is right." It is certainly impossible to ascertain what is wrong on any moral subject unless we have before us the standard of right. The mind must certainly be acquainted with the rule of right, before it can reasonably pronounce any thing wrong, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." It is therefore certainly absurd for the opponents of the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life to pronounce this doctrine wrong without being able to show us, what is right. To what purpose then, I pray, do they argue who insist upon this view of the subject as wrong while they do not so much as attempt to tell us what is right? It can not be pretended that the scriptures teach nothing upon this subject. And the question is, what do they teach? We therefore call upon the denouncers of this doctrine, (and we think the demand reasonable,) to inform us definitely, how holy Christians may be, and are expected to be in this life. And it should be distinctly understood, that until they bring forward the rule laid down in the scripture upon this subject, it is but arrogance to pronounce any thing wrong; just as if they should pronounce any thing to be sin without comparing it with the standard of right. Until they inform us what the scriptures do teach, we must beg leave to be excused from supposing ourselves obliged to believe that what is taught in these lectures is wrong or contrary to the language and spirit of inspiration. This is certainly a question that ought not to be thrown loosely by without being settled. The thing at which we aim is to establish a definite rule or to explain what we suppose to be the real and explicit teachings of the Bible upon this point. And we do think it absurd that the opponents of this view should attempt to convince us of error, without so much as attempting to show what the truth upon this subject is. As if we could easily enough decide what is contrary to right, without possessing any knowledge of right. We therefore beseech our brethren in discussing this subject to show us what is right. And if this is not the truth to show us a more excellent way and convince us that we wrong by showing us what is right. For we have no hope of ever seeing that we are wrong until we can see that some thing else than what is advocated in this discussion is right.

17. But before I close my remarks upon this subject I must not fail to state what I regard as the present duty of Christians: It is to hold their will in a state of consecration to God, and to lay hold on the promises for the blessing promised in such passages as 1st Thes. 5: 23,24: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it." This is present duty. Let them wait on the Lord in faith for that cleansing of the whole being which they need to confirm, strengthen, settle them. All they can do, and all that God requires them to do is to obey him from moment to

moment and to lay hold of him for the blessing of which we have been speaking, and to be assured that God will bring the answer for them in the best time and in the best manner. If you believe, the Anointing that abideth will surely be secured in due time.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 71

ELECTION.

In discussing this subject,

I. I SHALL REMIND YOU OF SOME POSITIONS THAT HAVE BEEN SETTLED RESPECTING THE NATURAL AND MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

II. WHAT THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION IS NOT.

III. WHAT IT IS.

IV. I SHALL PROVE THE DOCTRINE TO BE TRUE.

V. SHOW WHAT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE REASONS FOR ELECTION.

VI. WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN THE REASONS.

VII. WHEN THE ELECTION WAS MADE.

VIII. ELECTION DOES NOT RENDER MEANS OF THE SALVATION OF THE ELECT UNNECESSARY.

IX. ELECTION IS THE GREAT GROUND OF HOPE IN THE SUCCESS OF MEANS TO SAVE THE SOULS OF MEN.

X. ELECTION DOES NOT OPPOSE ANY OBSTACLE TO THE SALVATION OF THE NON-ELECT.

XI. THERE IS NO INJUSTICE IN ELECTION.

XII. THIS IS THE BEST THAT COULD BE DONE FOR THE INHABITANTS OF THIS WORLD.

XIII. HOW WE MAY ASCERTAIN OUR OWN ELECTION.

I. I shall remind you of some points that have been settled.

1. We have seen that eternity is a natural attribute of God in the sense that he grows no older. He was just as old before the world or the universe was made, as he is now, or as he will be at the day of judgment.

2. We have seen that omniscience is an attribute of God in the sense that he knows from a necessity of his infinite nature, all things that are objects of knowledge.

3. That he has necessarily and eternally possessed this knowledge, so that he never has and never can have any accession to his knowledge. Every possible thing that ever was, or will be, or can be an object of knowledge, has been necessarily and eternally known to God. If this were not true God would be neither infinite nor omniscient.

4. We have seen also that God exercises an universal providence, embracing all events that ever did or ever will occur in all worlds. Some of these events he causes or secures by his own agency, and others occur under his providence in the sense that he permits or suffers them to occur rather than interpose to prevent them. They may be truly said to occur under his providence because his plan of government in some sense embraces them all. He made provision to secure those that are good, and to overrule for good those that are evil and naturally of evil tendency, but which result incidentally from those that are good. They may be said to occur under Divine Providence also, because all events that do or ever will occur are and must be foreseen, results of God's own agency, or of the work of creation.

5. We have seen that infinite benevolence is a moral attribute, or rather that it is the sum of the moral attributes of God.

6. That God is both naturally and morally immutable; that in his natural attributes he is necessarily so, and in his moral attributes he is certainly so.

7. We have also seen that all who are converted, sanctified and saved, are converted, sanctified and saved by God's own agency; that is, God saves them by securing by his own agency their personal and individual holiness.

II. What the bible doctrine of election is not.

1. Not, as Huntington maintained, that all men are chosen to salvation through the atonement of Christ. This gentleman, who was a Congregational minister of New England, left a treatise for publication after his death, (which was accordingly published,) in which he maintained the usual orthodox creed, with the exception of extending the doctrine of election to the whole human race. He took the Old School view of the Atonement, that it was the literal payment of the debt of the elect; that Christ suffered what and as much as they deserved to suffer, and thus literally purchased their salvation. Assuming that such was the nature of the Atonement, he sets himself to inquire into the extent of the Atonement, or for whom it was made. Finding that Christ tasted death for every man, that he died for the world, he came to the conclusion that all were elected to salvation, and that all will therefore be saved. I have never seen the work of which I speak, but such is the account I have had of it from those who know as I suppose. But this is not the bible doctrine of election, as we shall see.

2. The bible doctrine of election is not that any are chosen to salvation in such a sense that they will or can be saved without repentance, faith and sanctification.

3. Nor is it that some are chosen to salvation in such a sense that they will be saved irrespective of their being regenerated and persevering in holiness to the end of life. The bible most plainly teaches that these are naturally indispensable conditions of salvation; and of course election can not dispense with them.

4. Nor is it that any are chosen to salvation for or on account of their own foreseen merits, or good works, 2 Tim. 1:9: "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." The foreseen fact that by the wisest governmental arrangement God could convert and sanctify and fit them for heaven, must have been a condition of their election to salvation, but could not have been the fundamental reason for it, as we shall see. God did not elect them to salvation for or on account of their foreseen good works, but upon condition of their foreseen repentance, faith and perseverance.

5. The bible doctrine of election is not that God elected some or any to salvation upon condition that they would repent, believe, and persevere in such a sense that there was any certainty in respect to either their conversion, perseverance or ultimate salvation.

These, as has just been said, are necessary conditions of salvation, and of course of election. But God, foreseeing that by the wisest use of means, he could secure their conversion and perseverance, chose them both to salvation, and also to

obedience through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. This brings me to show,

III. What the bible doctrine of election is.

It is, that certain individuals, making a certain number of mankind, are chosen by God to eternal salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. In other words they are chosen to salvation by means of sanctification. Their salvation is the end--their sanctification is a means. Both the end and the means are elected, appointed, chosen; the means as really as the end, and for the sake of the end. The election of some individuals and nations to certain privileges, and to do certain things is not the kind of election of which I treat at this time, but I am to consider the doctrine of election as it respects election unto salvation as just explained.

IV. I am to prove the doctrine, as I have stated it, to be true.

It is a plain doctrine of the bible:

Matt. 20:16. So the last shall be first, and the first last, for many be called, but few chosen.

24:22. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

John 13:18. I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen.

15:16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. 19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Acts 13:48. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Ro. 8:28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

9:10. And not only this, but when Rebecca had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, 11. (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,) 12. It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. 14. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

11:5. Even so at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 7. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

Eph. 1:4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. 11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

1 Thes. 1:4. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

5:9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thes. 2:13. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.

1 Pet. 1:2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Rev. 17:8. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

This doctrine is expressly asserted, or indirectly assumed and implied in every part of the bible, and in ways and instances too numerous to be quoted in these lectures. The above are only specimens of the scripture treatment of this subject.

9. It is as plainly the doctrine of reason as of revelation.

(1.) We have seen that God by his own agency secures the conversion, sanctification, and salvation of all that ever were or will be saved.

(2.) Whatever volitions or actions God puts forth to convert and save men he puts forth designedly to secure that end; that is, he does it in accordance with a previous design to do as and what he does.

(3.) He does it with the certain knowledge that he shall succeed in accomplishing the end at which he aims.

(4.) He does it for the purpose of securing this end.

(5.) This must be a universal truth, to wit, that whatever God does for the salvation of men, he does with the design to secure the salvation of all whoever will be saved, or of all whose salvation he foresees that he can secure, and with the certain knowledge that he shall secure their salvation. He also does much for the non-elect, in the sense of using such means with them as might and ought to secure their salvation. But as he knows he shall not succeed in securing their salvation on account of their voluntary and persevering wickedness, it can not be truly said that he uses these means with design to save them, but for other, and good, and wise reasons. Although he foresees that he can not secure their salvation because of their wilful and persevering unbelief, yet he sees it important under his government to manifest a readiness to save them and to use such means as he wisely can to save them, and such as will ultimately be seen to leave them wholly without excuse.

But with respect to those whom he foresees that he can and shall save, it must be true, since he is a good being, that he uses means for their salvation with the design to save them. And, since as we have seen, he is an omniscient being, he must use these means, not only with a design to save them, but also with the certainty that he shall save them. With respect to them he uses these means for the sake of this end; that is, for the sake of their salvation. But with respect to the non-elect, he does not use means for the sake of, or expecting to accomplish their salvation, but for other purposes, such as to leave them without excuse, &c.

(6.) But if God ever chooses to save any human beings, he must always have chosen to do so, or else he has changed. If he now has or ever will have any design about it, he must always have had this design; for he never has and never can have any new design. If he ever does or will elect any human being to salvation, he must always have chosen or elected him, or he has or will form some new purpose, which is inconsistent with his moral immutability.

(7.) If he will ever know who will be saved, he must always have known it, or he will obtain some new knowledge, which is contrary to his omniscience.

(8.) We are told by Christ that at the day of judgment he will say to the righteous, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" that is, from eternity.

Now has the judge at that time any new knowledge or design respecting those individuals? Certainly not!

(8.) Since God of necessity eternally knew all about the elect that will ever be true, he must of necessity have chosen something in respect to them, for it is naturally impossible that he should have had no choice about or in respect to them and their salvation.

(9.) Since God must of necessity from eternity have had some choice in respect to their salvation, it follows that he must have chosen that they should be saved or that he would not use such means as he foresaw would save them. If he chose not to use those means that he foresaw would save them, but afterwards saves them, he has changed, which is contrary to his immutability. If he always chose that they should be saved, this is the same thing for which we are contending.

(10.) It must, therefore, be true that all whom God will ever save were from eternity chosen to salvation by him, and since he saves them by means of sanctification, and does this designedly, it must be that this also was eternally designed or intended by him.

To deny the doctrine of election, involves a denial of the attributes of God.

(11.) It must also be true that God foreknew all that ever will be true of the non-elect, and must have eternally had some design respecting their final destiny. And also that he has from eternity had the same and the only design that he ever will have in respect to them. But this will come up for consideration in its place.

V. What could not have been the reasons for election.

It has been ascertained and established beyond controversy and dispute that God is infinitely benevolent and wise. It must follow that election is founded in some reason or reasons, and that these reasons are good and sufficient; reasons that rendered it obligatory upon God to choose just as he did, in election. Assuming, as we must, that God is wise and good, we are safe in affirming that he could have had none but benevolent reasons for his election of some to eternal life in preference to others. Hence we are bound to affirm that election was not based upon, nor does it imply partiality in God, in any bad sense of that term. Partiality in any being, consists in preferring one to another without any good or sufficient reason, or in opposition to good and sufficient reasons. It being established that God is infinitely wise and good, it follows that he can not be partial; that he can not have elected some to eternal salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, and passed others by, without some good and sufficient reason. That is, he can not have done it arbitrarily. The great objection that is felt and urged by opposers of this doctrine is, that it implies partiality in God and represents him as deciding the eternal destiny of moral agents by an arbitrary sovereignty. But this objection is a sheer and altogether unwarrantable assumption. It assumes that God could have had no good and sufficient reasons for the election. It has been settled that good is the end upon which God set his heart; that is, the highest well-being of himself and the universe of creatures. This end must be accomplished by means. If God is infinitely wise and good he must have chosen the best practicable means. But he has chosen the best means for that end, and there can be no partiality in that.

In support of the assumption that election implies partiality and the exercise of an arbitrary sovereignty in God, it has been affirmed that there might have been divers systems of means for securing the same end in every respect equal to each other; that is, that no reason existed for preferring any one, to many others--that, therefore, in choosing the present, God must have been partial or must have exercised an arbitrary sovereignty. To this I answer:

(1.) There is no ground for the assumption that there are or can be divers systems of means of precisely equal value in all respects in such a sense that there could have been no good reason for preferring one to the other.

(2.) I reply that if there were divers such systems, choosing the one, and not any other, would not imply preference. Choice of any one in such case must have proceeded upon the following ground, to wit, the value of the end demanded that one should be chosen. There being no difference between the various systems of means God chooses one without reference to the other and makes no choice respecting it, any more than if it did not exist. He must choose one--he has no reason for preference and consequently he can not prefer one to the other. His benevolence leads him to choose one because the end demands it. He therefore takes any one of many exact equals, indifferently without preferring it to any of the others. This implies no partiality in God in any bad sense of the term. For upon the supposition, he was shut up to the necessity of choosing one among many exact equals. If he is partial in choosing the one he does, he would have been equally so had he chosen any other. If this is partiality, it is a partiality arising out of the necessity of the case and can not

imply any thing objectionable in God.

That there is no preference in this case is plain because there is no ground or reason for preference whatever, according to the supposition. But there can be no choice or preference when there is absolutely no reason for the choice or preference. We have seen on a former occasion that the reason that determines choice, or the reason in view of which, or in obedience to which, or for the sake of which, the mind chooses, and the object or end chosen, are identical. When there is absolutely no reason for a choice, there is absolutely no object of choice, nothing to choose, and of course there can be no choice. Choice must have an object; that is, choice must terminate upon something. If choice exists, something must be chosen. If there are divers systems of means between which there is no possible ground of preference, there can absolutely be no such thing as preferring one to the other for this would be the same as to choose without any object of choice, or without choosing any thing which is a contradiction.

If it be said that there may be absolutely no difference in the systems of means so far as the accomplishment of the end is concerned, but that one may be preferred or preferable to another on some other account, I ask on what other account? According to the supposition, it is only valued or regarded as an object of choice at all, because of its relation to the end. God can absolutely choose it only as a means a condition or an end, for all choice must respect these. The inquiry now respects means. Now if as a means there is absolutely no difference between diverse systems in their relation to the end, and the value of the end is the sole reason for choosing them, it follows that to prefer one to another is a natural impossibility. But one must be chosen for the sake of the end, it matters not which: any one is taken indifferently so far as others are concerned. This is no partiality and no exercise of arbitrary sovereignty in any objectionable sense. But as I said, there is no ground for the assumption that there are various systems of means for accomplishing the great end of benevolence in all respects equal. There must have been a best way, a best system, and if God is infinitely wise and good, he must have chosen that for that reason; and this is as far as possible from partiality. Neither we nor any other creature may be able now to discover any good reasons for preferring the present to any other system, or for electing those who are elected in preference to any other. Nevertheless such reasons must have been apparent to the Divine mind, or no such election could have taken place.

2. Election was not an exercise of arbitrary sovereignty. By arbitrary sovereignty is intended the choosing and acting from mere will, without consulting moral obligation or the public good. God has been shown to be infinitely wise and good. It is, therefore, impossible that he should choose or act arbitrarily in any case whatever. He must have good and sufficient reasons for every choice and every act. Some seem to have represented God, in the purpose or act of election, as electing some and not others merely because he could or would, or in other words to exhibit his own sovereignty, without any other reason than because so he would have it. But it is impossible for God to act arbitrarily, or from any but a good and sufficient reason; that is, it is impossible for him to do so and continue to be benevolent. We have said that God has one and but one end in view; that is, he does and says and suffers all for one and the same reason, namely, to promote the highest good of being. He has but one ultimate end, and all his volitions are only efforts to secure that end. The highest well being of the universe including his own, is the end on which his supreme and ultimate choice terminates. All his volitions are designed to secure this end and in all things he is and must be directed by his infinite intelligence in respect not only to his ultimate end, but also in the choice and use of the means of accomplishing this end. It is impossible that this should not be true, if he is good. In election then he can not possibly have exercised any arbitrary sovereignty, but must have had the best of reasons for the election. His intelligence must have had good reasons for the choice of some and not of others to salvation, and have affirmed his obligation in view of those reasons to elect just as and whom he did. So good must the reasons have been, that, to have done otherwise would have been sin in him; that is, to have done otherwise would not have been wise and good.

3. Election was not based on a foreseen difference in the moral character of the elect and the non-elect previous to regeneration. The bible every where affirms that previous to regeneration all men have precisely the same character and possess one common heart or disposition, that this character is that of total moral depravity. God did not choose some to salvation because he foresaw that they would be less depraved and guilty previous to regeneration than the non-elect. Paul was one of the elect, yet he affirms himself to have been the chief of sinners. We often see (and this has been common in every age,) the most outwardly abandoned and profligate converted and saved.

The reason of election is not found in the fact that God foresaw that some would be more readily converted than others. We often see those who are converted hold out for a long time in great obstinacy and rebellion, while God brings to bear

upon them a great variety of means and influences, and takes much more apparent pains to convert them than he does to convert many others who are, as well as those who are not, converted. There is reason to believe that if the same means were used with those that are not converted that are used with those who are, many who are not converted would be. It may not be wise in God to use the same means for the non elect that he does for the elect, and if he should, they might, or might not be saved by them. God often uses means that to us seem more powerful to convert the non-elect than are used to convert many of the elect. The fact is he must have some reason aside from their characters for stubbornness or otherwise, for electing them to salvation.

VI. What must have been the reasons for election?

1. We have seen that God is infinitely wise and good. It follows that he must have had some reason, for to choose without a reason is impossible, as in that case there would be, as we have just seen, no object of choice.

2. From the wisdom and goodness of God, it follows that he must have chosen some good end, and must have had some plan, or system of means, to secure it. The end we know, is the good of being. The means we know from reason and revelation include election in the sense explained. It follows that the fundamental reason for election was the highest good of the universe. That is, the best system of means for securing the great end of benevolence included election. All choice must respect ends or conditions and means. God has, and can have but one ultimate end. All other choices or volitions must respect means. The choice or election of certain persons to eternal salvation &c., must have been founded in the reason that the great end of benevolence demanded it.

3. It is very easy to see that under a moral government, it might be impossible to so administer law as to secure the perpetual and universal obedience of all.

It is also easy to see that under a remedial system, or system of grace, it might be impossible to secure the repentance and salvation of all. God must have foreseen all possible and actual results. He must have foreseen how many and whom he could save by the wisest and best possible arrangement, all things considered. The perfect wisdom and benevolence of God being granted, it follows that we are bound to regard the present system of means as the best, all things considered, that he could adopt for the promotion of the great end of his government, or the great end of benevolence. The fact that the wisest and best system of government would secure the salvation of those who are elected, was doubtless a condition of their being elected. As God does every thing for the same ultimate reason, it follows that the intrinsic value of their salvation was his ultimate end, and that their salvation might and must have great relative value in promoting the highest good of the universe at large and the glory of God; so that the intrinsic value of their own salvation and the good to be promoted by it, must have been the reasons for election. If it be asked why some were elected instead of others, it is a sufficient answer to say that if we can see no good reasons, yet since it is so, we are bound to believe that there were good and sufficient reasons in the mind of God.

VII. When the election was made.

1. Not when the elect are converted. It has been said that God is omniscient and has known all things from eternity as really and as perfectly as he ever will. It has also been shown that God is unchangeable, and consequently has no new plans, designs, or choices. He must have had all the reasons he ever will have for election, from eternity, because he always has had all the knowledge of all events that he ever will have; consequently he always or from eternity chose in respect to all events just as he always will. There never can be any reason for change in the Divine mind, for he never will have any new views of any subject. The choice which constitutes election, then, must be an eternal choice.

2. Thus the scriptures represent it.

Eph. 1:4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

2:10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

2 Tim. 1:9. Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Rev. 17:8. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

This language means from eternity beyond question.

3. But the question will arise, was election in the order of nature subsequent to or did it precede the Divine foreknowledge. The answer to this plainly is that in the order of nature what could be wisely done must have been foreseen before it was determined what should be done. And what should be done must, in the order of nature, have preceded the knowledge of what would be done. So that in the order of nature, foreknowledge of what could be wisely done preceded election, and foreknowledge of what would be done followed or was subsequent to election. In other words, God must have known whom he could wisely save, prior, in the order of nature, to his determination to save them. But his knowing who would be saved must have been in the order of nature, subsequent to his election or determination to save them, and dependent upon that determination.

VIII. Election does not render means for the salvation of the elect unnecessary.

We have seen that the elect are chosen to salvation through the use of means; that is, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Since they are chosen to be saved by means they can not be saved in any other way or without them.

IX. Election lays a foundation for hope in the success of means.

1. No means are of any avail unless God gives them efficiency.
2. If God gives them efficiency in any case it is and will be in accordance with and in execution of his election.
3. It follows that election is the only ground of rational hope in the use of means to effect the salvation of any.

X. Election does not oppose any obstacle to the salvation of the non-elect.

1. God has taken care to bring salvation within the reach of all and to make it possible to all.
2. He sincerely offers to save all and does all to save all that he wisely can.
3. His saving some is no discouragement to others, but should rather encourage them to lay hold on eternal life.
4. The election of some is no bar to the salvation of others.
5. Those who are not elected may be saved if they will but comply with the conditions; which they are able to do.
6. God sincerely calls, and ministers may sincerely call on the non-elect to lay hold on salvation.
7. There is no injury or injustice done to the non-elect by the election of others. Has not God "a right to do what he will with his own?" If he offers salvation to all upon terms the most reasonable, and if he does all he wisely can for the salvation of all, shall some complain if God in doing for all what he wisely can secures the salvation of some and not of others?

XI. There is no injustice in election.

God was under obligation to no one--he might in perfect justice have sent all mankind to hell. The doctrine of election will damn no one; by treating the non-elect according to their deserts he does them no injustice; and surely his exercising grace in the salvation of the elect is no act of injustice to the non-elect, and especially will this appear to be true if we take into consideration the fact that the only reason why the non-elect will not be saved is because they pertinaciously refuse salvation. He offers mercy to all. The atonement is sufficient for all. All may come and are under an obligation to be saved. He strongly desires their salvation, and does all that he wisely can to save them. Why then should the doctrine of election be thought unjust?

XII. This is the best that could be done for the inhabitants of this world.

It is reasonable to infer from the infinite benevolence of God that the plan of his government includes the salvation of a greater number than could have been saved under any other mode of administration. This is as certain as that infinite benevolence must prefer a greater to a less good. To suppose that God would prefer a mode of administration that would accomplish the salvation of a less number than could be saved under some other mode, would manifestly be to accuse him of a want of benevolence. It is doubtless true that he could so vary the course of events as to save other individuals than he does; to convert more in one particular neighborhood, or family, or nation, or at one particular time. than he does.

Suppose there is a man in this town, who has so strongly intrenched himself in error, that there is but one man in all the land who is so acquainted with his refuge of lies as to be able to answer his objections and drive him from his hiding-places. Now it is possible that if this individual could be brought in contact with him, he might be converted; yet if he is employed in some distant part of the vineyard, his removal from that field of labor to this town, might not, upon the whole, be most for the glory of God's kingdom; and more might fail of salvation through his removal here, than would be converted here by such removal. God has in view the good of his whole kingdom. He works upon a vast and comprehensive scale. He has no partialities for individuals, but moves forward in the administration of his government with his eye upon the general good, designing to convert the greatest number, and produce the greatest amount of happiness within his kingdom.

XIII. How we may ascertain our own election.

Those of the elect that are already converted are known by their character and conduct. They have evidence of their election in their obedience to God. Those that are unconverted may settle the question each one for himself, whether he is elected or not, so as to have the most satisfactory evidence whether he is of that happy number. If you will now submit yourselves to God, you may have evidence that you are elected. But every hour you put off submission, increases the evidence that you are not elected.

I quote some remarks from a former discourse upon this subject.

INFERENCES AND REMARKS.

1. Foreknowledge and election are not inconsistent with free agency. 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.
2. You see why many persons are opposed to the doctrine of election, and try to explain it away; 1st, they misunderstand it, and 2d. they deduce unwarrantable inferences from it. They suppose it to mean, that the elect will be saved at all events, whatever their conduct may be; and again they infer from the doctrine that there is no possibility of the salvation of the non-elect. The doctrine as they understand it would be an encouragement to the elect to persevere in sin, knowing that their salvation was sure, and their inference would drive the non-elect to desperation; on the ground that for them to make efforts to be saved would be of no avail. But both the doctrine, as they understand it, and the inference are false. For election does not secure the salvation of the elect irrespective of their character and conduct; nor, as we have seen, does it throw any obstacle in the way of the salvation of the non-elect.
3. This view of the subject affords no ground for presumption on the one hand, nor for despair upon the other. No one can justly say, If I am to be saved, I shall be saved, do what I will. Nor can any one say, If I am to be damned, I shall be

damned, do what I will. But the question is left, so far as they are concerned, as a matter of entire contingency. Sinners, your salvation or damnation is as absolutely suspended upon your own choice, as if God neither knew nor designed any thing about it.

4. This doctrine lays no foundation for a controversy with God. But on the other hand, it does lay a broad foundation for gratitude, both on the part of the elect and non-elect. The elect certainly have great reason for thankfulness that they are thus distinguished. Oh, what a thought, to have your name written in the book of life, to be chosen of God an heir of eternal salvation, to be adopted into his family, to be destined to enjoy his presence, and to bathe your soul in the boundless ocean of his love forever and ever. Nor are the non-elect without obligations of thankfulness. You ought to be grateful if any of your brethren of the human family are saved. If all were lost, God would be just. And if any of this dying world receive the gift of eternal life, you ought to be grateful and render everlasting thanks to God.

5. The non-elect often enjoy as great or greater privileges than the elect. Many men have lived and died under the sound of the Gospel, have enjoyed all the means of salvation during a long life, and have at last died in their sins, while others have been converted upon their first hearing the Gospel of God. Nor is this difference owing to the fact that the elect always have more of the strivings of the Spirit than the non-elect. Many who die in their sins, appear to have had conviction for a great part of their lives; have often been deeply impressed with a strong sense of their sins and the value of their souls, but have strongly intrenched themselves under refuges of lies, have loved the world and hated God, and fought their way through all the obstacles that were thrown around them to hedge up their way to death, and have literally forced their passage to the gates of hell.

6. Why should the doctrine of election be made a stumbling-block in the way of sinners? In nothing else do they make the same use of the purposes and designs of God, as on the subject of religion; and yet, in every thing else, God's purposes and designs are as much settled, and have as absolute an influence. God has as certainly designed the day and circumstances of your death, as whether your soul shall be saved. It is not only expressly declared in the Bible, but is plainly the doctrine of reason. What would you say on coming home from meeting, if you should be called in to see a neighbor who was sick; and on inquiry, you should find he would neither eat nor drink, and that he was nearly starved to death. On expostulating with him upon his conduct, he should calmly reply, that he believed in the sovereignty of God, in foreknowledge, election, and decrees; that his days were numbered, that the time and circumstances of his death were settled, that he could not die before his time, and that all efforts he could make would not enable him to live a moment beyond his time. If you attempted to remonstrate against his inference, and such an abuse and perversion of the doctrine of decrees, he should accuse you of being a heretic, of not believing in divine sovereignty. Now, should you see a man on worldly subjects reasoning and acting thus, you would pronounce him crazy. Should farmers, mechanics, and merchants, reason in this way in regard to their worldly business, they would be considered fit subjects for bedlam.

7. How forcibly the perversion and abuse of this doctrine illustrates the madness of the human heart, and its utter opposition to the terms of salvation. The fact that God foreknows and has designs in regard to every other event, is not made an excuse for remaining idle, or worse than idle on these subjects. But where their duty to God is concerned, and here alone, they seize the Scriptures, and wrest them to their own destruction. How impressively does this fact bring out the demonstration that sinners want an excuse for disobeying God; that they desire an apology for living in sin; that they seek an occasion for making war upon their Maker.

8. I have said that the question is as much open for your decision, that you are left as perfectly to the exercise of your freedom, as if God neither knew nor designed anything in regard to your salvation. Suppose there was a great famine in New York city, and that John Jacob Astor alone had provisions in great abundance; that he was a benevolent and liberal-minded man, and willing to supply the whole city with provisions, free of expense; and suppose there existed a universal and most unreasonable prejudice against him, insomuch that when he advertised in the daily papers that his store-houses were open, that whosoever would, might come and receive provisions, without money and without price, they all, with one accord, began to make excuse, and obstinately refused to accept the offers. Now, suppose that he should employ all the cartmen to carry provisions around the city, and stop at every door. But still they strengthened each other's hands, and would rather die than be indebted to him for food. Many had said so much against him that they were utterly ashamed to feel and acknowledge their dependence upon him. Others were so much under their influence as to be unwilling to offend them; and so strong was the tide of public sentiment, that no one had the moral courage to break loose from the multitude and accept of life. Now, suppose that Mr. Astor knew beforehand the state of the public minds and that all the citizens

hated him, and had rather die than be indebted to him for life. Suppose he also knew, from the beginning, that there were certain arguments that he could bring to bear upon certain individuals, that would change their minds, and that he should proceed to press them with these considerations, until they had given up their opposition, had most thankfully accepted his provisions, and were saved from death. Suppose he used all the arguments and means that he wisely could, to persuade the rest, but then, notwithstanding all his benevolent efforts, they adhered to the resolution, and preferred death to submission to his proposals. Now, suppose he had perfect knowledge from the beginning, of the issue of this whole matter; would not the question of life and death be as entirely open for the decision of every individual as if he knew nothing about it?

9. Some may ask, Why does God use means with the non-elect, provided he is certain that they will not accept? I answer, because he designs that they shall be without excuse. He will demonstrate his willingness and their obstinacy, before the universe. He will rid his garments of their blood; and although he knows that their rejection of the offer will only enhance their guilt, and aggravate their deep damnation, still he will make the offer, as there is no other way in which to illustrate his infinite willingness to save them, and their perverse rejection of his grace.

Lastly, God requires you to give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. 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 all 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. The spirit and the bride say, Come; let him that heareth say, Come; let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely. The responsibility is yours. God does all that he wisely can, and challenges you to show what more he could do that he has not done. If you go to hell, you must go stained with your own blood. God is clear, angels are clear. To your own Master you stand or fall; mercy waits; the Spirit strives; Jesus stands at the door and knocks. Do not, then, pervert this doctrine, and make it an occasion of stumbling till you are in the depths of hell.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 72

REPROBATION.

In discussing this subject I shall endeavor to show,

- I. WHAT THE TRUE DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION IS NOT
- II. WHAT IT IS.
- III. THAT IT IS A DOCTRINE OF REASON.
- IV. THAT IT IS THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION.
- V. SHOW THE GROUND OR REASON OF THE DOCTRINE.
- VI. WHEN MEN ARE REPROBATED
- VII. REPROBATION IS JUST.
- VIII. REPROBATION IS BENEVOLENT.
- IX. REPROBATION IS THE BEST THING THAT CAN BE DONE, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.
- X. HOW IT MAY BE KNOWN WHO ARE REPROBATES.
- XI. ANSWER OBJECTIONS.

1. What the true doctrine of reprobation is not.

1. It is not that the ultimate end of God in the creation of any was their damnation. Neither reason nor revelation confirm, but both contradict the assumption that God has or can create any being for the purpose of rendering him miserable as an ultimate end. God is love, or he is benevolent, and can not therefore will the misery of any being as an ultimate end, or for its own sake. It is little less than blasphemy to represent God as creating any being for the sake of rendering him miserable as an ultimate end of his creation.

2. The doctrine is not that any will be lost or miserable to all eternity, do what they can to be saved, or in spite of themselves. It is not only a libel upon the character of God, hut is a gross misrepresentation of the true doctrine of reprobation to exhibit God as deciding to send sinners to hell in spite of themselves, or notwithstanding their endeavors to please God and obtain salvation.

3. Nor is this the true doctrine of reprobation to wit: that the purpose or decree of reprobation is the procuring cause of the destruction of reprobates. God may design to destroy a soul upon the foreseen condition of his wickedness; but his design

to destroy him upon this condition does not cause his wickedness, and consequently does not prove his destruction.

4. The doctrine is not that any decree or purpose of reprobation throws any obstacle in the way of the salvation of any one. It is not that God has purposed the damnation of any one in any such sense as that the decree opposes any obstacle to the salvation of any soul under heaven.

5. Nor is it that any one is sent to hell, except upon the condition of his own voluntary wickedness and ill-desert.

6. Nor is it that any one will be lost who can be induced, by all the means that can be wisely used, to accept salvation, or to repent and believe the gospel.

7. Nor is it, nor does it imply, that all the reprobates might not be saved if they will but comply with the indispensable conditions of salvation.

8. Nor does it imply that the decree of reprobation prevents or opposes any obstacle to their compliance with the necessary conditions of salvation.

9. Nor does it imply that any thing hinders or prevents the salvation of the reprobate, but their perverse perseverance in sin and rebellion against God, and their willful resistance of all the means that can be wisely used for their salvation.

II. What the true doctrine of reprobation is.

The term reprobation, both in the Old and New Testament, signifies refuse, cast away. Jer. 6:30: "Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them." The doctrine is that certain individuals of mankind are in the fixed purpose of God, cast away, rejected and finally lost.

III. This is a doctrine of reason.

By this is intended that since the Bible reveals the fact that some will be finally cast away and lost, reason affirms that if God casts them off, it must be in accordance with a fixed purpose on his part to do so, in view of their foreseen wickedness. If as a matter of fact they will be cast away and lost, it must be that God both knows and designs it. That is, he both knows that they will be cast away, and designs to cast them off in view of their foreseen wickedness. God can certainly never possess any new knowledge respecting their character and deserts, and as he is unchangeable he can never have any new purpose respecting them.

Again, it follows from the doctrine of election. If God designs to save the elect, and the elect only, as has been shown, not upon the ground but upon condition of their foreseen repentance and faith in Christ, it must be that he designs, or purposes to cast away the wicked, because of their foreseen wickedness. He purposes to do something with those whom he foresees will finally be impenitent. He certainly does not purpose to save them. What he will ever do with them he now knows that he shall do with them. What he will intend to do with them he now intends to do with them, or he were not unchangeable. But we have seen that immutability or unchangeableness is an attribute of God. Therefore the present reprobation of those who will be finally cast away or lost, is a doctrine of reason.

The doctrine of reprobation is not the election of a part of mankind to damnation, in the same sense that the elect unto salvation are elected to be saved. The latter are chosen or elected, not only to salvation, but to holiness. Election with those who are saved extends not only to the end, salvation, but also to the condition or means; to wit, the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth. This has been shown. God has not only chosen them to salvation, but to be conformed to the image of his Son. Accordingly, he uses means with them with the design to sanctify and save them.

But he has not elected the reprobate to wickedness, and does not use means to make them wicked with the ultimate design to destroy them. He knows indeed that his creating them, together with his providential dispensations, will be the occasion, not the cause, of their sin and consequent destruction.

But their sin and consequent destruction are not the ultimate end God has in view in their creation, and in that train of providences that thus result. His ultimate end must in all cases be benevolent or must be the promotion of good. Their sin and damnation are only an incidental result, and not a thing intended as an end, or for its own sake. God can have no pleasure in either their sin or consequent misery for its own sake, but on the contrary he must regard both as in themselves evils of enormous magnitude. He does not, and can not, therefore, elect the reprobate to sin and damnation, in the same sense in which he elects the saints to holiness and salvation. The elect into salvation he chooses to this end, from regard to, or delight in the end. But the reprobate he chooses to destruction, not for the sake of their destruction as an end, or from delight in it as an end; but he has determined to destroy them for the public good, upon condition of their foreseen sinfulness. He does not use means to make them sinful or with this design, but his providence is directed to another end, which end is good; and the destruction of the reprobate, is, as has been said, only an incidental and an unavoidable result. That is, God can not wisely prevent this result.

IV. This is the doctrine of revelation.

That this view of the subject is sustained by divine revelation, will appear from a consideration of the following passages:

Ex. 9:16. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

Prov. 16:5. Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

Mark 4:11. And he said unto them, unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables. 12. That seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Rom. 9:17. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 22. What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; 23. And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory; 24. Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

2 Cor. 13:5. Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves; know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates.

2 Peter 2:12. But these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.

Ezk. 18:23. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways, and live? 32. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

33:11. Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

2 Peter 3:9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

These passages when duly considered are seen to teach,

1. That some men are reprobates in the sense that God does not design to save but to destroy them, and,
2. That he does not delight in their destruction for its own sake, but would prefer their salvation, if under the

circumstances in which his wisdom has placed them, they could be induced to obey him;

3. But that he regards their destruction as a less evil to the universe than would be such a change in the administration and arrangements of his government as would secure their salvation. Therefore, in view of their foreseen wickedness and perseverance in rebellion under circumstances the most favorable to their virtue and salvation, in which he can wisely place them, he is resolved upon their destruction, and has already in purpose cast them off forever.

V. Why sinners are reprobated or rejected.

This has been already substantially answered. But to avoid misapprehension upon a subject so open to cavil, I repeat,

I. That the reprobation and destruction of the sinner is not an end, in the sense that God delights in misery and destroys sinners to gratify a thirst for destruction. Since God is benevolent, it is impossible that this should be.

2. It is not because of any partiality in God, or because he loves the elect and hates the reprobate in any sense implying partiality. His benevolence is disinterested and can not of course be partial.

3. It is not from any want of interest in and desire to save them on the part of God. This he often affirms and abundantly attests by his dealings with them, and the provisions he has made for their salvation.

4. But the reprobates are reprobated for their foreseen iniquities:

Ro. 1:28. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.

2:6. Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7. To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life; 8. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, 9. Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: 10. But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: 11. For there is no respect of persons with God.

Ezek. 18:4. Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. 19. Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. 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: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

2 Cor. 5:10. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Gal. 6:7. Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Eph. 6:8. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

Col. 3:24. Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Rev. 22:12. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Jet. 6:30. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.

These passages show the teachings of inspiration on this subject. Be it remembered, then, that the reason why any are reprobated, is because they are unwilling to be saved; that is, they are unwilling to be saved on the terms upon which

alone God can consistently save them. Ask sinners whether they are willing to be saved, and they all say, yes; and with perfect sincerity they may say this, if they can be saved upon their own terms. But when you propose to them the terms of salvation upon which the gospel proposes to save them; when they are required to repent and believe the gospel, to forsake their sins, and give themselves up to the service of God, they will with one consent begin to make excuse. Now, to accept these terms, is heartily and practically to consent to them. For them to say that they are willing to accept salvation, while they actually do not accept it, is to utter an infamous falsehood. To be willing is to accept it; and the fact that they do not heartily consent to, and embrace the terms of salvation, is demonstration absolute, that they are unwilling. Yes, sinners, the only terms on which you can possibly be saved, you reject. Is it not then an insult to God for you to pretend that you are willing? The only true reason that any of you are not Christians, is that you are unwilling; you are not made unwilling by any act of God; because you are a reprobate; but if you are a reprobate, it is because you are unwilling.

But do any of you object and say, why does not God make us willing? Is it not because he has reprobated us, that he does not change our hearts and make us willing? No, sinner, it is not because he has reprobated you; but because you are so obstinate that he cannot, wisely, and in consistency with the public good, take such measures as will convert you. Here you are waiting for God to make you willing to go to heaven, and all the while you are diligently using the means to get to hell--yes, exerting yourself with greater diligence to get to hell, than it would cost to insure your salvation, if applied with equal zeal in the service of your God. You tempt God, and then turn round and ask him why he does not make you willing? Now, sinner, let me ask you, do you think you are a reprobate? If so, what do you think the reason is that has led the infinitely benevolent God to reprobate you? There must be some reason; what do you suppose it is? Did you ever seriously ask yourself, what is the reason that a wise and infinitely benevolent God has never made me willing to accept salvation? It must be for one of the following reasons: either,

- (1.) He is a malevolent being, and desires your damnation for its own sake; or,
- (2.) He cannot make you willing if he would; or,
- (3.) You behave in such a manner that, to his infinitely benevolent mind it appears unwise to take such a course as would bring you to repentance.

Now, which of these do you think it is? You will not probably take the ground that he is malevolent, and desires your damnation because he delights in misery; nor will you, I suppose, take the ground that he could not convert you if he would.

The other, then, must be the reason, to wit: that your heart, and conduct, and stubbornness, are so abominable in his sight, that, every thing considered, he sees that to use such further means with you as to secure your conversion, would, on the whole, do more hurt than good to his kingdom. I have not time at present to agitate the question whether you, as a moral agent, could not resist any possible amount of moral influence that could be brought to bear upon you, consistently with your moral freedom.

Do you ask how I know that the reason why God does not make you willing is, that he sees that it would be unwise in him to do so? I answer, that it is an irresistible inference, from these two facts, that he is infinitely benevolent, and that he does not actually make you willing. I do not believe that God would neglect any thing that he saw to be wise and benevolent, in the great matter of man's salvation. Who can believe that he can give his only-begotten and well-beloved Son to die for sinners, and then neglect any other benevolent means for their salvation? No, sinner, if you are a reprobate, it is because God foresaw that you would do just as you are doing; that you would be so wicked as to defeat all the efforts that he could wisely make for your salvation. What a variety of means he has used with you. At one time he has thrown you into the furnace of affliction; and when this has not softened you, he has turned round and loaded you with benefits. He has sent you his word, he has striven by his Spirit, he has allured you by the cross; he has tried to melt you by the groanings of Calvary; and tried to drive you back from the way to death by rolling in your ears the thunders of damnation. At one time clouds and darkness have been round about you; the heavens have thundered over your head divine vengeance has hung out, all around your horizon the portentous clouds of coming wrath. At another time mercy has smiled upon you from above like the noon-day sun, breaking through an ocean of storms. He urges every motive; he lays heaven, earth and hell, under perpetual contributions for considerations to move your stony heart. But you deafen your ears, and close your eyes, and harden your heart, and say "Cause the holy one of Israel to cease from before us." And

what is the inference from all this? How must all this end? "Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord has rejected them."

VI. When sinners are reprobated.

1. In respect to the act of casting them off, they are cast away only when, and not until the cup of their iniquity is full.
2. In respect to the purpose or decree of reprobation, they are in the purpose of God reprobated or rejected from eternity. This follows irresistibly from the omniscience and immutability of God. He has certainly and necessarily had from eternity all the knowledge he ever can or will have of the character of all men, and must have designed from all eternity all things respecting them which he ever will design. This follows from his unchangeableness. If he ever does cast off sinners, he must do it designedly or undesignedly. He can not do it without any design. He must therefore do it designedly. But if he does it designedly, it must be either that he eternally entertained this design, or that he has changed. But change of purpose or design is inconsistent with the moral immutability of God. Therefore the purpose of reprobation is eternal; or the reprobates were in the fixed purpose of God cast off and rejected from eternity.

VII. Reprobation is just.

Is it not just in God to let men have their own choice, especially when the highest possible motives are held out to them as inducements to choose eternal life. What! is it not just to reprobate men when they obstinately refuse salvation---when every thing has been done that is consistent with infinite wisdom and benevolence to save them? Shall not men be willing to be either saved or lost? What shall God do with you? You are unwilling to be saved; why then should you object to being damned? If reprobation under these circumstances is not just, I challenge you, sinner, to tell what is just.

VIII. Reprobation is benevolent.

It was benevolent in God to create men, though he foresaw that they would sin and become reprobate. If he foresaw that upon the whole he could secure such an amount of virtue and happiness by means of moral government, as to more than counterbalance the sin and misery of those who would be lost, then certainly it was a dictate of benevolence to create them. The question was, whether moral beings should be created, and moral government established, when it was foreseen that a great evil would be the incidental consequence. Whether this would be benevolent or not, must turn upon the question whether a good might be secured that would more than counterbalance the evil. If the virtue and happiness that could be secured by the administration of moral government, would greatly outmeasure the incidental evils arising out of a defection of a part of the subjects of this government, it is manifest that a truly benevolent mind would choose to establish the government, the attendant evils to the contrary notwithstanding. Now, if those who are lost deserve their misery, and bring it upon themselves, by their own choice, when they might have been saved, then certainly in their damnation there can be nothing inconsistent with justice or benevolence. God must have a moral government, or there can be no such thing as holiness in the created universe. For holiness in a creature is nothing else than a voluntary conformity to the government of God.

Doubtless God views the loss of the soul as a great evil, and he always will look upon it as such, and would gladly avoid the loss of any soul, if it were consistent with the wisest administration of his government. How slanderous, injurious, and offensive to God it must be, then, to say that he created sinners on purpose to damn them. He pours forth all the tender yearnings of a father over those whom he is obliged to destroy--"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? my heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." And now, sinner, can you sit here and find it in your heart to accuse the blessed God of a want of benevolence. "O ye serpents! ye generation of vipers! how can you escape the damnation of hell!" .

IX. Reprobation is the best thing that can be done, all things considered.

Since the penalty of the law, although infinite, under the wisest possible administration of moral government, could not secure universal obedience; and since multitudes of sinners will not be reclaimed and saved by the Gospel, one of three things must be done; either moral government must be given up; or the wicked must be annihilated, or they must be reprobated and sent to hell. Now, that moral government should be given up, will not be pretended; annihilation would

not be just, inasmuch as it would not be visiting sin with what it justly deserves. Now, as sinners really deserve eternal death, and as their punishment may be of real value to the universe, in creating a respect for the authority of God, and thus strengthening his government, it is plain that their reprobation and damnation is for the general good, and making the best use of the wicked that can be made.

X. How it may be known who are reprobates.

It may be difficult for us to ascertain with certainty in this world, who are reprobates; but there are so many marks of reprobation given in the Bible, that by a sober and judicious investigation, we may form a pretty correct opinion whether we or those around us are reprobates or not.

1. One evidence of reprobation, is a long course of prosperity in sin. The Psalmist lays it down as such in the 92d Ps, v 7; "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed forever." God often gives the wicked their portion in this world, and lets them prosper and wax fat like a stalled ox, and then brings them forth to the slaughter. "The wicked are reserved unto the day of wrath." When, therefore, you see an individual for a long time prospering in his sins, there is great reason to fear that man is a reprobate.

2. Habitual neglect of the means of grace is a mark of reprobation. If men are to be saved at all, it is through the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; and it will probably be found to be true, that not one in ten thousand is saved of those who habitually absent themselves from places where God presents his claims. Sometimes, I know, a tract, or the conversation or prayer of some friend, may awaken an individual and lead him to the house of God; but as a general fact, if a man stays away from the means of grace, and neglects his Bible, it is a fearful sign of reprobacy, and that he will die in his sins. He is voluntary in it, and he does not neglect the means of grace because he is reprobated, but was reprobated because God foresaw that he would take this course. Suppose a pestilence were prevailing, that was certain to prove fatal in every instance where the appropriate remedy was not applied. Now, if you wish to know whose days were numbered and finished, and who among the sick were certain to die with the disease, if you found any among them neglecting and despising the only appropriate remedy, you would know that they were the persons.

All this was known to God as certainly beforehand as afterward. Now, if you wish to know who are reprobates in this place, or in any town or village, look abroad upon the multitude of Sabbath breakers, swearers, drinkers, and whoremongers; upon the young men that "assemble in troops at the harlot's house;" or the boys and young men that you may see assembled on the Sabbath before grog shops, or at the corners of the streets, with their segars, their bloated cheeks, and swollen, blood-shot eyes. Look through the length and breadth of the land, and see the thousands of young men who are utterly neglecting and despising eternal salvation. O horrible! poor, dying young men! not one in a thousand of them is likely to be saved! perhaps some of them came from a family of prayer, where they used to kneel morning and evening around the domestic altar. And now, where are they? and where are they going? They are already within the sweep of that mighty whirlpool, whose circling waters are drawing them nearer and nearer the roaring vortex. They dance, and trifle, and sport themselves. They heed not the voice that cries from heaven, nor the wail that comes up from hell, but nearer and nearer, with accelerated motion, they circle round and round till they are swallowed up and lost in the abyss of damnation.

3. Where persons are entirely destitute of the strivings of the Spirit. I speak not of those who never heard the Gospel; but in gospel lands it is doubtful whether any, except they are given up of God, live without more or less of the strivings of the Holy Spirit. Where, therefore, it is found that his strivings have entirely ceased with any mind, that soul has solemn and alarming evidence that it is given up of God. God says, "Yea, also, wo unto them when I depart from them."

4. Where persons have passed through a revival, and are not converted, it affords evidence that they are reprobates; I mean here, not conclusive, but presumptive evidence; and this presumption grows stronger and stronger every time an individual passes such a season without conversion. It is common for persons, in seasons of revival, to have more or less conviction, but to grieve away the Spirit. Some such persons are perhaps here, and perhaps dreaming away one more offer of eternal salvation. If you have once resisted the Spirit until he is quenched, I have but little hope that any thing I can say will do you any good. The great probability is that you will be lost.

5. Those who have grown old in sin, are probably reprobates. It is a solemn and alarming fact, that a vast majority of

those who give evidence of piety, are converted under twenty-five years of age. Look at the history of revivals, and see, even in those that have had the greatest power, how few aged persons are converted. The men who are set upon the attainment of some worldly object, and determined to secure that before they will attend to religion, and yield to the claims of their Maker, expecting afterwards to be converted, are almost always disappointed. Such a cold calculation is odious in the sight of God. What! take advantage of his forbearance, and say, that because he is merciful you will venture to continue in sin, till you have secured your worldly objects, and worn yourself out in the service of the devil, and then turn your Maker off with the jaded remnant of your abused mortality! You need not expect God to set his seal of approbation upon such a calculation as this, and suffer you at last to triumph, and say that you had served the devil as long as you pleased, and got to heaven at last.

You see such a man passing on from twenty years old and upwards, and the probabilities of his conversion fearfully diminish every year. Sinner, are you forty years old? Now look over the list of conversions in the last revival; how few among them are of your age? Perhaps some of you are fifty or sixty! how seldom can you find one of your age converted. There is only here and there one; they are few and far between, like beacons on distant mountain tops, scattered sparsely along, just to keep old sinners from absolute despair. Aged sinner, there are more than fifty chances to one that you are a reprobate.

6. Absence of chastisements is a sign of reprobation. God says, in the epistle to the Hebrews, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth; if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not; but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

7. "When men are chastened and not reformed by it, it is a mark of reprobation. A poet has said, "When pain can't bless, heaven quits us in despair." God says of such, "Why should ye be stricken any more; ye will revolt more and more." When your afflictions are unsanctified, when you harden yourselves under his stripes, why should he not leave you to fill up the measure of your iniquity?

8. Embracing damnable heresies, is another mark of reprobation.

Where persons seem to be given up to believe a lie, there is solemn reason for fearing that they are among that number upon whom God sends strong delusions, that they may believe a lie, and be damned, because they obey not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.

Where you see persons giving themselves up to such delusions, the more certainly they believe them, the greater reason there is for believing that they are reprobates. The truth is so plain, that with the Bible in your hands, it is next to impossible to believe a fundamental heresy without being given up to the judicial curse of God. It is so hard to believe a lie, with the truth of the Bible before you, that the devil can not do it. If, therefore, you reject your Bible, and embrace a fundamental falsehood, you are more stupid and benighted than the devil is. When a man professes to believe a lie, almost the only hope of his salvation that remains, is, that he does not cordially believe it. Sinner, beware how you trifle with God's truth. How often have individuals begun to argue in favor of heresy, for the sake of argument, and because they loved debate, until they have finally come to believe their own lie, and are lost forever.

XI. Objections.

1. To the idea that God rejected the reprobate for their foreseen wickedness, it is replied that Prov. 16:4: "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil," teaches another doctrine; that this passage teaches that God made the reprobates for the day of evil, or for the purpose of destroying them.

To this I reply, that if he did create them to destroy them, or with a design when he created them to destroy them, it does not follow that their destruction was an ultimate end, or a thing in which he delighted for its own sake. It must be true, as has been said, that he designed from eternity to destroy them in view, and in consequence of their foreseen wickedness, and of course, he designed their destruction when he created them. In one sense then, it was true, that he created them for the day of evil, that is, in the sense that he knew how they would behave, and designed as a consequence to destroy them

when, and before, he created them. But this is not the same as his creating them for the sake of their destruction as an ultimate end. He had another and a higher ultimate end which end was a benevolent one. He says, "I have created all things for myself, even the wicked for the day of evil;" that is, he had some great and good end to accomplish by them, and by their destruction. He foresaw that he could use them for some good purpose notwithstanding their foreseen wickedness; and even that he could overrule their sin and destruction to manifest his justice, and thus show forth his glory, and thereby strengthen his government. He must have foreseen that the good that might thus, from his overruling providence, result to himself and to the universe, would more than compensate for the evil of their rebellion, and destruction; and therefore, and upon this condition, he created them knowing that he should destroy, and intending to destroy them. That destruction was not the ultimate end of their creation must follow from such scriptures as the following:

Ezek. 33:11. Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

18:23. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

2 Peter 3:9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1 John 4:8. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love. 16. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Heb. 2:9. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

2. Another objection to the doctrine of this lecture is founded on Rom. 9:20--23: "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God willing to shew his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory."

From this passage it has been inferred that God creates the character and disposes of the destinies of both saints and sinners with as absolute and as irresistible a sovereignty as that exercised by the potter over his clay; that he creates the elect for salvation, and the reprobate for damnation, and forms the character of both so as to fit them for their respective destinies with an absolutely irresistible and efficient sovereignty; that his ultimate end was in both cases his own glory, and that the value of the end justifies the use of the means that is, of such means. To this I reply,

(1.) That it is absurd and nonsensical, as we have abundantly seen, to talk of creating moral character, either good or bad, by an irresistible efficient sovereignty. This is naturally impossible, as it implies a contradiction. Moral character must be the result of proper, voluntary action, and the moral character of the vessels of wrath or of mercy neither is nor can be formed by any irresistible influence whatever.

(2.) It is not said nor implied in the passage under consideration that the character of the vessels of wrath was created, or that God had any such agency in procuring their character as he has in forming the character of the vessels of mercy. Of the vessels of wrath it is only said they are "fitted to destruction," that is, that their characters are adapted for hell; while of the vessels of mercy it is said "which he had afore prepared unto glory." The vessels of wrath are fitted or had fitted themselves to destruction under the light and influence, that should have made them holy. The vessels of mercy God had by the special grace and influence of the holy Spirit, engaging and directing their voluntary agency, afore prepared for glory.

(3.) But the Lump spoken of in the text contemplates not the original creation of man, nor the forming or creating in them of a wicked character. But it manifestly contemplates them as already existing as the potter's clay exists; and not only as existing but also as being sinners. God may reasonably proceed to form out of this lump vessels of wrath or of mercy, as

seems wise and good unto him. He may appoint one portion to honor and another to dishonor, as is seen by him to be demanded by the highest good.

(4.) The passage under consideration can not in any event be pressed into the service of those who would insist that the destruction of the reprobate is chosen for its own sake, and therefore implies malevolence in God. Hear what it says, "What if God, willing to show his wrath and make his power known endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory." Here it appears that he designed to show and make known his attributes. This can not have been an ultimate, but must have been a proximate end. The ultimate end must have been the highest glory of himself and the highest good of the universe as a whole. If God willed thus to make known his holiness and his mercy for the purpose of securing the highest good of the universe, who has a right to say what doest thou? Or why doest thou thus?

3. Another objection is, if God knew that they would be reprobate or lost, why did he create them? If he knew that such would be the result and still created them, it follows that he created them to destroy them. I reply,

This objection has been already answered, but for the sake of perspicuity I choose here to answer it again.

From the admitted fact that God knew when he created them just what their destiny would be, it does not follow that their destruction was the end for which he created them. He created them, not for their sin and destruction as an ultimate end, but for another and a good end, notwithstanding his foreknowledge of their sin and ultimate ruin.

4. It is further objected that if God designed to make known his attributes, in the salvation of the vessels of mercy and in the destruction of the vessels of wrath, he must have designed their characters, as well as their end, inasmuch as their characters are indispensable conditions of this result.

I reply that it is true that the characters of both the vessels of wrath and of mercy must have been in some sense purposed or designed by God. But it does not follow that he designed them both in the same sense. The character of the righteous he designed to beget or induce by his own agency; the character of the wicked he designed to suffer him to form for himself. He doubtless designed to suffer the one rather than to interfere in such manner and form as would prevent sin, seeing as he did, that hateful as it was in itself; it could be overruled be good. The other he designed to produce or rather induce, both on account of the pleasure he has in holiness, and also for the sake of its bearings on the subject of it, and upon the universe.

5. To the doctrine of this lecture it is further objected that if one is a reprobate it is of no use for him to try to be saved. If God knows what he will be in character, and designs his destruction it is impossible that it should be otherwise than as God knows and designs, and therefore one may as well give up in despair, first as last.

(1.) To such an objector I would say, you do not know that you are a reprobate, and therefore you need not despair.

(2.) God designs to cast you off only because he foresees that you will not repent and believe the gospel; or in other words, for your voluntary wickedness. He foreknows that you will be wicked simply because you will be, and not because his foreknowledge makes you so. Neither his foreknowledge respecting your character. nor his design to cast you off in consequence of your character, has any agency in making you wicked. You are therefore perfectly free to obey and be saved, and the fact that you will not, is no reason why you should not.

(3.) You might just as reasonably make the same objection to every thing that takes place in the universe as to this. Every thing that ever did, or will, or can occur, is as infallibly known to God as the fact of your wickedness and destruction is.

He also has a fixed and eternal design about every thing that ever did or will occur. He knows how long you will live, where you will live, and when and where you will die. His purposes respecting these and all other events are fixed, eternal, and unchangeable. Why then do you not live without food and say, I can not make one hair black or white; I can not die before my time, nor can I prolong my days beyond the appointed time, do what I will; therefore I will take no care of my health?

Why not also apply this objection to every thing and settle down in despair of ever doing or being any thing but what an irresistible fate makes you? The fact is that the true doctrine of neither election nor reprobation affords the least countenance to such a conclusion. The foreknowledge and designs of God respecting our conduct or our destiny do not in the least degree interfere with our free agency. We, in every case, act just as freely as if God neither knew nor designed any thing about our conduct. Suppose the farmer should make the same objection to sowing his seed and to doing any thing to secure a crop; what would be thought of him? And yet he might with as much reason as he can plead the foreknowledge and designs of God as an excuse for doing nothing to secure his salvation. God as really knows whether you will sow and whether you will have a crop now and has from eternity as he ever will. He has either designed that you shall, or that you shall not have a crop this year, from all eternity; and it will infallibly be just as he has foreseen and designed. Yet you are really just as free to raise a crop or to neglect to do so as if he neither knew nor designed any thing about it.

The man who will stumble either at the doctrine of election or reprobation, as defined and maintained in these lectures, should, to be consistent, stumble at every thing that takes place and never try to accomplish any thing whatever; because the designs and the foreknowledge of God extend equally to every thing; and unless he has expressly revealed how it will be, we are left in the dark in respect to any event and are left to use means to accomplish what we desire or to prevent what we dread, as if God knew and designed nothing about it.

6. But it is objected that this is a discouraging doctrine and liable to be a stumbling block, and therefore should not be inculcated. I answer,

(1.) It is taught in the bible, and plainly follows also from the attributes of God as revealed in the reason. The scriptures that teach it are not less likely to be a snare and a stumbling block than are the definition and explanation of the doctrine.

(2.) The proper statement, explanation, and defense of the doctrines of election and reprobation are important to a proper understanding of the nature and attributes of God.

(3.) The scriptures that teach these doctrines are often subjects of cavil and sometimes of real difficulty. Religious teachers should, therefore, state these doctrines and explain them so as to aid the inquirer after truth and stop the mouths of gainsayers.

(4.) Again, these doctrines have often been so misstated and perverted as to make them amount to an iron system of fatalism. Many souls have heard or read these perversions and greatly need to be enlightened upon the subject. It is therefore all the more important that these truths should find a place in religious instruction. Let them be understood, properly stated, explained, and defended, and they can no more be a stumbling block than the fact of God's omniscience can be so.

REMARKS.

1. The salvation of reprobates is impossible only because they make it so by their own wicked conduct.

2. God will turn the damnation of the reprobate to good account. In establishing his government, he foresaw that great evils would be incidental to it--that multitudes would sin, and persevere in rebellion, until they were lost, notwithstanding all that could consistently be done to save them. Yet he foresaw that a vastly greater good would result from the virtue and happiness of holy beings, and that he, also, could make a good use even of the punishment of the wicked. Here is an instance of the Divine economy in turning every thing to the best account. I do not mean that the damnation of the wicked results in greater good than their salvation would if they would repent. If their salvation could be secured by any means that would consist with the highest good of the universe, it would be greatly to be preferred. But, as this can not be, he will do the best that the nature of the case admits. When he can not save them, he will, by their punishment, erect a monument to his justice, and lay its foundation deep in hell, and build it up to heaven, that being seen afar off in the smoke of their torment that ascendeth up forever and ever, it may ever stand as an affecting memento of the hatefulness and desert of sin.

3. It is very wicked and blasphemous to complain of God, when he has done the best that infinite wisdom, benevolence, and power could do. Who should complain? Surely not the elect; they have no reason to complain. Shall the reprobate complain, when he has actually forced upon God the necessity of giving up his government, or of sending him to hell?

4. Reprobates are found to praise God. He has created and given you many blessings, sinner, and offers you eternal life; and will you refuse to praise him?

5. God has every reason to complain of you, sinner. How much good you might do! see how much good individuals have often done! Now, of all the good you might do, you rob God. While eternity rolls its everlasting rounds, on how many errands of love you might go, diffusing happiness to the utmost bounds of Jehovah's empire? But you refuse to obey him; you are in league with hell, and prefer to scatter firebrands, arrows, and death, to destroy your own soul, and lead others to perdition with you. You drive on in your career, and help to set in motion all the elements of rebellion in earth and hell. Will you complain of God? He has reason to complain of you. He is the injured party. He has created you, has held you in his hand, and fanned your heaving lungs; and in return, you have breathed out your breath in rebellion and blasphemy and contempt of God, and compelled him to pronounce you reprobate.

6. There is reason to believe that there are many reprobates in the church. This is the probable history of many professors of religion. They had convictions of sin, and after a while their distress, more or less suddenly abated. If their distress had been considerable, if the Spirit left them, their minds would naturally go toward the opposite extreme. When their convictions left them, they thought, perhaps, this was conversion; this very perhaps created a sensation of pleasure, and the thought that this felt pleasure was evidence that they were converted, would naturally increase their confidence. As their confidence increased, their joy at the thought of being saved would be increased. This selfish joy has been the foundation upon which they have built their hopes for eternity; and now you see them in the church, transacting business upon worldly principles. pleading for sin, and finding a thousand apologies for conformity to the world. They live on in sin, perhaps not only vicious, but negligent of duty, cold and formal reprobates, and go down to hell from the bosom of the church.

7. Reprobates live to fill up the measure of their iniquity.

We are informed that the Amorites were spared, not because there was any hope of their reformation, but because their cup of iniquity was not yet full. Christ said to the Jews, "Fill ye up the measure of your fathers;" and God said to Pharoah, "For this purpose have I sustained thee, that I might show in thee my mighty power." Oh, dreadful thought! live to fill up the measure of your sins! The cup of trembling and of wrath is also filling up, which shall soon be poured out to you without mixture, when there shall be none to deliver you. "Your judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and your damnation slumbereth not."

8. Saints should not envy sinners.

The Psalmist once had this trial. He says, "Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart; but as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped, for I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, for there are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terror." How can a saint envy them, standing upon a slippery steep, with fiery billows rolling beneath them! "Their feet shall slide in due time." Christians, do not envy the wicked, though they enjoy the wealth of the world; do not envy them; poor creatures! their time is short, they have almost had all their good things.

Perhaps there are individuals, here, to whom I have been speaking, that have not been in the least benefitted by any thing I have said, or could say. You have set yourselves to oppose God, and have taken such an attitude, that truth never reaches you to do you good. Now, sinner, if you do this, and go home in this state of mind, you will have additional evidence that God has given you up, and that you are a reprobate. Now, will you go away in your sins, under these circumstances? Don't talk of the doctrine of election or reprobation as being in your way. No man is ever reprobated for any other reason than that is an obstinate sinner.

Have you not been listening to find something in this lecture that you can stumble over? Take care! if you wish to cavil, you can always find occasions enough. Sinners have stumbled over every other doctrine of the Bible into hell, and you may stumble over this.

What would you say of any man that should go home and cut his throat, and say he did it because God foreknew that he would do it, and by creating him with this foreknowledge, designed that he should do it. Would saying that excuse him? No. Yet he is under just as much necessity of doing it as he is of going away from this house in his sins.

You only show that you are determined to determined to harden your hearts, and resist God, and thus compel the holy Lord God to reject you, There is no doctrine of the Bible, that can save you, if you persevere in sin, and none that can damn you, if you repent and embrace the Gospel. The blood of Christ flows freely. The fountain is open. Sinners, what say you? Will you have eternal life? will you have it now, or will you reject it? Will you trample the law under foot, and stumble over the Gospel to the depths of hell?

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 73

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

In this discussion I shall endeavor to show,

I. WHAT IS NOT INTENDED BY THE TERM SOVEREIGNTY, WHEN APPLIED TO GOD.

II. WHAT IS INTENDED BY IT.

III. THAT GOD IS AND OUGHT TO BE AN ABSOLUTE AND A UNIVERSAL SOVEREIGN.

I. What is not intended by the term sovereignty as applied to God.

It is not intended, at least by me, that God in any instance wills or acts arbitrarily, or without good reasons; reasons so good and so weighty that he could in no case act otherwise than he does, without violating the law of his own intelligence and conscience, and consequently without sin. Any view of Divine Sovereignty that implies arbitrariness on the part of the Divine will, is not only contrary to scripture, but is revolting to reason, and blasphemous. God can not act arbitrarily, in the sense of unreasonably, without infinite wickedness. For him to be arbitrary, in the sense of unreasonable, would be a wickedness as much greater than any creature is capable of committing, as his reason or knowledge is greater than theirs. This must be self-evident. God should therefore never be represented as a Sovereign, in the sense that implies that he is actuated by self or arbitrary will, rather than by his infinite intelligence.

Many seem to me to represent the sovereignty of God as consisting in a perfectly arbitrary disposal of events. They seem to conceive of God as being wholly above and without any law or rule of action imposed upon his will by his infinite reason and conscience. They appear shocked at the idea of God himself being the subject of moral law, and are ready to inquire, Who gives law to God? They seem never to have considered that God is and must be a law unto himself; that he is necessarily omniscient, and that the Divine Reason must impose law on, or prescribe law to the Divine Will. They seem to regard God as living wholly above law, and as disposed to have his own will at any rate, reasonable or unreasonable; to set up his own arbitrary pleasure as his only rule of action, and to impose this rule upon all his subjects. This sovereignty they seem to conceive of as controlling and disposing of all events, with an iron or adamant fatal, inflexible, irresistible, omnipotent. "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." This text they dwell much upon as teaching that God disposes all events absolutely, not according to his own infinite wisdom and discretion, but simply according to his own will; and, as their language would often seem to imply, without reference at all to the universal law of benevolence. I will not say that such is the view as it lies in their own mind; but only that from the language they use, such would seem to be their idea of the Divine sovereignty. Such, however, is not the view of this subject which I shall state and defend on the present occasion

II. What is intended by Divine Sovereignty.

The Sovereignty of God consists in the independence of his will in consulting only his own intelligence and discretion, in the selection of his end, and the means of accomplishing it. In other words, the Sovereignty of God is nothing else than infinite benevolence directed by infinite knowledge. God consults no one in respect to what shall be done by him. He asks no leave to do and require what his own wisdom dictates. He consults only himself, that is, his own infinite intelligence.

So far is he from being arbitrary in his sovereignty, in the sense of unreasonable, that he is invariably guided by infinite reason. He consults his own intelligence only, not from any arbitrary disposition, but because his knowledge is perfect and infinite, and therefore it is safe and duty to take counsel no where else. It were infinitely unreasonable and weak and wicked in God to ask leave of any being to act in conformity with his own judgment. He must make his own reason his rule of action. God is a sovereign, not in the sense that he is not under law, or that he is above all law, but in the sense that he is a law to himself; that he knows no law but what is given him by his own reason. In other words still, the sovereignty of God consists in such a disposal of all things and events as to meet the ideas of his own reason, or the demands of his own intelligence. "He works all things after the counsel of his own will" in the sense that he formed and executes his own designs independently; in the sense that he consults only his own infinite discretion; that is, he acts according to his own views of propriety and fitness. This he does, be it distinctly understood, without at all setting aside the freedom of moral agents. His infinite knowledge enabled him to select an end and means that should consist with and include the perfect freedom of moral agents. The subjects of his moral government are free to obey or disobey, and take the consequences. But foreseeing precisely in all cases how they would do, he has laid his plan accordingly, so as to bring out the contemplated and desired results. In all his plans he consulted none but himself. But this leads me to say,

III. That God is and ought to be an absolute and a universal sovereign.

By absolute I mean, that his expressed will in obedience to his reason is law. It is not law because it proceeds from his arbitrary will, but because it is the revelation or declaration of the affirmations and demands of his infinite reason. His expressed will is law, because it is an infallible declaration of what is intrinsically fit, suitable, right. His will does not make the things that he commands, right, fit, proper, obligatory in the sense that, should he require it, the opposite of what he now requires would be fit, proper, suitable, obligatory, but in the sense that we need no other evidence of what is in itself intrinsically proper, fit[,] obligatory, than the expression of his will. Our reason affirms that what he wills must be right, not because he wills it, but that he wills it because it is right or obligatory in the nature of things; that is, our reason affirms that he wills as he does only upon condition that his infinite intelligence affirms that such willing is intrinsically right, and therefore he ought to will or command just what he does.

He is a sovereign in the sense that his will is law whether we are able to see the reason for his commands or not, because our reason affirms that he has and must have good and sufficient reasons for every command; so good and sufficient that he could not do otherwise than require what he does under the circumstances without violating the law of his own intelligence. We therefore need no other reason for affirming our obligation to will and to do than that God requires it; because we always and necessarily assume as a first truth of reason, that what God requires must be right, not because he arbitrarily wills it, but because he does not arbitrarily will it, and on the contrary has, and must have, in every instance, infinitely good and wise reasons for every requirement.

Some persons seem to represent God as a sovereign in the sense that his arbitrary will is the foundation of obligation. But if this is so, he could in every instance render the directly opposite course from what he now requires obligatory. But this is absurd.

The persons just mentioned, seem to think that unless it be admitted that God's will is the foundation of obligation, it will follow that it does not impose obligation, unless he discloses the reasons for his requirements. But this is a great mistake. Our own reason affirms that God's expressed will is always law, in the sense that it invariably declares the law of nature, or discloses the decisions of his own reason.

IV. God must and ought to be an absolute sovereign in the sense just defined.

This will appear if we consider,

1. That his end was chosen and the means decided upon when no being but himself existed, and of course there was no one to consult but himself.
2. Creation and providence are only the results and the carrying out of his plans settled from eternity.
3. The law of benevolence, as it existed in the Divine reason, must have eternally demanded of him the very course he has

taken.

4. His highest glory and the highest good of universal being demand that he should consult his own discretion and exercise an absolute and a universal sovereignty in the sense explained. Infinite wisdom and goodness ought of course to act independently in the promotion of their end. If infinite wisdom or knowledge is not to give law, what or who shall? If infinite benevolence shall not declare and enforce law, what or who shall? God's attributes and relations render it obligatory upon him to exercise just that holy sovereignty we have ascribed to him.

(1.) This sovereignty and no other he claims for himself.

Job 23:13. But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth even that he doeth.

33:13. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

Ps. 115:3. But our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

135:6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Isa. 55:10. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; 11. So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Dan. 4:35. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and 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?

Matt. 11:25. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. 26. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

20:12. Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. 13. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14. Take that thine is, and go thy way; I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? 16. So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen.

Ro. 9:15. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. 17. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh. Even this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18. Therefore hath he mercy whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Eph. 1:11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Phil. 9:13. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

(2.) Again God claims for himself all the prerogatives of an absolute and a universal sovereign in the sense already explained. For example, he claims to be the rightful and sole proprietor of the universe.

1 Chron. 29:11. Thine O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

Ps. 50:10. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; 11. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine; 12. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof.

95:5. The sea is his, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. 6. O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our maker; 7. for he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

100:3. Know ye that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Ezk. 18:4. Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth it shall die.

Rom. 14:8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.

(3.) Again God claims to have established the natural or physical laws of the universe.

Job 38:33. Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

Ps. 119:90. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations, thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. 91. They continue this day according to thine ordinances for all are thy servants.

Prov. 3:19. The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth by understanding hath he established the heavens. 20. By his knowledge the depths are broken up and the clouds drop down the dew.

Jer. 31:35. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name.

33:25. Thus saith the Lord, if my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, 26. Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

(4.) God claims the right to exercise supreme authority.

Ex. 20:23. Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.

1 Chron. 29:11. Thine O Lord, is the greatness and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

Ps. 47:7. For God is the King of all the earth, sing ye praises with understanding.

Prov. 23:26. My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

Isa. 33:22. For the lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us.

Matt. 4:10. Then saith Jesus unto him, get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shall worship the Lord thy God, and him only shall thou serve.

22:37. Jesus said unto him, thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

(5.) God claims the right to exercise his own discretion in using such means, and in exerting such an agency as will secure the regeneration of men, or not, as it appears wise to him.

Deut. 29:4. Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

Jer. 5:14. Wherefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

Matt. 13:10. and the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou to them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

20:15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? 16. So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen.

Mk. 4:11. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: 12. That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

Rom. 9:22. What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, 23. And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.

2 Tim. 2:25. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

(6.) God claims the right to try his creatures by means of temptation.

Deut. 13:1. If there arise among you a prophet, or dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder. 2. And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3. Thou shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

1 Kings 22:20. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. 21. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. 22. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shall persuade him, and prevail also; go forth, and do so.

Job 2:3. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. 7. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

Matt. 4:1. Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

(7.) God also claims the right to exercise his own discretion in so arranging the affairs of his government as to control the hearts of men, not necessarily, but through the exercise of their own liberty.

1 Sam. 26:19. Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering; but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord, for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods.

Ps. 33:14. From the place of his habitation he looked upon all the inhabitants of the earth. 15. He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

Is. 44:9. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

Ro. 9:20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor.

(8.) God also claims the right to use all creatures and to dispose of all creatures and events so as to fulfil his own designs.

2 Sam. 7:14. I will be his father, and he shall be my son; if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.

2 Kings 5:1. Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria; he was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper.

1 Chron. 6:15. And Jehozadak went into captivity, when the Lord carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

Job 1:15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I am escaped alone to tell thee. 17. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped to tell thee. And Job said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Ps 17:13. Arise O Lord, disappoint him, cast him down; deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword, from men which are thy hand, O Lord.

Isa. 10:5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. 6. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. 7. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. 12. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. 15. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

Jer. 27:8. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.

Ezk. 24:14. And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel; and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger, and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord God.

Hab. 1:6. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling-places that are not theirs. 12. Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die, O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

(9.) God claims the right to take the life of his subjects at his own discretion.

Gen. 22:2. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Deut 20:16. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shall save alive nothing that breatheth: 17. But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee: 18. That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the Lord your God.

1 Sam. 15:3. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

(10.) God also claims the right to employ wicked rulers and instruments as his own rod and scourge to chastise individuals and nations for their wickedness.

1 Kings, 19:15. And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.

2 Kings, 8:12. And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

Ezk. 20:24. Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols: 25. Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live: 26. And I polluted them in their own gifts, in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord,

Dan. 4:17. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

Hos. 13:11. I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.

(11.) God furthermore claims the sole prerogative of executing vengeance on the wicked.

Ps. 94:1. O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself.

Rom. 12:19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Deut, 32:35. To me belongeth vengeance and recompense; their feet shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste, 36. For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left. 39. See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. 40. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. 41. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. 42. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain, and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. 43. Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.

(12.) God declares that he will maintain his own sovereignty.

Isa. 42:8. I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

48:11. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

These passages will disclose the general tenor of scripture upon this subject.

REMARKS.

1. The Sovereignty of God is an infinitely amiable, meek, sweet, holy, and desirable sovereignty. Some seem to conceive of it as something revolting and tyrannical. But it is the infinite opposite of this and is the perfection of all that is reasonable, kind, and good.

Is. 57:15. For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. 16. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. 17. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on forwardly in the way of his heart. 18. I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. 19. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him.

2. Many seem afraid to think or speak of God's sovereignty, and even pass over, with a very slight reading, those passages of scripture that so fully declare it. They think it unwise and dangerous to preach upon the subject, especially unless it be to deny or explain away the sovereignty of God. This fear, no doubt in pious minds, has originated in a misconception of the nature of this sovereignty. They have been led either by false teaching, or in some way have come to conceive of the Divine Sovereignty as an iron and unreasonable despotism. That is, they have understood the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty so to represent God. They therefore fear and reject it. But let it be remembered and forever understood, to the eternal joy and unspeakable consolation of all holy beings, that God's Sovereignty is nothing else than infinite love directed by infinite knowledge in such a disposal of events as to secure the highest well-being of the universe; that in the whole details of creation, providence, and grace, there is not a solitary measure of his that is not infinitely wise and good.

3. A proper understanding of God's universal agency and sovereignty, of the perfect wisdom and benevolence of every measure of his government, providential and moral, is essential to the best improvement of all his dispensations toward us and to those around us. When it is understood that God's hand is directly or indirectly in every thing that occurs, and that he is infinitely wise and good, and equally wise and good in every single dispensation--that he has one end steadily and always in view--that he does all for one and the same ultimate end--and that this end is the highest good of himself and of universal being; I say, when these things are understood and considered, there is a divine sweetness in all his dispensations. There is then a divine reasonableness and amiableness and kindness thrown like a broad mantle of infinite love over all his character, works and ways. The soul in contemplating such a sacred, universal, holy sovereignty takes on a sweet smile of delightful complacency and feels secure and reposes in perfect peace, surrounded and supported by the everlasting arms.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 74

PURPOSES OF GOD

In discussing this subject I shall endeavor to show,

- I. WHAT I UNDERSTAND BY THE PURPOSES OF GOD.
- II. NOTICE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN PURPOSE AND DECREE.
- III. THAT IN SOME SENSE THE PURPOSES OF GOD MUST EXTEND TO ALL EVENTS.
- IV, DIFFERENT SENSES IN WHICH GOD PURPOSES DIFFERENT EVENTS.
- V. THAT GOD'S REVEALED WILL IS NEVER INCONSISTENT WITH HIS SECRET WILL OR PURPOSE.
- VI. THE WISDOM AND BENEVOLENCE OF THE DIVINE PURPOSES.
- VII. THE IMMUTABILITY OF THE DIVINE PURPOSES.
- VIII. THE PURPOSES OF GOD ARE A GROUND OF ETERNAL AND JOYFUL CONFIDENCE.
- IX. THE RELATION OF THE PURPOSES TO THE PRESCIENCE OR FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD.
- X. GOD'S PURPOSES ARE NOT INCONSISTENT WITH, BUT DEMAND THE USE OF MEANS BOTH ON THE PART OF GOD AND ON OUR PART TO ACCOMPLISH THEM.

I. What I understand by the purposes of God.

Purpose, in this discussion, I shall use as synonymous with design, intention. The purposes of God must be ultimate and proximate. That is, God has and must have an ultimate end. He must purpose to accomplish something by his works and providence which he regards as a good in itself or as valuable to himself, and to being in general. This I call his ultimate end. That God has such an end or purpose, follows from the already established fact that God is a moral agent, and that he is infinitely wise and good. For surely he could not be justly considered as either wise or good had he no intrinsically valuable end which he aims to realize by his works of creation and providence. His purpose to secure his great and ultimate end, I call his ultimate purpose. His proximate purposes respect the means by which he aims to secure his end. If he purposes to realize an end, he must of course purpose the necessary means for its accomplishment. The purposes that respect the means are what I call in this discussion his proximate purposes.

II. Distinction between purpose and decree.

Purpose has just been defined, and the definition need not be repeated. The term decree is used in a variety of senses. It is much used in legal and government proceedings. When used in judicial or equitable proceedings; it is synonymous.

1. With judgment, decision, determination, and,

2. With order, direction, command.

When used in legislative proceedings, it is synonymous with ordinance, law, statute, enactment, command. The term is used in the bible as synonymous,

(1.) With foreordination or determination, appointment.

Job 28:10. He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overturneth the mountains by the roots. 26. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.

Ps. 2:[7] I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.

148:6. He hath also established them for ever and ever; he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

Prov. 8:29. When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth.

Jer. 5:22. Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree that it can not pass it, and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

Dan. 4:24. This is the interpretation, O King, and this is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king.

2. It is used as synonymous, with ordinance, statute, law.

Dan. 6:7. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. 8. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 26. I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

This term has been generally used by theological writers as synonymous with foreordination, appointment. To decree with these writers, is to appoint, ordain, establish, settle, fix, render certain.

This class of writers also, often confound decree with purpose, and use the word as meaning the same thing.

They seldom, so far as I recollect, use the term decree as synonymous with law, enactment, command, &c.

I see no objection to using the term decree in respect to a certain class of physical events as synonymous, with appointment, foreordination, fixing, rendering certain. But I think this use, of it, applied, as it has been, to the actions of moral agents, is highly objectionable and calculated to countenance the idea of fatality and necessity in respect to the actions men. It seems inadmissible to speak of God's decreeing the free actions of moral agents, in the sense of fixing, settling, determining, foreordaining them as he fixes, settles, renders certain physical events. The latter he has fixed or rendered certain by a law of necessity. The former that is, free acts, although they may be, and are certain, yet they are not rendered so by a law of fate or necessity; or by an ordinance or decree that fixes them so that it is not possible that they should be otherwise.

In respect to the government of God, I prefer to use the term purpose, as I have said, to signify the design of God both in respect to the end at which he aims, and the means he intends or purposes to use to accomplish it. The term decree, I purpose to use as synonymous with command, law, or ordinance. The former I use as expressive of what God purposes or designs to do himself, and by his own agency and also what he purposes or designs to accomplish by others.

The latter I use as expressive of God's will, command, or law. He regulates his own conduct and agency in accordance with the former, that is, with his purposes. He requires his creatures to conform to the latter, that is, to his decrees or laws. We shall see in its proper place that both his purposes and his actions are conformed to the spirit of his decrees or laws, that is, that he is benevolent in his purposes and conduct as he requires his creatures to be.

I distinguish between what God purposes or designs to accomplish by others, and what they design. God's end or purpose is always benevolent. He always designs good. His creatures are often selfish, and their designs are often the direct opposite of the purpose of God, even in the same events.

For example, see the following cases:

Gen. 44:4. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me I pray you; and they came near. And he said, am I Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. 5. Now therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you, to preserve life. 6. For these two years hath the famine been in the land, and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

50:19. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not; for I am in the place of God? 20. But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Isa. 10:5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. 6. I will send him against a hypocritical nation and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. 7. Howbeit he meaneth not so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. 12. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

Mk. 15:9. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the king of the Jews? 10. (For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.)

Jno. 3:16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his is only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Acts 2:23. Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

III. There must be some sense in which God's purposes extend to all events.

1. This is evident from reason. His plan must in some sense include all actual events. He must foreknow all events by a law of necessity. This is implied in his Omniscience. He must have matured and adopted his plan in view of, and with reference to all events. He must have had some purpose or design respecting all events that he foresaw. All events transpire in consequence of his own creating agency; that is, they all result in some way directly or indirectly, either by his design or sufferance, from his own agency. He either designedly brings them to pass, or suffers them to come to pass without his interposing to prevent them. He must have known that they would occur. He must have either positively designed that they should, or, knowing that they would result from the mistakes or selfishness of his creatures, negatively designed not to prevent them, or, he had no purpose or design about them. The last hypothesis is plainly impossible. He can not be indifferent to any event. He knows all events and must have some purpose or design respecting them.

2. The bible abundantly represents God's purposes as in some sense extending to all events. For example:

(1.) He is represented as perfectly wise in his works and ways and plan of creation and government:

Deut. 32:4. He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he.

Ps. 104:24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.

Eccl. 3:14. I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

If God is infinitely wise he must have had a universal plan.

(2.) The bible represents his purposes as universal and particular.

Job 14:5. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.

Isa. 14:26. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

Acts 17:26. And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.

Eph. 1:11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

(3.) It represents his purposes as in some sense extending both to natural evil and to sin or moral evil.

Acts 2:23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

4:27. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. 28. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

13:29. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

1 Pet. 2:8. And a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed.

Jude 4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God, into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. 17:17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

(4.) It represents God's purposes as both ultimate and proximate, or including means and ends:

Acts 27:22. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. 23. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24. Saying, Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 30. And as the shipmen

were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under color as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, 31. Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

2. Thess. 2:13. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

1 Pet. 1:2, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

(5.) The bible represents God's providence and agency as extending in some sense to all events; from which also we must infer the universality of his purposes:

Ps. 147:8. Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. 9. He giveth to the beast his food, and to young ravens which cry. 15. He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth; his word runneth very swiftly. 16. He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. 17. He casteth forth his ice like morsels; who can stand before his cold? 18. He sendeth out his word and melteth them, he causeth his winds to blow, and the waters flow.

Isa. 26:12. Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

45:7. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things.

Dan. 4:36. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and 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?

Amos 3:6. Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?

Matt. 10:29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

Ro. 11:36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.

Eph. 1:11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Phil. 2:13. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Heb. 13:20. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21. Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.

Ps. 104: He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth; 15. And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart. 21. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. 27. These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. 28. That thou givest them they gather, thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

Matt. 5:45. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

6:26. Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field,

how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; 19.[29.] And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. 30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

(6.) The Bible also represents all creatures as dependent on the providence and of course on the purposes of God.

Job 12:10. In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

Ps. 57:7. As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.

Jer. 10:23. O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

18:6. O house of Israel, can not I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

Jno. 15:5. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Acts 17:26. And hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27. That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. 28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we also are his offspring.

2 Cor. 3:5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is God.

(7.) The Bible also represents all creatures as preserved by the providence of God, from which also we must infer that his purposes extend to them.

Neh. 9:5. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

Job 7:20. I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?

10:12. Thou hast granted me life and favor, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

34:14. If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; 15. All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

Ps. 36:6. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep. O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.

63:8. My soul followeth hard after thee; thy right hand upholdeth me.

66:8. O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard; 9. Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

121:7. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

Heb. 1:3. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

(8.) The Bible also represents the Lord as in some sense and in some manner influencing the hearts of men.

From this also we must infer that his purposes in some sense extend to the moral exercises of men.

Ezra 7:27. Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.

Prov. 16:1. The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord. 9. A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps.

21:1. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Isa. 64:8. But now, O Lord, thou art our Father: we are the clay, and thou our Potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

Zec. 12:1. The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

Acts 16:14. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Ro. 9:20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?

(9.) The bible represents God as often, at least, controlling public sentiment.

Gen. 39:21. But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Ex. 3:21. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.

Dan. 1:9. Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

Acts 7:9. And the patriarchs. moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, 10. And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt, and all his house.

From these passages we must infer that the purposes of God extend to these events.

(10.) The bible also represents the providence of God as extending to moral evils and delusions; from which again we must infer that his purposes in some sense extend to them.

Ex. 7:3. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt.

9:7. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

10:1. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him.

14:8. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel. 17. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians.

Deut. 2:30. But Sihon king of Heshbon, would not let us pass by him: for the Lord thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.

Josh. 11:19. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. 20. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses.

Jud. 7:22. And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host.

2 Sam. 24:1. And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

1 Kings 22:23. Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.

Job 17:4. For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them.

Ps. 105:25. He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.

141:4. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked words with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

Isa. 19:14. The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.

29:10. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

44:18. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

45:7. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things,

63:17. O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servant's sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

Ezek. 14:9. And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

Zec. 8:10. For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbor.

Luke 10:21. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

John 12:39. Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40. He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

Rom. 9:18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

11:7. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. 8. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear,) unto this day.

2 Thess. 12:10. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; 12. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Rev. 17:17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

These passages will show the general tenor of scripture upon this subject.

IV. Different senses in which God purposes different events.

1. The great end of all his works and ways he must have purposed positively, that is, absolutely. This end, namely his own good and the highest good of the universe, he set his heart upon securing. This end he no doubt properly intended or purposed to secure. This must have been his ultimate intention or purpose. This end was no doubt a direct object of choice.

9. God must no doubt also have in some sense purposed all the necessary means to this result. Such means as tended naturally or on account of their own nature to this result, he must have purposed positively, in the sense that he delighted in them, and chose them because of their own nature or of their natural relation to the great end he proposed to accomplish by them. Observe, the end was an ultimate end, delighted in and chosen for its own sake. This end was the highest good or well-being of himself and the universe of sentient existences. This has been sufficiently shown in former lectures, and besides it follows of necessity from the nature and attributes of God. If this were not so, he would be neither wise nor good. Since he delighted in and chose the end for its own sake or value, and purposed it with a positive purpose, he must also have chosen and delighted in the necessary means. He must have created the universe both of matter and of mind and established its laws with direct reference to and for the sake of the end he purposed to accomplish. The end was valuable in itself and chosen for that reason. The necessary means were as really valuable as the end which depended upon them. This value, though real because of their tendency and natural results, is not ultimate, but relative. That is, they are not, in the same sense that the end is, valuable in themselves; but they being the necessary means to this end, are as really valuable as the end that depends upon them. Thus our necessary food is not valuable in itself, but is the necessary means of prolonging our lives. Therefore, though not an ultimate good, yet it is a real good of as great value as the end that naturally depends upon it. The naturally necessary means of securing a valuable end we justly esteem as equally valuable with the end although this value is not absolute but relative. We are so accustomed to set a value on the means equal to the estimated importance of the end to which they sustain the relation of necessary means, that we come loosely to regard and to speak of them as valuable in themselves, when in fact their value is not absolute but relative.

God must have purposed to secure, so far as he wisely could, obedience to the laws of the universe, both physical and moral. These laws were established for the sake of the end to which they tended, and obedience to them must have been regarded by God as of real, though not ultimate value, equal to that of the end, for the accomplishment of which they were ordained. He must have delighted in obedience to these laws for the sake of the end, and must have purposed to secure this obedience so far as he could in the nature of things; that is, in so far forth as he wisely could. Since moral law is a rule for the government of free moral agents, it is conceivable that in some cases this law might be violated by the subjects of it unless God resorted to means to prevent it, that might introduce an evil of greater magnitude than the violation of the law in the instances under consideration would be. It is conceivable that in some cases God might be able so to overrule a violation of his laws, physical and moral, as upon the whole to secure a greater good than could be secured by introducing such a change into the policy and measures of his administration, or so framing his administration as to prevent altogether the violation of any law. God might, and no doubt does prefer that every creature should, in the precise circumstances in which he is placed, obey all the laws of his being. But if under these circumstances, voluntary agents will in any case disobey, their disobedience, though a real, may be a less evil than such a change in the administration of his government as would prevent the violation, would be. In this case he might regard the violation as

the less of two evils, and suffer it rather than change the arrangements of his government. He might sincerely deplore and abhor these violations of law, and yet might see it not wise to prevent them, because the measures necessary to prevent them might result in an evil of still greater magnitude. He might purpose to suffer these violations, and take the trouble to overrule them so far as was possible for the promotion of the end he had in view, rather than interpose for their prevention. These violations he might not have purposed in any other sense than that he foresaw them and purposed not to prevent them, but on the contrary to suffer them to occur and to overrule them for good, so far as this was practicable. These events, or violations of law, have no natural tendency to promote the highest well-being of God and of the universe, but have in themselves a directly opposite tendency. Nevertheless God could so overrule them as that these occurrences would be a less evil than that change would be that could have prevented them.

Violations of law, then, he might have purposed only to suffer, while obedience to law he might have designed to produce or secure.

3. We have seen that God, and men may have different motives in the same event as in the case of the brethren of Joseph, already alluded to:

Gen. 45:4. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. 6. For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest;

As also in the case of the king of Assyria:

Is. 10:5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. 6. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. 7. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. 12. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

Also,

John 3:16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Acts 2:23. Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

These and such like instances show that the wicked agents may, and often do, and when wicked always do, have a very different reason for their conduct from what God has in suffering it. They have a selfish end in view, or do what they do for a selfish reason. God, on the contrary, has a benevolent end in view in not interposing to prevent their sin; that is, he hates their sin as tending in itself to destroy or defeat the great end of benevolence. But foreseeing that the sin, notwithstanding its natural evil tendency, may be so overruled as upon the whole to result in a less evil than the changes requisite to prevent it would, he benevolently prefers to suffer it rather than interpose to prevent it. He would, no doubt prefer their perfect obedience under the circumstances in which they are, but would sooner suffer them to sin than so change the circumstances as to prevent it; the latter being, all things considered, the greater of two evils. God then always suffers his laws to be violated, because he can not benevolently prevent it under the circumstances. He suffers it for benevolent reasons. But the sinner always has selfish reasons.

4. The bible informs us that God brings good out of evil in the sense that he overrules sin to promote his own glory and the good of being:

Ps. 76:10. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

Ro. 3:5. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.) 7. For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I judged as a sinner? And not rather (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

5:20. Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

8:28. And we know that all things work together good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

5. The bible also informs us that God does not aim at producing sin in creation and providence; that is, that he does not purpose the existence of sin in such a sense as to design to secure and promote it, in the administration of his government. In other words still, sin is not the object of a positive purpose on the part of God. It exists only by sufferance, and not as a thing which naturally tends to secure his great end, and which, therefore, he values on that account and endeavors to promote, as he does obedience to the law.

Jer. 7:9. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not? 10. And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

1 Cor. 14:33. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

James 1:13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; 14. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. 16. Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

3:14. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. 17. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and hypocrisy.

1 John 2:16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Obedience to law is an object of positive purpose. God purposes to promote it, and uses means with that design. Sin occurs incidentally, so far as the purpose of God is concerned. It need not be, and doubtless is not the object of positive design or purpose, but comes to pass because it can not wisely be prevented. God uses means to promote obedience. But moral agents in the exercise of their free agency, often disobey in spite of all the inducements to the contrary which God can wisely set before them. God never sets aside the freedom of moral agents to prevent their sinning nor to secure their obedience. The bible every where represents men as acting freely under the government and universal providence of God, and it represents sin as the result of or as consisting in an abuse of their freedom.

Gen. 42:21. And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

Ex. 8:32. And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

9:27. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.

10:16. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and

against you. 17. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only.

Deut. 30:19. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.

Josh. 24:15. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

2 Sam. 24:1. And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah. 10. And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

Prov. 1:10. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. 29. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: 30. They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof: 31. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

16:9. A man's heart deviseth his way. but the Lord directeth his steps.

23:26. My son., give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

S. Songs 1:4. Draw me, and we will run after thee. The King hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.

Is. 5:3. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

Hosea 13:9. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.

Matt. 13:15. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

18:7. Wo unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Luke 22:22. And truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined: but wo unto that man by whom he is betrayed.

23:39. And one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, saying, if thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

John 5:40. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Acts 4:27. For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together. 28. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Ro. 2:15. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing, one another.

Philip. 2:12. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: 13. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

The following things appear to be true in respect to the purposes of God as taught both by reason and revelation:

- (1.) That God's purposes extend in some sense to all events.
- (2.) That he positively purposes the highest good of being, as a whole, as his end.
- (3.) That he has ordained wise and wholesome laws as the necessary means of securing this end.
- (4.) That he positively purposes to secure obedience to these laws in so far forth as he wisely can, and uses means with this design.
- (5.) That he does not positively purpose to secure disobedience to his laws in any case, and use means with that design; but that he only purposes to suffer violations of his law rather than prevent them, because he foresees that by his overruling power he can prevent the violation from resulting in so great an evil as the change necessary to prevent it would do. Or in other words he sees that he can secure a greater good upon the whole to suffer the violation under the circumstances in which it occurs, than he could by interposing to prevent it. This is not the same thing as to say that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. For should all moral agents perfectly obey under the identical circumstances in which they disobey, this might and doubtless would result in the highest possible good. But God, foreseeing that it were more conducive to the highest good of being to suffer some to sin rather than so change the circumstances as to prevent it, purposed to suffer their sin and overrule it for good; but he did not aim at producing it, and use means with that intent.
- (6.) Obedience to law he purposes to secure.
- (7.) Disobedience to law he never proposed or aimed to secure, but on the contrary purposed to prevent it so far as he wisely could.
- (8.) When he can not wisely prevent it, he wisely suffers and overrules it, so as to render it, not a less evil than obedience would have been in the identical circumstances in which the disobedience occurs, but as a less evil, than the change of circumstances necessary to prevent it, would be.

V. God's revealed will never inconsistent with his secret purpose.

It has been common to represent sin as the necessary occasion, condition or means of the greatest good in such a sense that upon the whole, God secretly, but really prefers it to holiness in every case where it exists; that while he has forbidden sin under all circumstances, upon pain of eternal death, yet because it is the necessary occasion, condition or means of the greatest good, God really prefers its existence to holiness in its stead, in every instance in which it exists. It has been said, Sin exists. God, does not therefore, prevent it. But he could and would prevent it if he did not upon the whole prefer it to holiness in the circumstances in which it occurs. Its existence, then, it has been said, is proof conclusive that God secretly prefers its existence to holiness in every case in which it occurs. But this is a non sequiter. It does not follow from the existence of sin that God prefers sin to holiness in the circumstances in which it occurs, but it may be that he only prefers sin to such a change of circumstances as would prevent it. Suppose I require my son to do a certain thing. I know that he will do it if I remain at home and see to it. But I know also that if I go from home he will not do it. Now I might prefer that he should do as I command and consider his disobedience as a great evil; still I might regard it as a less evil than for me to remain at home and keep my eye upon him. I might have just reasons for supposing that under the circumstances a greater good could be secured upon the whole, by my going from home, although his disobedience might be the consequence, than by remaining at home and preventing his disobedience. Benevolence therefore might require me to go.

But should my son infer from my leaving him under these circumstances that I really, though secretly, preferred his disobedience to his obedience, under the identical circumstances in which I gave the command; would his inference be legitimate? No, indeed. All that he could justly infer from my leaving him, with the knowledge that he would disobey me if I did, would be that although I regarded his disobedience as a great evil, yet I regarded remaining at home a greater.

Just so, it may be when sin exists. God is sincere in prohibiting it. He would greatly prefer that it should not exist. All that can be justly inferred from his not preventing it is, that, although he regards its existence as a great and real evil, yet he upon the whole regards it as a less evil that would result from so great a change in the administration of his government as would prevent it.

He is, therefore, entirely and infinitely sincere in requiring obedience, and in prohibiting disobedience, and his secret purpose is in strict keeping with his revealed will. Were the moral law universally obeyed under the circumstances in which all moral agents exist, no one can say that this would not be better for the universe, and more pleasing to God than disobedience is in the same circumstances. Nor is it fair to infer that upon the whole, God must prefer sin to holiness, where it occurs from the fact that he does not prevent it. As has been said, all that can justly be inferred from his not preventing it is, that under the circumstances he prefers not sin to holiness, but prefers to suffer the agent to sin and take the consequences rather than introduce such changes in the policy and administration of his government as would prevent it. Or, it may be said that the present system is the best that infinite wisdom could devise and execute, not because of sin, but in spite of it, and notwithstanding sin is a real though incidental evil.

It is a palpable contradiction and an absurdity to affirm that any being can sin, intending thereby to promote the greatest good. This will appear if we consider,

1. That it is admitted on all hands that benevolence is virtue.
2. That benevolence consists in willing good or the highest good of being as an end.
3. That it is duty to will both the end and the necessary means to promote it.
4. That right and benevolence are always at one, that is, that which is benevolent must always be right, and can in no case be wrong.
5. That consequently it can never be sin to choose the highest good of being with all the necessary occasions conditions and means of promoting it.
6. It is impossible therefore for a being to sin or to consent to sin as an occasion, condition or means, or designing thereby to promote the highest good of being; for this design would be virtue and not sin. Whether all virtue consist in benevolence, or not still it must be admitted that all forms of virtue must be consistent with benevolence, unless it be admitted that there can be a law of right inconsistent with, and opposed to the law of benevolence. But this would be to admit that two moral laws might be opposed to each other; which would be to admit that a moral agent might be under an obligation to obey two opposing laws at the same time, which is a contradiction. Thus it appears that there can be no law of right opposed to, or separate from the law of benevolence. Benevolence and right must then always be at one. If this be so, it follows that whatever benevolence demands, can not be wrong, but must be right. But the law of benevolence demands, not only the choice of the highest good of being as an end, but also demands the choice of all the necessary occasions, conditions, and means with a design to promote that end.

It is naturally impossible to sin, in using means designed and known to be necessary to the promotion of the end of benevolence. It is, therefore, naturally impossible to do evil or to sin that good may come, or with the design to promote good thereby. To deny this and to maintain that a man can possibly sin in intending to promote the highest good of being, and in fulfilling the necessary conditions and in using what he regards as the necessary means, is, I say again, to hold that there is a law of right separate from and opposed to the law of benevolence; which is, as before said, to hold that two moral laws are opposed to each other and require opposite courses of conduct in the same agent at the same time; which is, to hold that there are two opposing laws of nature and of God at the same time; which is to hold that a moral agent may justly be required on pain of eternal death to choose, design, and act in opposite directions at the same time; which is to hold that it is his duty to sin, and not to sin at the same time; which is to hold that a moral agent might sin in doing his duty or in obeying moral law.

Let those who hold that right and benevolence may be opposed to each other, and that a moral agent can sin with a

benevolent intention, see what their doctrine amounts to, and get out of the absurdity as best they can. The fact is, if willing the highest good of being is always virtuous, it must always be right to will all the necessary occasions, conditions, and means to that end. It is therefore a contradiction to say that sin can be among the necessary and intended occasions, conditions and means; that is, that any one could sin intending thereby to promote the highest good.

But it is not pretended by those who hold this dogma, that sin sustains to the highest good the same relations that holiness does. Holiness has a natural tendency to promote the highest good; but the supposition now under consideration is, that sin is hateful in itself, and that it therefore must dissatisfy and disgust all moral agents, and that its natural tendency is to defeat the end of moral government, and to prevent rather than promote the highest good; but that God foresees that notwithstanding its intrinsically odious and injurious nature, he can so overrule it as to make it the condition, occasion, or instrument of the highest good of himself and of his universe, and that for this reason he really upon the whole is pleased that it should occur and prefers its existence, in every instance in which it does exist, to holiness in its stead. The supposition is that sin is in its own nature infinitely odious and abominable to God, and perfectly odious to all holy moral agents, yet it is the occasion of calling into development and exercise such emotions and feelings in God and in holy beings, and such modifications of benevolence as do really more than compensate for all the disgust and painful emotions that result to holy beings and for all the remorse, agony, despair, and endless suffering, that result to sinners.

It is not supposed by any one, that I know of, that sin naturally tends to promote the highest good at all, but only that God can, and does, so overrule and counteract its natural tendency as to make it the occasion or condition of a greater good, than holiness would be in its stead. Now in reply to this, I would say, that I pretend not to determine to what extent God can and will overrule and counteract the naturally evil and injurious tendency of sin. It surely is enough to say that God prohibits it, and that it is impossible for creatures to know that sin is the necessary occasion or condition, or means of the highest good.

If sin is known by God to be the necessary occasion, condition, or means of the highest good of himself and of the universe, whatever it may be in itself, yet viewed in its relations, it must be regarded by Him as of infinite value, since it is the indispensable condition of infinite good. According to this theory, sin in every instance in which it exists, is and must be regarded by God as of infinitely greater value than holiness would be in its stead. He must, then, upon the whole, have infinite complacency in it. But this leads me to attend to the principal arguments by which it is supposed this theory is maintained. It is said, for example,

(1.) That the highest good of the universe of moral agents is conditioned upon the revelation of the attributes and character of God to them; that but for sin these attributes, at least some of them, could never have been revealed, in as much as without sin there would have been no occasion for their display or manifestation; that neither justice nor mercy, nor forbearance, nor self-denial, nor meekness, could have found the occasions of their exercise or manifestation had sin never existed.

To this I reply, that sin has indeed furnished the occasion for a glorious manifestation of the moral perfections of God. From this we see that God's perfections enable him greatly to overrule sin and to bring good out of evil, but from this we are not authorized to infer that God could not have revealed these attributes to his creatures without the existence of sin. Nor can we say that these revelations would have been necessary to the highest perfection and happiness of the universe had all moral agents perfectly and uniformly obeyed. When we consider what the moral attributes of God are, it is easy to see that there may be myriads of moral attributes in God of which no creature has, or ever will have, any knowledge, and the knowledge of which is not at all essential to the highest perfection and happiness of the universe of creatures. God's moral attributes are only his benevolence existing and contemplated in its various relations to the universe of beings. Benevolence in any being must possess as many attributes as there are possible relations under which it can be contemplated, and should their occasions arise, these attributes would stand forth in exercise. It is not at all probable, that all of the attributes of benevolence, either in the creator or in creatures, have yet found the occasions of their exercise, nor will they ever. As new occasions rise to all eternity, benevolence will develop new and striking attributes and manifest itself under endless forms and varieties of loveliness. There can be no such thing as exhausting its capabilities of development.

In God, benevolence is infinite. Creatures can never know all its attributes nor approach any nearer to knowing all of them than they now are. For it is infinite and there can be no end to its capabilities of developing in exercise new forms of

beauty and loveliness. It is true that God has taken occasion to show forth the glory of his benevolence through the existence of sin. He has seized the occasion, though mournful in itself, to manifest some of the attributes of his benevolence by the exercise of them. It is also true that we can not know how or by what means God could have revealed these attributes if sin had not existed, and it is also true that we can not know that such a revelation was impossible without the existence of sin, nor that but for sin the revelation would have been necessary to the highest good of the universe.

God forbids sin and requires universal holiness. He must be sincere in this. But sin exists. Shall we say that he secretly chooses that it should, and really though secretly prefers its existence to holiness in the circumstances in which it occurs? Or shall we assume that it is an evil, that God regards it as such, but that he can not wisely prevent it; that is, to prevent it would introduce a still greater evil? It is an evil and a great evil, but still the less of two evils; that is, to suffer it to occur, under the circumstances, is a less evil than such a change of circumstances, as would prevent it, would be. This is all we can justly infer from its existence. This leaves the sincerity of God unimpeached, and sustains his consistency and the consistency and integrity of his law. The opposite supposition represents God and the law as infinitely deceitful.

(2.) It has been said that the bible sustains the supposition that sin is the necessary means of the highest good. I trust the passages that have been quoted disprove this saying.

(3.) It is said that to represent [s]in as not the means of the highest good, and God as unable to prevent it, is to represent God as unable to accomplish all his will, whereas he says he will do all his pleasure and that nothing is too hard for him.

I answer: God pleases to do only what is naturally possible, and he is well pleased to do that and nothing more. This he is able to do. This he will do. This he does. This is all he claims to be able to do; and this is all, that in fact, infinite wisdom and power can do.

4. But it is said that if sin is an evil and God can neither prevent nor overrule it so as to make it a means of a greater good than could be secured without it, he must be unhappy in view of this fact, because he can not prevent it and secure a higher good without it.

I answer: God neither desires nor wills to perform natural impossibilities. God is a reasonable being and does not lust after impossibilities. He is well content to do as well as in the nature of the case is possible and has no unreasonable regrets because he is not more than infinite, and that he can not accomplish what is impossible to infinity itself. His good pleasure is, to secure all the good that is possible to infinity: with this he is infinitely well pleased.

Again, does not the objection that the view of the subject here presented limits the Divine power, lie with all its force against those who make this objection? To hold that sin is the necessary means or condition of the highest good, is to hold that God was unable to promote the highest good without resorting to such vile means as sin. Sin is an abomination in itself; and do not they as really and as much limit the power of God who maintain his inability to promote the highest good without it as they do who hold that he could not wisely so interfere with free actions of moral agents as to prevent it? Sin exists. God abhors it. How is its existence to be accounted for? I suppose it to be an evil unavoidably incidental to that system of moral government which, notwithstanding the evil, was upon the whole the best that could be adopted. Others suppose that sin is the necessary means or condition of the greatest good, and account for its existence in this way; that is, they suppose that God admits or permits its existence as a necessary occasion, condition or means of the highest good; that He was not able to secure the highest good without it. The two explanations of the admitted fact that sin exists differ in this:

One method of explanation holds that sin is the necessary occasion, condition or means of the highest good, and that God actually, upon the whole, prefers the existence of sin to holiness in every instance in which it exists, because in those circumstances it is a condition or means of greater good than could have been secured by holiness in its stead. This theory represents God as unable to secure his end by other means or upon other conditions than sin. The other theory holds that God really prefers holiness to sin in every instance in which it occurs; that he regards sin as an evil, but that while he regards it as an evil, he suffers its existence as a less evil than such a change in the administration of his government as would prevent it, would be. Both theories must admit that in some sense God could not wisely prevent it. Explain the fact of its existence as you will, it must be admitted that in some sense God was not able to prevent it and secure his end.

If it be said that if God could neither wisely prevent it, nor so overrule it as to make it the means or condition of the highest good, he must be rendered unhappy by its existence, I reply that this must be equally true upon the other hypothesis. Sin is hateful, and its consequences are a great evil. These consequences will be eternal and indefinitely great. God must lament these consequences. If sin is the necessary condition or means of the greatest good, must not God lament that he can not secure the good without a resort to such loathsome and such horrible means? If his inability wisely to prevent it, will interfere with and diminish his happiness, must not the same be true of his inability to secure the highest good, without such means as will prove the eternal destruction of millions?

VI. Wisdom and benevolence of the purposes of God.

We have seen that God is both wise and benevolent. This is the doctrine both of reason and of revelation. The reason intuitively affirms that God is, and is perfect. The bible assumes that he is, and declares that he is perfect. Both wisdom and benevolence must be attributes of the infinite and perfect God. These attributes enter into the reason's idea of God. The reason could not recognize any being as God to whom these attributes did not belong. But if infinite wisdom and benevolence are moral attributes of God, it follows of course that all his designs or purposes are both perfectly wise and benevolent. God has chosen the best possible end and pursues it in the use of the best practicable means. His purposes embrace the end and the means necessary to secure it, together with the best practicable disposal of the sin which is the incidental result of his choosing this end and using these means, and they extend no further; they are all therefore perfectly wise and good.

VII. The immutability of the Divine purposes.

We have seen that immutability is not only a natural, but also a moral attribute of God.

The reason affirms that the self-existent and infinitely perfect God is unchangeable in all his attributes. The ground of this affirmation it is not my purpose here to inquire into. It is sufficient here to say what every one knows, that such is the affirmation of the reason. This is also every where assumed and taught in the bible. God's moral attributes are not immutable in the sense of necessity, but only in the sense of certainty. Although God is not necessarily benevolent, yet he is as immutably so as if he were necessarily so. If his benevolence were necessary, it would not be virtuous, for the simple reason that it would not be free. But being free, its immutability renders it all the more praise-worthy.

VIII. The purposes of God are a ground of eternal and joyful confidence.

That is they may reasonably be a source of eternal comfort, joy, and peace. Selfish beings will not of course rejoice in them. But benevolent beings will and must. If they are infinitely wise and good, and sure to be accomplished, they must be a rational ground of unfailing confidence and joy. God says:

Isa. 46:10. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

Ps. 33:11. The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Prov. 19:21. There are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.

Acts 5:39. But if it be of God, ye can not overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

These and many parallel passages are reasonably the source of perpetual confidence and joy to those who love God and sympathize with him.

IX. The relation of God's purposes to his prescience or fore-knowledge.

We have seen that God is omniscient, that is, that he necessarily and eternally knows whatever is, or can be an object of

knowledge. His purposes must also be eternal and immutable, as we have seen. In the order of time, therefore, his purposes and foreknowledge must be coeval, that is, they must be co-eternal.

But in the order of nature God's knowledge of what he could do, and what could be done, must have preceded his purposes: that is, he could not, so to speak, in the order of nature, have formed his purpose and made up his mind what to do until he had considered what could be done and what was best to be done. Until all possible ends and ways and means were weighed and understood, it was of course impossible to make a selection and settle upon the end with all the necessary means, and also settle upon the ways and means of overruling any evil, natural or moral, that might be seen to be unavoidably incidental to any system. Thus it appears that, in the order of nature fore-knowledge of what could be done, and what he could do, must have preceded the purpose to do. The purpose resulted from the prescience or fore-knowledge. He knew what he could do before he decided what he would do. But on the other hand the purpose to do must, in the order of nature, have preceded the knowledge of what he should do, or of what would be done or would come to pass as a result of his purpose. Viewed relatively to what he could do, and what could be done, the Divine prescience must in the order of nature have preceded the Divine purposes. But viewed relatively to what he would do and what would be done and would come to pass, the Divine purposes must in the order of nature, have preceded the Divine prescience. But I say again, as fore-knowledge was necessarily eternal with God, his purposes must also have been eternal, and therefore in the order of time, neither his prescience could have preceded his purposes, nor his purposes have preceded his prescience. They must have been contemporaneous and co-eternal.

X. God's purposes are not inconsistent with, but demand the use of means both on his part, and on our part, to accomplish them.

The great end upon which he has set his heart necessarily depends upon the use of means, both moral and physical, to accomplish it. The highest well-being of the whole universe is his end. This end can be secured only by securing conformity to the law of matter and of mind. Mind is influenced by motives, and hence moral and physical government are naturally necessary means of securing the great end proposed by the Divine mind.

Hence also results the necessity of a vast and complicated system of means and influences, such as we see spread around us on every hand. The history of the universe is but the history of creation and of the means which God is using to secure his end with their natural and incidental results. It has already been shown that the bible teaches that the purposes of God include and respect both means and ends. I will only add that God's purposes do not render any event, dependent upon the acts of a moral agent, necessarily certain, or certain with a certainty of necessity. Although, as was before said, all events are certain with some kind of certainty, and would be and must be, if they are ever to come to pass, whether God purposes them, or whether he fore-knows them or not; yet no event, depending upon the will of a free agent, is, or can be certain with a certainty of necessity. The agent could by natural possibility do otherwise than he will do and than God purposes to suffer him to do or wills that he shall do. God's purposes, let it be understood, are not a system of fatality. They leave every moral agent entirely free to choose and act freely. God knows infallibly how every creature will act and has made all his arrangements accordingly, to overrule the wicked actions of moral agents on the one hand and to produce or induce the holy actions of others on the other hand. But be it remembered, that neither the Divine fore-knowledge nor the Divine purpose in any instance sets aside the free agency of the creature. He in every instance acts as freely and as responsibly as if God neither knew nor purposed any thing expecting the conduct or his destiny.

God's purposes extend to all events in some sense, as has been shown. They extend as really to the most common events of life as to the most rare. But in respect to the every day transactions of life, men are not wont to stumble and cavil and say, Why, if I am to live, I shall live whatever I may do to destroy my health and life; and if I am to die, I can not live, do what I will. No, in these events they will not throw off responsibility and cast themselves upon the purposes of God, but on the contrary they are as much engaged to secure the end they have in view as if God neither knew or purposed any thing about it.

Why then should they do as they often do in regard to the salvation of their souls, cast off responsibility, settle down in listless inactivity as if the purposes of God in respect to salvation were but a system of iron fatality from which there is no escape? Surely "madness is in their hearts while they live." But let them understand that in thus doing they sin against the Lord, and be sure their sin will find them out.



Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 75

PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.

In discussing this subject, I will.

I. CALL ATTENTION TO THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF CERTAINTY THAT MAY BE PREDICATED OF DIFFERENT THINGS,

II. STATE WHAT IS NOT INTENDED BY THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS, AS I HOLD THE DOCTRINE.

III. SHOW WHAT IS INTENDED BY IT.

IV. NOTICE THE OBJECTIONS TO THIS DOCTRINE.

V. PRESENT THE PRINCIPLE ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF IT.

1. I am to notice the different kinds of certainty.

Every thing must be certain with some kind of certainty. There is a way in which all things and events either have been, are, or will be. All events that ever did or will occur, were and are as really certain before as after their occurrence. To an omniscient mind their real certainty might and must have been known as really before as after their occurrence. All future events, for example, will be in some way, and there is now no real uncertainty in fact, nor can there be any real uncertainty in the knowledge of God respecting them. They are really as certain before they come to pass as they will ever be, and they are as truly and perfectly known as certain by God as they ever will be. They are as truly present to the Divine fore-knowledge as they ever will be. Whatever of contingency and uncertainty there may be respecting them in some respects, yet in point of fact, all events are certain, and there is no real uncertainty in respect to any event that ever did or will occur. This would be equally true whether God or any other being knew how they would be or not. The fore-knowledge of God does not make them certain. He knows them to be certain simply because they are so. Omniscience is the necessary knowledge of all objects of knowledge, past, present and future. But omniscience does not create objects of knowledge. It does not render events certain, but only knows how they certainly will be because it is certain, not only that they will be, but how and when they will be. All the free actions of moral agents are as really certain before they occur, as they ever will be. And God must as truly know how they will be before they occur, as he does after they have occurred.

1. The first kind of certainty that I shall notice is that of absolute necessity; that is, a certainty depending on no conditions whatever. This is the highest kind of certainty. It belongs to the absolute and the infinite, to the existence of space, duration, and to the existence of God, and in short to every thing that is self-existent, infinite, and immutable in a natural sense; that is, to every thing infinite that does not imply voluntariness. The natural attributes of God are certain by this kind of certainty, but his moral attributes, consisting as they do in a voluntary state of mind, though infinite and eternal, do not belong to this class.

2. A second kind of certainty is that of physical, but conditional necessity. To this class belong all those events that come to pass under the operation of physical law. These belong properly to the chain of cause and effect. The cause existing,

the effect must exist. The event is rendered certain and necessary by the existence of its cause. Its certainty is conditioned upon its cause. The cause existing, the event must follow by a law of necessity, and the events would not occur of course, did not their causes exist. The causes being what they are, the events must be what they are. This class of events are as really certain as the foregoing class. In speaking of one of them as certain in a higher sense than the other, it is not intended that one class is any more certain than the other, but only that the certainty is of a different kind. For example, the first class are certain by a kind of certainty that does not and never did depend on the will of any being whatever. There never was any possibility that these things should be otherwise than they are. This, it will be seen, must be true of space and duration, and of the existence and the natural attributes of God.

But all other things except the self-existent, the naturally immutable, and eternal, are certain only as they are conditioned directly or indirectly upon the will of some being. For example, all the events of the physical universe were rendered certain by creation and the establishing and upholding of those physical and necessary laws that cause these events. These are, therefore, certain by a conditioned though physical necessity. There is no freedom or liberty in the events themselves: they occur necessarily when their causes or conditions are supplied.

3. A third kind of certainty is that of a moral certainty. I call it a moral certainty, not because the class of events which belong to it are less certain than the foregoing, but because they consist in or are conditioned upon the free actions of moral agents. This class do not occur under the operation of a law of necessity, though they occur with certainty. There is no contingency predicable of the absolutely certain in the sense of absolute certainty above defined. The second class of certainties are contingent only in respect to their causes. Upon condition that the causes are certain the events depending upon them are certain, without or beyond any contingency. This third class, though no less certain than the former two, are nevertheless contingent in the highest sense in which any thing can be contingent. They occur under the operation of free will, and consequently there is not one of them that might not by natural possibility fail, or be otherwise than it is or will in fact be. This kind of certainty I call a moral certainty as opposed to a physical certainty, that is, it is not a certainty of necessity in any sense; it is only a mere certainty or a voluntary certainty, a free certainty, a certainty that might, by natural possibility in every case, be no certainty at all. But on the contrary the opposite might in every instance be certain by a natural possibility. God in every instance knows how these events will be, as really as if they occurred by necessity, but his foreknowledge does not affect their certainty one way or the other. They might in every instance by natural possibility be no certainties at all, or be the opposite of what they are or will be, God's fore-knowledge in any wise notwithstanding. God knows them to be certain, not because his knowledge has any influence of itself to necessitate them, but because they are certain in themselves. Because it is certain in itself that they will be, God knows that they will be. To this class of events belong all the free actions of moral agents. All events may be traced ultimately to the action of God's free will; that is, God's free actions gave existence to the universe with all its physical agencies and laws, so that all physical events are in some sense owing to and result from the actions of free will. But physical events occur nevertheless under the immediate operation of a law of necessity. The class now under consideration depend not upon the operation of physical law as their cause. They are caused by the free agent himself. They find the occasions of their occurrence in the providential events with which moral agents are surrounded, and therefore may be traced indirectly and more or less remotely to the actions of the Divine will.

Concerning this class of events, I would farther remark that they are not only contingent in such a sense that they might in every case by natural possibility be otherwise than they are, but there may be, humanly speaking, the utmost danger that they will be otherwise than they really will be; that is, there may be danger, and the utmost danger, in the only sense in which there can be in fact any danger that any event will be otherwise than what it turns out to be. All events being really certain, there is in fact no danger that any event whatever will turn out differently from what it does, in the sense that it is not certain how it will be. But since all acts of free will, and all events dependent on those acts are contingent in the highest sense in which any event can in the nature of things be contingent, and in the sense that, humanly speaking, there may be millions of chances to own that they will be otherwise than they will in fact turn out to be, we say of all this class of events that there is danger that they may or may not occur.

Again, I remark in respect to this class of events that God may foresee that so intricate is the labyrinth, and so complicated are the occasions of failure that nothing but the utmost watchfulness and diligent use of means on his part and on our part, can secure the occurrence of the event. Every thing revealed in the Bible concerning the perseverance and final salvation of the saints, and every thing that is true, and that God knows of the free actions and destinies of the saints, may be of this class. These events are nevertheless certain, and are known to God as certainties. They will not in

fact, one of them, turn out differently from what he foresees that they will; and yet by natural possibility, they might every one of them turn out differently, and there may, in the only sense in which danger is predicable of any thing, be the utmost danger that some or all of them will turn out differently from what they in fact will. These events are contingent in such a sense that should the means fail to be used, or should any event in the whole chain of influences connected with their occurrence, be otherwise than it is, the end or event resulting would or might be otherwise than in fact it will be. They are nevertheless certain, every one of them, together with all the influences upon which each free act depends. Nothing is uncertain in respect to whether it will occur or not; and yet no free act, or event depending upon a free act is certain in the sense that it can not by natural possibility be otherwise, nor in the sense that there may not be great danger, or humanly speaking, a probability that it will be otherwise, and that humanly speaking, there may not be many chances to one that it will be otherwise.

When I say that any event may, by natural possibility be otherwise than what it will in fact be, I mean that the free agent has natural power in every instance to choose otherwise than he does or actually will choose.

As an illustration of both the contingency and the certainty of this class of events, suppose a man about to attempt to cross Lake Erie on a wire, or to pass down the falls of Niagara in a bark canoe. The result of this attempt is really certain. God must know how it will be. But this result, though certain, is conditioned upon a multitude of things, each of which the agent has natural power to make otherwise than in fact he will. To secure his safe crossing every volition must be just what and as it will be; but there is not one among them that might not by natural possibility be the opposite of what it will be.

Again, the case may be such and the danger of future so great that nothing could secure the safe crossing, but a revelation from God that would inspire confidence that the adventurer should in fact cross the lake or venture down the falls safely.

I say this revelation of God might be indispensable to his safe crossing. Suppose it were revealed to a man under such circumstances that he should actually arrive in safety, but the revelation was accompanied with the emphatic assurance that the end depended upon the most diligent, cautious, and persevering use of means on his part, and that any failure on his part would defeat the end. Both the revelation of the certainty of success and the emphatic warning might be indispensable to the securing of the end. Now if the adventurer had confidence in the promise of success, he would have confidence in the caution not to neglect the necessary means, and his confidence in both might secure the desired result. But take an example from Scripture:

Acts 27:21. But after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. 22. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24. Saying, Fear not, Paul: thou must be brought before Caesar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. 26. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island. 27. But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; 28. And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. 29. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. 30. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under color as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, 31. Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

Here the end was foreknown and expressly foretold at first without any condition expressed, though they plainly understood that the end was to be secured by means. Paul afterwards informs them that if they neglected the means, the end would fail.

Both the means and the end were certain in fact, and God therefore expressly revealed the certainty of the result, and afterwards by a subsequent revelation secured the use of the necessary means. Here was no uncertainty in the sense that the thing might, in fact, turn out otherwise than it did, and yet it was uncertain in the sense that by natural possibility both the means and the end might fail.

I remark, again, in respect to events that are morally certain, that if they are greatly desired, they are not the more, but all the less, in danger of failing by how much stronger the confidence is that they will occur, provided it be understood that they are certain only by a moral certainty; that is, provided it be understood that the event is conditioned upon the free acts of the agent himself.

Again, it is generally admitted that hope is a condition of success in any enterprise, and if this is so, assurance of success, upon the proper conditions, can not tend to defeat the end.

I remark again, that there is a difference between real danger and a knowledge or sense of danger. There may be as great and as real danger when we have no sense or knowledge of it as when we have. And on the other hand, when we have the highest and the keenest sense of danger, there may be, in fact, no real danger; and indeed, as has been said, there never is any danger in the sense that any thing will, as a matter of fact, turn out differently from what God foresees it will be.

Again, the fact that any thing is revealed as certain, does not make it certain; that is, the revelation does not make it certain. It had been certain, had not this certainty been revealed, unless it be in cases where the revelation is a condition or means of the certainty revealed. An event may be really certain and may be revealed as certain, and yet, humanly speaking, there may be millions of chances to one that it will not be as it is revealed; that is, so far as human foresight can go, the probabilities may be all against it.

II. State what is not intended by the perseverance of the saints, as I hold the doctrine.

1. It is not intended that any sinner will be saved without complying with the conditions of salvation; that is, without regeneration and persevering in obedience to the end of life in a sense to be hereafter explained.

2. It is not intended that saints or the truly regenerate can not fall from grace and be finally lost by natural possibility. It must be naturally possible for all moral agents to sin at any time. Saints on earth and in heaven can by natural possibility apostatize and fall and be lost. Were not this naturally possible, there would be no virtue in perseverance.

3. It is not intended that the true saints are in no danger of apostacy and ultimate damnation. For, humanly speaking, there may be and doubtless is the greatest danger in respect to many, if not all of them, in the only sense in which danger is predicable of any event whatever, that they will apostatize, and be ultimately lost.

4. It is not intended that there may not be, humanly speaking, myriads of chances to one that some, or that many of them will fall and be lost. This may be, as we say, highly probable; that is, it may be probable in the only sense in which it is probable that any event whatever may be different from what it will turn out to be.

5. It is not intended that the salvation of the saints is possible except upon condition of great watchfulness, and effort, and perseverance on their part, and great grace on the part of God.

6. It is not intended that their salvation is certain in any higher sense than all their future free actions are. The result is conditioned upon their free actions, and the end can be no more certain than its means or conditions. If the ultimate salvation of the saints is certain, it is certain only upon condition that their perseverance in obedience to the end of life is certain. Every act of this obedience is free and contingent in the highest sense in which contingency can be predicated of any thing whatever. It is also uncertain by the highest kind of uncertainty that can be predicated of any event whatever. Therefore there is, and must be as much real danger of the saints failing of ultimate salvation as there is that any event whatever will be different from what it turns out to be.

But here it should be distinctly remembered, as was said, that there is a difference between a certainty and a knowledge of it. It is one thing for an event to be really certain and another thing for us to have a knowledge of it as certain. Every thing is really equally certain, but many things are not revealed to us as certain. Those that are revealed as certain, are no more really so than others, but with respect to future things not in some way revealed to us we know not how they will prove to be. The fact that a thing is revealed to us as certain does not make it certain, nor is it really any the less uncertain because it is revealed to us as certain, unless the revelation tends to secure the certainty. Suppose the ultimate salvation of all the

saints is certain, and that this certainty is revealed to us; unless this revelation is the means of securing their salvation, they are in just as much real danger of ultimately failing of eternal life as if no such revelation had been made.

Notwithstanding the certainty of their salvation and the fact that this certainty is revealed to them, there is just as much real, though unknown, certainty or uncertainty in respect to any future event whatever as there is in respect to this. All events are certain with some kind of certainty, and would be whether any being whatever knew the certainty or not. So all events consisting in, or depending upon the free acts of free agents are really as uncertain as any event can be, and this is true whether the certainty is revealed or not. The salvation of the saints, then, is not certain with any higher certainty than belongs to all future events that consist in, or are conditioned upon the free acts of free will, though this certainty may be revealed to us in one case, and not in the other.

Of course the salvation of the saints is not certain by any kind or degree of certainty that offers the least ground of hope of impunity in a course of sin. "For if they are to be saved, they are to be saved upon condition of continuing in faith and obedience to the end of life."

Moreover their salvation is no more certain than their future free obedience is. The certainty of future free obedience and a knowledge of this certainty, can not be a reason for not obeying, or afford encouragement to live in sin. So no more can the knowledge of the conditional and moral certainty of our salvation afford a ground for hope of impunity in a life of sin.

8. The salvation of the saints is not certain by any kind or degree of certainty that renders their salvation or their damnation any more impossible than it renders impossible any future acts of sin or obedience. Consequently, it is not certain in such a sense as to afford the least encouragement for hope of salvation in sin any more than a certainty that a farmer would raise a crop upon condition of his diligent and timely and persevering use of all adequate means, would encourage him to neglect those means. If the farmer had a knowledge of the certainty with its conditions, it would be no temptation to neglect the means, but on the other hand this knowledge would operate as a powerful motive to the required use of them. So neither can the knowledge of the certainty of the salvation of the saints with the condition of it be to them a temptation to live in sin, but on the contrary this knowledge must act as a powerful incentive to the exercise of confidence in God and perseverance in holiness unto the end. So neither can the certainty that the necessary means will be used, afford any encouragement to neglect the use of them in the case of man's salvation any more than the revealed certainty that a farmer will sow his field and have a crop would encourage him to neglect to sow. The known certainty of both the means and the end, with an understanding of the moral nature of the certainty, has no natural tendency to beget presumption and neglect but on the contrary to beget a diligent, and cheerful, and confident use of the necessary means.

III, Show what is intended by the doctrine in question.

It is intended that all who are at any time true saints of God are preserved by his grace and Spirit through faith in the sense that, subsequently to regeneration, obedience is their rule, and disobedience only the exception; and that being thus kept, they will certainly be saved with an everlasting salvation.

IV. Consider the objections to it.

1. It is said that the natural tendency of this doctrine condemns it; that it tends to beget and foster a casual presumption in a life of sin on the part of those who think themselves saints.

There is, I reply a broad and obvious distinction between the abuse of a good thing or doctrine, and its natural tendency. The legitimate tendency of a thing or doctrine may be good, and yet it may be abused and perverted. This is true of the atonement, and the offer of pardon through Christ. These doctrines have been, and are greatly objected to by universalists and unitarians as having a tendency to encourage the hope of impunity in sin. It is said by them that to hold out the idea that Christ has made an atonement for sin, and that the oldest and vilest sinners may be forgiven, and saved, tends directly to immorality and to encourage the hope of ultimate impunity in a life of sin, the hope that after a sinful life the sinner may at last repent and be saved.

Now, there is so much plausibility in this objection to the doctrine of pardon and atonement that many sensible men have rejected those doctrines because of this objection. They have regarded the objection as unanswerable. But a close examination will show that the objection against those doctrines is entirely without foundation, and not only so, but that

the real natural tendency of those doctrines affords a strong presumptive argument in their favor. Who does not know after all, that from the nature and laws of mind, the manifestation of compassion and of disinterested good will, and a disposition to forgive a fault on the part of the justly offended, tend in the highest degree to bring the offender to repentance? "If thine enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shall heap coals of fire upon his head." This command is the perfection of wisdom. It recognizes mind, and the laws of mind as they are. The free offer of pardon to a convicted and self-condemned sinner has no natural tendency to encourage him in sin, but is the most potent influence possible to bring him to immediate repentance.

So the telling of a convinced and self-condemned sinner that Christ has died for his sins, and offers freely and at once to forgive all the past, has no natural tendency to beget a spirit of perseverance in rebellion, but is on the contrary the readiest, and safest, and, I may add, the only effectual method of subduing him and bringing him to immediate repentance. But suppose, on the other hand, you tell him there is no forgiveness, that he must be punished for his sins at all events, what tendency has this to bring him to immediate and genuine repentance; to beget within him the love required by the law of God? Assuring him of punishment for all his sins might serve to restrain outward manifestations of a sinful heart, but certainly it tends not to subdue selfishness and to cleanse the heart; whereas the offer of mercy through the death of Christ, has a most sin-subduing tendency. It is such a manifestation, to the sinner, of God's great love to him, his real pity for, and readiness to overlook and blot out the past, as tends to break down the stubborn heart into genuine repentance for sin, and beget the sincerest love to God and Christ together with the deepest self-loathing and self-abasement on account of sin. Thus the doctrines of the atonement and pardon through a crucified Redeemer in stead of being condemned by their legitimate tendency, are greatly confirmed thereby. To be sure these doctrines are liable to abuse and so is every good thing; but is this a good reason for rejecting them? Our necessary food and drink may be abused, and often are, and so are all the most essential blessings of life. Should we reject them on this account?

It is admitted that the doctrines of atonement and forgiveness through Christ are greatly abused by careless sinners, and hypocrites; but is this a good reason for denying and withholding them from the convicted sinner who is earnestly enquiring what he shall do [to] be saved? No, indeed.

It is also admitted that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is liable to, and often is abused by the carnal and deceived professor; but is this a good reason for rejecting it and for withholding its consolations from the tempted, tempest-tossed saint? By no means. The fact is that such are the circumstances of temptation from within and without, in which the saints are placed in this life, that when they are made really acquainted with themselves and are brought to a proper appreciation of the circumstances in which they truly are, they have but little rational ground of hope except what is found in this doctrine. The natural tendency and inevitable consequence of a thorough revelation of themselves to themselves, would be to beget despair but for the covenanted grace and faithfulness of God. What saint who has ever been revealed to himself by the Holy Spirit, has not seen what Paul saw when he said, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing?" Who that has been made acquainted with himself, does not know that he never did, and never will take one step towards heaven except as he is anticipated and drawn by the grace of God in Christ Jesus? Who that knows himself does not understand that he never would have been converted, but for the grace of God anticipating and exciting the first motions of his mind in a right direction? And what true saint does not know that such are his former habitudes; and such the circumstances of trial under which he is placed, and such the downward tendency of his own soul on account of his physical depravity, that although converted, he shall not persevere for an hour except the indwelling grace and Spirit of God shall hold him up and quicken him in the path of holiness?

Where, I would ask, is the ground of hope for the saints as they exist in this world? Not in the fact that they have been physically regenerated, so that to fall is naturally impossible. Not in the fact that they have passed through any such change of nature as to secure their perseverance for an hour if left to themselves. Not in the fact that they can; or will sustain themselves for a day or a moment by their resolutions. Where then is their hope? There is not even a ground of probability that any one of them will ever be saved unless the doctrine in question be true, that is, unless the promised grace and faithfulness of God in Christ Jesus goes before and from step to step secures their perseverance. But if this grace is promised to any saint as his only ground of confidence, or even hope that he shall be saved, it is equally and upon the same conditions promised to all the saints. No one more than any other can place the least reasonable dependence on any thing except the grace equally promised and vouchsafed to all. What does a man know of himself who hopes to be saved and who yet does not depend wholly on promises of grace in Christ Jesus?

The natural tendency of true and thorough conviction of sin and of such a knowledge of ourselves as is essential to salvation, is to beget and foster despondency and despair; and, as I said, the soul in this condition has absolutely little or no ground of hope of ultimate salvation except that which this doctrine, when rightly understood, affords. However far he may have progressed in the way of life, he sees, when he thoroughly knows the truth, that he has progressed not a step except as he has been drawn and overpersuaded by the indwelling grace and spirit of Christ, and that he shall absolutely go no further in the way to heaven unless the same gracious influence is continued in such a sense and to such extent as to overcome all the temptations with which he is beset. His only hope is in the fact that God has promised to keep and preserve him. Nothing but God's faithfulness to his Son procured the conversion of any saint. Nothing but this same faithfulness has procured his perseverance for a day, and nothing else can render the salvation of any soul at all probable. What can a man be thinking about, or what can he know of himself; who does not know this? Unless the same grace that secures the conversion of the saints, secures their perseverance to the end, there is no hope for them. It is true that the promises to sinners and to saints are conditioned upon their faith and upon the right exercise of their own agency, and it is also true that grace secures the fulfillment of the conditions of the promises in every instance in which they are fulfilled, or they never would be fulfilled. We shall see that the promises of the Father to the Son secure the bestowment upon the saints of all grace to secure their final salvation.

It shocks and distresses me to hear professed christians talk of being saved at all except upon the ground of the anticipating, and persevering, and sin-overcoming, and hell-subduing grace of God in Christ Jesus. Why, I should as soon expect the devil to be saved as that any saint on earth will be, if left, with all the promises of God in his hands, to stand and persevere without the drawings, and inward teachings, and overcoming influences of the Holy Spirit. Shame on theology that suspends the ultimate salvation of the saints upon the broken reed of their own resolutions in their best estate. Their firmest resolutions are nothing unless they are formed and supported by the influence of the Spirit of grace going before and exciting and persuading to their formation and their continuance. This is every where taught in the bible; and who that has considered the matter, does not know that this is the experience of every saint? Where, then, is the ground of hope, if the doctrine in question be denied? "If the foundation be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?" Where, then, is the evil tendency of this doctrine? It has no naturally evil tendency. Can the assurance of eternal salvation through the blood, and love, and grace of Christ, have a natural tendency to harden the heart of a child of God against his Father and his Savior? Can the revealed fact that he shall be more than a conqueror through Christ beget in him a disposition to sin against Christ? impossible! This doctrine though liable to abuse by hypocrites, is nevertheless the sheet anchor of the saints in hours of conflict. And shall the children be deprived of the bread of life, because sinners will pervert the use of it to their own destruction? This doctrine is absolutely needful when conviction is deep and conflicts with temptation are sharp, to prevent despair. Its natural tendency is to slay and keep down selfishness, to forestall selfish efforts and resolutions, and to sustain the confidence of the soul at all times. It tends to subdue sin, to humble the soul under a sense of the great love and faithfulness of God in Christ Jesus; to influence the soul to live upon Christ and to renounce entirely and forever all confidence in the flesh. Indeed, its tendency is the direct opposite of that asserted in the objection. It is the abuse and not the natural tendency of this doctrine against which this objection is urged. But the abuse of a doctrine is no reason why it should be rejected.

2. But it is said that real saints do sometimes fall into it least temporary backsliding, in which cases the belief of this doctrine tends to lull them into carnal security and to prolong their backsliding, if not to embolden them to apostatize.

To this I reply,

(1.) That if real christians do backslide, they lose for the time being their evidence of acceptance with God, and withal they know that in their present state they can not be saved. This objection is levelled rather against that view of perseverance that says, "once in grace, always in grace;" that teaches the doctrine of perpetual justification upon condition of one act of faith. The doctrine as stated in these lectures holds out no ground of hope to a backslider except upon condition of return and perseverance to the end. Moreover the doctrine, as here taught, is that perseverance in holiness in the sense that subsequent to regeneration, holiness is at least the rule and sin only the exception, is an attribute of christian character. Every moment, therefore, a backslider remains in sin, he must have less evidence that he is a child of God.

But, as I said, he loses confidence in his own christianity, and in this state of backsliding he does not believe the doctrine of perseverance as a doctrine of revelation. It is absurd to say that while backslidden from God, he still has faith in his word, and believes this doctrine as a christian doctrine and upon the strength of the testimony of God. He does not in this

state really believe the doctrine, and therefore it is not the tendency of the doctrine when believed that harms him, but a gross abuse and perversion of it. But the perversion of a doctrine is no objection to it. The real tendency of the doctrine is to break the heart of the backslider, to exhibit to him the great love, and faithfulness, and grace of God which tends naturally to subdue selfishness and to humble the heart. When backsliders are emboldened by this doctrine and rendered presumptuous it is never by any other than a gross perversion and abuse of it.

But still it is said that when christians backslide; they know if this doctrine is true that they shall not die in a backslidden state, and that therefore they are naturally rendered presumptuous by it. I answer, that the same objection lies against the doctrine of election, which can not be denied. Who does not know that sinners and backsliders say, If I am elected I shall be saved, and if not, I shall be lost. The event is certain at any rate, and if I am to use the means, I shall use the means; and if I am to neglect them, I shall neglect them. If I am one of the elect, I shall not die in sin; and if not, I shall, do what I may. The backslider says, I have been converted and am therefore one of the elect, for there is no evidence that any of the non-elect are ever converted; but the elect can not be lost or will not be lost at any rate: therefore I shall be reclaimed before I die. Now who does not see that all such refuges are refuges of lies? They are abuses of precious truth. The objection we are considering is based upon an overlooking of the all important distinction between the natural tendency and the abuse of a doctrine. If this doctrine has a natural tendency to mischief, it must be calculated to mislead a humble, honest, and prayerful mind in search of truth. It must tend to lead a true saint away from, instead of to, Christ. The fact that sinners and backsliders who for the time being are the chief of sinners will and do abuse and pervert it, is no better reason for rejecting this doctrine than it is the rejecting the doctrine of atonement, of justification by faith, or the doctrine of the free pardon of the greatest sinners upon condition of repentance and faith. It is true that no person whom God foresees will be saved will die in sin. It is true that no elect person will die in sin; and, as I believe, all true saints are elect, nevertheless the natural tendency of this doctrine is any thing else than to beget presumption in the real saint; but on the contrary it has a natural and a powerful tendency to impress him with sin, with subduing views of the infinite love, compassion, faithfulness and grace of God, and to charm him away from his sins forever. If by any means he falls into temporary backsliding, he may abuse this as he may every other doctrine of the gospel; but let it be understood that he does not believe for the time being one of the doctrines of the gospel. Not believing them, he of course is not injured by their natural tendency, but only by a perverse abuse of them.

As well might a universalist croak and accuse you of preaching smooth things and of encouraging sinners to continue in sin by preaching that the vilest sinner may be forgiven as for you to object to this doctrine that backsliders are rendered presumptuous by it.

If one is more liable to abuse than the other, the difference is only in degree and not in kind. The backslider can not know that he was ever converted; for as a matter of fact, he has lost communion with God and has lost the present evidence of acceptance. He does not, therefore, rest in a real belief of this doctrine, but only in a perverse abuse of it.

Those who persist in such objections as this should reflect upon their own inconsistency in making a manifest perversion and abuse of this doctrine an objection to it when they hold other doctrines, equally liable to abuse and equally abused, in spite of such abuse. Let such persons see that they are practically adopting a principle and insisting upon its application in this case, which if carried out, would set aside the whole gospel. They are thus playing into the hands of infidels and universalists, and giving the enemies of God occasion to blaspheme.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 76

PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.

FARTHER OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

3. It is objected that the bible speaks of the saints as if there were real danger of their being lost. It requires them to spend the time of their sojourning here in fear, and abounds with cautions and warnings and threatenings that are certainly out of place, and not at all to be regarded, if the salvation of the saints is a revealed certainty. How, it is inquired, can we fear, if God has revealed the certainty of our salvation? Is not fear in such a case a result of unbelief? Can God reveal to us the fact that we shall certainly be saved and then call on us or exhort us to fear that we shall not be saved? Can he require us to doubt his word and his oath? If God has revealed the certainty of the salvation of all true saints, can any saint fear that he shall not be saved without downright unbelief? and can God approve and even enjoin such fears? If a person is conscious of possessing the character described to the true saints in the bible, is he not bound upon the supposition that this doctrine is true, to have and to entertain the most unwavering assurance that he shall be saved? Has he any right to doubt it or to fear that he shall not be saved?

I answer, that no true saint who has an evidence or an earnest of his acceptance with God, such as the true saint may have, has a right to doubt for a moment that he shall be saved, nor has he a right to fear that he shall not be saved. I also add that the bible no where encourages or calls upon the saints to fear that they shall not be saved, or that they shall be lost. It calls on them to fear something else, to fear to sin or apostatize lest they should be lost, but not that they shall sin and be lost. The following are specimens of the exhortations and warnings given to the saints:

Matt. 26:41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Mark 13:33. Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. 34. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. So watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; 36. Lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37. And what I say unto you; I say unto all, Watch.

Luke 12:37. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh, shall find watching, verily I say unto you, That he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

1 Cor. 10:12. Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

19:13. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Eph. 5:15. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. 16. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

6:10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. 11. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Phil. 1:27. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. 28. And in nothing terrified by your adversaries which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

1 Thes. 5:6. Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

1 Tim. 6:12. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

3[2.] Tim. 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4:5. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

1 Pet. 4:7. But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

Matt. 10:22. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

John 15:6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Ro. 2:6. Who will render to every man according to his deeds; 7. To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life.

1 Cor. 9:27. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

2 Cor. 6:1. We, then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

Col. 1:23. If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.

Heb. 3:[6] But Christ as a Son over his house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. 12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13. But exhort one another daily, while it is called, To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

4:1. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 11. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

2 Pet. 1:10. Wherefore the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

Rev. 2:10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days[;] be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. 17. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. 26. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.

21:7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

1 Pet. 1:17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

I find no instance in the bible in which the saints are enjoined or exhorted to fear that they shall actually be lost; but on the contrary this kind of fear is every where, in the word of God, discountenanced and rebuked, and the saints are exhorted to the utmost assurance that Christ will keep and preserve them to the end, and finally bestow on them eternal life. They are warned against sin and apostacy, and are informed that if they do apostatize they shall be lost. They are expressly informed that their salvation is conditioned upon their perseverance in holiness to the end. They are also called upon to watch against sin and apostacy, to fear both, lest they should be lost:

Heb. 4:1. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

6:1. Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2. Of the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3. And this will we do, if God permit. 4. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5. And have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, 6. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

3:12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you, an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

They are required to fear to sin but not to fear that they shall sin in any sense that implies any expectation of sinning. They are to fear to apostatize, but not to expect, or fear that they shall apostatize. They are to fear to be lost, but not that they shall be lost. To fear to sin lest we should be lost, is a very different thing from fearing that we shall sin and shall be lost. There is just as much need of our fearing to sin, and of fearing to be lost as there would be if there were no certainty of our salvation. When we consider the nature of the certainty of the salvation of the saints, that it is only a moral and a conditional certainty, we can see the propriety and the necessity of the warnings and threatenings which we find addressed to them in the bible. The language of the bible is just what it might be expected to be, in case the salvation of the saints were certain with a moral and conditional certainty.

But in replying to this objection, it is important to ascertain the meaning of the terms used by the objector. I will first show what is not, and what is implied in the term danger:

(1.) We have seen that all events are really certain by some kind of certainty. Danger then can not imply that there is any real uncertainty in respect to that of which we predicate danger, for this can not truly be said of any event whatever. It will be in some way, and it is beforehand as really certain how it will be, as it is after it has thus occurred. Danger, then, does not imply real uncertainty.

(2.) We generally use the term as implying uncertainty it respects our knowledge of how the even will be; that is, we predicate danger of that of which we are not certain how it will turn out to be. We generally use the term as implying that we regard the result as uncertain, and that there is at least a possibility and even a probability that it may turn out differently from what we would have it. The term, then, does not imply real, but only to us an apparent uncertainty. This is commonly implied in the term danger as we use it.

(3.) But the term does not always and necessarily imply that we are uncertain in respect to the event of which we predicate danger. If a thing may fail by natural possibility; if, moreover, the result is suspended on the action of free will; and if, humanly speaking and judging of the probability of the result from the usual course of events there are seen to be many chances to one against it; and if from the nature of the event, nothing can make it certain, or secure its occurrence, but the most strenuous care and watchfulness and effort on the part of those whose agency is to be employed in its

production; and if, moreover, it is understood that those concerned will have many temptations to take a course that would, if taken, defeat it, to each of which temptations the agent can yield with the greatest ease and no compulsion will be used to prevent his yielding--I say, when there is a concurrence of such facts and circumstances, we should say that there was danger even if the result were a revealed certainty. There is in this case, in truth, as real and as much danger of failure as there is that any event whatever will be different from what it in fact turns out to be; and considering the nature of the certainty, and the multitude of apparent contingencies upon which the result is suspended, and, humanly speaking, the many chances to one against its occurrence, we should in such a case say there is danger, and could not but feel a sense of danger although we knew that the result was certain. For example, suppose a man about to cross the Niagara river upon a wire just over the falls, and suppose it to be revealed to him and to the world that he shall cross in safety; but suppose it to be revealed also that he is not to be preserved by a miracle, but that his safety is to depend upon his own skill, prudence and efforts, and the fact revealed to be simply that he will so behave as to cross in safety. Now all would say and feel that there was danger in this case, although they might have the fullest confidence in the result. The danger is as real in this case as if the certainty were not revealed; and considering the multitude of chances of failure, we should feel and say that there is danger, notwithstanding the revealed certainty. If the certainty were absolute, or were that of necessity, we should not say or feel that there was danger. But when the certainty is understood to be only a moral one, we should as properly say that there was danger, as if the certainty, though real, were not revealed. By danger, then, we mean to express, not a real, but only an apparent uncertainty, and a human probability, or at least a natural possibility that an event may turn out otherwise than we desire. We do not always and necessarily mean that the event is uncertain to us, but that humanly speaking and judging from the ordinary course of events, it is possible or probable that it may not occur as we would have it, and that nothing can render it certain but care and watchfulness and diligence and perseverance on the part of him, or them, upon whose agency the event is suspended.

But this objection assumes a false philosophy of mind. It assumes that fear is out of place and impossible except when there is at least supposed uncertainty. It is said that fear is an emotion that always implies real or apprehended danger in the sense of uncertainty.

It is asserted that the emotion of fear can not exist but upon condition that the subject does not regard himself as safe, or that he does not regard the interest or thing safe, concerning which fear is excited. But this is a mistake. It is true, that fear is more readily excited when there is no accredited certainty in regard to the safety of the thing or interest concerning which the fear is excited; and it is also true that this kind of fear tends, by reason of its strength and from its nature, very strongly to selfish efforts to escape from apprehended danger. It is also true that fear may be and often is excited when there is no accredited uncertainty and no apprehended danger in the sense of uncertainty in regard to the safety of self or of the interest or thing respecting which the fear is excited. For example, place an individual upon the verge of a precipice, beneath which yawns a gulph of frightful depth, and withal chain him fast so that he knows that to fall is impossible, and yet his fears will be excited. An emotion of fear will arise in spite of himself. Webster quotes Rogers' definition of fear thus. "Fear is that passion of our nature which excites us to provide for our security on the approach of evil." But this, as we shall see, is saying only half the truth. "Fear," Webster says, "expresses less apprehension than dread, and dread less than terror, and terror less than fright. The force of this passion beginning with the most moderate degree may be thus expressed: Fear, dread, terror, fright." He says again, "Fear in scripture is used to express a filial or a slavish passion. In good men, the fear of God is a holy awe or reverence of God and of his laws, which springs from a just view and real love of the divine character, leading the subjects of it to hate and shun every thing that can offend such a holy being. Slavish fear is the effect or consequence of guilt: it is the painful apprehension of merited punishment." Every one knows that these two kinds of fear are frequently spoken of in the bible. Fear does not necessarily imply an apprehension of real danger. For example, to return to the individual upon the verge of the precipice: here, although there is a known natural impossibility of falling, and of course no apprehension of danger in the sense of uncertainty, yet who does not perceive that even more than simple fear would, at least in many cases, be excited. To look down, even if certain of not falling, would excite in many minds a degree of dread and even of terror that would be almost unendurable. Few individuals could be found in whom the emotion of fear and even of terror would not, under such circumstances be awakened. It is a great mistake to suppose that this emotion can not exist except where there is real or apprehended danger in the sense of uncertainty. Who, for example, can not conceive, and who that has considered the matter does not admit, that a view of the torments of the damned may and doubtless will excite a wholesome fear and dread of sin in the inhabitants of heaven? The witnessing of any thing terrible in its nature tends to awaken the emotion of fear or terror whether we regard ourselves as exposed to it or not. Much more is this true when we know that the evil is naturally possible to us, and that nothing but care and watchfulness on our part, prevents its actually coming upon us. Now although we are certain that we shall not fall from a precipice upon which we stand, yet a view of so terrible an object

awakens the corresponding emotions at once. Instead of saying that fear is an emotion that is awakened only by an apprehension of real danger, it were more in accordance with truth to say that it is an emotion that is awakened when its correlated object is present to the thoughts; and its correlated object is any thing whatever that is fearful, or dreadful, or terrible in its nature, whether we regard ourselves as really exposed to it in the sense of uncertainty or not. Thus should we stand on the shore and witness a shipwreck, or be within hearing of a battle, or witness the rush of a distant tornado, as it spreads its wings of desolation over a country or a city, and in a direction from us that forbids the possibility of injury to us, the emotion of fear and even of terror in such cases would be awakened even if we were sure that no real harm would result to any being whatever. The emotions all have their correlated objects, and it is a great mistake to say that the presence of these objects does not awaken them except upon condition that our own interest or the interest of some one else is to be affected thereby. Objects naturally lovely when present to the mind, naturally awaken corresponding emotions. Objects of beauty, and deformity, of desire, and of terror, naturally awaken their corresponding emotions, wholly irrespective of any apprehended pleasure or pain to be derived from them. But surely I need not enter into a further statement or illustration of a fact of universal consciousness. The affirmation that fear is correlated only to real or apprehended danger in the sense of uncertainty and not at all to objects naturally fearful or terrible, irrespective of apprehended danger, is so palpable a contradiction of human consciousness that few reflecting minds can fail to perceive it.

Again, the sanctions of law have, and even in heaven will and must have their appropriate influence. But what is their appropriate influence? These sanctions are remuneratory and vindicatory as we have formerly seen. They present all that is naturally desirable as the reward of virtue. They hold forth all that is dreadful and terrible as the reward of sin. The contemplation of these sanctions naturally begets their correlated emotions in all worlds and at all times. The inhabitants of hell no doubt have their desires awakened by a contemplation of the happiness of heaven, while the inhabitants of heaven have their pity, their fears, their dread awakened in view of the torments of hell, and in neither case is it in view of any apprehended uncertainty. The inhabitants of hell know that the joys of heaven are certainly never to be theirs, and the inhabitants of heaven know that the miseries of hell are never to be theirs. Nevertheless the emotions respond to their correlated objects both worlds, and no doubt will as long as mind exists.

Sin is a hateful and a fearful and a terrible thing. The wrath of an offended God is infinitely terrible in its nature. Endless torments are unspeakably fearful and terrible. The flaming penalty of the divine law is an object of infinite terror. These things are so correlated to the constitution of moral agents, as naturally to excite their corresponding emotions entirely irrespective of any apprehended personal danger. When added to this tendency that results from the nature and correlations of those objects, there is a sense of uncertainty in regard to our personal safety, the contemplation of these objects causes intense agony. A certainty of personal security relieves the agony, but it does not cause the emotion of fear and awe and dread wholly to subside. Enough remains to fix the attention, and to act as a safeguard against presumption in cases where there is a natural possibility of the evil we fear becoming ours. What a mistake in psychology to affirm that fear can not exist unless it be excited by a belief of personal danger in the sense of uncertainty in respect to whether the evil shall come upon us. I say again that the emotion is correlated to its object, and is not dependent upon an apprehension of personal danger, as every one knows. When the apprehension of personal danger is added, the excitement of the emotion is greatly, and painfully aggravated. And on the other hand the emotion is modified and softened by a sense and certainty of personal security. But still the emotion in a modified and softened form will exist so long as an object, fearful and terrible in its nature, is made the object of contemplation.

In this life, time and habit and reflection may cause emotions of fear to cease even in the presence of a fearful object, as in the case of the supposed precipice. Continuing for a long time to look upon precisely the same object and considering that there was and could be no danger in the sense of uncertainty, and familiarizing the mind to this contemplation, might in time cause the sensible emotions of fear to cease. The same would be true of any other emotion, such as an emotion of love, or a sense of beauty, or deformity, &c. This would occur where the object contemplated presented no new attractions on the one hand, or repulsions or terrors on the other. But suppose the more the object was contemplated, the more it developed its beauties, its deformities, or its terrors to the mind. In this case the emotions corresponding would never cease. This is precisely the case with the sanctions of moral law, with the wrath and the love of God, with the joys of heaven and the pains of hell. These objects will never lose their influence for want of novelty. They will never cease to beget their correlated emotions, for the reason that they will be ever new in the sense of always presenting to the gaze of intelligent beings more to desire on the one hand and more to fear and dread on the other.

But again, we see that this objection is based upon a gross error in respect to the philosophy of moral government. Moral law exists with its sanctions as really in heaven as on earth, and its sanctions have in heaven the very influence that they ought to have on earth. It is as true in heaven as on earth that the soul that sinneth shall die. Now can the sanctions of law exert no influence in heaven? I suppose no reasonable person will doubt the certainty, and the known certainty of the perseverance of all saints there. But if they are certain that they shall not sin and fall, can they not be the subjects of fear in any sense? I answer yes. They are naturally able to sin and may be sometimes placed under circumstances where they are tempted to selfishness. Indeed the very nature of mind renders it certain that the saints will always have need of watchfulness against temptation and sin.

Now, it is the design of the sanctions of law in all worlds to produce hope on the one hand, and fear on the other; in holy beings the hope of reward and the fear to sin lest they should perish. This hope and fear in a being duly influenced by them, is not selfishness. It is madness and desperate wickedness not to be influenced by them. Our reason affirms that we ought to be influenced by them, that our own salvation is of infinite value and that our damnation were an infinite evil. It, therefore, affirms that we ought to seek to secure the one and to avoid the other. This is law both on earth and in heaven. This we are not to do selfishly, that is, to seek our own salvation or to avoid our own damnation exclusively or only, but to seek to save as many as possible; to love our neighbor as ourselves, and ourselves as our neighbor. In all worlds the sanctions of law ought to have their influence, and with holy beings they have. Holy beings are really subjects of fear to sin and to be lost, and are the only beings who have the kind of fear which God requires, and which it is the design of the sanctions of law and of the gospel to inspire. What! are we to be told that a certainty of safety is wholly inconsistent with every kind and degree of fear? What then is the use of law in heaven? Must a man on earth or in heaven doubt whether he shall have eternal life in order to leave room for the influence of moral law and of hope and fear? or in order to leave play for the motives of moral government? There is room for the same fear in heaven that ought to be on earth. No one had a right to expect to violate the precept and thereby incur the penalty of law. But every one was bound to fear to do so. The penalty was never designed on earth, any more than it is in heaven, to beget a slavish fear, or a fear that we shall sin and be damned; but only a fear to sin and be damned. A fear to sin and to be lost will to all eternity, no doubt, be a means of confirming holy beings in heaven. The law will be the same there as here. Free agency will be the same there as here. Perseverance in holiness will be a condition of continued salvation there as really as here. There may, and doubtless will be temptations there as well as here. They will therefore need there substantially the same motives to keep them that they need and have here. There will there be laws and conditions of continued bliss as here. There will be the same place, and in kind, if not in degree, the same occasion, for fear there that there is here. I say again, that the objection we are considering, overlooks both the true philosophy of mind and of the influence of the sanctions of moral law.

The objection we are considering is based upon the assumption that warnings, exhortation, to fear, &c., are inconsistent with the revealed certainty of the salvation of the saints. But does not the bible furnish abundant instances of warning in cases where the result is revealed as certain? The case of Paul's shipwreck is in point. This case has been once alluded to, but I recur to it for the sake of illustration in this place. God, by Paul, revealed the fact that no life on board the ship should be lost. This he declared as a fact, without any revealed qualification or condition. But when the sailors, who alone knew how to manage the ship, are about to abandon her, Paul informs them that their abiding in the ship was a condition of their salvation from death. The means were really as certain as the end; yet the end was conditioned upon the means, and if the means failed, the end would fail. Therefore Paul appealed to their fears of death to secure them against neglecting the means of safety. He did not intend to excite in them a distrust of the promise of God, but only to apprise them of the conditional nature of the certainty of their safety which had been revealed to them, and thus cause them at once to fear to neglect the means, and to confide in the certainty of safety in the diligent use of them. But this is a case, be it understood, directly in point and by itself affords a full answer to the objection under consideration. It is a case where a revealed certainty of the event was entirely consistent with warning and threatening. Nay, it is a case where the certainty, though real, was dependent upon the warning and threatening, and the consequent fear to neglect the means. This case is a full illustration of the revealed certainty of the ultimate salvation of the saints. and were there no other case in the bible where warning and threatening are addressed to those whose safety is revealed, this case would be a full answer to the assertion that warnings and threatenings are inconsistent with revealed certainty. Paul feared to have the means of safety neglected, but he did not fear that they really would be, because he knew that they would not.

To the pertinency of this case as an illustration, it is objected that the prophet pronounced the destruction of Nineveh in forty days to be certain, as really as Paul in this case revealed the certainty of the safety of all on board the ship; therefore, it is contended that Paul did not intend to reveal the result as certain, because when a revelation was made, respecting the

destruction of Nineveh in just as unqualified terms, the event showed that it was not certain. To this I reply that in the case of Jonah, it is manifest from the whole narrative that neither Jonah nor the Ninevites understood the event as certain. Jonah expressly assumed his knowledge of the uncertainty of the event as an excuse for not delivering his message. So the people themselves understood that the event might not be certain, as their conduct abundantly shows. The difference in the two cases is just this: one was a real and a revealed certainty, and the other was neither. Why then should this case be adduced as setting aside that of the shipwreck? But it is said that no condition was revealed in the one case more than in the other. Now so far as the history is recorded, no mention is made in the case of Nineveh that Jonah intimated that there was any condition upon which the destruction of the city could be avoided: yet it is plain that both Jonah and the Ninevites understood the threatening to be conditional in the sense of the events being uncertain. Jonah himself did not expect it with much certainty. But in the case of Paul, he expressly affirms that he believed God that it should be as he had declared, that there should be the loss of no man's life, and he encouraged them to believe the same thing. Paul understood the end to be certain though he knew, and soon informed them, that the certainty was a moral one, and conditioned upon the diligent use of means. The two cases are by no means parallel. It is true that Nineveh would have been destroyed, had they not used the appropriate means to prevent it; and the same is true of the ship's crew, and it is also true that in both cases, it was really certain that the means would not be neglected, yet in one case the certainty was really understood to be revealed, and was believed in, and not in the other. Now observe, the point to be illustrated by reference to this case of ship-wreck: It is just this: Can a man have any fear, and can there be ground and need of caution and fear, where there is a real and revealed, and believed or known certainty? The objection I am answering is that if the salvation of the saints is certain, and revealed as such, and is believed to be certain, there is then no ground of fear and no necessity or room for warning, threatening, &c. But this case of ship-wreck is one in which all these things meet.

(1.) The event was certain and of course the conditions were sure to be fulfilled.

(2.) The certainty was revealed.

(3.) It was believed. Yet,

(4.) There was warning and threatening and fear to neglect the means. But these things did not all meet in the case of Jonah and the Ninevites. In this case,

(1.) It was not certain that the city would be destroyed.

(2.) It was not understood to be revealed as certain.

(3.) It was not believed to be certain.

Why, then, I ask again, should these cases be taken as parallels? Paul's case is conclusive for the purpose for which it is cited, to wit, as being an instance in which there was,

(1.) Certainty.

(2.) Revealed certainty.

(3.) Believed certainty.

(4.) Threatening and warning.

(5.) Fear to neglect the means. It follows that threatenings, and warnings, and fears are consistent with revealed and believed certainty. This strikes out the foundation of [t]he objection.

Again, Paul repeatedly speaks of his own salvation as certain, and yet in a manner that conditionates it upon his perseverance in faith and obedience to the end. He says,

Phil. 1:19. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
25. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith.

2 Tim. 4:18. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever.

In this place it is plain that he regarded his perseverance and ultimate salvation, by and through the grace of God, as certain. Paul every where, as every attentive reader of the Bible knows, renounces all hope but in the indwelling grace and Spirit of Christ. Still he felt confident of his salvation. But if he had no confidence in himself, on what was his confidence based? Again,

2 Tim. 1:12. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Here again Paul expresses the fullest confidence of his own salvation. He did not merely intend to say that Christ was able, if he was disposed, to keep that which he had committed to him, but he assumed his willingness and asserted his ability as the ground of his confidence. That he here expressed entire confidence in his ultimate salvation, can not reasonably be doubted. He did not say that he was persuaded that Christ was able to save him if he persevered, but his confidence was founded in the fact that Christ was able to secure his perseverance. It was because he was persuaded that Christ was able to keep him that he had any assurance, and I might add even hope, of his own salvation. The same reason he assigned as the ground of confidence that others would be saved. To the Thessalonians he says, 2 Thess. 3:3: "But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil." Again, Jude says, 1:24: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Again, Peter says of all the elect or saints, 1 Peter 1:5: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Thus we see that the ground of confidence with the apostles was that God and Christ could and would keep them, not without their own efforts, but that he would induce them to be faithful and secure this result. The same was true of Christ as is manifest in his last prayer for them. John 17:15,16, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." But the apostles frequently expressed their confidence, as we shall more fully see hereafter, both in the certainty of their own salvation and also in the salvation of those to whom they wrote. Again, Paul says, 1 Cor. 9:26,27, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away." Here he expresses the fullest confidence that he shall win the crown, but at the same time recognizes the condition of his salvation and informs us that he took care to fulfill it lest he should be a cast away. He says, verse 26, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:" He alludes to the Olympic games, and in this connection says, verses 24 and 25, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." He then adds verse 26 and 27, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Of those who ran in these games, but one could win the prize. But not so in the christian race: here all might win. In those games, because but one could possibly win, there was much uncertainty in respect to whether any one in particular could win the prize. In the christian race there was no need of any such uncertainty. As it respected himself he says, verse 26, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:" that is, I do not run with any uncertainty or irresolution because of uncertainty in respect to whether I shall win the prize. Nor do I fight as one that beateth the air, or as one who fights uncertainly or in vain; but while I have this confidence, as a condition of this confidence, I keep under my body. It has been denied that Paul intended to express a confidence in his salvation in this place; but this cannot be reasonably denied. He was speaking in this connection of the christian race, and of the conditions of winning the victor's crown. He affirms that there was no real uncertainty whether he should win the crown. In the Olympic games there was uncertainty, because but one could win, but here no such ground of uncertainty existed; and moreover with him there was no real uncertainty at all, while at the same time he understood the conditional nature of the certainty, and kept under his body, &c. Can any one suppose that Paul really had any doubt in regard his own ultimate salvation? Now observe, these passages in respect to Paul are not adduced to prove that all saints will be saved; nor that, if Paul was sure of his

salvation, therefore all saints may be. To prove this, is not my present design, but simply to show that while Paul was sure and had no doubt of his ultimate salvation, he yet feared to neglect means. He was not disheartened in the christian race with a sense of uncertainty as they were who ran in the Olympic games. He was not, as they might be, irresolute on account of their great uncertainty of winning. He expected to win, and yet he dared not neglect the conditions of winning. Nay, he expected to win because he expected to fulfill the conditions; and he expected to fulfill the conditions, not because he had any confidence in himself, but because he confided in the grace and Spirit of God to secure his perseverance. Nevertheless he kept under his body and feared self-indulgence lest he should be a castaway.

Paul affirms of the Thessalonians that he knew their election of God. 1 Thes. 1:4: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." In both his epistles to this church, he often speaks of them in a manner that implies that he regarded their salvation as certain, and yet he also frequently warns and exhorts them to faithfulness and to guard against being deceived by false teachers, &c. 2 Thes. 2:1--3: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." He addresses the same strain of exhortation to them that he does to all christians, and plies them with admonition and warning just as might be expected considering the moral and conditional nature of the certainty of their salvation.

In writing to the Phillipians[sic.] he says, Phil. 1:6,7: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace." Here he expresses the confidence of an inspired Apostle, that Christ would secure their salvation. But yet in the 2d chapter 12th and 13th verses, he says, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Here he warns them to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. There is no stronger passage than this, where the saints are exhorted to fear; and mark, this is addressed to the very persons of whom he had just said, 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Almost at the same breath he expresses the confidence of an inspired Apostle, that he who had begun a good work in them would carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ; that is, that he would surely save them; and at the same time exhorts them to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling." He did not express confidence that they would persevere except their perseverance was secured by Christ, but that Christ would carry on the work he had begun. Paul also addresses the church at Ephesus as follows:

Eph. 1:1. "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. 2. Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, 4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love: 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8. Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10. That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him; 11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; 12. That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."

Now, let any one read the epistle through, and he will find that these same elect persons are addressed throughout with precept, exhortation, and warning, just as all other saints are throughout the bible. To quote the instances of this, were only to quote much of the epistle. Indeed this is the common usage of the inspired writers, to address the saints as the elect of God, as persons whose salvation was secure as a matter of fact, but whose salvation was after all conditioned upon their perseverance in holiness; and they hence proceed to warn, admonish, and exhort them just as we might expect when we consider the nature of the certainty of which they were speaking.

But if it be still urged that the fact of election is not revealed in any case to the individuals who compose the elect; that if

the fact of election were revealed to any one, to him threatenings and warnings would be out of place, I reply that this is only saying that if certainty is revealed as such at any time. and in respect to any thing, then warnings, and threatenings, and fears are wholly out of place. But this is not true, as we have seen in the case of the ship-wreck. Here the certainty was revealed to the individuals concerned, and accredited. Christ also revealed to his apostles the fact of their election as we have seen, also to Paul. Can any one reasonably call in question the fact that the Apostles understood well their election of God, not only to the apostleship but also to eternal life? John directs one of his epistles as follows: "The elder to the elect lady and her children." Observe again, what Paul in writing to the church at Ephesus says:

Eph. 1:1. "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. 2. Grace he to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; 4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8. Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself. 10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him, 11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Here he expressly recognizes himself as one of the elect, as he does elsewhere, and as the apostles always do, directly or by way of implication, and yet Paul and the other apostles did not feel that warning and watchfulness and fear to sin were at all out of place with them.

Job speaks as if the certainty of his salvation had been revealed to him. He says:

Job 19:25. For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

Can any one suppose that Job regarded threatenings and warnings, and fear to sin as out of place with him?

It is generally admitted that there is such a thing as the full assurance of faith or hope, or as attaining to the certain knowledge that salvation is secure to us. But would a saint who has made this attainment be less affected than others by all the threatenings, and warnings, and exhortations to fear, found in the bible? Would such souls cease to tremble at the word of God? Would they cease to pass their time of sojourning here with fear? Would they cease to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling?" Would God no longer regard them as belonging to the class of persons mentioned in Isa. 66,1: "For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

Christ prayed for the salvation of his apostles, in their presence, in such a manner as to leave no room for them to doubt their ultimate salvation, if they expected his prayers to be answered. He did the same with respect to all that should believe on him through their word. Now will you affirm that they who are conscious of believing in Jesus must cease to have confidence in the efficacy of his prayers before they can feel the power and propriety and influence of warnings and threatenings, and the various motives that are addressed to the elect of God to preserve them from falling? The supposition is preposterous. What! must we doubt the efficacy of his prayers, to credit and appreciate the force of his warnings? In fact, the more holy any one is and the more certain he is of his eternal salvation, the more does sin become an object of loathing, of fear, and even of terror to him. The more holy he is, the more readily he trembles at the word of God, and the more sensibly and easily he is affected by a contemplation of sin and divine wrath; the more awful and terrible these things appear to him, and the more solemnly do they affect him, although he has the fullest assurance that he shall never taste of either sin or hell. It is true, indeed, as we shall have occasion to remark hereafter, that in general the bible assumes that individuals are not sure of their salvation, for reasons that I shall notice, and proceeds to warn them upon that assumption.

But still it is insisted that if the end is certain, so are the means, and if one is revealed as certain so is the other, and therefore it is absurd and implies unbelief to fear that we shall neglect the means, or that either the end or means will fail. But as has been said, to fear to neglect the means, and to fear that we shall neglect them are not the same. We are naturally able to neglect them, and there is just as much real danger of our neglecting them, as there would be if no revelation were made about it, unless the revelation of the certainty of their use be a means of securing the use of them. We are therefore to fear to neglect them. There is in fact as much real danger of our neglecting the means of our salvation as there is that any event whatever will be different from what in fact it turns out to be. There is no more real danger in one case than in the other, but in one case the certainty is revealed, and in the other not. Therefore when the certainty is not revealed, it is reasonable to fear that the event will not be as we desire, and as it ought to be. But in the other, that is, when the certainty is revealed, we have no right to fear that it will be otherwise than as revealed, nor to fear that the means will in fact be neglected; but in all such cases, we should fear to neglect the means, as really and as much as if no revelation of certainty, had been made, just as Paul did in the case of his shipwreck.

Again, it is inquired, Are we not to fear that any of the saints will be lost, and pray for them under the influence of this fear? I answer, no. The saints are the elect. None of God's elect will be lost. We are to pray for them as Christ prayed for his apostles, and as he prayed for all believers, not with the fear that they will be lost--for this were praying in unbelief,--but we are to pray for all persons known to be saints, that they may persevere unto the end and be saved, with confidence that our prayer will be answered. But it is said, that Paul expressed doubts in regard to the salvation of the churches in Galatia. I answer that he expressed no doubt in respect to their ultimate salvation; he says, "I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you."--Gal. 4:20. In the margin it reads, "I am perplexed for you." He says in the next chapter, "I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded; but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be."--Gal. 5:10. Paul set himself zealously to reclaim these churches from error, and expresses full confidence of the result, and no where that I see, intimates that he doubted whether they would finally be saved.

But it is said still that if the salvation of all the saints is secured, and this certainty is revealed, there is no real danger of their either neglecting the necessary means or of their being lost, and therefore warnings, and threatenings, and fears are vain; and that the certainty being granted, it is irrational and impossible to fear without doubting the truth of God; that certainty is certainty, and it matters not at all of what kind the certainty is; that if so be that the event is certain, all danger, and of course all cause of fear, is out of the question.

To this form of the objection I reply, that it proceeds upon the assumption that there is no danger of the saints falling if God has revealed the certainty of their ultimate salvation. But what do we mean by danger? It has already been said that all events are certain in the sense that it is and was from eternity as really certain that they will be, and how they will be; and that all their circumstances and conditions are and eternally were, as certain as they ever will be. So that there never is any real danger, in the sense of uncertainty, that any event will be otherwise than it turns out in fact to be. By danger, then, is not meant that there is really any uncertainty in respect to how any thing will be. But all that can properly be intended by danger is, that there is a natural possibility, and, humanly speaking, may be a probability, that it may be otherwise than as we desire; that this is probable in the sense that there is, humanly speaking, from the circumstances of the case, and, so far as we can judge, from the course of events, a probability that a thing may not occur as we would have it.

Now a natural possibility always exists in respect to the falling and final destruction of the saints; and in most cases at least, the circumstances are such, that humanly speaking, and aside from the grace of God, there is not only real danger, but a certainty, that they will fail of eternal life. There are, humanly speaking, many chances to one that they will fall and be lost. Now this danger is as real as if nothing of certainty had been revealed. The event would have been as certain without the revelation of the certainty as with, unless it be true, which I suppose in many cases is the fact, that the revelation of the certainty helps to secure their perseverance.

But again the objection overlooks the nature of the certainty, and erroneously assumes that nothing depends upon its nature, when, in fact, every thing depends upon its nature. If it were a certainty of necessity, then there could be no danger, because no possibility of being otherwise. In this case, warnings, expostulations, threatenings, exhortations to fear, &c., would be out of place and mere trifling; but since the certainty is but a certainty of liberty or a moral certainty,

and one that is conditioned upon our own free acts and upon the influence of those warnings which are found in the Bible, and upon the influence of those fears to sin to which we are exhorted; I say since the nature of the certainty is such as to be conditioned upon these influences, it is preposterous to say that nothing depends upon the nature of the certainty, for it is manifest that the entire event may be dependent, and turn upon the nature, and an understanding of the nature of the certainty. When the nature of the certainty is understood, it is entirely rational and necessary to fear to sin, lest thereby we should lose our souls. For be it remembered, we are able to apostatize, and should we do so, we must be lost. It is no answer to say that it is a revealed certainty that we shall persevere and not be lost; for the certainty that we shall not be lost is no greater than that we shall not apostatize, and we are naturally able to apostatize. The certainty that we shall be saved, is no greater than that we shall persevere to the end. If, then, we do not persevere, but apostatize, we shall assuredly be lost. Fear to sin and apostatize, fear to neglect perseverance, is just as rational as if the certainty of the event were not revealed. Perseverance in holiness will no doubt be a condition of the saints' abiding in heaven, and since they will be free, and there will be a natural possibility of falling or of sinning, they will then fear to sin.

But it is said that "perfect love casteth out fear." True, but what kind of fear does love cast out? I answer, that "fear that hath torment." It casts out the fear of hell, that is, of actually going to hell; but it does not cast out the fear of God nor the fear of sin, but begets both. Love casts out the fear that we shall be lost, but not a fear to be lost. It casts out the fear that we shall apostatize, but begets a fear to apostatize. The place for fear in the saints is in the presence of temptation. When enticed or tempted to sin, a salutary fear and dread of sin and of its consequences is aroused, and the soul recoils from the temptation as from death and hell. Let it not be said, then, that if a thing is certain, it is certain, and it matters not by what kind of certainty, for there is in no case of real, known certainty, any rational ground of fear. Such things are loosely said. Both the kind of certainty and the kind of fear are here overlooked. It is true that in this case there is no rational ground to fear that either the end or the means will actually fail; but there is just as rational a ground to fear to neglect the means as if no certainty whatever were revealed. There is no more room for presumption in one case than in the other. In both cases to neglect the conditions is possible, and in our circumstances, extremely natural and easy, and even certain but for the preventing grace of God. This neglect would in either case prove fatal.

The temptations to neglect are alike in both cases: there are therefore equally rational grounds of fear to neglect the conditions in both cases. There are not, it is true, equal grounds to fear in both cases that we really shall neglect these conditions, but there are equal grounds to fear to neglect them. A fear that we shall really neglect them is not salutary. But a fear to neglect them is highly so. A fear that we shall neglect them and that we shall be lost tends strongly to selfishness, because it does not imply nor consist with confidence that we shall be preserved and saved. But a fear to sin, to offend God, to be lost, is consistent with a confidence that we shall be preserved and saved, and does not therefore tend to selfishness in efforts to escape damnation, at least to the same extent. The right kind of fear tends to liberty and to life. The wrong kind of fear gendereth to bondage and to death.

But it is said again, that fear implies a sense of danger, which, it is said, is impossible when we know the certainty. I answer again that fear to sin does imply a sense of the danger of sinning, and there is reason to have this sense of danger, when there is in fact all the real danger that there is in any case whatever that any event may be different from what it turns out to be. As I have said, a sense of danger is possible and reasonable when failure is possible and when the event is conditioned, not only upon free acts, but also upon the greatest watchfulness and perseverance on our part. The danger is so real and the sense of danger is so reasonable in this case that although the event is certain, yet it is conditioned upon this sense of danger. Were not the danger as real as in cases where no certainty had been revealed, and were there not a sense of danger, the result might fail. But the fact that there is as real danger of the damnation of the saints as there is that any event may turn out to be different from what in fact it will be, and the fact that the saints have a sense of this danger and understand the conditional and moral nature of this certainty, are conditions of the certainty of their salvation and tend to make it certain. Surely this is extremely plain; for example, let us suppose again that a man is about to venture down Niagara Falls in a bark canoe. It is revealed to him that he shall go down safely, but at the same time it is also revealed that he is not to be preserved from death by a miracle, but on the contrary that he must, as a condition, exert all his skill, and avoid every thing that tends to procure a failure, and omit nothing that is essential to his descending safely without a miracle; that the event, though certain, is conditioned upon the right and persevering exercise of his own agency, and that although it is sure, and he may rest in the assurance, that both the means and the end are certain and that neither of these will fail; yet to defeat the end by the neglect of the means is within his power; that he will meet with great temptations to neglect the means--temptations to presumption on the one hand, and to unbelief and despair on the other; temptations to levity, or to despondency; to innumerable neglects and wanderings of the attention, and such like things,

which, if not guarded against, will prove his destruction. Now who can not see the propriety and necessity of both the assurance and the warnings and the place for the salutary influence of a fear to neglect the necessary means in this case. This I regard as a true illustration of the revealed certainty of the perseverance of the saints in the sense under consideration.

But thus far I have replied to the objection, upon the assumption that the certainty of the salvation of the saints is revealed in the sense that individual saints know the certainty of their own salvation. I have shown, as I trust, that admitting this to be true, yet the nature of the certainty leaves abundant room for the influence of a wholesome sense of danger and for the feeling of hope and fear. But the fact is, that in but few cases comparatively does it appear that the certainty is revealed to the individuals as such. The salvation of all true saints is revealed, as we shall see, and the characteristics of true saints are revealed in the bible. So that it is possible for individual saints to possess a comfortable assurance and even to know that they are saints. And as has been shown, it is doubtless true that in some cases in the days of inspiration and not improbably in some cases since the bible was complete, individuals have had a direct revelation by the Holy Spirit, that they were saints, and accepted of God.

But in the great majority of cases in all time hitherto, the saints have had no personal and clear revelation of their being saints, and no evidence of it except what they gather from an experience that in their view accords with the bible description of the character of the saints. When Peter addressed his epistles to the elect saints for example, although he regarded the elect as certain of salvation, yet he did not distinguish and address individuals by name, but left it for them to be satisfied of their own election and saintship by their own consciousness of possessing the character that belongs to the saints. He did not reveal to any one in particular the fact of his own election. This was for the most part true of all the letters written to the church. Although they were addressed as a body as elect and as saints, yet from this they were not to infer that they were all saints or elect, but were to learn that fact, and who were real saints, from their conscious character.

We shall see in its proper place that the bible represents perseverance, in the sense already explained, as an attribute of christian character, and therefore no one can have evidence that he is a saint any farther than he is conscious of abiding in obedience. If saints do abide in the light and have the assurance that they are saints, we have seen the sense in which they may be influenced by hope and fear, and the sense in which moral law with its sanctions may be useful to them. But when a saint shall backslide, he must lose the evidence of his being a saint, and then all the warnings and threatenings may take full effect upon him. He finds himself not persevering, and has of course to infer that he is not a saint, and the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints can not be a comfort to him. It is in fact against him; for this doctrine is that the saints do persevere, and every day he lives in backsliding, it becomes less evident that he is a saint. The bible is manifestly written, for the most part, upon the assumption that individual saints do not certainly know their election and the certainty of their own salvation. It therefore addresses them as if there were real uncertainty in respect to their salvation; that is, as if, as individuals, they were not certain of salvation. It represents the salvation of real saints as certain, but represents many professed saints as having fallen and warns them against presumption and self-deception, on account of their profession and privileges and experience. It represents the danger of delusion as great, and exhorts them to examine and prove themselves, and see whether they are truly saints. The warnings, for the most part, found in the bible are evidently of this kind; that is, they assume that individuals may deceive themselves and presumptuously assume their own election and saintship and safety from their privileges, relations, and experiences. Inspiration, therefore, proceeds to warn them, assuming that they do not know the certainty of their own individual salvation. We shall by and by have occasion to examine some passages that will illustrate and confirm this remark.

There is, therefore, I apprehend no real difficulty in accounting for the manner in which the bible is written upon the supposition that the doctrine in question is true. But on the contrary it appears to me that the scriptures are just what might be expected if the doctrine were true. When we consider the nature of the certainty in all cases, and also that the great mass of professed christians have no certain revelation of their being real saints, that there is so much real danger of deception in regard to our own characters, and that so many are, and have been deceived; I say, when we consider these things, there can be no difficulty in accounting for the manner in which both professors and real saints are addressed in the word of God.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 77

PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.

FARTHER OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

3. A third objection to this doctrine is, that if by the perseverance of the saints is intended that they live any thing like lives of habitual obedience to God, then facts are against it.

To this objection I reply, that by the perseverance of the saints, as I use these terms, is intended that subsequently to their regeneration, holiness is the rule in their lives, and sin only the exception. But it is said that facts contradict this.

(1.) The case of king Saul is brought forward as an instance in point to sustain the objection.

To this I reply that it is far from being clear that Saul was ever a truly regenerate man. He appears, in connexion with his appointment to the throne of Israel, to have been the subject of divine illuminations in so far as to be much changed in his views and deportment, and as to have had another heart, in so much that he prophesied, &c.; but it is no where intimated that he became a truly regenerate man, a truly praying child of God. Similar changes are not unfrequently witnessed in men, and changes evidently brought about by the illuminations of the Holy Spirit, where there is no good reason to believe that the subjects of them were truly regenerated. From the history of Saul, subsequent to the change of which we are speaking, we gather absolutely nothing that looks like true piety. His case, therefore, can not properly be brought as an objection to the doctrine in question, for the plain reason that evidence is wanting that he ever was a saint. His prophesying, as is evident from the connection in which it is spoken of, was merely speaking fervently upon religious subjects. He was so much enlightened as to manifest for a time considerable excitement upon the subject of religion, and as to mingle with the schools of the prophets, and take an interest in their exercises. But this was only similar to what we often witness, when the end, and indeed when all the circumstances, duly considered, show clearly that true regeneration does not take place. Who has not seen men have, for the time being, another but not a holy heart?

(2.) It is said that David did not persevere in obedience in the sense that obedience was his rule, and sin only the exception. To this I reply,

[1.] That it is not pretended that there is any doubt respecting the final salvation of David, king of Israel.

[2.] That David did not persevere in the sense above defined wants proof. His Psalms, together with his whole history, show that he was a highly spiritual man. He was an eminent type of Christ, and for a man in his circumstances was a remarkable saint. To be sure David practised polygamy, and did many things that in us, under the light of the gospel, would be sin. But it should be considered that David lived under a dispensation of comparative obscurity, and therefore many things which would now be unlawful and sinful, were not so in him. That David, with comparatively few exceptions, lived up to the light he had, can not be reasonably called in question. He is said to have been a man after God's own heart. I know this is said of him as a king, but I know also that as king this could not have been said of him unless he had feared and served the Lord, and in the main lived up to the light with which he was surrounded.

[3.] It is also said that Solomon king of Israel did not persevere in the sense contended for in this discourse. Of Solomon I would say,

[1.] That he was manifestly a type of Christ.

[2.] That he at one period of his life, for how long a time it does not appear, fell into grievous backsliding, and appears to have in some sense practised idolatry.

[3.] His final apostacy has been inferred by some from the fact that idolatry was practiced in Israel after, as it has been supposed, he was reclaimed, and until the end of his life. The people were allowed to offer sacrifices and to burn incense in the high places.

To this I reply that the same was true also during the reign of several of the pious kings who succeeded him and is probably to be accounted for by the fact that neither Solomon nor his successors had, for a considerable time, political power or influence enough to abolish idolatry altogether. The people were greatly divided in their religious views and worship. Many were the priests and devotees of the groves and high places, and multitudes of the high and more influential classes clave to their idols. It was a very difficult matter to put an effectual stop to idolatry, and perhaps was impossible in Solomon's day, and for a long time after. Solomon's idolatrous wives and concubines had doubtless exerted great influence to render idolatry popular with the people, and it was not until several generations had passed away, that the pious kings seem to have had sufficient political power to banish idolatry from the nation. Solomon's final apostacy then can not be inferred from the fact that idolatry continued to be practised in the nation until long after his death. There is no reason to believe that he continued to practice it himself. But,

[4.] I remark that from the writings of Solomon we may gather sufficient evidence that, as a general thing, he lived any other than a wicked life. His Ecclesiastes seems to have been written after he was reclaimed from backsliding, as appears from the fact that the book contains many statements of his views and experiences while in his wanderings from God. It appears to me that the book is inexplicable upon any other supposition. In his wanderings from God, as is common, he fell into great doubts and embarrassments in regard to the works and ways of God. He became skeptical, and in the book under consideration, he states the skeptical views that he had entertained. But the book, as a whole, contains conclusive evidence of piety at the time it was written. This probably will not be called in question.

Again, the Proverbs and Song of Solomon show that he was not only a pious man, but also, at least when they were written, a highly spiritual man. Especially is this true of his Song. The Proverbs were doubtless the result of deep and protracted reflection and observation, and were written at intervals extending through his whole or nearly his whole reign. He was a man of great study and of great learning for his day. He must have spent much time in deep meditation and communion with God, and there is no greater mistake, as I apprehend, than to suppose that Solomon was an apostate, or that he lived any thing like a majority of his days in a state of backsliding from God. His profound wisdom, manifested on various occasions, and his history and writings altogether, when duly considered, render it extremely probable, if not certain, that his backsliding was but temporary, and that he was soon reclaimed. We have little else recorded of him than his public life, except what is contained in his own writings. Should we judge of him only by his recorded history, separate from his writings, we might infer that he lived, at least for a long time, in sin, but from his writings we must infer that his life as a whole was one of deep thought, much profound meditation upon God and divine things, much research into the works and ways and government of God, both moral and providential, and of much spirituality. His practice of polygamy on so large a scale, and many other things that appear in his life were in the substance and principle of them common to the most pious men of that age and nation. Solomon's case, when duly considered, can not disprove the doctrine under consideration. Many things in him that shock us, might have been consistent with his living in a state of acceptance with God.

4. Observation, it is said, conflicts with the doctrine in question. So far as human observation can go, I admit that this is so; that many persons seem to be born again and to run well for a time, and afterwards fall, and apparently live and die in sin. But it should be remarked that observation can not be conclusive upon this subject, because we can not certainly know that any of the cases just alluded to are real conversions to God: Hence the objection fails of conclusiveness. Were it certainly known that such persons were truly regenerated, and that afterwards they fall away and live lives of sin, and die in that state, it would follow that the doctrine, at least in the form in which I have stated it, can not be true. But this is not and can not be certainly known by observation. If it shall be found to be true, when we come to the examination, that the bible plainly teaches the doctrine in question in the form in which I have stated it, it must follow of course that observation can not disprove it, for the reason that it is not a question that lies within the reach of observation, in such a

sense as to admit of certainty or of any such kind or degree of evidence as to shake the sure testimony of the bible.

5. But an appeal is also made to consciousness to overthrow this doctrine. It is said that the real saints, at least in some instances, know themselves to have lived a great part of their lives in sin, and even by far the greater part of their days subsequent to regeneration.

This objection or assertion may be answered substantially as was the last. It is true indeed that the saints may know themselves to have been regenerated, and it is also true that many may think they know this when they are deceived. A man may know himself to be awake, but from this it does not follow that no one can think himself awake while he is asleep. If upon examination, the bible shall be found plainly to teach the doctrine of the saints' perseverance in the sense in which I have defined it, we must of course yield the objection founded on experience, and grant that such experiences can weigh nothing against the testimony of God. The objection can not be conclusive of course, at any rate, for it is not one of the nature that admits of no error or doubt. The bible defines all the essential attributes of christian character. Now if upon examination perseverance in the sense here insisted on shall be proved to be one of them, it is absurd to array the consciousness of not persevering against the doctrine. It is to assume that we and not the bible are to say who is a christian and what are the essential attributes of christian character.

6. But it is also objected to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints that several passages of scripture plainly teach that some real saints have fallen away and been lost. I will therefore now proceed to the examination of those passages upon which the principal reliance is placed to disprove this doctrine. The first one which I shall notice is found in 1 Cor. 1:10. "Moreover brethren I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2. And were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3. And did all eat of the same spiritual meat: 4. And did all drink the same spiritual drink; (for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ;) 5. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 5. [6.] Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after these things, as they also lusted. 7. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them, as it is written; The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. 8. Neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11. Now all of these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12. Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

It is said of this passage that the history of the Israelites is here introduced as a warning to real christians; consequently the apostle must have assumed that those of the Israelites who fell were real saints, or there would have been no pertinency or force in his allusion. To this I reply that the pertinency and force of the allusion appear to me to have been as follows. The Israelites composed the visible church of God. At the time he mentioned, they were all professors of religion. All possessed great light and privileges compared with the rest of the world; they therefore felt confident of their acceptance with God, and of their consequent safety and salvation. But with many of them, it turned out, that God was not well pleased. Some of them turned out to be idolaters and were destroyed. Now, says the apostle, let this be a warning to you. You are in like manner professors of religion. You are all members of the visible church of God, to which the promises are made. You have great light and privileges when compared with the world at large. You may think yourselves to be altogether safe, and sure of final salvation. But remember that the history of the ancient church is written for your benefit; and the destruction of those just alluded to, is recorded for your admonition. Be not high minded, but fear. Do not be presumptuous because you are members in good standing in the visible church and possess great light and privileges, but remember that many before you, who were like you in these respects, have lost their souls; "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest He fall."

If the apostle had intended to convey the impression that they were real saints that fell in the wilderness, and that real saints do fall away and are lost, he would no doubt have said let him that standeth, instead of him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. The term rendered thinketh is represented by Robinson as correctly translated in this passage. The meaning of the apostle appears to have been this, that others who were, from their circumstances and fancied characters, very confident of their safety, had been finally cast off and lost; therefore take heed to yourselves lest being similarly situated, you in like manner deceive yourselves, and while you think that you stand, you should fall and perish.

But it may be said that the apostle speaks of those as falling who had eaten of the spiritual meat, and drank of the rock Christ, and therefore must have been real saints. To this I reply that the apostle does indeed use universal language and speak of all the Israelites as doing these things; but who will soberly contend that he intended really to be understood as affirming that all the Israelites that passed through the sea &c., were true saints? What he says does not necessitate the conclusion that any of them were truly regenerated saints. They were all baptised unto Moses; that is, were all introduced into the covenant of which he was the mediator. They all ate of the same spiritual bread, that is, the manna on which the Lord fed them. They all drank of the spiritual rock; that is, of the water that gushed from the rock when Moses smote it with his rod, and which rock was a type of Christ, as was also the manna. Now, does the apostle mean to say that all the Israelites understood the typical meaning of these waters and this manna, and that they were all truly spiritual or regenerate persons? I think not. All that he intended, appears to me to have been that all the church of the Jews at the time were so far partakers of the grace of Christ as to receive this baptism and as to have this spiritual or typical bread and water, and also to enjoy great light and much miraculous instruction, but that nevertheless with many of them God was displeased. Their being baptised in their passage through the Red Sea, did not imply that they so understood and consented to it at the time, nor does the assertion that they ate the spiritual food, and drank of the spiritual rock, imply any thing more than that they enjoyed these great and high privileges, and counted themselves as very secure in consequence of them. It is certainly straining the sense to make the apostle affirm that all the Israelites were real saints who passed through the sea. Indeed it is doubtful whether he intended to affirm the real piety of any of them. It was not essential to his purpose to do so.

In examining the class of passages adduced to prove that some real saints have fallen from grace and been lost, I am only concerned to show that they do by fair construction necessitate this conclusion. I may admit that if the doctrine of perseverance were not, or shall not upon examination be found to be clearly taught in the bible, the not unnatural construction of some of the class of texts in question might lead to the conclusion that some, yea many, real saints have been lost.

But if it shall prove to be true upon examination, that the doctrine is plainly and unequivocally taught in the bible, all that needs to be shown of the class of texts now under consideration is that they do not, when fairly interpreted, really and unequivocally teach that some true saints have been lost. This showing will sufficiently vindicate the scriptures against the imputation of self-contradiction in both affirming and denying the same doctrine. Observe, I am not called upon to show that the passages in question can not be so construed, and with considerable plausibility, as to make them contradict this doctrine; but all I am called upon to show in this place is that they do not necessarily, by fair construction, contradict it; that they do not, in case the doctrine in question appears to be unequivocally taught in the bible, necessitate the admission either that the bible contradicts itself, or that a different construction must be given to the passages that seem to teach this doctrine.

With these remarks, I proceed to the examination of 2 Peter 2:9--22: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: 10. But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government: presumptuous are they, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 11. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. 12. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 13. And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day-time. Spots they are, and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you; 14. Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: a heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: 15. Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16. But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet. 17. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. 18. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. 19. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage. 20. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 21. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to return from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was

washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Now observe, the apostle calls the persons of whom he speaks "wells without water: clouds that are carried with a tempest;" that is, without rain. His whole description of them shows that he is speaking of false professors or hypocrites. But it is inferred that they are fallen saints, because it is said they have "forsaken the right way, and are gone astray after the error of Balaam, &c." But this does not necessarily imply that they were in heart ever in the right way, but that they have forsaken the right way so far as the outward life is concerned, in which respect they had doubtless been in the right way or they would not have been admitted to membership in the church.

But it is said of these false professors that "they allure through lust and much wantonness those who were clean escaped from those who live in error." But neither does this necessitate the conclusion that they had escaped in heart from those that lived in error, but merely that they had for the time being outwardly abandoned their idolatrous practices and companions and had made a profession and put on the form of Christianity.

But it is also said, verses 20--22, For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning. 21. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

Neither does this necessitate the conclusion that they had in heart escaped from the pollutions that are in the world, but merely that they had outwardly reformed. What is said in the last verse seems to favor this construction. Verse 22, "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. That is, the dog has returned to his vomit, because he remains a dog and is not changed, and the sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire, because she is still a sow, and her washing has not changed her nature. So, the apostle would say. by returning to their former ways do the persons in question show they have experienced no radical change, but on the contrary that they are only like a washed sow, sinners still who have been only outwardly cleansed, while within they are same as ever. This appears to me to be all that can fairly be made out of this passage.

I will now attend to 1 Tim. 1:19,20: "Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck. Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." Of this text I may say, that the apostle was writing to Timothy as an eminent religious teacher, and was giving him cautions respecting his influence in that relation. Hymeneus and Alexander, as we may infer from this, and which is still more plainly taught in other passages, were religious teachers who had cast off or perverted the true faith or doctrine of the gospel, and thus made shipwreck. They had put away faith and a good conscience, and by so doing had made shipwreck of the true gospel. This passage does not teach that these men were true christians, nor does it necessarily imply that any had been true saints who had gone with them. The expression "some having put away," does not necessarily imply that they once had true faith and a good conscience, but only that they taught that which was inconsistent with either; or it may mean that they had rejected or refused both faith and a good conscience: that they practised and taught things inconsistent with either true faith, or with the true gospel, or with a good conscience, and had therefore run upon a rock and wrecked their souls and the souls of those who followed them. But this proves nothing in respect to their ever having real saints.

The apostle was speaking in popular language, and represented things as they appeared to the observer. Thus we should speak of spurious converts. It certainly does not appear to me that this passage would, without forced construction warrant the conclusion that some real saints had been lost even apart from those passages that, we shall see, seem unequivocally to teach the doctrine. Much less, when those passages are considered, are we, as I think we shall see, authorized so to construe this passage as to make it either contradict them or to necessitate such a modification of their construction as is contended for by those who deny the doctrine in question. If the doctrine in question is not really taught in the bible, we certainly should not believe it; but if it is, we must nor lightly reject it. We need candidly to weigh each passage, and to understand if we can just what is the mind of God as therein revealed.

The case of Judas has been relied upon as an instance of utter apostacy and of consequent destruction. It is said that in the

Psalms Judas is spoken of as the familiar friend of Christ in whom he trusted. Psalms 41:9. "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

There is no reason to believe that Ps. 41, originally respected either Christ or Judas. Christ quotes the 9th verse as is common in the New Testament, not because it was originally spoken of himself or of Judas, but because his case was like that of the Psalmist. In the passage in which Christ quotes these words, he directly negatives the idea of Judas being one of his true disciples. He says, John 13:18, I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen; but, that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."

Here Christ plainly teaches that he to whom he applied these words, was not chosen in the sense of being chosen to salvation, or in the sense of his being a true saint. He says:

John 6:64. "But there are some of you who believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of is a devil? 71. He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."

He had chosen twelve to follow him as pupils or disciples, but one of them he had known from the beginning to be a wicked man. In John 17:12, Christ says, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." Christ has been represented as saying to his Father in this passage that he had lost none that the Father had given him except the son of perdition, that is Judas. But this is not the meaning of the passage in Christ's prayer. He intended that of those that the Father had given him, he had lost none; but the son of perdition was lost that the scripture might be fulfilled.

The same form of expression is used in Luke 4:27, "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian." Here *eime* is used in the original as meaning not except, but as an adversative conjunction but. Naaman was not an Israelite but a heathen. Christ here used the same form of expression as in John 17:12. In this passage in Luke it is plain that he intended that the prophet was not sent to any Israelite, but to a heathen. This same form is also used, Matt. 12:4, "How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?"

Here the same form of expression in the original is used as in John 17:12. The plain meaning of this form in Matt. 12:4, is but, not except. It was not lawful for David nor for his companions to eat the shew-bread, but it was lawful for the priests to do so. So also, Acts 21:25. "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered unto idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication." Here the same form is used, and the plain meaning of the phraseology is just that which I am contending for in the passage in Christ's prayer. Likewise, Rev. 21:27, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Here again the same form of expression and the same word in the original are used in the sense now contended for. Nothing shall enter into the city that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life, shall enter in. So beyond reasonable doubt, Christ intended to say in his prayer to his Father, "While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept and none of them is lost, that is, I have lost none of those whom thou hast given me; but the son of perdition is lost according to the scriptures."

But it seems to me that the context shows clearly what the Savior intended by this form of expression. He says, verses 11 and 12, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."

That is, "Do thou keep them in thine own name and lose none of them, for while I was with them I kept them in thy name and lost none of them; but the son of perdition is lost." He evidently did not mean to say, I lost but one whom thou gavest me. Or that he kept in his Father's name all except one of those whom the Father had given him. He says: 6. I have

manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. 7. Now they have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee 8. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. 10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. 11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thy own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. 12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Here he plainly represents that all who had been given him by the Father had known and kept the word of God. They had believed and persevered, and Christ was glorified in them. Since he had kept them in his Father's name and had lost none of them, he proceeds to pray that now the Father will keep them in his own name. Let any one ponder well this passage from verse 6 to 12, and he will see I trust that this is a true view of the subject. At any rate this cannot be a proof text to establish the fact that any have fallen from grace for the plain reason that the text can quite as naturally at least, and, I think, with much greater propriety, be quoted to sustain the doctrine which it is adduced to disprove. Again:

Matt. 18:21. Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22. Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.--23. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed ten thousand talents: 25. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had and payment to be made. 26. The servant therefore fell, down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30. And he would not; but went and cast him in prison, till he should pay the debt. 31. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant. I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? 34. And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

This has been adduced to prove that some do fall from grace especially the 32nd to the 34th verses. But from this whole passage it is evident that what the Lord meant was to set in a strong light the necessity of a forgiving spirit and that this is a condition of salvation. It is a parable designed to illustrate this truth, but does not assert as a fact that any truly pardoned soul was ever lost; nor does it imply this, as any one may see who will duly weigh the whole parable. It does plainly imply that a pardoned soul would be lost should he apostatize; but it does not imply that such a soul ever did apostatize.

I consider next I Tim. 5:12. "Having damnation because they have cast off their first faith." This passage stands in the following connection:

I Tim. 5:9. Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man: 10. Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. 11. But the younger widows refuse, for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; 12. Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. 13. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

The word rendered damnation in this passage is often rendered judgment and condemnation; and the meaning may be that the younger widows were found to wax wanton and fall into condemnation, and for a time at least to disgrace their profession by casting off their first faith; or it may mean that they were apt to be found among those who renounced the profession of the true faith which they at first professed. They were young widows. Uneducated as heathen women were

and are, and it could not be surprising that many of this class should make a spurious profession and afterwards cast off their profession through wantonness, and disgrace their profession. The apostle therefore warns Timothy against too hasty a reception of them or against having too early a confidence in the reality of their piety.

As every one knows that Dr. Adam Clark was a strong opponent of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, I give his views of this passage from his commentary. See Clark on verses 3,9,11, and 12:

"Verse 3. Honor widows that are widows indeed. One meaning of the word Timao, to honor, is to support, sustain, &c., Matt. xv. 45., and here it is most obviously to be taken in this sense. Provide for those widows especially which are widows indeed; persons truly destitute, being aged and helpless; and having neither children nor friends to take care of them; and who behave as becometh their destitute state.

Verse 9. Taken into the number. Let her not be taken into the list of those for which the church must provide. But some think that the apostle means the list of those who were deaconesses in the church; and that no widow was to be admitted into the rank who did not answer to the following character.

Verse 11. But the younger widows refuse. Do not admit those into this office who are under sixty years of age. Probably those who were received into such a list, promised to abide in their widowhood. But as young or comparatively young women, might have both occasion and temptations to re-marry, and so break their engagement to Christ; they should not be admitted. Not that the apostle condemns their remarrying as a crime in itself, but because it was contrary to their engagement.

Wax wonton. Katastreniasosi, from kata intensive, and streniao, to act in a luxurious or wonton manner. The word is supposed to be derived from sterein, to remove, and enia, the rein; and is a metaphor taken from a pampered horse, from whose mouth the rein has been removed; so that there is nothing to check or confine him. The metaphor is plain enough, and the application easy.

Verse 12. Having damnation. In the sense in which we use this word, I am satisfied the apostle never intended it. It is likely that he refers here to some promise or engagement which they made when taken on the list already mentioned; and now they have the guilt of having violated that promise; this is the krima, or condemnation, of which the apostle speaks.

They have cast off their first faith. By pledging their fidelity to a husband, they have cast off their fidelity to Christ; as a married life and their previous engagement are incompatible. Dr. Macknight translates these two verses thus:--But the younger widows reject; for when they cannot endure Christ's rein, they will marry; incurring condemnation, because they have put away their first fidelity."

This passage does not assert that any real christian had fallen and been lost, and the most that can be made of it is that they may, or can do so, and that there is danger of apostacy. This I fully admit and maintain; that is, that humanly speaking there is danger, which is the only sense in which there is danger that any event may be different from what it in fact turns out to be. I have already said and shall have occasion to say again, that there is, and can be no danger in the sense of real uncertainty that any event whatever will be different from what it turns out to be, and from what God foresees that it will be. But in the sense of probability, judging from the natural course of events as they appear to us, there may be a high degree of probability and therefore the utmost danger that things may be different from what in fact they turn out to be, and from what God foresees that they will be, and from what they really would be were it not for the warnings and threatening and a consequent sense of danger.

Again: it has been said that from Christ's letters to the churches in Asia, recorded in Revelations we learn that those churches, some of them at least, were in a state of apostacy from God, and that from the fact that the judgments of God annihilated those churches, there is reason to believe that the apostacy was complete and final, and their destruction certain. To this I reply, that those letters were written to churches as such, just as the prophets spoke of the Jewish Church as such. The things which the prophets declare of the Jewish church were declared of them as a body of professed saints, some generations of whom had more, and some less, real piety. The prophets would rebuke one generation for their backsliding and apostacy, without meaning to represent that the particular individuals they addressed were ever true saints, but meaning only that the body as such was in a degenerate and apostate state compared with what the body as

such had been in former times. So Christ writes to the churches of Asia and reproveth them for their backslidden and apostate condition, asserts that they had fallen, had left their first love &c., from which, however, we are not to infer that he intended to say this of those who had been truly converted as individuals, but merely that those churches as bodies had fallen, and were now composed of members as a whole who were in the state of which he complained; just as we say of the Roman Catholic church, or of the Lutheran or German Reformed, or of other bodies in which piety is at a low ebb, that they have left their first love, &c. In saying this we should not mean to be understood as affirming that the individuals who now compose those churches were at any time in a better spiritual state than they are at present, but only that the churches as such are fallen from what those bodies once were, and had left the love and zeal and obedience once manifested in those churches.

The churches of Asia were doubtless when first gathered by the Apostles and primitive ministers, full of faith, and zeal and love. But things had changed. Many of the members had changed and perhaps every member who had originally composed those churches was dead previous to the time when these letters were written. However this may be, there had doubtless been great changes in the membership of those churches, and since they were evidently addressed as bodies, from what is said it cannot be fairly inferred that the same persons addressed had fallen from a state of high spirituality into backsliding or apostacy, but that that was true only of the then present membership when compared with the former membership and state of the churches. These letters can not be justly relied upon as disproving the doctrine in question; for the utmost that can be made of them is that those churches as bodies were at the time in a state of declension.

The passages we have examined are so far as I know the principal ones upon which reliance has been placed to disprove the doctrine in question. I have read over attentively several times the views of Mr. Fletcher in his Scripture Scales, and the passages quoted by him to disprove this doctrine. His chief reliance is manifestly upon the numerous passages that imply the possibility and danger of falling rather than on any passages that unequivocally teach that any have or will utterly fall. I am not aware that any respectable writer has laid much stress upon other passages than those I have examined as expressly teaching or unequivocally implying the fact of the fall and ruin of real saints. There may be such writers and such passages as those of which I speak; but if there are, I do not recollect to have seen them.

Before I proceed to state the main arguments in support of the doctrine in question I would remark that I have felt greater hesitancy in forming and expressing my views upon this than upon almost any other question in theology. I have read whatever I could find upon both sides of this question, and have uniformly found myself dissatisfied with the arguments on both sides. After very full and repeated discussions I feel better able to make up and express an opinion upon the subject than formerly. I have at some periods of my ministry been nearly on the point of coming to the conclusion that the doctrine is not true. But I could never find myself able to give a satisfactory reason for the rejection of the doctrine. Apparent facts that have come under my observation have sometimes led me seriously to doubt the soundness of this doctrine; but I can not see, and the more I examine the more unable I find myself to see how a denial of it can be reconciled with the scriptures.

I shall give the substance of what I regard as the scripture proof of this doctrine, and beg the reader to make up his opinion for himself by a careful examination. Perhaps what has been satisfactory to my mind may not be so to the minds of others. let no one believe this or any other doctrine upon my authority, but "prove all things and hold fast that which is good."

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 78

PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS PROVED.

V. I COME NOW TO A CONSIDERATION OF THE PRINCIPAL ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THIS DOCTRINE.

But before I proceed to the direct proof of the doctrine it is proper to remark:

1. That its truth can not be inferred from the nature of regeneration. It is true as has been said, and as will be farther shown that perseverance is an attribute or characteristic of christian character, but this does not necessarily result from the nature of regeneration, but from the indwelling Spirit of Christ. It has been common for that class of writers and theologians who hold what is called the Taste Scheme of regeneration to infer the truth of this doctrine from the nature of the change that constitutes the new birth. In this they have been entirely consistent. If, as they suppose, regeneration consists in a change in the constitution of the mind, in the implanting or infusion of a new constitutional taste, relish, or appetite, if it consists in or implies a change back of all voluntary action, and such a change as to secure and necessitate a change of voluntary action; why, then it is consistent to infer from such a change the perseverance of the saints, unless it can be made to appear that either God, or Satan, or voluntary sin can change the nature back again. If in regeneration the nature is really changed, if there be some new appetite, or taste implanted, some holy principle implanted or infused into the constitution, why, then it must follow that they will persevere by a physical law of the new nature or constitution. I see not how in this case they could even be the subjects of temporary backsliding, unless the new appetite should temporarily fail, as does sometimes our appetite for food. But if this may be, yet if regeneration consists in or implies a new creation of something that is not voluntary, but involuntary, a creation of new nature instead of a new character, I admit that perseverance might be reasonably inferred from the fact of such a change. But since I reject wholly this theory of regeneration and maintain that it is wholly a voluntary change, I can not consistently infer the final salvation of the saints from the nature of the change that occurs in regeneration. I have been struck with the inconsistency of those who hold the Taste Scheme of regeneration, and yet contend, not only for falling from a regenerate state, but also that the regenerate may and do fall into a state of entire depravity every time they sin; that they fall from this state of physical or constitutional regeneration every sin they commit, and must be regenerated or converted anew or be lost. Now, this is not reconcilable with the idea of a physical regeneration.

2. Nor can we infer the perseverance of the saints with any justice from their being at their conversion brought into a state of justification.

By perseverance some seem to mean, not that the saints do persevere or continue in obedience, but that they will be saved at any rate, whether they persevere in obedience or not. It was against this idea that such men as the Wesleys and Fletcher and their coadjutors fought so valiantly. They resisted justly and successfully the doctrine of perpetual justification upon condition of one act of faith and maintained that the saints as well as sinners are condemned whenever they sin. They also contended that there is no kind of certainty that all true saints will be saved. Since I have endeavored to refute the doctrine of a perpetual justification conditioned upon the first act of faith, I can not of course infer the final salvation of the saints from the nature of justification. Those who hold that the first act of faith introduces the soul into a new relation of such a nature that from thenceforth it is not condemned by the law, do what it will, may justly infer from the nature of such a justification that all who ever exercise faith will escape the penalty of the Divine law. But we have seen that this is

not the nature of gospel justification, and therefore we must not infer that all saints will be saved from the mere fact that they have once believed and been justified.

But the following considerations taken together seem to me to establish the truth of the doctrine in question beyond reasonable doubt.

(1.) God has from eternity resolved upon the salvation of all the elect. This we have seen. No one of this number will ever be lost. These are given to Christ from eternity as a seed to serve him. The conversion, perseverance, and final salvation of the elect, we have seen to be secured. Their conversion, perseverance, and salvation are secured by means of the grace of God in Christ Jesus prevailing through the gospel to so influence their free will as to bring about this result. The instructions, promises, threatenings, warnings, exhortations of the bible with all the influences with which they are surrounded are the instrumentalities by means of which the Holy Spirit converts, sanctifies, and saves them. At every step, as Fletcher acknowledges "grace is beforehand with free will." God first comes to and moves upon the sinner, and not the sinner comes to and moves or attempts to move God. God first draws, and the sinner yields. God calls and the sinner answers. The sinner would never approach God did not God draw him.

Again: God calls effectually, but not irresistibly before the sinner yields. He does not yield and answer to a slight call. Some indeed wait to be drawn harder and to be called louder and longer than others, but no one in fact comes to God until overpersuaded to do so; that is, until he is effectually hunted from his refuges of lies and drawn with so great and powerful a drawing as not to force, of course, but to overcome his reluctance or voluntary selfishness and as to induce him to turn to God and to believe in Christ. That the sinner is wholly disinclined to obey up to the very moment in which he is overpersuaded and induced to yield there can be no doubt. His turning, as we have seen, is an act of his own, but he is induced to turn by the drawings of the Holy Spirit.

Every person who was ever truly converted knows that his conversion is not to be ascribed to himself in any other sense than that he finally consented, being drawn and overpersuaded by the Holy Spirit. The glory belongs to God, for the sinner only yielded after perhaps protracted resistance and never until after he was so convinced as to have no further excuse or apology for sin, nor until the Spirit by means of truth and argument and persuasion fairly overcame him, and constrained, not forced, him to submit. This is a brief statement of the facts connected with the conversion of every soul that was ever converted to God. This is true of the conversion of all the elect of God, and if others besides the elect are ever converted, this is a true account of their conversion.

Again, the same is true of their perseverance in holiness in every instance and in every act. The saints persevere not by virtue of a constitutional change but alone by virtue, or as a result of the abiding and indwelling influence of the Holy Spirit. "Free grace is always beforehand with free will;" that is, the will never obeys in any instance nor for one moment except as it is persuaded to do so as really as at the first. The work begun by the Holy Spirit is not carried on except as the same spirit continues to work in the saints to will and to do of his good pleasure. Saints do not begin in the spirit and then become perfect through or by the flesh. There is no holy exercise that is not as really to be ascribed to the grace and to the influence of the Holy Spirit as is conversion itself.

The saints convert themselves in the sense that they turn or yield when drawn, until overpersuaded by the Holy Spirit. God converts them in the sense that he effectually draws or persuades them. They turn themselves in the sense that their turning is their own act. God turns them in the sense that he induces or produces their turning. The same is true of their whole course of obedience in this life. The saints keep themselves in the sense that all obedience is their own, all their piety consists in their own voluntary obedience; but God keeps them in the sense that in every instance and at every moment of obedience, he persuades and enlightens and draws them in so much that he secures their voluntary obedience; that is, he draws and they follow. He persuades and they yield to his persuasions. He works in them to will and to do, and they will and do. God always anticipates all their holy exercises, and persuades the saints to put them forth. This is so abundantly taught in the bible that to quote Scripture to prove it were but to waste your time. The saints are not only said to be converted, but also sanctified and kept by the power of God.

No saint then keeps himself except in so far forth as he is kept by the grace and spirit and power of God. There is, therefore, no hope for any saint, and no reason to calculate upon the salvation of any one unless God prevails to keep him from falling away and perishing. All who ever are saved or ever will be, are saved by and through free grace prevailing

over free will, that is, by free grace securing the voluntary concurrence of free will. This God does and is sure to do with all the elect. It was upon condition of the foreseen fact that God could by the wisest administration of his government secure this result that they were elected to eternal salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Now observe how the elect are saved. All the threatenings, warnings, and teachings of the bible are addressed to them as to all others. If there are any saints at any time who are not of the elect, the bible no where notices any such persons or speaks of them as any less or more secure than the elect.

Again, the bible no where represents or implies that any but the elect are converted. It does not represent any but the elect as at any time coming in heart to Christ--as at any time regenerated or born of God. The bible no where acknowledges two classes of saints, elect and non-elect. But if there were two such classes, and the salvation of the elect was certain, as it really is, and that of the non-elect not certain, it is incredible that the bible should not reveal this fact. Again, so far is the bible from recognizing or implying any such distinction that it every where implies the contrary. It divides mankind into two, and but two classes, and these it sets one over against the other. These are contrasted by the names saint and sinner; people of God and people of this world; children of God and children of this world, or children of the devil; the elect and the reprobate, that is, the chosen and the rejected; the sanctified and the unsanctified; the regenerated and the unregenerated; the penitent and the impenitent. By whatever names they are called, it is manifest that the same classes and none others are meant. The elect of God is a common name for the saints or people of God. I can not find in the bible any evidence that any were converted at any time, but the elect or those whose salvation is sure. The elect are or will be everyone of them certainly converted and saved. If any one chooses to conten[d] that any other are ever converted, the burden of proof is upon him; let him prove it if he can. But this he must prove in order to establish the fact that any truly regenerated persons are ever lost, for sure it is, that no one of the elect will ever be lost. But since I am to take the affirmative I must take the burden of showing that none but the elect are recognized in the scriptures as saints, and as I am speaking only of the salvation of the saints I shall take it for granted that all those who were from eternity chosen to eternal salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, will certainly be saved.

Now if it can be shown that some saints have been really lost, it will follow that some have been converted who were not of the elect.

And on the other hand, if it can be shown that no saint has been, or will be finally lost, but on the contrary, that all the true saints are, and will be saved, it will follow that none but the elect are converted. For all who are, or will be saved, are saved by God, and saved by design and in accordance with an eternal design, and of course they were elected to salvation from eternity.

I have already said that it is incredible that the bible should read as it does and that it should no where distinguish between elect and non-elect saints, if there is any such distinction. It can not be said with justice that the bible purposely conceals from all saints the fact of their election, lest it should be a stumbling-block to them. This we have seen is not the fact but on the contrary that the elect, at least some instances have known that they were elect.

But it is said that Peter exhorts the saints to "give all diligence to make their calling and election sure." from which it is inferred that they did not know that they were elect, and furthermore, that it might be that although they were real saints, nevertheless they were not, at least all of them, of the elect.

The words here referred to stand in the following connection:

2 Pet. 1:1. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ: 2. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord; 3. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6. and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7. And to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. 8. For if these be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and can not see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give

diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

Upon this passage I remark:

[1.] That Peter addressed this epistle to all who had faith, that is, to all true christians, as appears from the first verse. He addressed no one by name, but left it for every one to be sure that he had faith. He then proceeds to exhort them to grow in grace, assuring them that if any one did not do so, he had forgotten that he was purged from his former sins; that is, if any one lacked that which he enjoined, it would prove that he had not true faith, or that he had backslidden. Then he adds as in the 10th verse: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." Here I remark:

[2.] That the apostle plainly assumes,

- a. That the called and elected will be saved; to make their calling and election sure, was to make their salvation sure: and,
- b. That none others are saved but the called and elected, for if others are saved it were of no consequence whether they were of the called and elected or not provided they were saved;
- c. That he regarded none as christians, or as at any time having true faith but the called and elected; for he was not exhorting supposed impenitent sinners to become christians, but supposed christians to be sure of their calling and election. This shows that he regarded all christians as of the called and elected. To be sure of their calling and election was to be sure of their salvation. The apostle did not certainly mean to exhort them to become of the number of the elect, for this number we have seen was settled from eternity; but by diligence and growth in grace to secure their salvation, or thus to prove or demonstrate their calling and election. He meant also to admonish them that although called and elected, still their ultimate salvation was conditioned upon their diligent growth in grace and perseverance in holiness to the end of life. He, therefore, exhorts them to make their calling and election sure, which is the same, as to secure their salvation. He speaks of calling and election as indissolubly connected. Effectual calling either results from election, or election from calling. We have seen that election is eternal; therefore election can not result from calling, but calling must result from election.

Again: Christians and saints and the children and people of God, the disciples of Christ, and the elect are to all appearance regarded throughout the bible as the same class.

Again, Christ says:

John 6:37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

Here Jesus says that all who are given to him by the Father shall come to him, and that of those that come to him it is his Father's will that he should lose none, but that he should raise them up, (that is, to eternal life,) at the last day. He does not say here that none do come to him who are not given to him by the Father, but this is plainly implied, for he says, 37th: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." What he means by not casting them out is plain from verse 39. That is, "It is the Father's will that of all that shall come to me I should lose nothing." By not casting them out, then, he intended that he should surely save them, that is, all that came to him. But if he saves them, they must have been given to Christ and have been elected, or they were not. If they were not elected or given to Christ by the Father, they will never be saved unless some are saved without God's designing or choosing to save them. If any are saved God saves them through, or by Christ. If he saves them, he does it designedly, and not without design. But if he ever does, or will design it, he has from eternity designed it. So then, it appears that all who come to Christ were given to him of the Father, and that he will lose none of them, but will raise them up at the last day. My object at present however, is not to insist that no one that comes to Christ will be lost, but only that all who come to Christ are of the number that were given to him of the Father, or are of the elect.

Again compare verses 37,39,44,45. He says:

John 6:37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 44. No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me, draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. 45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.

Here it appears that no one can come to Christ except he be drawn of the Father. Every one who is drawn by the Father with an effectual drawing, or every one who hears and learns of the Father comes to Christ, and no other. The Father draws none to Christ, but those whom he has given to Christ, for these, and these only are the children of God. Isa. 53:13: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." From these passages it appears that none come to Christ but those who are drawn by the Father, and that none are drawn by the father but those whom he has given to his Son, or the elect, and that of those who are thus drawn to Christ it is the Father's will that he should lose none, but that he should raise them up at the last day, that is, that he should save them. But observe, it is my particular object just now to establish the fact that none come to Christ but those who are of the number that are given to Christ, and also that every one who is given to him shall come to him. These, and these only are effectually called or drawn of the Father. All are called in the sense of being earnestly and honestly invited, and all the divine persuasion given them that can wisely be given them. But others than those given to the Son are not as a matter of fact over-persuaded and effectually drawn, in a sense that secures the "concurrence of free will with free grace."

The same truth is strongly implied in many other passages in the teachings of Christ. For example, He says,

John 10:1. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 6. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

He then proceeds to expound the parable. He is the good shepherd having the care of his Father's sheep. He says: 7. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 11. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep; and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. 17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

He had other sheep which were not yet called--they were not of this fold--that is, they were not Jews but Gentiles; these he must bring. To the unbelieving and caviling Jews he said:

Jno. 10:26. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. 29. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Here it is plainly implied that all those were sheep who were given to him by the Father, and that all such would surely hear and know his voice and follow him, but those that were not of his sheep or were not given him by the Father, would not believe. He says: verse 26. But ye believe not. because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. What he here says amounts to this: all those are sheep who are given to me of my Father. All my sheep thus given, shall and will hear my

voice, and follow me, and none others will. I do not notice in this place what he says of the certainty of their salvation, because my present object is only to show that those and those only come to Christ who are given to him of the Father, or are of the elect.

This same truth is either expressly taught or strongly implied in a great many passages and indeed it seems to me to be the doctrine of the whole bible. Again: Ro. 8:28, And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Here they that love God are represented as identical with those who are the called according to his purpose. In other words they who love God are the called according to, or in consequence of their election. All that love God do so, because they have been effectually called according to the purpose or election of God. This passage seems to settle the question, especially when viewed in its connection, that all who ever love God are of the elect, and that they are prevailed upon to love God in conformity with their election.

We shall have occasion by and by to examine the connection in which this passage is found for the purpose of showing that all who at any time truly come to love God, will be saved. I have only quoted this 28th verse here for the purpose of showing, not directly that all that love God at any time will be saved, but that they are of the number of the elect, from which fact their ultimate salvation must be inferred.

It is plain that the apostles regarded regeneration as conclusive evidence of election. The manner in which they address christians seems to me to put this beyond a doubt. Paul in writing to the Thessalonians, 2nd Thes. 2:13, says, But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. Here the Apostle speaks of all the brethren at Thessalonica as beloved of the Lord, and as being from eternity chosen to salvation. He felt called upon to give thanks to God for this reason, that God had chosen them to salvation from eternity. This he represents as true of the whole church: that is, doubtless of all true christians in the church. Indeed the apostles every where speak as if they regarded all true saints as of the elect and their saintship as evidence of their election. Peter in writing to the christians in his first letter, says:

1st Pet. 1:1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Capadocia, Asia: and Bithynia, 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 4. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time: 6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; 7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor. and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: 9. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Here it is plain that Peter regarded all who had been born again to a lively hope, or who were regenerated, as elected, or as chosen to salvation. I might pursue this argument to an indefinite length, but I must attend to other considerations in support of the doctrine in question.

I will for the present close what I have to say under this particular branch of the argument, by reminding you that Christ has expressly asserted that no man can or does come to him except the Father draw him, and that the Father draws to him those, and by fair inference, those only whom he has given to Christ; and further that it is the Father's will that of those whom the Father had given to Christ and drawn to him, Christ should lose none, but should raise them up at the last day. It is I think evident that when Christ asserts it to be his Father's will that of those whom the Father had given him he should lose none but should raise them up at the last day, he intended to say that his Father not merely desired and willed this, but that such was his design. That the Father designed to secure their salvation.

This we shall more fully see in its proper place.

(2.) I remark that God is able to preserve and keep the true saints from apostacy, in consistency with their liberty:--2nd

Tim. 1:12. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Here the apostle expresses the fullest confidence in the ability of Christ to keep him, and indeed, as has been said, it is most manifest that the apostles expected to persevere and be saved only because they believed in the ability and willingness of God to keep them from falling. Again: Ro. 14:4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant; to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand. Again: Phil. 3:21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Again: Eph. 3:20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Again: Jude 24. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Again: 2nd Cor. 9:8. And God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. Eph. 1:18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Again: Heb. 7:25. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. These and many other passages prove beyond a doubt that God is able to preserve his saints.

(3.) God is not only able to keep all that come to Christ, or all true christians, but he is also willing. But Christ has settled this question, as we have seen.

John. 6:37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38. For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me; 39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Here, then, we have just seen these two points settled, namely,

[1.] That God is able to save all saints or all who at any time truly believe and come to Christ, and,

[2.] That he is willing or will to do it. Now if he is both able and willing to keep and save all the saints, he certainly will do it.

But here I know it will be objected, that by this course of argument the doctrine of universal salvation may be established. The bible, it is said, represents God as both able and willing to save all men, and if his being both able and willing to save the saints proves that they will all be saved, it follows that his being able and willing to save all men proves that all men will be saved. But the cases are not parallel; for God no where professes ability to save all men, but on the contrary, disclaims such ability and professes to be unable to save all men; that is, he can not under the circumstances wisely save them, nor can he wisely do any more for saints or sinners than he does. No passage can be found in the bible in which God asserts his ability to save all men. The passages that affirm that "God can do all things," and that "nothing is too hard for the Lord," and the like can not be understood as affirming God's ability to save all men. They do imply that he has power to do whatever is an object of physical omnipotence; but to save sinners is not an object of physical power. Their salvation, if accomplished at all, must be brought about by a moral and persuasive influence, and not by the exercise of physical omnipotence. In the sense in which we can justly apply the terms ability and inability to this subject, God is really unable to do what it is unwise for him to do. He has an end in view. This end is the highest good and blessedness of universal being. This end can be accomplished only by the appropriate means, or upon certain conditions. These conditions include the perfect holiness of moral agents. If God can not wisely use such means as will secure the conversion and sanctification of sinners, he can not save them. That is, he is unable to save them. This he repeatedly professes to be unable to do.

Ezek. 18:23. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways, and live? 32. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

33:11. Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Is. 5:4. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

Hos. 11:8. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

These are only specimens of the manner in which God speaks of his ability to save sinners, and to do more for the church or the world than he does. From such professions on the part of God, we are to understand him as disclaiming ability to do more or otherwise than he does, in consistency with the highest good of being in general. Since the highest good of being in general is the end which he is aiming to secure, he "may justly be said to be unable to do whatever he can not do in consistency with the use of those means that will secure this end." God therefore does not affirm his ability to save all men, but fully disclaims any such ability and professes to do and to be doing all that he can to save them. He professes to be perfectly benevolent and infinitely wise, and to be doing all that infinite wisdom and benevolence can do for sinners and for all men, and complains that all he can do does not save and will not save many of them.

But with respect to the saints, he does expressly affirm his ability to keep them in a sense that will secure their salvation. This we have seen. He does for them all that he wisely can, and does enough, as he expressly affirms, to secure their salvation. No one can attentively read and consider the passages relating to God's ability to save all men and his ability to save his people without perceiving that the two cases are not parallel, but that in fact they are contrasts. He expressly affirms his ability to keep, to sanctify, and to save his elect children, whilst he repeatedly either expressly or by implication disclaims ability to save all men.

Again: the bible no where represents God as willing the salvation of all men in the same sense in which it represents him as willing the salvation of christians or of his elect.

Such passages as the following are specimens of God's professions of willingness to save all men.

I Tim. 2:4. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

John 3:16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

2 Peter 3:9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

These and similar passages teach that God wills the salvation of all men only in the sense of desiring it. This we know from the fact that he no where intimates a willingness in the sense of a design or intention to save all men; but on the contrary, plainly reveals an opposite purpose or design; that is, he reveals the fact that he can not, shall not, and of course, does not expect or design to save all men. By the profession of a willingness to save all men we can therefore justly understand him to mean only that he desires the salvation of all men, and that he would secure their salvation if he wisely could. This is all that we can understand him as affirming, unless we would accuse him of self-contradiction.

But he professes a willingness to save his elect, or in other words all regenerate persons or all believers in Christ and all who ever will truly believe in him, in the sense of purposing or designing to save them. This is most manifest from the scriptures we have already examined and this will still further appear from the passages to be examined.

We have seen that the Father has given a certain number to Christ with express design to secure their salvation; that he has committed to him all the requisite power and influences to save them, and that they will actually be saved. Nothing

like this can be found in the bible respecting any other class of men whatever. This objection, then, is without foundation, and the argument from the ability and willingness of God to save his saints remains in full force and conclusiveness.

4. Again, Christ expressly prayed for all believers, and in a manner that secures their being kept and saved:

John 17:2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. 7. Now they have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee; 8. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9. I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. 10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. 11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. 12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. 21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. 23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. 24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world.

Now observe, that in this most affecting prayer Christ says

[1.] Verse 2: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

We have seen that in the 6th chapter of this book Christ expressly teaches that all are given to him that come to him, and that all shall come to him who were given to him by the Father.

[2.] He proceeds to affirm that he had in the exercise of this power kept in his Father's name all who had been given and had come to him and had lost none.

[3.] He asks the Father henceforth to keep them in his own name as he was about to leave them as to his bodily presence. He says, verse 15, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Again he says, 20--24: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Now as surely as Christ's prayer is answered all believers will be saved; that is, at least all who ever have believed or ever will believe subsequent to the offering of this prayer. But Christ's prayers are always answered.

To this it is objected that a part of this same prayer is not answered and of course never will be. It is said for example, that in the 21st verse he prays for the union of all believers, which has been far enough from having been answered. The verse reads, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Here he explains the sense in which he prays that all believers may be one, not that they should be all of one denomination or creed, but that they should possess one and the same spirit; that the same spirit that united the Father and the Son, that is the Holy Spirit who is in the Father and the Son might also be in all christians.

This is plainly his meaning; and that this is true of all real christians that they possess the Holy Spirit or the spirit that dwells in the Father and the Son, no one can doubt who understands and believes his bible.

But it is objected again that Christ prayed to be delivered from crucifixion and his prayer was not answered.

I reply that he did not pray for this, if at all, unqualifiedly. He says, "If it be possible, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." If it were the pains of the cross from which his soul shrunk in the garden, and from which he desired if possible to be excused, it is plain that he did not pray unqualifiedly to be delivered, but on the contrary submitted the question to the will of his Father. But in the prayer in John 17, he made no such condition. He knew that in this case it was his Father's will to grant his request. Of this he had expressly informed his disciples, as we have seen; that is, that it was his Father's will to keep and save all who were given to Christ, and had been drawn by the Father to Christ. The Spirit of this petition accords precisely with his teaching upon the subject. He had taught before that all believers would be kept and saved, and that this was his Father's will; now, could he, either expressly or impliedly, in this prayer, put in the condition that was in the prayer, just referred to, namely, "If it be thy will?" But although what has been said is a full answer to the assertion that Christ's prayers are not always answered, it may be, for some minds, important to say that it is far from being certain that Christ prayed to be delivered from crucifixion.

John 12:23. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, It bringeth forth much fruit. 25. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my father honor. 27. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. 28. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven. saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

Here Christ plainly intimates that he did not pray to escape the death to which he was appointed and for which he had come to that hour. But it may be asked, against what did Jesus pray in the garden? I reply, against being overcome by the agony of his soul and crushed to death before he came to the cross. The following passages may throw some light upon this question: John 14:30: "Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me."

Here he informs his disciples that he must soon break off the conversation with them, for he was just entering into a severe conflict with Satan.

Matthew records the conflict through which the Savior passed, and of which he advised his disciples.

Matt. 26:37. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. 38. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39. And he went a little further, and fell on his face., and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40. And he cometh unto the disciples. and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What! could ye not watch with me one hour? 41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. 44. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. 45. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46. Rise, let us be going: behold he is at hand that doth betray me.

Here it appears that Christ had his last and great conflict with Satan. Satan set on him, as it appears, to kill him outright with anguish.

Luke in recording this transaction, says, Luke 22:39. "And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. 40. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. 41. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42. Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine he done. 43. And there appeared

an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. 44. And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow. 46. And said to them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray lest ye enter into temptation."

It is, I think, plain that this struggle in the garden was a sore and overwhelming temptation, and that an angel was sent to assist him by resisting and putting away Satan; that is, it was by sending an angel that his Father answered his prayer. This prayer appears to have been heard and answered; for from this time his mind remained calm. There is a passage in Hebrews that I think evidently refers to this scene.

Heb. 5:7. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.

To what does this refer if not to the death he feared in the garden? He said on that occasion, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." He then offered up prayer with strong crying, and tears and was heard, &c. To my mind all these circumstances taken together make it very evident that Christ did not pray against the cross in the petition under consideration, but that on the contrary he prayed to be delivered from temptation and was heard and answered.

But be this as it may we are to remember that Christ expressly affirms that his Father always hears, that is, answers his prayers.

Jno. 11:42. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

Again, Paul says of Christ, Heb. 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Here he asserts that Christ is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he always lives to make intercession for them. This as plainly as possible implies that his intercessions are all-prevailing. Indeed, as he is the mediator, they must be.

Now let us consider how far we have advanced in establishing the perseverance and final salvation of all believers.

[1.] We have seen that all the elect to salvation will be saved.

[2.] That all true believers are of this number.

[3.] That God and Christ are able to keep them from apostacy and save them.

[4.] That he is willing or wills to do it.

[5.] That Christ expressly prayed for the perseverance and final salvation of all believers.

[6.] That he prayed in express accordance with the revealed will of his Father; and,

[7.] That his prayers always prevail and are answered.

In Christ's prayer in Jno. 17, he expressly affirms that he did not pray for the world, that is, for all men. He prayed only for those whom the Father had given him. For these he prayed, not merely that God would save them upon condition of their perseverance, but that God would keep them from the evil that is in the world, and save them, and make them one in the sense that one Spirit should be in them all. He asked manifestly the same things for all that in future believe, that he asked for those who had already believed.

Should I proceed no farther the argument is complete and the proof conclusive. But since this doctrine is so abundantly taught, either expressly or impliedly, in the bible, I proceed to the consideration of a number of other passages which will throw still further light on the subject.

(5.) Christ expressly and designedly teaches this doctrine.

John 6: 39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. 47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Here he expressly teaches as we have before seen that it is his Father's will that all believers or all who at any time believe, (for this is plainly his meaning,) shall be saved; that he should lose none of them, but as we have seen, John 17:2, should give them eternal life. Then he claims ability to keep and save them agreeably to his Father's will. This, remember, respects all believers or all who are given to Christ who we have learned are the same persons.

Again, John 10:27. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. 29. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my father's hand.

The whole connection shows that Christ intended to teach the certainty of the salvation of all his sheep or of all the elect, or, which is the same, of all true believers. But to this it is objected, that none are sheep any longer than they remain obedient, and therefore the assertion that he will save the sheep, does not secure those who at any time sin. But I reply that Christ recognizes all the elect as his sheep whether converted or whether in a state of temporary backsliding or not. He represents his sheep as hearing his voice, and as following him, and those who are not of his sheep as not hearing his voice and as not following him: John 10:16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. 26. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

Again, Matt. 18:12. How think ye? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? 13. And if so be that he find it. verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. 14. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

The design of this parable is to teach the doctrine I am defending. If not what is its design? This is a full answer to the objection that no one is recognized as a sheep who has gone astray.

But again it is said that although no one else can pluck the sheep out of the Father's hand, yet we can do it ourselves. I grant that we can by natural possibility; but this objection is good for nothing, for Christ expressly says. John 10:27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. 29. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Not only is no one able to pluck them out of his Fathers hand; but Christ gives unto them eternal life and they shall never perish. This implies that while they might or are able to apostatize and be lost, yet as a matter of fact they never will. What could be made out of all he says of himself as a shepherd in this passage, if after all he loses some of his sheep? Let any one ponder the whole chapter and see.

Systematic Theology

Volume III

By Rev. Charles G. Finney

Lecture 79

PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.

PERSEVERANCE PROVED.

(6.) Another argument in support of the doctrine under consideration, I deduce from the fact that Paul, an inspired apostle, believed it.

Phil. 1:1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons; 2. Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4. (Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,) 5. For your fellowship in the gospel, from the first day until now. 6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Here the apostle represents himself as giving thanks for all the saints at Philippi, upon the ground of his confidence that he who had begun a good work in them would perform or perfect it until the day of Christ. His confidence did not rest in them, but in the faithfulness of Christ. He did not express a confidence that they would of themselves persevere, but that he who had begun a good work in them, would carry it on: that is, that he would so work in them as to keep them and as to secure their perseverance to the end. This he expected with respect to all the saints at Philippi. But if he believed this of all the saints at that place, it is plainly and fairly inferable that he believed it, simply because he expected this as to all true saints. He does not intimate that he expected this because of any peculiarity in their case, that is, not because they were better than other saints. or that God would do more for them than for others. He seems plainly to have expressed this confidence upon the ground of his expectation that he who begins a good work in any saint will carry it on and perfect it until the day of Christ. Should it be said that Paul intended merely to express the conviction or opinion of a good man that the Philippian saints would be saved, but that he did not intend to utter this as the voice of inspiration, I reply that Paul plainly expresses a confidence that they would all be saved, and that God would perfect the work which he had begun. Now how came he by this confidence? He was an inspired man. If inspiration had taught him that real saints do fall away and are lost how could he consistently express so thorough a persuasion that all the saints at Philippi would be saved? If Paul believed in the perseverance of the saints, it must be true, or he was deceived in respect to this important doctrine. But is it not safe to trust Paul's opinion of this doctrine? If any one is disposed to contend that we can not with strict justice infer that Paul believed the same in respect to God's perfecting the work in all saints, that he believed in respect to the Philippians, I will not contend with him with respect to this. It is, however, clear that Paul no where in this epistle nor elsewhere, intimates that he had higher expectations in regard to the salvation of the Philippians than he had in respect to the salvation of all true saints. In writing to the churches the apostles appear to have regarded and spoken of all true saints as the elect children of God. They seem to represent the salvation of all such persons as certain, but always keeping in mind and holding forth either expressly or by way of implication the nature of this certainty, that it was conditioned upon the right and persevering use of their own agency. They consequently constantly endeavor to guard the churches against delusion in regard to their being real saints, and admonish them to prove themselves in this respect, and also warn them against the supposition that they can be saved without actual perseverance in faith and obedience to the end of life.

(7.) The apostles seemed to have regarded the conversion of sinners as an evidence that God designed to save them or that they were of the elect:

Acts 2:47. Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be

saved.

13:48. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.

In these passages as elsewhere, the conversion of sinners is spoken of as settling the question of their salvation. But if true saints do fall from grace and perish, why should the inspired writers so often express themselves as if they regarded the regeneration of a person as an indication that he is one of the elect and as securing his salvation?

So common is it for Christ and the apostles to speak of regeneration as settling the question of the salvation of those who are regenerated, that great multitudes have overlooked the fact that there was any other condition of salvation insisted on in the bible. When the Jailor demanded of Paul and Silas what he should do to be saved, Paul replied to him "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house."

Here, as is common in the bible, faith is spoken of as if it were the sole condition of salvation. Repentance, faith, regeneration. &c., are often, as every student of the bible knows, spoken of as if they were the only conditions of salvation. Now it seems to me that this could not and ought not to be if there is not a certain connection of some sort between real conversion and eternal salvation. It is true the necessity of perseverance to the end, is often mentioned and insisted upon in the bible as a condition of salvation, just as might be expected when we consider the nature of the certainty in question. If there is not, however, a certain connection between true regeneration, or faith, or repentance and salvation, it seems to me incredible that we should so often find faith, and repentance, and conversion spoken of as if they secured salvation.

Those who believe are represented as already having eternal life, as not coming into condemnation, but as having passed from death unto life. The following passages are specimens of the manner in which the scriptures speak upon this subject.

John 1:12. But Its many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

3: 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. 16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

4:14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

5:24. Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

6:37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, That every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

Acts 2:38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

13:48. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.

16:31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved, and thy house.

Mark 16:15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Now it seems to me that this numerous class of passages strongly imply that there is a certain connection of some sort between coming to Christ, receiving Christ, &c., and eternal life. Observe, I do not contend that perseverance faith and obedience is not also a condition of salvation, but, on the contrary, that it actually is. Nor do I contend that such like representations as the above, settle the question that all who at any time repent, believe, or come to Christ, will be saved. The thing which I here intend is, that this class of texts is just what we might expect, if the fact of regeneration were certainly connected with salvation, and just what it seems they ought not to be in case this were not true.

To this it is objected that many who attended on Christ's ministry are represented from time to time as believing, of whom it is almost immediately said that they turned back and walked no more with him. I answer that the Bible manifestly recognizes different kinds of faith, such as an intellectual faith, a faith of miracles, and the faith of the heart. The following are specimens of the Bible treatment of this subject:

Acts 8:13. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. 21. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 37. And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

James 2:19. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble.

These and many other passages manifestly speak of an intellectual faith, or of a simple conviction of the truth.

Matt. 7:22,23; 1 Cor. 13:1,2; are specimens of the manner in which the faith of miracles is represented.

See Rom. 10:9,10,11. Acts 8:37. Gal. 5:6. These and such like passages speak of evangelical faith or the faith of the heart. When the multitude are spoken of as believing under Christ's instruction or in view of his miracles, and then as going back and walking no more with him, we are doubtless to understand those passages as teaching simply that they were at the time convinced of his Messiahship, and that they intellectually believed that he was what he professed to be. But their history seems to forbid the conclusion that they were truly regenerated, or that they had the true faith of the gospel.

Again, John speaks of those who openly apostatized as if they had not been true christians: 1 John 2:19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. Observe the force of the expressions, "They went out from us, but they were not of us;" that is, were nor[not] truly Christians. Why does he say so? He assigns the reason for this assertion; "for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. but they went out from us that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." That is, a part of the professed disciples went out from the rest and returned to the world, that it might be made manifest who were and who were not Christians. I do not say, however, that this is indubitably taught in this passage; but it cannot be denied that this is its most natural construction.

(8.) The inhabitants of heaven seem to believe that there is a certain connection between repentance and salvation.

Luke. 15:7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

Now surely this joy is premature unless they expect the penitent to be saved. If after all, there is an uncertainty about the result in their estimation, and if it may be, and there is a probability that the penitent will fall and suffer a vastly more aggravated damnation than if he had never been enlightened, one would think that they would at least suspend their triumph until the result was known. To be sure they might rejoice if the sinner broke off temporarily from his sin, and rejoice at the bare prospect of his salvation, but to me this passage reads just as it might be expected to read if they regarded repentance as certainly connected with ultimate salvation.

Again: there are several parables that seem to take the perseverance of the saints for granted or to assume its truth. The one immediately preceding the verse upon which I have just remarked is one of them.

Luke. 15:3. And he spake this parable unto them saying: 4. What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

Now why this joy at the return of a strayed or lost sheep if there is no certainty or scarcely any probability that he will not stray again and be finally lost with an aggravated destruction?

Immediately following this is another parable of the same import.

Luke. 15:8. Either what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? 9. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found that which was lost. 10. Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Here again it may be asked, why this great joy at finding the sinner, unless his conversion is to result in his salvation?

I do not quote these passages as proving the doctrine in question, but only as specimens of the class of passages that seem to assume the truth of the doctrine and as being just what might be expected if the doctrine is true, and just what might not be expected if the doctrine is not true.

To this it may be, and has been replied that there are many passages that are just what we could not expect if the perseverance of the saints were true. The following are relied upon as examples of this class:

Heb. 6:1. Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. 2. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment, 3. And this will we do if God permit. 4. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5. Shall have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Ez. 18:24. But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

33:13. When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

Matt. 10:22. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Jno. 15:6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

1 Cor. 10:12. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Heb. 3:6. But Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. 12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from

the living God. 13. But exhort one another daily while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

4:1. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 11. Let us labor therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

2. Pet. 1:10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

These passages have been quoted in another connexion, but are repeated here again, because the objection occurs in this place.

In reply to this objection I remark, as I have in substance before done, that instead of these passages being otherwise than might be expected if the doctrine in question were true, and therefore implying that the doctrine is not true, they are precisely what might be expected if the doctrine as I have stated it, were true. If the certainty be but a moral certainty, even when the fact of conversion is settled beyond all doubt or possibility of mistake, if the final salvation of the truly regenerate be as really conditioned upon perseverance as if there was no certainty about it, and if moreover the fact of conversion is seldom settled in this life beyond the possibility of mistake, then these passages instead of implying any real uncertainty in regard to the final salvation of the saints, are just as and what might be expected because they are just what is needed upon the supposition that the doctrine in question is true. They do not affirm that any true saints are or will be lost. They do imply the natural possibility and, humanly speaking, the danger of such an event. They further imply that without watchfulness and perseverance salvation is impossible. They also imply that caution, warning, and threatening, are needed. They also imply that some men, to say the least, are not certain of their own salvation, and, that they do not certainly know that they are saints beyond all possibility of mistake.

Now these things that are fairly implied in this class of passages are really true: hence these passages just meet the necessities of the church, and are therefore just what might be expected when all the facts in the case are considered. I do not intend that this class of passages imply the truth of the doctrine under consideration, but that they are consistent with it and might be expected if the doctrine, as I have stated it, were true.

(9.) Regeneration is represented as securing perseverance in obedience: 1st. In those passages that make it the condition of salvation. 2nd. In those passages that expressly affirm that the truly regenerated do not and cannot live in sin. 1st Jn. 3:9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 4:7. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 5:1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him that is begotten of him. 4. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 18. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not: but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. These and similar passages expressly teach the persevering nature of true religion through the indwelling of the Holy spirit: in other words, they teach that the truly regenerate do not sin, in the sense at least of living in any thing like habitual sin. They teach that with all truly regenerate souls, holiness is at least the rule and sin only the exception; that instead of its being true that regenerate souls live a great majority of their days subsequent to regeneration in sin, it is true that they so seldom sin, that in strong language it may be said with truth that they do not sin. This language so strongly and expressly teaches that perseverance is an unfailing attribute of christian character, that but for the fact that other passages constrain us to understand these passages as strong language used in a qualified sense, we should naturally understand them as affirming that no truly regenerate soul does at any time sin. But since it is a sound rule of interpreting the language of an author, that he is if possible to be made consistent with himself; and since John in other passages in this same epistle and elsewhere, represents that christians or truly regenerate persons do sometimes sin; and since this is frequently taught in the bible, we must understand these passages just quoted as only affirming a general and not a universal truth; that is, that truly regenerate persons do not sin any thing like habitually, but that holiness is the rule with them and sin only the exception. Certainly these passages can not be reasonably understood as affirming and meaning less than this. I know it has been said that being born of God is used by John in these cases in a higher sense and as meaning more than simple conversion or regeneration, as representing a higher state than can be predicated of all true christians. But observe, he especially affirms that all who truly believe are

born of God.

1st. John 5:1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Again: Christ speaks as if he regarded those only as having truly believed who persevere in obedience. John 8:31. Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. The parable of the sower appears to have been designed expressly to teach the persevering nature of true religion.

Luke 8:5. A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. 7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. 8. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundred fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 11. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12. Those by the way-side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 13. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15. But that on the good ground are they, which, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

If this parable was not designed to distinguish true religion from its counterfeits and to illustrate the persevering nature of true religion, I do not know and can not conceive what was its design. I need not enlarge upon it. Let any one read and consider the parable for himself.

Again the parable of the leaven, seems designed also to teach the progressive and persevering nature of true religion.

Matt. 13:33. Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

This parable I understand to represent or teach the aggressive nature of true faith and piety as it exhibits itself both in the hearts and lives of individual christians and also as it progresses and extends itself in the world. It is in its nature persevering and aggressive, and when it once truly exists, it will through grace triumph. When I speak of the persevering nature of true religion, I do not mean that religion as it exists in the hearts of the saints in this life would of itself, if unsupported by the grace and indwelling Spirit of God, prevail and triumph over its enemies; but the thing intended is that through the faithfulness of God, he that has begun or shall begin a good work in any heart will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. The persevering character of true religion is owing to the indwelling Spirit of God. This leads me to remark,

Again, that repentance is made the condition of receiving the Holy Spirit; and when this Spirit is received it is with the express promise and pledge, that he shall abide in the heart forever.

John 7:37. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried. saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Here we learn that water represents the Holy Spirit. This is abundantly taught in the bible. Now let us hear what Christ said to the woman of Samaria.

John 4:13. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. 14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The prominent truth taught in this text is that whosoever shall drink of this water shall never thirst. In this particular respect the Savior contrasts it with the water of Jacob's well, and says 13,14: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This Christ plainly states as a fact.

That is, he shall never perish for lack of this Spirit or water, but it shall abide in him and spring up into eternal life. The Spirit shall remain in him and secure him against falling and perishing. The fact that the Spirit shall abide with and in all who ever receive him and shall prevail to secure their salvation, seems to be plainly taught in this passage.

Again, Ro. 8:9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10. And Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Here it is expressly declared that none are christians who have not the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of Christ, and that they who are Christ's do not walk after the flesh but after the Spirit; that they who are Christ's have crucified, that is, killed the lusts of the flesh. This is the real character of all true saints. Such like passages, observe, are designed to distinguish true religion from its counterfeits, and to teach that perseverance in true obedience is a characteristic of all saints.

The bible every where represents professors who do not persevere and abide steadfast as hypocrites, or as self-deceived. Job says:

Job 27:8. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? 9. Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? 10. Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?

Here he represents the failing to always call upon God as a demonstration of hypocrisy. Christ expressly represents perseverance as the characteristic of true believers. "My sheep hear my voice and follow me." This must relate at least to habitual character.

(10.) Christ represents it as impossible to deceive the elect. Matt. 24:24. We have seen that the elect unto salvation includes all true christians; that is, that all christians are the elect children of God. They have come to Christ. Observe the Savior himself teaches, as we have seen,

[1.] That no one can come to, or believe in him, unless the Father draw him.

[2.] That the Father draws those; and only those to Christ whom he has given to him.

[3.] That all whom the Father has given to him shall come to him, and of those that come to him he will lose none, but will raise them up at the last day.

John 6:44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 37. [39.] And this is the father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

False theories are represented as permitted to test the piety of true and false professors. 1 Cor. 11:19. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Those who are of the elect or are true children of God will not follow heresies. Christ says, John 10:4. "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee

from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

But those who are not true believers will not and do not hear and know his voice and follow him, John 10:26. "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you."

(11.) The eighth chapter of Romans seems to settle the question, or rather is of itself a clear proof of the doctrine we are examining. We need to read and ponder prayerfully the whole chapter, to apprehend distinctly the scope of the apostle's teaching upon this subject. He had in the seventh chapter been dwelling upon and portraying a legal experience. He begins this chapters by asserting, Ro. 8:1. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; 4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. 5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8. So then they that are in the flesh can not please God. 9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Here he describes the character of true believers as distinguished from mere legalists of whom he had been speaking. True believers, he here asserts, are justified; they are in Christ Jesus, they walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them, that is, the law is written in their hearts; they have the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of adoption; the Spirit witnesses with their spirit that they are the adopted children of God; "If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ;" the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in them. Verse 24 he says: "For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"

He then proceeds to notice the ground of this hope. The first particular he notices is, that the Spirit which he had just said, dwells in all true believers, and of which, as we have seen, Christ says that when he is once given, the soul that has received him shall never thirst, but that he shall be in him like a well of water springing up into everlasting life: Paul says of this spirit, verse 26 and 27, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." This, observe, he affirms to be true of all who are Christ's or who are true believers. Of this spirit he affirms the following things: (1.) That all christians possess this Spirit; (2.) That this Spirit bears witness with the spirits of christians that they are the children of God. Verse 16, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (3.) That he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God, that is, that he prays in them or excites them to pray, and to pray aright, for those things which it is the will of God to grant to them. He then in the 28th verse says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Here he represents those who love God and those who are the called according to his purpose, as the same persons, and affirms that we know that all things shall work together for their good. This he notices as a second ground of hope. He next proceeds to state how we know that all things work together for the good of those that love God, or, which he regards as the same thing, to those who are the elect, called according to the election or purpose of God. He says verse 29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren:" that is, we know it because they are predestinated to be conformed

to the image of his Son. Not if they will be, but to be, and therefore all things must directly or indirectly contribute to this result. He then says, "Moreover, whom he did predestinate; them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." That is, furthermore we, know this, and have good ground of hope from the fact that whom he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, them, that is the same persons, he also called, and whom, that is, the same persons whom he had predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son and had called, them he also justified, and whom he predestinated and called and justified them, that is, the same persons, he also glorified.

Here then, he concludes, is a firm foundation for the hope of which he had spoken, the grounds of which he had been pointing out. He accordingly proceeds to say in a spirit of triumph:

Rom. 8:31. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Here he says, "if God be for us, who can be against us?" and then proceeds to point out several other considerations that enter into this ground of confidence. All who love God are his elect. God justifies them, and who is he that condemns them? God is for them, and who shall be against them? God freely gave his Son for all of them, how much more shall he freely give them all things? If he did not withhold his Son, surely he would withhold nothing else from them that was necessary to secure their salvation. Furthermore it was Christ that died and, still more and rather, that had risen again and maketh intercession for them. If these things are so we may well inquire:

35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine or nakedness, or peril or sword? 36. (As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.)

He then triumphantly affirms, verses 37--39: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors. through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If Paul in the eighth of Romans does not settle the question that all true saints will be saved how could it be settled? Let us in few words sum up the argument as he here presents it:

[1.] We are saved already in anticipation or in hope, and only by hope, for as yet we have not received our crown.

[2.] The grounds of this hope are that we are in Christ Jesus, have the spirit of Christ, spirit of adoption. We walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. This Spirit witnesses that we are children and heirs of God. He makes intercession for us according to the will of God. We also know that all things work together for good to them who love God, for they are the called according to his purpose. They who are called, that is, effectually called, are called in conformity with their predestination to be conformed to the image of the Son of God. Hence those who are thus predestinated are called and justified and glorified. Therefore no one can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect. God justifies, and who shall condemn them? Christ died for them, yea, rather, has risen and makes intercession for them. God withheld not his Son, and of course will withhold from christians nothing that is essential to secure their salvation. Wherefore he concludes that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God.

I know that to this it has been replied, that although nothing else can separate us from the love of God, yet we may separate ourselves from his love.

To this I answer, true we may or can do so, but the question is, shall we or will any of the elected and called do so? No, indeed; for this is the thing which the apostle intended to affirm, namely, the certainty of the salvation of all true saints. The apostle manifestly in this passage assumes or affirms that all who ever truly love God are elect or are chosen to be conformed to the image of his Son; and are called and sanctified, and justified, in conformity with such predestination.

If this is not his meaning, what is? If this is not his meaning, what ground of hope do we, after all, find in what he says?

The apostle seems to have had the same thought in his mind in writing to the Hebrews.

Heb. 6:17. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; 18. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; 19. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20. Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high-priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec.

There are a great many other passages of scripture, of the same import as those I have quoted in support of this doctrine, as every one knows who has taken the trouble to examine for himself.

But I have pursued this investigation far enough. If what has been said fails to satisfy any mind, it is presumed that nothing which might be added would produce conviction. I will therefore drop the discussion, and conclude, with several

REMARKS.

1. If the doctrine under consideration is not true, I can not see upon what ground we can affirm or even confidently hope that many of our pious friends who have died have gone to heaven. Suppose they held on their way until the last hours of life. If we may not believe that the faithfulness of God prevailed to keep them through the last conflict, what reason have we to affirm that they were preserved from sin and apostacy in their last hours, and saved? If the sovereign grace of God do not protect them against the wiles and malice of Satan in their feebleness and in the wreck of their habitation of clay, what will become of them? I must confess that if I did not expect the covenanted mercy and faithfulness of God to prevail and to sustain the soul under such circumstances I should have very little expectation that any would be saved. If I could have any confidence that christians would stand fast while in health aside from the truth of this doctrine, still I should expect that Satan would overcome them at the last when they passed through the last great struggle. Who could then trust to the strength of his own purposes.

2. But I could no more hope that myself or any one else would persevere in holiness in our best estate, even for one day or hour, if not kept by the power of God through faith, than I could hope to fly to heaven.

As I have before said, there is no hope of any one's persevering, except in so far forth as free grace anticipates and secures, the concurrence of free will. The soul must be called and effectually called and perpetually called or it will not follow Christ for an hour. I say again that by effectual calling, I do not mean an irresistible calling. I do not mean a calling that can not or that might not be resisted; but I do mean by an effectual calling, a calling that is not in fact resisted, a calling that does in fact secure the voluntary obedience of the soul. This is my only hope in respect to myself or any body else. This grace I regard as vouchsafed to me in the covenant of grace or as a reward of Christ's obedience unto death. It is pledged to secure the salvation of those whom the Father has from eternity given to the Son. The Holy Spirit is given to them to secure their salvation, and I have no expectation that any others will ever be saved. But these, every one of them, will surely be saved. There is, there can be no hope for any others. Others are able to repent, but they will not. Others might be saved if they would believe and comply with the conditions of salvation. but they will not.

We have seen that none come to Christ except they are drawn of the Father, and that the Father draws to Christ those and those only whom he has given to Christ; and also that it is the Father's design that of those whom he has given to Christ he should lose none, but that he should raise them up at the last day, to be with him and to behold his glory. This is the only hope that any will be saved. Strike out this foundation and what shall the righteous do? Strike out from the bible the doctrine of God's covenanted faithfulness to Christ--the truth that the Father has given to him a certain number whose salvation he foresees that he could and should secure, and I despair of myself and of every body else. Where is the ground of hope? I know not where.