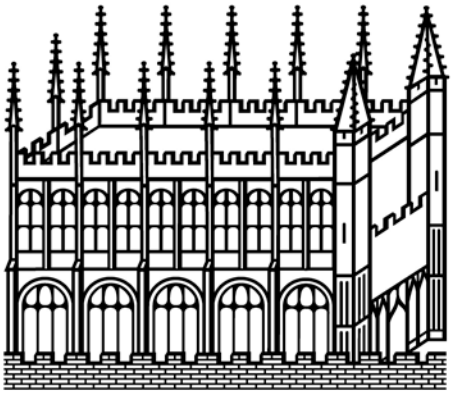

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THE DOCTRINES

OF

PREDESTINATION, REPROBATION,

AND ELECTION.

BY

ROBERT WALLACE,

Pastor of Cathcart Road E. U. Church, Glasgow.

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PREFACE.

WERE a number of shipwrecked mariners cast upon an island, one of their first inquiries would be, Is it inhabited? Having observed footmarks upon the sand, and other tokens of man's presence, another question would be, What is the character of the people? Are they anthropophagi, or are they of a friendly disposition? The importance of such questions would be realised by all. Their lives might depend upon the answer to the latter.

We look around upon the universe, and everywhere observe marks of design, or the tadapation of means to ends. The conviction gathers upon us with deepening power, that there must have been a supreme intelli-

gence arranging the forces of nature. If I throw the dice box twenty times, and the same numbers always turn up, I cannot resist the conclusion that the dice must have been loaded. The application is simple. But, as in the case of the mariners, a second question arises, viz.:—What is the character of the Being revealed in nature? Is He beneficent, or like the fabled Chronus, who devoured his children? It is substantially with this second question that the following work has to do. It is a treatise concerning the character of God.

The subjects discussed have been for many years the occasion of much controversy and difficulty. Whilst to certain minds it were more agreeable to read exposition of Christian truth, yet the followers of Christ may often have to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Our Lord's public ministry showed how earnestly He con-

tended for the truth. At every corner He was met by the men of "light and leading" amongst the Jews, and who did their best to oppose Him. Paul, too, when he lived at Ephesus, disputed "daily in the school of one Tyrannus, and this continued by the space of two years." The period of the Reformation was also one of earnest discussion between the adherents of the old faith and the followers of Luther. The questions discussed in those days, both in apostolic and post-apostolic times, were eminently practical; but they were not a whit more so than the questions of Predestination, Reprobation, and Election. These touch every man to the very centre of his being when he awakes from the sleep of indifference, and wishes to know the truth about the salvation of his soul. It has been our object, in the present volume, to dispel the darkness which has been thrown around those sub-

jects, and to let every man see that the way back to the bosom of the heavenly Father is as free to him as the light of heaven.

The following treatise consists of an Introduction bearing on the history of the questions discussed; Part I. treats of Predestination; Part II. is on Reprobation, and Part III. on Election.

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For God so loved the world that He gave His only beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—*Jesus.*

I reject the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination, not because it is incomprehensible, but because I think it irreconcilable with the justice and goodness of God.

—*Bishop Tomline.*

God our Saviour will have all men to be saved.—*Paul.*

THE DOCTRINES

OF

PREDESTINATION, REPROBATION, AND ELECTION.

INTRODUCTION.

REGARDING the predestinarian controversy, it has been said, "Hardly one among the many Christian controversies has called forth a greater amount of subtlety and power, and not one so long and so persistently maintained its vitality. Within the twenty-five years which followed its first appearance upwards of thirty councils (one of them the General Council of Ephesus) were held for the purpose of this discussion. It lay at the bottom of all the intellectual activity of the conflicts in the Mediæval philosophic schools; and there is hardly a single subject which has come into discussion under so many different forms in modern controversy" (*Ch. Encyc.*)

Although the controversy between Pelagius and Augustine began in the fifth century, it is

an interesting inquiry—What was the mind of the earlier Christian writers on the subject? Of course their opinion cannot settle the truth of the question in debate, but it has a very important bearing upon the subject. The late Dr. Eadie claimed the voice of antiquity for the system of the Confession of Faith. He says, "The doctrine of predestination was held in its leading element by the ancient Church, by the Roman Clement, Ignatius, Hermas, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, before Augustine worked it into a system, and Jerome armed himself on its behalf" (*Ec. Cyc.*) This statement may be fairly questioned, and, we think, successfully challenged. Dr. Cunningham, in his *Historical Theology*, remarks, "The doctrine of Arminius can be traced back as far as the time of Alexandrinus, and seems to have been held by many of the Fathers of the third and fourth centuries." He attributes this to the corrupting influence of Pagan philosophy (*Hist. Theo.*, Vol. II., p. 374). This is not a direct contradiction to Eadie, but it shows that truth compelled this sturdy Calvinist to admit that non-Calvinistic views were held in the earlier and best period of the Church. The question, however, is one that must be decided by historical evidence, and not by authority.

And what is that evidence? Mosheim, in writing of the founders of the English Church, says, "They wished to render their church as similar as possible to that which flourished in the early centuries, and that Church, as no one can deny, was an entire stranger to the Dordracene doctrines" (*Reid's Mos.*, p. 821). The Synod of Dort met in A.D. 1618, and condemned the Arminian doctrine, and decided in favour of Calvinism; but, according to Mosheim, this system of Calvin was unknown to the early Church. Faber maintains the same. He says, "The scheme of interpretation now familiarly, though perhaps (if a scheme ought to be designated by the name of its *original* contriver) not quite correctly, styled Calvinism, may be readily traced back in the Latin and Western Church to the time of Augustine. But here we find ourselves completely at fault. Augustine, at the beginning of the fifth century, is the first ecclesiastical writer who annexes to the Scriptural terms 'elect' and 'predestinate' the peculiar sense which is now usually styled Calvinistic. With him, in a form scarcely less round and perfect than that long and subsequently proposed by the celebrated Genevan reformer himself, commenced an entirely new system of interpretation previously unknown

to the Church Catholic. What I state is a mere dry historical fact" (*Faber's Apos. Trin.*, *Cooke's Theo.*, p. 305).

Prosper of Acquitania was a devoted friend and admirer of Augustine, and not wishing to be charged with propagating new views, wrote to the Bishop of Hippo (Augustine) desiring to know how he could refute the charge of novelty. "For," saith he, "having had recourse to the opinion of almost all that went before me concerning this matter, I find all of them holding one and the same opinion, in which they have received the purpose and the predestination of God according to His prescience; that for this cause God made some vessels of honour and other vessels of dishonour, because He foresaw the end of every man, and knew before how he would will and act" (*Whitby's Pos.*, p. 449). This was a frank acknowledgment on the part of Prosper, who was a man of ability, and Secretary to Leo, and it carried much farther than was intended. The fact, however, was patent that the Christian Church for some four hundred years was a stranger to what is known as the doctrine of Calvin. The view thus stated is confirmed by Neander. When Prosper and Hilary appealed to the Bishop of Rome, they doubtless expected that

he would favour the system of Augustine, and condemn the Semi-pelagians (modern E.U.'s). If so, they were mistaken. The bishop was chary, and whilst speaking contemptuously of those presbyters who raised "curious questions," he left it undecided what the curious questions were. He had said in his letter to the Gallic bishops, "Let the spirit of innovation, if there is such a spirit, cease to attack the ancient doctrines;" but he did not say what was ancient and what was novel. Neander upon this remarks: "The Semi-pelagians, in fact, also asserted, and they could do it with even more justice than their opponents, that by them the ancient doctrine of the Church was defended against the false doctrine recently introduced concerning absolute predestination, and against the denial of free-will tenets, wholly unknown to the ancient Church" (Vol. IV., p. 306). The concluding words are almost identical with those of Mosheim, just quoted.

Bishop Tomline, who gave special attention to this phase of the subject—viz., the state of opinion in the Church previous to Augustine, says, "If Calvinists pretend that absolute decrees, the unconditional election and reprobation of individuals, particular redemption,

irresistible grace, and the entire destruction of free-will in man in consequence of the fall, were the doctrines of the primitive Church, let them cite their authority, let them refer to the works in which these doctrines are actually taught. If such opinions were actually held we could not fail to meet with some of them in the various and voluminous works which are still extant. I assert that no such trace is to be found, and I challenge the Calvinist of the present day to produce an author prior to Augustine who maintained what are now called Calvinistic opinions" (Preface VII.)

The extracts which he gives from the writings of the Fathers are so many and extended that we can only give a few. Clement of Rome, a contemporary of the apostles, says: "Let us look stedfastly at the blood of Christ, and see how precious His blood is in the sight of God, which, being shed for our salvation, has obtained the grace of repentance for all the world" (p. 288). Justin Martyr, who lived about the middle of the second century, says, "But lest anyone should imagine that I am asserting things that happen according to the necessity of fate, because I have said that things are foreknown, I proceed to refute that opinion also. That punishments and chastise-

ments and good rewards are given according to the worth of the actions of every one, having learnt it from the prophets, we declare to be true; since if it were not so, but all things happen according to fate, nothing would be in our own power; for if it were decreed by fate that one should be good and another bad, no praise would be due to the former, nor blame to the other; and, again, if mankind had not the power of free-will to avoid what is disgraceful and to choose what is good, they would not be responsible for their actions" (Tom., p. 292). Irenæus, who lived near the end of the second century, says, "The expression 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not' (Matt. xxiii. 37), manifested the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man free from the beginning, having his own power as he had also his own soul to use the sentence of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion from God. For there is no force with God, but a good intention is always with Him. And therefore He gives good counsel to all. But He has placed the power of choice in man, in that those who should obey might justly possess good, given indeed by God, but preserved by ourselves" (Tom., p. 304). Tertullian (A.D. 200), "There-

fore, though we have learned from the commands of God both what He wills and what He forbids, yet we have a will and power to choose either, as it is written, 'Behold I have set before you good and evil, for you have tasted of the tree of knowledge'" (Tom., p. 320). Origen (A.D. 230) says, "We have frequently shown, in all our disputations, that the nature of rational souls is such as to be capable of good and evil" (Tom., p. 323). Ambrose (A.D. 374) says, "The Lord Jesus came to save all sinners" (Tom., p. 377). Chrysostom (A.D. 398) says, "Hear also how fate speaks, and how it lays down contrary laws, and learn how the former are declared by a Divine spirit, but the latter by a wicked demon and a savage beast. God has said, 'If ye be willing and obedient,' making us masters of virtue and wickedness, and placing them within our own power. But what does the other say? That it is impossible to avoid what is decreed by fate, whether we will or not. God says, 'If ye be willing ye shall eat the good of the land;' but fate says, 'Although we be willing, unless it shall be permitted us, this will is of no use.' God says, 'If ye will not obey my words, a sword shall devour you;' fate says, 'Although we be not willing, if it shall be granted to us,

we are certainly saved.' Does not fate say this? What, then, can be clearer than this opposition? What can be more evident than this war which the diabolical teachers of wickedness have thus shamelessly declared against the Divine oracles" (Tom., p. 458).

Besides the names thus given, Tomline appeals to and gives quotations from the following authors of antiquity as confirming his statement—viz., Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Lactantius, Eusebius, Athenasius, Cyril, Hilary, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, &c. The testimony of the Fathers is clearly against the Calvinistic system. We do not, of course, claim them as settling the controversy; this must be done by an appeal to reason and the Scriptures; but it is nevertheless deserving of attention, that for some 400 years the stream of opinion in the Church ran in a contrary direction to that of Geneva. The system of Calvin is, that God wishes only some men to be saved, and that everything is fixed; and it was clearly held before Augustine's time, that God wished all men saved, and that men were free, which they could not be if all things were foreordained.

Besides this, it is a remarkable fact that the errors of the early heretics bore a close

resemblance to those held by the followers of Calvin. Irenæus, writing of Saturnius, says, "He first asserted that there are two sets of men formed by the angels, the one good and the other bad. And because demons assisted the worst men, that the Saviour came to destroy bad men and demons, but to save good men" (Tom., p. 515). Gregory of Nazianzum, warning his readers against heresy, says, "For certain persons are so ill-disposed as to imagine that some are of a nature which must absolutely perish," &c. (Tom., p. 522). Jerome, commenting on Eph. v. 8, remarks, . . . "There is not, as some heretics say, a nation which perishes and does not admit of salvation" (Tom., p. 525). Do not the heretical opinions denounced by the Fathers bear a close resemblance to the "elect" and the "reprobate" of the Confession of Faith?

The departure from the ancient creed of the Church arose out of the controversy with Pelagius. This monk, surnamed Brito (from being generally believed to be a native of Britain), is supposed to have been born about the middle of the fourth century. Nothing is now known regarding the place of his birth, or precise period when he was born. His name "is supposed to be a Greek rendering

of (Pelagios, of or belonging to the sea) the Celtic appellative Morgan, or sea-born." He never entered holy orders. If tradition is to be trusted, he was educated in a monastery at Bangor, in Wales, of which he ultimately became abbot. In the end of the fourth century he went to Rome, having acquired a reputation of sanctity and knowledge of the Scriptures. Whilst here he made the acquaintance of Cœlestius, a Roman advocate, who espoused his views, and gave up his own profession, and devoted himself to extend the opinions of his master. About A.D. 405, they began to make themselves known, but attracted little attention; and after the sack of the city by the Goths, A.D. 410, they left and went to Africa. The two friends seem to have separated here. Pelagius went to Jerusalem, whilst Cœlestius remained in Africa. The latter desired to enter into holy orders, and sought ordination. His opinions had become known, however, and objections were lodged against him. He appealed to Rome, but did not prosecute his case. He went to Ephesus instead. The proceedings at Carthage in this matter are noteworthy, as they were the occasion of introducing Augustine into the controversy. He was determined not to let the

subject rest, and sent Orosius, a Spanish monk, to Jerusalem, and got the question brought before a synod there in A. D. 415. This assembly, however, refused to condemn Pelagius. In A. D. 418, the emperor banished the heresiarch; and after this history fails to give any reliable account of him. He had spoken what he thought, and had stirred the minds of men in three continents. When the Council of Carthage met, there were twelve charges of heresy laid against him. A summary of his opinions is given by Buck, and is as follows:—(1.) That Adam was by nature mortal, and whether he had sinned or not, would certainly have died. (2.) That the consequences of Adam's sin were confined to his own person. (3.) That new-born infants are in the same situation with Adam before the fall. (4.) That the law qualified men for the kingdom of heaven, and was founded on equal promises with the Gospel. (5.) That the general resurrection of the dead does not follow in virtue of the Saviour's resurrection. (6.) That the grace of God is given according to our merits. (7.) That this grace is not given for the performance of every moral act, the liberty of the will and information in points of duty being sufficient. If these were

the opinions of Pelagius, then, according to our finding, he had erred from the truth. I say "if," because it is not safe to trust an opponent when professing to give the views of an antagonist. He is apt to confound deductions with principles which are denied.

Although we do not know where and when Pelagius was born, nor the place and time of his death, we have reliable information on these points regarding Augustine. He was born at Tagaste, a town in north Africa, on 13th Nov., A.D. 354. He was the child of many prayers by his devoted mother Monica. The early portion of his life was spent in idleness and dissipation, but he was at last converted in a somewhat remarkable manner. He turned over a new leaf in his moral life, and became a most devoted Christian. Although considered inferior to Jerome (his contemporary) as regards Biblical criticism, he was a man of genius, and a strong controversialist. He contended against the Donatists, the Manichæans, and the Pelagians. When the Vandals were besieging Hippo, he died on the 28th of August, A.D. 430, in the 76th year of his age. No father of the early Church has exercised a greater influence upon theological opinion than he has done.

The system now known as Calvinism should be designated "Augustinianism," Augustine being, as remarked, the real author of the system, and not the Genevan divine. Regarding the central tenets of his creed, it is said: "He held the corruption of human nature, and the consequent slavery of the human will. Both on metaphysical and religious grounds he asserted the doctrine of predestination, from which he necessarily deduced the corollary doctrines of election and reprobation; and, finally, he supported against Pelagius, not only these opinions, but also the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints," (*Ch. En.*, Aug.) Besides introducing a new theological system, Augustine put his imprimatur upon the burning of heretics. When the magistrate Dulcitius had some compunctions about executing a decree of Honorius, Augustine wrote to him and said, "It is much better that some should perish by their own fires, than that the whole body should perish in the everlasting fires of Gehenna, through the desert of the impious dissension" (*Ch. En.*, Aug.) Calvin therefore could not only claim the authority of Augustine for his dogmas, but he might have claimed him also as justifying the burning of Servetus. But this by the way.

With the voice of the Fathers against him, and, as we think, unwarranted by the light of philosophy and the true interpretation of Scripture, how came it about, it may be asked, that Augustine adopted the system which should be called by his name? The true answer to this will be found, we apprehend, in a variety of considerations. His early dissipated life, his nine years connection with Manichæism, the extreme statements of Pelagius, his own strange conversion by hearing, when weeping and moaning under a fig-tree, a young voice saying quickly, "*Tolle lege, tolle lege*" (take and read, take and read), and which he took as a Divine admonition; these, combined with the commotion of the times, would lend their influence to the position he came to occupy. His system, whilst it accords glory to God, is one-sided, by ignoring the function man has to perform in applying the remedial scheme.

Although Pelagius had got many to espouse his opinions, yet his tenets were again and again condemned by the councils of the Church. The controversy, however, very soon diverged from strictly Pelagian lines, and entered upon a new track—viz., that of Semi-pelagianism, to which is closely allied the

principles advocated by the Evangelical Union of Scotland. From extremes there is generally a recoil, and this was the case as regards Augustinianism. Certain monks at Adrumetum drew conclusions from the system which, whether they are admitted or not, are its logical outcome. They said, "Of what use are all doctrines and precepts? Human efforts can avail nothing, it is God that worketh in us to will and to do. Nor is it right to reproach or to punish those who are in error, and who cannot sin, for it is none of their fault that they act thus. Without grace they cannot do otherwise, nor can they do anything to merit grace; all we should do, then, is to pray for them" (Neander, Vol. IV., p. 373). Augustine endeavoured to neutralise these opinions by writing two books explaining his views. Regarding these answers, Neander observes, "But such persons," as the monks, "must rather have found in this a further confirmation of their doubts."

Whilst the monks of Adrumetum drew natural conclusions from the dogmas of Augustine, there came determined opposition to the new creed. It came from the south of France. John Cassian, who had been a deacon under Chrysostom, had established a cloister

at Massila (Marseilles), and had become its abbot, entered the lists against the Bishop of Hippo. He departed from the opinions of Pelagius regarding the corruption of human nature, and he recognised "grace" as well as justification in the sense of Augustine. But he widely differed from him, as will be seen from the summary of Semi-pelagianism given by Buck. It is as follows: "(1.) That God did not dispense His grace to one man more than another in consequence of an absolute and eternal decree, but was willing to save all men if they complied with the terms of the Gospel. (2.) That Christ died for all mankind. (3.) That the grace purchased by Christ, and necessary to salvation, was offered to all men. (4.) That man before he received this grace was capable of faith and holy desires. (5.) That man was born free, and consequently capable of resisting the influence of grace, or of complying with its suggestions." Buck remarks, "The Semi-pelagians were very numerous, and the doctrine of Cassian, though variously explained, was received in the greatest part of the monastic schools in Gaul, from whence it spread itself far and wide through the European provinces. As to the Greeks and other Eastern Churches, they had embraced

the Semi-pelagian doctrine before Cassian." Yet when, as in 1843, similar opinions were proclaimed in Scotland, they were everywhere met with the cry of "New Views," although they had been held so extensively 1400 years before! So much for ignorance.

The name "Semi-pelagians" was not assumed by the party, lest they should be held as maintaining the dogmas of Pelagius; neither was it given until long after the early heat of the controversy. Their opponents still stigmatised them as Pelagians, although they had departed from the system advocated by the British monk.

The controversy continued to occupy the mind of the Church during the latter part of the fifth and beginning of the sixth centuries. In A.D. 475 a synod held at Arles sanctioned the views of the Semi-pelagians, and compelled the presbyter Lucidus, who was an earnest advocate of Augustinianism, to recant. Another synod, held at Lugdunum in the same year, put also its imprimatur upon them. But there was not complete agreement, and the divines who had been banished by the Vandals from northern Africa held a council in A.D. 523, and under their auspices Fulgentius of Ruspe composed a defence of Augustine's views. (Kurtz, p. 213.)

For a considerable time after this the controversy may be said to have remained quiet, but broke forth with great fury in the ninth century. Gottschalk, the son of a Saxon count, had been dedicated by his parents to the service of religion, and in due course entered the monastery of Fulda. He did not take to cloister life, and petitioned an assembly held at Metz to be released from his monastic vows. His request was granted, but Rabanus Maurus, who was the abbot, appealed to Lewis the Pius, and endeavoured to show that all *oblati* (lay brethren dedicated to the service of the Church) were bound to perpetual obligation. Lewis revoked the decision of the assembly, and Gottschalk had to go back to cloister life, which he did by entering the monastery of Orbais. Here he became an ardent student of the writings of Augustine, and sought to propagate his views. "He affirmed a *prædestinatio duplex*, by virtue of which God decreed eternal life to the elect, and the elect to eternal life; and so also everlasting punishment to the reprobate, and the reprobate to everlasting punishment, for the two were inseparably connected" (Neander, Vol. VI., p. 180).

On returning from a pilgrimage to Rome

Gottschalk happened to meet Noting (Bishop of Verona), and expounded to him his views. Sometime after this meeting the bishop had a conversation with Rabanus (who was now Bishop of Mayence), and informed him regarding Gottschalk's opinions. Rabanus promised to send a reply, which shortly afterwards he did, in two "thundering epistles." The controversy now waxed warm, too much so for the monk. He was condemned, imprisoned, and scourged. He threw his treatises into the fire, but intimated his willingness to go through the ordeal of stepping into cauldrons of boiling water, oil, and pitch, being thoroughly convinced that he had the truth upon his side. His offer was treated by Hincoma as the boast of a Simon Magus. He died in prison.

In the Middle Ages the schoolmen took sides in this controversy, but there was no general agitation upon the subject. The "Dark Ages" had set in, and remained until the Renaissance and the revival of learning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The European countries had been greatly agitated by the Crusades, which had collateral issues of an important character. Turbulent spirits had been weeded but, and the royal authority had become better established. Independence of thought began

to assert itself in Wickliffe; and Huss and Jerome of Prague paid the penalty of martyrdom for gainsaying Rome. But a bright morning was at hand. Luther arose. His voice, like a clarion trumpet among the Alps, produced echoes all around. His doctrines spread like wild-fire. Amongst the countries which readily received them was Holland. Charles V. was determined to crush the nascent spirit of liberty in that portion of his dominions, and inaugurated a persecution by which 50,000 people lost their lives. The Dutch maintained their rights, and in due course the Protestant religion was that of the land. The opinions of Calvin were adopted generally. He had adopted the system of Augustine, as already intimated, and he had a great influence upon the Protestants generally outside Germany. James Arminius was born at Oudewater in 1560. He lost his father when quite young, and the merchants of Amsterdam undertook his education upon condition that he would not preach out of their city unless he got their permission. Having gone to Geneva, he sat at the feet of Theodore Beza, one of the most rigid of Calvin's followers After travelling in Italy he returned to Holland, and was duly appointed a minister of

religion in Amsterdam. About this time certain clergymen of Delft had become dissatisfied with the doctrine of predestination, and Arminius was commissioned to answer them. But in prosecuting his inquiries he began to doubt, and then to change his views. He saw that he could not defend the system of Calvin, and having the courage of his convictions, he spoke out his mind. He excited intense opposition, and was visited, without stint, with the *odium theologicum*. All the pulpits began to fulminate against him. In the midst of the controversy he died, 19th October, 1609. He was admitted by his opponents to have been a good man. In 1610 his followers presented a Remonstrance to the assembled States of the province of Holland. From this circumstance they have been called Remonstrants. In this celebrated document the following propositions were stated:—(1.) That God had indeed made an eternal decree, but only on the conditional terms that all who believe in Christ shall be saved, while all who refuse to believe must perish; so that predestination is only conditional. (2.) That Christ died for all men, but that none except believers are really saved by His death. The intention, in other words, is universal, but the efficacy

may be restricted by unbelief. (3.) That no man is of himself able to exercise a saving faith, but must be born again of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. (4.) That without the grace of God man can neither think, will, nor do anything good; yet that grace does not act in men in an irresistible way. (5.) That believers are able, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, victoriously to resist sin; but that the question of the possibility of a fall from grace must be determined by a further examination of the Scriptures on this point." The last proposition was decided in the affirmative in the following year (1611).

A synod was convened at Dort in 1618, from which the followers of Arminius were excluded. It put its approval upon the views of Calvin. The discussion soon assumed a political aspect, which Maurice of Orange turned to his own account, put Oldenbarnveldt to death, and sent Grotius to prison.

In the Church of England divines may hold either view of this question. The saying has been ascribed to Pitt: "The Church of England hath a Popish liturgy, a Calvinistic creed, and an Arminian clergy" (Bartlett). Whilst she has had such genuine Calvinists as Scott and Toplady, she has also produced men

who held that the Saviour died for all—viz., Hales, Butler, Pierce, Barrow, Cudworth, Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Patrick, and Burnet. The Wesleyan body are decidedly anti-Calvinistic.

In 1643 an assembly of divines met at Westminster, and although they could not agree about church government, they came to a finding about doctrines, and drew up the Confession of Faith and the Catechism, which are thoroughly Calvinistic. The Church of Scotland adopted these formularies, and although there have been several secessions from her, they were not upon the ground of doctrine as expressed in the creed. In 1843, however, a decided departure took place in this respect, in one of the offshoots of the Church—viz., in that of the United Secession Church. The Rev. James Morison had declared it to be his belief that Christ died for all men. He was charged with heresy and deposed. Other brethren threw in their lot with him, and in due course the Evangelical Union was formed. Its primary doctrines are that the Divine Father loves all men, that Christ died for all men, and that the Divine Spirit gives sufficient grace to all men, which, if improved, would lead to their salvation.

Such, then, is a brief outline of the main

historical facts in this controversy, and it is worthy of note, as remarked, that for the first 400 years of the Christian era the Calvinistic system of theology was unknown to the Christian church. It began, as we have seen, with Augustine, and being adopted by Calvin was widely spread in those countries which received at the Reformation Protestant principles. It comprehends truths of vast value to man, but which are not peculiar to it. They are held as firmly by opponents as by the followers of Calvin; such, for instance, as the inspiration of the Bible, the doctrine of the Trinity, the inability of man to work out a glory meriting righteousness, justification by faith alone, and the necessity of the Spirit's work in regeneration. As in the Church of Rome, there have also been ranged under the banner of the Genevan divine men of the most varied accomplishments and the most saintly character. But men are often better than their professed creed, and often worse. As a system it has passed its meridian, and although ministers and elders are still required to profess their faith in its peculiarities, it has lost its hold on the popular mind. Mr. Froude, in his celebrated address to the St. Andrew's students, said, "After being accepted for two

centuries in all Protestant countries as the final account of the relations between man and his Maker, Calvinism has come to be regarded by liberal thinkers as a system of belief incredible in itself, dishonouring to its object, and as intolerable as it has been itself intolerant. To represent man as sent into the world under a curse, as incurably wicked—wicked by the constitution of his flesh, and wicked by eternal decree; as doomed (unless exempted by special grace, which he cannot merit, or by an effort of his own obtain), to live in sin while he remains on earth, and to be eternally miserable when he leaves it; to represent him as born unable to keep the commandments, yet as justly liable to everlasting punishment for breaking them, is alike repugnant to reason and to conscience, and turns existence into a hideous nightmare. To deny the freedom of the will is to make morality impossible; to tell men that they cannot help themselves, is to fling them into recklessness and despair. To what purpose the effort to be virtuous, when it is an effort which is foredoomed to fail; when those that are saved are saved by no effort of their own, and confess themselves the worst of sinners, even when rescued from the penalties of sin; and those

that are lost are lost by an everlasting sentence decreed against them before they were born? How are we to call the Ruler who laid us under this iron code by the name of wise, and just, or merciful, when we ascribe principles of action to Him which, as a human father, we should call preposterous and monstrous?" Error, however, like disease, is not easily eradicated; but as men get better acquainted with God, those dark and heathenish conceptions regarding him entertained by Calvinists, such as the foredooming of children and men to endless misery, will give place to nobler thoughts of the Author of our being.

"I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

In 1879 the United Presbyterian Church adopted what is known as the "Declaratory Act," which is a clear departure from the rigid Calvinism of the Confession of Faith. In this declaration God's love is said to be world-wide, and the propitiation of Christ to be for the "sins of the whole world." They hold the Confession dogmas in harmony with the Declaratory Act, but it is an attempt to put the new cloth on the old garment, or the new wine

into the old bottles. It is impossible that God can love the whole world, and yet foredoom millions to be lost. The two views are destructive of each other. This church, one of the most intelligent in the country, cannot stand where it now is. It is bound to go forward.

PART I.—PREDESTINATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE WORD PREDESTINATION, AND THE DOCTRINE AS HELD BY CALVINISTS.

THE word "predestinate" signifies, according to the *Imperial Dictionary*, "to predetermine or foreordain," "to appoint or ordain beforehand by an unchangeable purpose." The noun, according to the same authority, denotes the act of decreeing or foreordaining events; the act of God, by which He hath from eternity unchangeably appointed or determined whatsoever comes to pass. It is used particularly in theology to denote the preordination of men to everlasting happiness or misery. The term is used four times in the New Testament, and comes from the Greek word *proorizo*, which signifies, "to determine beforehand," "to predetermine" (Liddell and Scott). Robinson gives as its meaning, "to set bounds before," "to predetermine," "spoken of the eternal

decrees and counsels of God." According to he lexicographers, the meaning—as far as the word is concerned—is plain enough. It is quite clear from the Scriptures that God predestinates or foreordains. This is admitted on all sides. But here the questions arise—What is the nature of God's predestination? and does it embrace all events? The Confession of Faith gives the following deliverance on the subject—"God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably foreordain whatsoever comes to pass." The Larger and Shorter Catechisms express the same idea. This was the opinion of the Westminster divines, and is the professed faith of Presbyterians in general in Scotland. One of the most eminent theologians of the school of Calvin—Dr. C. Hodge—vindicates this deliverance of the Assembly. He says, "The reason, therefore, why any event occurs, or that passes from the category of the possible into that of the actual, is that God has so decreed" (Vol. I., p. 531). He says again, "The Scriptures teach that sinful acts, as well as those which are holy, are foreordained" (Vol. I., p. 543). And, again, "The acts of the wicked in persecuting the early Church were ordained of God,

as the means of the wider and more speedy proclamation of the Gospel" (Vol. I., p. 544). He says, moreover, "Whatever happens God intended should happen, that to Him nothing can be unexpected, and nothing contrary to His purposes" (Vol. II., p. 335). The same writer, in speaking of the usage of the term "predestination," remarks, "It may be used first in the general sense of foreordination. In this sense it has equal reference to all events, for God foreordains whatsoever comes to pass." It will thus be seen that the Confession, and the Catechisms, and Hodge, as one of the most eminent expounders of these formularies, uphold the doctrine, that everything which happens was foreordained by God to happen. The doctrine as thus stated is clearly the foundation of the whole system of Calvinism. If this is shaken, the entire structure topples to its base. Being so important, its advocates have sought to strengthen it by appealing to the Divine attributes and to passages from holy writ. Let us then examine their arguments derived from the attributes, and the texts they have adduced.

CHAPTER II.

CALVINISTIC PREDESTINATION IN REFERENCE TO DIVINE WISDOM.

THE wisdom of God is held as proving universal foreordination. Being infinitely wise—such is the argument—He will act upon a plan, as in creation, and as wise people do in regard to affairs in general. And this is perfectly correct. The question, however, is not whether God has a plan, but what that plan comprehends? Sin being a factor in the programme of life, the Divine wisdom or plan will be exercised in reference to it. There are two ways in which this may be done. It may be foreordained as part of the plan, as is seen in the above extracts. But another way is this: The Divine wisdom may be exercised in regard to sin, not as ordaining it, but as overruling it, and in turning it to account. That the evil deeds of men bring into view features of the Divine character which would not otherwise have been seen, is no doubt true, but this does not save the wrong-doers from the severest blame. But what is wisdom? It is the

choosing of the best means to effect a good end. The ultimate end of creation is the glory of God, as He is the highest and the best of beings. There can be nothing higher than himself. He desires the *confidence* and the *love* of men.

"Love is the root of creation, God's essence.
Worlds without number
Lie in His bosom like children; He made them for this purpose only,—
Only to love and be loved again."—TEGNER.

Men are asked to give Him their trust and love. It is right that they should do so, for He is infinitely worthy of them. But what are sinful actions? Essentially they are foolish, and issue in misery. And if God foreordained them, how can we esteem Him as wise and good? And if not to our intelligence wise and good, how can we give Him our confidence and love? Trust and love are based upon the perception of the true and the good. If I find a man who is destitute of these qualities of character, to love him with approval is, as I am constituted, an impossibility. But to ordain the "acts of the wicked," as Hodge says that God did, in order to spread Christianity, was neither just nor good. It was doing evil that

good might come. Instead of being wise it was, if it were so, an exhibition of unwisdom as regards the very end of creation, as it was fitted to drive men away from, instead of bringing them to, God. And yet wisdom, Divine wisdom, was exercised in reference to those very persecutions. It was true, as Tertullian said, that the "blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church." By means of the sufferings of the early Christians men's minds were directed to that religion which supported its adherents in the midst of their accumulated sorrows. Their patience, their heroic bravery in facing grim death, threw a halo of moral glory around the martyrs which touched the hearts of true men who lived in the midst of general degeneration. The Christians were driven from their homes, but they carried the truth with them.

"The seeds of truth are bearded, and adhere we know not when, we know not where." In the world of nature there are seeds with hooks, and others have wings to be wafted by the breeze to their proper habitat. And if Divine wisdom watches over the seeds of the vegetable kingdom, does it not stand to reason that it will do so in regard to truth? God overrules the evil, and makes it the occasion of good.

Joseph was immured in jail, but from it he ascended to a seat next the throne. Christ was crucified, but from the blessed cross came streams of blessing. Paul was incarcerated, but from his prison came "thoughts that breathe and words that burn," that have kept alive the flame of piety for more than a thousand years. The people of God still suffer, but, like the asbestos cloth when thrown into the fire, they, by these sufferings, become purified and made meet for the coming glory. In thus overruling evil, God, we say, shows the highest wisdom and love fitted to secure our trust and affection; but to ordain evil would be an illustration of supreme folly, fitted to lower him in the estimation of angels and of men.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO ALMIGHTY POWER.

THE POWER OF GOD is held as supporting universal foreordination. As in the case of wisdom, God's power must be recognised as

infinite. It is true, indeed, that creation does not prove this, since it is limited, and no conclusion can be more extensive than the premises. But looking at the nature and multitude of His works, we cannot resist the conviction that there is nothing (which does not imply a contradiction) that is "too hard for the Lord." He is infinite in power. But the power of God is guided by His wisdom and His love, just as is the power of a good and a wise king. In governing His creation, it stands to reason that He will govern each creature according to its nature—brute matter by physical law, animals by instinct, and man in harmony with his rational constitution. God does not reason with a stone, or plead with a brute; but He does so with man. "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isa. i. 18). It would be absurd to punish a block of granite because it was not marble, or to condemn the horse because he could not understand a problem in Euclid. To do so would be to treat the creatures by a law not germane to their nature. It is, indeed, a radical vice in Calvinistic reasoning that, because God is omnipotent, He can as easily therefore create virtue in a free being as He can waft the down of the thistle on the breeze.

It is quite true that "whatsoever the Lord pleased that did He in heaven and in earth" (Ps. cxxxv. 6). But the question is—What is His pleasure in regard to the production of virtue? Is it a forced or free thing? Every good man will cheerfully ascribe to God the praise of his (the good man's) virtue. God gave him his constitution; God's Spirit brought to bear on him the motives of a holy life. Had there been no Spirit, there would have been no holy life. Yet there is a sense in which the personal righteousness of the good man is his own righteousness. It consists in right acts, in right acts as regards God and as regards man. God told him what to do, and when he did it the acts became his acts, and were not the acts of God, nor of any other. When he does the thing that was right, he is commended—when he does not, he is blamed. Conversing one day with a Calvinistic clergyman, he intimated that a certain person had declared that the only thing stronger than God in the world was the human will. We remarked that we did not approve of such a mode of expression. And rightly so. It implies a confusion of ideas, confounding physical power which is almighty, and moral power, which is suasory

and resistible. Stephen charged the Jews with resisting the Spirit. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts vii. 51). Because they resisted him, would it be right to say that they were physically stronger than God? We replied to the clergyman that we supposed that the person who used the expression meant that God did not get people to do what He wished. The reply was that we were equally wrong. We then asked, "Do you think that God wishes people to keep His law?" He refused to answer the question. But why would he not? Aye, why? He was in this dilemma: If he said that He *did* wish them to keep His law, he would have been met by the question, Why then does He not make them do so? Everywhere the law is broken. If he said that God did not wish them to keep His law, would not this have been to put the Holy One on a level with the great enemy of man? This brings out the idea that whilst God is possessed of infinite power, in the exercise of that power He has respect to the constitution of man in the production of virtue. He does not override the constitution, and treat it as if it were a nullity. To do so would be absurd,

for forced virtue is not virtue at all. God is all-powerful, but He is also ALL-WISE.

CHAPTER IV.

PREDESTINATION CONSIDERED WITH REFERENCE TO DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE.

THE FOREKNOWLEDGE of God is held as evidence that He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. He foreknows, so it is argued, but He does so because He has foreordained. Calvin says, "Since He (God) doth not otherwise foresee the things that shall come to pass than because He hath decreed that they should so come to pass, it is vain to move a controversy about foreknowledge, when it is certain that all things do happen rather by ordinance and commandment" (B. iii.) Toplady says "that God foreknows futurities, because by His predestination He hath rendered their futurition certain and inevitable." Bonar says, "God foreknows everything that takes place, because he Has fixed it" (*Truth and Error*, p. 50). The same doctrine is held by the younger Hodge—that foreknowledge involves foreordination.

There have been some who have denied the

infinitude of God's knowledge, notably Dr. Adam Clarke. He held that God, although possessed of omnipotence, yet as He chooses not to do all things, so also although He possesses the power of knowing all things, yet He chooses to be ignorant of some things. In refuting this notion, Dr. Hodge remarks, "But this is to suppose that God wills not to be God, that the Infinite wills to be finite. Knowledge in God is not founded on His will, except so far as the knowledge of vision is concerned—*i.e.*, His knowledge of His own purposes, or what He has decreed shall come to pass. If not founded on His will it cannot be limited by it. Infinite knowledge must know all things actual or possible" (Vol. I., p. 546). Although the motive underlying Clarke's argument is good, yet it is not wise to sacrifice the Divine intelligence to the Divine goodness. God is the infinitely perfect one, but to suppose that He is ignorant of what will happen to-morrow is to limit His perfections, and make Him a dependent being. But neither can we accept the Calvinistic doctrine, that God foreknows because He has foreordained. This, properly speaking, is not foreknowledge, but *after* knowledge, since it comes after the decree. It is, moreover, simply assertion. It is not a

self-evident proposition, and is neither backed by reason nor Scripture. The great difficulty, however, with our Calvinistic friends is regarding certainty. If God is certain that an event will happen, then, so it is argued, it must happen. If we deny that there is an absolute necessity for the event as an event happening, then it is replied that God in that case was not certain. But this is sophistical reasoning —slipshod philosophy. God was certain that the event would happen, but He was also certain that it need not have happened. The Divine knowledge is simply a state of the Divine intelligence, and never causes any thing. It comprehends all that is past, all that now is, and all that will ever be. But it comprises more than this, and herein lies the key of the mystery. It takes in the *possible*, or that which is never realised in the *actual*. Human knowledge does this—and how much more the Divine! God knows that the thief will steal; He is certain that he will do it, but He is also certain that he need not do it. His being certain that the theft will take place does not necessitate the theft. It (the certainty) exercises no controlling agency upon the wrong-doer. Dr. W. Cooke remarks, "What is involved in necessity? It is a resist-

less impulse exerted for a given end. What is freedom? It involves a self-determining power to will and to act. What is prescience? It is simply knowledge of an event before it happens. Such being, we conceive, a correct representation of the terms, we have to inquire, where lies the alleged incompatibility of prescience and freedom? Between freedom and necessity there is, we admit, an absolute and irreconcilable discrepancy and opposition; for the assertion of the one is a direct negation of the other. What is free cannot be necessitated, and what is necessitated cannot be free. But *prescience* involves no such opposition. For simple knowledge is not coercive; it is not impulse; it is not influence of any kind: it is merely acquaintance with truth, or the mind's seeing a thing as it is. If I know the truth of a proposition of Euclid, it is not my knowledge that makes it true. It was a truth, and would have remained a truth, whether I knew it or not, yea, even, if I had never existed. So of any fact in history; so of any occurrence around me. My mere knowledge of the fact did not make it fact, or exercise any influence in causing it to be fact. So in reference to the Divine prescience; it is mere knowledge, and is as distinct from force, constraint, or influ-

ence as any two things can be distinct one from the other. It is force which constitutes necessity, and the total absence of force which constitutes liberty; and as all force is absent from mere knowledge, it is evident that neither foreknowledge nor afterknowledge involves any necessity, or interferes in the least degree with human freedom. Man could not be more free than he is, if God were totally ignorant of all his volitions and actions" (*Deity*, p. 293). Calvinists sometimes entrench themselves behind God's foreknowledge as behind a rampart of granite, but it gives in reality no support to their system. That God knows the possible, and the contingent, was illustrated in the case of David at Keilah. He had taken up his temporary residence in this town. Saul was out on the war path, and David wished to know if he would visit Keilah, and if so, whether the men of Keilah would deliver him up. The answer was that Saul would come, and the people would deliver him up. Receiving this answer from God, he left. This shows that God's knowledge does not necessitate an event (see 1 Sam. xxiii.)

He knows what might be, but which never will be. He saw how men would act in regard to David, but His knowledge did not

make them do it. And He knows how men will act regarding the rejection of salvation, but this does not necessitate them to ruin their souls. He is certain that they might have been saved. There was a perfect remedy for their need; they had power to take it, and refused. The lost might have been saved; or, in other words, every man in hell might have been in heaven.

The late Lord Kinloch in his *Circle of Christian Doctrine*, has several judicious remarks on this subject. In his chapter on predestination he says:—"The choice of free agents cannot have been predestinated in any proper sense of the word, that is, cannot have been fixed beforehand so as to fall out in one way, and no other, irrespectively of his own will. To say that it has been so, involves a contradiction in terms, for it is to say that a man chooses and does not choose at one and the same moment. The choice may be foreseen, must indeed in every case be foreseen by God, otherwise the government of the universe could not be conducted. But to foresee and foreordain are essentially different things" (p. 121). He says again, "What God appoints, He, to whom the whole of futurity lies open at a glance, necessarily appoints beforehand. Hence arises the axio-

matic distinction which I find the key to the subject. All that God is himself to do He not merely foresees but foreordains. All that He does not do himself, but leaves man to do by the very act of creating him a free agent, the choice, namely, between one course and another, is foreseen but not predestined" (p. 124). The ideas of Lord Kinloch are sound, and we deem them irrefutable.

CHAPTER V.

PROOF TEXTS FOR CALVINISTIC PREDESTINATION EXAMINED.

THE Scriptures are supposed to teach the doctrine that God hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. It were impossible within the compass of this short treatise to consider at large all the passages that have been imported into this controversy. We shall, however, consider a few which seem to favour the dogma.

THE SONS OF ELI.—In 1 Sam. ii. 25, it is written regarding the sons of Eli, "Notwithstanding they hearkened not to the voice of their father, *because* the Lord would slay them." The whole stress of the argument from this

passage lies in the word "*because.*" They were not able to hearken to their father, because God had determined to slay them. There are two objections to this view, the first critical and the second moral. The Hebrew particle translated because is—*ki.* It is again and again translated by the word "that," and there is no reason in the world why it should not have been so translated in this passage. By substituting "that" for "because," there is no support to predestination. It simply denotes, in such case, that they would not believe their father, which doubtless was the case from their depraved habits. The *moral* objection is that God had made their return to good impossible, whilst He declares that He is not willing that any should perish. On these grounds we reject the interpretation.

MICAIAH AND AHAB.—The parabolic representation of Micaiah is held as proving not the bare permission of an event, but the actual deception of Ahab. The matter is recorded in 1 Kings xxii. Jehoshaphat had paid a visit to his neighbour, the King of Israel, Ahab. The latter proposed that the former should accompany him in an attack upon Ramoth-gilead. Ahab's prophets had promised success to the enterprise. Jehoshaphat

wished to inquire of the prophet of the Lord. Ahab told them that there was one, Micaiah by name, but that he hated him as he always prophesied evil of him. He was sent for, however, and when he came he was asked if they should go up against Ramoth-gilead. He answered, "Go and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." This was evidently spoken in such a tone and manner, that Ahab said, "How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord?" The prophet then uttered a few words about the dispersion of the army, which were very unpalatable to the king. He then said, "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left." A question was asked who would persuade Ahab to go up, and at last one answered that he would go and be a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets, and that he would persuade him. The narrative proceeds, and it is added, "And He (the Lord) said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets" (1 Kings xxii.) It is held that this narrative proves

that God intended to deceive Ahab. I could understand an infidel trying to make capital out of such a passage; but for a professed Christian to go to it to prove that God intended to deceive Ahab, appears at first sight to transcend belief. To do so is to sap the foundations of religion. How much reason has the Bible to say, "Save me from my friends!" No doubt, the interpretation of the passage given lies on the same lines with the general system of the true Calvinists, and is quite of a piece with their declaration that God foreordained the Jews to crucify Christ. But, let us look at the passage. If God had intended to deceive Ahab, as saith Calvin, the course taken was the very opposite of what was fitted to secure the end. Micaiah was His recognised prophet; He spoke through him, and warned Ahab against going up. The result, if he did, was predicted; was this deception? The method adopted by the prophet was highly dramatic, and fitted to impress both the kings with the folly of the enterprise. It was a LYING spirit that was to inspire the emissaries of Baal, and advise the attack. And if God's prophet intimated disaster—which actually occurred—where was there deception? When it is said

that God told the lying spirit to go and deceive Ahab, this is the mere drapery of the parable, and must be held as denoting sufferance, and not authoritative command. When the literal meaning of a passage leads to absurdity, we are required to seek for its spirit or other explanation. Christ said, "Give to him that asketh of thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." To carry this out literally would be impossible; but the *spirit* of the passage is beautiful, teaching, as it does, the heavenly charity characteristic of the good man. Christ demanded of those who would become His disciples, that they should hate their brethren; but no honest interpreter would take this literally. The passage evidently means that we owe a higher allegiance and love to Christ than any earthly relationship. The parable of Micaiah, taken literally, makes God to take part in the work of Satan, whilst He also works against himself, in inspiring His own prophet. Such a method must be rejected. The great truth brought out in the parable is this—viz., that a man rejecting heavenly counsel becomes a prey to evil spirits, which drive him to ruin.

LIMITATION OF DAYS.—Job xiv. 5 is appealed to. The words are, "Seeing his days are

determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." We do not see any bearing the passage has upon the subject under discussion—universal predestination. It brings before us the Divine Sovereignty, by virtue of which God has determined the laws of the constitution of man, and that there is a period in his life beyond which he cannot go. But he may shorten this period, for "bloody and deceitful men do not live half their days," and many people commit suicide, and break one of God's commands. Does God determine the number of suicides? Yes, if Calvinism is true; for, according to it, He hath "foreordained whatsoever comes to pass."

RESTRAINT ON WRATH.—Psalm lxxvi. 10 is appealed to. The words are, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Dying men catch at straws, and to appeal to this passage is as if one were catching at a straw. It brings before us the great truth that God overrules evil, and brings good out of it. The *methods* by which God does this are not stated, but would be suited to the peculiar circumstances of each case. We see illustra-

tions of the principle in the destruction of the Egyptians, the deliverance of the three Hebrews from the furnace, and the general history of the Church. But to bring good out of evil and cut down persecutors, are very different things from "foreordaining whatsoever comes to pass."

THE STANDING OF THE COUNSEL.—Isaiah xlvi. 10 is appealed to. It is as follows:—"My counsel shall stand, and I shall do all my pleasure." Now there is no doubt that God's counsel shall stand, nor that He will do all His pleasure; but the questions are, what is His counsel, and what is His pleasure? To bring the passage forward on behalf of universal foreordination is to assume the point in debate, and it is therefore inadmissible. God has a definite purpose regarding individuals and nations. It is to make the best out of every man that He can in harmony with the freedom of the will; and it is the same regarding nations. The principle of His dealing is stated in these words,—"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword" (Isa. i. 19). This is the Divine counsel and pleasure regarding man still.

EVIL IN THE CITY.—Amos iii. 6 is appealed to. It is as follows:—"Shall the 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?" The word rendered "*evil*" (*ra*) occurs more than 300 times in the Old Testament, and has various shades of signification. It is translated as meaning "sorrow" (Gen. xliv. 29), "wretchedness" (Neh. xi. 15), "distress" (Neh. ii. 17). It is applied to "beasts," "diseases," "adversity," "troubles." It stood as the opposite of "good," and sometimes meant "sin." To determine its meaning in any particular instance, we must consider the context. In the beginning of the third chapter of Amos, punishment is threatened against the people: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." When trouble and distress come upon a people, they may be said to come from God as the result of their disobedience. He vexes them in His "sore displeasure."

There are various species of evil—as metaphysical evil, or the evil of limitation; physical evil, or departure from type; moral evil, or sin; and penal evil, or the punishment of sin. Looking at the context, it is perfectly clear

that the prophet has reference to the last-mentioned. The people had broken God's laws, and were punished by God for their misdeeds. It might take the form of pestilence or famine, but whatever was its shape, it was a messenger from God. He sent it because the people had done wrong. This interpretation is in harmony with the usage of the word, and satisfies the moral conscience.

The passage in Isaiah xlv. 7, "I make peace and create evil," has obviously the same meaning, as it stands in contrast to "peace." "Peace" is representative of blessings; "evil" is the synonym of distress and sorrow. The prophet is supposed to allude to the Persian religion, according to which there were two great beings in the universe—viz., Oromasden, from whom comes good, and Ahriman, from whom comes evil. It is very doubtful whether the prophet had any such reference. Barnes says,—"The main object here is, the prosperity which should attend the arms of Cyrus, the consequent reverses and calamities of the nations whom he would subdue, and the proof thence furnished that JEHOVAH was the true God; and the passage should be limited in the interpretation to this design. The statement, then, is that all this was under His direction."

PREDESTINATION AND THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.—Acts ii. 23 is appealed to. It reads thus: "Having been delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." But how can these words prove universal foreordination? It might be said, that if God foreordained the bad deeds of the crucifiers, the principle is established. True; but did He foreordain them? The words simply declare that God had given up Christ, and that in so doing He had acted in harmony with a settled plan, and that the Jews had wickedly taken the Saviour and slain Him. From the throne of His excellency God saw the character of the people that lived in A.D. 33; that they stood upon religious punctilio, and "as having the form of godliness whilst destitute of its power," that they would do as the Scriptures foretold; and yet He determined to send His son into their very midst, and when He came, they took Him and crucified Him. In all that they did they acted freely. Had it not been so, had they been acting under an iron necessity, then the apostle could not have brought against them the charge of having done what they did with "wicked hands." That charge, that homethrust, explodes the

Calvinistic argument, as far as the verse is concerned.

Another passage is Acts iv. 27, 28. It reads thus: "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, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel had determined before to be done." But the question is simply this,—what was it that God had determined to be done? We cannot admit that God had fixed unalterably the doings of Herod, Pilate, and their unholy allies, for the simple reason given in explaining Acts ii. 23—viz., that if such were the case, then there is no foothold upon which to condemn those high-handed sinners. They were verily guilty, but we cannot find a shadow of fault with them if they were only doing what they were-fore-ordained to do. What, then, had God determined to be done? He had determined to send His son into the world to make an atonement for sin. But this might have been done without the betrayal, the trial, and the crucifixion. I may determine to go to a distant city without determining the *mode* of travel. One way may be pleasant, another disagreeable in the highest degree, and yet the

latter may be chosen because of certain collateral issues.

So Christ's death might have been determined on, but not the *mode.* Atonement might have been made in another way than on the cross. It was not the crucifixion that made the atonement, but its value lay in the death of the Son of God. Had He expired during the sore agony in the garden, would not His death have been meritorious? The adjuncts, the trial and crucifixion, were not therefore necessary to give His death atoning power. But God saw what the Jews would do,—that they would, in the exercise of their free agency, and without any decree, put Christ to death; and yet He sent Him at the time He did. All the glory of grace, therefore, redounds to the praise of the Lord, and the ignominy rests upon the Jews and the Gentiles. As a proof of universal foreordination, the passage proves nothing.

GOD WORKETH ALL THINGS.—Ephes. i. 11 is adduced as upholding the predestination of all events. It reads thus: "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." The stress of the passage as a proof rests on the words, "who worketh all things."

But according to the canon of interpretation already stated—viz., that when the literal interpretation of a passage leads to absurdity, it cannot be the true one. John in his first epistle (ii. 20) says, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." To take these words literally would be to make those Christians to whom they were addressed to possess all knowledge, and thus make them equal to God, which is absurd. The words must be limited to the subject matter in which they are found. The apostle is speaking of the anointing of Christians, the imparting unto them of the Holy Ghost, and the phrase "all things" denotes things necessary to salvation. It is said (Acts ii. 44) that the first Christians "had all things common." But to take the words literally would be to outrage propriety. In Philippians ii. 14, it is written: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." Here, again, the words must be limited in their application, otherwise the Christians were commanded to do all kinds of evil if commanded, without a murmur or dispute. This could not be, hence the words must be restricted to the duties devolving on them. So there must, of necessity, be restriction upon the passage in Ephesians quoted in the Confession of

Faith. It must be restricted, otherwise it will follow that God is the only worker in the universe. And what is done in the world? God's laws are broken; but if He is the only worker, then He is the only breaker of His own laws! This is absurd, hence the literality must be given up. The obvious meaning is, that in the redemptive scheme God has wrought it all out according to the wise plan He had formed respecting it, just as He works out all His plans in nature and in providence.

We know of no stronger passages than those mentioned, although others have been quoted. It is the easiest thing in the world to quote verses from the Bible as supporting a dogma; it is quite a different thing to show that they prove it.

CHAPTER VI.

OBJECTIONS TO CALVINISTIC PREDESTINATION.

THERE are very grave objections to this doctrine, that God hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. They are so formidable, indeed, that in view of them the doctrine to our finding must be rejected. On another

occasion we stated several of these, which, with a few modifications, were the following:—

(1.) In the first place, we object to the doctrine of universal foreordination because, if adhered to, it makes science and philosophy *impossible.* These are all based upon the trustworthiness of consciousness, and if this is false we have no foundation to build upon. When we interrogate consciousness it testifies to our freedom. But if every volition is fixed, as it is held it is, by a power *ab extra* from the mind exercising the volition, then consciousness is mendacious; it lies when it testifies to our freedom, and, therefore, cannot be trusted; thus, science, philosophy, and religion become impossible. The old Latin saw *falsum in uno, falsum in omnibus,* which, when freely translated, is—one who gives false evidence on one point may be doubted on all points. And where does this lead to? It leads to Pyrrhonism in science and philosophy, and indifferentism in religion. The doctrine is thus a foundation for universal scepticism.

(2.) In the second place, we object to universal foreordination because it leads to Pantheism, a phase of Atheism. Pantheism as Pantheism may be viewed statically or

dynamically. The static Pantheist assumes that all properties are properties of one substance. This was the feature of the vedanta system of Hindu philosophy, which holds that nothing exists but Brahma. "He is the clay, we are the forms; the eternal spider which spins from its own bosom the tissue of creation; an immense fire, from which creatures ray forth in myriads of sparks; the ocean of being, on whose surface appear and vanish the waves of existence; the foam of the waves, and the globules of the foam, which appear to be distinct from each other, but which are the ocean itself." Now, if our consciousness is only a dream, which this doctrine of foreordination makes it out to be, what are we all, in such a case, but mere *simulacra*, ghosts, shadows? This, and nothing more. We thus reach the fundamental principle of the Hindu philosophy, which is this, *Brahma only exists, all else is an illusion.*

The dynamic Pantheist holds that all events are produced by one and the same cause. This is precisely the doctrine of the out-and-out Calvinist. God is said to be the "fixer" of whatsoever comes to pass; and Pantheism says every movement of nature is necessary, because necessarily caused by the Divine

volition. He is the soul of the world, or as Shelley says—

> "Spirit of nature, all-sufficing power,
> Necessity, thou mother of the world."

The only platform from which Pantheism can be assailed is our consciousness of self,—of our own personality and freedom, — from which we rise to the personality and the freedom of God. The tenet of universal foreordination takes from us this "coigne of vantage," and lands us in dynamic Pantheism.

(3.) In the third place, we object to universal foreordination because it destroys all moral distinctions. Praise has been bestowed upon Spinoza because he showed that moral distinctions are annihilated by the scheme of necessity. But, indeed, it requires very little perception to see that this must be the case. If God has, as is said, determined every event, then it is impossible for the creature to act otherwise than he does. A vast moral difference stands between the murderer and the saint. But if the doctrine of universal foreordination is true, we can neither blame the one nor praise the other. Each does as it was determined he should do, and could not but do, and to blame or praise anyone is impossible.

"Man fondly dreams that he is free in act;
Naught is he but the powerless worthless plaything
Of the blind force that in his will itself
Works out for him a dread necessity."

There is therefore, according to this system, no right, no wrong, no sin, no holiness; for wherever necessity reigns, virtue and vice terminate. "Evil and good," says the Pantheist, "are God's right hand and left—evil is good in the making." Everything being fixed by God we can no more keep from doing what we do, than we can keep the earth from rolling round the sun. Since this monstrosity in morals results from the doctrine, it is evidently false.

(4.) We object, in the fourth place, to universal foreordination, because it makes God the author of sin, the caveat of the Confession notwithstanding. It is said that God's foreknowledge involved foreordination. If so, the matter may be easily settled thus:—Does God foresee that men will sin? Of course He does. But if foreknowledge involves foreordination, then by the laws of logic He has foreordained sin. Syllogistically thus:—God only foreknows what He has fixed; but He foreknows sin, ergo, He fixed sin. We cannot resist this conclusion if we hold the premises. The

Confession says He has foreordained everything, yet is He not the author of sin. But is it not clear as day that the author of a decree is the author of the thing decreed? David was held responsible for his decree regarding Uriah, and justly so. Had he been as clever as the authors of the Confession he could have parried that homethrust of Nathan, "Thou art the man." If everything that comes to pass was foreordained, David might have said, "I beg pardon, Nathan; it is true that I made the decree to have Uriah killed, but I did not kill him. Is it not the case that the author of a decree is not responsible for the sin of the decree?" Would Nathan have understood this logic? We think not. But if the Confession had been then in existence (if the anachronism may be pardoned), he might have appealed to it against Nathan; and we never should have had that awful threnody—the fifty-first Psalm. There is, then, no escape from the conclusion, that if everything that comes to pass has been foreordained, so also must it be the case with sin, for it also comes to pass. I open the page of history, and find it bloated with tears and blood. It is full of robberies, massacres, and murders. As specimens, look at the murder of John

Brown by Claverhouse; the massacre of St. Bartholomew; the sack of Magdeburg, when the Croats amused themselves with throwing children into the flames, and Pappenheim's Walloons with stabbing infants at their mothers' breasts. Who ordained these and a thousand such horrid deeds? The Confession says that God ordained them, for He foreordains whatsoever comes to pass. Tilly, the queen-mother, the infamous Catherine de Medici, Charles IX., the bloody "Clavers" were mere puppets. The Confession goes past all these, and says that God fixed them to take place. This is nothing else, in effect, than to place an almighty devil on the throne of the universe. This is strong language, but it is time, and more than time, that sickly dilettanteism should be left behind, and this gross libel on the Creator should be utterly rejected. He foreordains all His own deeds, but not the deeds of men.

(5.) We object to the doctrine of universal foreordination, in the *fifth* place, because it makes the day of judgment a farce. The books are opened, and men are about to receive acquittal or condemnation. This is perfectly right if men were free when on earth, but not so if all their deeds were fore-

ordained by God. One of the most interesting sights in Strasbourg is the clock of the cathedral when it strikes twelve. Then the figures move. A man and a boy strike the bell, the apostles come out, and Christ blesses them. It is a wonderful piece of mechanism. But the figures are simply automatic. They move as they are moved. To try them in a court of justice (should anything go wrong), would be simply ridiculous—a farce. And if every one of our deeds is fixed, what better are men than mere automata? To try them, to judge them, and to award praise and blame for what was done, would be to burlesque justice. The judgment day, therefore, and foreordination of all things cannot stand in the same category. If we hold by the one we must give up the other. God foreknows all things, but foreordains only what He himself brings to pass. Man will be judged, condemned, or rewarded, according as he has acted in life; which judgment implies his freedom or the non-foreordination of his acts.

The objections thus adduced are, in our judgment, quite sufficient to condemn the dogma of universal foreordination. Yet others of a grave character may be urged against it. It is a sacred duty as well as a privilege of

the Christian, to defend the Divine administration when attacked by infidels. But if everything has been fixed how can this be done? Look at the fall. God knew that it would occur, but, according to Calvinism, He knew it because He had foreordained it. But the actors in the whole transaction were severely blamed and punished. To the serpent it was said, "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field." The woman was told that because she had done what she did, her sorrow was to be multiplied; and the man was driven out of Paradise, because he had hearkened unto the voice of his wife. Can such declarations be justified if the transactions recorded were all foreordained? Each of the parties condemned might have asked, and done so pertinently—Why put this punishment upon me when I was simply carrying out the Divine decrees? And what answer could be given? None that we know of which would satisfy the reason. And what, then? This—viz., that in the light of the drama of the fall, the doctrine of universal foreordination must be given up as a myth which ignores philosophy, and reflects injuriously upon the Divine character.

In Jeremiah vii. 29-31 it is written: "Cut off

thy hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places . . . for the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. And they have built the high places of Tophet, . . . to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, nor came it into my heart." Here the Lord expressly declares, that instead of having foreordained these deeds, such an idea was never in His heart. There is here a clear "Thus saith the Lord" against the dogma of universal predestination.

In Mark v. 6, it is said of Jesus that "He marvelled because of their unbelief." But we only marvel when we are ignorant of the *cause* of a phenomenon. As soon as we know this the marvel ceases. Had Jesus, therefore, known that all was fixed, He never would have marvelled. Would you marvel that the fire had gone out when it was decreed not to give additional fuel? Would the miller marvel that the mill did not go when he had ordained that the water should be shut off? The prefixing of all events, and "marvelling" at anything, are out of the question. But since Christ did "marvel" it shows that He

believed that they *could* and *ought* to have believed, and that He knew of no reason why they did not. It may be said that He was a man, and spake and felt like a man. True, but will the followers of Calvin maintain that he knew more of divinity than Christ? We should think not.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE DOCTRINE.

We have thus endeavoured to show that the doctrine of universal predestination—the foundation of the Calvinistic theology—is not based upon the principle of the Divine wisdom, nor upon Divine power, nor upon Divine foreknowledge, nor proved by the Scripture texts advanced on its behalf. It is closely allied to Pantheism and the fate of the Stoics. It shakes hands with Socialism, which maintains that man can have no merit or demerit, that he could not be otherwise than he has been and is (*Socialism*, by Owen). It is the creed of the Mahometans. According to them every action in a man's life has been written down

in the *preserved tablets,* which have been kept in the seventh heaven from all eternity. "No accident," saith the Koran, "happeneth on the earth, or on your persons, but the same was entered into the book of our decrees before we created it. Verily this is easy with God: and this is written lest ye immoderately grieve for the good which escapeth you, or rejoice for that which happeneth unto you." They might fall in battle, but it was so decreed, and at the resurrection they would appear with their "wounds brilliant as vermilion, and odorous as musk." Since the primary principle of Calvinism is a foundation principle of Pantheism, Socialism, Stoicism, and Mahometanism, Calvinists may well question whether they have not been building upon the sand, instead of the eternal rock of immutable truth.

In view of the doctrine we have advocated, viz., that God has not ordained whatsoever comes to pass, but has left each man to be the arbiter of his own fate, we can see the propriety of the exhortation, "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" (Deut. xxx. 19). It is the same still. God has provided a Saviour

for all, and, therefore, for each. It is the province of the Holy Spirit to testify respecting Christ—that He is able to save the very worst, and as willing as He is able. Each may choose to neglect this Saviour, or reject Him by choosing some other ground; or may choose Him as his only refuge. This choice has to be made by each man himself. No man can choose for another any more than he can eat or drink for another. It belongs entirely to each to do this. To choose Him is to choose life. To neglect or reject Him is to choose—death. Which will it be? The principle—viz., of choice, runs through life. Your happiness here depends on it in numberless instances. It is recognised everywhere in the Bible. Its exhortations summed up are expressed thus—"Turn ye, turn ye, why will you die?" It thus rests with you, and with you only—after what God has done for you—whether you shall live or die.

PART II.—REPROBATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION STATED.

THE subjects of reprobation and election are so closely connected that they might be considered in one chapter. Indeed, so close is the connection, that certain verses supposed to prove one of them, are also adduced to prove the other, as—"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." It is, however, stoutly maintained that election is scriptural, whilst reprobation is repudiated. It is important to have clear ideas on the subject.

What, then, are we to understand by the doctrine of reprobation? The question is not whether those dying in impenitency shall be subjected to suffering; for this is held by the opponents of Calvinism as well as by Calvinists themselves. The question is this, Is it true that God in a past eternity foreordained

millions of men to endless misery, that to this end they were born, and to this end they must go? John Calvin held that it was so. He says, "All are not created on equal terms, but some are foreordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and accordingly as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death." He says, again, "If we cannot assign any reason for God's bestowing mercy on His people, but just that it so pleases Him, neither can we have any reason for His reprobating others, but His will. When God is said to visit in mercy, or to harden whom He will, men are reminded that they are not to seek for any cause beyond His will." He says, again, "The human mind, when it hears this doctrine, cannot restrain its petulance, but boils and rages, as if aroused by the sound of a trumpet. Many, professing a desire to defend the Deity from an invidious charge, admit the doctrine of election, but deny that any one is reprobated. This they do ignorantly and childishly, since there could be no election without its opposite—reprobation. Those, therefore, whom God passes by He reprobates, and that for no other cause but because He is pleased to exclude them from the inheritance which

He predestines to His children" (*Inst.*, b. iii.). Zanchius held—"It was therefore the first thing which God determined concerning them from eternity—namely, the ordination of certain men to everlasting destruction" (*Thesis de Reprob.*). Elnathan Parr maintained, "If a man be reprobated he shall certainly be damned, do what he can" (*Grounds of Divinity*). Maccovius says that "God has indeed decreed to damn some men eternally, and on this account He has ordained them to sin; but each sins on his own account, and freely." To like purpose we might quote Maloratus, Amandus Pollanus, John Norton, John Brown of Wamphray, Piscator, &c. (*Vide Old Gospel*, &c., Young, Edin.) Calvin and his followers did not mince the matter, as these extracts clearly show.

The Lambeth Articles expressed the same ideas as above. Article First says, "God hath from eternity predestinated certain persons to life, and hath reprobated certain persons to death." Article Third runs thus, "The predestinate are a predeterminate and certain number, which can neither be lessened nor increased." Article Ninth has these words, "It is not in the will or power of every man to be saved." The Lambeth Articles were drawn up as expressing the sense of the Church of England,

or, rather, a section of it. They were merely declaratory, and recommended to the students of Cambridge, where a controversy had arisen regarding grace. They received the sanction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and a few others.

The Synod of Dort, as intimated, was held in 1618, and had divines in it from Switzerland, Hesse, the Palatinate, Bremen, England, and Scotland. Its first article runs thus:—"That God by an absolute decree had elected to salvation a very small number of men, without any regard to their faith or obedience whatsoever; and secluded from saving grace all the rest of mankind, and appointed them by the same decree to eternal damnation, without any regard to their infidelity or impenitency" (Tom., p. 567). The Synods of Dort and Arles declared that if they knew the reprobates, they would not, by Austin's advice, pray for them any more than they would for the devils (*Old Gospel*, &c.) In this they were entirely consistent, whatever else they might be.

The Westminster Assembly met in London in 1643. They drew up the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms. In its third chapter the Confession declares:—"By the decree of

God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it can neither be increased nor diminished." The Confession of Faith is the declared standard of doctrine of Presbyterians in general in this country. It is proper to note this fact, because it has been denied that whilst election is held reprobation is denied. They are both in the Confession.

From what we have thus brought forward it appears evident that, according to Calvin, reputed Calvinistic divines, the Lambeth Articles, the Synod of Dort, and the Westminster Assembly, there is a portion of the human family born under the decree of reprobation—born—we do not like the expression, but it is the case—born to be damned. It is a harsh expression, but the blame does not rest with us, but with those who hold the doctrine.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIBLE USAGE OF THE WORD REPROBATION.

THE word "reprobation," according to the *Imperial Dictionary*, means "to disallow," "not enduring proof or trial," "disallowed," "rejected." Gesenius says the Hebrew word (*maas*) primarily means to reject, and is used (*a.*) of God rejecting a people or an individual —Jer. vi. 30; vii. 29; xiv. 19; 1 Samuel xv. 23; (*b.*) of men as rejecting God and His precepts—1 Samuel xv. 23. The Greek word (*adokimos*) denotes, according to Robinson, "not approved," "rejected." In N. T. Metaph., "worthy of condemnation"—"reprobate"—"useless"—"worthless." It occurs seven times in the English translation; once in the Old Testament, and six times in the New. In none of the instances, however, does it convey the idea of unconditionalism.

First passage.—In Jer. vi. 30, it is written: "Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them." But why were they rejected—reprobated? The answer is contained in the context. It is there said,

"They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters. The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain; for the wicked are not plucked away." Everything had been done to save them, and when all remedial agencies had failed, they were declared to be rejected—reprobated.

The *second* passage is in Rom. i. 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." Here, again, we have reprobation; but then they were given over to this state on the ground that they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. The reprobation was therefore conditional, and not Calvinistic.

The *third* passage is in 2 Cor. xiii. 5: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." Grotius explains *adokimoi* — "reprobates," thus: "Christians in name only and not in deed." Dr. Hamond as "steeped and hardened." Vorstius, "wicked, and unfit for the faith." Dickson, "as unworthy of the name of Christian." Calvin, "unless you by your crimes have cast off Christ" (Whitby, *ad loc.*) Doddridge paraphrases the passage thus:

"Are ye not sensible that Jesus Christ is dwelling in you by the sanctifying and transforming influences of His spirit, unless ye are mere nominal Christians, and such as, whatever your gifts be, will finally be disapproved and rejected as reprobate silver that will not stand the touch?" The reprobation again implied a condition, and was non-Calvinistic.

The *fourth* passage is as follows:—"But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates" (2 Cor. xiii. 6). Barnes's paraphrase of the text is this: "Whatever may be the result of the examination of yourselves, I trust (*Gr.*, I hope) you will not find us false, and to be rejected; that is, I trust you will find in me evidence that I am commissioned by the Lord Jesus to be His apostle." There is nothing in the verse to favour unconditional reprobation.

The *fifth* passage runs thus: "Now I pray God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates" (2 Cor. xiii. 7). The meaning is plain enough. Paul desired that his readers should live pure and honourable lives, although he and those associated with him should be rejected as bad

silver is rejected—reputed silver that cannot stand the tests. The verse gives no countenance to Calvinistic reprobation.

The *sixth* passage is this: "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith" (2 Tim. iii. 8). But here again we have the moral state of those men brought before us—they "resisted the truth," and were men of corrupt minds. They could not stand the test of examination, and were rejected or disallowed as members of the Christian community. There is no unconditionalism here.

The *seventh* text is as follows: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus i. 16). The passage, according to all the ancient commentators who write upon it, refers to the Jews (Whitby). Its meaning is finely hit off by Doddridge, who, paraphrasing the words, says, "And with respect to every good work disapproved and condemned when brought to the standard of God's word, though they are the first to judge and condemn others." They had been tried in the balance and found wanting. They were so utterly bad that in

view of good works they were of no account. The reprobation was conditional.

The Greek word (*adokimos*) is used in Heb. vi. 8, but is translated "rejected." It has reference to ground. But why was the ground rejected, or reprobated? Unconditionally? Nay, but because it yielded, instead of good fruit, "briers and thorns." The human mind is like a field, and God is the husbandman. He uses various methods to produce the fruits of righteousness, and when these fail, judgment is pronounced against the mind. And is not this just?

As far, therefore, as the word is concerned, there is not the most distant support given to the doctrine of an eternal decree foredooming millions of men to hopeless misery. It is something gained when we find this to be the case.

On what, then, does the doctrine rest, if not upon the use of the word? It is supposed to rest upon the sovereignty of God, and certain passages of Scripture, although the word "reprobate" is not found in them.

The term sovereign is from the French "souverain," and that again from the Latin "supernus." It means supreme in power, supreme to all others. That God occupies this position will not be questioned by any one

who believes in Him. The matter, therefore, is not one of sovereignty, or whether God is 'the only' absolute Sovereign in the universe. This is admitted. The question is this—what has God, in the exercise of His sovereignty, chosen to do? To adduce proofs in its support is beside the point, since we hold it as firmly as our opponents in this controversy. Nebuchadnezzar uttered a great truth when he said that God "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." But what is His will? Is man governed by the law of necessity as storms are, and as waters are? These creatures do as God desires; is it so as regards man? The condemnation that each passes on himself is the best answer. Man may transgress, but God by virtue of His absolute sovereignty has appointed the penalty, and no one can reverse His decree.

CHAPTER III.

PROOF TEXTS FOR CALVINISTIC REPROBATION EXAMINED.

PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.—There are certain passages of the Bible supposed to teach the doctrine of Calvinistic reprobation, and it may be well to examine their meaning.

REPROBATION AND THE EVIL DAY.—In Proverbs xvi. 4, it is written: "The Lord hath made all things for Himself, even the wicked for the day of evil." This passage is supposed to teach the doctrine of Calvin, that some men have been reprobated from eternity, and come into existence with the doom of death eternal on their brow. The first part of the verse presents no difficulty. It brings before us the idea that God Himself is the great object of creation. It is proper that this should be so. He is the greatest and the best of beings, and to have created for a lesser object than Himself would not have been conformable to the dictate of the reason. It is the second part of the verse which is supposed to teach the

doctrine of eternal and unconditional reprobation. Calvin's idea of the passage is that the wicked were created for "certain death that His name (God's) may be glorified in their destruction." Let us suppose this to be the meaning—what then? The word "glory" in Hebrew means "beauty," "honour," "adornment." All around us lies the beautiful—the earth with her carpet of flowers—and the overarching skies—the sun, the moon, and the stars, are all beautiful.

> "Oh, if so much beauty doth reveal
> Itself in every vein of life and motion,
> How beautiful must be the source itself,
> The ever bright one."—TEGNER.

But there is a moral beauty in God. It lies in the supreme moral excellence of His character; in His holiness, in His love, in His truthfulness, in His patience, in His gentleness, in His mercy. These attributes existing in God in the highest perfection, constitute the glory of the Most High. "Beauty and kindness go together" saith the poet; but is there any kindness in creating men for the purpose of making them miserable for ever? For ourselves we see no beauty, no glory in this—but the reverse. We regard it as a libel upon the character of the ever blessed God.

The meaning of the passage is simple enough. God hath appointed good for the righteous and evil for the wicked. Though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished. One version of the passage is, "Jehovah hath made all things to answer each other, even the day of calamities for the wicked" (Davidson's *Commentary*). In Collins' *Critical Commentary* it is explained thus: "For Himself or for its answer or purpose . . . . Sin and suffering answer to each other, are indissolubly united" (*ad loc*). Thus interpreted, there is nothing in the passage to create difficulty.

John xii. 37, 41, reads thus: "But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because Esaias said again, 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. These things said Esaias when he saw His glory, and spake of Him." Calvin held that John, "citing this prophecy (of Isaiah), declares that the Jews could not believe

because this curse of God was upon them." The first portion of the quotation is from Isaiah liii. 1, "who hath believed our report?" &c. The question would imply that comparatively few had at first responded to the Gospel invitation. The larger portion of the passage is from Isaiah vi. It is as follows: "Go ye, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed" (vers. 9, 10). The passage is quoted by Matthew (xiii. 14, 15). Dr. Randolph, as quoted by Horne, says on this passage, "This quotation is taken almost verbatim from the Septuagint. In the Hebrew the sense is obscured by false pointing. If instead of reading it in the imperative mood, we read it in the indicative mood, the sense will be, 'Ye shall hear, but not understand; and ye shall see, but not perceive. This people hath made their heart fat, and hath made their ears heavy, and shut their eyes,' &c., which agrees in *sense* with the evangelist and with the Septuagint, as well as with the Syriac and Arabic versions, but not with the Latin Vulgate. We have the

same quotation, word for word, in Acts xxviii. 26. Mark and Luke refer to the same prophecy, but quote it only in part." The Hebrew vowel points which make the passage in Isaiah to be read in the imperative mood were only introduced some 700 years after the birth of Christ (Gesenius).

Read in this light the passage gives no support to the doctrine sought to be fastened on it. The oracle was originally applied to the Jews living in the time of Isaiah. They were then exceedingly depraved, and the evangelist found that the words were applicable to the Jews living in the time of Christ. Horne, writing on "accommodation," observes, "It was a familiar idiom of the Jews when quoting the writings of the Old Testament to say that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by such and such a prophet, not intending it to be understood that such a particular passage in one of the sacred books was ever designed to be a real prediction of what they were then relating, but signifying only that the words of the Old Testament might be properly adopted to express their meaning and illustrate their ideas" (*Intro.*, Vol. II.) "The apostles," he adds, "who were Jews by birth, and spoke in the Jewish idiom, frequently thus cite the Old

Testament, intending no more by this mode of speaking than that the words of such an ancient writer might with equal propriety be adopted to characterise any similar occurrence which happened in their times. The formula, 'That it might be fulfilled,' does not therefore differ in signification from the phrase, 'then was fulfilled,' applied in the following citation in Matt. ii. 17, 18, from Jer. xxxi. 15, 17, to the massacre of the infants in Bethlehem. They are a beautiful quotation, and not a prediction, of what then happened, and are therefore applied to the massacre of the infants, according not to their original and historical meaning, but according to Jewish phraseology' (*Vide* Kitto, Art. Accom.) The principle of accommodation clears away all difficulty. It is also in harmony with the context, as applied in John. Christ exhorted those around Him to believe in the light, that they might be the children of the light. But how could He exhort them to believe in the light, if He knew that the Divine Father had rendered their doing so an impossibility? Would you ask a man to walk who had no legs? to look, if he had no eyes? Underlying the exhortation to walk in the light lay the idea that they were able to

perform it. It has been said that although we have lost the power to obey, God has not lost the power to command. Dr. Thomas Reid meets this notion thus: "Suppose a man employed in the navy of his country, and, longing for the ease of a public hospital as an invalid, to cut off his fingers so as to disable him from doing the duty of a sailor; he is guilty of a great crime, but after he has been punished according to the demerit of his crime, will his captain insist that he shall do the duty of a sailor? Will he command him to go aloft when it is impossible for him to do it, and punish him as guilty of disobedience? Surely if there be any such thing as justice and injustice, this would be unjust and wanton cruelty" (Hamilton's Reid, p. 621).

Yet whilst there is no decree dooming men to hardness of heart or moral blindness, this state may be reached. Many are progressing towards it, many are now in it. They have turned a deaf ear to the cry of mercy, and are like the ground that has been often rained upon, but brought out only briers and thorns. The difficulty of the return of such does not lie with God, but in the habit of evil contracted and persisted in by the wrong-doers.

God desires the salvation of all men, and has made the way open for all by the propitiation of Christ.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.—The apostle of the Gentiles is supposed to have clearly established, in this epistle, the doctrine that some are born to be saved, and others born to be lost. The ninth chapter especially has been the great storehouse of arguments for such as hold this view. The strong-minded and the weak-kneed have all resorted thither. They entrench themselves behind such passages as, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated;" "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" and think, by repeating them, that they have settled the controversy.

JACOB AND ESAU.—We shall consider the proof texts in this chapter under the form of inquiry, and answer. Inquirer: "But does not the passage 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated' (verse 13), prove that the man Jacob was elected to eternal live, and the man Esau reprobated or doomed to eternal death?" Answer—Far from it, as we shall soon see. The passage is a quotation from Malachi i. 2, 3. If you look at the context of the quotation you will see that the prophet is speaking of the *people* "Jacob" and the people "Esau," or the

Edomites. It is of the utmost moment to see this, as it has a most important bearing upon the controversy. The fourth and fifth verses read thus:—"Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel." The plural pronouns used, "we," "us," "ye," "they," and the term "people," prove that the prophet was speaking, not of the man "Jacob," nor of the man "Esau," but of the respective peoples which had descended from them. Look now at the word "loved." It has been taken to mean God's electing love. But if this were so, then it will follow that all the Jewish people would be saved. And if so, why was it that Paul was so distressed about them, as he says, in the first part of the chapter, that he was? He had great "heaviness and continual sorrow" regarding the spiritual state of his countrymen; but if they were unconditionally elected to eternal life, then Paul was certainly carrying a useless burden. The "love" spoken

of was representative of God's kindness in bestowing upon the people Jacob the privilege of being the Messianic people. The word "hated" will thus signify, as the opposite of "loved," that the people Esau might be said (from a certain standpoint) to be "hated;" that is, "less loved" in comparison with the favour bestowed upon the people Jacob. This meaning is in harmony with Hebrew idiom. The words "loved" and "hated" are used in a relative sense. Christ says, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26). This passage throws an important light on the subject. No one will contend that Christ meant that we should hate our parents. He simply brings before us this truth, that we were to love Him above all relatives; but the use of the term "hate" by Him takes it out of the category of the absolute, and places it in the relative. And this must be its meaning as used by Paul. If not, if it means that the race of Esau has been reprobated, then there is no Gospel for them, and Christ's command to preach the Gospel to every creature must be limited. To send a missionary to the Arabs

would be absurd if this doctrine is true. Thank God it is not so.

The Jews took up the position that they must be saved; that they did not need the Gospel; that being Abraham's seed they could not possibly be damned. Paul felt deeply grieved with respect to the position they occupied, and sought to dislodge them from it. "As to the fine logic of his argument, bear in mind that he has been proving in the preceding context that the lineal descent of the Jews from the patriarch Abraham did not, as they fancied it did, make them curse-proof for eternity. He proves this in the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth verses . . . by showing that the Ishmaelites could boast of a descent as lineal and patriarchal as theirs, and yet it did not suffice to instal them in the medium Messianic privilege of being Abraham's favoured children for time. By showing this, he leaves us to draw the natural inference that the lineal descent which could not instal Ishmaelites in the medium Messianic privilege of being Abraham's highly-favoured children for time, could never be sufficient to instal the infatuated Christ-rejecting Jews in the peerless privilege of being Abraham's glory-inheriting and curse-proof spiritual seed, his

highly-favoured children for eternity. . . . He then proceeds to prove again his already proved position, and thus to clench his argument. This he does in the third section of the chapter, which begins with the tenth verse and ends with the thirteenth. . . . His proof consists of the fact that the Edomites were as purely descended from Abraham through Isaac, as were the Israelites; and yet, as is manifest at once from the declaration made to Rebecca, 'the greater people shall be inferior to the lesser,' and from the stronger statement made to the Israelites themselves by God in Malachi, 'the people Jacob have I loved, but the people Esau have I hated,'—this pure-lineal patriarchal descent of the Rebecca-born Edomites was not sufficient to elevate them to the enjoyment of the medium privilege of Abraham's Messianic children. This being the case, it was scarcely short of perfect madness for the Israelites to suppose that *their* pure descent from Abraham would suffice to constitute them his glory-inheriting and curse-proof spiritual children, his highly-favoured seed for eternity. Such is the fine and matchless logic of the apostle's argumentation" (Morison, *Romans IX.*).

The interpretation thus given makes the

apostle to be consistent with himself, and in harmony with the "analogy of faith." The Calvinistic interpretation makes the apostle inconsistent with himself, and the command to preach the Gospel to every creature—a nullity.

MERCY ON WHOM HE WILL.—*Inquirer*,—"But did not God claim the right to extend mercy to whom He pleased, and to withhold it from whom He pleased?"

Answer,—It is even so. Paul says, "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" (Rom. ix. 15). The quotation is from Exodus xxxiii. 19. The Israelites had committed the sin of making the golden calf, and were threatened with destruction; but God was entreated not to destroy them utterly, and Moses was assured that God would extend mercy as He should see fit. The quotation has a bearing upon the position of the Jews and Paul's argument. They were filled with self-sufficiency and pride, and in great danger. In the reply to Moses, God claimed the right of extending mercy as He pleased, and would not allow Moses to interfere with His prerogative. The Jews were reminded by the

quotation that God had a right to say on what terms He would have mercy upon sinners. He does not state the principle after the quotation, but does so in verses 30–33 of this chapter. He extends mercy to those who believe in Jesus.

PHARAOH.—*Inquirer*,—"But what do you make of Pharaoh? Was he not a typical illustration of the unconditionally reprobated?"

Answer,—It is thought so. The apostle refers to the wicked king in the seventeenth verse. His case was analogous to that occupied by the Jews. He had been raised up from a sick bed, treated most graciously, but became hardened under the influence of mercy, and was at last destroyed. The Jews had also been very generously dealt with, but instead of yielding were becoming indurated, and unless they repented, would, as Pharaoh was, be destroyed. It is said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and also that He hardened his own heart. Both statements are true, but looked at from different standpoints. God softens or hardens human hearts as they keep the mind in truth or falsehood.

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY.—*Inquirer*,—"But what of the potter and the clay, verse twenty-one?"

Answer,—The question discussed in the ninth of the Romans is a question of Divine sovereignty, or God's right to appoint the destinies of men after their moral probation is over. The potter claimed the right to say what he should do in respect of the vessels which he had made. Should one become marred in his hands, he makes it into a vessel of dishonour or inferiority. If not, if it turned out as he wished it, then it occupied the position of a vessel of honour. The illustration came with crushing power against the Jews. The attitude of hostility which they then occupied was that of being marred in the hands of God, and He claimed the right of appointing them their destiny. If they refused the Saviour whom Paul preached, if they continued morally unregenerated, then the mere fact of being Abraham's seed would not save them. As regards their fate hereafter, they would be as clay in the hands of the potter.

We have thus seen that those passages so much relied on have really no bearing upon reprobation or predestination. They refer to another and distinct question—namely, that of SOVEREIGNTY. Had God a RIGHT to select the Jacobites as the Messianic people instead

of the Edomites? The Jews would not dispute this. But had He a right to extend mercy as He saw fit? Had He a right to destroy Pharaoh when he refused to yield? Had He a right to deal with the destinies of men as He judged right? If He had, then the Jews had not a foot to stand upon in their absurd contention, that because they had descended from Abraham they must needs be saved. According to Paul's theology, God, in the exercise of sovereignty, had appointed faith as the condition of salvation, and if they refused to comply with the condition, then, as the Israelites were destroyed in the wilderness for lack of faith, as Pharaoh was destroyed in the sea when he refused obedience, and as the potter assigned an inferior position to the marred vessel, so would the Divine Ruler visit the Jews with evil if they refused to accept of Christ.

There is nothing in this ninth chapter to frighten any one. The Jew expected to be saved by works (see vers. 30-33), and on the ground of his descent from Abraham. The apostle sweeps both of these away, and presents Christ as the only ground for them. And the ground that was for them is for all.

THE STONE OF STUMBLING.—In 1 Peter ii. 8

it is written: "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." This text is supposed to teach that the parties spoken of were appointed to be disobedient. At the first glance it would seem to teach this. But the principle of interpretation to which we have referred—namely, that when the mere grammatical construction of a passage is clearly absurd, it is clear it cannot be the true one, and we must look for another meaning. Now, if the "whereunto" refers to the "disobedient," how could they be charged with disobedience if they were just doing what they were appointed to do? If Christ was put before those unbelievers for the purpose of making them disobey, then would not this be to put a stumbling-block in their way? Surely such conduct is infinitely the opposite of a good God.

Another translation of the passage, including verse 7, is this:—"Unto you, therefore, who believe He is precious; but unto those who disbelieve, the stone which the builders disallowed has become the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence. They, disbelieving the word, stumble—that is,

fall or perish, whereunto also they were appointed." That is, unbelievers are appointed to perish if they continue unbelievers. Horne says, "Hence it is evident that 1 Peter ii. 8 is not that God ordained them to disobedience (for in that case their obedience would have been impossible, and their disobedience no sin), but that God, the righteous Judge of all the earth, had appointed or decreed that destruction and eternal perdition should be the punishment of such disbelieving persons who willingly reject all the evidences that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. The mode of pointing above adopted is that proposed by Drs. John Taylor, Doddridge, and Macknight, and recognised by Greisbach in his *Critical Edition of the New Testament*, and is manifestly required by the context" (Vol. IV., p. 398). The passage as thus explained has no difficulty. Blessings come to those believing, evil to those disbelieving.

FOREORDAINED TO CONDEMNATION. — In Jude, verse 4, it is written thus: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were of old foreordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God,

and our Lord Jesus Christ." The passage contains the reason why the apostle had urged the Christians to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. The term "ordained" in the passage means "to write before," or "aforetime," "to post up publicly in writing." Certain men of bad character had got into the church, but the condemnation of such had been intimated before. Macknight says, "Jude means that these wicked teachers had their punishment before written—that is, foretold in what is written concerning the wicked Sodomites and rebellious Israelites, whose crimes were the same with theirs." To write regarding certain characters, and intimating their punishment, is a widely different thing from unconditional reprobation.

The passages thus examined are the principal ones brought forward to prove that some men are foreordained to everlasting ruin. We do not think they prove this, and we reject the doctrine.

CHAPTER IV.

OBJECTIONS TO CALVINISTIC REPROBATION.

In the first place, we object to it because it impeaches the Divine Fatherhood. God sustains to the human family the relation of a Father. He is the Creator of the sun and stars, but not their father. Fatherhood carries in it two ideas,—creation and similarity of nature. He is the Creator of the sun and stars, but they do not possess a nature like His. But in man there is a Divine likeness, an epitome of God. There is the power of thought, will, and feeling. In this broad view every man is a son of God. He has been created by Him, and, so far, is like Him. It is very true that man has rebelled and ignores the relationship. But denial of relationship does not abolish it. A son may deny his own father, and claim another to be so; and men have denied God, and acted as the children of the devil. But although they have rebelled, He earnestly remembers them. They are prodigals, but they are His prodigals. He made them, and He feels for

them. A good father feels for all his children. Could we call a father a good father who foreordains that one-half of his offspring should be burned? But this is the doctrine of Calvinistic reprobation! It cannot stand in the light of the parable of the prodigal son. As that father in that parable felt to his prodigal child, so God *feels* to every one of His prodigals.

We reject this doctrine of unconditional reprobation,

In the second place, because it impeaches the Divine *sincerity*. Sincerity is descriptive of the harmony that exists between the feelings of the heart and the utterances of the lips.

> "Sincerity,
> The first of virtues, let no mortal leave
> Thy onward path, although the earth should gape,
> And from the gulph of hell destruction cry
> To take dissimulation's winding way."

An insincere man, who professes one thing whilst he feels another, is universally despised. Now, when I take up the Bible, what do I find? I find it full of invitations to all men to come and be saved. "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be saved." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Turn ye, turn ye, why will you

die?" Now, these invitations are addressed to all alike. Their value turns on this—does God *mean* what He says? Not so if Calvinistic reprobation be true. But if He does mean what He says—that He really wishes all saved—then these utterances reveal the great heart of God as it gathers round every human being; and the Calvinistic dogma of unconditional reprobation is a huge lie, that should be thrown back to the place whence it came.

CHAPTER V.

SUMMARY OF THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION.

THERE is a doctrine of reprobation taught in the Bible. The word, as we have seen, is several times used in the sacred writings. It means, according to classic Greek, "not standing the test," "spurious, base, properly (1.) of coin, (2.) of persons," "ignoble, mean" (Liddell and Scott). In the Bible it signifies the same thing, "disapproved," "rejected," "undiscerning," "void of judgment." Cruden says, "This word among metallists is used to signify any

metal that will not undergo the trial, that betrays itself to be adulterate or reprobate, and of a coarse alloy. . . . A reprobate mind, that is, a mind hardened in wickedness, and so stupid as not to discern between good and evil." We are quite familiar with the idea in everyday life. Ships, horses, land, governments, individuals, are being constantly subjected to trial, and, being found wanting, are rejected, *reprobated*. And what thus takes place in the lower plane of things, takes place in the sphere of morals. Men are now on trial for eternity. If they act as God wishes them, they shall walk with him in white, and sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb; but if not, then they will be rejected. The great principle is neither more nor less than this —namely, that men shall reap as they sowed. The principle is just. If men sow nettle-seed or the seed of briers and thorns, is it not fair that they should reap the fruit? The great principle, then, of the Bible is this: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword" (Isaiah i. 19, 20).

It is a blessed thing, then, to know that on your head there is no decree of unconditional reprobation. You may be saved. Your heavenly

Father wishes you saved, for He is "not willing that you should perish" (2 Peter iii. 9); and He wishes "all men saved" (1 Timothy ii. 4), and therefore you. He has done all He can for you. Will you be saved? It rests with you to build only on Christ, and conform your life after the pattern He has left.

PART III.—ELECTION.

CHAPTER I.

THEORIES OF CALVINISTIC ELECTION.

If the question of Calvinistic reprobation is fitted to freeze the blood and repel the mind from God, that of election, as represented by the same school, is calculated to perplex and disturb the inquirer after truth. At the noon-day meeting in Glasgow, some time ago, the prayers of those present were requested on behalf of a lady who was troubled with the doctrine of election! She is, we believe, a type of thousands. Poor woman! had she listened to the teachings of Scripture instead of to those of man, she need have had no trouble in the matter. Heaven's order is—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." In other words, believe that God loves yourself, that Christ made an atonement

for thy sin, and thou shalt enter among the saved ones—or the elect.

There are four different theories regarding this subject:—

(1.) There is, *first*, the supralapsarian theory. Those who hold this view are high Calvinists. According to this theory, God, without any regard to the good or evil works of men, resolved by an eternal decree, *supra lapsum*, antecedently to any knowledge of the fall of Adam, and independent of it, to reject some and save others; or, in other words, that God intended to glorify His justice in the condemnation of some as well as His mercy in the salvation of others, and for that end decreed that Adam should necessarily fall (Buck).

(2.) The *second* theory is designated *sublapsarianism*. According to this view, God permitted the first man to fall into transgression without absolutely predetermining his fall; or, that the decree of predestination regards man as fallen by an abuse of that freedom which Adam had. In other words, they regard the decrees of election and reprobation as having reference to man in his fallen condition. But according to this theory God loves only a portion of our race—gives His

Son to die for this only, and His converting grace to this only. This portion is designated the elect.

(3.) A *third* view is that God loves all men, has given His Son to die for all men, but His saving grace is not given to all, but only to some. This is modern Calvinism. "Election is then," says Dr. Payne, "God's purpose to exert upon the minds of certain members of the human family that spiritual and holy influence which will secure their ultimate salvation" (*Lect. on Sovy.*)

(4.) A *fourth* view is that God loves all men, that Christ died for all men, and that converting grace is given to all men; and that those of mankind who believe God's testimony regarding His Son, become His elect or chosen ones. It is this view which we support. The first three theories have points of difference and agreement, but in their last analysis they come to this, that God does not wish all men saved, only some—the elect.

CHAPTER II.

CALVINISTIC ELECTION INVOLVES POSITIVE REFUSAL TO PROVIDE SAVING GRACE FOR THE LOST.

Dr. PAYNE, one of the subtlest and most accomplished of modern Calvinists, argues strongly against the notion that the decree of election involves the decree of reprobation. He says "I may determine to relieve one out of twenty destitute families in my neighbourhood, without positively determining not to relieve the others; and if any one should ask me why others are not relieved, it would be sufficient to reply that the giving of actual relief can only spring from a determination to relieve, which in reference to them does not exist. I may determine to take a book from the shelf, without a positive determination not to take the others. There may, indeed, be such a determination, but it is not necessarily implied in the determination to take, and that is all that I am obliged to prove—the other books may not even be thought of" (p. 40). Dr. Payne was a very

subtle dialectician, but we fear he has here imposed upon himself in these illustrations. It is very true that when I determine to select book "A" from my library, that book "B" may not have been before my mind, and that I did not knowingly determine to reject it. But it may have been, and if it was, then the selection of "A" only, carried with it the rejection of "B." A father sees his two children perishing in the waters. He jumps into a boat, and reaches the scene of disaster. The children are sinking from sheer exhaustion. He takes one into the boat, and returns to shore. He could easily have saved the other, but did not, and he tells the people this on landing, and that he must be simply judged by his act of saving the rescued child, and that he is not to be held as passing a decree of reprobation against the other. This, we submit, is Dr. Payne's case. And will it bear looking at? I don't think it. Dr. Payne adds, "This reasoning applies yet with greater force to the great Eternal. There must exist in the mind of God a determination to do what He actually does, because His actions are the result of His volitions or determinations. But where God does not act, where He does nothing, He determines nothing. It is childish to suppose

that because when He acts, there must be a determination to act, when he does not act, there must be a determination not to act, since a determination is necessary to a state of action, but it surely is not necessary to a state of rest. When Jehovah created the present universe, is it necessary to suppose that there existed in His mind a positive determination not to create any of the other possible universes which were present to His views? Surely not." But we should say, Surely yes. If twenty plans are presented to me, and I select one only, does not this imply the rejection of the others? To the Divine mind there must have been present the conception of many different kinds of worlds than the one we are in; but of the possibles He chose the present system as, all things considered, the best. Had there been a better world and God did not make it, it must have been, according to the optimists, either because God did not know of it, or was unable to make it, or was unwilling,—all of which suppositions are either incompatible with the omniscience, the omnipotence, or the goodness of God. When the Creator selected the present system, He rejected the "possibles" that might have been brought into being. I am sur-

prised that Dr. Payne should say that "determination" is not necessary to a state of rest, or non-action. In thousands of instances non-action—rest—is as much the result of volition as is the most determined activity. The old divines used to divide sin into acts of commission and omission. But in every sin of omission there was action implied. If I do not help the needy when he crieth, my non-help—my rest as regards aid—carries action in it—determination. Dr. Payne again says, "When God determined to save man, did that volition necessarily imply a positive determination not to save the angels who kept not their first estate? No one, it is presumed, will answer in the affirmative. It implies, indeed, that fallen angels were not included in the merciful purpose of God, that there was no volition to save them; but no degree of ingenuity can gather any conclusion beyond this from the facts of the case. Why, then, should a positive determination, on the part of God, to save some of the human family be supposed to imply of necessity a counter and positive determination not to save the other members of the family. Not to save men is not to act, it is just doing nothing." But this is a very partial view of the case. What God did in

the case of the fallen angels we know nothing, and can affirm nothing. But one may do nothing from one side of things, and do a great deal from another. The priest and the Levite just did nothing as far as helping the man was concerned. They rested, but in this rest there was action which has covered them with obloquy for all time. And if God has special influence at His disposal, and determines to give it to some when He KNEW that others needed it as much, and yet withholds it from them, His withholding it is as much an act as the gift of it. He passed the non-elect over in applying the influence, and no ingenuity can make it otherwise. But what He does in time He determined to do in eternity—He determined to pass them over. The illustration, therefore, of the book is worthless.

CHAPTER III.

CALVINISTIC ELECTION CONSIDERED IN REFERENCE TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

THE Divine sovereignty may be said to be the great foundation on which the various shades of Calvinists take their stand. Here they

think they are as safe as if they stood on adamant. But assertion is not argument, and he who asserts must prove.

Dr. Payne, in his preliminary lecture, discusses the question of sovereignty, and endeavours to show that there is a difference between supremacy and sovereignty. By the former punishment is inflicted, by the latter good. If by sovereingty we mean that God has absolute power to do whatsoever He pleases, then it will comprehend the penalty of transgression, as well as the bestowment of good. And this, as we apprehend, is the correct view of the case. The Divine sovereignty being one of the main pillars of his system, Dr. Payne gives various illustrations of it.

(1.) He instances the varied mental powers bestowed on men. He says, "The mind of one man is marked by infantile weakness, of another by a giant's strength. Nothing can elevate the former, nothing permanently depress and overpower the latter. . . . In the case of certain persons, the reasoning powers preponderate; in that of others, the imagination. One man has little judgment, but an exuberant fancy. Another has received the gift of a piercing intellect; but if it be clear as a frosty night, it is also as cold. A third is all

impetuosity and fire, but it is a fire that scorches and consumes everything that comes in its way. We can account for these diversities by the principle of sovereignty alone. God 'divideth to every man severally as He will,' 'He giveth none account of these matters,' 'He has a right to do what He will with His own.'" Now, we do not question God's right to do what He will with His own, but is this difference in mental calibre purely an arbitrary act? Has brain, nerve, habit, nothing to do with the case? and marriage? and education? Look at the biographies of prominent men, and what do we find? Much depends evidently on the mother, as in the case of Bacon, Erskine, Brougham, Cromwell, Canning, Byron. The last-mentioned, writing of himself, says, that his "springs of life were poisoned." His mother was a most passionate woman, and is reported to have died of a fit of ill-nature at the sight of her upholsterer's bills. The possession, then, of talent is not purely arbitrary, but dependent on parentage, training, surroundings. There was one question, indeed, which would have upset the whole of these illustrations. It was this:—Whence comes insanity? It would never be contended that God made some individuals insane and others

sane, by a merely arbitrary act. We find, in hundreds of instances, that it is hereditary. One observer considers that six-sevenths of the cases arise from this one cause. When, then, Dr. Payne quotes the words, "He giveth none account of these things," we ask, is it so? Has He not written His mind in the providence around us? Let certain habits be encouraged, certain marriages entered into, and we require no ghost to rise and tell us what the issue will be. God is telling it to us every day. Departure on the part of parents from organic laws entails misery, even to imbecility, on the children. We do not, of course, deny that there are diversities among men; but we do deny that these are purely arbitrary, like the gift of special grace, and are therefore inept as illustrative of it.

(2.) Dr. Payne refers to providential blessing as illustrative of sovereignty. He remarks, "That inequalities in the external condition and circumstances exist, is manifest to all. The questions, then, which force themselves upon our attention are these: Do these inequalities originate with God, or with man?" He asks, "Why one is born rich, and another poor? How is it to be explained that two persons equal in talent and moral worth,

obtain such unequal measure of success? . . . The facts are entirely to be resolved into Divine sovereignty. God is here exercising the right of testimony, the bounties of His providence upon men, as it seems good in His sight." It is very true that God is the source of all the good in the world, but does He bestow it arbitrarily? If a man neglects being *thrifty*, and lives beyond his means, his offspring will inherit his poverty. There are economic as well as physical laws in the world, and the non-observance of them descends unto the third and fourth generations.

Dr. Payne appeals to health as illustrating his position. He says, "It is impossible to account for the fact that of two individuals equal in point of moral worth, one is the constant subject of bodily infirmity, and the other the habitual possessor of health; but by admitting that the hand of sovereignty confers upon the latter a measure of good to which he has no claim" (p. 32). Doubtless, health is a precious blessing; but is it given arbitrarily, like special grace? Every one knows that its possession depends upon the observance of laws, both in parents and offspring. It is the result of complying with *conditions*, and there is no analogy

between it and the gift of special influence, which is entirely unconditional.

The chief illustration which Dr. Payne gives of Divine sovereignty is, "The exertion of that holy influence upon the minds of the chosen to salvation, by which they are brought to the knowledge and belief of the Gospel, together with the Divine purpose to exert this influence of which it is at once the index and the accomplishment" (p. 33). We shall, however, endeavour to show that there is no such irresistible influence as that for which the doctor contends. God is a sovereign —the only absolute sovereign in existence; but He is all-wise and all-good, not willing that any should perish.

We have thus examined those illustrations of Dr. Payne. They are a kind of stock in trade of those who build their faith upon the dogmas of Calvin.

CHAPTER IV.

CALVINISTIC ELECTION JUDGED BY THE REASON.

THE reason is supposed to affirm the doctrine that God has chosen some men to get saving

grace, and some men only. The question is asked, "Is God the cause or author of man's salvation, or is man the author of his own salvation?" It is maintained that God being entirely the author of man's salvation, and that as man is brought into a state of safety by infallible grace, and as God exercises this grace, He must have determined to do it in eternity. The doctrine of election is thus supposed to be affirmed by the reason. But this is a very summary process of settling the question. How stands the case? If by "salvation" is meant the *meritorious ground* of salvation, then the question about its authorship is very simple. God is the *sole* author. He devised the plan, He wrought it out, and He applies it to the hearts of men. To Him belongs all the glory.

But the question of merit being settled, there is another. It is this—Are there *immeritorious* grounds of salvation, and are men required to be active in their moral regeneration? We must distinguish between God's action and that of man. To confound them is a grand mistake. In the Bible we find certain moral conditions insisted upon in order to moral deliverance. There is a human side in the matter. Are not men

called upon "to look?" "to hear?" "to come?" "to eat?" "to repent?" "to choose?" These terms represent acts which men are called upon to perform. God does not "look" or "choose" or "repent" for men. They must "choose" or die. The Spirit comes to them, points out their sinful state, and places Christ before them as their Saviour. When they give ear unto Him, and put their trust in Jesus, they become saved. They have no more merit in the matter than a beggar has when he accepts alms, or a prisoner when he accepts a pardon.

Salvation, then, as regards merit, is entirely of God, but men are required to be active in their own deliverance. But why do some yield, and some not? This question has often been asked, and it is supposed that it stops all further argument. Let us look, however, at the saved man. God has wrought out the remedy, the Holy Spirit plies the sinner with motives for accepting the Saviour, and under His persuasion he yields himself up unto God, and gives Him all the glory of His salvation. Both scripturally and philosophically the man's saved condition is accounted for. And can anything be said against it? Look now at the unsaved man: why has he not believed? To

press for an answer to this question is just to press for an answer to another—viz., why do men sin? Can any one give a reason for it that will stand scrutiny? No one, not even God; and to demand an answer in these circumstances is unphilosophical and impertinent. The one believes through grace, and the other resists and dies. We submit that this is a fair explanation of the case. The believer acts in harmony with the reason, the unbeliever is guilty of sin; and no reason can be given for sin.

The view thus advocated has been held as a denial of the Spirit's work. If by the Spirit's work is understood a faith-necessitating and will-overpowering work, then certainly the Spirit's work is thus denied. But this is to cut before the point. There are, for instance, different views of inspiration, as the inspiration of direction, superintendency, elevation, and suggestion. Suppose I were asked what theory of inspiration I held regarding any portion of the Bible, and I answered that I had none, but took the Scriptures as God's message to men, would it be fair argument to assert that I denied inspiration? Manifestly not. But neither is it fair to raise the cry that the Spirit's work is denied because a particular

theory regarding that work is denied, the theory, namely, which makes it to be physical or mechanical.

Incorrect views of the Spirit's work have been entertained by theologians in consequence of erroneous conceptions regarding the degeneracy of human nature. Augustine held that man can do nothing which will at all contribute to His spiritual recovery. He is like a lump of clay, or a statue without life or activity. In consequence of these views, he held that grace in its operation on the heart was irresistible, —sometimes through the word, at other times without it. Dr. Knapp says, "God does not act in such a way as to infringe upon the free will of man, or to interfere with the use of his powers" (Phil. ii. 12, 13). Consequently, God does not act on men immediately, producing ideas in their souls without the preaching or reading of the scriptures, or influencing their will in any other way than by the understanding. Did God act in any other way than through the understanding, He would operate miraculously and irresistibly, and the practice of virtue under such an influence would have no intrinsic worth; it would be compelled, and consequently incapable of reward (*Theo.*, p. 408). He says again,

"The doctrine of the Protestant church has always been that God does not act immediately on the heart in conversion, or, in other words, that He does not produce ideas in the understanding, and effects in the will, by His absolute Divine power without the employment of external means. This would be such an immediate conversion and illumination as fanatics contend for, who regard their own imaginations and thoughts as effects of the Spirit" (p. 400). If our creed on this subject is to be based on the Bible, it leaves us in no doubt upon the matter. In speaking of the new birth it is written, "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (Jas. i. 18). Here the truth is used as the medium in conversion, and not a syllable about irresistible influence. The apostle Peter states the same thing: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter i. 23). Our Lord, in explaining the parable of the sower said—"The seed is the word of God," and seed, in order to germination, must have an appropriate soil.

CALVINISTIC ELECTION UNCONDITIONAL.—The followers of Calvin, however they differ

among themselves regarding certain standpoints, agree in this, that evangelical election is unconditional. The Confession of Faith declares that election is "without any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving Him (God) thereunto" (*Confess.*, Chap. III.) Dr. Payne says of the elect, "They were not chosen to salvation on account of their foreseen repentance, and faith, and obedience, for faith and repentance are the fruit, not the root of predestination" (p. 47.) And again, "The electing decree, which is unconditional" (p. 38).

The Bible has been appealed to as supporting this view, that election is eternal and unconditional, and we shall consider certain of the passages thus appealed to.

CHAPTER V.

BIBLE TEXTS IN PROOF OF CALVINISTIC ELECTION CONSIDERED.

In Matthew xx. 16 it is written: "For many are called, but few are chosen." These words

occur at the conclusion of the parable of the marriage of the king's son. A great feast had been provided and parties invited. A second invitation was sent out, in harmony with oriental usage; but those first invited made excuses, and refused to come. The servants were then commissioned to go out and give an invitation to all and sundry, and the wedding was furnished with guests. When the king came in to see the guests, he found a man without a wedding garment, and asked him how he had come in not having on one. The man remained speechless. It is then added, "many are called, but few are chosen." Now, the election which Calvinists contend for is eternal and unconditional. Does the above passage prove this? We think it proves the reverse. There was a rejection and a choosing, but each was based on state or personal condition. The man was rejected because he had not on the wedding garment; the others were chosen because they had it on. Suppose that there was no robe for the man, would he or should he have been speechless? Might he not have risen up in the midst of the assembly, and said, "Sire, I received the invitation in the highway. I was pressed to come to the feast. When I came there was no robe for me, and even if

there had been one, there was no one to help me to put it on; and by a fatal accident in childhood I lost an arm, and was unable to do it myself. Yet I received the invitation, and that is the reason why I am here." Would not such a speech have been perfectly satisfactory? And where the justice of condemning the man to be cast, in these circumstances, into outer darkness? But the punishment meted out to the man, showed that there was a robe for him, and that he might have put it on. The choice, therefore, of sitting at the marriage feast was conditional, and not, as Calvinists contend, unconditional.

The choice, moreover, was after the calling, and is *yet* to take place, and as a consequence the passage does not prove that election is eternal. No doubt, whatever God does in time He purposed to do in eternity, but we should distinguish between a *purpose* to choose and the choice itself.

There is nothing, then, in this passage to perplex any one. God, the infinite Father and heavenly King, has provided a feast of love for all men, and therefore for you, O reader, whosoever you are. Christ has wrought out a robe of righteousness for all, and therefore for you. The Holy Spirit prays you to be clothed

with it—that is, to depend on Christ and Christ only, and not upon your doings or upon your feelings. When you cease to depend on self and to rest entirely on Jesus, there springs up in the heart an aspiration to be Christ-like, and to be wholly His. By being clothed with Christ's righteousness you will have, by God's grace, a title to sit down at the heavenly feast, and a moral meetness for heavenly society.

THE ELECT FOREKNOWN.—In Romans viii. 29, 30, it is written: "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. 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." This passage is one of the strongholds of the view we contend against; but if it prove eternal election, it will also prove much more than this. If the persons spoken of were eternally elected, then they were also eternally called, and eternally justified, and eternally glorified. They would thus be justified before they sinned, and glorified before they had a being. The verbs are all in the aorist tense, and what is true of one verb is true of all the others. An interpretation

burdened with such consequences cannot be true.

Dr. Payne has very few remarks on the passage, but they are emphatic enough. "The passage is so conclusive," he says, "that it scarcely seems to require or even to admit of many remarks," and he does not give many. The simple question is this: does this passage prove unconditional election? Is there anything in the context to prove the reverse? We think that there is. In the twenty-eighth verse the apostle says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." He is thus writing of a certain class of persons, or of persons in a certain moral state, that moral state being that they were lovers of God, as he expressly states in verse 28. He does not say that they were visited by a special and irresistible influence bestowed on them and withheld from others. He simply asserts that those lovers of God had all things working for their good; that they were called or invited to glory, as (in 1 Peter v. 10) it is said, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus." And having intimated their call, Paul goes on to show what was the destiny awaiting the

believer. He says, "For whom He did foreknow," and when he said this he could not mean the mere knowledge of entities, or of persons, for this reason, that God knows the finally lost as well as the finally saved. The apostle therefore could only mean that God, knowing beforehand those who would love him, fore-appointed or decreed in eternity that those who possessed this moral state should be conformed to the image of His Son, or personal appearance of Christ (1 John iii. 2). Those lovers of God thus predestinated are invited to heavenly bliss, and will be ultimately justified before the world, and glorified. The twenty-eighth verse, then, lays down the condition upon which the whole passage rests; and to bring forward the text as a proof of unconditional election, is simply to ignore the context. As far as this portion of the Bible is concerned, there is nothing to perplex the most simple. Become a lover of God, and the destiny sketched by the apostle awaits you. We become lovers of God by believing in His love to us. "We love Him," says John, "because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 19).

THE UNBORN CHILDREN.—Romans ix. 11, is appealed to. It reads thus: "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 who calleth." This verse is parenthetical, lying between the tenth and twelfth verses. They read thus, verse 10: "And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;" verse 12: "It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger." It is the eleventh verse which is taken as proving Calvinistic election. It is supposed to refer to the spiritual and eternal condition of the respective parties. But how stands the case? The original statement is found in Genesis xxv. 22, 23: "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." Now, if we take the passage in the Calvinistic sense, that it refers to salvation, what will follow? This, namely, that all the descendants of Jacob would be saved, and all the descendants of Esau utterly lost. If this were so, then why should Paul have been so troubled about the spiritual state of his countrymen, as he says he was, in the preamble of this very chapter?

The hypothesis makes the apostle to stultify himself as a logician.

The Calvinistic interpretation will not stand looking at, there being, in fact, no reference to salvation in the passage. The apostle quotes the text, the purport of which is that in a certain respect the people of Esau would be inferior to the people of Jacob. The Jews held that, being Abraham's seed, they were safe for eternity. The apostle's argument, then, is this: The people of Esau were as truly descended from Abraham as you, my countrymen, are, and yet this descent did not entitle them to be the Messianic people; and if mere descent did not entitle to this, how much less would it entitle to heavenly glory? The text, then, has really no bearing upon *evangelical* election, but simply to the election of the Jews to theocratic privileges.

CHOSEN BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.—Ephesians i. 4, is appealed to. It reads thus: "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." This is an old favourite text in support of eternal and unconditional election. But does it prove it? Those Christians to whom Paul wrote were chosen before

the foundation of the world. True, but what does this mean? Does it prove eternal election? To elect is to "pick out," "to select." But the parties spoken of could not be *actually* elected or chosen before they existed. Before you can take a pebble from an urn, it must first be in the urn. So before man can be *actually picked* out of the world, he must *first* be in it: hence election must be a work of time. Paul speaks of his kinsmen who were in Christ before him (Rom. xvi. 7); but if election is eternal, then the one could not be in Christ before the other. The language then in Eph. i. 14, can only refer to the *purpose* of God to select certain persons in time—BELIEVERS—to be "holy and without blame." The bearing of the passage, then, is the same as many others, and is simply this, that whatever God does in time, He determined to do in eternity. His purpose was formed before the foundation of the world, or in eternity.

Neither is there any countenance given to the idea that the election was *unconditional.* This is clearly shown by the words "IN HIM." The Catechism asks the question, "Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?" and the answer is, "God having out of His mere good pleasure from all

eternity elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer." If this is a true version of the case, then the saved were elected first when they were *out of* Christ. But the passage in Ephesians says the reverse of this. They were elected being IN CHRIST. To be in Christ is just to be united to Him by faith—a believer in Christ as the great High Priest of humanity.

CHOSEN TO SALVATION.—2 Thess. ii. 13, is appealed to. It reads thus: "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." The question then is, does this passage prove eternal and unconditional election? As to its being eternal, the only portion of the verse that bears on this is the phrase "from the beginning." Barnes says the words mean "from eternity." But the words themselves do not prove this. When the Jews asked Jesus who He was, He answered, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning." It clearly does not mean "eternity" here. Again, in 1 John ii. 7,

it is written: "The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning." Here, also, it is evident that the words cannot mean from "eternity," since they did not exist in eternity. But supposing the words did refer to eternity, then their meaning could only denote the purpose of God, since they had in eternity no real existence. We take the words to signify the commencement of the Christian cause in Thessalonica. Whedon's paraphrase is: "From the first founding of the Thessalonian church." Watson takes them to denote, "The very first reception of the Gospel in Thessalonica." Whatever view is taken of the words, the idea of an *actual* eternal election is excluded.

Dr. Payne depends upon the verse as supporting his view of unconditional election. In concluding his criticism of the passage he says, "The election, then, here spoken of is not an election of future glory founded on foreseen faith and obedience; but an election to faith and obedience as necessary pre-requisites to the enjoyment of this glory, or perhaps, more correctly speaking, as partly constituting it" (pp. 84. 85.) Unfortunately for this argument the apostle uses the word "*through*" (en), not "*to*" (eis). He says that they were chosen to

salvation or glory through sanctification of the Spirit on God's part and belief of the truth on theirs; or, in other words, he contemplates the Christians at Thessalonica as objects of future glory, and they had come to occupy this position by God's gracious Spirit dealing with them through the truth, and by their believing the truth thus brought to them. The passage shows the means by which they had become chosen or elected persons. They believed the TRUTH, and you may do the same.

ELECTION AND FOREKNOWLEDGE.—1 Peter i. 1, is appealed to in support of Calvinistic election. It reads thus: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." But this cannot prove that the election spoken of was eternal, because the Spirit's work takes place in time, and not in eternity. Neither does it prove that it was unconditional. It is through the Spirit that men are convicted of sin, and led by His gracious influences to trust in Jesus. The epistle was written to believers, to those who had been "born again" (1 Peter i. 23), and he says that they were elected, choice ones,

according to God's foreknowledge, who knew from eternity that they would believe under His grace; and they were, being believers, chosen unto obedience, and also to a justified state, or "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." To contend that if a man believes under what is termed "common grace," this is to make himself to "differ," and to take the praise of salvation to himself, is in our opinion entirely wrong. Does the patient who takes the medicine under the persuasion of a kind physician, and is cured, have whereof to boast? Because the blind beggar takes an alms, has he whereof to glory? Neither do we see that a poor guilty sinner has any reason for boasting when, under the persuasion of the Divine Spirit, he accepts a full pardon of all his sins. Were a prisoner who has been condemned to be visited by the sovereign, and a pardon put into his hands, to go afterwards through the streets shouting, "I have saved myself—I have saved myself," we should say the man was crazed. Why will not theologians look at things from a commonsense point of view? There is nothing in the passage to prevent you at once entering among the elect.

MAKING ELECTION SURE.—In 2 Peter i. 10, it is written thus: "Wherefore the rather,

brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." But the passage says nothing about the *time* when they were elected, nor whether they were elected to get a peculiar influence to necessitate faith. It implies the negative of the Calvinistic opinion. The Christians were exhorted to make their election sure. But if they were elected by an infallible decree, how could they make it sure? It was, by the theory, sure, independent of them. The exhortation shows that Peter did not know anything of the dogma, and that he held that men had to do with watching over their spiritual life, so that their calling to glory and their election might not fail.

A REMNANT ACCORDING TO ELECTION.—In Romans xi. 5, it is written thus: "Even so at the present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace." It is true that the words "election" and "grace" occur in this passage; but the simple question is, what is their meaning? The apostle had asked, in the first verse, "Hath God cast off His people?" And he repudiates the idea, and refers to the state of matters in the time of Elijah. The prophet had thought that he was the solitary worshipper of God; but in this he was

mistaken. Seven thousand men were yet true to the Lord, and had not bowed the knee to Baal. So at the time the apostle wrote there was a few, a "remnant" of the nation who had believed through grace, and were chosen, elected, to receive the blessings of pardon and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. God had not, therefore, cast off His people, since He was saving all of them who believed. In the exercise of His sovereign wisdom He has made, however, *faith* to be the condition of salvation both for Jew and Gentile. And there is nothing arbitrary in this. In our everyday life we are required to exercise, and are constantly exercising, faith. If we wish to cross the Atlantic, we must exercise faith in regard to the seaworthiness of the ship. We marry, lend money, take medicine, and a thousand other things, upon the principle of faith. We will not allow a man into our family circle who holds us to be liars. Should he take that position we exclude him from friendly fellowship. If he would get good from us in a certain sphere of things, faith in us is absolutely requisite. It is the same with God. If we would be blessed with the sweet peace of pardon, we can only have it by believing in the testimony that God has given regarding the Son, that He tasted

death for every man—died, therefore, for us.

The passages of Scripture we have thus considered are those mainly depended on in support of the Calvinistic doctrine of election. The doctrine, like the chameleon, has different shades, according to the school. The high predestinarians, or, as they are called, "*supra-lapsarians*," maintain, as we have seen, that God created a certain number to be saved, and a certain number to be lost. The *infra-* or *sublapsarians*, maintain that God contemplated the race as fallen, and determined to save a given number, and a given number only, and to reprobate a given number. Regarding the former a Saviour has been provided for them and irresistible grace. The modern Calvinists differ, as we have also seen, from both of these schools, and hold that God loves all, and has provided a Saviour for all, but that converting grace is given only to some. There is a consistency, a grim consistency, in the two former views; but the latter limps, it divides the Trinity. It makes God's love to be world-wide, Christ's death to be for all, but the gracious or converting work of the Spirit is limited. But however these systems differ from each other, they all agree in this, that God is not earnestly

desirous of saving all men. And this, as we hold, is the damning fact against them all.

There are certain specific objections, however, to which we now beg attention.

CHAPTER VI.

OBJECTIONS TO THE CALVINISTIC DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

(1.) WE object, in the *first* place, to the Calvinistic doctrine of election, because it is absurd to call it election. The advocates of the three views of election mentioned stoutly maintain that the persons chosen are chosen unconditionally; in other words, they are chosen not on account of any mental or moral quality in them. It is on this account designated *unconditional.* There is nothing whatever in the persons chosen on which to ground the choice. Supposing this to be the case, can there be any choice, election? Mr. Robinson has put the case thus: "What is election? Is it possible to choose one of two things, excepting for reasons to be found in the things themselves? Ask a friend which of a number of oranges he will take. If he sees nothing in them to deter-

mine selection, he says, "I have no choice." Ask a blind man which of two oranges, that are out of his reach, he prefers, and you mock him by proposing an impossibility. If they are put near him, that he may feel them or smell them, or if by any other means he can judge between them, he can choose, otherwise he cannot choose. If they lie far from him, he may say, 'Give me the one that lies to the east, or the west;' but that is a lottery, an accident, chance, certainly no choice. Therefore, to assert that the cause of election is not in anything in the person chosen, is really to deny that there is any election. And it is a curious fact that the most vehement predestinarians, while they flatter themselves that they are the honoured advocates of the Divine decrees, by sequence set aside election altogether. Their hypothesis annihilates the very doctrine for which they are most zealous, and, if it may be said without irreverence, introduces the dice box into the counsels of heaven" (*Bible Studies*, p. 192). If we look into life, we always find that when we elect or choose, we do so because of something in the person or thing elected. It is so as regards food, drink, dress, houses, pictures, statues, books; it is so, too, as regards members of

Parliament, ministers for pastorates, and in marriage. We are, indeed, so constituted that we cannot conceive of choice or election except upon the grounds of freedom in the elector, and something to differentiate the object chosen from others of like nature. The Confession of Faith says, however, that those who are predestinated unto life are chosen "without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creation as conditions or causes moving Him thereunto, and all to the praise of His glorious grace" (*Con.*, chap. iii.) Yet the Bible says expressly, "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself" (Ps. iv. 3); "Hath not God chosen the poor in this world rich in faith?" (Jas. ii. 5.) There is a setting apart, or choosing, but it is not unconditional, as these verses show.

No doubt, the *motive* of those who hold unconditional election is good, arising from a desire to give all the glory of salvation to God, and from the frequency of the term "grace" in regard to our deliverance. But the great object of giving all the glory to God may be, and is accomplished, without doing violence to Scripture, or trampling upon common sense. The principle or system of Syenergism does

this. It simply means that man is active in his own conversion. It was advocated in his later years by Melancthon. We have not, however, to do with the *motive* of our friends, but with the philosophy of the subject; and to assert that men are chosen to salvation apart from condition, is only assertion, and an absurd assertion, too. Try it in regard to anything, and its folly will be apparent. Why, then, insist upon it in religion? Are we to throw reason to the dogs when we speak on scriptural subjects?

(2.) In the *second* place, we object to the Calvinistic theory of election, because it ignores and tramples upon a primary principle of philosophy. The principle is this: "That a plurality of principles are not to be assumed when the phenomena can possibly be explained by one" (Hamilton's *Reid*, p. 751).

It is what is known as the law of parcimony. The three views of election referred to have bound up with them, as an integral portion of the system, the theory of *irresistible* grace. Take this away, and they fall to pieces as a rope of sand. A man who has hitherto lived an ungodly life becomes converted, and the question arises—how are we to account for this moral phenomenon? Our friends from whom we differ

account for it in this way: In the past eternity God saw that the man would come upon the stage of time, and determined to visit his soul with an irresistible influence, under the operation of which he became converted. Now this is to them a very satisfactory way of accounting for the conversion. But may not this change in the man take place without this *tertiam quid*, or third something? If it may, then to import it into the controversy is to violate the law of parcimony or maxim of philosophy, that it is wrong to multiply causes beyond what are necessary. But let us look at life: let us enter the sphere of human experience. We find men, for instance, who in politics were at one period pronounced Radicals, like Burdett, becoming Conservative in their opinions; and men, like the Peelites, changing from the Conservative side to that of the Liberals. In accounting for this we do not call in a mysterious and occult influence to solve the matter. It is explainable without this. Take the case of medicine. We find men educated in the allopathic system changing, and becoming disciples of Hahnemann. Ask them how it came about, and they answer at once, that it was by considering the results. Take a case of intemperance.

An old inebriate attends a temperance lecture, listens attentively, becomes persuaded of the value of abstinence, signs the pledge, and spends the remainder of his life a sober man. He loved the drink, and now he hates it. Ask him how it came about? He tells you at once that the facts and arguments of the lecture convinced him of the evil of the drink, and led him to abandon it for ever. A great change has been effected, but in perfect harmony with the known laws of mind. Let us now look at religion. Paul arrives at Corinth, and preaches the Gospel to the inhabitants of that degenerate city. They listened to the wondrous story of redeeming love, and became changed through means of it. Was there anything in the nature of the truth preached to them and believed by them fitted to do this? We think that there was. They had sins—were guilty. Paul told them of a Saviour who died for them. This met their case. They were degraded, foul; the religion Paul preached appealed to their sense of right, to their gratitude, to their fears and their hopes; and believing it, they became regenerated in their moral nature. They had been won to God by the "Gospel" (1 Cor. iv. 15). As temperance truth revolutionises the drunkard, so does

Gospel truth the sinner (1 Peter i. 23, 25). The apostle was the agent employed by the Holy Spirit, and believing the message he brought, they were believing the Spirit (See 1 Samuel viii. 7). Since, then, the truth believed is a sufficient reason for the change, why introduce the theory of irresistible grace? It may be replied that this kind of grace is used to get the sinner to attend to the message.

But attention to any subject is brought about by considering motives. Man has the power over his attention. It is the possession of this power which is a main item in constituting him a responsible being. He may or may not attend to the voice of God. If he attends to it he lives; if not, he dies. If God used force in this matter, why reason with men and appeal to them as He does?

We appeal to Christian consciousness. Let any Christian give a reason of the hope that is in him—and it is all perfectly reasonable. All through, in the great matter of conversion, he acted freely. He attended to the Divine message—but there was no compulsion. Why, then, insist upon irresistibility when it is repudiated by Christian consciousness? We know no reason for it but the exigencies of

the system. If you are waiting for it you are being deceived.

(3.) We object, in the *third* place, to the Calvinistic view of election, because it makes God a respecter of persons. What is it to be a respecter of persons? Literally, it means "an accepter of faces." According to the *Imperial Dictionary*, it signifies "a person who regards the external circumstances of others in his judgment, and suffers his opinion to be biassed by them, to the prejudice of candour, justice, and equity." It is to act with partiality. It is of the utmost moment that respect of persons should not be shown in the domestic circle, on the bench, or in the church. If a father shows favouritism to one son less worthy, say, than the others, he lays himself open to the charge of partiality, unevenness in his procedure, and it tends to alienate the affections of his other children. To show it on the bench is to sully the ermine, and bring the administration of justice into disrepute. Whoever else may exhibit it, the church is required to have clean hands in the matter (James ii.)

We are so constituted that we cannot love or hate by a mere fiat of the will. Before we can love one another with complacency, there must be the perception of excellence. And it

is the same as regards God. Hence it is of the last importance that to our mental view He should be pure, holy, impartial, good. To love Him if we thought Him otherwise, would be impossible. Now God has abundantly shown, both in providence and in the Bible, that He is not a respecter of persons. He executes His laws indiscriminately—upon all alike. Fire burns, poison kills, water drowns all and sundry. If the laws of health are broken, the penalty is enforced on each transgressor according to the measure of his transgression. It is the same with moral penalties. If a man lies, or steals, or is mean, or selfish, he will suffer moral deterioration, which will pass through his moral being as a leprosy. Our physical, mental, and moral natures are thus under their respective laws, and whosoever breaks these laws God executes the penalty on the transgressor. There is in this respect no favouritism —no respect of persons.

There are, as a matter of course, diversities upon earth. All cannot occupy the same place. We have not the brilliancy and luxuriancy of the tropics, but we have our compensations. And it is the same with life in general. In comparison with the rich the poor have a rough road to travel, but they are not without

their compensations. The moral life is the higher life of man, and in the stern school of adversity there are developed noble traits of character.

> "Though losses and crosses
> Be lessons right severe,
> There's wit there you'll get there,
> You'll find no other where."

The diversities we find in life are not arbitrary acts, as we have already seen, but dependent upon adherence or non-adherence to law.

The same great principle that regulates the providential government of God, is brought clearly out in the Scriptures. It is remarked by Cruden that God appointed that the judges should pronounce their sentences without any respect of persons (Lev. xix. 15; Deut i. 17); that they should consider neither the poor nor the rich, nor the weak nor the powerful, but only attend to truth and justice, and give sentence according to the merits of the cause." It is said in Proverbs that it is not good to have respect of persons in judgment (Prov. xxiv. 23). Peter declared that there is no respect of persons with God; and Paul said, "For there is no respect of persons with God"

(Romans ii. 11). James declared that if the Christians to whom he wrote showed respect of persons they committed sin (James ii. 9).

The Bible is thus exceedingly careful to guard the Divine character from the charge of partiality. And obviously so. Let but the idea be entertained in the mind for a moment, and it leaves a slime behind it as if a serpent had passed through the corridor of our dwelling. The simple question then is, Does this doctrine of Calvinistic election exhibit God as a respecter of persons? It clearly does so. According to it, God, irrespective of any conditions in the creature, appoints a certain number to be saved and leaves the rest to perish. And is not this partiality? Is not this favouritism? Since the doctrine thus reflects on the Divine character, it deserves condemnation.

(4.) In the *fourth* place, we object to the Calvinistic doctrine of election, *because it is opposed to the letter and spirit of many passages of the Bible.* We beg attention to a few. Consider the OATH OF GOD. "As I live, saith the Lord, 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 way, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). Would not any

one reading these words naturally conclude that God really wished all the people to be saved? Have they not a ring of genuine sincerity about them? We cannot conceive that such a question would have been asked, viz., "Why will ye die?" had their death been inevitable. Not only was it not inevitable, but the earnest entreaty to return showed that God intensely desired their salvation. Yet, if Calvinism is true, the oath of God and His earnest entreaty, as far as millions of the human race are concerned, are simply as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Nay, more, they are a solemn mockery. I see two men floundering in deep water; I jump into my boat and save one, and bring him safely to shore. I could easily have saved the other had I wished it, but did not. Were I then to stand on the bank of the river and ask the sinking man, Why will you die? what would be thought of me, or any man who should act such a part? Such conduct would be cruel, cruel to any poor soul in its death-struggle. Yet this is exactly the part God is made to perform by the high Calvinists, and is endorsed by their more modern brethren. He could easily save every one if He wished it, they say. But this assertion cannot stand in the presence

of God's oath and His earnest entreaty to turn and live.

THE VINEYARD.—Let us look at the case of the vineyard, as recorded in Isaiah v. The house of Israel is there compared to a vineyard which God had planted. After detailing what had been done, the question is asked, "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?" (verse 4). The moral condition of Israel was anything but good. God had looked for judgment, but there was oppression, and for righteousness, but behold a cry! Yet the question in this fourth verse carries the idea that He had done all that He wisely could, in the circumstances, to reform and save them. But they were not reformed, they were not saved. It might indeed be affirmed that this was because they had not been visited by "special influence," or converting grace. But if this kind of grace is the only kind that is fructifying, and was for sovereign reasons withheld, how could the question be asked, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" The one thing needful had *not* been done, if this hypothesis is true, and in

view of it the question could not have been put at all. But it was put, and this shows that God had done all that He wisely could do to save the people, and that He did not keep back the needed grace, for which Calvinists contend.

CHRIST'S TEARS OVER JERUSALEM.—The tears of our Lord over the city of Jerusalem are a clear demonstration against the Calvinistic doctrine of election. It is said, "When He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke xix. 41, 42). When a woman weeps it is not an infrequent phenomenon. Her nerves are more finely strung than man's, and a touching tale or sympathetic story brings the tears to her eyes and sobs from her lips. When men weep it indicates deep emotion; and when Christ looked upon the city, His soul was moved with compassion, and He wept. He knew what had been done for the guilty inhabitants—how God had borne with them—and the doom that, like the sword of Damocles, hung over them, and His tender heart found relief in tears. In the presence of this weeping Redeemer can we entertain the

Calvinistic notion that He could easily have saved the people, *if He had only wished it?* He wished to gather them as a hen doth her chickens under her wings, but they would not come. Were there not another passage in the Bible than the one just referred to (Matthew xxiii. 37), it is sufficient to dispose of the theory that God uses irresistible grace in saving men. He had used the most powerful motives to bring them to himself, but they would not come.

John Wesley, in writing on Predestination, says,—"Let it be observed that this doctrine represents our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the righteous, the only-begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth, as an hypocrite, a deceiver of the people, a man void of common sincerity. For it cannot be denied that He everywhere speaks as if He was willing that all men should be saved. Therefore, to say that He was not willing that all men should be saved, is to represent Him as a mere hypocrite and dissembler. It cannot be denied that the gracious words which came out of His mouth are full of invitations to all sinners. To say, then, He did not intend to save all sinners, is to represent Him as a gross deceiver of the people. You cannot deny that He says,

'Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden.' If, then, you say He calls those that cannot come, those whom He knows to be unable to come, those whom He can make able to come but will not, how is it possible to describe greater insincerity? You represent Him as mocking His helpless creatures, by offering what He never intends to give. You describe Him as saying one thing and meaning another, as pretending the love which He had not. Him in whose mouth was no guile, you make full of deceit, void of common sincerity; then, especially when drawing nigh the city He wept over it, and said, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not.' Now, if ye say they would but He would not, you represent Him (which who could hear) as weeping crocodile's tears; weeping over the prey which himself had doomed to destruction" (Ser. 128).

Consider the *last commission* of Christ. Before our Lord left the world He said to His apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Good news was thus to be proclaimed to every human being. If the commission meant anything it meant

this, that God was honestly and earnestly desirous of saving every one. And this is in beautiful harmony with the exhortation in Isaiah: "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isa. xlv. 22). It is also in keeping with the words of Jesus recorded by John: "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" (John iii. 16); and with what the apostle Peter says, that "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter iii. 9); and with what the apostle Paul says, that God "will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4). But whilst the commission to preach the good news is in harmony with these express statements, it is out of joint and incongruous with the Calvinistic doctrine of election, that God wishes only a few of the human family saved.

Consider the HOLY SPIRIT'S INVITATION. In Revelation xxii. 17, it is written: "And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Whilst we are so constituted that we cannot believe a proposition the terms of which we do not understand,

and whilst there is much that is inscrutable in the Spirit's work, yet the passage just quoted clearly means, if it means anything, that the Holy Spirit invites all to come and drink of the life-giving water. We cannot doubt His sincerity. When all are invited to drink, it is implied that there is water for all, and that it is free to all, and that they have power to drink. We may not ask one to drink at an empty fountain without being guilty of the sheerest mockery; and neither may we ask the wounded and disabled man, who cannot walk a step, to come and drink, without being guilty of the same. This invitation of the Spirit, then, is inconsistent with the Calvinistic notion that His converting grace is limited. Says the late Dr. John Guthrie, "Was it antecedently to be supposed that a Divine Father who loves all, and so loved as to give His own and only-begotten for our ransom, and that the Divine Son, who as lovingly gave Himself, would send the Divine Spirit mediatorially to reveal and interpret both, who should not operate in the world on the same principle of impartiality and universality? What philosophy and theology thus dictate, Scripture confirms. Christ promised His disciples an interpreting and applying

Spirit, who should convince the *world*. Prophets predicted, and Pentecost proved, that God was pouring out His Spirit on all flesh. These influences were, in their largest incidents, soul-saving; through being moral, they were resistible. Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, said Stephen, and the Holy Ghost himself saith to-day, Oh that ye would hear His voice; which He would not do if faith came by another sort of influence which He only could give, and which He did not mean to give till *to-morrow*, or next year, or not at all! In that last and most gracious of Gospel invitations, which the incarnate Himself utters in Rev. xxii. 17, among other inviters, the Spirit says, come! and says it to all; which surely, as He is the Spirit of truth, He would not do, if not a soul could come till He himself put forth an influence which He had predetermined to bestow only on a select and favoured number. The ugly limitation will not do. The work and heart of the loving Spirit are, and must be, as large as those of the Father and the Son, whom He came to reveal. (*Discourses*, Ser. X.)

The objections thus tendered to the Calvinistic theory of election are sufficient separately, and much more so collectively, to condemn the dogma. We impute no motives to

the honoured men who hold the doctrine. They are doubtless as sincere in their belief as we are in ours. It did seem to us, at one time, that God could convert men if He wished it; but the dictum of Chillingworth—"the Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants," overturned that idea. The words of Jesus, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, . . . but ye would not," showed that Jesus was wishful to save the people; but His wish was not realised, because they "would not." And the Bible and philosophy are in harmony. We could easily conceive, that were certain individuals to be taken by almighty effort from one sphere, and placed in another, they would be converted. Christ confirms this idea. He said, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Mat. xi. 21). But as God loves all equally with the love of compassion, this exercise of miracle in one case would lead to the exercise of miracle in another. And what would this involve? It would simply lead to the overturning of God's moral providence, which is based upon, and carried on in conjunction

with, the highest wisdom. Parents may often be found sacrificing their wisdom to their love, but it is not so with God. All His attributes are in harmony. Justice is not sacrificed to love, nor love to justice. There is thus, in the Divine character, a firm and unchanging basis for the most profound veneration and the most intense affection.

Regarding the particular illustration of the people of Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon, and why Christ had not done mighty works there, Dr. Morison has remarked, "It was not befitting our Saviour to become incarnate at *all times*, or even *at two different epochs* in the history of the world. And when He did appear at a particular epoch in time, 'the fulness of the time,' it was absolutely necessary that He should live and work miracles, *not everywhere*, but in some *one limited area or locality* (*Com. on Mat., ad loc.*)

CHAPTER VII.

THE SCRIPTURAL VIEW OF EVANGELICAL ELECTION.

ALTHOUGH there is much confusion of thought regarding election viewing it from a Calvinistic

standpoint, the word itself is simple enough, as is the doctrine when viewed in the light of Scripture.

THE WORD.—According to Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon, the verb to elect (eklego) means, "To pick or single out," especially as soldiers, rowers, &c. In the middle voice, "to pick out for one's self, choose out." Robinson says it means "to lay out together, to choose out, to select." In N. T. Mid., "to choose out for one's self." Parkhurst gives as its signification, "to choose, choose out." It has a variety of applications in the Scriptures, just as it has in our common everyday life. It was applied to the Jewish nation, regarding which it was said, "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deut. xiv. 2). The term comprehended the whole nation, and no one will contend that the choice spoken of indicated that every Jew was safe for eternity. It was applied to the apostles, but this did not thereby secure infallibly their salvation. Judas fell away, and hanged himself. Paul declared that he had constantly to watch himself, lest he should become "a castaway." It is applied to David, "But I chose David to be over my people Israel" (1 Kings

viii. 16). It is used also in reference to "place:" "As the place which the Lord your God shall choose" (Deut. xii. 5). The prophets of Baal were asked to "choose" a bullock, "and call on the name of their gods" (1 Kings xviii. 23). These and other applications of the word are quite sufficient to show that the term is not necessarily connected with the choosing of a few men to eternal salvation, and implying a faith-necessitating work of the Holy Spirit. And something is gained when we have gained this. Were we therefore asked whether we denied election? we should be quite entitled to ask, to what kind of election did our questioner refer? since there are several kinds referred to in the Holy Scriptures, and a special kind outside of Scripture, entertained by the followers of John Calvin.

EVANGELICAL ELECTION A PROCESS.—Seeing that the word "elect" means to "pick out," "to choose, to lay aside for one's self," it may denote either an act or a process, according to the object elected. If I select a book from the library, or choose an apple from the tree, the election thus exercised is simply an act. The book elected and the apple were entirely passive, having no will in the matter. But suppose I want two servants: I go into the

market where a number are standing waiting to be employed. I find two, and explain the nature of the service, and state the wages and the rules of the house. One of the two accepts, the other refuses. I go forward on my mission, and find another. I state to him what I stated to the two already mentioned. He agrees, and is engaged. I have chosen—"elected"—the servants; but it was a process, not a simple act Other wills came into play which differentiated the election in the one case from the other, and the concurrence of the two wills completed the matter. It is written in the word: "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" (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18). This brings the matter plainly before us. There is the Divine exhortation, human concurrence, and the result—adoption. It is an absurd and unreasonable supposition to imagine that God deals with rational and responsible creatures as He does with vegetable and irrational brutes, which He does if the theory of irresistible grace is maintained.

THE AUTHOR OF EVANGELICAL ELECTION.—

There would not be need for any remark on this subject, were it not that objection may be urged against the view just stated, that it makes man the author of his election. In a secondary, yet important sense, he has to do with his election. But God is the Prime Mover and Author of evangelical election. The scheme of redemption originated with Him. He tells men that He earnestly desires their return, and upon what terms He will graciously receive them. If they consent He will take them out from amongst the condemned, "select them," "elect them," and place them among His children. The Bible confirms this view: "God hath from the beginning chosen you" (2 Thes. ii. 13.) "God our Father has chosen us in Him" (Eph. i. 3, 4.)

THE OBJECTS OF EVANGELICAL ELECTION.—The people of this country are frequently engaged in elections. We elect men for the School Board, the Town Council, and for Parliament. When we record our vote we do so for a definite object. What, then, are the objects which God has in view in evangelical election? The apostle Peter states them in his first epistle. He says, "Elect unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." (1 Peter i. 2.) In other words, they were

chosen, having become believers, to the blessings of justification and sanctification,—the one having reference to their state, the other to their character.

HOW TO ENTER AMONG THE ELECT.—This has been the great puzzle to those educated under the teaching of Calvinistic divines. They read in the Bible that God wishes all men to be saved, but they are told that this means all the elect. At times they are "offered" a Saviour, but they are told that in order to believe in Him they need the irresistible influence of the Holy Ghost. If they are amongst the favoured ones, it will come to them in due time; but if they are not, then no prayers, no cries, no tears can alter the Divine decree. How long will men stand by a system unknown to the Christian church for 400 years, and alike repugnant to the reason and the whole spirit of the Gospel, and fitted to plunge the honest inquirer into endless perplexity?

"Oh! how unlike the complex works of man
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan,
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile;
From ostentation as from weakness free,
It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed above the portal from afar,

Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only by the light they give,
Stand the soul-quickening words—'BELIEVE AND LIVE.'"

Paul in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians tells us how they entered among the elect. His words are: "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" (2 Thes. ii. 13.) They were thus among the elect, and we are told how it came about. The Spirit had brought the Gospel message to Thessalonica by his accredited agent, the apostle Paul. In that message the people were told of God's infinite love—that He loved them, and that the Saviour had died for their sins. He testified to Jesus as mighty to save, to save any—to save all—to save to the very uttermost. He convinced them that they stood in need of a Saviour, and that Christ was the very Saviour they required. These were two great phases of the Spirit's work—viz., to produce conviction in the mind of the sinner, and to point out Jesus as the Lamb of God which hath taken away the sin of the world. The Thessalonians, under His gracious testimony, believed the record, or, as

it is said, "the truth," and became the chosen of God—His elected ones.

That this is true may be seen from the way in which sinners enter into God's adopted family. It will be admitted that all who are in God's adopted family are in a saved condition—in the same state, in short, as are the elected ones. But how do men enter into this adopted family? It is stated in John i. 12, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." To believe on His name is just to depend upon Him alone for salvation. The apostle Paul in writing to the Galatians says, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26.) Each one had personally to believe in Christ, or to say as Paul said, He "loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20.)

It may be said that this makes the way too easy, too simple. It is simple to us indeed, but it cost the Divine Father the sacrifice of His only-begotten Son; it cost the Divine Son His sore agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and His offering up of himself upon the cross. But the simplicity of the way of salvation is implied in such passages as, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;"

and, "Hear and your soul shall live." The reason why it is easy is this,—the meritorious work of salvation, the work upon the ground of which we get into heaven, is not our feelings, nor our own works, but the work, the finished work of Christ.

The system advocated in this treatise may be objected to on the ground that it makes man the arbiter of his own destiny. There is no doubt that it really does so. But is this a good ground for rejecting it? We think not. Let it be remembered that all through life man has to exercise the power of election—choice. He has to do so in regard to a profession or trade, in regard to securities, and in respect of marriage, and it would only be in harmony with what he is constantly doing, were he called upon to "choose," or decide, upon matters affecting his spiritual condition. Is he not, moreover, the maker of his own character? This is his most precious heritage, more valuable than thousands of gold and silver. But how is it made? By single volitions on the side of the right, the true, and the good. And is not the life that is to come a continuance of the life that *now is?* And if we exercise choice in the making of our characters, this is the same as being the arbiters

of our destination in eternity. And what is thus plain to the intelligence is confirmed by the Scriptures. Their language is, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve;" "Wilt thou not from this day say unto me, My father?" They thus clearly make the matter to turn on the "*will.*"

It may be said that the view for which we have been contending, does not give the Christian the comfort of heart which the system opposed does. But the primary question with an honest inquirer should not be, which view of a subject is the most agreeable? but, what is the truth upon the point? It is possible in religious life, as in social, to live in a fool's paradise. But what more comfort could a man desiderate than is given by the Holy Spirit? The Christian may be poor and deformed, but God loves him all the same as if he were rich as Crœsus, and in form had the symmetry of the Apollo Belvidere. He may be tried as silver is tried in the fire, but the Lord will sit as the refiner, and not suffer him to be tried above what he is able to bear.

But what about the *security* of the believer? The covenant being made between Christ and the Father is well ordered in all things and sure, according to the system of Predestination.

"Once a saint, a saint for ever," it has been said. The Christian, it is argued, may make slips, even as David did, but he cannot fall finally away, for every one that Christ died for will be ultimately saved. Now if all this were true, then doubtless a sense, or feeling if you will, of security would be gained. When Cromwell was dying he is said to have asked his chaplain whether those who once knew the truth could be lost, and being answered in the negative, he replied, "Then I am safe." Now, it is not agreeable to be constantly on the watch-tower looking out for the foe, or to have to tread cautiously among the grass lest you should be bitten by a rattlesnake. But a man may imagine himself to be secure when he is not. Many of the shareholders and trustees involved in the late Bank catastrophy thought they were secure; but they slept upon a slumbering volcano, and many lost their all. They thought that they were secure, but it was a dream from which they were awakened to a terrible reality. So in religion. A man under the shadow of a theory may think himself safe, whilst his gourd is only the gourd of Jonah, a thing that withers under the heat of the sun. The feeling of security is very agreeable; but how, if strict Calvinism is adhered to, is

any man to get intelligently amongst the elect? If Christ has died only for a few, and the names of these are kept a profound secret, how can I believe that I am among that few? We cannot believe without evidence. If we do, our faith is the faith of the fool—a dream, a conceit, and nothing more. Before a man, upon the theory of strict Calvinism, can believe that Christ died for him, he would require to get a list of the elect. This not being forthcoming, many poor men are waiting for the touch of the Almighty's finger to work faith within them, and place them among the happy number of the saved. But in so waiting they are under a perfect delusion. As a matter of fact there are many excellent Christian men who contend earnestly for the creed of Calvinism. They read in the Bible that God is willing to take sinners back through Christ, and they come to Him, and consecrate themselves to His services, and then battle for limitation. But in accepting Christ as their Saviour they shut their eyes to the doctrine of their creed, and acted on the declarations of the word of God. We rejoice that they are Christians, but maintain, nevertheless, that in believing they acted illogically.

But to return to security. What more

security could any one desire than the word of Christ?—"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John x. 27, 29). Our Lord is here speaking of external foes, and declares that no enemy is strong enough to take His sheep from Him. But men enter His service freely, and freely they remain. He has no slaves in His household. His people are attached to Him because they see in Him a concentration of all that is noble and good. His self-sacrifice for them has won their hearts, and inspired them with devotedness to His person. That it is possible to fall away we admit, from the fact that man is a free being surrounded with temptations; and also because we find throughout the Bible earnest exhortations to watchfulness, which would be quite useless except upon the possibility of letting the truth slip from the mind. Hymenæus and Alexander made shipwreck of their faith (1 Tim. i.); and Paul had to keep his body under, lest he himself should become a castaway. But the *possibility* of falling away should not disturb

the equanimity of any Christian for a moment. As free creatures we have the power of throwing ourselves into the river, or the fire, or in many other ways taking our own life; yet the possession of this power in nowise disturbs our tranquillity of soul, or mars our peace of mind. It were, no doubt, more pleasing to the flesh to have no fighting, no struggle, no watching; but we must accept the logic of facts, and they clearly indicate that the Christian life is a battle all the way to the gates of the New Jerusalem. But in this spiritual contest, the thews and sinews of the soul are made strong. By failing to realise the ideal of what a Christian should be, believers feel the need of Christ's presence, and the help of the Holy Ghost, and sympathise with the sentiments of the hymn.

"I could not do without Thee,
O Saviour of the lost,
Whose precious blood redeemed me
At such tremendous cost;
Thy righteousness, Thy pardon,
Thy precious blood must be
My only hope and comfort,
My glory and my plea.

"I could not do without Thee;
I cannot stand alone,

"I have no strength or goodness,
No wisdom of my own;
But Thou, beloved Saviour,
Art all in all to me,
And weakness will be power
If leaning hard on Thee.

"I could not do without Thee
No other friend can read
The spirit's strange deep longings,
Interpreting its need;
No human heart could enter
Each dim recess of mine,
And soothe, and hush, and calm it,
O blessed Lord, but Thine.

Having entered by faith into the family of God, or, in other words, amongst the elect, it becomes the sacred duty of the believer to be careful to maintain good works. He must remember that the way to heaven is not strewn with roses. He is Christ's freeman; but it is with spiritual freedom as with civil, "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Neither is it an artillery duel, or firing at long range; it is ofttimes a grapple in the fosse for victory or death.

But the Christian—the elected one—has not to fight life's battle alone. The Holy Spirit having led him to Jesus carries on the good work in his heart. He tells him that he is

dear to God; that he is His son, "His jewel;" His "portion;" that God will never leave him nor forsake him; that his strength shall be equal to his day; that his foot shall never be moved; and that God, who hath given up for him His son, will with that Son freely give him all things. By being faithful unto death he shall at last receive the crown of life, which shall never fade away.

THE END.

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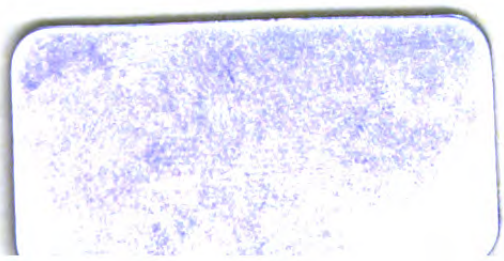
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