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ARTICLE I.

SIN, AS RELATED TO HUMAN NATURE AND TO THE
DIVINE PURPOSE.

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SEMINARY.

THERE is, perhaps, no one topic in the whole province of theological investigation that presents to the philosophic and thoughtful inquirer more, or more formidable, problems than the doctrine of sin. It meets him in every direction, and always with a difficulty. Whether he turn his thoughts to the divine or human side of theology, Godward or manward, in either case he comes directly upon this strange and unaccountable phenomenon. It stands like some fearful spectre in his path, barring further progress; and he may well exclaim, with Milton's angel:

“ Whence and what art thou, execrable shape,
That darest oppose my way ? ”

There are two aspects in which this doctrine is of special moment to the theological inquirer: one is, the relation which it sustains to *the nature of man*; the other, its relation to *the divine will and purpose*. It is the object of the following pages, not to offer new opinions, or advance a new

heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Will God, then, introduce everlasting monotony and permit no changes in heaven? Rather would analogy lead us to conclude that it may be a succession of higher and higher economies of life and enjoyment, into which the law of change shall introduce us. We conjecture not what these new developments may be, nor would we form so low an estimate of that world as to fancy them a repetition of the most beautiful flowers and fruits and gems and landscapes which earth now contains; but rather objects far more attractive and glorious; such as could not be understood and appreciated by our present powers, but such as an infinite God knows how to produce, and such as infinite benevolence will delight to scatter in rich profusion all along the upward pathway of our immortal existence.

ARTICLE III.

DOCTRINES OF THE NEW SCHOOL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

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THE design of this Article is to answer a question often asked: "What is the difference between Old and New school Presbyterians?" Ecclesiastically, they form two distinct and independent bodies. Denominationally, they are known to be prosecuting different and separate interests. Yet they hold the same Confession of Faith; adopt and profess attachment to the same system and form of ecclesiastical government; have the same modes and forms of discipline; and designate themselves by the same popular and corporate name, "the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," and seem to be, and to be known in law, as the true and

rightful successor of the body so called, which originated in accordance with the previous action of the synod of New York and Philadelphia, and was duly organized in 1789. Their ministers extensively exchange with and preach for each other; and the mass of their hearers say, we see no difference in their preaching, either as it regards the doctrines they teach, the morality they inculcate, or the spiritual experience they seek to develop in the religion of their congregations.

It is not therefore surprising that many curiously inquire: "In what do they differ?" The Old school¹ have for years had their publications circulating, some of which did much to forestall public sentiment, and to prepare the way for the rupture which took place in 1837. "A series of numbers," originally published, about the time of that rupture, in the *Protestant and Herald*, of which paper the Rev. N. L. Rice, D. D., was then an editor, were republished by the Old school Board of Publication, in 1853, as his "exhibit of the most important differences in their doctrine and church polity," between "the Old and New schools," thus reviving and perpetuating the allegations they contain. Other publications of ephemeral character have appeared, which have found favor and been circulated among Old school Presbyterians. Little effort has been made by New school Presbyterians to correct or counteract the fallacies they contain. Nothing has been published on the subject with the formal sanction of their General Assembly.

In the weekly religious gazettes, which have contained discussions, and refutations of charges of error made in the days of heated controversy; in the published accounts of the trials of the few arraigned before their presbyteries on such charges—two only of which processes found their way to the supreme judicature by appeal, and in disputations contained in Quarterly Reviews, must the curious reader search

¹ The terms "Old school" and "New school," throughout this Article, are used simply as current and convenient forms of speech, in popular use, for designating the different bodies, and with no other real or intentional significance.

for the records of the times, in relation to these differences. The Presbyterian Quarterly, a few years ago, published several successive Articles, prepared by a former member of the New school "Committee of Publication," intended to circulate information on the subject. The American Presbyterian, a weekly sheet, still later afforded its columns to another member of the same committee whose papers editorial were afterwards published, and are for sale at the bookstore of the publishing committee, in tract form. Beyond them, we have no knowledge of publications, didactic or polemic, save one or two,¹ to which we would refer any inquirer for information relative to the differences between Old and New school Presbyterians. The generation that has risen since the division between them finds no authentic sources of such information readily accessible. It is therefore thought that the statement this Article furnishes may be as useful as it seems needful. Even this statement cannot be satisfactory or intelligibly made in mere didactic dogmatic form. A reference to historic events connected with the development of whatever differences existed and manifested themselves in the discussions of the day is indispensable.

HISTORY OF THE DIVISION.

It is just one quarter of a century since the General Assembly, in 1837, passed what is justly called its unconstitutional excising act, by which the four synods of Utica, Geneva, Genessee and the Western Reserve — containing 28 Presbyteries, 509 ministers, 599 churches, and 50,489 communicants as reported — were excluded from their ecclesiastical rights, and relation to the Presbyterian church. This was done by a party represented in that body, who that year gained ascendancy and controlled its councils. For

¹ These are, *The History of the Presbyterian Controversy, etc.*, by H. Woods, Louisville, 1843, and *The Alleged Doctrinal Differences of the Old and New School examined by an Old Disciple*, Auburn, 1855. The author is the Rev. W. Bacon, of Auburn, N. Y.

several years previously that party had labored for the avowed purpose of frustrating what they believed to be the unpresbyterian views, both as to doctrine and polity, which had generally directed the sympathies and measures of the majority of delegates in the General Assembly.

In the year 1837, the controlling majority in that body was of Old school predilections. It was secured, partly by zealous, interested efforts of leading men, securing pecuniary contributions to defray the travelling expenses of ministers and elders, appointed commissioners, and coming pre-advised and prepared for dismemberment; and partly and principally by the sudden and alarming financial and commercial crisis in the early spring of that year, which extensively absorbed the attention and awakened the anxieties of business men in the northern and eastern portions of the country, and which especially prevented a full representation of elders from the presbyteries of the state of New York, within the bounds of the four synods already named, where what was called New school views and measures prevailed, and whence also, it was believed, were derived their numerical strength and potent influence in swaying the councils of the General Assembly.

There had existed since 1801 "a plan of union between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in new settlements," which was first proposed by the General Association of Connecticut, and mutually adopted afterwards by that body and the General Assembly. It was an arrangement, accepted and acted on in good faith, in which the higher obligations of morality and Christian love were more regarded by the parties than those originating in ecclesiastical or conventional authority. The western and northern parts of New York, and the Connecticut or Western Reserve in northern Ohio, were regions, in which its provisions had operated for the rapid growth and prosperity of numerous churches, which had sprung up among the settlements formed by the great tide of emigrant population penetrating extensively the western wilderness. For a third of a century it ex-

erted its influence, and was accepted and acknowledged as possessing the authority of common law in the Presbyterian church.

In process of time, and in the conflicts and collisions incident to various domestic missionary enterprises and organizations, it became the occasion of disputes and misunderstandings among those who preferred the distinctive forms of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. Many of Old school Presbyterian affinities, in the Middle, Western, and Southern states, began to believe that there had been a departure from the fundamental principles and constitutional forms of Presbyterianism through the influence of Congregationalism, where that element had entered into, and become incorporated with, churches and judicatories of the Presbyterian body, as in the districts of country above named. It was also believed and alleged that, incident to the great and extensive revivals of religion, especially in 1831 and thereafter, throughout those and other regions, there had arisen great irregularities in relation to the manner of preaching and measures adopted for their promotion. The policy and modes of missionary operations, both foreign and domestic, furnished exciting topics of debate, and led to rival efforts and enterprises, — some preferring voluntary and others ecclesiastical organizations for such purposes. Both methods had been in use, and were cordially aided throughout the congregations, presbyteries, and synods of the General Assembly. The American Home Missionary society had originated, and, to a very great extent, either absorbed or superseded different local associations for domestic missions. The General Assembly's Board of Missions, which had operated from the earliest period, enlarged its field of labor, and quickened its activity, under a revived organization and more zealous administration. The rivalry and strifes incident to the attempt, for several years allowed and favored by the General Assembly, to secure the benefit of both systems, contributed to develop and invigorate the zeal and labors of their respective friends and advocates.

The first manifestations and movements of parties seeking ascendancy in the General Assembly were in connection with this subject. Becoming unmistakable soon after the reorganization of the General Assembly's Board of Missions, with a view to its greater efficiency, the emulations and antagonisms that had been engendered began to exhibit themselves in those differences in sympathy and effort which, after a few years of conflict, resulted in separation. The terms "New" and "Old" school became the familiar designations of the parties then growing into maturity.

Their original differences were mainly those of polity, especially in relation to missionary and benevolent operations. The voluntary and the ecclesiastical had each their zealous advocates. The attempt to make the one or the other the exclusive polity proved disastrous to the peace and unity of the Presbyterian church. Different elements of strife, in the progress of controversy, developed themselves. Differences of sentiment and feeling, as between Congregationalists and Presbyterians, distinctively so denominated, became more and more apparent; also as to those opposed to American slavery and those disposed to tolerate or apologize for it, as it was still countenanced in southern congregations and practised among their members; also, as between those who pressed the responsibility of the churches for reform in relation to this thing, and for its removal from them, and those who denied the practicability and necessity of such measures, inevitably conflicting with the slave codes of different states; also, as between those whose theological views and modes of preaching were claimed to be more conducive to revivals of religion than were theirs who suspected their genuineness and regarded them rather as transient and dangerous excitements. It was not until the strifes of party were approaching their culmination in division that particular prominence was given to erroneous doctrines, as alleged by the Old school against those of the New. Neutrals and medium ground were pronounced inadmissible by those who began to feel that they

were called to save the Presbyterian church from the inroads of error and irregularities by some attempts at reform, and for its liberation from dangerous elements which they believed and declared had been injuriously tolerated in it.

A minority of the General Assembly, in concert with others, who assembled shortly after its adjournment in 1834, prepared and signed what they called their "Act and Testimony," and recommended a convention to be held in Pittsburgh, Pa., the next spring, in pursuance of the design expressed in that document. It was designed to be a test of orthodoxy, and in its spirit evinced a determination to rule or rend the church. The convention assembled in Pittsburgh, May 1835, a week previous to the meeting of the General Assembly. A list of grievances was made out and a memorial prepared and forwarded to the General Assembly, in which, among other things, "an outline of the system" of error was given, and against which the testimony of that body was earnestly invoked. The neutral and moderate men, opposed to party strife, were forced into ranks. The nullifying "Act and Testimony" gained the ascendancy; and at last the work of schism was carried forward with fearful despatch, in the excising acts of 1837, and the reform acts and ordinances of 1838.¹

They were in violation of the Constitution, revolutionary in tendency and design, and, establishing a new basis, consummated a plan of secession for the Old school, from those who maintained the union and government of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, as its discipline had been administered and its policy developed for one third of a century and more, in accordance with the fifth and seventh of the fundamental principles stated in the first chapter of its "Form of Government." In 1837 the minority entered and recorded their protests against the revolutionary proceedings of the General Assembly of that year. In 1838, despite of the resistance of the Clerks and Moderator,

¹ The History of the Presbyterian Controversy, by H. Woods, p. 74. Louisville, 1843.

in their attempts to carry out the revolutionary principles introduced and adopted by the majority of the previous year, the meeting of the General Assembly was organized upon the basis of the Constitution. The right of representation by *all* the Presbyteries comprising the ecclesiastical body, and by their delegates regularly and constitutionally convened, constituting "the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America," was recognized and formally declared. The Old school revolutionary party subsequently organized their General Assembly upon the new basis they had adopted. Having the officers and a majority of the members of the different organic Boards in their interests, the archives and funds were retained in their possession. Soon after a suit was instituted before the supreme court of the state of Pennsylvania, upon a writ of *quo warranto*, that led to a full and careful investigation and trial by jury, for the determination of the question: "Which of her parties was the constitutional Presbyterian church, and entitled to its corporate powers and property?"¹ The Hon. Milton C. Rogers, presiding judge in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, after a careful investigation, during a trial lasting twenty days, pronounced the opinion, that the plan of union, made the pretext for the excising act of the majority in the General Assembly of 1837, so far from being unconstitutional, was "an agreement or regulation which the General Assembly not only had power to make, but one which is well calculated to promote the best interests of religion"; that, if it were unconstitutional, there is no evidence that the excised synods were formed under it; and that the resolutions of excision are "not only contrary to the eternal principles of justice, the principles of the common law, but at variance with the constitution of the church," "*unconstitutional, null, and void.*" So he instructed the jury, who, "after a short absence, returned into court, and rendered verdict that they find the defendants guilty." The effect was, to pronounce the General Assembly organized

¹ M'Elroy's Report, pp. 512, 514, 530.

in 1838 by the New school, in despite of the resistance of the Moderator and Clerks, "the true General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America under the charter."¹

Application was made for a new trial, and argued before the court in bank, chief justice Gibson, and justices Rogers, Kennedy, and Huston on the bench. The chief justice and a majority of the court concurring, gave an opinion adverse to the decision of justice Rogers and the claim of the Constitutional Assembly, and granted a new trial. Justice Rogers then said, "After the patient and impartial investigation by me of this cause, at Nisi Prius and in bank, I have nothing to add, except that my opinion remains unchanged on *all* the points ruled at the trial."¹

The moral and popular effect, however, of this trial was deemed sufficient for all the principles and interests which the Constitutional Assembly sought and cared to establish. Before the trial therefore came on, they instructed their counsel to withdraw the suit. It was done; and they have left the excising party in undisputed possession of the property and funds, to which New school Presbyterians had very largely contributed.

Several suits in different states—two in Pennsylvania, and others in New York and Ohio—have been brought by parties in the interest of the New basis or Old school Assembly against corporations in connection with the Constitutional or New school Assembly. The verdicts have always been rendered in favor of the latter. And what is most worthy of remark is, that when the case of the party at York, Pa., was carried, upon appeal, before chief justice Gibson, he affirmed the decision of the lower court, which had given the property to the Constitutional or New school party. In explaining his opinion rendered in the previous case, he took occasion to correct the misapprehensions that had grown out of his former decision, and denied, as some had construed it, that the New school had forfeited name, rights, property, and all,

¹ M'Elroy's Report, p. 628.

clearly expressing the opinion that the acts of the New basis or Old school Assembly were those of revolution, and saying that the order for a new trial was granted because the Old school, at the time, were "the stronger party!"¹

The above history is given with as much brevity as possible, to render intelligible the influence and procedures resulting in the dismemberment of the Presbyterian church by its division into two distinct denominations, commonly called Old and New school. It is matter for Christian congratulation that at the sessions of the Old school General Assembly last spring (1862) incipient measures were adopted for fraternal intercourse and correspondence by delegates with the New school. The General Assembly of the latter had adjourned finally before knowing this fact; but had adopted resolutions expressive of their desire and readiness for such correspondence. Communications on the subject have passed between the Moderators of the two bodies since their adjournment; and it is very probable that, notwithstanding the great distance at which the two Assemblies will next convene, an interchange of delegates will take place before the close of their sessions next May,² which, initiating a fraternal intercourse, may lead ere long to a much desired re-union.

The question, therefore, may very pertinently be asked by

¹ Christian Observer, Jan. 25, 1841. The reason here assigned by the chief justice Gibson for his decision in the case is in accordance with his well-known political and revolutionary opinion, unfolded in an elaborate argument prepared by him and published in the American Quarterly, edited by Robert Walsh, Esq., of Philadelphia, for some years editor of the National Gazette, viz. that written constitutions, neither really nor rightfully, politically nor morally, can or should have power to control beyond the popular will, thus placing a minority at the mercy of a majority, without any guarantee of security for their rights whatever. This doctrine of irresponsible democracy may suit the tastes and interests of demagogues and despots, who can contrive to form and control public opinion for their purposes; but it is at war with all our American ideas of rational and political liberty, bounded and regulated by law, divine and human, and is especially opposed to all those ideas of constitutional liberty which have ever been characteristic of, and cherished in, the Presbyterian church, the zealous defender of responsible representation; in other words, an enlightened, virtuous republican government.

² This Article was prepared for the last January number. — Eds.

some : Why trace lines of difference probably to be obliterated by a restoration of ecclesiastical unity? It may suffice to reply, that doctrinal differences may or may not be essential; and since those only that are, afford justifiable grounds of separation, if it can be shown that there is in reality no radical antagonism between the views of Old and New school Presbyterians, it may conduce to co-operation and unity in the spirit of love to trace wherein they disagree, and thus relieve from misapprehensions tending to alienation and strife.

The intelligent Christian needs not to be told that theology and faith are by no means identical. The one is of man, the other of God. The one, the teachings of human science, the other, the power of a divine life. The writer of this Article has for many years been convinced that the doctrinal differences between Old and New school Presbyterians are wholly theological, by no means involving radical error in respect to vital points of faith. With such conviction he has more readily consented to the urgent request that has induced him to prepare this Article. It is his hope in doing so, not only to subserve the general cause and interest of theological science, but to promote the reciprocities and courtesies of Christian confidence and fraternal fellowship. In the nature of things, from the very constitution of the human mind, there ever have been, and must ever continue to be, different modes of apprehending the same facts, and different forms of phraseology in stating them. If the fact itself can be well and accurately stated, so as to be readily apprehended by faith, the statement, when made in the spirit of good will and brotherly love, must just as certainly conduce to agreement and union as do theological discussions too often to alienation and strife.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

The differences in doctrine between Old and New school Presbyterians may be stated, in general, in one word : they are differences in philosophy, not in faith. By philosophy

some understand the veritable *ratio rerum*. This, if we may so say, is God's own divine philosophy. It however is not always patent to the human understanding. The reasons or causes of natural phenomena are not made known by divine revelation. Observation, experiment, logical demonstration, careful analysis and investigation, leading by processes of induction to great general results and laws, are the appropriate and only proper means to be employed in the study of nature and in the acquirements of science. The explanation of phenomena; the tracing of effects to their proper causes; the classification of great general facts or truths; the arrangement of them in simple, harmonious system, for the better and easier apprehension; all are the work of the human reason or created intelligence. It is appropriate to the domain of science.

In matters of religion, it pertains to theology—the highest sphere of science—to state, explain, elucidate, and systematically arrange, in their just and proper relations, the facts or truths, whether revealed to faith or discoverable from nature, and hence called revealed or natural theology. With the latter, this Article has no concern, there being no distinguishing doctrines, characteristic of either school in this department of theological science. Their doctrinal differences relate to what may be called the theology of revelation. By this we do not mean to intimate that the truths or facts revealed in the sacred scriptures are given to us by God to be arranged by the church, or any teachers in it, into a system of consecutive propositions, or logical deductions, on metaphysical or philosophical principles or assumptions, to be made the tests and exponents of the faith essential to salvation. Creeds, confessions of faith, systems of theology, commentaries, may be of use within their proper sphere; but they have no authority divine, as theological dicta, however valuable they may be as aids for human teaching, exponents of according sentiment or belief in churches, text-books in the science of religion. A man may be thoroughly versed in them all, an accom-

plished expert, casuist, and doctor of theology, and yet be devoid of the faith which is unto salvation.

Faith concerns itself with the matters of fact reported or made known by infallible inspiration, to be believed, simply and exclusively on the ground of God's veracious testimony, whether communicated directly by himself or through divinely authorized messengers or witnesses. The facts, or what we otherwise call the truths, of revelation as apprehended by the human mind, affecting and influencing the sensibilities, controlling the conscience, and regulating the conduct, form the ground-work of religion, whether as developed in the experience and life of individuals, or as set forth in creeds and confessions of faith, or as specially modified and characterized by ritual forms and ecclesiastical and social prescriptions, tactics, customs, sympathy, and assimilation. The genuine developments of vital godliness through the faith of Christ, and the spurious forms and phases of Christianity so variously professed in the world and in the church, to the production and promotion of which moral philosophy and scientific theology have greatly contributed, are often so associated and intermingled, that it becomes difficult to trace the lines of difference between them. Every church has felt more or less of this difficulty, and found it utterly impracticable, in judging of the qualifications of membership, to separate between the true and the false, the precious and the vile, the wheat and the tares. Theology has concerned itself with these matters; but only to increase the perplexity and difficulty in forming a right judgment. How much of error there may be, and how far it may determine and shape the use and application of the great facts or truths revealed to faith, and lead to false ideas of Christianity, and false judgments of personal piety, and false professions of religion, the disclosures in the great day of final judgment will make known. Didactic and polemic theology both fail to furnish infallible tests of character, as well as infallible rules of faith and practice. Misinterpretations and misapplications of the

great facts and truths of scripture, dependent on, and determined often by, casual external circumstances, partial ignorance, false metaphysical philosophy, the imperfection of language, the influence of pride, prejudice, and various passions, popular opinion, state patronage, ecclesiastical authority, and other such like things, have rendered the theology of the schools, in the lapse of ages, an entangled net-work of subtle distinctions and contradictions. Yet, amid all the bald and naked facts, which form the marrow of the gospel, i. e. the great fundamental truths essential to the faith that saves, as they are stated and taught by God in the Bible, are believed by many simple, uneducated hearers and readers, with sanctifying and saving results. The Lord Christ rejoiced and gloried in this fact: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

It is not, therefore, out of place here to notice that the Presbyterian church, while in the ordination of its ministry it pledges them to its Confession of Faith, "as containing the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures," has never prescribed any doctrinal test or form to be applied and used in the admission of members into its communion; but always recognized that with the Session rests that responsibility, in the exercise of their best judgment, applying the rules and tests of Christian faith and practice as laid down in the sacred scriptures. It is the office of Christian charity, in all such exercise of judgment, to distinguish between the doctrines, traditions, and commandments of men, and the teachings of God; between mere knowledge of theology, and the faith that saves; and cheerfully to concede the largest liberty consistent with the cordial practical submission of the mind and will to the divine authoritative teaching of the word by the Spirit of God, in matters of essential faith. God forbid that the revived sectarianism of late years should ever induce the Presbyterian church in the United States of America to depart from this lofty catholic ground.

¹ Matt. xi. 25.

DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES.

We have deemed the foregoing preliminary and explanatory remarks necessary for the better understanding of the points of doctrinal difference between Old and New school Presbyterians, to the statement of which we now pass. In brief terms it may be remarked, that the differences are nearly allied with those discernible between the Scottish and New England theologies, as they have been sometimes styled. But the theology of New school Presbyterians cannot be identified with the latter, any more than with the former. It is especially characteristic of New school Presbyterian apprehensions and statements of the radical, essential truths of scripture, that they are those mainly of common sense, and less technical and scholastic than of either of the theologies just named. The "faith once delivered to the saints," i. e. the simple truth as it is in Jesus and revealed to faith, is regarded of more importance and value than as it is taught in systematic theology, whether as it was a quarter of a century ago at Andover, New Haven, or Princeton, by Drs. Woods, Taylor, Alexander, and Hodge, or by Drs. Edwards, Hopkins, Bellamy, Emmons, and other theologians of an earlier day. All have severally contributed their share in shaping what has been called New England theology, of whom President Edwards and the younger of the same name were better known and held in higher repute among Presbyterians than any after them. But if any name particularly deserves to be noticed as of higher authority, and exerting more influence, in giving form and character, not to say originating, New school views of truth, and especially on the subject of regeneration, it is that of the renowned Dr. John Witherspoon, who though a Scotchman by birth and education, became thoroughly American, and nobly and gloriously broke loose from the shackles of party and the tyranny of schools, to enjoy, commend, and establish liberty of thought and conscience, in both church and state. The pertinency of this remark will appear as we proceed.

The doctrinal differences between New and Old school Presbyterians relate mainly to the topics of human depravity, involving the imputation of guilt and original sin, regeneration, the agency of the Holy Spirit, the atonement of Christ, justification by faith, human ability, and the sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners.

IMPUTATION OF SIN.

The answers to the twenty-fifth and eighteenth questions of the Larger and Shorter Catechisms set forth the Presbyterian views of "the sinfulness" of human nature. It is described as comprising "the guilt of Adam's *first* sin," "the want of original righteousness," viz. "the righteousness in which he was created," "the corruption of man's whole nature, which is commonly called original sin," and "all actual transgressions." The use of the word "estate," which is by no means now, nor was in the days of the framers of the Catechisms, a perfect synonyme, or identical in meaning with the modern term "state," as well as the comprehensive range of the answer, we think, already indicates, that under the general idea of "the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell," was comprehended the totality of human corruption, or wickedness in the world from the first rebellious act of our first parents, throughout the entire generations of the race, in all time.

The word "guilt" was used by theological writers of a former day, to denote obnoxiousness to punishment, as contradistinguished from moral turpitude or personal demerit. Inasmuch as all the generations of the human race are subject to suffering and death, and inasmuch as "death," as the apostle Paul declares, "reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,"¹ the question of the derivation of moral corruption by his posterity has involved necessarily more or less of direct or implied theory, or attempts of philosophy at a satisfactory solution of the fact or phenomenon. Imputa-

¹ Rom. v. 14.

tion of guilt and original sin are accounted by Old school Presbyterians adequate *fontes solutionum* of whatever mystery there may be in the fact of moral corruption derived by the race from our first parents. They are properly theological theories, deserving respectful consideration for their antiquity and authority in the schools, but unknown to many who have believed to the saving of the soul. The doctrine of imputation is employed by Old school theologians to explain or account for the facts stated by Paul, that "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."¹ Their idea is, that the one act of Adam's disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit became, to all legal intents and purposes, the act of each and every one descending from him by ordinary generation. He is regarded as the federal or covenant head, the legal representative, acting by God's appointment for each one and all of his fallen race, so that the condemnation and punishment he deservedly incurred were justly, by the very same sentence, transferred to them. The disobedience of Adam was his crime, and rendered him obnoxious to death, its ordained punishment. According to the theological theory of the Old school, that crime was imputed to his posterity, and being so imputed, involved them in his guilt, and rendered them obnoxious to the same punishment, that is death.

"In imputation," say the Princeton reviewers, "there is first an ascription of something to those concerned; and secondly a determination to deal with them accordingly."² "To impute sin" they say, with Dr. John Owen, "is to lay it to the charge of any, and to deal with them according to the desert, i. e. punish them for it." "When Adam's sin is said to be imputed to his posterity, it is intended," say they, very explicitly, "that *his* sin is laid to their charge, and they are *punished* for it."³ New school Presbyterians, dispense with this and every other theory by which to explain the moral relationship of Adam and his posterity. They receive it as

¹ Rom. v. 18.

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² Bib. Repertory, II. 435.

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³ Ib.

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a fact divinely revealed. Preferring the language of common sense to theological technicalities, they are contented to say, that, as the result or in consequence of Adam's transgression, his posterity became mortal and morally corrupt. There is no difference between them, so far as their belief of the fact is concerned. Even the author of the treatise entitled "The Old and New schools," which has contributed much to give currency to mistaken opinions concerning the New school, says: "When therefore we say that the guilt of Adam's first sin was imputed to his posterity, the meaning is, not that there was between them and him such personal identity as that they really committed the same act, which is grossly absurd, but simply that God treats them *as if* they had committed it — they suffer all the consequences of his sin. *This* is precisely the doctrine of the Confession of Faith, and *in this sense* they 'sinned in him and fell with him.' This too, as we shall presently see, is the doctrine of the Bible."¹ The intelligent reader cannot fail to see that the disputes and differences here relate to what theologians call the federal headship of Adam, and to their attempts to explain his moral relationship to his posterity. Cognate and intimately connected with the theory of the imputation of guilt is that of original sin, which topics must be noticed as correlate in giving a full and faithful statement of the views of the different schools.

ORIGINAL SIN.

Such a statement, however, is attended with this serious difficulty, that, apart from the differences between New and Old school Presbyterians, theologians of the latter are not only far from being definite and perspicuous in their ideas and language, but actually differ among themselves. The phrase "Original Sin," occurs in the Confession of Faith, Chap. 6, Sec. 6, and in the answers to the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth questions of the Larger, and the eighteenth of the Shorter, Catechisms. It is quoted there as a popular form

¹ The Old and New Schools, etc., by Rev. N. L. Rice, D.D., pp. 21, 22.

of speech, current in the days of the Westminster Assembly, to designate the corruption of man's nature. In "The Confession of the Faith and Doctrine believed and professed by the Protestants of Scotland, exhibited to the Estates of the same in Parliament, etc., August, 1560, ratified and established in 1567, as the public and avowed Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland," *the act of our first parents in eating the forbidden fruit is stated, at that day, to have been "commonly called original sin."* In "Craig's Catechism," adopted and recommended by the General Assembly of the church of Scotland 1590, 1591, and 1592, "Original sin and natural corruption" are distinguished and affirmed to be *two "things which came to us by the fall of Adam from God."*² The confession of faith, adopted by both Old and New school Presbyterians, affirms that "*every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God,*"³ etc. The New school Presbyterian believes this to be strictly accurate according to the plain meaning of the words, holding that original sin, if the term needs to be used, is unmistakably reaffirmed in the confession, a transgression of the righteous law of God, and therefore voluntary on the part of a morally accountable creature. He does not, as did the Princeton reviewers, perplex himself with any theological theory of imputation of guilt, ascribing to one what belongs to another, by which to explain the confession as above quoted. When its advocates are themselves perfectly agreed as to what original sin exactly is, it will merit, and doubtless receive, stricter attention.

Augustine, to whose philosophy the Christian church is indebted for much of its didactic and polemic theology, explains original sin to consist in "an innate disposition derived from the voluntary transgression of the first man."

¹ See Art. 3 of that Confession.

² A Form of Examination before the Communion, questions 3 and 4.

³ Chap. VI. sec. 6.

He calls it "an inborn vice," and compares it to "an hereditary disease." The Manichees affirmed that there is an evil substance in man, of which God is the author. This he denied; for he would not make God the author of sin. But while denying that original sin is a *substance*, he attempted to explain it by calling it a *quality* of the affections, an evil accruing from the ancient sin, an accidental evil, as infirmity or weakness in the body is not a substance but a vitiation. His metaphysical subtilty, with whatever good intent employed against the philosophical and infidel emperor Julian, would to the generality of readers at this day be as unsatisfactory to their common sense as offensive to their modesty.¹ Turretin says that the phrase "original sin" was first introduced in the church by Augustine, in his controversy with the Pelagians, and being found a convenient form of speech for expressing the nature of the sin, was ever afterwards retained. The reader will find in the note below the rationale of its import² as stated by Turretin, who calls it "some inherent vice propagated from Adam to all his posterity, by natural generation."³

Different theologians of later date have expressed their views differently, explaining original sin to be "an inclination to evil," "a corrupt disposition," "a propensity to do wrong," "a depraved nature," "an hereditary tendency to sin." Zuingli called it "a disease, not sin;" as Thomas Aquinas, in his *Summa Theologiae*, had done. Whether original sin consisted in a habit, or was the result of the want of original righteousness after the fall, or the loss of

¹ See August. de Nupt. et Conc., I. 25. Comp. C. Jul. VI. 18.

² Ita vero dicitur, non ratione *originis primae*, quam habuit homo a Deo creatus, sed ratione *originis secundae*, quam habet a primo parente; tum ratione *principii sui*, quia est a peccato originante (viz. concupiscentia); tum ratione *modi propagandi* (viz. generationis naturalis), quia ab origine nobis inhaeret; tum ratione *effectorum suorum*, quia est origo peccatorum actualium. Tur. Inst., Tom. I. p. 569.

³ Vitium aliquod inhaerens, quod peccatum originale dicitur, quod ab Adamo ad omnes ipsius posteros naturali generatione ab eo oriundos propagetur. Tur. Inst., Tom I. p. 570.

harmony in the parts and powers of the moral creature man; whether it was a mere privation, and therefore not an evil *per se*; whether a *prava vis*, a causative power *sui generis*, of its own sort, like instinct in animals or the impulse of the passions and affections; whether this *prava vis* was their propension, rendered sinful by irregularity and excess; or whether it was a positive taint or *lues* consequent on the loss, and taking the place, of original righteousness, in which consisted the moral equilibrium of the soul; just as sickness is a disordered state of the body and its functions, arising from the loss of the equal temperament in which health consists, — were questions discussed with great subtilty in the schools; questions wholly of metaphysical theology, the discussion of which can never be shown to be essential to the faith which is unto salvation. Far distant be the day when such refined theological subtilties as those of Andradius and Gerhard and Chemnitius, and the doctors of the schools, shall be revived and made occasions of dispute and contention in the Presbyterian or any other Christian denomination.

The intelligent inquirer into the history of polemic and dogmatic theology will not fail to see that mere opinion and theory have much more to do with the differences on this subject than the simple belief of the facts as they are reported in the sacred scriptures. To the origin and development of these different opinions or theories the attempts, by various analogical illustrations, to explain these facts have greatly contributed. The Old school Presbyterian prefers the language of Luther, Calvin, Turretin, Stapfer, Edwards, and other renowned theologians, accepting their illustrative analogies and phraseology. The descent and development of original sin, in the successive generations of mankind, have been compared to the streams proceeding from a fountain; to pollution of blood in the parent, transmitting a taint or virus to the offspring, by the physical laws of reproduction; to original unity, evolved by seminal propagation; to the root, giving life and character to the growth

from it; to the sap, carried into the trunk and eliminated in the branches, and to other such like operations in nature. And it has been claimed that the very illustration of Christ himself, in which he avers, that the character of the fruit, whether good or evil, depends on that of the tree,¹ sanctions, if it be not itself, just such divine philosophy. The remark of the Saviour, however, is but the statement of a fact in plain, common-sense terms, viz. that according to men's principles of action will be their character and conduct. Grapes are not to be found on thorn-bushes, nor figs on thistles. "By their fruits ye shall know them." He is speaking of diversities of character and conduct among men, and not of the nature of original sin.

Analogies between moral or spiritual and natural things, must ever fail to convey ideas of exact identity. They can never lead to philosophical or correct logical definitions. For the things themselves are in their very nature radically different. The "*union* of representation in Adam" is a form of speech which has by some been regarded as involving the idea of personal identity. Old school theologians have found it difficult to determine exactly among themselves what is meant by calling Adam "a public person," "the federal head," "the representative of his posterity," as united to him by natural generation, whether by anticipation in the purpose of God, or *de facto*, by seminal propagation. The Princeton reviewers disavowed, so far as they were concerned, — and they assumed to be the defenders of Old school Presbyterianism, — that they held any philosophy or theory of imputation which involved "the notions of personal oneness, community in action, or transfer of moral character"; yet they did not deny that there have been those who "philosophized on this subject," and "taught a *mysterious union* of the race."²

This, if it be not altogether taking the same ground with New school Presbyterians, is so very near an approach to it, that practically we can see little or no difference. The lat-

¹ Matt. vii. 17, 18.

² Bib. Rep. II. p. 438.

ter disregard all attempts at philosophical explanation of the *quo modo* of the facts; and are contented to receive in simple faith the Bible statements of them. They believe that Adam, as the first and father of his race, became a sinner, and by his transgression, not only forfeited his own paradisaic life and estate, but subjected his posterity to the loss of the same, so that they are born into this world devoid of any righteousness of their own, or right of inheritance through any original or transmitted righteousness from Adam; are exposed and subjected to all the consequences of his first transgression, and through a natural bias thence arising incline to sin, and become sinners as soon as, in the language of Edwards, "they are capable of it." The reader is referred to the protest offered by the New school minority in the General Assembly, and recorded on their minutes in 1837,¹ which he will find in the margin below, and in which their views were tersely stated, not only in reference to orig-

¹ *DOCTRINAL VIEWS OF AMERICAN PRESBYTERIANS, from the Protest of 1837, re-adopted unanimously by the Auburn Convention, August 17, 1837.*

We protest, finally, because, in view of all the circumstances of the case, we feel that while we were prevented from uniting in the final vote with the majority in their testimony against error, for the reasons above stated, we owe it to ourselves, to our brethren, to the church, and to the world to declare and protest that it is not because we do, directly or indirectly, hold or countenance the errors stated. We are willing to bear our testimony in full against them, and now do so, when, without misapprehension and liability to have our vote misconstrued, we avow our real sentiments, and contrast them with the errors condemned, styling them, as we believe the true doctrine, in opposition to the erroneous doctrine condemned, as follows, viz.:

First Error. "That God would have prevented the existence of sin in our world, but was not able, without destroying the moral agency of man; or that, for aught that appears in the Bible to the contrary, sin is incidental to any wise moral system."

True Doctrine. God permitted the introduction of sin, not because he was unable to prevent it consistently with the moral freedom of his creatures, but for wise and benevolent reasons which he has not revealed.

Second Error. "That election to eternal life is founded on a foresight of faith and obedience."

True Doctrine. Election to eternal life is not founded on a foresight of faith and obedience, but is a sovereign act of God's mercy, whereby, according to the counsel of his own will, he has chosen some to salvation; "yet so as thereby neither is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or con-

inal sin, but to all the points on which they were charged by their Old school brethren as holding and teaching erroneous doctrines. The document is one of such historical value, as

tingency of second causes taken away, but rather established"; nor does this gracious purpose ever take effect independently of faith and a holy life.

Third Error. "That we have no more to do with the first sin of Adam than with the sins of any other parent."

True Doctrine. By a divine constitution, Adam was so the head and representative of the race, that, as a consequence of his transgression, all mankind become morally corrupt, and liable to death, temporal and eternal.

Fourth Error. "That infants come into the world as free from moral defilement as was Adam when he was created."

True Doctrine. Adam was created in the image of God, endowed with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Infants come into the world not only destitute of these, but with a nature inclined to evil, and only evil.

Fifth Error. "That infants sustain the same relation to the moral government of God in this world as brute animals, and that their sufferings and death are to be accounted for on the same principles as those of brutes, and not by any means to be considered as penal."

True Doctrine. Brute animals sustain no such relation to the moral government of God as does the human family. Infants are a part of the human family; and their sufferings and death are to be accounted for on the ground of their being involved in the general moral ruin of the race induced by the apostasy.

Sixth Error. "That there is no other original sin than the fact that all the posterity of Adam, though by nature innocent, will always begin to sin when they begin to exercise moral agency; that original sin does not include a sinful bias of the human mind, and a just exposure to penal suffering; and that there is no evidence in scripture that infants, in order to salvation, do need redemption by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost."

True Doctrine. Original sin is a natural bias to evil, resulting from the first apostasy, leading invariably and certainly to actual transgression. And all infants, as well as adults, in order to be saved, need redemption by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost.

Seventh Error. "That the doctrine of imputation, whether of the guilt of Adam's sin or of the righteousness of Christ, has no foundation in the word of God, and is both unjust and absurd."

True Doctrine. The sin of Adam is not imputed to his posterity in the sense of a literal transfer of personal qualities, acts, and demerit; but by reason of the sin of Adam, in his peculiar relation, the race are treated as if they had sinned. Nor is the righteousness of Christ imputed to his people in the sense of a literal transfer of personal qualities, acts, and merit; but by reason of his righteousness, in his peculiar relation, they are treated as if they were righteous.

Eighth Error. "That the sufferings and death of Christ were not truly vicarious and penal, but symbolical, governmental and instructive only."

True Doctrine. The sufferings and death of Christ were not symbolical, gov-

well as so pertinent to the design of this Article, as to render the presentation of it appropriate, if not in this statement necessary.

ernmental, and instructive only, but were truly vicarious, i. e. a substitute for the punishment due to transgressors; and while Christ did not suffer the literal penalty of the law, involving remorse of conscience and the pains of hell, he did offer a sacrifice which infinite wisdom saw to be a full equivalent. And by virtue of this atonement overtures of mercy are sincerely made to the race, and salvation secured to all who believe.

Ninth Error. "That the impenitent sinner is by nature, and independently of the influence or almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, in full possession of all the ability necessary to a full compliance with all the commands of God."

True Doctrine. While sinners have all the faculties necessary to a perfect moral agency and a just accountability, such is their love of sin and opposition to God and his law, that, independently of the renewing influence or almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, they never will comply with the commands of God.

Tenth Error. "That Christ does not intercede for the elect until after their regeneration."

True Doctrine. The intercession of Christ for the elect is previous as well as subsequent to their regeneration, as appears from the following scripture, viz. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

Eleventh Error. "That saving faith is not an effect of the operations of the Holy Spirit, but a mere rational belief of the truth or assent to the word of God."

True Doctrine. Saving faith is an intelligent and cordial assent to the testimony of God concerning his Son, implying reliance on Christ alone for pardon and eternal life; and in all cases it is an effect of the special operations of the Holy Spirit.

Twelfth Error. "That regeneration is the act of the sinner himself, and that it consists in a change of his governing purpose which he himself must produce, and which is the result, not of any direct influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart, but chiefly of a persuasive exhibition of the truth, analogous to the influence which one man exerts over the mind of another; or that regeneration is not an instantaneous act, but a progressive work."

True Doctrine. Regeneration is a radical change of heart, produced by the special operations of the Holy Spirit, "determining the sinner to that which is good," and is in all cases instantaneous.

Thirteenth Error. "That God has done all that *he can do* for the salvation of all men, and that man himself must do the rest."

True Doctrine. While repentance for sin and faith in Christ are indispensable to salvation, all who are saved are indebted from first to last to the grace and Spirit of God. And the reason that God does not save all, is not that he wants the power to do it, but that in his wisdom he does not see fit to exert that power farther than he actually does.

It is unnecessary to burden our pages with quotations, setting forth the views of those who were denounced as erroneous, because they did not express themselves in the technicalities of the Old school theology. It was done amply in the controversial publications current a quarter of a century ago. It may suffice to extract the following from the "Warning against error, adopted by the Presbytery of Detroit at their session at Northville, Michigan, Sept. 29th, 1847, and afterwards by the synod of Michigan at their session at Kalamazoo, Oct. 13th, 1847, and ordered to be published for the benefit of the churches under their care."¹ "The successive generations of the race," say the presbytery and synod, "are born, not holy, under a violated constitution, with no security for motive influences to induce right and holy choices, but with a *tendency to sin*. It is this tendency to sin, in this state of things, which our standards call corruption and original sin. It is not the moral depravity induced by each one's personal crime, but that selfish tendency induced through the loss of original righteousness, and the derangement of the

Fourteenth Error. "That God cannot exert such influence on the minds of men, as shall make it certain that they will choose and act in a particular manner, without impairing their moral agency."

True Doctrine. While the liberty of the will is not impaired, nor the established connection between means and end broken by any action of God on the mind, he can influence it according to his pleasure, and does effectually determine it to good in all cases of true conversion.

Fifteenth Error. "That the righteousness of Christ is not the sole ground of the sinner's acceptance with God; and that in no sense does the righteousness of Christ become ours."

True Doctrine. All believers are justified, not on the ground of personal merit, but solely on the ground of the obedience and death, or, in other words, the righteousness of Christ. And while that righteousness does not become theirs, in the sense of a literal transfer of personal qualities and merit; yet, from respect to it, God can and does treat them as if they were righteous.

Sixteenth Error. "That the reason why some differ from others in regard to their reception of the gospel is, that they make themselves to differ."

True Doctrine. While all such as reject the gospel of Christ do it not by coercion but freely, and all who embrace it do it not by coercion but freely, the reason why some differ from others is, that God has made them to differ.—Min. of Gen. Assem., 1837, pp. 484-486; New Digest, pp. 315-318.

¹ Warning against Error, p. 71.

primitive constitution by the sin of Adam. It would no doubt have been different had he obeyed; how, it is not for us to say. But as it is, we, through the fall of our first parents, come into being devoid of holiness, destitute of that state and tendency of mind in which they were created, and which inclined them to obedience, and naturally, therefore, begin our existence in a "sinful estate." "We mean, what our standards affirm, that in all we inherit from Adam there is no provision made for our holiness and salvation; but, on the contrary, it is morally certain we shall sin." A fuller statement on this subject renders it necessary to notice the differing views of Old and New school Presbyterians as to

The Nature of Moral Depravity, or the Corruption of our Moral Nature.

New school Presbyterians thought that their Old school brethren, in setting forth their views of original sin, regarded as the corruption of our moral nature, believed, and by their language and illustrations implied, that man's natural depravity, as a moral and accountable creature, is something, if not physical, so inwrought or involved in his constitutional nature as to be transmitted like any other corporeal faculty or quality, *lege procreationis* by "ordinary generation." Although this was denied, yet their language and modes of illustration led unavoidably to the inference, that moral corruption was believed by them to be some psychological peculiarity, property, or cause—something in the very constitution of the soul or mind—determining, by necessity of nature, to sin, and therefore itself sinful. This view New school Presbyterians could not reconcile with the fact, as affirmed by the Confession of Faith, that God is not the author of sin, nor with the nature of God's moral government, the freedom of the human will, and the accountability of the moral creature.

The Old school Presbyterians, on the other hand, charged their brethren who dissented from their theological ideas as to the nature of moral corruption, with denying "that Adam's posterity inherit from him a depraved nature," and

also "that there is any such thing as "a corrupted nature" distinct from *voluntary* acts.¹ The ground of controversy here lies in a *terra incognita*. New school Presbyterians care not to explore it, objecting to the vague, ill-defined use of language on the part of metaphysical theologians, and not to the scriptural statements of the facts. It is appropriate to metaphysics and philosophy to discuss such questions of theology, as whether moral corruption is an entity or a quality; whether it is a resultant of organization, or an element of being; whether it is developed by the same physical laws that regulate the procreation of the human species, or has its incipency in a generic state of mind, rendered morally certain by a tendency to evil, consequent on the sin and fall of our first parents; and whether selfishness be the sin of our nature; or, the lusts of the mind and the lusts of the flesh are characteristically different and reciprocally affect and stimulate each other. Less heat of controversy in such matters might conduce to clearer theological light. But who does not know that such inquiries are not essential to saving faith, and are eschewed by ninety-nine hundredths of spiritual-minded, simple-hearted Christians?

Were such phrases as "nature," "moral and total depravity," "corrupted nature," "corruption of our whole nature," "inherited depravity," "corrupt inclination," "sinful disposition," "evil propensity," "depraved heart," and such like, — so current as loose, convenient forms of speech, — always accurately defined, and carefully and perspicuously used, without varying shades or degrees of significance, the theological differences between New and Old school Presbyterians might soon be adjusted. To do this is not appropriate to this Article or its design. It is sufficient to remark that men's ideas of the nature of human depravity, moral corruption, a depraved nature, etc., will, and must be, mainly determined or regulated by their notions and definitions of sin. New school Presbyterians are satisfied with the scriptural definition, and that of the Larger and Shorter catechisms.

¹ Dr. Rice's *Old and New Schools*, p. 71.

The apostle John has accurately defined it. "Sin is the transgression of the law." "All unrighteousness is sin."¹ And Paul says, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." In exact accordance with this divinely inspired definition is that of the catechism: "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature."² The knowledge of sin by the law does not involve, directly or indirectly, the idea that simple existence is sinful; nor that sin is a property of man's created nature, physiologically or psychologically regarded; nor that sin is predicable of the faculties and constitutional nature of man, in themselves considered, irrespectively of their exercise; nor that it is the necessary result of any law of nature, physical or psychical, material or immaterial, which God has created or ordained. The author of it is a reasonable creature, a moral agent, whose will God has "endowed with that natural liberty, that," as the Confession of Faith³ affirms, "it is neither forced nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good or evil." "In this," says Dr. Witherspoon, "the sin of man originally consisted; and in this the nature of all sin, as such, doth still consist, viz. withdrawing the allegiance due to God, and refusing subjection to God."⁴

Believing this, however, the New school Presbyterian does not deny that, in loose, general terms, the rational creature, the moral agent, human beings, may be called sinful, and so characterized, as well as those acts and exercises of which this property or quality is more immediately and accurately predicable. The Old school Presbyterian, in charging him with making sin to consist exclusively in *actual transgression*, and with maintaining that "all moral corruption consists of voluntary acts or choices," both mistakes and misrepresents the meaning and sentiments of his brother. "All *unrighteousness* is sin," and unrighteousness may and does exist through the want and

¹ 1 John iii. 4; v. 17.² Larger Catechism, Q. 24.³ Confession of Faith, Chap. IX. sec. 1.⁴ Witherspoon's Works, I. 146.

failure, neglect or forgetting, to will and act as the law requires. Volitions and purposes, acts and exercises, of the moral agent, may secretly exist in the heart, known only to God and the individual's consciousness, which are never embodied in outward expression and deed. So the Saviour has taught, Matt. v. 24, 28. New school Presbyterians concede that, both by omission and commission, it is natural to fallen man to sin. But when required by their Old school Presbyterian brethren, as does Dr. Rice,¹ to adopt his metaphysical theology and technicalities, and — with “Dr. Owen and the old Calvinists, to speak of original or indwelling sin (moral corruption) as a *principle* or SOMETHING which has *the efficiency of cause*, and which exists in men *anterior to any acts performed by them*,” he demurs, and resists such a trespass on his liberty in Christ.

When required by proper authority, or when it may be necessary for the interests of truth, to employ language with metaphysical import, and precision in theological discussion, and to speak of sin as an *effect* related to its direct and efficient *cause*, he prefers, instead of the vague terms of “principle” or “SOMETHING” (?) to designate supreme selfishness, distinguishable from instinctive self-love, as the primary originating cause or source of all developments of moral corruption. He can trace the voluntary acts and exercises, of which he predicates sin, to the demands and control, or impulse, of a generic, governing purpose; or, to use the language of the catechism, “the chief end,” which being for self, and not “to glorify and enjoy God,” is itself a transgression of his law, and the fruitful cause of endless forms and manifestations of moral corruption. In so explaining his theological views, he feels that he conforms more closely to the teachings of the Bible and the Presbyterian standards than do his Old school brethren; and also that he is far less liable to be suspected of believing that moral depravity and sin are “something” physical, resulting from a necessity of nature, or from any cause whatever

¹ Old and New Schools, p. 73.

inconsistent with, and destructive of, the voluntary agency of a reasonable and moral creature, justly held responsible by God, in all his "thoughts, words, and deeds," perfectly to keep his commandments. That the Old school Presbyterian believes differently here, we will not affirm; for many of them deny that they accept the inferences others draw from their theological teachings. They certainly differ in the processes by which they arrive at their ultimate results in their analyses of moral corruption. The faith that saves cares not to penetrate the usages of metaphysical and philosophical theology. When Old school theologians will show — what they have thus far failed to do — *how sin* exists *in* a moral creature anterior to, and separate or distinguishable from, any or all volitions or voluntary exercises of intelligence and will, or actings of the passions and affections, then may they, with greater show of theological acumen, as well as aid to Christian charity, accuse their New school brethren with denying what, by such ill-defined and vague theological technicalities, they either do or design to teach about innate corruption, inherent depravity, a corrupted moral nature, a deep-rooted principle of depravity, and the like. Till this is done frankly and fully, the teachings of the Presbytery of Detroit and the Synod of Michigan on the subject must be deemed satisfactory by all who prefer the language of common sense to that of scholastic theology.

"In the language of common sense," say they, "men attribute to the moral being, whose general state of mind manifests itself in uniform choices and prevalent governing emotions and passions, the same character they do to these its manifestations. Both the general state of mind and its specific manifestations — as well in uniform, habitual choices as in occasional ascendant passions, affections, or propensities — are regarded as developments and attributes of character, which are to be predicated of the person or moral agent; strictly speaking, of the rational, responsible mind or soul in which they exist, either as habitudes, or as

acts or events, rather than of the specific faculties, susceptibilities, affections, or passions. This man and the other is called revengeful, malicious, lewd, lascivious, deceitful, covetous, avaricious, and the like, according to the ascendant passion, affection, propensity, or habit of mind, which determines his choice and conduct, and in so doing, develops his character. In the same way, we say of men in general that *they* are sinful; because of the manifestations of something wrong or sinful in the state of mind and heart, the passions, affections, habits, and purposes which determine their choices and conduct. So, too, we commonly speak of a 'sinful nature,' meaning those constitutional attributes, intellect, susceptibilities, and voluntary powers which in all the appropriate circumstances of man's being will only and uniformly be acted out or exercised in sin. The same moral quality by which we characterize the actings or choices of a moral being, we predicate, in ordinary style of speech, not only of the being himself, but also of that which determines him thus to choose and act. Hence it is common to speak of sinful dispositions, sinful affections, sinful words, sinful conduct, as sinful choices, not as sinful *per se*, i. e. in themselves, by a mere necessity of being, but as related to sinful choice, that is to say, the dispositions, affections, etc., influencing the sinful choices of sinful beings. The language of the sacred scriptures is in conformity with this usage. Thus we read of 'men of corrupt minds,' who evince their corruption or moral depravity by 'perverse disputings' and by 'resisting the truth'; also of 'the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,' and of 'corrupt words,' 'corrupt communication,' and 'corrupt doings;'¹ of the mind being 'corrupted from the simplicity of Christ;'¹ and of 'the corruption that is in the world through lust.'¹ A correct knowledge and careful discernment of the difference in the import of terms, when analogically or literally to be understood, would contribute

¹ Warning against Error, pp. 58-60.

greatly to allay the heat and violence of angry theological controversy.¹

REGENERATION.

From this statement of differing views as to the nature of moral corruption, we pass appropriately to that of regeneration. It is not necessary here to compass the whole ground of theological discussion and theories on this subject. The design of this Article restricts us to the differences between Old and New school Presbyterians as to its nature. Those who believe, with Dr. John Owen and the theologians of his day, that the essence of moral corruption is "something physical," or with Dr. Woods, in words much less perspicuous, "in the settled constitution of our nature," must, by a logical necessity, conceive regeneration to be something physical, or wrought, implanted, or settled in the constitution of the nature by the power of God. Dr. Owen says explicitly: "There is a real *physical* work of the Spirit on the souls of men, in their regeneration."² "There is not only a *moral* but a *physical* immediate operation of the Spirit, by his power and grace, or his powerful grace, upon the minds or souls of men in their regeneration."² Accordingly he understood and used the phrases "new creature," "new creation," "created anew," in their strict, literal sense, and not either metaphorically or analogically, to denote resemblance in a moral point of view. He attributed it to the same Omnipotence, which is exerted in every department of the material creation. Hence, to deny the reality and necessity of the intervention of this divine Omnipotence in regeneration he accounted a fatal heresy. So, too, averred Old school Presbyterians.

His theory as to the nature of life, and his want of discrimination in the use of terms, whether in their literal or analogical import, necessarily, by logical sequence, led him

¹ See Brown's Treatise on Divine Analogy, — the author of "The Procedure, Extent, and Limits of the Human Understanding."

² Owen on the Spirit, Book III. chap. v. pp. 307, 311.

into confused ideas¹ as to the nature of regeneration. The theory of the eminent German chemist and physiologist of that period, Dr. Geo. Ernest Stahl, as to the nature of life, had not only influenced extensively medical practice, but was well received among theologians. It made all the vital functions and phenomena in man to depend on the absolute dominion of mind or the will over the body. The soul, in fact, was regarded as the vital force, or cause of all vital actions in the body. This idea was readily and naturally adopted by Dr. Owen and theologians of his day very extensively for the illustration of spiritual life. The life of the soul of the moral creature man, beginning in or with regeneration by the power of God, was referred to the implanting in the mind, heart, or soul a new principle, as the proximate and efficient cause of holy sensibilities and spiritual actions constituting the life of the new creature, of the sinner born again. This "principle of holiness," created by the physical omnipotence of God, according to this theory of regeneration, when implanted in the mind and heart, formed the life of the soul, just as the soul itself was believed to be the life of the body. New school Presbyterians cannot understand this life-theory of regeneration, as we take the liberty to call it, according as Old school Presbyterians employ it for illustration, in any other light,

¹ It is with some deference that we speak thus derogatively of one for whom, in common with many Old school Presbyterians, the writer entertains a high respect; but the cause of truth requires it. His style and want of precision of thought render his writings often wearisome, though enriched with much valuable erudition and breathings of ardent piety. The truth of the following anecdote happens to be known to the writer, having received it from a very dear friend of early days, eye and ear witness of the scene, viz. the lamented M. Bruen. It is given in justification of the judgment above expressed. The late justly renowned Dr. J. M. Mason, than whom there were none in his day superior in theological lore and force, was engaged in conversation with the equally renowned Robert Hall of England on theological questions. The merits of Dr. Owen passing under review, of whom the latter spoke rather disparagingly, Dr. Mason remarked: "Well Mr. Hall, whatever you may think of Dr. Owen as a theologian, you must confess that he is very profound, and dives deep." "Yes," replied he, very promptly in his wit, "he does indeed dive deep, but brings up a continent of mud."

than as intended to teach that the *very same* sort of physical omnipotence by which God raises a dead body to life, is exerted and requisite to infuse spiritual life into the dead sinner by the work of regeneration.

Dr. Owen denounces those who deny the literal reality of such an effort of physical omnipotence in creating the sinner anew in Christ Jesus, as utterly subverting "all the glory of God's grace." To say that such expressions as "quicken," "alive to God," and the like, are metaphorical, is, in his declared opinion, equivalent with making the whole gospel a metaphor; and so have some zealous Old school Presbyterians judged and expressed themselves.

"If," says he, "there be not an impotency in us by nature unto all acts of spiritual life, like that which is in a dead man unto the acts of life natural; if there be not an *alike* power of God required unto our deliverance from that condition, and the working in us a principle of spiritual obedience, as is required unto the raising of him that is dead, they may as well say that the scripture speaks not truly as that it speaks metaphorically,"¹ We see not how any other idea could have been intended by such language, than that the *same sort of physical omnipotence* which gives vitality to material organisms, is both real and necessary in imparting spiritual life to the sinner in regeneration. This is the theology of Old school Presbyterians on the subject, who talk of implanting and infusing into the soul a principle of spiritual life². But that the New school Presbyterian accounts philosophic theory, and a very fallacious one also.

¹ Owen on the Spirit, Book III. chap. v. p. 329.

² Dr. Rice defines mind to be "a *substance* which thinks, feels, and determines." These he regards as its "properties" (acuter metaphysicians prefer to call them its *acts*, or, as he does elsewhere himself, *exercises*). "Of the *intimate nature* of mind we know nothing. This is equally true of matter. Then if we know nothing of the physical nature of mind, except that it is adapted to produce thought, feeling, and choice, it is reasonable to *suppose* that we can know nothing of its moral nature, except that it gives a certain character, good or bad, to moral conduct. But it is as rational to deny that the mind possesses a physical nature adapted to thinking, feeling, and choosing, as to deny that it

The difference between them here lies within a very narrow compass. It is a difference in the use and interpretation of language; the Old school Presbyterians using terms in their literal signification, while the New school Presbyterians understand them in a figurative or tropical sense as metaphors, or, more correctly and properly explained, as analogically employed. This analogical import of language grows necessarily out of the fact that God has so constituted us as intelligent creatures, comprising, as Paul says, "soul, spirit, and body," that we have no direct intuition of things spiritual and divine, but must derive our knowledge of them from or through some revelation; and even the divine revelation of things spiritual, beyond the sphere of human sense and consciousness, "does not exhibit to us any direct view or knowledge of the real, *true nature* of things divine;

possesses a moral nature adapted to give character to its exercises." "There is in every moral agent a moral nature, distinct from his acts, and which gives to them their character, or which causes him to act as he does."

"This doctrine throws much light, not only upon the necessity but upon the nature of regeneration. For if there is in man what our standards call original sin, or a corrupted nature, regeneration, which is the beginning of sanctification in the heart, and the cause of the first obedience in life, must be the removal by the Holy Spirit of this corrupted nature, at least in part, and the implantation of a new nature or disposition, which will lead to obedience to God's law."—*Old and New Schools*, pp. 82–84. Yet Dr. Rice a little further on, seems to admit that such language must be taken only in its analogical import, and not literally; for he qualifies the above remark, repeating "There is in regeneration a new creation, not indeed of any physical faculty, but of a new heart or moral disposition; so that the regenerated man is in his moral character as really a new creature, as he would be in his physical character if the natural powers of his mind were radically changed."—*Idem*.

The New school Presbyterian would find no difficulty in admitting the reality or truth of such a change thus analogically expressed, that is, by way of resemblance; but inasmuch as Dr. Rice and Old school Presbyterians have not even accurately explained in precise terms, in any definition, what they mean by the words "heart" and "moral disposition," the New school Presbyterian would prefer to express himself more explicitly and perspicuously, as not intending to intimate that the great and radical change which the Spirit of God produces in the sinner when he believes and becomes morally a new man, metaphorically a new creature, although really an effect secured by the "mighty power of God," is accomplished by the same sort of divine omnipotence which is exerted in creation, literally speaking.

yet it lays before us such lively resemblances of them, that from thence we *necessarily infer* the existence of their substance and *correspondent realities*; and that *these* become the subject of our *faith* and our *hope*. This is *seeing* them as the apostle speaks, *through a glass darkly.*"¹ Our knowledge, in other words, of things abstract and spiritual, beyond the observation and sphere of our senses, is attained by reflection, by means or through the aid of ideas obtained originally through the senses, which ideas the mind employs as representative of such things or truths, spiritual and divine, because of some assumed resemblance or analogical similarity between them. This being the fact, there should, therefore, ever be great care, courtesy, and forbearance, as well as the utmost caution and precision in the use of language by which we communicate our ideas to each other, that in matters of doubt, difference, and difficulty of apprehension we do not misapprehend or misrepresent each other.

The intimate nature of things or truths, spiritual or divine, which theology undertakes to discuss and teach, can never, by any direct process of intuition or consciousness or philosophical theorizing, be perfectly understood by us. We may aid each other by a comparison of ideas; but beyond the fact or truth affirmed and revealed to us by God in the use of human language, it is rash, presumptuous, dogmatical, tyrannical, to adventure and require unqualified assent. It is substituting human philosophy for the truth of God; and disputes here must partake more of the logomachy of theologians and the persecuting spirit of dogmatic bigots than the charity of the gospel.

The Old school Presbyterian may employ his life-theory, if he chooses, for the expression of his ideas of regeneration and illustration of its nature, exercising his liberty in this matter. But when he demands that his New school brother shall receive the terms of his moral and metaphysical philosophy, of necessity having but an analogical import, in their strict literal meaning, and as the *ipsissima dicta* of God him-

¹ Brown's Divine Analogy, p. 58.

self, he should be reminded that he trespasses upon the liberty of Christ's house, the law of love, and becomes an usurper of authority never conceded to him either by God or his brethren. The persecuting tyranny of the Roman Catholic church, which has required the Saviour's metaphorical language in the eucharist, "this bread is my body," etc. to be understood as literally declaring it to be "his body, soul, and deity," is only a more glaring exhibition of the dangerous excess to which men may run when they undertake to interpolate or involve their theories and philosophy in the plain, common-sense language of the Bible.

There have ever been different attempts among theologians to explain the nature of regeneration. New England divines have had their "taste-theory." Dr. Dwight has said "This change of heart consists in a *relish* for spiritual objects, communicated to it by the power of God,"¹ His successors at New Haven, have had their modes of explaining the fact, by stating and unfolding the transforming influence on character exerted by a change of the ruling purpose, or chief controlling end. Disputes and differences have prevailed among Congregationalists, as well as among Presbyterians, in relation to the metaphysics of regeneration. The writings of Drs. Hopkins, Bellamy, Emmons, Dwight, Woods, Taylor, and other New England divines, have had more or less influence among both Old and New school Presbyterians. But few, if any, have had greater authority, or done more to put a distinctive stamp upon the theological views of New school Presbyterians, on the subject of regeneration especially, than the renowned, learned, and patriotic Dr. John Witherspoon, President of Princeton College, and a member of Congress and signer of the Declaration of Independence.

"I am sensible," says he, "that regeneration or the new birth is a subject at present very unfashionable, or at least, a style of language which hath gone very much into desuetude."² Of the Saviour's remark to Nicodemus on the subject, he says: "It deserves the serious attention of every

¹ Dwight's Theology, p. 418.

² Witherspoon's Works, I. 97.

Christian, that, as this declaration was made by our Saviour in a very solemn manner, and by a very peculiar metaphor, so this is not the single passage in which the same metaphor is used.”¹ The expressions “new creature,” “workmanship,” “created in Christ Jesus unto good works,” and similar, he regarded also as metaphorical, remarking, “as I would not willingly strain the metaphor, and draw from it any uncertain conclusion, so it is no part of my design to run it out into any extraordinary length.”² Having noticed various comparisons used in the sacred scriptures in referring to it, he says: “It appears that regeneration, repentance, conversion, or call it what you will, is a very great change from *the state* in which every man comes into the world.”³ Noticing various partial changes which take place in men’s characters from different causes, he groups all under one generic class, and remarks: “There must always be some governing principle which, properly speaking, constitutes character.”⁴ Of the true change of character, entire and universal, which begins in regeneration, he says: “it may be fully comprehended in the three following things, *giving a new direction* to the understanding, the will, and the affections.” “As therefore the change he infers is properly of a moral or spiritual nature, it seems to me properly and directly to consist in these two things, 1st, that our supreme and chief end be to serve and glorify God, and that every other aim be subordinate to this. 2nd, That the soul rest in God as its chief happiness, and habitually prefer his favor to every other enjoyment.”⁵ “Till this be wrought, the person is in sin, and can do nothing but sin. The reason of this is very plain; that the supreme and governing motive of all his actions is wrong, and therefore every one of them must be so. Upon the whole I suppose, if they were to *explain* themselves *fully*, this is chiefly meant by those who insist that there is an essential difference between special and common grace.”⁶

¹ Witherspoon’s Works, I. 100.

² *Ib.* p. 101.

³ Witherspoon’s Works, I. 103.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 112.

⁵ Witherspoon’s Works, I. 145.

⁶ *Ib.* p. 176.

In this view of the nature of regeneration Dr. Witherspoon confines himself within the range of human consciousness; he adventures not back of it, into the *terra incognita* of the essential or intimate nature of the soul or spirit of man which speculative philosophic theology has attempted to penetrate. In this he stands a fair representative of the great body of New school Presbyterians.

Neither the Confession of Faith, nor the Catechisms, Larger or Shorter, define regeneration. Whatever is to be found in them relative to its metaphysical nature is contained in the chapter of the former and the answers of the latter on the subject of Effectual Calling. Dr. Witherspoon does but develop the ideas therein expressed, by aid of the answer to the first question of the Catechisms, viz. "What is the chief end of man." His illustration, so far as the metaphysics of regeneration are concerned, differs widely from "the life-theory" of Dr. Owen, and may be called that of "the generic purpose." Dr. Taylor and the New Haven theologians, whose views on the subject greatly alarmed many Old school Presbyterians, might have appealed with great force to this renowned father of the Presbyterian church, if not as authority, yet by his plain, common-sense illustrations, taken from the range of human consciousness and expressed often in the language of the Catechisms, as sanctioning similar ideas, not to say identical, with those much more extensively, carefully, and metaphysically elaborated in the Spectator's review of "Dr. Spring on the Means of Regeneration."

THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S AGENCY.

If regeneration be a *new creation*, in the literal sense of the terms, then the agency of the Holy Spirit—which both Old and New school Presbyterians admit to be necessary to a radical change of heart and of moral character—must be that of his physical omnipotence. This many of the former, along with Dr. Owen, believe and declare; yet a different style of speech is preferred by others, shall we say more astute theologians among them. They talk of a "*direct*,"

“*immediate*” agency of the Spirit in the work of regeneration ; expressions employed to intimate the idea that it is without instrumentality. But as the Bible undeniably teaches that God “of his own will begat us with the word of truth,”¹ they themselves, in rather awkward and infelicitous terms, saying, “we are far, however, from denying that in regeneration the Holy Spirit operates *in connection with the truth.*”² How in connection ? whether by mere juxta-position, or as “over, above, and beyond the truth,” — favorite phrases with some, — or, plainly and frankly, by means of the truth ? The answer to this question would not be so embarrassing as it is to the Old school Presbyterian, if he did not believe the agency of the Spirit to be other than *through*, that is *by means* of, the truth. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit, and is so called by the apostle. The New school Presbyterian accordingly believes it to be appropriately and fitly the instrument of his mighty power. He looks for and apprehends the presence and aid of the Spirit — his agency in renewing, sanctifying, enlightening, comforting, etc. — just as he consciously accepts, yields unto, confides in, and does what God speaks to his mind, heart, will, and conscience in his holy word. How the Holy Spirit’s agency “makes the word effectual” in him, or in one and not in another, is a question, not of faith, but philosophy with which he will not perplex himself. He knows, both from the testimony of the scriptures, and as confirmed by his own experience, that “the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword,”⁴ etc. ; also that “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations⁵ (vain reasonings), and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of Christ, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”⁶

The truths or facts revealed and reported to us in the

¹ James i. 13.

² Dr. Rice’s Old and New Schools, p. 87.

³ Eph. vi. 17.

⁴ Heb. iv. 11.

⁵ Λογισμοίς, vain sophisms of philosophy

⁶ 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

sacred scriptures originally by the miraculous inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are the means of his divine and gracious agency which he employs to produce faith in us, as Dr. Witherspoon says, "regeneration, repentance, conversion, or call it what you will." The apostle Paul regarded himself, in and by his teaching and preaching the great truths of the gospel, a subordinate instrumentality employed by the Holy Spirit in the work of saving sinners. "In Christ Jesus," says he, "I have begotten you *through the gospel*";¹ and sanctification, commenced in regeneration, as we learn from the Saviour's prayer, is carried on by the same instrumentality. "Sanctify them *through thy truth*; thy word is truth."² Hence the scriptures uniformly represent that faith, from its very incipiency to the end of this mortal life, indicates both the agency of the Holy Spirit and the degree of its power in the mind and heart. Faith is the cordial belief of the truth on our part,—the yielding to, and relying of the whole heart upon the teachings or testimony of the Spirit in the word of God. The fact of faith being the means of that agency of the Spirit brings his operations in us within the range of our consciousness. For the instrumentality of that agency—the truth as it is in Jesus, of which the mind and heart takes cognizance—is adapted to move, excite, direct, regulate, and control the rational sensitive nature of the moral creature man. Hence the apostle Paul utterly rejects all ritual, tactual appliances of the ceremonial law, and yokes of bondage imposed by man, as vehicles of the Spirit's agency. He installs faith as the great and efficacious means through which personal holiness—all that is appropriate and of value in the character of the renovated man—is to be developed. "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but *faith which worketh by love*."³ This love is itself holiness, and its possession and directing and determining power, renders us "partakers of the divine nature." For, "God is love,"⁴ and "his divine power hath given to us *all things*

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 15.² John xvii. 17.³ 1 Gal. v. 6.⁴ 1 John iv. 8.

that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue ; whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious *promises*, that *by these* ye might be *partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."¹ In exact accordance with this blessed and saving office of faith — the effect and index of the Spirit's agency in our minds and hearts — the token of his abode with us and power in us, the apostle Peter declared before the synod at Jerusalem, when speaking of God's "giving the Holy Ghost" to the Gentiles, that his renewing and sanctifying energy was exerted through faith, — "purifying their hearts through faith."² And long after, in addressing "the strangers scattered" in Gentile lands, he appealed to their own conscious experience, as having been renewed by the Spirit through their belief of the truth, and urged to increased "zeal and activity in the cultivation and manifestation of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." "Seeing," says he, "ye have purified your souls in obeying³ the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren ; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently, *being born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever."⁴

The conscious experience of every Christian certifies to him that there is no other way to "overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil." If he looks for an agency of the Spirit to save him, lying back of and beyond the sphere of his own conscious exercise of faith in Jesus Christ, of hope toward God, it is a thing of which he has no direct cognizance and cannot with the utmost efforts of his philosophy explore ; and he therefore may become the dupe of his own deceitful heart, through false inferences, mystical, perplexing, bewildering, distracting, or fanatical and foolish, like the

¹ 2 Pet. i. 3, 4.

² Acts xv. 8, 9.

³ ἐν τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας, by affording willing ears to the truth, a periphrasis for faith.

⁴ 1 Pet. i. 22, 23.

pagans that sought the afflatus or furor of their inspiring god. The apostle John's testimony on the subject is in exact accordance with that of Paul and of Peter. "Who-soever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."¹ All here are in perfect harmony.

The agency of the Spirit is not physical, not literally creative, but in perfect consistency with man's free moral agency as a rational, accountable creature, held rightfully under obligations of obedience to the law of God. It is such as in its nature may be, and often is, resisted; and, exerting its power through the truth, becomes cognizable by us through our consciousness, according as we believe or resist what the Spirit teaches. The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father, Christ says, "will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."² "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak."³ Whatever excitement of the affections and imaginations, impelling to action, is not produced through the truth, and cannot, as to its causes, be apprehended by the rational mind as the legitimate results of truth believed, may be set down to the account of sympathy, superstition, disease, a disordered state of the stomach and nervous system, and such like, but not to the Spirit of God, as its author. For he is the Comforter, and his office is to minister light, conviction, reproof, comfort, joy, peace, holiness, and salvation to his moral agents through their belief of the truth.

While the agency of the Spirit in the order of nature must of necessity precede the action of the sinner, and is prior to, and the efficient cause of, the change which occurs in his regeneration, yet that change does not actually take place, that is, the sinner is not *de facto* changed, so as to be rightly and truly called, metaphorically or logically, "a new

¹ 1 John v. 4.² John xiv. 26.³ John xvi. 13.

creature" in Christ Jesus, a sinner "born again," unless and until, with his own free will and consent, he yields to, and concurs with the blessed divine Spirit, who is seeking to turn him to God from the error of his ways, and translate him from the kingdom of darkness into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. His office is not only thus to change the heart and character and state of the lost and ruined sinner that believes to the saving of his soul, but ever thereafter to abide with, watch over, keep, sanctify, and bring unto everlasting life those who commit themselves to his teaching and care, knowing in whom they have believed. But in the very nature of things, from the instant in which the sinner is born again and passes from death to life, there must be the concurrence or combination of the agency of the free moral agent man with the agency of the Holy Spirit of God. He that first subdued the rebel soul, and brought it to the feet of Jesus, will ever thereafter take care of those "who first trusted in Christ, in whom after that they heard the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation, and after that they believed, were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."¹ They are just as really dependent on the Spirit's grace and sanctifying care after the commencement of their new life as they ever were in the days of their unregeneracy; for without Christ we can do nothing. But while "we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness through faith,"² "we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."³ Such, as far as we have ever understood them, are the views of New school Presbyterians on the subject of the saving agency of the Holy Spirit of God.

If Old school Presbyterians do not believe that the agency of the Spirit in regeneration is physical, like that of his physical omnipotence in creation, they have failed to make themselves understood. We confess ourselves utterly un-

¹ Eph. i. 12-14.² Gal. v. 5.³ 1 Pet. i. 5.

able to get any other idea from such language as this : “ the *formal efficiency* of the Spirit, indeed, in the putting forth the exceeding greatness of his power in our *quickenings*, is no *otherwise* to be comprehended by us than *any other creating act* of divine power.”¹ Dr. Rice, the exponent of Old school views, insists upon there being “ a moral nature or disposition, distinct and anterior to its acts,” produced, of course, by a *new creation*,² “ so that the regenerated man is, in his moral character, as really a new creature as he would be in his physical character, if the natural powers of his mind were radically changed.”³ If, in understanding such language as above stated, the New school Presbyterian does the Old injustice, it is what the Old does the New by charging him with believing and teaching, according to his views, that the agency of the Spirit is *wholly* that of moral suasion.

This phrase was used by Dr. Owen and others to denote the influence which one human mind can and does exert, by instruction, argument, and eloquence, upon another. The New school Presbyterian believes that the moral suasion of the Spirit of God — although the phrase is seldom used by him — which, it cannot be denied, he has exerted by the truths revealed in the Bible, and enforced by exhortations, remonstrances, appeals, motives, and considerations of varied character therein contained, is just as much more mighty, as *God employs them* in applying them to men’s minds, hearts, and consciences, and gives them force and efficiency, than anything man can do by *his* moral suasion, as the omnipotence of God exceeds the power of man. In so doing he is far from admitting, and utterly denies, what is charged upon him by Old school Presbyterians, that the Spirit’s agency, in the regeneration or conversion of the sinner, is merely *objective*, consisting only in the presentation of truth before the mind — first by originally inspiring the scriptures, and second by the preaching of the gospel.

¹ Owen on the Spirit, Book III. chap. 1. p. 225.

² Old and New Schools, p. 89.

³ *Ib.* p. 84, 85.

The divine, miraculous inspiration of the sacred scriptures, as matter of fact, he believes and teaches. But as to *how* this inspiration was accomplished, any further than as they themselves have declared it to be, in such way as to make God responsible for the truth to be received by faith, he does not philosophize or speculate. A "thus saith the Lord" is sufficient for his faith, by whatever process or in whatever way the Spirit of God may have first spoken or revealed the truth, and employed the minds, words, and pens of prophets and apostles to deliver them to their fellow men. Theories as to the nature and processes of justification, are accomplishing much evil, and subverting the popular respect for the truth and authority of the word of God, as a standard of appeal in all matters of faith and practice. Some of them are but disguised infidelity—the kiss of Judas in the betrayal of his Master.

He that at first made known his will, whether by dreams, visions, oral communication, prophetic inspiration, assisting memory, directing thought, or in whatever way he chose, and threw into the minds of prophets, apostles, and holy men of old the truths he designed and moved them to declare to others, in intelligible terms, of ordinary or excited speech, is just as able to make use of the same, and give them his own living potency at this day, to sway and sanctify and save them that believe, so as to be "the author and finisher of our faith." New school Presbyterians believe that no created mind can ever use the word of God with the efficacy and power which "the Spirit, who searcheth all things, yea even the deep things of God," can alone give it, when he is pleased to make it his two-edged sword. Their prayers, public and private, as well as their teaching, preaching, and the publications they have put forth, prove their conviction that the clearest and most vivid presentation of the truth which man can present, cannot alone turn the sinner to God and renovate his heart.

"It is the province of the Spirit of God, and his office as provided for in the gracious scheme of redemption through

Jesus Christ." says the Synod of Michigan and Presbytery of Detroit, "to help our infirmities, to come in with the aid of *his* motive power, to induce us to renounce our selfishness, and make choice of God and holiness. If left to himself, without the Spirit's aid, as provided for by the scheme of redemption, no sinner would ever repent and turn to God, or fly for refuge to Jesus Christ." "In what way precisely it is that the Spirit gives energy to the truth and renders it efficient, so that he becomes the author or cause of the sinner's regeneration, it is in vain for us to inquire." "The fact of his agency is asserted in the scriptures, and that is enough for our faith;"¹

HUMAN ABILITY.

We pass, naturally in order, from the consideration of the nature of the Spirit's agency to that of the sinner's ability. It has been a main and prominent point of difference between Old and New school Presbyterians. To deny man's free-agency, and regard him literally as dead and destitute of all ability as a block of marble or wood till a new life is created within him, is in keeping with the theory of the Spirit's agency in regeneration being that of physical omnipotence. The language of Old school Presbyterians on this subject has led many to believe that the inability they predicate of the unrenewed sinner is of this nature. For many of the most zealous among them have utterly condemned and denounced the distinction made by theologians of past and present times, between natural and moral ability. Among both Old and New school Presbyterians, however, at this day, the distinction is acknowledged; and far less of discussion and dissension, for some ten years past and more, has prevailed upon the subject. The terms "natural" and "moral ability" are by no means of as frequent occurrence. The distinction is one that exists in the very nature of things; and though not in metaphysical terms expressed, is made by all classes of persons. Dr. Wither-

¹ Warning against Error, pp. 77, 79.

spoon expressed his strong desire that his hearers would consider it. "O that you would but consider what sort of inability you were under to keep the commandments of God. Is it *natural*, or is it *moral*? Is it really want of *ability*, or want of *will*?"¹ Neither New school nor Old school Presbyterians deny the fact of men's natural and total depravity in their unconverted state. Both believe that the sinner's dependence on God for his aid is such that without it he can do nothing morally good, nor even exercise aright any of the functions of his constitutional nature. Neither assume that by the sin and fall of Adam the human soul or mind was deprived of any faculty essential or appropriate to man as a free moral agent. However the exercise of them may be impeded and frustrated by reason of depravity, both believe that the obligations to obedience have not been impaired, and that whatever may be the sinner's inability, it is sinful and inexcusable. Thus far there is no difference between them. Their preaching and exhortations are much the same, proceeding on the assumption that their hearers are not devoid of all ability to comply with the terms of the gospel. It is only when they attempt theological explanations that they are found at variance.

The incompatibility of two diametrically different states of mind, or the impossibility of two antagonistic choices or volitions, existing together at the same instant, are facts which should never be lost sight of by those who would correctly interpret the ordinary, common-sense language of men. There are certain things which, in their very nature, it is impossible for a finite creature to do, as, for example, to know all things, to put forth the force of Omnipotence, to transfer itself into ubiquity, etc. There are absolute limitations of finite power in the creature, who is infinitely removed from that of the Creator. There are some things too which transcend the highest capacities of created intelligence. There are other things which can be done by one class of creatures and not by another. Capacities or abil-

¹ Witherspoon's Works, I. 215.

ities vary endlessly. The human mind cannot by the eye, unaided by telescopic and microscopic powers, analyze the nebular universes, or discern the feathers on the wings of a butterfly. By instrumentalities we can greatly extend the reach of our natural capacities, and become able to accomplish what otherwise would be impossible, as is well understood in science and the arts, by the use and combination of the mechanical powers, and of the forces of heat, steam, electricity, etc. To say that what man cannot do without such instrumental aids he cannot do with them, would be to contradict universal observation and experience.

A man has no capacity or power, like the bird of passage, to cross the ocean; but by ship or steamer he can. In certain relations we have ability which in others we have not. Our natural capacities may fail altogether in one and be surprisingly extended in another set of circumstances. Exercise, education, science, skill, enable us to accomplish wonders. Why then should it be denied that men's natural capacities in relation to actions of a moral nature may also, by appropriate aid, be rendered effectual to do what otherwise would have been impracticable?

Both Old and New school Presbyterians say that independently or without the aid of the Holy Spirit, the natural man — man in the exercise merely of his own natural capacities — never *will* comply with the commands of God. But this is a vague generality. To be absolutely true, it must mean *perfect* obedience. For it is obvious that it is one thing to obey the whole moral law, all the commandments of God *perfectly*, and another to do imperfectly this or that which God requires. The law says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might,"¹ and "thy neighbor as thyself."² These, as the Saviour teaches, form the sum total of its requirements.

Adam was endowed with capacities adequate to this; and was placed in circumstances favorable and conducing to

¹ Deut. vi. 5.

² Lev. xix. 18.

it. But the tempter interposed his motive influence to alienate him from his obedience to God, He succeeded in changing the state of his mind and heart, by overcoming his ruling purpose, as directed by the love of God. He exchanged his confidence in God, by which he remained loyal and true to God, for that in his wife and the tempter; taking and believing their counsel in preference to the divine command. The change was instantaneous. From love and devotion to God, the state of his mind became that of alienation and antagonism to his supreme authority. By that very fact, perfect obedience became forever just as absolutely impossible as it is to identify failure and perfection. His offspring came into being in relations and under circumstances and motive influences that, from the earliest period of their moral agency, embarrassed, disinclined, and prevented them from exercising their natural capacities in obedience to God. It is a matter of very little practical moment whether we say they will not or they cannot perfectly keep the commandments of God, under the circumstances and in the relations in which they came into being. Left to themselves in their natural condition and relations, it is morally certain they will sin. What they may or can be brought to do through the agency of the Spirit of God and a change of relations is a very different question. Related to Adam and the original moral constitution with him, there is no redemption, no recovery, no means of restoration and salvation for them. They succeed to an estate of moral degradation, corruption, and ruin. But through Christ, the second Adam, provision has been made for redemption and recovery from corruption and ruin. He has secured an agency of the Holy Spirit of God for the renovation and salvation of men. Hence he says: "Without me ye can do nothing;"¹ and "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him."² He introduced a new economy of grace, "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that who-

¹ John xv. 5.² John vi. 44.

soever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.”¹ Provision has thus been made in Christ for new and saving agency and motive power to be imparted. “Now,” says he, “is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.”² He procured, and now sends, the Comforter, of whom he said: “When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin because they believe not on me.”³ Under these circumstances he declares that the damning guilt, the cause of everlasting death among men, wherever his gospel is preached, is their neglect of his salvation, their refusal to come to him by faith and partake of life. “Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.”⁴ Salvation is not impossible.

There are, however, certain things in this work impossible for men. There are certain others which are not. It is of importance here carefully to distinguish, and not view or speak of things in false relations. Thus it is forever impossible for a sinner to atone for his own or for others’ sins; “none of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom that he should live forever.”⁵ Nor can any man, by his good works or deeds of righteousness, justify himself before God; “by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”⁶ God alone provides the atonement. It is his prerogative to say whether, after having sinned and come short of his glory, any of our fallen race shall be pardoned; and under what circumstances, in view of what considerations, and in what relations he will exercise his pardoning prerogative. In Christ the atoning sacrifice for the remission of sins, “the righteousness of God” for the justification of sinners, have been provided. That which is forever impossible with man is possible with God.

The gospel announces this gracious and glorious fact, that Jesus Christ “hath power on earth to forgive sin;” that “his

¹ John iii. 16.² John xii. 31, 32.³ John xvi. 7-12.⁴ John v. 40.⁵ Psalm xlix. 7-9.⁶ Gal. ii. 16.

blood cleanseth from all sin;" and that in him "have we righteousness and strength." He is "the gift of God" to a lost world for salvation, and the dispenser of the Spirit for purposes of salvation unto everlasting life.¹ Thus constituted "a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins," he brings to us the motive power needed to turn sinners to God, and renders that possible for us which without him we never, by any effort of our own, could have attained to. What, without the gospel and its divine aid, would have been for ever impossible is so no longer. Here is an instrumentality for us, united to our weakness and wretchedness. Perfect obedience is no longer required of us as the means of eternal life. But believe and ye shall be saved are the assurances of Christ. We have all the requisite constitutional faculties necessary for the exercise of faith in our fellow-men. The same capacities bring us under obligations and adapt our minds to believe God. There is no natural impossibility to prevent us from setting to our seal that God is true, and accepting the offers of grace and salvation, made freely to us by Jesus Christ. Whatever difficulty or inability there may be, grows out of a dominant state of mind and heart, utterly incompatible with faith, love, and repentance toward God. Aversion, dislike, opposition, prevail and govern. But, in the nature of things, it is no more impossible that these may be overcome and superseded by love, preference, and obedience, than it was that Adam's holy obedience should have been exchanged for rebellion. It is the Spirit secured by Christ that accomplishes the change; but he operates on man not as on matter. The change takes place as the sinner—operated on and moved by the Holy Spirit through the truth, exciting to the exercise of the capacities of his constitutional nature, viz. mind, will, affections—is induced to believe on Christ, to deny himself, to renounce his sins, and consecrate himself to God. Such is the ability of man in the matter of working out his own salvation, making to himself a new heart,

¹ John iv. 10; vii. 37-39.

believing, repenting, and turning to God "with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience," which New school Presbyterians believe he has, placed, as he now is, under the gospel of the grace of God and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

There may be, and are, theologians who believe and teach that man in his natural state, independent of the gospel and Spirit of Christ, has ability and power perfectly to obey all the commandments of God. New school Presbyterians no more believe and teach this than do the Old school. The former understood the latter's denial of all ability on the part of the sinner to believe and repent, as equivalent with denial of the capacities or faculties requisite for moral agency, essential to moral obligation. The latter were offended with such an intimation, and in their turn charged the former, who insisted on the sinner's ability — meaning his natural constitutional capacities to believe and repent — with holding that men are able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God. A better understanding prevails at present.

The analysis of man's ability — a complex idea — into its constituents of capacity, faculty, susceptibility, motive power, and efficient volition, and the discussions which of late years have taken place upon the subject, have rendered it no longer the *questio vexata* it once was. "In estimating ability, we are in the habit of giving more or less import to the word, according to the nature of the subject and of the case; at one time meaning by it the natural faculties or capacities for a given class of actions; at another time, the instrumental agencies requisite; and at a third, the moving power appropriate and necessary to excite, determine, and restrain the successful exercise of those faculties. It is in this last sense the Saviour says: 'No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.'¹ But this he does by the influence of the Spirit, who brings the mind and heart into that state which disposes and inclines it to make

¹ John vi. 44.

choice of God and holiness, and to come to Jesus Christ for 'grace and strength to help in every time of need.' In doing so, the Spirit employs the truth as his instrument; and that not at man's will, but of his own will."¹

The dogma of "entire sanctification," "or sinless perfection," which Old school Presbyterians sometimes charged the New with holding, never formed an article of their belief. Nor does it follow as a logical result from their views of ability. While teaching and insisting, as important essential evidence of true Christian character, that "whosoever is born again, doth not commit sin," that is, manufacture sin,² yea, and cannot deliberately make choice of, and allow himself to do, what he knows to be sinful,³ or refuse to do what he knows to be his duty, we nevertheless admit that, as matter of fact, through weakness of faith and the bewildering influence of temptation, "in many things we offend all," so that "he that saith he hath no sin, deceiveth himself and the truth is not in him." The love of God may be supreme, but that does not prove it perfect. Integrity or uprightness of character, sincerity of purpose, transparency of conduct, and outward moral perfection in the sight of man, as the apostle uses the word and speaks of the thing, fall far short of that perfection in the sight of God which his law requires.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

We think it can be safely said, that there never was so large a body of ministers and people so well and so entirely agreed on the subject of justification by faith as those embraced in the Presbyterian church before its division. The history of the last twenty-five years has not proved that there is any radical difference on the subject between its branches, Old and New. Different forms of speech and modes of illustration, as a matter of course, have existed, and will continue to do so. But separation has not impaired the unity of their faith.

¹ Warning against Error, p. 78, 79.

² ἀμαρτίας οὐ ποιεῖ, doth not make a sin.

³ 1 John iii. 9.

Both agree that, on the ground of innocence or deeds of the law, no flesh living shall be justified; that pardon of sin and acceptance with God can never be merited by sinful man; but if ever and wherever they are enjoyed, must proceed from the riches of his grace; that the ground or reason of his justifying grace is the redemption in Christ Jesus; not because of the sinner's morality, good works, repentance, and return to obedience, but solely on account of the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ; that the way or means by which a sinner can be justified is faith alone, without the deeds of the law; that justification, being an act of God's grace, takes effect in this mortal life, immediately when the sinner believes in Christ, and is not to be awaited or looked forward to as a future good, but accepted as a present boon; that the relation of the sinner who believes in Christ, and is justified by "faith in his blood," is so thoroughly changed to the law, that he passes from under its condemnation into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and is accepted as if he were righteous, and adopted into his family, only for the righteousness of Christ and through the grace given in him; that justification is one sovereign, gracious act of God, done once and forever, and begins immediately upon believing to produce the fruits of the Spirit — peace, love, joy, the spirit of adoption, and access with confidence into the favor of God, etc.; that simultaneously with being justified the sinner believes in Christ, becomes renewed, "the workmanship of God, created anew unto good works," and begins to lead a life of holy obedience; and that, while loving, grateful obedience proves both his regeneration and justification, neither his regeneration, nor good works, nor holy obedience, nor love, nor faith, nor repentance, form the ground of his justification before God, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ alone, which God so accounts to him as to regard him as righteous, i. e. accepts and treats him as if he were so, agreeably to the gracious provisions of that covenant of redemption in which the Father stands engaged to Christ, and through him to all his seed.

It is mainly in relation to this last item that differences between the two schools may be traced; but like all we have already noticed, not in point of faith, but of philosophy or theological explanation. The Old school Presbyterian insists upon using the *ipsissima verba* of the Confession and Catechisms when they speak of the righteousness of Christ being "imputed by faith." The New school Presbyterian is not tenacious about this technical term of theology, but prefers to express the idea intended to be conveyed by it in the plain language of common sense. As to what is meant by the word "imputation," the reader will have gathered from what has already been brought into view. The ideas of Luther and other early reformers — not Calvin — differ very far from those of Old school Presbyterians; who would be equally averse with the New to use his language expressive of the imputation of our sins to Christ. It is unnecessary to notice the differences on this subject among Old school writers, or on other questions connected with it, such as — whether Christ's sufferings during his life, or only those producing his death, or both, formed his atonement; whether his "active obedience" as contra-distinguished from his "passive obedience," made part of the righteousness on account of which we are justified; whether his incarnation and mediatorial work must enter into the estimate to be made of his obedience, by which many shall be made righteous; whether justification is entirely an act of grace, a perfectly gratuitous thing, with God, or whether it eventuates on strictly legal principles as the award of justice, the grace of the transaction lying back of the act, in the provision of mercy made through Christ for its exercise; and how the justice of God appears in the act of justifying the ungodly. No sliding-scale here would mark the lines of difference as between Old and New school Presbyterians, and the members respectively of either. The main questions of difference between them relate to the real nature of the formal character of the justice of God involved in forgiving the sins, and accepting as righteous the persons, of them that

believe. In stating them we must necessarily present the differing views of Old and New school Presbyterians in relation to the atonement of Christ.

THE ATONEMENT.

The answer to the seventy-first question of the Larger Catechism, as to "how justification is an act of God's free grace," is cordially accepted and believed by all Presbyterians, Old or New. It speaks of the full satisfaction to God's justice, in the behalf of them that are justified, made by the obedience and death of Christ, and traces the grace of God in the substitution of a surety, "imputing his righteousness to them, and requiring nothing of them for their justification but faith, itself the gift of God. It says nothing of the nature of the justice of God, which has received a proper, real, and full satisfaction by the obedience and death of Christ. The ground is left open, and is legitimate, for the investigations of theology. Would that they had always been conducted in an humble and fraternal spirit!

The consideration of the nature of the divine justice to which satisfaction has been rendered, necessarily suggests the inquiry: In what light or character is God, in the exercise of his justice therein to be viewed,—whether as a judge who hears, examines, and decides in a case according to law, or as a governor who exercises supreme authority in maintaining the laws and promoting the general and greatest good? The distinction is well understood in this country, and respected in our constitutional arrangements for the distribution of the functions of governmental authority into legislative, judiciary, and executive. God has revealed himself to us as judge, lawgiver, and executive ruler or governor, acting severally and distinguishably in these capacities, relations, or characters. They should not be confounded, notwithstanding the different functions are exercised by the one Supreme Lord and Creator of all things.

Old school Presbyterians regard the satisfaction rendered to the justice of God by the obedience and death of Christ

as explicable upon principles of justice recognized among men in strict judiciary procedures. While they concede that there is grace on the part of God in its application to the believer, inasmuch as he has provided in Christ a substitute for him, they nevertheless insist that he is pardoned and justified by God as judge, and as matter of right and strict justice in the eye of the law, inasmuch as its claims against him have all been met and satisfied by his surety. The obligations in the bond having been discharged by his security, the judge, according to this view, is bound to give sentence of release and acquittal to the original failing party, the grace shown being in the acceptance of the substitute. Their ideas of the nature of the divine justice exercised in the pardon and justification of the sinner because of the righteousness of Christ, are all taken from the transactions of a court of law. New school Presbyterians, equally with the Old, concede the grace of God in the substitution of Christ, the whole work of his redemption to be the development of "the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ"; but they prefer to regard and speak of the atonement of Christ, his obedience and death, by which he satisfied the justice of God for our sins, as the great expedient and governmental procedure adopted by the great God of heaven and of earth in his character of chief executive, the governor of the universe, in order to magnify his law and make it honorable, rather than as a juridical plea to obtain a sentence in court for discharging an accused party on trial.

There are two constituent parts of justification, or benefits accruing to the believer through the atonement and righteousness of Christ. These are pardon of sin and acceptance as righteous. Pardon is an act of sovereignty; to grant it is the prerogative exclusively of the highest executive functionary of government, whether of our State or national constitutions. God, the sovereign ruler over all, claims it as his (Mic. vii. 18; Isa. xliii. 25). He only can release the sinner from the penalty of the law. This grace

and mercy he exercises in the person of the Son of God, to whom, in his mediatorial office, "all power and authority in heaven and on earth are given."¹ The other constituent of justification is the acceptance of the person of the sinner believing, so as to treat him as righteous. He is not indeed treated as if he were innocent; for he suffers and dies, like the great ancestor of our race, who forfeited by his transgression all rights and immunities guaranteed only to perfect obedience. As a transgressor the sinner can lay claim to none of these, nor have any rightful ground of hope to escape from the exaction of the forfeit to his everlasting ruin and death. By justification through faith in Christ his relation to the law is changed. The forfeiture of eternal life and exclusion from the favor and friendship of God are not exacted. By faith we enter into the family of Christ, and become the children of God and recipients of the benefits received by his perfect obedience, viz. forgiveness of sin, acceptance with God, and a title to eternal life. The believers' faith is "imputed to him for righteousness";² it does for him what he never would have secured by his own righteousness, inasmuch as by the grace of God it places him in a new relation to his law, and entitles him to all the immunities and benefits forfeited by Adam, but restored and enlarged by Christ. "the second Adam."

Neither pardon nor righteousness can ever be claimed by the sinner as due to him; no suffering or repentance or good work on his part can ever atone for his past sins. He must for ever be indebted to Christ for "the atonement." In like manner, by no possible effort or righteousness of his his own can he ever justify himself before God. To the obedience of Christ unto death must he look for this. Here both Old and New school Presbyterians agree. But the questions, how Christ's sufferings and *death* atone for sin, and how his obedience avails unto justification through faith, as they do, — the philosophy of the way of salvation, — receive from them different answers and explanations, accord-

¹ *Math.* xxviii. 18.² *Rom.* iv. 22.

ing to their views of the nature of justice and their theories of government. The simple faith that saves needs none of them, nor asks for them. They are not therefore essential to Christianity. Whatever merit they may claim as human attempts to explain facts in their nature mysterious, their admission or adoption should never be made tests of faith and terms of Christian fellowship.

The theory of the Old school Presbyterians relative to the satisfaction rendered to divine justice by the sufferings and death of Christ, accords with their ideas and illustrations of justice, taken partly from commercial and partly from penal transactions. Some affect to despise the distinctions, as to the nature of justice, of which the younger Edwards and later theologians have availed themselves in their discussions on the subject of the atonement. They speak of three kinds of justice, more properly it should be said of three different relations and classes of circumstances calling for the exercise and manifestations of justice. The general idea of justice admits of no dispute. All agree in regarding it as the attribute or virtue, which determines one to render unto others their due. It is but another phase of the righteousness which determines its possessor to do right under all circumstances. These circumstances vary according to the relations in which one is held to others. There are the relations of debtor to creditor, in endless variety of circumstances; of the criminal to the law and government, and that in endless respects; and of those in authority to the general interest or public good. In human governments, the legislative authority enacts the laws designed to secure just and righteous conduct between man and man, and courts of justice decide in matters of doubt and dispute, and determine awards and punishments; and rulers, executive officers, are employed for enforcing the laws and maintaining their authority and promoting the public good. The justice concerned with commercial transactions, as between buyer and seller, debtor and creditor, is called commutative or commercial justice; that required in the decisions and awards of courts for the punish-

ment of offenders, is called distributive or retributive and punitive justice; and that by which the ruler or executive is required and determined to maintain the honor and integrity of the government and advance the public good, is called general or public justice. The merits of theological discussions on the difference between Old and New school Presbyterians as to the atonement turn upon the question: In which of these three relations and respects, are the sufferings and death of Christ to be regarded as a satisfaction to the justice of God?

In assuming the first, the Old school Presbyterian takes his notions and illustrations of the justice of God from the justice exercised among men in their commercial transactions. The sinner is spoken of as a debtor to God, and Christ as the surety or security in the note or bond. His sufferings and death are regarded as payment in full for all the sinner owes to God. The payment having been made in full by the security, the law has no further claims, and justice demands that the bond be cancelled and the debtor released from all further obligations. This analogy may represent the completeness of the satisfaction rendered by Christ to the divine justice, and of the deliverance of the sinner; but it can hold good no further. The justice of God which demands satisfaction for sin, is different from that of the creditor, who justly requires payment in full according to the terms of the bond, and when paid is satisfied, whether that payment be made by the debtor or by his security. It is a justice that takes cognizance of criminal and not of commercial matters.

Old school Presbyterians aware of this, avail themselves also of illustrations taken from the several sorts of justice above referred to, viz. distributive justice, which acquits innocence and punishes crime. As in human governments punishment is sometimes commuted, as banishment or solitary confinement for death, or release from imprisonment by the payment of a pecuniary fine, so in the government of God, His justice, it is contended, admits of commutation,

and is satisfied as fully if the penalty be inflicted on a surety or substitute for the transgressor as upon the transgressor himself. The sufferings and death of Christ are accounted, according to this view of justice, by Old school Presbyterians, to be the penalty of the law for sin, inflicted on him as having stood "in the room and stead" of his elect.

The analogy here is far from being perfect or correct; for the commutation of one form of punishment for another is a very different thing from the substitution of the person of the innocent for the person of the guilty. It is the same guilty person that really suffers in human government in sustaining either form of punishment, except indeed where the punishment is commuted for a debt or pecuniary obligation, which the criminal by his friend or security may discharge. This however is to confound or identify crime with debt, which are distinguishable, and are not always or necessarily united. The Old school Presbyterian's idea of the substitution of Christ is, that his person is commuted for the persons of the elect, and therefore his sufferings and death were the very same punishment in penalty, in law, which might have been exacted personally from them in their eternal sufferings and death. To deny this, they account a denial of the vicariousness of Christ's sufferings and death, and of their real expiatory virtue.

The New school Presbyterian does not so understand it. It is contrary to the very nature of distributive justice — which has reference to personal character and conduct — to punish innocence and protect crime. No legal fiction can ever make it possible to transfer the personal properties of guilty sinners to the innocent Son of God, so that he should assume their character and become guilty and merit their punishment. The substitution of Christ and his vicarious sufferings and death he does not believe to have been a procedure either of commutative or distributive justice. He suffered and died, "the just for the unjust," the holy for the unholy, not according to law, but according to the agreement or covenant between him and the Father, in pursuance

of which he offered himself as a substitute for the infliction of the penalty, to which penalty the sinner only is or can be deservedly subjected. His sufferings and death take the place in the divine government of the endless punishment of any and every sinner of the human race who should believe in him.

Hence there arises a difference between Old and New school Presbyterians as to the applicability and extent of the atonement; the former limiting it to the persons of the elect, as the ransom paid specifically by name for each one, and designed for them only. The definite nature of the atonement is a logical sequence of the assumption, that the substitution of Christ's person was made for the persons of the elect, so as to entitle them, on principles of either commercial or of distributive justice, to exemption from punishment, because the penalty was endured by their surety. This Old school view of the definite nature of the atonement is felt, by many besides the New school, to throw embarrassment in the way of the free and universal offer of pardon and salvation in the preaching of the gospel. It is but just, however, to say that all Old school Presbyterians do not deny the indefinite nature of the atonement. Some believe and preach its availability for all, affirming its infinite sufficiency, as in itself adequate for the whole human race, though not designed by God to be actually applied to all. Others, adopting the views of "the marrow men" of Scotland, proceed a step further, and affirm that, on the ground of the infinite sufficiency of Christ's atonement, God has been graciously pleased to make a royal grant of him as a Saviour for sinners of the lost races of mankind, so that by virtue of this "deed of gift," an interest in him is conferred upon every one, and it becomes the duty of all who hear the proclamations of grace in the gospel to receive and appropriate Christ as his or her Saviour, — "the gift of God" to him or her for purposes of salvation.

The truth and theological consistency of these views, were formerly objected to by many in the Presbyterian church who, with Dr. Bellamy and other American writers of the

last century, condemned the language and ideas of the "Scotch seceders," viz. the Erskines, Boston, Wilson, and "marrow men" generally, on the subject of "the appropriation of faith;" but particularly as advocated in Dr. Hervey's "Theron and Aspasia," a work of extensive popularity in its day. Dr. Robert Smith of Pecquea and Leacock, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, father of the celebrated S. Stanhope Smith D.D., LL.D., president of Princeton College, and Dr. John McKnight, pastor of the first Presbyterian church of New York, and others, have left in published treatises their dissent from the seceder views as above stated. Yet they, in common with Dr Witherspoon, Dr. Davies, Dr Green, Dr. Miller, Alexander, and others, affirmed the infinite sufficiency of the atonement of Christ, in itself, for the salvation of the whole world, if God should see fit to apply it.¹ Although the New school Presbyterians would perhaps prefer the technical forms of speech, such as indefinite or

¹ The writer of this Article hopes he may be pardoned for noticing a small item of history, illustrative of the opposition once entertained by many in the Presbyterian church against the view of the seceder churches and "marrow men" of Scotland. When a student, under the care of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, from 1813 to 1815, he was subjected to repeated and rigid trials, because of his views on the subject of the infinite sufficiency of the atonement being the ground of God's gift of Christ to a lost world for purposes of salvation; and of that gift being so proclaimed in the gospel as to afford a warrant to every sinner hearing it to receive and appropriate Christ as his personal Saviour. Although his views were made the occasion of protracted discussion in the presbytery, and some hesitated whether to license him, a majority sustained all his trials, and he was licensed without any retraction of his sentiments whatever, and some years afterward permitted to see a large portion of the seceder ministers and churches cordially admitted into and incorporated with the Presbyterian church of the General Assembly. It has also been no small matter of satisfaction to observe, that the Old school Presbyterian Board of Publication, having their press and active members under the very eyes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, have published an edition of "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," for sale and circulation throughout that branch of the Presbyterian church. Whatever may be the theological theory, and however logically inconsistent or otherwise, provided that the infinite sufficiency of the atonement of Christ, and its availability and applicability for the salvation of sinners of mankind without exception, be preached, and the Saviour of sinners be pressed on their acceptance, and the confident reliance of their hearts on him alone for forgiveness and justification and eternal life be required, therein he does and ever will rejoice.

general atonement, yet it is enough to agree in the faith of the fact that Christ "died for all," and that as a Saviour his blood and merits are applied universally, and are available for all to whom the gospel comes with messages of peace and salvation.

New school Presbyterians believe that the atonement of Christ may be much more satisfactorily explained by regarding it in the light of that sort of justice appropriate to, and required in, a public governor. This is called public justice, having relation to the public interests, the general good. The governing authority, the chief executive, has the special charge of all those great ends and interests of the public weal which are to be secured, not only by the execution of law, but also by measures which emergencies may demand, and which are not provided for by specific legislation. The obligations of public justice require, that right be done in all cases of which law may not have direct cognizance, and that in estimating right, in such circumstances, governmental authority should seek to secure the greatest amount of public good with the least incidental evil. Examples of such justice in human governments are not rare. In a raging fire, to stop its further ravages and prevent the utter destruction of the city, public justice dictates that the ruling authorities take possession of and destroy the property of private persons, the question of compensation not being taken into account, but left for adjustment in the results of the future. So the governing authorities in time of war and peril, may seize the property of private citizens, levy contributions, and require personal service, when necessary for the welfare of the government or the public security. All sanitary regulations and abatement of nuisances and measures for general improvement must be traced for their sanction, to the obligations of public justice. Its exercise has no direct reference to law, and its obligations are those of high, ennobling morality, enforced by the demands of benevolence and the dictates of virtue. In this respect public justice is but a phase of goodness, as the righteous-

ness of God, essentially considered, is but the conformity of his will and actions to the promptings of his nature, which is love. It is by this that God, the great moral and supreme ruler, governs the universe. His moral law bears the inscription of his love, designed and adapted, as it is, to produce the greatest amount of good (Mic. vi. 8; Deut. xii. 28).

The rebellion of the human race against God is an event in the government of the universe, which demanded the exercise of the functions of his supreme authority. To have consented to it, and suffered it to run riot, would have been for God to have abandoned his throne, and proved himself — we speak with reverence — unfit and unable to govern. The law enacted for the human race was armed with the sanction of the penalty of death. “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” All have sinned and become guilty before God. The execution of the penalty upon our guilty race would have vindicated the law, and honored and maintained the government of God. But this result would have been secured by the utter and eternal loss of the entire human race to God and holiness and virtue, and therefore would have afforded occasion of malignant triumph, on the part of the great enemy and avenger, the first rebel apostate and seducer of man. To have withheld the execution of the penalty, and by an act of simple sovereignty overlooked and pardoned human guilt, would have been to have dishonored his law and renounced his moral government. Here, then, was an emergency of the most solemn nature. Shall an entire race of intelligent creatures be destroyed forever by the enforcement of the penalty? or shall God, by a gratuitous pardon, refusing to execute the penalty, subvert the grounds of confidence in his wisdom, justice, and truth on the part of rational creatures, and virtually abandon his throne? These were the alternatives of the dilemma which the rebellion of the human race presented to the great moral Governor of the universe. It was an occasion befitting and demanding the exercise of public justice. What shall the

mighty ruler of heaven and earth do? It was a mystery beyond the solution of the loftiest created intelligence.

This "mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ," has been solved by the scheme of redemption revealed to us in the glorious gospel of the grace of God. If the rights of God's throne can be maintained, his law be honored, rebellion be suppressed and overcome, and all the great interests of good and righteous government be secured, which had been provided for by the penalty of the law to be executed on the transgressor, and at the same time clemency be shown in the forgiveness and salvation of the penitent laying down the weapons of rebellion and returning to allegiance; then the dictate of public justice, according to the promptings of that benevolence which renders God the fittest being in the universe to exercise dominion, would be: let such an expedient be substituted for the execution of the penalty by the eternal perdition of the human race.

- Such an expedient New school Presbyterians see in the divine plan of redemption, by means of the sufferings and death of Christ. It reconciles things that differ, and those that were opposed, so making peace between God and man, hence called the at-one-ment (*καταλλαγὴ*), the reconciliation. It is not necessary to enter into minute details here of "the unsearchable riches of Christ," in order to unfold the marvellous adaptation of this expedient, the sufferings and death of Christ, for securing, through the salvation of men, all the great interests of good government, even more effectually than by the eternal perdition of the human race. It may suffice to state that the incarnation of the Son of God; his voluntary devotion to the work of recovering rebellious, ruined man; his perfect obedience to the moral law; his absolute subjection to the will of God commanding him to lay down his life and take it up again (John x. 17, 18); his suffering even unto death in perfecting that obedience; his uniting himself to our fallen nature, and dwelling among

men in this revolted and accursed world; his thus meeting and enduring, in common with the race, the consequences of man's rebellion against God, as really as if he himself also had been a transgressor; and his whole mediatorial work, so honorable to God,—are in his sight an ample compensation and satisfaction for the dishonor done to his law and government by the sin of man. It more than meets all the ends of good government that might have been secured by the infliction of the penalty on the persons of the guilty, while it thus renders it practicable for God to forgive and save, and provides a subduing power of love to make the rebel return, in faith, repentance, and new obedience, to entire submission to God and friendly intercourse with him through a mediator. This atonement or reconciliation, secured by the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, must ever thence be regarded by an intelligent universe as a sufficient reason with God, an expedient, abundantly satisfactory to his public justice as moral governor, so that the exercise of his pardoning prerogative may be freely indulged, and without injury to the interests of his government. So far from encouragement being given to rebellion by forgiveness under such circumstances, the motives and obligations to obedience are greatly and eternally enhanced.

It is obvious, therefore, that although Old and New school Presbyterians differ in their views of the justice of God more particularly concerned in the maintenance of his divine moral government, and in their illustrations of the nature of the same, yet are they both agreed in the belief of the following facts, viz. the necessity and reality of the atonement made by Christ; the full satisfaction rendered to the divine justice, so that God "might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus"; the substitution of the sacrifice of Christ for the infliction of the penalty on the persons of guilty sinners; and the expiatory virtue of his vicarious offering up of himself to God. They are both equally far from believing, that the sufferings and death of Christ were merely educational or scenical displays, sym-

bolical exhibitions for illustrating the love of God for fallen man. But while the Old school Presbyterian, with his views of a limited atonement, designedly restricted upon principles of commutative justice to the elect only, is embarrassed in preaching the free and universal offers of salvation by God to sinners of mankind without exception, although his faith may overpower his philosophy, the New school Presbyterian, according to his view of the nature and rationale of the atonement, finds no difficulty whatever in proclaiming to sinners universally of the human race the infinite sincerity of God in his offers of mercy and salvation, but can take his word and oath without the shadow of a doubt, as reliable assurance that he "hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he would turn [unto him] and live."

THE DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

Neither the high supralapsarian scheme of ultra-Calvinists of a former age, nor the conditional election of Arminians, can be charged on either Old or New school Presbyterians, as an item of distinctive belief. Both believe, according to the doctrine of the divine decrees, as set forth in the Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms, that God has a plan predetermined in his own mind from all eternity, which he is prosecuting in his providence, according to which all things eventuating are so rendered certain to him as to be the objects of his foreknowledge. Their differences on these subjects relate to the methods, metaphysical and philosophical, employed by them in attempting to reconcile the predestination of God with the free-will of man and the contingency of second causes. The Old school have charged the New with believing that God could have prevented the existence of sin in the world, but not without destroying the freedom of the human will, and that sin is incidental to any moral system. To this the latter reply, that God permitted the entrance of sin, but not because he was unable to prevent it; but for wise and benevolent reasons which he

bath not revealed. As to the disputations, whether sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, or whether God permitted it in order to give greater intensity to his glory, the New school Presbyterian prefers to remain ignorant, because it is not a matter revealed to us in the sacred scriptures. If a brother should say, that as friction is incident to matter so is sin to a moral system, and that therefore while God would not absolutely prevent it altogether, he seeks, like a skilful machinist, to limit and restrain it, and overrule it for the greatest good, the New school Presbyterian will be contented to reply: "prove it if you can." Should he in rejoinder be challenged to prove the contrary, he deems it sufficient to say: "when we so aver, then may you demand of us the proof." He prefers neither to assert nor deny, but lets it rest where God has left it, among the secret things that belong not to us.

That God foresaw that man, when tried, would act as he did and sin, neither Old nor New school Presbyterians will deny. If asked *how* God foresaw it, he prefers to be ignorant rather than wise above what is written. If the Old school Presbyterian affirms that God's foreknowledge is founded on his purpose, the New school Presbyterian replies that the absolutely certain futuration of any event is not essential to its being apprehended by Omniscience; for God has spoken of contingencies as possible, and under supposable cases certain, to arise, which never actually did occur, as when by oracle he replied to David (1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12). He will not circumscribe the mind of Omniscience by reducing it within the limits of God's conscious intention. His foreknowledge is part of his Omniscience, the result of his predestination or of the adoption of his plan. In so saying he reverently assumes that there may be predicated an analogy between the divine and the human mind; but he prefers to let such themes pass, *sub silentio*, and to take off his shoes in deep humility when adventuring so near to God. The Confession of Faith is plain enough for him

when it affirms that "God knows whatever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions."¹

New school Presbyterians do not affirm that God exercises his sovereignty arbitrarily, i. e. willing for mere will's sake, but believes with the Confession that the decrees of God, his plan, or predestination are "according to the *counsel* of his will," for reasons known to himself, and in all respects wise and good, like himself.

In the decree of election they believe that the sin and ruin of the human race are presupposed. If, after having in various respects so misstated the difference between Old and New school Presbyterians, Dr. Rice will be admitted as authority, there is here in reality no difference. "Our doctrine," says he, "concerning the first sin committed by man, and in which the human race was involved, is simply that God *for wise and good reasons* decreed or purposed, first to permit sin, and secondly to overrule it for his glory."² The same position is applicable to the decrees of election and reprobation: they are for good and sufficient reasons known to God himself. New school Presbyterians do not affirm that faith foreseen is the condition with God for his decree of election, much less any good works. The objects of his election are to be made holy by the redemption of Christ; and the work of the Spirit is designed for this purpose. On this subject, according to the admonition of the Confession of Faith, cautious speech becometh us. Believing that God foreknew all of the human race who, in the progressive development of his plan of redemption through Christ, could be led to faith and repentance by the Holy Spirit, the New school Presbyterian avers that he affirms nothing at variance with the sacred scriptures and the standards of his church, when he says, that the divine decree of election embraces all whom God foresaw that he could, by the blood and spirit of Christ, in the providential development of his plan, bring to faith and repentance. The apostle Peter affirms

¹ Confession of Faith, Chap. III. sec. 2.

² Rice on Divine Sovereignty, p. 4.

believers to be "elect according to the foreknowledge of the Father."¹ Elect, says the New school Presbyterian, expanding this thought, not because God foreknew that this one and the other, left to themselves would believe; but because, according to the mystery of the divine Omniscience, he foreknew whom he could, by the truth and Spirit of Christ, bring to faith and repentance, as the plan of redemption should be developed and prosecuted by him throughout all the generations of men. Hence he affirms with the Confession of Faith, that the number of the elect is "so certain and definite (in God's view) that it cannot be either increased or diminished." This relieves the whole subject in his opinion from the harsh aspect of absolute, unqualified, arbitrary will, or a decree of election or reprobation without "*counsel*" or good and wise reason.

Old school Presbyterians are apt to adopt a more summary process by which to explain the mystery of election, affirming the choice of God to be wholly arbitrary, a simple, absolute exercise of sovereign will, without any reason whatever, except its designed arbitrariness. Rom ix. 15, where Paul quotes God as saying to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," etc., is adduced in proof of the absolute, unqualified arbitrariness of the decree of election. It is however worthy of critical attention, that the original Greek expressions, by which Paul has translated the Hebrew in Exod. xxxiii. 19, admit not of such a rigid interpretation. Ἐλεήσω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ, καὶ οἰκτειρήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτείρω are his words. He employs the Greek particle ἂν in connection with the subjunctive mode, as though the exercise of the sovereign will, asserted in the first part of the sentence, was dependent or conditioned on some circumstances apprehended in the divine mind. "I will have mercy on whom I *may* or *can* have mercy." The differences on the subject of the divine sovereignty are not radical; but like all already noticed on other topics, relate more to theological explanations of facts

¹ 1 Pet. i. 2.

than to the facts themselves, as reported to and received by the Christian's faith.

CONCLUSION.

The reader will draw his own inferences from the statements made in this Article. We think that in most instances he will agree with us in saying that the differences are not such as should separate brethren whose hearts and efforts might be much better united, ecclesiastically and socially, in advancing the great interests of Christ's truth and cause against the common enemy. Even Dr. R. Breckenridge, who contributed as much, if not more, than any other man, to the dismemberment of the Presbyterian church, five years afterward was constrained, in his discourse preached at the opening of the Old school general Assembly in 1842, to bear his testimony (though by no means in a kind spirit) to the radical soundness and superior orthodoxy of the New school branch of the Presbyterian church. Referring to the protest already noticed, which embodied a statement of the views of New school Presbyterians, as the reader has seen, in opposition to the false charges of error alleged against them, he says: "This extraordinary party could not lay aside its moral characteristics; and after doing so much to destroy the church and corrupt its faith, they drew up and recorded a confession, not only at direct variance with their own published declarations, but more orthodox than many who dreaded and opposed them ever held."¹ That protest contributed greatly to neutralize the reproach of heresy which, for a few years previously, had been so industriously circulated. His insinuations against the honesty and sincerity of those who adopted the confession it embodied, call not for our animadversion. The day, we trust, draws nigh when, instead of unkindly magnifying differences and making them pretexts for separation and angry contention, it will be found much better to study the things which make for peace, whereby we may edify one another. The want of

¹ The Calling of the Church of Christ, p. 15.

this spirit was, we doubt not, the prime cause of the measures which resulted in separation. Truth requires us to state our conviction that both sectional and sectarian jealousies exerted their influence to separate us, long before the division took place. That prolific source of incalculable evil in our country, the slavery cherished in the Southern States, had inflamed the minds and alienated the hearts of many; and although it was not publicly made a pretext for the division, yet the sectional relations and unmistakable sympathies which became apparent immediately thereafter, afforded undeniable proof, that differing views and dissonant moral sensibilities on this subject so inflamed and irritated as to render separation a desirable means of peace. The *coup d'Eglise*, if we may so call it, by which the separation was attempted in 1837, would have been lately imitated by a *coup d'Etat* in the state, for overriding the Constitution and establishing a new basis for the administration of the Federal government, had all the circumstances necessary for it as favorably concurred. Sectional strifes and jealousies, sustained by differing views and conflicting moral sensibilities on a great question of morality and religion, have convulsed the nation and shaken the government to its very centre and foundations. Ecclesiastically, the Old school branch of the Presbyterian church has suffered more deeply from it than the New. What Providence may have in store for the future, it is not for man to predict. But as to the great interests both of church and state, now so rent and perilled, our hope rests in the love and wisdom, the grace and care, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the great administrator of divine providence, and "head over all things to his church," "God, blessed for evermore." Haste the day when a united country and united church, delivered from self-destroying measures and hostilities, shall have occasion to say: "Lo this [Lord Jesus] is our God; we have waited for him and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation!"