

THE  
G R E A T S U P P E R ;

OR,

AN ILLUSTRATION AND DEFENCE

OF SOME OF

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE;

IN TWO FAMILIAR DISCOURSES.

BY

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IN preparing the following discourses, the writer had not the most distant idea of their publication. They were designed for his own neighborhood, and were addressed to audiences of a mixed character, composed of persons of different denominations, and of very different degrees of intelligence, including many who had been greatly misled by their religious teachers in regard to the real sentiments of Presbyterians. It was the aim of the speaker to present the subjects treated of, in such a form and in such familiar language, as might interest and instruct the less informed portion of his hearers. Having preached the substance of them before the Presbytery of Redstone, at its late session, that body thinking they might be usefully circulated within their bounds, passed a resolution, requesting a copy for publication. In complying with the wishes of his esteemed brethren, the writer has judged it expedient not to make any material alterations, but to retain, with very few exceptions, the original form and language, in order that those may be profited, for whose use his humble effort is specially designed.

A. G. FAIRCHILD.

*Smithfield, Fayette county, Pa.* }  
July 4th, 1843.

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# THE GREAT SUPPER.

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## DISCOURSE FIRST.

"A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper."—LUKE 14:16—24.

THIS is one of the most interesting and instructive of all the parables. It presents to view, the plenteous provision of the gospel—its free and sincere offer—the cold reception that offer meets with,—and the sovereign grace by which any are inclined to give it a cordial acceptance. It was addressed to the Jews, to whom it conveyed a clear intimation of their contemptuous rejection of the gospel, and of the calling

of the Gentiles. But like the other parables, it was designed for the instruction of mankind in all future ages of the world. It affords a striking picture of that which is now continually taking place, wherever the gospel is faithfully preached. God having provided an all-sufficient atonement through the sufferings and death of his Son Jesus Christ, sends forth his servants to cry,—“Come, for all things are now ready.” All, however, are disposed to reject the gracious invitation; and it is made evident that unless some special means are employed to furnish the table with guests, the whole of this rich and costly provision will be thrown away. He therefore determines to send down the special influences of his divine Spirit, to give efficacy to the ministrations of his servants, and thus some are sweetly constrained to come to the gospel-feast. At the same time he passes by others who were invited and would not come, declaring that they “shall never taste of his supper.”

To do full justice to every truth contained in this interesting portion of scripture, would require so much time that I shall by no means attempt it on this occasion. All I intend at present, is to avail myself of the parable, in the illustration and defence of some of the leading doctrines of grace, as maintained by the church to which I belong.

I shall offer no apology for the exercise of a privilege guaranteed by the civil constitution to the humblest individual in this commonwealth,—I mean the privilege of declaring and vindicating my own religious belief. That freedom of speech which you claim for yourselves as a sacred, inalienable right, you will no doubt cheerfully accord to others. Nor can I incur the charge of violating the rules of chris-

tian courtesy, by thus publicly maintaining the distinctive tenets of Presbyterianism. On the contrary, it is well known that our brethren of other denominations are accustomed not only to inculcate their own peculiarities with the greatest zeal, but also to remark with the utmost freedom upon the sentiments of others. Nay, they are often heard to complain that Presbyterians do not more frequently bring into view their own doctrinal peculiarities. These good brethren will not therefore take it as unkind, if we make an honest effort to remove the ground of their complaint. At all events, I hope to accomplish the duty I have undertaken, in such a manner as not to give just cause of offence to any sincere child of God, with whatever denomination he may be connected.

The first subject for consideration suggested in the parable before us, is *the sufficiency of the atonement of Christ*. "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready." The language here used, implies that the provision in readiness was abundant in proportion to the number of persons invited. And it teaches us that the provision of the gospel is sufficient for the salvation of the whole world. And this is a prominent article in the creed of the church to which I belong. Our Confession of Faith, chap. 10, sec. 4, speaking of the finally lost, says,—"They never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved." The only reason why they cannot be saved, is, that they will not come to Christ. This doctrine of the universal sufficiency of the atonement, is now and ever has been maintained by genuine Presbyte-

rians. The great Calvin, in his comment on 1 John, 2:2, asserts that "Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world;" and he repeats the same sentiment in various parts of his Commentary.\* At the Synod of Dort, more than two hundred years ago, the whole Calvinistic world united in the declaration, "That the death of the Son of God is a sacrifice of infinite value and price, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world;" and that, "because many who are called by the gospel, do not repent of their sins, nor believe on Christ, but perish in their unbelief, this doth not arise from any defect or insufficiency of the sacrifice offered by Christ, but from their own fault." Act. Syn. Dort, ch. 2. All approved Calvinistic writers have uniformly maintained the same sentiment. And yet there are persons who will tell you that the sufficiency of the atonement is not, and never was a doctrine of the Presbyterian church! What proof can they adduce in support of their assertion? None at all. Without a particle of evidence, and in opposition to all evidence, they have the hardihood to assert that Presbyterians do not believe in the infinite sufficiency of the atonement! What can we do with such men? We do not deny that, in a certain sense, Jesus Christ died for the whole world. In the scriptural sense of the terms, he "gave himself a ransom for all," and was "a propitiation for the sins of the whole world." But the main point of dispute between ourselves and other denominations, respects the *design* of the atonement. Among those who are agreed that the atonement is "a proper, real and full satisfaction to the Father's justice," the question in debate, is,

\* On Romans 5:18, and 2 Peter 2:1.

Whether that atonement be *definite or indefinite* in its *design*?\* In other words, was it designed to save all men alike? Did the Lord Jesus die with the intention of saving the whole human family? We deny that he did; and in support of our position, appeal to reason and scripture.

1. It will be admitted by those who sincerely believe the Bible to be the word of God, that all men are not actually saved. Indeed it would be quite as easy to prove from scripture, that all will be lost, as that all will be saved. It is admitted then, that some do finally perish. But if the Lord Jesus intended to

\* Our Methodist brethren admit the doctrine of satisfaction. See their Articles of Religion,—Art. 20. The Cumberland Presbyterians also, define the atonement as a “proper, real and full satisfaction” to justice. Cum. Conf. Faith, ch. 11, sec. 3. The views of the New School may be gathered from a few extracts from Four Sermons on the Atonement, by DR. N. S. S. BEMAN, a file-leader of the party.

“The law can have no penal demand, except against the offender. With a substitute it has no concern. And though a thousand substitutes should die, the law in itself considered, and left to its own natural operation, would have the same demand upon the transgressor which it always had. The claim can never be invalidated. This penal demand can never be extinguished.” Page 34.

“The law knows nothing of punishing the innocent and acquitting the guilty. The principles of distributive justice sternly forbid it. We conclude then, that distributive justice, or justice in its common and appropriate sense, in relation to rewards and punishments, was not satisfied with the atonement made by Jesus Christ.” Pages 62 and 63.

“We cannot see how every sin of all the redeemed could have been expiated in a few short hours by the agonies endured by the human nature of Christ, though this nature was united to the Godhead.” Page 78.

If this reasoning be correct, God cannot “be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” Rom. 3:26.

save all, and all are not saved, then he cannot be said to be *infinitely wise*. No wise being is willing to undertake a work in which he has not a reasonable prospect of success.' On the contrary, men expose themselves to ridicule, whenever they "begin to build and are not able to finish." To say, therefore, that the Lord Jesus commenced a work which proved unsuccessful in the issue, is to impeach his infinite wisdom.

2. In the next place, if the Lord Jesus died with the intention of saving all mankind, and all are not saved, he cannot be said to *foreknow all things*. No person is willing to embark in any undertaking, especially an expensive one, if he be certain beforehand that it will fail of success. Hence, when men have ruined themselves by rash speculations, they are free to confess that they would not have pursued the same course, if they could have foreseen the results. Consequently, to affirm that the Lord Jesus undertook what he did not fully accomplish, is to say that he did not see "the end from the beginning." It is to deny his infinite foreknowledge.

3. If the Lord Jesus intended to save all, and all are not saved, then he cannot be said to be *almighty*. The only reason why any person fails in his ultimate designs, is that he has not power to carry them into effect. And hence, to assert that the Redeemer is defeated in any of his glorious purposes, is to deny that he possesses almighty power.

Now put all these things together, and see what are the consequences of maintaining that Jesus Christ died intentionally, to save all mankind. It impeaches his wisdom; it denies his foreknowledge; it strips him of his almighty power; in a word, it disrobes him of his divinity and reduces him to the level of a

frail, erring mortal. Besides, if the Redeemer has failed in a purpose to save the finally impenitent, he may fail in his purpose to save the believer; and thus the hope even of the righteous becomes as the spider's web. With all due respect then for our brethren of some other denominations, we must dissent from their views of the design of the atonement; and must ever maintain that the Lord Jesus never could have intended to save a single individual whom he permitted to be finally lost.\* At the same time, we cheerfully admit that the death of Christ is just as sufficient to redeem the whole human family, as if all were to be redeemed and saved.

But some will perhaps say, "of what avail is this infinite sufficiency in the provision of the gospel, if men are *unable* to come to the feast? You Calvinists represent men as bound hand and foot, and yet

\* Lest the writer should be regarded as "arguing without an opponent," he begs leave to refer the reader to a pamphlet entitled "Miscellaneous Thoughts," which has been extensively circulated as an accredited exposition of Cumberland Presbyterianism. It is there maintained in so many words, "that Christ died intentionally to save all the family of Adam;" and that, if this be not true, "no preacher has a right to invite any sinner to the Savior." In another pamphlet, published by the Cumberland brethren at Uniontown, Pa., in 1833, after proposing the following question, "Did God design an application of the saving benefits of the atonement to all mankind?"—it is asserted in reply, that if this question is not to be answered in the affirmative, then "the sincere offer of mercy to all sinners, is only the veriest tantalization:" Pages 13 and 14. And the champion of the Pittsburgh Methodist Conference, the Rev. Robert Boyd, in a series of articles published in the "Conference Journal," in 1834, among other things, lays down and endeavors to prove the position, "That God may intend to save a man, who is not ultimately saved."

invite them to come to Christ." I shall show in a suitable place that this is not a correct representation of our sentiments. At present it may not be amiss to inquire, what is the professed belief of other denominations, in reference to the subject of human ability? Our Methodist brethren, in their Articles of Religion, Art. 8., lay down the following doctrine: "The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works, to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore, we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." Here we have a judicious and scriptural view of the subject; and by whatever name any of you are pleased to call it, I must take the liberty of styling it genuine Old School Calvinism. It tells us, that no one can turn and prepare himself to faith and calling upon God, by his own natural strength. It also tells us, that we have no power to do good works without the grace of God *preventing us*; that is, *preceding our efforts*, in order that we may have a good will.

Our Cumberland brethren, also, in their Confession of Faith, Ch. 9, Sec. 3., express their solemn belief, in the following emphatic language: "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto, without divine aid." Here, again, the inability of the sinner is stated as strongly as the most rigid Calvinist could desire. And let it be ob-

served that the point in debate is not, what a man can do with the help of God. With *his* aid we can "do all things." Nor is it a subject of query, whether God will afford the aids of his grace to those that sincerely seek him. It is admitted on all hands, that he will certainly "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." But the question is, whether all men have, at all times, sufficient ability to repent and believe on Christ, without any special additional aid of the Holy Spirit bestowed in answer to prayer? My hearers, let us submit this question to the decision of the great infallible Teacher. What does he say of man's ability? He says, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." John 6:44. And in the 65th verse of the same chapter he says, "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father." Such are the declarations of him, who "knew what was in man." And with this accords the experience of every sincere, humble child of God. Christians of all denominations, when they approach a throne of grace, confess their own weakness and insufficiency in the strongest terms. Indeed I have been quite surprised at the conduct of some, who in conversation would stoutly maintain the sufficiency of man's ability, and yet the moment they bowed on their knees before God, would acknowledge their inability, saying, "Lord, *enable* us to repent; *enable* us to believe; *enable* us to serve thee aright." What can we make of such persons? They tell one story to man, and another to God.—To man they talk of their ability; to God, of their inability. Which of these two stories are we to believe? Why, undoubtedly, if ever a man will tell the truth, he will tell it to his God.

Still the question recurs, Why invite sinners to come to Christ, if they are unable of themselves to come? Now, though it has been seen that our brethren of other denominations are quite as much involved in difficulty from this source as they may imagine us to be, yet as the question is a fair and reasonable one, I shall attempt an answer.

Presbyterians believe that the inability of the sinner to repent and turn to God, is not of a *physical*, but of a *moral* kind. To explain my meaning, let us suppose that a master requires of his servant a task transcending his bodily or mental powers; such as to pluck the moon from her orbit. It is obvious that however well disposed the servant might be, however anxious to please his master, he could not comply with his command; and it is equally obvious that he would be excusable for not complying. In this instance, the inability is of a physical kind. But let us suppose a different case. A wicked man is required to love his mortal enemy. It is plain that though the duty is perfectly within the compass of his physical powers, yet he finds an obstacle to its performance arising from the state of his affections. But he *ought* to love his enemy; and he is inexcusable for not loving him. His inability to love him, is that of the heart. It is a *moral inability*.

Hence, in the *first* place we urge sinners to come to Christ, because there is no physical impediment to hinder their coming. Their inability is of a moral kind. It is wholly their own fault, and they are perfectly inexcusable for not yielding to the invitation. In the *second* place, we invite them to Christ, because, if they make the effort in humble dependence upon the aid of divine grace, they will be enabled to come. Why did the Savior command the helpless

paralytic to take up his bed and walk? Doubtless, if some zealous opponent of Calvinism had been present, he would have charged our Lord with inconsistency in directing a man to walk who had not been in a condition to sit up for several years. But the Savior said, "Rise;" and at once, looking to Christ for his almighty aid, he made the effort; he "arose, took up his bed and walked."

I shall now proceed to the most interesting part of the parable. The King having provided a most plentiful entertainment, sent out his servant "to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready." All, however, "with one consent began to make excuse," and under various pretences declined the generous offer. "The master of the house being angry," and not willing that all this costly preparation should be thrown away, directed his servant to go out into the lanes and streets, the highways and hedges, and "compel them to come in that his house might be filled." He moreover declared, that those others, who were bidden and would not come, should never taste of his supper.

This whole passage affords a beautiful illustration of the doctrine of *gratuitous election*, as maintained by the Presbyterian Church. Thus, from eternity all things were present to the eye of God. To him the fall of man was distinctly visible, even before the race was called into existence, and moved by infinite mercy, he resolved to provide a remedy. Intending to rescue a portion of the race from perdition, he would send his only begotten Son to prepare a great salvation. Through the death of Christ, he determined that an unlimited offer of mercy should be made to the human family. All should be invited to partake of the rich repast. But he well knew that

this generous offer would be universally rejected, and that unless some special means should be employed to bring sinners to the Savior, all would continue in sin and perish; and thus Christ would die in vain.

To prevent so unhappy a result, God determined to send forth the special influences of the divine Spirit, to attend the preaching of his gospel; and thus he would sweetly constrain some to accept the terms of salvation. In other words, he *chose* or *elect-ed* them, in Christ, to eternal life, and appointed the means necessary to bring them to its enjoyment.— And as to the rest who were invited, but would not come, he resolved to pass them by, and exclude them forever from his mercy. These glorious purposes God is now carrying into effect. At his command his servants go forth and invite all, “as many as they find,” to come to Christ and accept of the salvation provided. Still none are found to hearken to the gracious overtures, till by the powerful influences of the Spirit of grace, they are brought to bow to his peaceful sceptre.\*

\* The writer does not mean to intimate that some of the divine purposes succeed others in the order of time; though one may be viewed as following another in the order of nature. For example, God’s determination to provide a Savior, was a consequence of his determination to redeem a portion of our ruined race. In saying this, we merely affirm that one purpose is the means of accomplishing another.

In accordance with the Confession of Faith, the Synod of Dort, and the great body of Predestinarian divines, it is assumed in these discourses that God in his purpose of election viewed man not merely as created, but as fallen. Not only so, but following out the illustration afforded in the parable of the Supper, the decree of election is here made to respect man not only as fallen, but as disinclined to accept of salvation. Ordinarily, at least, God’s eternal purpose of

Such is the doctrine of gratuitous election, as maintained by the church to which I belong. It may indeed differ very materially from the representations commonly made by some Anti-Calvinists. As partisans, they are interested in misleading the public, as to our real sentiments; and consequently their statements should be received with caution. I have endeavored to define the doctrine as it now is, and ever has been maintained by its friends and advocates. And from the view of it which has been presented, you may clearly see—

1. That the doctrine of sovereign election *completely harmonizes with the free, unrestricted offer of salvation.* And yet there are some who seem to imagine that Calvinists are guilty of inconsistency, when they invite all sinners to the Savior. But it may easily be seen that, on the contrary, they would not be consistent with their principles if they should not invite all to Christ. Because the master of the feast commanded his servant to invite all, even as many as he should find; was this at all inconsistent with his determination, afterwards carried into effect, to constrain a part to come to the feast? We invite all to come to Christ, because our divine master has directed us so to do. We invite them to come, because the provision of the gospel is sufficient for all, and if they come they “shall in no wise be cast out.” We invite them, because it is their duty to come to

mercy is not carried into effect in time, till after an indiscriminate offer of salvation has been tendered and rejected. It is taken for granted in these discourses, that God’s eternal designs correspond exactly with what he actually does in time; and that he intended that a general offer of mercy should precede the interposition of his special grace and the selection of the vessels of mercy.

Christ, and they have no excuse for staying away. We urge sinners to come, because we hope that while we are speaking, God may attend the word with the special influences of the Holy Spirit, and constrain them to yield their hearts to the Savior.

2. In the next place we may see that it is not implied in the doctrine of election, *that if a man be elected to salvation he will be saved, let him do what he will.* This is often asserted by the enemies of the doctrine. But it is not true. Because the master of the house, in the parable, determined that some should be constrained to come to the feast, did it follow that they would partake of the feast, whether they came or not? If they had stayed away, would they not have deprived themselves of the opportunity of tasting the rich and costly provision? So, if God has determined to bring some to Christ, in order to their salvation, does it follow that they will be saved whether they come to Christ or not? Surely nothing can be more absurd than such an inference. If a man does not repent of his sins, and embrace the gospel offer; in a word, if he does not become a sincere christian, there is nothing in the doctrine of election that can save him. "He that believeth not shall be damned." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

3. We may see also that *the Presbyterian church does not carry the doctrine of election farther than some other denominations do.* Our brethren of the Protestant Episcopal denomination, in their Articles of Religion, art. 17th, publicly declare their sentiments in the following terms: "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed, by his counsel, secret to us, to

deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor. Wherefore they, which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose, by his Spirit working in due season; they, through grace, obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity." Such are the views of our Episcopal brethren; and it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to express the doctrine of personal, gratuitous election, in stronger or more unequivocal language.

Our brethren of the Cumberland Presbyterian church also, in their Confession of Faith, chap. 7, sec. 1, publicly declare their solemn belief, in the following words: "It has pleased God to choose the Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest and King; the Head and Savior of his church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world; unto whom be promised a seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called by his Word and Spirit, justified by his grace, sanctified and glorified." This is strong language. It is true, the words *elect* and *predestinate* are omitted, but the passage contains the very sum and substance of the old Calvinistic doctrine of election. It tells us that Jesus Christ was foreordained to be a Mediator, before there were any human beings in whose behalf he could mediate. It also tells us that the Father

promised the Son a seed to be redeemed and saved, before there were any sinners to be redeemed and saved. Who is this "seed?" Certainly not all mankind. Surely our brethren do not mean to affirm that all mankind are to be, by Christ, in time redeemed, called, sanctified and glorified. By the "seed," is meant only a part of the human family. Here then, according to our brethren, is a part of mankind who are given to Christ, and whose salvation is as certain as it can be made by a solemn promise of the Father to the Son, uttered before the foundations of the world were laid. What is this but the old-fashioned doctrine of gratuitous election? These same brethren also, in their Catechism, answer to question 7th, tell us that "God, according to the counsel of his own will, hath foreordained to bring to pass what shall be for his own glory." Now, if ever the glory of God is displayed in its brightest colors, it is when a sinner turns to God by repentance, and embraces the offers of the gospel. Indeed the occurrence of every such event, calls forth fresh ascriptions of glory from the whole heavenly world. It follows, that whenever and wherever sinners are converted to the Lord, according to our brethren, God must have foreordained to bring their conversion to pass. And this he did, not on account of goodness foreseen in the creature, but "according to the counsel of his own will." Is not this the doctrine of special, eternal election?\*

\* That the Cumberland Presbyterians do, as a body, cordially approve all the doctrines of their Confession of Faith, cannot, with any propriety, be questioned; for if any article appear to them in the least degree objectionable, it can at any time be amended by a majority of their Presbyteries. See their Form of Government, chap. 11, sec. 7. All their

4. We may further learn, from the view which has been presented, that it is no part of the doctrine of election, as maintained by its friends, *that the non-elect cannot be saved, let them do what they may.* If all that were bidden to the feast had accepted the invitation, instead of turning away, one to his farm and another to his merchandize, they might all have enjoyed the rich repast provided. And so, if the non-elect would come to Christ, he would "in no wise cast them out." What hinders their coming? Nothing in the universe but their own voluntary, cherished sinfulness. But if, sensible of their own weakness, they would seek the aid of the Holy Spirit, and make the effort in humble dependance upon divine grace, they would be enabled to come. But since they choose to stay away, they cannot throw the blame of their perdition upon God, and say, let them do what they will, they must be lost. Of what can they complain? That they were not invited to the feast? No. That the provision was not sufficient? No. Did they come and were refused admittance? No. Did they earnestly desire to come, but were prevented? No. Of what then can they complain unless of this,—that they

Ministers, Licentiates and Elders, at their induction into office, solemnly declare before God and the congregation, that they "sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures." Ibid. chap. 14, 15 and 16.

To intimate that this declaration is not made in sincerity and truth, would be to charge these brethren with a crime little, if any thing, short of perjury. If it be alleged that Cumberland Presbyterians are not often heard to preach the doctrine of gratuitous election, I answer, that is no proof that they do not believe it. Nothing is more certain than that the doctrine is in their Confession of Faith.

were not constrained to do what they were not willing to do. And will any man complain of this? No, my friends; be assured their mouths will be stopped, and they will forever feel that they have been their own destroyers. There is no mysterious influence, no fatal necessity, no secret decree, by which the sinner is dragged down to perdition. I am aware that intimations to this effect have been sometimes thrown out against the doctrines of our church. But I solemnly pronounce all such representations shamefully false and slanderous. Our Confession of Faith, closely following the language of inspiration, says of the non-elect, that "It pleased God to pass them by, and ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his glorious justice." And in the Larger Catechism, answer to question 68, we are told, that "for their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in unbelief, they do never truly come to Christ." And the Confession of Faith, chap. 10, sec. 4, says, "they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved." What is the plain meaning of this language? What but this,—that if any are not saved, it is because they do not come to Christ. They do not come to Christ, because they are justly left in unbelief. And they are passed by, justly left in unbelief, and finally punished on account of their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them.

And here it may not be amiss to bring into view the sentiments of some other denominations, in regard to the condition of the non-elect. That highly distinguished man, the Rev. John Wesley, in a tract on predestination, formerly printed in the Methodist Discipline, but now published among the "Doctrinal

Tracts," expresses his views of the subject in these words: "God predestinates or fore-appoints all disobedient unbelievers to damnation, not without, but according to his foreknowledge of all their works, from the foundation of the world." And again he says, "God refused, or reprobated all disobedient unbelievers, as such, to damnation." This is strong language. It represents God as predestinating a part of mankind to damnation before they were born. And I feel quite confident, that on this point no consistent Calvinist would express himself in harsher terms.

Our Cumberland brethren also, in their Catechism, answer to question 7, declare it as their sincere and solemn belief, that "God, according to the counsel of his own will, hath foreordained to bring to pass what shall be for his own glory."\* This is very plain; but the question is, What is for God's glory? This question is answered by our brethren in their Confession of Faith, chap. 33, sec. 2; where they tell us, that God hath appointed a day of judgment, among other ends, for the manifestation of his glory, "in the *damnation of the reprobate.*" The natural and necessary inference from these two passages, is, that the damnation of the reprobate being for the glory of God, God has foreordained *to bring their damnation to pass.* And this, say they, he did "according to the counsel of his own will." I shall not quarrel about a mode of expression; still I prefer

\* "Q. What are the decrees of God?"

A. "The decrees of God are his purpose, whereby, according to the counsel of his own will, he hath foreordained to bring to pass what shall be for his own glory. Sin not being for God's glory, therefore he hath not decreed it."—Cumb. Presb. Cat., quest. 7.

the milder view presented in our own Confession, which simply says of the non-elect, that "God ordained them to dishonor and wrath for their sin."\*

Having endeavored to explain the doctrine, and free it from the misrepresentations of its opponents, I shall now offer a few arguments in support of its truth.

1. *The prayers which are offered by christians, for the conversion of sinners, all take for granted the truth of the doctrine of election.* Christians generally agree that it is proper to pray to God, for the salvation of careless, impenitent sinners; and that such prayers are not offered in vain. Those who hold the Calvinistic views, think they have peculiar encouragement to pray for the conversion of their fellow-men; because, according to their creed, God has foreordained a connection between the means and the end,—between prayer and its answer. They profess to believe, that by God's eternal decree, "the liberty, or contingency of second causes, is not taken away, but rather established." And if

\* Our Cumberland brethren profess to believe that God not only "passes by," and "withholds his mercy" from a certain class of mankind, but that (for their sins) he pursues a course of conduct, in regard to them, tending to increase their final condemnation. See the following extract from their Confession of Faith:

"As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden; from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and withal gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves even under those means which God useth for softening others." Chap. 5, sec. 4.

this be true, "the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous" must prevail. But even those of our christian brethren, who are most opposed to a Calvinistic creed, do, I trust, sincerely and fervently pray for the conversion of sinners. But what do they mean by such petitions?—and what do they wish God to do for the sinner? They profess to believe that God has already done enough for the impenitent; that it is now left to the self-determination of their own wills, whether they will be saved or not, and that they must act "without being acted on." Why, then, do they ask God to interfere any further in the matter? Ah, it is evident that our brethren, after all, are not quite willing to trust the question of the salvation of sinners, to the self-determining power of their own wills. They wish God to determine the question himself,—to constrain sinners to come to the Savior; or, in other words, to *choose* or *elect* them to eternal life. And the meaning of their petitions, is as if they expressed themselves in the following words:

"Lord, we are afraid, that after all thou hast done for these sinners, they will be eternally lost, without additional grace. We do not believe they will ever act effectually, until they are "acted on" by the special influences of the Holy Ghost. We are convinced that if they are left to the self-determining power of their own wills, they never will come to the Gospel feast. And therefore we beseech Thee to interpose in their behalf. Lord, constrain them to come, or they will go on in sin and sink to hell. Lord, compel them by Thy almighty grace to come in, that thus their eternal salvation may be secured."

Such is the tenor of the petitions offered by our brethren for the conversion of sinners. And I need

not say, that they all contain the very sum and substance of the old Calvinistic doctrine of election.— And our brethren should not find fault with us for preaching the doctrine, as long as they “pray it out” in all their supplications at a throne of grace. Surely, if they pray it, we may preach it.

2. In the second place, the truth of this doctrine is strongly attested by the *experience of all true christians*.

If we request pious persons, of whatever denomination, to relate how they were first brought to the Savior, they will all give substantially the same account of the matter. One will say, “I once led a very careless life, and though often affectionately urged to come to the gospel feast, I refused, and, like many others, sought to ‘make excuse.’ At last I was led to hear a sermon, which I shall never forget while I live. The Lord sent it home with power to my heart, and would not let me find peace until I found it in believing. Thus, if the Lord in mercy had not constrained me, I should never have come to Christ, and to him be all the praise.” Another will say, “I was living without God and without hope, my heart being set supremely on the world. And such I would have remained to this day, but for the interposition of sovereign grace. God called to me by the voice of affliction, and though at first I heeded him not, he still followed me with one affliction after another, and would not let me go till I was compelled to surrender my whole heart to him.” A third will say, “There is nothing very remarkable in the history of my conversion. I was one day reflecting how I had neglected my soul, and I secretly resolved that I would begin to seek salvation in the use of God’s appointed means. The more I read, and

heard, and prayed, the more I became impressed with my sinfulness and danger, until through mercy, I was enabled to cast myself entirely upon Him, who is the helpless sinner's Friend. And though my first movement toward the Lord might have appeared to come from the suggestions of my own heart, I am now convinced that my first resolutions on the subject, as well as the feelings which dictated them, were the operations of the divine Spirit. To him, therefore, be all the glory."\*

Thus, the testimony of all christian experience is in favor of the doctrine of gratuitous election; and sincere and humble christians of every denomination, cordially unite with the poet in saying,

\* The true hinge of the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians, is, whether God or the creature is first in the matter of conversion.

"A talking lady who honestly avowed Arminian sentiments, was one evening engaged in a dispute with a gentleman of the opposite opinion; and argued so long and so violently in defence of the creature's being *first* in the matter of conversion to God, that to her surprise she perceived it was one o'clock in the morning. She started and said, "Well I had not thought it was so late; I see I cannot work upon *you*, and I am sure all you say will not convince *me*; so good night." "Yes," said the gentleman, "it is time to go to rest. Madam, I wish you a good night. I suppose, however, that when you retire, you think to spend a few minutes between you and God?" "Doubtless, sir, I do." "Please then, madam, to tell God what you have just told me." "What is that, sir?" "Why, madam, that you began with him before he began with you." "No, I will not," said she. "I knew you would not," replied the gentleman, "and therefore I reserved this argument for the last; for I never found any person of your opinion that could address God in consistency, with the language which you hold out so confidently to your fellow-mortals." She was evidently hurt by this simple confutation; went away without answering a word, and never spoke to him afterwards."—*Anec. on Short. Cat.*, p. 48.

“ ’Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced us in;  
Else we had still refused to taste,  
And perished in our sin.”

And what is this but Calvinistic election?

3. In support of this doctrine we shall make our appeal to *the inspired word of God*.

As Protestants, you profess to receive the scriptures as an infallible rule of faith and practice. You admit that every truth contained in this holy book, claims the authority of Jehovah himself. Let us then submit every question to the decision of the Bible. Let us receive every declaration it contains in its plain and obvious meaning; without presuming to add unto, or take away from that which the Lord hath spoken. Let us not first form a system and then bend the scriptures to support it; but let us go to our Maker and learn what he has revealed, with the solemn determination to make our opinions yield to the authority of eternal truth.

In the 1st epistle to the Ephesians, 1st chapter, and 4th verse, we are taught that God from eternity chose or elected some of mankind, not for their foreseen holiness, but to holiness itself. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” And as if to give greater emphasis to the sentiment, the apostle adds in the following verses, “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved,”—“having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself,—in whom also we have an inheritance, being predesti-

nated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Now I leave it to the candor of every person of intelligence, whether this passage does not teach the doctrine of personal gratuitous election.

In the latter part of the eighth chapter to the Romans the apostle lays down and proves the position, that, "all things shall work together for good to them that love God." But how does he prove it? By appealing to the eternal purpose of God in election. "And we know," says he, "that all things work together for good, to them that love God; to them that are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"

In the 9th chapter of the same epistle, the apostle illustrates the doctrine of gratuitous election by a reference to the temporal distinction made between Jacob and Esau. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." In the eleventh chapter the apostle pursues the same subject. "Even so at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise

grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." What is this but the doctrine of gratuitous election?

In 2d Tim. 1 : 9, we read as follows: "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." In 2d Thess. 2 : 13, says the apostle, "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord; because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." If the Thessalonians had made their election themselves, why should the apostle thank God for it? When Paul preached the gospel at Antioch in Pisia, it was declared, that as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." Acts 13 : 48.

But it is unnecessary to multiply texts; for if the plain and unequivocal declarations which have been quoted will not force conviction, a thousand others would not. Indeed if such positive and repeated assertions are to be denied or explained away, why not discard the whole of revelation at once? This would be a far more consistent course, than to admit the truth of the scriptures, and yet deny the doctrine of election. Let us remember we are solemnly required to receive whatever God has been pleased to reveal. No matter what have been our prejudices, or habits of thinking; no matter what the interests of a particular sect may seem to require; when God speaks to us in his word, we are bound to believe. We have no more right to reject a doctrine of the

Bible, than to disobey one of its precepts. Both are alike rebellion against God, and equally expose us to his displeasure.

It is found exceedingly difficult to explain the passages quoted, except upon the supposition of the truth of personal, gratuitous election. Though the attempt has often been made, yet the construction put upon the texts has always appeared so unnatural and forced, as hardly to satisfy the authors themselves. Thus, some try to interpret the passages as intimating an election of *all mankind*. You have only to try this construction upon the first eleven verses of the first chapter to the Ephesians, in order to satisfy you that it leads to downright Universalism. It makes the apostle say, that all mankind are "predestinated to the adoption of children," are "accepted in the Beloved," have received "the forgiveness of sins," and possess "an inheritance" beyond the grave. Others again, have alleged that God merely determined from eternity to choose or elect those whom he foresaw would, of themselves, come to the Savior; and that this is all the scriptures mean by election and predestination. I answer, if things had been placed on this footing, not one would ever have come to Christ. Look at the parable of the supper. Did the master of the house determine to constrain a part to come to the feast, because he saw they would come at any rate? No; he saw clearly that unless he specially interposed, not one of the multitude would approach his table. So God determined from eternity, by the special operation of his Spirit, to bring some to Christ; that is, he chose or elected them, because he well knew that unless he did this, not one would ever come to him. Hence the apostle says of christians, that they were chosen in Christ,

that they *should be* holy," not *because of* their holiness; for the Lord knew they would possess none until he should impart it by his Holy Spirit. Again; they were "predestinated to the adoption of children," not predestinated because it was foreseen that they would become his children at any rate. So also, "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called," &c. Does this mean that certain persons were predestinated, because it was foreseen that they would at all events be called and justified; or does it mean that they were called and justified, as a consequence of their predestination? Consider besides, that St. Paul expressly says of election, that it is "not of works, but of him that calleth." "Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace;" "according to the good pleasure of his will;" and according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." I submit it to the candor of this audience, whether these expressions can signify election, on account of foreseen goodness.

The question between Calvinists and Anti-Calvinists, is, Whether the cause of election is found in the Creator, or in the creature? In other words, whether election springs from the spontaneous mercy of God, or is founded upon something good in man? In order to set this matter in a clear light, let us suppose that a church unites in fervent, persevering prayer, in behalf of impenitent sinners. In answer to their supplications, the Lord sends down the influences of the Spirit and great numbers are awakened, convinced and converted. Now the question is, What was there in the previous character or conduct of these sinners, to render them superior in the sight of God to other sinners? Was there any thing *in*

*themselves* which could furnish a reason why God should determine to convert *them*, rather than others? Presbyterians answer this question in the negative. They contend that election, as well as conversion, flows from the free unmerited mercy of God. In other words, it is altogether gratuitous. And hence our Confession of Faith says of the elect, that "God hath chosen them in Christ, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, *as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto*; and all to the praise of his glorious grace." Chap. 3., Sec. 5.\*

I shall now proceed to answer a few objections to the doctrine:

1. It is sometimes alleged that this doctrine represents God as *partial*.

We answer; partiality is a capricious preference of one person before another. But God is always guided by infinite wisdom, and therefore is not actu-

\* I am really sorry to find this passage artfully mutilated by Fisk, and other Anti-Calvinist writers, and made to convey the idea that God is perfectly indifferent about the faith and holiness of his people. It will be seen that it denies not that God foresaw the faith and works of his people, but simply rejects the opinion that foreseen faith and works were the conditions or causes of their election.

I wonder if our Anti-Calvinist brethren ever present their views of election in an address to God. "Lord, thou didst choose us to salvation, because thou didst, from all eternity, foresee that we would not be as other men are. Thou didst foresee something in us, antecedent to conversion, which would lead us to faith and holiness. And regarding these good dispositions of ours, thou didst choose us to salvation in preference to other sinners. Unto us, therefore, be the praise."

ated by caprice. It is true, he is discriminating in the exercise of his mercy. The master of the feast in the parable, did more for those who were brought to his table, than for those who stayed away; he constrained them to come. And it is admitted that God does more for the elect than for the non-elect; he makes them "willing in the day of his power." But he is not therefore arbitrary nor partial, for he has good and substantial reasons for his conduct,—reasons not the less wise, because not always known to us.

It will be admitted by my present audience, that it is right and proper that we should pray God to convince and convert sinners. But consider the plain import of such petitions, and the principle they involve. God has not converted all sinners. Do we not then in all such prayers, virtually ask God to do for some sinners, what he has not done for others? Do we not in effect, ask him to discriminate in the exercise of his mercy? And would he be chargeable with partiality, in case he should answer our requests? If any one say, "I will not pray for *one* sinner, or for *some* sinners, but for the whole world;" he cannot thus evade the difficulty. For if he pray that the Lord would convert all the sinners now in the world, that would be asking God to do more for the sinners of this generation than he has done for preceding generations, all of whom have not been converted and saved. And why should any christian charge God as partial, because he does that which he requests him to do, every time he approaches a throne of grace?

2. It is objected that the doctrine of election represents God as *unjust*.

I answer; if God be charged with injustice to-

wards any, it must be presumed that he treats them worse than they deserve. But of whom will this be affirmed? Not of the elect; for it must be admitted that they are dealt with infinitely better than they deserve. Not of the non-elect; for they are only punished in the degree that their "wilful neglect and contempt" of the Divine mercy, together with all their other sins, have justly merited.

Suppose the master of the house had not determined to constrain any one, but had resolved to leave all in their refusal of his generous offer, never to taste of his supper; would this have been treating them worse than they deserved? And what if God had left all to perish in the rejection of his mercy, where would have been the injustice of his proceeding? Why then charge him as unjust, because he determined to rescue a part from that perdition which they had merited?

3. "But," says one, "If God has not determined to bring all men to Christ, he ought not to constrain any." We answer, "Who art thou, O man, that replest against God?" Must the master of the feast allow all this rich and expensive provision to be thrown away? In other words, must Jesus Christ shed his blood in vain, and never see of the travail of his soul? Must God withhold the special influences of his grace, and cease to draw sinners to himself, because some men are not pleased with his method of salvation?

Allied to this last objection is one frequently urged against the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, viz: that it does not say that *all mankind* are effectually called; but affirms this of "the elect only." Chap. 10, Sec. 1. As well might it be objected, that the Confession does not say that all men are converted

and saved. Does the objector know the meaning of the phrase, "effectual calling?" The passage referred to is only a paraphrase of the words of Paul, in Rom. 8 : 30, "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called," &c. And will you censure the apostle because he does not say that all mankind are called, justified, and glorified? It is painful to witness the strong tendency to Universalism in most of the objections urged against the doctrine of election.\*

4. It is objected, "that if the doctrine of election be true, *we may not pray for all men.*"

We answer; for the dead, prayer is indeed unavailing. But we deny that there is any thing in election to discourage our hopes or our supplications for the salvation of all men *living*. Election does not say that a part of the present generation of mankind must be lost. It does indeed imply that of the whole mass of the human family, some will finally perish. But if all men now living were converted and saved, it would not overturn the doctrine, since some of former generations have not been converted and saved. The Calvinist has decidedly more encouragement than others, to pray for all men, because he believes that God has by an unchangeable decree appointed a period in the future history of the world, when "all shall know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest." And this happy change he is taught to believe, will be brought to pass in answer to prayer. It may also be observed, that according to the creed of the

\* Our Cumberland brethren profess their belief in the doctrine of effectual calling; and devote the whole of the 10th chapter of their Confession of Faith to the consideration of the subject. In section 1, they wisely define it as an *effectual drawing* of men to Jesus Christ. The doctrine is further recognised in chap. 13.

Calvinist, there is a certainty that some will be saved. According to that of the Anti-Calvinist, it is not rendered absolutely certain that any will be saved. Besides, it has already been shown, that no prayer can be offered for the salvation of any sinners, without involving the principle of gratuitous election.\*

While on this subject, allow me to say a word respecting the election of infants. Presbyterians are of opinion that God from eternity determined to save all of Adam's ruined race, who should die in infancy. In other words, he chose or elected them out of the great mass of the human family, as a part of that immense multitude that should be rescued from the ruins of the fall. And as it is our opinion that all who die in infancy, are among the elect of God, so we expect that they will not only be saved from hell, but gathered to the kingdom of glory. In opposition to this view of the subject, some persons have earnestly contended that infants are not elect, but are to be placed rather among the non-elect. If this be true, they will not be received by Christ into his heavenly kingdom. He himself says, that at the last

\* Calvinists think they have reason to complain of their opponents, as seeking to evade the main point in the controversy, when they raise ambiguous questions, such as, Whether all men living may be saved? The answer to which, will vary according to its design. If it be a question of *probability*, it may be sufficiently answered by saying, that the salvation of the present generation is at least as probable on the Calvinistic, as on the Arminian hypothesis. Again—if it be a question of *possibility*, then our answer would be, that with man it is impossible that one should be saved; with God it is just as possible to save all, as to save one. But if the meaning of the question be, Whether there be any thing to keep sinners from the Savior, beyond the voluntary sinfulness of their own hearts? We answer, nothing whatever.

day, "he will send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather (not the non-elect but) his *elect* from the four winds." Matth. 24 : 31, and Mark 13 : 27. Those therefore, who deny that infants are elect, however they may admit their deliverance from hell, must deny that they will be gathered to the world of glory. Hence our Confession recognizes the election of infants: "Elect infants dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ," &c. Chap. 10, sec. 3. And hence the Discipline of our Methodist brethren, under the head of "Ministration of Baptism to Infants," very properly directs the minister to pray, that the infant to be baptized, "may ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children." Of course, if the infant remain in the number of elect persons, it must itself be elect,—an elect infant. Our Cumberland brethren, in their Confession, chap. 10, sec. 3, admit the salvation of infants; and yet in the first section of the same chapter, eternal life is limited to "those whom God calls, and who obey the call, and *those only*," from which number infants are necessarily excluded. They also do not recognise the election of infants, but affirm, on the contrary, that none are elect in a "saving sense," but those who are justified, and "enlightened in the knowledge of God," and have "spiritual wisdom to discern and detect deceivers."\* Let us not however,

\* See Cumb. Presb. Confession of Faith—note at the end of chapter third. See also their Catechism, Q. 21, where the word elect is restricted to, and made synonymous with, "true believer." Some old Arminian divines, as Episcopius, Curcelleus and others, contended, that infants in a future world, though saved from hell, would always remain in an infantine state, incapable of participating in the blessedness of heaven. See Ridgley, Vol. 2. pp. 139 and 140. The Papists assign

hastily charge these brethren with a deliberate design to exclude infants from the blessedness of heaven; but let us put the most charitable construction upon the matter which the nature of the case will admit.

I am aware, that by some individuals, the Presbyterian church has been represented as holding what they call *infant damnation*. I say *some individuals*; for I will not suppose that the great body of any christian denomination would countenance so base and wicked a slander. It has often been proved, and is perfectly well known, that the Presbyterians do not now and never did maintain such a sentiment. There have been those indeed, who from conscientious scruples have refused to pronounce with confidence upon the exact condition of infants in the future world; but they never believed or advocated infant perdition.\* Yet, in opposition to all evidence, some individuals either secretly or openly, by sly insinuation, or by confident assertion, labor to fix this stigma upon the members of our communion. And there is scarcely a Presbyterian minister who has not frequently been charged with preaching, "that there are infants in hell not a span long." Now we must look upon all this as a species of persecution, on account of our religious tenets. We regard it as an

to infants, dying without baptism, a place midway between heaven and hell. And we learn that certain ultra New School men of our times, deny the future existence of infants altogether.

\* More than two centuries ago, the Calvinists were accused by their Arminian opponents, of holding that "infants are torn away from the breasts of their mothers, and tyrannically precipitated into hell." The charge was indignantly repelled by the Synod of Dort. See the conclusion of their Articles.

evidence of the extent to which Presbyterians would be called to suffer for their religion, if it were not for the protection of the laws. For if men will propagate the most wilful and deliberate falsehoods against us, as they certainly do, for no other offence than an honest difference of religious belief, what would they not do, if their power were proportioned to their malice? Presbyterians, however, can look beyond the agency of evil men, to the Almighty Disposer of events; and say like David, when Shimei cursed and cast stones at him, "Let them alone, for the Lord hath bidden them."\*

\* When the charge of "infant damnation" is found to proceed from persons possessing any reputation or standing in society, it is well enough sometimes to arrest the calumny, by exposing their falsehood to the world. This was handsomely done in a particular instance, about three years since, by a minister of the Presbytery of Redstone. The facts are well worth relating. A certain Anti-Calvinist preacher, had been much in the habit of dropping from the pulpit such expressions as "the damnable doctrines of Calvinism,"—and "the hellish doctrine of infant damnation,"—of which no one took any notice. At length, in his great zeal against Calvinism, he undertook to proselyte a lady from the Presbyterian church. He told her that he had been raised a Presbyterian, but could not get along with the "horrible doctrine of infant damnation," and left the church on that account. She remarked that she did not believe it herself, and did not suppose that the Presbyterians believed it. He replied,—“You are bound to believe it. If you believe the doctrines of your church, you must believe it. And the Presbyterians do believe it.” The lady communicated the purport of this conversation to her Pastor, who promptly proceeded to the house of the Anti-Calvinist, and after introducing the subject, a dialogue took place,—of which the following is the substance :—

*Presbyterian.*—I have heard, Sir, of your saying a great deal in the pulpit, about the doctrines of our church. Of that, I have taken no notice. But now that you have said to one of our members, that Presbyterians believe there are infants in hell not a span long, I have come to ask your authority for the assertion. It is astonishing that this charge of believing infant damnation, is so frequently made, and yet we can never find one individual who believes the doctrine.

*Anti-Calvinist.*—I know hundreds that believe it.

*Presbyterian.*—I am very glad, Sir, for I have long been anxious to find out who those Presbyterians are, that believe this doctrine. Now, Sir, give me the name of one—only one—and I will write immediately, and have him called to account. Please to name one.

'Thus I have endeavored to explain and illustrate, in part, some of the most prominent truths of the Bible. I am aware that some will be ready to say, that the doctrine of election is an unprofitable subject of discourse, and ought not to be publicly preached. Let me ask these persons a single question: Is it taught in the Scriptures? If it is, it cannot be unprofitable. "All Scripture," says the apostle, "is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." It is not said, all Scripture, except those parts which treat of election; but, "all Scripture, is profitable." And if so, why should it not be publicly preached?

If it be asked, what are the practical uses of the doctrine?—we reply, it answers several important purposes. It displays in a clear light, the sinfulness of men's hearts, in that, without the special influences of the divine Spirit, not one would ever have approached the Gospel-feast. It shows the sinner his inexcusableness, and the danger to which he is exposed while continuing in a state of unbelief.

*Anti-Calvinist.*—(Much confused, and stammering.)—I—I—I do not know that they believe it *now*.

*Presbyterian.*—Well, mention one who believed it *then*, when you were among them. Out of the hundreds, be so good as to name one.

Here the Anti-Calvinist was understood as insinuating that the Rev. John M'Clusky had preached the doctrine.

*Presbyterian.*—Well, say Mr. M'Clusky, will you?

*Anti-Calvinist.*—No, no, I will not say he believes it.

*Presbyterian.*—Why, Sir, I should feel very mean, if I had asserted that I could name hundreds that believed it, and yet, when called on, should not name one. And you certainly have little to do, to be running about, telling people that you know hundreds that believe in infant damnation; and when urged to name one individual, cannot.

The reverend gentleman saw that he was detected; and while he remained in the town of C——, never spoke again of "infant damnation."

Sinners are very apt to imagine that they can repent and be converted at any time they please; and that God is nearly as dependant on them, as they are on him. And that if they see fit to accept of salvation, they will be doing as great a favor to him as to themselves. Against all this self-sufficiency and pride, the doctrine of election strikes a fatal blow. It tells the sinner that if he is ever saved, he must be indebted to the sovereign, unmerited mercy of God. That if he chooses to stay away from the feast, the purposes of God cannot thereby be defeated; and that if the Lord should see fit to pass him by, and finally reject him for his "wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to him," it would be perfectly just and right. This doctrine also shows the christian what he would himself have been, but for constraining grace; and teaches him to give all the glory of his salvation to God alone, who has "made him to differ" from others. In a word, while it abases the sinner in the dust, it exalts God on the throne of the universe; and exhibits his mercy in its most glorious colors, as interposing to snatch the sinner as a brand from the midst of the flames.

In conclusion, let me address myself particularly to those who have never yet embraced the offers of the gospel. I come to announce in the name of my divine Master, that he has made a great supper; a feast for the hungry and famishing; a feast in which all the exquisite dainties that infinite Wisdom could devise, are set forth; a feast which speaks its value by the infinite price at which it was procured. It cost him all that he possessed. Though he was rich, he became poor in order to provide it. It cost him tears and blood and agonies unknown. To this feast I am sent to invite you. He has commanded me to bring

in all, even as many as I should find. Whether young or old, rich or poor; whatever may be your character or condition, you all have an invitation. There is an ample sufficiency for all; and though thousands have taken their seats at the table, there is still abundance of room. The Master of the feast promises you a welcome and cordial reception. He is now standing at the door of the banqueting house, crying, "Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out." He is now waiting to receive you. "Come," then, "for all things are now ready." Do not, I beseech you, decline the generous invitation; do not treat infinite kindness with so much ingratitude, as to say, "I pray thee, have me excused." I take you all to record that you have once more been invited to come. If you perish therefore, it will not be because Christ did not offer to save you, nor because you did not hear of the offer, but because you were not willing to accept it. You will therefore, be left without even the shadow of an excuse. I am aware you may imagine that you have an excuse. You will say, perhaps, that you would like to come, but are not able. But let me assure you, that of all the excuses you can present to your Maker, this is the most insulting. Believe me, your inability is your greatest sin. Its very essence, is an opposition of heart to God and his Christ. If indeed you do deeply feel your inability, then go and humbly confess it before God, and convert it into a plea for the assistance of his grace, crying,—"Lord, I would believe; help thou mine unbelief." But do not provoke him by turning it into an excuse for neglecting your salvation. My careless hearers, do you really believe that you are unable to come to Christ for salvation? If you do, how is it that you discover no anxiety on

the subject? We know that when any important event is in suspense, and you have no control over it, you always feel anxious in proportion to the interests which are involved. If, for instance, you were threatened with a law-suit, which would likely strip you of all your worldly possessions, and you felt that you had no power within yourself to make any effectual resistance, you would be all anxiety on the subject; you would be roused to vigorous and untiring exertion to procure the assistance of others. And so, if you really believed that you must come to Christ, or perish forever in your sins, and felt at the same time unable of yourselves to come, you could not remain unconcerned about your condition. You would at once be awakened from your indifference, and begin to cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" "Lord, save or I perish!" As long, therefore, as you are careless about the interests of your souls, we must conclude that you are indulging a presumptuous confidence in your own ability to secure your salvation. Be persuaded now to throw away all your excuses, and make the effort to come, in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit. The door is still open; the feast is still waiting for you. Delay a little longer and the door will be forever shut. Soon the great Master of the feast will pass you by, saying,—“As for those men that were bidden, they shall never taste of my supper.” And now I have done. I can do no more. I cannot compel you to yield to the overtures of mercy. May the Lord, by the mighty influences of his Holy Spirit, constrain you to come to the feast, before the sentence go forth which shall forever exclude you from the gracious provision!—AMEN.

## DISCOURSE SECOND.

“A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.”—LUKE 14:16—24.

IN the former discourse, I endeavored to avail myself of this interesting parable, in the illustration and defence of some distinguishing tenets of the Presbyterian church. In doing so, I merely laid claim to the exercise of a right secured by the civil constitution to all persons without exception, to whatever religious denomination they belong. This right is exercised by other denominations, and by none more freely than by Anti-Calvinists, who not only labor diligently to impress their own doctrinal views on the public mind, but not unfrequently treat those of

different sentiments, with peculiar freedom and severity. Nor can any good reason be assigned, why Presbyterians should not enjoy all that freedom of speech which may be lawfully claimed by others.

In carrying into effect my present undertaking, I have in the previous discourse confined myself to the illustration and defence of our own system of doctrines, abstaining from any hostile attack upon the system of others, and endeavoring to treat their opinions with respect. And in so far as quotations were produced from the Creeds and Confessions of other denominations, it was done with expressions of cordial approbation of the passages cited. In continuing the discussion, I hope to pursue the same inoffensive line of conduct towards brethren of other churches. If, however, contrary to expectation, any shall prove so intolerant as to take umbrage at our exercise of an undoubted right, and shall commence a hostile attack upon us, then it may not be proper to restrict ourselves to these narrow limits. It may in that case become a duty to enter upon a thorough examination of the religious system of the assailant.

It was remarked in the former discourse, that the first great truth presented to view in the parable before us, is the *sufficiency of the atonement of Christ*; a truth which has ever been believed and taught in the Presbyterian church. Nay, in some instances, the whole Calvinistic world have united in the declaration, that "the death of Christ is a most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; of infinite value and price; abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world." I will go further. There is an important sense in which the Lord Jesus died for all mankind. He died for all, in that he made an atonement sufficient for all, adapted to the condition

of all, and which might consistently be offered to all. And this may be the sense of those passages of scripture, in which he is said to be "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world;" and to have given himself "a ransom for all."\* And here let me remark, that when Presbyterians deny that Christ died for all mankind, they mean only to deny that he died for all, in the sense in which that expression is understood by their opponents. That is to say, they mean to deny that the Lord Jesus expected or intended by his death, to save the whole human family. Accordingly, our Confession of Faith, ch. 8, sec. 8, affirms that "to all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply the same." This passage is intended to guard against the idea, that the Savior will suffer himself to be defeated in any of the great designs which were to be accomplished by his death. And here, my friends, after all, lies the main point of dispute in regard to the atonement. Among those who agree as to the nature of the atonement, the chief question in debate, is, What is the design of that atonement? This assertion is not made on the authority of an individual. All who have been best qualified by their learning and experience in the controversy, have so stated the question. Among others, the celebrated Francis Turretin, the successor of Calvin in the Theological Chair of Geneva, in his Institutes, Q. 14th, on the Atonement, says, "The question is not concerning the value and sufficiency of the death of Christ; but

\* The writer by no means wishes to intimate a doubt that in most instances in which it is affirmed by the sacred writers, that Christ died for *all*, the context requires us to understand the expression in reference to *all* the children of God.

the hinge of the controversy, is the design of God in sending his Son into the world, and the intention of Christ in expiring on the cross." So, also, the distinguished Dr. Ridgley, in vol. 2, page 309, says,— "It is allowed on both sides, especially by all that own the divinity and satisfaction of Christ, that his death was sufficient to redeem the whole world. The main question before us, is whether God *designed* the salvation of all men by the death of Christ?"

This question was briefly discussed in the former discourse; and we endeavored to point out some of the consequences which would flow from the belief that Christ died intentionally to save all mankind. Such a belief must inevitably lead to Socinianism on the one hand, or to Universalism on the other. If, in the first place, to avoid the doctrine of universal salvation, we assert, that though Christ intended to save all, yet all will not be saved; what is this but to affirm that the Savior may be disappointed in his expectations, and defeated in his designs? What is it, but to strip him of his perfections, and reduce him to the level of a mere created being? And then, what confidence can be reposed in the most solemn promises of a being, whose purposes have already been thwarted in many millions of instances? But if, on the other hand, to escape these revolting consequences, we affirm that the Lord Jesus not only intends to save all,—but that, as God, he is able to fulfil his intentions, we boldly plunge into the gulph of Universalism. My hearers, will you have this interesting question decided by the voice of Inspiration? What say the scriptures, then? Do they assert that the Lord Jesus intended the salvation of all mankind? By no means.

1. In the first place, they speak of those whom

Christ died intentionally to save, as *believers*. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16, 14. Here you perceive that God's saving purpose, instead of being extended to all mankind, is expressly limited to those that believe in his Son: "That whosoever *believeth* in him, might have eternal life."

2. In the second place, those whom Christ designed to save by his death, are called *his sheep*: "I am the good shepherd," says the Savior; "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And again,— "I lay down my life for the sheep." He does not say, for all mankind, but, "for the sheep." John 10:11, 15. Who are meant by the sheep, is clearly manifest from the following verses: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

3. In the third place, those whom the Lord Jesus died intentionally to save, are called *his church*, of which he is the Head. Says the Apostle Paul,— "Christ loved his church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it with the washing of water by his word." Eph. 5:25. And the same apostle, in his address to the elders of Ephesus, exhorts them to "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28.

4. In the fourth place, though the sacred writers, when they contemplate the atonement in its univer-

sal sufficiency, speak of it as in this respect provided for all men; yet whenever they view it in its design, they carefully limit it to a *definite object*. Thus they tell us that the Lord is "the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe." 1 Tim. 4:10. Now if Christ died to save all men alike, why use the word *especially*, implying a distinction? Why make a distinction, if there is no difference? Again, they tell us that Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14. Accordingly it was foretold of him by the prophet, that he should justify many; for that he should bear their iniquities. And again, says the same inspired penman, "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." Isa. 53:8, 11.

5. If the Lord Jesus had designed the salvation of all men alike, he would have prayed for the salvation of all. And if he had done so, his prayer would undoubtedly have been heard; and as a certain consequence, all men would have been saved. For the blessed Savior never prayed in vain. He himself said to the Father, "I thank thee that thou hast heard me; and I knew that thou hearest me always." John 11:41. But for whose salvation did he pray? Not for all mankind; but for them that should *believe* on him, and for those that were *given* him. If we turn to the 17th chapter of John, we shall hear the Savior saying, "I pray not for the world," verse 9. And in the 20th verse, having prayed for his disciples, he says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." And again, in the 24th verse, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may

behold my glory which thou hast given me." Accordingly he is represented as making intercession, not for the finally impenitent, but for "them who come unto God by him." Heb. 7:25.

6. If the atonement be a full and perfect satisfaction for sins, then to affirm that it was intended to save all men alike, is to assert the doctrine of universal salvation, in unequivocal terms. For if the satisfaction be perfect; if justice be fully satisfied in behalf of the finally impenitent, no principle of justice or equity can subject them to a further satisfaction in hell. And I am happy to say, that there is scarcely a christian denomination that does not concur with us in representing the atonement as a full and perfect satisfaction for sin. Our Cumberland brethren, as to the *nature* of the atonement, profess decidedly Calvinistic views. They tell us, that "Christ by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified; and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf." Conf., chap. 11, sec. 3. Who, I ask, can make such an atonement universal as to its design, and yet escape the conclusion that all men will be finally saved?\*

\* The Rev. Wm. Annan has handled the argument from this source in so masterly a manner, that I cannot do better than to transcribe a passage from his work. After quoting the 20th article of the Methodist Creed, in which the sacrifice of Christ is said to be "that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for *all the sins of the whole world*, both original and actual," he observes—

"If all of every description of character have a perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction completed for them, how can any be lost? Wesley, or one of his disciples, has answered, 'Because they believe not on the only begotten Son of God.' But is this unbelief, this rejecting of Christ,

But why should I pursue this subject further? Surely any further argument on this point, must be superfluous. You cannot admit the opinion that Jesus Christ intended the salvation of all mankind. What then, we ask, was the real design of his death? Will any one have the boldness to assert, that he had no definite object in view? Shall we be told that he had no particular design to save any sinners? Did he come from heaven to earth—did he spill his precious, priceless blood, with no definite purpose to be accomplished? Surely no one in this assembly will hazard so desperate a conclusion. I trust it will be freely granted that Jesus Christ died with the intention of saving some. He could not have intended to

a sin? If not a sin, it can do them no harm at the great day of decision. 'Nil nisi peccatum timeo.' But if it be a sin, then the article declares that a perfect satisfaction has been made for all the sins of the whole world; and of course for unbelief, as well as for other sins. How then can it be a cause of perdition? If it be just to punish *this sin* with everlasting torments, after a 'perfect propitiation and satisfaction' have been made for it, it will be equally just and right to punish *all sin* for which Christ died. Both law and justice then will take the redeemed sinner by the throat at the day of judgment, and each urge its demand, 'pay me what thou owest,' as inexorably as though no Savior had ever suffered and died for his salvation. Who then can be saved? Here is the dilemma: If unbelief be not a sin, it cannot be a cause of future misery; it can do the sinner no harm. If unbelief be a sin, a 'perfect satisfaction' is made for it, as for all sin; and still it can do the sinner no harm, unless a sin for which a perfect satisfaction is made, and the whole debt paid, can be again called up for satisfaction, and the debt again exacted. In the former case, no one can be lost; in the latter no one can be saved. The doctrine of a perfect satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, must land us either in Universal Salvation, or Universal Perdition."—Diff. Arm. Meth., Letter 3.

save all; but did intend to save some; and is perfectly able to carry his intentions into effect. Will you admit this, my hearers? If so, we do not ask you to assume the name of Calvinists, if you have any objection to the term; though you admit in substance the principal points in the Calvinistic system.\*

But though we are constrained to reject an opinion which would drive us to the alternative of Socinianism on the one hand, or of Universalism on the other, still, we not only admit, but earnestly contend, that the provision of the gospel is just as sufficient to save all, as if all were to be actually saved. It was designed as a full and complete satisfaction for the sins of all who should ever come to Christ; and effectually secures the salvation of all who comply with the invitations of the gospel. If, therefore, any do not experience its saving efficacy, it is, to use the language of our Confession, "because they do not come to Christ." That they do not come to Christ, is ascribable solely to the voluntary, cherished sinfulness of their hearts. There is no secret purpose

\* "Mr. Winter was lately in company with an Arminian who spoke violently against the doctrine of election. 'You believe election,' said Mr. Winter, 'as firmly as I do.' 'I deny it,' answered the other: 'on the contrary, it is a doctrine I detest.' 'Do you believe that all men will be saved on the last day, or some only?' 'Only some.' 'Do you imagine that those some will be found to have saved themselves?' 'No, certainly; God in Christ is the only Savior of sinners.' 'But God could have saved the rest; could he not?' 'No doubt.' 'Then salvation is peculiar to the saved?' 'To be sure.' 'And God saves them designedly, and not against his will?' 'Certainly.' 'And suffers the rest to perish, though he could have hindered it?' 'It should seem so.' 'Then, is not this election?'"—Anec. Short. Cat.

of God to hinder their coming; nor is there any physical impediment in their way. It has indeed been often asserted, that we represent sinners as "bound hand and foot," and yet punished for not coming to Christ. I need not say, that there is not a word of truth in such statements. It was shown in a former discourse, that our brethren of other communions; even those most hostile to us, state the sinner's inability quite as strongly as we do ourselves. It may not be uninteresting to present some further proofs of this singular fact.

The Protestant Episcopal church, in their Articles of Religion, Art. 10, express their opinion on the subject, in the following words: "The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore, we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

Our brethren of the Evangelical Lutheran church, also, in the Augsburg Confession of Faith, adopted by them, tell us, that "man's will—hath no power to perform a spiritual justice, without the Holy Spirit; because Paul saith, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;' and Christ saith, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' Now this spiritual justice is wrought in us when we are helped of the Holy Ghost." And again, say they, "We condemn the Pelagians, and all such as they are, who teach, that by the only powers of nature, without the Holy Spirit, we may love God above all, and fulfil

the law of God as touching the substance of our actions. We do freely and necessarily dislike these dreams, for they do obscure the benefits of Christ."

Our Cumberland brethren, also, in their Confession of Faith, Chap. 6, Sec. 4, declare their sentiments in the following language: "From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." Nothing can be more decided than the language here employed. It declares that man in his natural state, is not only "indisposed," but "disabled, and made opposite to all good." And it perfectly agrees with a passage quoted in the former discourse, in which it is asserted, that "Man—has lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation." Some indeed might suppose that these passages are intended to describe an imaginary condition in which man would have been placed, but for the mediation of Christ. And it might be alleged, that through the Redeemer's sufferings and the gift of the Holy Ghost, the aforesaid *disability* is now removed from all men. But no—according to these brethren, the sinner's inability constantly remains, till God removes it in the process of conversion. For they declare in their Confession of Faith, chap. 9, sec. 4, that "When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the kingdom of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by *his grace alone enables him* freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good." So again, they represent the sinner's inability as remaining till he is *effectually called*. In Chap. 10, Sec. 2, under the head of "Effectual Calling," they say, "This call is of God's free grace alone; not from any good thing at all fore-

seen in man, who is altogether dead in sin, until being enlightened by the Holy Spirit, he is *thereby enabled* to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it." And they tell us that even the faith, by which the sinner receives Christ, is a divine gift—chap. 11, sec. 1: "Which faith they have not of themselves; it is the gift of God." Nay, according to these brethren, the inability of man is not entirely removed by effectual calling. For in their catechism, Q. 82, it is asked, "Is any man able perfectly to keep the moral law?" And the answer is, "No."\*

We are happy to express our entire approbation of all the above extracts. We quote, not to censure, but to applaud. And we here call your attention to the fact, that no scheme of doctrine, even approaching an evangelical character, can be attempted by any denomination, without introducing some of the distinguishing features of the Calvinistic system. It seems to be the general sentiment of christians, that there is a difficulty in the way of the sinner's conversion—an inability arising from the state of his heart. Presbyterians indeed maintain that the inability in question, is an inability of the *will*; and is not of a physical, but of a moral kind; and consequently, leaves the sinner without excuse. Still, all evangelical christians admit, that there is an inability of some kind; and the question is, how is it to be removed? This is not a question of idle speculation; it is one

\* If it be alleged that Cumberland Presbyterians "profess one thing and preach another,"—I answer, that however this remark may be true of some unworthy individuals, (and what church does not contain some such,) we should not bring so sweeping a charge against the great body of ministers in that denomination.

of great practical importance. Is the sinner to overcome the difficulty himself? Or is he to implore the aid of that God who will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Is the sinner to rely on his own ability to repent and believe on Christ, at any future time he pleases, and thus dismiss all present anxiety on the subject? Or is he now to cast himself on sovereign mercy, crying, "Lord, save, or I perish?" Such is the true statement of the question; and I trust, my hearers, you will decide upon it conscientiously, in view of that solemn declaration of the Savior, "Without me, ye can do nothing."

While on this part of the subject, permit me to notice a certain theory, which at different periods, from the time of Pelagius in the fifth century, down to the present day, has made some noise in the world. It is this: That man by the fall lost the freedom of his will; or, in other words, that his will became *trammelled*. And that, had he remained in this condition, he would have been free from condemnation and safe from punishment. But grace interfered with this state of things; the Lord Jesus by his death procured grace for all men, by which the will was *untrammelled*. As a consequence, every man's inclinations are so nearly balanced between good and evil, holiness and sin, that the will, by its self-determining power, may cause him to vibrate in either direction at pleasure. On this theory I remark,—

1. That it has not a particle of support in the scriptures. It is mere theory.

2. All who are acquainted with that profound and intricate subject, the human will, know perfectly well, that man could not lose the natural freedom of his will, without ceasing to be a rational creature. Accordingly our Confession, chap. 9, sec. 1, tells us,

that "God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty; that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good or evil."

3. According to the whole tenor of scripture, no one was ever led to Christ and salvation by the self-determining power of his own will. Of believers it is said, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:13. And the apostle says, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Rom. 9:16. And again, in Eph. 1:5, "Predestinated according to the good pleasure of his (God's) will;" not according to the self-determination of man's will.

4. This theory utterly precludes the necessity, and even the propriety of prayer to God for the conversion of sinners. For if the question of their salvation depend on their self-determining power, who does not see that our prayers should be addressed, not to God, but to the sinners themselves?

But no, my friends, no one would ever have loved God, if God had not first loved him. Nor would any have chosen Christ, if Christ had not first chosen them. He himself says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bear much fruit." And this grand gospel-truth is beautifully illustrated in the parable which is the foundation of these discourses. A great supper was prepared. The servant went forth and proclaimed to them that were bidden, "Come, for all things are now ready." And did they come? Did the self-determination of their own wills lead any to embrace the generous offer? Not in a single instance. And what if the Master of the house had not con-

strained some to accept his invitation? Not one would have tasted his supper. And thus, if God had not determined by his grace effectually to draw some to the Savior, not an individual of the race would ever have accepted the offer of salvation. He knew from eternity the character that would be possessed by our fallen race. He knew that they would possess corrupt, rebellious dispositions, and that they would expose themselves to his wrath. Yet, moved by infinite mercy, he determined to rescue a part of the race from perdition. In accordance with this glorious design, he resolved to send into the world his Son Jesus Christ to prepare a great salvation. And he would send forth his ministering servants to offer this salvation to the whole human family. But he also knew from eternity, that notwithstanding the plenteous provision of the gospel,—sufficient for all, adapted to all, offered to all,—without his special interference all would make excuse and reject its gracious overtures. No power possessed by his ministering servants,—no zeal or eloquence they might employ,—would be sufficient to constrain a single individual to lay down the weapons of rebellion and be reconciled to God. And he saw from eternity, that unless his almighty Spirit should interpose in the glory of his grace and bow the stubborn heart of the sinner, all would be lost, and Christ would shed his precious blood in vain. These appalling consequences God clearly foresaw, and he resolved to prevent them. He was not willing that the whole race should finally perish. He determined to save some, to rescue a part of the human family from the everlasting consequences of sin. And this glorious purpose he is now carrying into effect, wherever the gospel is proclaimed. He sends down the special

influences of the divine Spirit to attend the means of grace; and renews, sanctifies and saves rebellious sinners, sweetly constraining them to approach the Savior, for pardon and reconciliation.

Such is the doctrine of sovereign, gratuitous, eternal election; and I shall now proceed to confirm its truth by some additional arguments.

1. Let us hear what the great infallible Teacher will say on the subject.

He was "foreordained before the foundation of the world," to be a Mediator between God and man. He entered into a covenant engagement, "to give his life a ransom for many." But can you believe, my hearers, that he would undertake the dreadful work, on an uncertainty? Would he consent to endure the death of the cross, and the wrath of a sin-avenging God, trusting to chance, or to the self-determining power of the human will, for the reward of his death? No;—he clearly foresaw, that in such an event, not one sinner would be rescued from perdition; never would he obtain the smallest recompense for his sufferings. Hence it was rendered certain from eternity, that a portion of the human family should experience the benefits of his salvation. We read of a promise of eternal life, made before the world began: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Titus 1:1, 2. To whom was this promise made? Not to creatures; for they were not then in existence, but to the Lord Jesus Christ. The ancient prophets frequently refer to this promise, made to the Messiah. Says Isaiah,—“When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed; he shall prolong his days; and the pleasure of the Lord shall

prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities:" Isa. 53:10, 11. And the Psalmist referring to the Messiah, says,—“A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.” And addressing the Savior,—“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power:" Ps. 22:30 and 110:3. Accordingly the Lord Jesus speaks of those that were promised him, with peculiar tenderness, as *his sheep*, and as those that were *given him* by the Father. “I lay down my life for the sheep.” “Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which *gave them me*, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.” John 10:26—29. Elect Gentiles are counted as sheep, even before their conversion: “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice;”—chap. 10:16. And alluding to the promise of the everlasting covenant, he says, “All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I shall lose nothing.” John 6:37—39. To his heavenly Father he says, “Thou hast given him (the Son of man) power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” “I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast

given me." "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." John 17:2, 9 and 24. To the mother of Zebedee's children he said, "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." Matt. 20:23. "Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34. Such are the solemn declarations of the Redeemer himself; and they do not admit of any evasion. They may be perverted and disbelieved, but not one word of them shall pass away. And let me ask you, my hearers, do they not justify Presbyterians in the belief that a portion of the human family was secured to Christ, by the Father, as the reward of his sufferings? And what is this but the doctrine of election?\*

\* It has been alleged that the Lord Jesus suffered some that were given him, to be lost; but if so, he did not do the will of the Father. For he himself says, "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing." Joh. 6:39. Still it is contended that the fact may be proved from John 17:12,— "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." From this passage, it is argued, that the son of perdition must have been given to Christ. But this is a gross mistake, arising from a misunderstanding of the peculiar idiom of the language used by the sacred writers. The very same idiom is observable in Luke 4:27: "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian." It might just as well be argued from this passage, that Naaman was a "leper in Israel," though it is the design of the sacred writer to make it plain that he was not. The meaning may be given thus: Many lepers were in Israel, in the time of Eliseus the prophet, and none of them was cleansed—but Naaman the Syrian (was cleansed.) And so in John 17:12, the sense is, "Those that thou gavest me, I have kept; and none of them is lost—but the son of perdition, (is lost,) that the scripture might be fulfilled."

2. This doctrine may also be argued from the *promise of a future millennium*.

God has promised his church, that at some future period, fixed by himself, "all shall know the Lord, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." "I will declare the *decree*," says Messiah. "The Lord hath said unto me, 'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.'" Psalm 2:7, 8. When this period arrives, "the people shall all be righteous;" for the Lord Jesus will carry into full effect that declaration to his disciples,—“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” John 12:32. Then “the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in; and so all Israel shall be saved.” Rom. 11:25, 26. Here then, is a solemn promise of him who is the Lord, and changes not; a promise founded upon a fixed determination, or “decree.” During the period of “a thousand years,” or perhaps for a period of much greater duration, God has purposed, according to his “counsels of old,” to bring all the inhabitants of this earth to the enjoyment of salvation; and has also determined the means by which it shall be accomplished. And his determination gives absolute certainty to the event. What is this, but the doctrine of election, which simply affirms that God, of his free grace and love, has purposed to make a portion of mankind the subjects of his grace? And as all who shall be born during the millennial period, will certainly possess that natural aversion to God and holiness, which characterizes the whole race, no reason can be assigned why all that live on the earth during that particular period, should be right-

eous, except that God has determined to bring them to the gospel-feast. Nor can we allege any other reason why God should choose them to salvation in preference to many previous generations of men, than "the good pleasure of his will." And the objection, that it represents God as partial, that it conflicts with free agency,—indeed all the arguments usually urged against election,—will lie with equal force against the promise of a future millennium.\*

3. The doctrine may be proved also, by the unchangeableness of God.

When the monks of Rome were informed of Galileo's assertion, that the sun remained fixed in the centre of the great system, and that the changes from day to night, and from night to day, were caused by the revolution of the earth on its axis, they were filled with astonishment and indignation. To them, the doctrine appeared an enormous absurdity, contradicted by the every-day testimony of their senses. For why should not the water be emptied from the wells,

\* According to the scheme of our Anti-Calvinist brethren, there can be no absolute certainty of the future conversion of any individual of the human family; because, as they allege, an absolute certainty of such an event, founded upon a promise, determination or decree of God, would be "partiality and arbitrary injustice;" and would "take away human liberty." And if this be true, the future conversion of the world, is a merely probable event. On the contrary, according to the Calvinistic scheme, the greater part of the future inhabitants of the world, will be constrained by almighty grace to approach the gospel-feast. For when we consider the capacity of this globe to sustain fifty times its present population; the great increase of the human family during the millennial period; and the certainty that for the space of a thousand years, (some commentators say many thousand years,) all the people shall be made righteous; we may, on the Calvinistic scheme, readily conclude that the vast majority of the descendants of Adam, will at last be found the subjects of gratuitous election and salvation. And yet some weak and ignorant persons have urged, "that according to the Presbyterians, very few will be saved, and all the rest must perish;" as though their own scheme held out more favorable hopes of the final happiness of the human species.

while the earth was rolling around its centre! But how is it, my friends, that many who laugh at the folly of the ignorant monks, are guilty of far greater folly themselves? How is it, that when some men are told that God is unchangeable; that all his purposes are unalterably fixed; and that we must look to the creatures for all the changes which occur in the universe;—how is it, I say, that they are affected with equal contempt and indignation? They too, bring forward arguments drawn from their daily experience. They tell us that our doctrine conflicts with the freedom of the human will, and with moral accountability. But in opposition to all such reasonings, the Bible asserts the unchangeableness of God. “He is of one mind, and who can turn him?”—“Without any variableness or shadow of turning.” Job 23:13, and James 1:17. “The counsel of the Lord standeth forever; and the thoughts of his heart to all generations.” Psl. 33:11. And God himself expressly claims this character, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” Isa. 46:10. If the Deity could be supposed to increase in knowledge, wisdom, or power, it might be admitted that every advance of this kind might lead him to form a new purpose. But as He is always the same, so his *purposes* are ever the same. If He has ever formed any new design to save sinners, then he has altered his first plan, and is changeable. But if he has always been of the same mind, then every individual he *now* intends to save, he must *always* have intended to save. And thus, the unchangeableness of the divine character, establishes the doctrine of election.

4. This doctrine may also be proved by arguments drawn from the *divine foreknowledge*.

I trust it will be freely admitted by my present audience, that God knows all things,—past, present, and to come. To limit in any degree the knowledge of the Most High, is to strip him of one of the essential perfections of Deity. To say, therefore, that he did not choose to know all things, is to say that he did not choose to be God. But the scriptures place this point beyond dispute. “Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.” It must therefore be admitted that God knew from eternity, all that would come to pass in time. Suppose then that God converts a sinner to-day; or, in other words, constrains him to come to the gospel-feast. He knew from all eternity that he would do this; he knew it with certainty. He did not merely know that he *probably* might convert that sinner; but he knew with absolute certainty that he would. But how could he know this, unless his determination was already made up? If his determination was unsettled, then the issue was doubtful; and if doubtful, it could not certainly be known. It is impossible, my hearers, to look at this with an unprejudiced mind, and not admit the doctrine of election. How could God know from all eternity that he would certainly convert a sinner to-day, unless he had come to a certain determination so to do? For if he had not a fixed determination to convert the sinner, he could not have known with certainty that he ever would convert him. And thus the divine foreknowledge places the truth of election beyond all doubt.\*

\* Some Indians of South America being informed by the missionaries, that God knew all things, replied, “We do not desire a God so sharp-sighted.” How far advanced beyond these heathens, are those professed christians, who limit the foreknowledge of the Deity?

And hence you may learn the reasons why Presbyterians are not willing to speak of God's designs or purposes, as *conditional*. Such language represents God as unsettled in his determinations, through some defect of knowledge, goodness or power. Men indeed form conditional designs, because they cannot penetrate into futurity, and consequently cannot determine how they ought to act in any future emergency. But the knowledge, power and goodness of God are infinite, and can never be increased; and therefore he need not wait to see how his creatures will act, before he determines what he will himself do. Hence our Confession of Faith tells us, that, "Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet he hath not decreed any thing, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass, upon such conditions." Chap. 3, sec. 2.\*

And hence, too, we may perceive the force of that passage in our Confession, so often objected to, which affirms that the number of the elect "can neither be increased nor diminished." Chap. 3, sec. 4. This passage refers simply to the number of the elect, as comprehended by the infinite mind of the Deity, to whom only it can be exactly known. The number of converted sinners, as viewed by the eye of man, is indefinite and uncertain, and may be greater or less than his expectations. It may be said, that if christians were more earnest in prayer,

\* Some Anti-Calvinists strain this passage to make it say that God did not avail himself of his knowledge, in the formation and execution of his eternal purposes; an idea which is expressly contradicted in the larger Catechism, Q. 14:—"God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge."

and in the use of the appointed means for the conversion of sinners, a greater number of sinners would be converted and saved. Because the connection between the means and the end, is just as much a subject of foreordination, as any other thing.\* And for the same reason, all these converted sinners would be found at last among the subjects of sovereign, gratuitous election. And still the number, as originally contemplated by the eye of infinite Foreknowledge, would not be increased or diminished. And permit me to remark, that every person, of whatever religious creed, who admits the doctrine of foreknowledge, has a difficulty to meet, of precisely the same kind. For if he allow that God knew from eternity the exact number that would be saved, then let me ask, can that number be increased or diminished? And if so, would it not prove that God did not know the exact number? Now here is a difficulty which, I confess, I could not fairly solve, on Anti-Calvinist principles. Men of little minds are often heard to say, they find no difficulties involved in the doctrine of divine foreknowledge. Not so the celebrated John Wesley. His penetrating mind discovered difficulties here, for which the principles of Arminianism could afford no remedy. In his letter to Dr. Robertson, dated Sept. 24th, 1753, found in his miscellaneous works, he writes,—“And if any one ask, how God’s foreknowledge is consistent with our freedom, I plainly answer, I cannot tell.”

I shall now proceed to answer OBJECTIONS made against the doctrine.

*Objection 1.*—It is frequently urged against elec-

\* Acts 27:31.—“Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.”

tion in particular, and foreordination in general, that these doctrines, as held by Calvinists, conflict with the *freedom of man's will*, and involve the principle of *fatality*. And yet the idea of fatalism, is carefully excluded by the very terms which Calvinists employ in defining the doctrines. In stating the doctrine of foreordination, for instance, the language of our Confession is, "God ordained whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established:" chap. 3, sec. 1. Here, as you perceive, our church rejects all such foreordination as would conflict with the freedom of the will, or that would take away—nay, that would not rather establish the necessity and efficacy of means. Where then, is there any ground for the charge of fatalism?

Still it is often urged, "that the very words, *foreordain* and *predestinate*, involve the idea of *fatality*." Do they indeed? When Peter tells us that Christ "was foreordained before the foundation of the world," does he mean to say that the Savior's advent, sufferings and death, were decreed by fate, to be accomplished without means, and in violation of his natural freedom? And when Paul tells the Ephesians that they had been "predestinated unto the adoption of children," must we understand him as asserting that those christians had become such by fatal necessity? This would indeed be a novel commentary on the language of the sacred writers.

This objection of fatality, allow me to say, does not come with a good grace from those who maintain the certain, infallible perseverance of the saints. For if God can render certain the continuance of

believers in holiness, without affecting their free agency, or setting aside the necessity of means, then he can on the same principles, render it certain that sinners shall become believers. The one is no more difficult than the other; and there is as much fatality in the one case, as in the other.\*

But how, it will be asked, can the Lord constrain a sinner to come to Christ, if the sinner chooses to resist? It is well to throw in the word *if*. For when God undertakes to convert a sinner, he knows how to exercise such a control over his affections, that he shall not choose to resist. His people "shall be willing in the day of his power." "I drew them," says Jehovah, "with cords of a man, with bands of love." Hos. 11:4. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Ezek. 36:26. And here I wish to remark, that in using the word *constrain*, in these discourses, I do not wish to intimate that sinners are literally *compelled* to approach the gospel-feast. I use the word only in the sense in which it is used by the great apostle, when he says, "The love of Christ *constraineth* us." I will also observe, that Presbyterians do not speak of renewing grace as *irresistible*, but rather, as *unresisted*. Lest their

\* Calvinism is consistent with itself. Its several parts form a magnificent arch, from which if a single stone be removed, the whole falls to the ground. Election and Perseverance must stand or fall together. Those who deny both, are far more consistent than those who maintain Perseverance, and yet deny Election: the former represent religion as a great temple, into which a person may easily enter, and as easily withdraw: the latter represent it as a species of labyrinth, into which a person may easily introduce himself; but when he is once in, can never find his way out.

meaning should be misconstrued, they prefer using the term *effectual*, or *efficacious* grace, which signifies such a measure of divine influence, as will secure the sinner's conversion.

Some professed christians indeed, contend, that the Lord cannot, without violating the freedom of the will, convert any sinner he pleases. But it is observed that they always abandon this opinion whenever they approach a throne of grace. There, they do not tell the Lord that he is unable to convince and convert men; but their language is, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst subdue the hearts of these rebellious sinners." Indeed, if sinners are beyond the reach of almighty grace, prayer in their behalf, is useless, unmeaning mockery.

The manner in which sovereign grace draws sinners to the Savior, is so admirably described by our Cumberland brethren, under the head of "Effectual Calling," that I cannot forbear to transcribe the passage. "The work," say they, "is effected by taking away their heart of stone, and giving them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace." Confession of Faith, chap. 10. And this is downright Calvinism.

*Objection 2.*—It is also objected against those who believe the doctrine of election, that they hold what is called *eternal reprobation*.

I answer, that neither the words, nor the ideas usually attached to the words, have any place in our Confession of Faith, and consequently form no part of the Presbyterian creed. It is true that many Calvinists have, in their writings, used the word repro-

bation in its scriptural sense, (Rom. 1:28,) but not in the sense imputed to them by their adversaries. It was shown in the former discourse, that agreeably to our Confession, the non-elect "are justly left in unbelief, on account of their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them." And as the master of the feast resolved that those that were bidden and would not come, should never taste of his supper, so God determined to pass by those who should persist in their refusal of his mercy, "ordaining them to wrath and dishonor for their sin."\* And this is in exact conformity to the language of inspiration, which tells us of "ungodly men who were before of old ordained to condemnation." I am ready at any time to produce an overwhelming amount of testimony to prove that this was the view of the subject adopted by the framers of our Confession of Faith, and by genuine Calvinists in all ages. At present, as we are frequently charged with "softening down the asperities of Calvinism," I shall refer to a few authorities. The Synod of Dort, which assembled in the year 1618, and in which the whole Calvinistic world was represented, in reply to some calumnies of their enemies, (the very same now em-

\* It is admitted by intelligent Anti-Calvinists, that God from eternity determined to punish the finally impenitent, knowing at the same time all the individuals who would compose that class. The Calvinist merely adds to this, that God is able to overcome their wilful obstinacy, and bring them to accept the terms of salvation; but that for wise reasons, he permits them to continue in sin, and become appalling monuments of his justice. And herein consists the sovereignty of his dispensations towards them. Thus their destruction is of themselves; and their refusal of mercy, is in the order in which it stands in the divine mind, prior to the determination to punish.

ployed against Presbyterians,) say that "this their declaration ought to suffice all lovers of peace, and men of moderate dispositions, viz., that God condemned no one; yea, neither had he decreed to condemn any one, unless justly for his own proper sins." So again in chap. 1, art. 15, speaking of the non-elect, they say, "Whom truly God decreed to leave in the common misery into which they had by their own fault cast themselves; and at length, not only on account of their *unbelief*, but also of all their other sins, to condemn and eternally punish them, to the manifestation of his own justice."

Dr. Twisse, who was Chairman of the Assembly that composed our Confession of Faith, and who must have understood its meaning quite as well as some modern Anti-Calvinists, says, "that his opinion is well known, that God doth not ordain any man to damnation, before the consideration of sin." And again, "That God of his mere pleasure created all; but of his mere pleasure, damneth none; but every one that is damned, is damned for his sin, wilfully committed and contumaciously persisted in by them that come to riper years."

Dr. Thomas Ridgley, in his *Body of Divinity*, vol. 1, page 491, says, "Since God's permitting sin, or not hindering it, cannot be said to be the cause of its being committed, there being no cause thereof but the will of man; it follows from hence, that God's punishing sin, is not to be resolved into his permission of it as the cause thereof, but into the rebellion of man's will, as refusing to be subject to the divine law. And thus God considered men, when, in his eternal purpose, he determined to condemn those whose desert of this punishment was foreseen by him from all eternity."

I quote these passages merely to show what views were entertained by the Calvinists of former times. I am aware that our sentiments have been grossly misrepresented. Presbyterians are frequently accused with holding, that God decreed to damnation, the greater part of mankind, from his mere pleasure, and without regard to their moral character.\* The Lord shall judge betwixt us and those misguided persons who make these assertions. It was shown in a former discourse, that according to our Methodist brethren, "God refused or reprobated all disobedient unbelievers, as such, to damnation;" and that agreeably to our Cumberland Presbyterian brethren,

\* A clerical friend of the writer, distinguished for the mildness of his manners, was lately treated with *jure divino* insolence by an Anti-Calvinist clergyman, who charged him to his face with "falsehood," because he denied that the Presbyterian Confession teaches the doctrine of Predestination to death, without regard to moral character. This reverend *successor* of Diotrephe, was quite as deficient in intelligence, as in good breeding. The passage he quoted to sustain his position, is found in the Confession, chap. 3, sec. 2; and its meaning is obvious to every one who has the slightest acquaintance with the history of Theology. The Arminians supposed that God entertained at the same time, several different and opposite determinations, suspended in uncertainty on so many different and opposite possible results. Thus, before the fall of man, he formed one purpose to send a Savior into the world, and another purpose not to send him—neither of which purposes could become fully settled till he should wait and see whether man would stand or fall. So also, he formed one determination to save, and another to damn all mankind,—both of which being dependent upon uncertain conditions, he could not make up his mind positively which determination he would carry into effect, till he would see how his creatures would act. Now, in opposition to this degrading view of Deity, our Confession of Faith represents the divine Being, as able to judge of the reasons which should influence his future conduct, just as well at one period as at another; and therefore as fully settled in all his determinations in eternity, as in time; his purposes not being conditioned upon uncertain contingencies. At the same time, it represents him as influenced by the best possible reasons in all his determinations, and as decreeing none to punishment, but for their own demerit. Hence, the passage above cited, teaches, that "although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet he hath not decreed any thing, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass, upon such conditions."

“God, according to the counsel of his own will, fore-ordained to bring to pass”—“the damnation of the reprobate.” I submit it to this respected audience, whether the doctrine of Presbyterians on the subject, is at all harsher than this.

*Objection 3.*—If the doctrine of election be true, why need I make use of *means*, to secure my salvation?

We answer, the decree of God, instead of taking away, “rather establishes” the necessity of means, God’s determination to save Noah by means of the ark, only rendered the construction of the ark the more necessary to his salvation from the flood. God determined to save Paul from shipwreck, by the exertions of the seamen; and that rendered their exertions so necessary, that Paul could not be saved without them. Though “there stood by him an angel of God, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee,”—yet, “as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.” If God has determined to favor you with an abundant harvest, through his blessing on your own industry; does it follow that you may safely neglect to break up the soil and sow the seed? No! Be assured, that if you leave your salvation to some supposed decree of God, neglecting all exertions on your own part, you will sink to hell in spite of election. God has never ordained an end without ordaining the means by which it shall be accomplished.

But says one, “If I am not elected to be saved, what good will it do to try?” I shall best answer this question by asking another: if God has not deter-

mined that you shall leave this place of worship and return to your homes this evening, what good will it do to try to reach your homes? The answer which will suit this question, will equally suit the other.

*Objection 4.*—Election is a *discouraging doctrine*.

*Answer.*—As long as it is true, that unless the Master of the house determine to constrain men to approach the gospel-feast, and carry his determination into effect, they will never come at all—I cannot see how the fact that he does constrain a part to come, should prove discouraging. But whom does it discourage? Faithful ministers? All their hopes of success are derived from God's gracious determination to save. Was it discouraging to the apostle Paul, when laboring in the corrupt, idolatrous city of Corinth, to hear the voice of the Lord saying, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I have much people in this city?" Acts 18:9, 10. Or, was it discouraging to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, in prospect of laboring among the heathen, to be assured from the testimony of the inspired Simeon, that "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them [i. e. to elect] a people for his name?" Acts 15:14. No, my hearers, ministers would all be in despair without the doctrine. Who then are discouraged? Praying christians? Without the encouragement derived from God's unchanging purpose to save, they could not have the heart to open their mouths in supplication to God. Were they convinced that the salvation of sinners were left to chance, or were suspended on the will's self-determining power, the lips of prayer would be sealed in everlasting silence. Whom then, I ask again, does this doctrine discourage? The anxious sinner?

It is upon this truth that he relies, when every other support has failed. He resolves to take his life in his hand, and cast himself at the footstool of sovereign mercy, saying,—

“I can but perish if I go;  
I am resolved to try;  
For if I stay away, I know  
I must forever die.”

No, my friends, the doctrine of election discourages none but careless, presumptuous or self-righteous persons, who are building their hopes upon a foundation of sand.

*Objection 5.*—It is alleged that the doctrine of election, and that whole system of which election is a part, exerts a *demoralizing influence*.

We deny it, and appeal with confidence to the testimony of all history, to prove that the tendency of that system has been evidently the reverse of that imputed to it by the objector. We point you to those countries, and districts of country, whether in Europe or America, where Calvinism has long been the prevailing creed, and where its doctrines have been instilled into the minds of the people from their very infancy—and we ask, what has ever been their moral and religious character? The unanimous voice of historians and travelers declares, that the population of such countries have ever been distinguished above that of the neighboring states, by a purer and more elevated morality. “Will it not be granted by every intelligent reader, that during the first half century after the Reformation was established in England, when nineteen-twentieths of the Protestant clergy in that kingdom were avowed Calvinists, the state both of piety and of morals, was

unspeakably better, than during the latter half of the seventeenth century, when Arminianism had, among the majority, taken its place? What was the character of the two thousand 'ejected ministers,' in the reign of Charles II. who were almost to a man Calvinists? Were they not, characteristically as a body, the most pious, pure, diligent and exemplary servants of God, that England ever saw? Is it not universally admitted, that the state of piety and of morals has ever been far more pure in Scotland than in England, and pre-eminently in those districts and congregations in Scotland, in which Calvinism has maintained a steady reign? And can any part of the world be named, in which for nearly a hundred years after its settlement, purer morals reigned, than in New England, in which, as every one knows, during the greater part of that period, a Calvinistic creed almost universally prevailed?\*"

On this subject also, the British Encyclopedia, a work unfriendly to Calvinism, makes a remarkable concession. At the close of a long article on Predestination, the writers say,—“There is one remark which we feel ourselves bound in justice to make, although it appears to us somewhat singular. It is this,—that from the earliest ages down to our own days, if we consider the character of the ancient Stoics, the Jewish Essenes, the modern Calvinists and Jansenists, when compared with that of their antagonists, the Epicureans, the Sadducees, the Arminians and the Jesuits, we shall find that they have excelled, in no small degree, in the practice of the most rigid and respectable virtues; and have been the highest honor of their own ages, and the best

\* DR. SAMUEL MILLER.

models for imitation to every age succeeding.”\* Indeed if Calvinism exert so corrupting an influence as its enemies pretend, we ought to expect Calvinists, more frequently than others, to fall from their profession into open immorality. But do we see this actually take place? It is not my present business to inquire whether cases of apostacy among Calvinists are fewer; for according to our opponents, they ought to be far more numerous than among an equal number of those who profess a different creed. But I submit it to the candor of this audience, whether Presbyterians are more apt, than others, to dishonor their profession, or to apostatize from the way of truth? It is however somewhat singular that the very persons who at one time charge Presbyterianism as immoral in its tendency, at other times are heard to complain of Presbyterians as *too strict*. I need not say that the one charge refutes the other.

Still it is insisted, “that the Presbyterian doctrine

\* The following is a part of a letter addressed by a Methodist to the Editor of a religious paper, in whose columns there had appeared a severe and denunciatory letter against those holding Calvinistic views. We wish we could see more of the spirit manifested in the extract, among our Anti-Calvinist brethren. Of that correspondent he says,—“He should not forget that among them [Calvinists] are some of the greatest christians and biblical scholars now upon the stage; that among them too, are large numbers of able, devoted and excellent ministers, at whose feet he and myself would delight to sit and receive instruction. Nor should he forget that, by these same ‘heretics,’ almost every benevolent cause, is fostered and encouraged—the largest missionary operations are carried forward—and the most vigorous efforts are made to save the world. He should remember too, that Christ loves them, and crowns their pious labors with success. Is it judicious, to brand as ‘heretics,’ such a people?”

*does harm.*" But how is it that it does harm? Only when misrepresented and perverted by its enemies. And this is neither our fault nor the fault of the doctrine. We proclaim the truth of God just as we find it recorded in the sacred volume. Designing sectaries, in order to render it odious, artfully mix with it, soul-destroying error. We hand out the pure water of life from the divine fountain; they mix with it the poison of death, and then give it circulation. If therefore harm is done, we cannot be held accountable. The whole responsibility, and it is a fearful one, rests upon those misguided persons who, to serve the purposes of a party, give currency to their own perversions of the doctrines we preach. It is the poison they infuse into the cup of salvation, which does all the mischief.

Indeed it must be admitted, that no system of doctrine, from the time of the apostles, has ever been so shamefully perverted and falsified by its enemies, as that maintained by the Presbyterians. Nor is there any religious denomination in the land, half so much vilified and persecuted by wicked men, and worldly, time-serving professors of the gospel. I do not speak of this as one that "counts it strange;" for the nearer any system approaches that of Christ and his apostles, the more offensive it will be to the unrenewed heart. Nor do I complain of it as a dispensation of Providence. Doubtless, the Head of the church permits it, with a view to his own glory and the ultimate triumph of his truth. And in all probability he will still permit this bitter hostility to continue, till we are aroused from our supineness and led to take a more decided stand, *offensive* as well as defensive, in support of the truth. Nor indeed do I wish to cast censure upon the great body of the members of any

christian society. Left to themselves, they would no doubt desire to live in peace with all who love the Savior. But unhappily, almost every denomination contains in its bosom a number of bigoted partisans, ministers as well as laymen, who are the bane of christian society. And these are the men who bring about those disgraceful dissensions among christians, which occasion religion to mourn and infidelity to triumph. They conceive it to be the interest of their party to cry down the doctrines and the preachers of other denominations, and render them as odious as they can in the eyes of the community. Against Presbyterians especially, they employ all the petty artifices that sectarian cunning can devise. Being unable to enlist the civil power on their side, they have ever a sort of secret and fanatical police, which they use for the attainment of their ends. Finding it impossible, after repeated trials, to overthrow the doctrines of our church by fair and manly argument, they descend to a course of misrepresentation and slander, at variance with every principle of honesty, and even of common decency.\*

\* It is really painful to see a man like the late Dr. FISK, so far carried away with blind party zeal, as to make the following statement: "They [Calvinists] believe that God determined to create men and angels for the express purpose to damn them eternally; and that he determined to introduce sin, and influence men to commit sin, and harden them in it, that they might be fit subjects of his wrath." Disc. on Pred., p. 27. The Cumberland brethren, in their pamphlet published at Uniontown, tell the world that the Presbyterian doctrine,—1st. Does not admit the idea of a general sufficiency in the Gospel for the whole human family. 2d. Does not admit, that all have a day of grace. 3d. Does not admit the idea, that God requires faith of all. 4th. Does not admit, that all dying in infancy, are saved. 5th. Does not admit the idea of a general resurrection. 6th. Does not admit the idea of a general judgment, &c.—Page 23. Now, though it is not a new thing, that Calvinists should be slandered, and that men should "say all manner of evil against them falsely,"—yet it would be difficult to find in the whole compass of controversy, more gross, barefaced, inexcusable misre-

They proclaim from the pulpit and the press, and from house to house, that Presbyterians maintain a system of fatality—that they represent men as mere machines, destitute of both power and will—that they believe that God made the greater part of mankind merely to damn them,—and that to this end he works wickedness in the wicked—that if a person be elected, he will be saved, let him do what he will, and that if not elected he cannot be saved, let him do what he may—that there are infants in hell not a span long, &c. All this and much more, they assert and reiterate in direct contradiction to oft-repeated declarations in our Confession of Faith, and in opposition to all that Presbyterians have ever spoken or written on these subjects.

Such is the *moral practice* of the men who are so much afraid of the demoralizing influence of Calvinism! And may I not humbly ask,—Are these the *good works*, of which they claim to be the exclusive advocates? these the evidences on which they found their confident assurance of salvation? Do they never think of that solemn command of Jehovah, pronounced from the midst of the lightnings and thunders of Sinai,—“**THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR?**” Or do they not consider Calvinists as neighbors?

If at any time we undertake to refute their misre-

presentations than these. They are only equalled by the false testimony borne against Christ and his apostles, by the Jews. How can men who do such things, look up to God for a blessing upon their labors!

The able author of the “*Difficulties of Methodism*,” has brought to light a systematic course of fraud practiced by the Managers of the Methodist Book Concern, who, it appears, endeavor in various publications, to sustain their perversions of Calvinism by false quotations. And he produces, in the appendix to his work, fifteen or twenty instances, in which they have falsified passages from the Confession of Faith, and different standard authors.

presentations by exhibiting our real sentiments, they discover the utmost alarm and irritation, as though their dearest rights were invaded. Instantly their secret police is set to work, and reports are spread far and near, that we have perpetrated some daring outrage against the peace of christian society. Now they feel that their "craft is in danger." Now they must resort to new artifices to sustain their credit. They assert that we have "covered up the offensive features of Calvinism;" deserted its true and ancient landmarks, and contradicted our own professed belief. And what proof do they bring to support this charge? None, but their own empty assertion. And have they carefully examined the subject? No.—Have they read? No. Have they thought? No. How then do they arrive at their conclusion? O they are such giants in intellect, that without reading, conversation or reflection, they can decide peremptorily upon matters which require more study, learning and knowledge, than other men can even comprehend. It is in vain that we on our part, point them to the Confession of Faith; in vain do we quote a multitude of writers both ancient and modern, in evidence that we have given a faithful exhibition of our doctrines. They are not to be convinced by evidence. For the thousandth time they will repeat their hackneyed perversions of Calvinism, while they raise a hue and cry, "that Presbyterians preach what they do not believe." Thus these persecuting bigots seek to stab the character of ministers of Christ. But what do *they* know of our belief, who can scarcely tell what they believe themselves? And how can they be qualified to explain our creed, when it is too evident that they are not

competent to give an intelligible explanation of their own?\*

My hearers, do you suppose these men really believe what they assert in reference to the doctrine of Presbyterians? Have they even a suspicion that we entertain the sentiments they impute to us? Only witness their conduct whenever they preside at the administration of the Lord's supper. Will they then permit Presbyterians to take their places at the table of the Lord, among the followers of the Savior? O yes:—if party interest dictates, they can excel all others in loud professions of charity, and can mingle with their invitations the warmest expressions of christian affection and cordial fellowship. But would they—could they do all this, if they believed that we entertained the doctrinal opinions they ascribe to us? No, my hearers; be assured that if they supposed the half were true, they are in the daily habit of charging upon us, they would as soon think of inviting infidels or atheists to their communion. They

\* These misguided fanatics remind one of the old Papists, whom they strongly resemble in four or five particulars:—  
 1. They shun to submit questions to the test of the Bible.  
 2. They shun an examination of the principal arguments of their antagonists.  
 3. They strive to keep out of view the real points in debate.  
 4. They do not inquire, What saith the scripture?—but, what does the interest of their party seem to require?  
 5. They seek to overwhelm their opponents with slander and abuse.

It is a curious fact, that all the stale slanders now uttered against Calvinists, have been from the earliest ages employed against those who advocated the same doctrines—by whom also they have always been triumphantly refuted. See Rom. 3:8 and 9:19. Augst. Ench. passim. Calvin's Inst., B. III, ch. 16 and 23. Art. of Synod of Dort—conclusion. Wendel. Theol., page 183.

know well enough that they could not, without the most glaring treachery to their divine Master, hold christian fellowship with persons maintaining the opinions they charge upon the members of the Presbyterian church. And thus it becomes evident that they attach no sort of credit to the slanders they continually circulate against our doctrinal system.

As the class of men of whom I am speaking, belong to different religious bodies, they are often engaged in fierce disputes and bitter quarrels among themselves. Yet they can on any occasion, smother their resentments and unite their different and jarring interests, and even join hands with infidels and wicked men of every description, if it be to enter upon a crusade against the Presbyterian church. Then it is seen that Annas and Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate, Pharisees and Sadducees,—however alienated,—are ready to make friends for the sake of persecuting the truth as it is in Jesus. If you are a Presbyterian, and one of these sectarian proselytes is by any means introduced into your family, he will begin the conversation with strong professions of christian charity. He will lament with much apparent feeling, the dissensions which prevail amongst the professed followers of the Savior; and as long as there remains a hope of bringing you over to his party, he will fairly overwhelm you with his flatteries and expressions of regard. But if any thing occurs to frustrate his expectations, his lamb-like gentleness is laid aside in an instant, and you will then hear the angry growl of the wolf.

While I make these remarks, I must exempt the great mass of the different denominations, from the principal part of the censure implied in them. Doubtless many well-meaning persons in connexion with

these bodies, are grievously misled by their religious teachers. But if they could be prevailed on to lay aside party prejudice, and unite in putting down the sectarian fanatics we have described, the different denominations might live together in comparative peace and harmony. And then, though there might not be so many loud professions of charity, as are now heard, there would be much more of the reality. Then, if there might not be quite so much loving "in word and in tongue," there would be much more of it, "in deed and in truth."

Thus I have endeavored, in continuation, to explain and illustrate some of the most prominent doctrines of the Bible, as set forth in the standards of the Presbyterian church. From what has been said in the previous discourses, we may see that the opposition made against these doctrines, is of a very unjustifiable character. If, as we think has been shown, the election of grace is taught in the scriptures; if it accords with the experience of all sincere and humble christians, and enters largely into all their prayers for the conversion of sinners; if it follows necessarily from the unchangeableness and foreknowledge of God; then it cannot be overthrown by misrepresentation, ridicule or abuse. Nor can the purposes of the divine mercy be frustrated or retarded in their execution, by the overflowings of blind fanatical zeal. I once heard of a person who prayed against election; and I wonder that his tongue did not cleave to the roof of his mouth, while giving utterance to a sentiment so much in unison with the feelings of devils. Surely he could not have understood the full import of the horrid imprecation. Think for a moment of the consequences which would have ensued, if God had answered that prayer.

It would at once and forever have silenced all the harps above; the joy in heaven would never have been renewed, over a repenting sinner. It would have occasioned a universal jubilee in hell. Ministers would preach and christians would pray in vain, if God should abandon his eternal purpose of mercy, and cease to draw sinners to the Savior. Would to God that men would seriously consider against what their hostility is directed, when they oppose the election of grace. It is against that eternal purpose, to which must be traced the advent of a Savior,—the gift of the Holy Ghost,—the offer of mercy,—the existence of a church,—and all the boundless, everlasting bliss of heaven. Not one thought of mercy would ever have been entertained towards our fallen, ruined race, had it not been for electing love. It is even owing to this blessed and eternal purpose, that you and I are at this moment out of hell. That we enjoy a day of grace and the means of salvation, is owing to God's eternal purpose to rescue a part of our fallen race from perdition. And yet it is against this glorious truth, that all the enmity of the human heart rises up in desperate opposition. Perhaps there is no truth that is opposed with greater bitterness by the unrenewed mind, than the election of grace. I have no doubt indeed that some oppose it, because they do not understand it. They have been accustomed so long to hear the most distorted and horrid representations of the subject from their religious teachers, that their prejudices are shocked at the very name. And yet, while they deny and oppose it in words, they do notwithstanding embrace it substantially as a part of their own experience. They will tell you that they are confident that they never would have chosen God, if God had not first chosen them.

They will acknowledge, that if they had been left to the self-determination of their own wills, they never would have approached the gospel-feast. They even confess that if God had long since "passed them by" in their impenitence and unbelief, and cast them off forever, he would have been most just and equitable.\* Now this is the very essence of the doctrine of election. But there are many others who hate and oppose it, because they see it in a light which disturbs their self-righteous hopes, and makes them uneasy in their sinful courses. The idea that they are so depraved as to need the constraining influence of Almighty grace to bring them to the Savior,—the idea that they might be as justly passed by as the very worst of the race,—this gives a deadly blow to their pride. It gives them no peace till they are reconciled to God. Hence, on one occasion, when the doctrine was preached by the Savior himself, many of his hearers "went back and walked with him no more:" John 6:66. On another occasion, when he preached it with remarkable clearness at Nazareth, the people were so enraged that they made an attempt upon his life: Luke 4:25—30. Wicked men are not willing that God should reign. They are not pleased to see the interests of eternity in his hands. They cannot bear the idea that he should "work all things after the counsel of his own will." And they are angry, because they know that his "counsel shall stand and he will do all his pleasure." And the language in which they express their enmity against the truth,

\* How often is it, that when Anti-Calvinists have heard the very strongest Calvinism from Presbyterian pulpits, without any express mention of the words Election or Predestination, they go away gratified, and even boast that they have heard *their own doctrine* preached!

is enough to make one shudder. Not long since I saw a treatise in which the writer declared that he would not believe in the election of grace, if it were revealed never so clearly in the Bible. I have also seen a tract in which it was attempted to be proved that if election were true, God was *worse than the devil!* Not twenty miles from this place, a man calling himself a preacher, declared from the pulpit, that if election were true, God Almighty ought to be (I shudder to say the word) damned!! Nothing is more common than to hear wicked men call upon God to damn the elect—to damn election and all that preach it.\* Think for a moment, my hearers, what would become of the universe, if such men could gain the object of their wishes, and frustrate the designs of Omnipotence, and arrest the arm of Redeeming Mercy! Then, from every part of our lost world, might begin the wailings of eternal despair. And what is there to call forth all this deadly hostility? Because they are not willing to be saved by sovereign, victorious grace. Would they have the whole world to perish beside them? Rather than be saved on God's terms, would they sink to hell themselves, and drag down the hosts of the redeemed to mingle their sighs and moans with theirs forever? O, who are they that indulge this spirit? Are they maniacs? or are they devils?

My christian friends, this subject lays open to you the distinguishing grace of God, and traces back your salvation to its proper source, the eternal counsels of Jehovah. It shows you where your strength lies,

\* One man in the street calls upon God to damn election; another in a church calls upon his Maker to send it to hell. Which is the most daring act of profanity?

and whence your hope springs. It tells you, who has made you to differ from others. It imparts to you the happiness of seeing God on the throne, and the immortal interests of the universe in his hands. It teaches you to ascribe your whole salvation to God and the Lamb, and to lay your honors at his feet. Cherish then this sweetest truth of the Bible, and let its practical influence be felt in your hearts and manifested in your lives. Be not afraid boldly to confess it before the world. Regard not the scoffs of those who have never experienced its power or tasted its sweetness. Thus saith the Lord,—“Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.” You may even count yourselves happy to endure any measure of persecution for the truth’s sake. “Blessed are ye,” says Christ, “when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” Yes, my friends, when men speak evil against you falsely, on account of the truth as it is in Jesus, it is your privilege to rejoice and be glad. Instead of being “terrified by your adversaries,” be resolved to hold fast the word of truth with a firmness and constancy proportioned to the violence with which it is assailed. Endeavor to grow in grace, and thus attain a fuller and clearer evidence that you are chosen of God. To this duty you are exhorted in the divine word:—“Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” Though you cannot render the divine mind more certain, you may at least obtain a more confident assurance of your own election and salvation. Thus, though your path through this world be beset with trials and tempta-

tions, ages of glory await you at your journey's end. Then will you begin the song of grace. While everlasting ages roll, you will cast your crowns before the throne, and swell the rapturous song,—“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever,—AMEN.”

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### HYMN.

Let me, my Savior and my God,  
 On sovereign grace rely;  
 And own 'tis free, because bestowed  
 On one so vile as I.

Election!—'tis a word divine;  
 For, Lord, I plainly see,  
 Had not thy choice prevented mine,  
 I ne'er had chosen thee.

For perseverance, strength I've none,  
 But would on this depend,  
 That Jesus, having loved his own,  
 Will love them to the end.

Empty and bare, I come to thee  
 For righteousness divine:  
 O! may thy glorious merits be  
 By imputation mine.

Free grace alone can wipe the tears  
From my lamenting eyes;  
And raise my soul from guilty fears,  
To joy that never dies.

Free grace can death itself outbrave,  
And take the sting away;  
Can sinners to the utmost save,  
And give them victory.

ASSEMB. COLL.

## ADDENDA.

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### PHYSICAL AND MORAL INABILITY.

In the preceding discourses the writer availed himself of the well known and acknowledged distinction between physical and moral inability, in showing the inexcusableness of unbelief and impenitence. He does not, however, admit the propriety of the inference which some would deduce from the distinction, viz., that impenitent sinners have sufficient ability to come to Christ without divine grace. He does not suppose that mere physical ability will qualify a man to love God, without a right disposition of the heart; or in other words, that a man is fully able to perform a spiritual act, simply because he is not physically unable. The writer sincerely believes those words of Christ,—“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” John 6:44.

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### FOREORDINATION.

“From this doctrine, as maintained by the Presbyterian church, men have attempted to deduce several absurd and blasphemous inferences, which they have held up to the world as parts of our system,—such as these: “That God is the author of sin.” “That we deny man’s free-agency, and make him a mere machine.” “That we set aside the necessity and efficacy of means,” and “maintain a system of fatality.” To give coloring to these charges, they seize upon a single detached member of a sentence

in our Confession of Faith, viz: "God ordained whatsoever comes to pass,"—and here they stop. They do not quote the whole definition of the doctrine, for reasons best known to themselves. It is this: "God ordained whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." Chap. 3, sec. 1. In this definition are three important restricting clauses, to which your attention is requested.

"The *first* of these declares that God has so ordained all things, as not to be the author of sin. His purposes do not extend to all events in the same manner. Accordingly, all our approved divines distinguish foreordination into *efficacious and permissive*. The former applies to whatever God accomplishes by his own agency; the latter, to whatever he, for wise reasons, chooses to permit. This important distinction is adopted in our Confession of Faith, chap. 6, sec. 1, and chap. 5, sec. 4. And you may now see upon what grounds men have charged us with 'hanging every thing on divine agency,' and making God the author of sin; a tenet so shockingly blasphemous, as not to be exceeded by Atheism itself.

"The *second* restricting clause of the definition, denies any such foreordination as would set aside free-agency: 'So as thereby—neither is violence offered to the will of the creatures.' With what justice then, do men clamor against us, that we 'deny man's free-agency and make him a mere machine?' The language in which our doctrine is stated, expressly disavows the idea. Turn to chap. 9, sec. 1, of our Confession, and you will read thus: 'God

hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good or evil.' This indeed is a truth, of which we are all perfectly conscious; and we are fully aware that to deny it, would be to set aside man's accountability to his Maker. All men are as voluntary in their actions, as they would be if there were no God.

“The *third* restricting clause asserts, that God has so ordained all things, as rather to *establish* than take away human liberty, and the efficacy of means; ‘so as thereby—the liberty or contingency of second causes is not taken away, but rather established.’ Here again you perceive the rashness and ignorance of those who accuse us with denying human liberty, or the necessity of means, or with maintaining a system of *fatality*. Charity would lead us to suppose that they have never seen, or never attentively examined our Confession. Any other supposition would be attended with such imputations against their morals, as I am unwilling to make. Those who hold the doctrine of our church, as you perceive, must believe in human liberty, and the necessity and efficacy of means; and must be, if possible, more free from fatalism than others. For they hold that the liberty and contingency of second causes, are established by an unchangeable decree of God. If any, calling themselves Presbyterians, have held contrary to this, they did not believe our doctrine; and it is uncandid, it is illiberal, it is unchristian, to blame the whole denomination with the eccentricities of a few individuals.

“What then is meant by foreordination? I shall give you a more satisfactory answer to this question, by first inquiring, how the decrees or purposes

of God, in foreordination, are fulfilled? Our Shorter Catechism tells us that they are all fulfilled or executed 'in his works of Creation and Providence.' Creation and Providence, then, according to our standards, include the whole field in which the purposes of God are unfolded. Hence, the doctrine may be briefly comprised in the two following propositions:

"1. Nothing comes to pass without the agency or permission of Deity.

"2. What God now does, he always meant to do; and what he now permits, he always meant to permit, for wise reasons.

"In illustrating these two positions, I shall reason from the effect to the cause, and demonstrate the purposes of God from what he actually does.

"1. *Nothing comes to pass without either the agency or permission of Deity.* This, I think, must be evident enough to those who attribute infinite perfection to Jehovah. No being ever comes into existence but by his creating power. Not one prolongs its existence a moment, but by his upholding power. He does not stand aloof from the universe he has created, to look at it as an idle spectator, leaving it to the dominion of chance. The scripture represents his providential agency as reaching to all events, even the smallest—to the fall of a sparrow, to the loss of a hair of our heads, as well as to the rise and fall of an empire: Matt. 10:29, 30. He 'worketh all things after the counsel of his will,' making every thing conduce to his glory. His government extends to the actions of men, without infringing upon human liberty. The Bible teaches us to behold his hand in every event, whether connected with human agency or otherwise. Even the disposal of the lot is ex-

pressly ascribed to him: Prov. 16:33. Sin is hateful in his pure and holy eyes; yet it continually takes place in the world. To say that he could not prevent it, is to *undeify* him. We must then necessarily conclude, that he permits it for good reasons. While he suffers it to take place, he does this, not through a weak or idle permission, 'but such as hath joined with it, a holy, wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering it to his holy ends; yet so that the sinfulness thereof proceedeth from the creature, and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be, the author or approver of sin.' Conf. of Faith, ch. 5, sec. 4.

"2. The next thing, is to prove that *what God now does, he always intended to do*. What he now accomplishes in creation and providence, he always meant to accomplish. To make this matter plain, let us suppose that God creates a new world to-day; you will admit that he does so from *design*. And if so, he must always have had that design, or else he has formed a new purpose and is changeable, which he denies, saying, 'I am the LORD; I change not.'

"Again: If God creates a world to-day, and does so from *design*, when did he form that design? Not till to-day? Why not sooner? Is he more wise, more mighty, more benevolent to-day; or does he see something new, which induces him to form an intention which never existed in his mind before?

"The same thing may be proved by the foreknowledge of God. For whatever any being foreknows he himself will do of his own accord, *that* he must already have resolved to do. If, for example, you know that you will of your own accord, take a journey to-morrow, you must already have resolved upon that journey. Now God foreknew

that he would, of his own accord, make a world to-day. He knew it from eternity. How did he know it? If his determination was unsettled at that period; if he had not already come to a decision on the subject, how could he *certainly* know that he would create a world to-day? The same reasoning applied to any thing else that God does in creation or providence, will issue in the same conclusions. Indeed if we deny the principle, that *what God now does he always meant to do*, we disrobe him of his perfections, and reduce him to the level of a creature.

“In the same manner it may be shown, that *what God now permits he always meant to permit*. Did God know from eternity that he should permit a wicked man to persecute his church? How did he know it? If his purpose was not settled, how did he know certainly that he should permit him?

“Now in one or the other of these senses, God ordained ‘whatsoever comes to pass.’ No event would ever have taken place, but for his agency or permission. When he formed this world, he had in view His own glory, which is necessarily connected with the highest good of the universe. He did not begin the work as an ignorant architect commences a building, without a settled plan. No. He beheld with an intuitive glance, all the possible results of an infinity of systems, and out of them all chose ONE. All the long train of consequences which would flow from that system, passed in review before him.— Its details extended to every particle of which the globe is composed; to every individual of the human species; to every thing that has existence. It embraced the connection between cause and effect, the free-agency of man, and both a moral and providential government. He held his eye steadily upon

every event,—every action that would sooner or later flow out of this system of operations. He saw as one *certain* result, that men would sin, that men would be punished. He knew that he could, by destroying free-agency, or by a variety of other alterations in his system, prevent the entrance of sin. But probably this would have interfered with the main end he had in view, and he saw it would be best to permit it. He might have determined to leave sin unpunished, but this would have tarnished the lustre of his glory. Besides, the plan was so admirable, that sin itself would be overruled for the promotion of his glorious designs. Perceiving then, all these results; being able to calculate to a *certainty*, all the holiness and all the sin, all the happiness and all the misery, that would take place through his agency or permission, from the commencement to the end of time, he deliberately chose this system and ushered it into existence. He did not choose it for the sake of the sin and misery which, through the freedom of man, would certainly attend it; but he chose it for the greater good which would be effected by it, in spite of the existence of sin and misery. I say, being able to calculate to a *certainty* all the events which would result from it, he put this system in operation, and thus, either *efficaciously* or *permissively* determined the certainty of whatever comes to pass.”—*Unpop. Doct.*, pp. 4—8.

## DECREES EFFICACIOUS AND PERMISSIVE.

It has already been remarked, that Presbyterians do not regard the purposes of God, as extending to all events in the same manner. Some things he has determined to *effect* by his positive agency, and other things he has decreed to *permit* or suffer to be. And this distinction between a decree to effect and a decree to permit, is held up to view distinctly, in three different places in the Confession of Faith. And it is perfectly notorious that it has been adopted by genuine Predestinarian divines in all ages. Augustine, about four hundred years after Christ, uses the distinction and says, "After a wonderful and unspeakable manner that is not done beside his (God's) will, which is done contrary to his will; because it could not be done if he should not suffer it to be done. And yet he doth not suffer it to be done unwillingly, but willingly. Neither would he, being God, suffer any evil to be done, unless, being also Almighty, he could make good out of evil."—*Enchirid.* And again, in his book, *De Trinitate Lib. 3, ch. 4*,—he asserts, "that the will of God is the highest and first cause of all things; because nothing happens without his command or *permission*." Calvin quotes this last passage with approbation—*Insti.*, B. 1, ch. 16—though he rejects the idea of a bare, idle permission. Francis Turretin, his successor, uses the same distinction and says, "The decree of God is not efficient in respect of evil, but *permissive* and directive." Dr. Twisse, the Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, defines a decree to be, "a purpose to do, or to *permit* any thing." Dr. Watts, in his explanation

of the Shorter Catechism, says, "Foreordained whatsoever comes to pass;" i. e., "appointed to bring to pass all that is good, and to *permit* what is evil." Dr. Ridgely on the same subject, observes,—“Sin must be supposed to be committed by his (God’s) *permission*, and therefore is the consequence of his decree to *permit*, though not as other things, of his decree to *effect*.” Vol. 1, page 424. And the Presbyterian Confession, chap. 6, sec. 1,—adopting this distinction,—says, “This their sin [viz., that of our first parents] God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to *permit*,—having purposed to overrule it to his own glory.” Here we are told of a counsel and of a purpose, according to which God permitted the first sin. In other words, he decreed to permit it.

But some will say,—“Why use such strong language as decree, purpose, foreordain, to express the idea of permission?” I answer, because the scriptures use language equally strong in reference to the same subject. For instance, when Shimei cursed David, it was said, “The Lord hath bidden him.” When Job’s children and servants were slain, and his property carried off by robbers, he said, “The Lord hath taken away.” When Hushai deceived the court of Absalom by treacherous counsel, it was said, “For the Lord had appointed (i. e. foreordained) to defeat the good counsel of Ahithopel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom:”—2 Sam. 17:15. And God himself says to the Assyrian king, “O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them

down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations not a few:” Isa. 10:5—7. When Jesus was wickedly put to death it was declared, “Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever God’s hand and his counsel determined before to be done:” Acts 4:27, 28. Our Anti-Calvinist friends say, this is rather strong language; but we think it not too strong. Once more: When Joseph’s brethren had sold him to go into Egypt, he said to them, “God did send me before you to save life.” And again,—“Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good:” Gen. 50:20. Anti-Calvinists will tell us that God did not *mean* it at all; but the Bible says he did. That very event which Joseph’s brethren meant for evil, God meant, purposed, or decreed to permit for good.

In the next place, Presbyterians adopt this strong language in reference to the permission of sin, because they wish to repudiate the Arminian notion of a bare, idle permission, arising from indolence or weakness. They do not believe that God suffers sin to exist on account of any inability to prevent it. They are confirmed in this opinion by the fact, that he could, and did for a time, hinder the death of Christ. On one occasion the people, as we are told, “sought to take him, but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.”—John 7:30. Presbyterians also believe, that what God now suffers or permits, he always meant to permit, for good and substantial reasons. They believe that he withholds that restraining influence by which he could have hindered the commission of evil, and suffers the wicked to rush into the sin to which they are prone;

at the same time, that he so directs and controls them, that what they design for evil shall eventuate in good. Hence, the Confession of Faith, chap. 5, sec. 4, teaches that "the almighty power, unsearchable wisdom and infinite goodness of God, do so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it [viz., his providence] extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, but such [permission] as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation to his own holy ends; yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.\*

Our Cumberland brethren, in their Catechism, Q. 7, tell us that "sin not being for God's glory, therefore he hath not decreed it." The meaning of this passage is not clearly apparent. If, in the first place, our brethren mean that the *natural tendency* of sin is not for God's glory, we accord with them in the sentiment, and urge that as a reason to prove that it never would have been suffered to exist, had not God for wise purposes decreed to permit its existence. But if they mean that sin does not eventuate in the glory of God, we must dissent from their opinion; because, though the putting of Christ to

\* The writer has in his possession a tract, issued from the Methodist Book Concern, in which the above passage is cited as evidence that Presbyterians hold, that God compels men to sin. But it is falsified in the following manner: "The almighty power of God extends itself to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men." Surely these good brethren cannot regard Presbyterians as "neighbors."

death was the greatest sin ever committed by man, yet no event ever contributed so much to the display of the divine glory. In the second place, our brethren tell us that "God hath not decreed sin." *To decree sin*, is a very uncommon expression, the import of which is by no means obvious. If they mean, that God in forming his eternal purposes, did not take into the account the future existence of sin—did not design to permit it—then the necessary inference is, that God did not in any sense intend that the Jews should put Christ to death; an idea which is contradicted by all the prophecies, as well as by the express declaration in Acts 4:27, 28. But if the words mean, that God did not decree to compel men to sin, or to bring sin to pass by his own agency,—that is the doctrine of Presbyterians. Adopting this latter construction, the whole passage may be paraphrased thus: "Sin in its native tendency not being for God's glory, therefore, or *for that reason*, he hath not decreed to bring it to pass by his own agency." And the natural inference is, that if sin were for his glory, he would have decreed to bring it to pass, his moral perfections presenting no obstacle to such a procedure,—a sentiment to which Presbyterians cannot subscribe.