

# Christian Doctrine

By ✓

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## PREFACE

This little volume has been prepared primarily for the use of students in The Westminster Teacher-Training Course who may wish to pursue further their study of Christian doctrine. The lessons in the manual are necessarily brief outlines only. In these pages the author has expanded and developed the several subjects. Then, others, also, besides teacher-training students, will find here an exposition of the great doctrines of the Christian religion.

## INTRODUCTION

### **A. A Presentation of Christian Doctrine presupposes:—**

- a. *That God exists.*
- b. *That God has revealed Himself.*
- c. *That the Bible is God's authoritative and complete revelation to man in the life that now is.*

These are the subjects which constitute the science of Christian Apologetics. An excellent treatise on this science is "The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief," by Prof. Geo. P. Fisher, D. D., LL. D.

### **B. It should be remembered:—**

- a. *That the proof of a Christian doctrine is the evidence that is expressed or implied in the teaching of the Bible.*
- b. *That the proof-texts given in these lessons are simply specimens of a far larger number that might be adduced.*
- c. *That no doctrine rests on detached texts simply, but on these as illustrating the general trend of the Bible.*

### **C. It is recommended:—**

- a. *That the proof-texts be memorized.*
- b. *That the indicated sections of the Confession of Faith be carefully studied.*
- c. *That the lectures in "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes" be read.*

W. B. G.

## CHAPTER I

### THE BIBLE \*

**A. The Bible is a Word of Man.** A glance at it shows this.

a. *Each one of its sixty-six books was written by a man* (Rom. I: 1-7).

b. *Each one of these authors wrote from human impulses*, with earthly conditions for his occasions, with definite designs of his own (Luke I: 1-4).

c. *They had each a style of his own, and they wrote each in his own style.* Compare Paul's epistles with John's.

d. *What they wrote was affected by their mental state and by their surroundings.* Thus no one of the evangelists told or knew all concerning Christ (John XXI: 25).

e. *Hence, the Bible is not omniscient.* It does not touch on every subject; it does not tell all on any subject. It is so truly the free expression of men that it is marked by all the limitations characteristic of man, error only excepted.

**B. The Bible is Unique.** As its name signifies, it is "The Book."

a. *No other*, not even the sacred books of the other great religions, *approaches it as regards circulation.* Over eight million new copies are being issued yearly.

b. *No other has been studied* and is being studied *so carefully and so generally.* More than two hundred thousand volumes are said to have been written simply to expound it.

c. *No other has achieved such results or has been accorded such a place.* The Hon. W. H. Seward wrote: "The whole hope of human progress is suspended on the ever growing influence of the Bible."

**C. The Bible is The Word of God.** This is its own claim, the explanation which it gives of its uniqueness. It is "The Book,"

\*See "Confession of Faith," Chapter I; also "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," Lecture IV.

because its human authors "spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter I:21). God's part in the preparation of this Book of books falls under several heads:—

a. *Providence*. God so places and conditions every man as to secure his becoming what His plan for him calls for. Because He intended that Christianity should demand, and so knew that it would demand, doctrinal statement, He gave Paul a logical mind and then caused him to be brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel." In this natural way God so prepared the writers of the Bible that, as regards the things of this world, they would of themselves write what He wished and as He wished and when He wished.

b. *Spiritual illumination*. Notwithstanding providential control, man cannot of himself receive "the things of the Spirit of God" (I Cor. II:14). Though put where he could best see them and given the faculties with which to discern them, his power for such discernment has been destroyed by sin. Hence, in the case of the writers of the Bible, as in that of all God's children, He supernaturally opens and clarifies their organ of spiritual vision (Eph. I:18). Thus Paul, who thought that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts XXVI:9), came to recognize Him as his Lord and Saviour (Acts IX:6).

c. *Revelation*. Even the spiritually illuminated man could not by himself discover the deep things of God (Rom. XI:33, 34). His own organ of spiritual vision is not strong enough; and if it were, God's purpose of grace, because purely optional, could be known only as He should Himself declare it. Hence, by visions, dreams, direct mental suggestion, verbal dictation, "in divers manners, God spoke unto the fathers in the prophets" (Heb. I:1). This supernatural revelation, of course, was furnished to the writers of the Bible only when providential preparation and spiritual illumination were inadequate. The Scriptures, therefore, *contain* revelations; they are not made up solely of revelations (Luke I:1-4).

d. *Inspiration*. All men are fallible. Consequently, in receiving and recording a revelation they would be liable to err. They would be almost as much so in stating their own observation or experience. Hence, a special influence from the Holy Spirit of God was granted to the sacred writers to enable them accurately to conceive and to express what God would have them say. Of this inspiration we may affirm:—

(1) It was in no sense mechanical. It did not dictate words; it effectively guided the selection of words. It did not impair the writer's spontaneity; it was exerted through and in accordance with his spontaneity. It must have been somewhat like the touch of the driver on the reins which guide the racing steeds. The naturalness of the style of the Bible indicates as much as this.

(2) It was constant. Only parts of the Bible were revealed, but every part, without distinction, is inspired (II Tim. III: 16).

(3) This is true even of the words. Though, except when otherwise stated, the free utterance of men, they are God's words; for they are those to which He guided the choice of the writer as the expression of His will for us (I Cor. II: 13). It was of the use of a particular word, that Christ said that "the scripture cannot be broken" (John X: 35).

(4) It is the original Scriptures in the original languages that are so inspired. These have been preserved to us, however, through the care of the copyists and the labors of scholars in remarkable purity; and have been brought within the reach of all by faithful translations. Hence, he who reads our current English Bible reads in it, with competent exactness, the mind of the Spirit as it was recorded in the inspired Word for our admonition.

**D. The Bible's Own Claim to be "The Word of God" must be True.**

a. *What it has done and what it is, when considered in connection with its claim, prove this.* If the Bible were not, as it asserts, "the word of God," it would be on its face either a lie or a mistake. Could a lie or a mistake, however, have exerted the uniquely beneficent moral influence which the Bible has exerted? Again, though written by forty different authors through sixteen centuries, the Bible is so clearly one book that God must have suggested at least its ruling ideas. Can we, however, think of God as doing this in the case of a book which would be on its face a lie or a mistake, if it were not, as it asserts, even as to its words, God's Word?

b. *The direct work of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of Christians is for them an additional kind and the decisive kind of evidence.* The Holy Spirit puts the teachings of the Bible to the test of experience in the hearts of Christians, and this experience both demonstrates the truth and witnesses to the supernatural origin of these

teachings (John XVI: 13, 14). Then we infer that the book which contains them is, as it says, "the word of God."

c. Hence, *the comparatively few seeming mistakes in the Bible* ought not to disturb us. On the one hand, not one of them can be proved to be a mistake; on the other hand, the evidence that the Bible is "the word of God" makes it irrational not to hold them in suspense until we know more of them. Even a man with a name for honesty ought not to be admitted to be dishonest because his statements show a few discrepancies that we can not explain.

**E. The Doctrine that the Bible is "the Word of God" means:—**

a. *Its authority rests directly upon God* (I Thess. II: 13). We do not obey it because it is reasonable; we believe it to be reasonable ultimately because it is "the word" of Him who is the source of all reason. We do not receive it on the authority of the church; we hold that the church has no authority save as founded upon it. We do not accept it on the ground that our feelings approve it; we approve only such of our feelings as it endorses (II Tim. III: 16).

b. *The Bible is infallible throughout.* In all its words, God's word, it can make no mistake (John X: 35). Hence, though it leaves much unsaid, all that it says is true *in the sense in which it says it*. What it states as history is real history. Its descriptions of the processes of nature, though not scientific in design or effect, are, as popular statements always aim to be and as scientific statements could seldom be, true to what appears. When the mistakes of men or the lies of Satan are given, it is an infallible record of mistakes or of lies that we have.

c. *As the rule of faith and practice the Bible is complete.* In these respects it tells us all that we need to know and all that we may regard as authoritative (Gal. I: 8, 9).

d. *As the rule of faith and practice it is also perspicuous.* Though there is much in the Bible too deep for human understanding, its presentation of "the way of life" is so plain that "he who runs may read." Hence, the Scriptures are addressed to all men and ought to be searched and judged by all men (Ps. CXIX: 105, 130).

e. *The Bible differs from every other book, therefore, in its purpose as well as in its nature.* God gives it to us that we may live in Him. The Bible presents the way of life. Its purpose is to make us "wise unto salvation" (II Tim. III: 15).

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*Note.*—For particulars concerning the composition, contents, and preservation of the Bible see Part I. of the first year's Westminster Teacher Training Course.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NATURE OF GOD \*

The Bible being infallible because itself "the word of God," and containing all that we need to know in this world as regards the eternal life in Him, we ought, in the teachable spirit of little children, first to study its doctrine of the divine nature.

**A. Like Ourselves, "God is a Spirit"** (John IV: 24).

a. *He is a personal being.* As each of us, He is distinct and separate from all other beings; as we are, He is conscious of Himself as thus distinct and separate; and, as also in our case, He is never determined in His choosing by any external constraint, nor yet by any inherent physical necessity, as when a tree produces a flower, nor even by any animal instinct, as when a bird makes her nest; but always and only in accordance with and in response to His own rational nature (Gen. I: 26; Dan. IV: 35). This implies that, also like ourselves, God knows and feels (Gen. VI: 5, 6).

b. *He is a moral being.* He lives in the light of the eternal difference between right and wrong. He determines Himself, not only as He wishes, but also always as He ought (Gen. XVIII: 25).

**B. Unlike Ourselves, but like the Angels, God is Only a Spirit.** Neither vitally nor otherwise, is He united with a body (Deut. IV: 15, 16). All apparently contrary representations, as Ps. XXXII: 4, are figurative.

**C. Unlike both Ourselves and the Angels, God is Unique and Supreme.** He stands absolutely by Himself, and there is nothing with which to compare Him or by which to explain Him (Isa. XL: 18).

a. *God is self-existent.* Unlike all else, He neither has nor demands any cause or reason outside of Himself. He alone exists necessarily, of Himself and for Himself (Acts XVII: 25).

\*See "Confession of Faith," Chapter II; also "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," Lectures I and VI.

b. *God is infinite.* Unlike all others, there are no limitations to His being, His knowledge, His power, His righteousness, His goodness, His truth.

(1) His *being* is superior to the limitations and conditions imposed on the creatures of His hand by time, space, and degree. He is eternal; He is immeasurable; He is incomparable. "The whole God is always everywhere," and He is always everywhere unique (Ps. CXXXIX:7-12).

(2) His *knowledge* embraces Himself and the universe, past, present, and future; and it comprehends both in one all-including intuition (Heb. IV:13).

(3) His *power* is inexhaustible and perfect in mode of action (Isa. XL:28). So far as power itself is concerned, "With God all things are possible" (Matt. XIX:26). His activity, however, has two limitations. One is His will. In God, as in us, there is a distinction between will and power (Eph. I:9). He does not do all that He can; He does only what He has purposed. The other limitation is His nature. Because God is self-determined or free, He cannot purpose contrary to His nature any more than we can (II Tim. II:13). He has power enough to do wrong, but He lacks the will to do it: and He could not will to act wrongly or unreasonably; for His self or nature is perfectly righteous and reasonable.

(4) His *righteousness*, as just remarked, is absolute. He is exactly just. God is ever all that He Himself ought to be, and He never appoints for any of His creatures less than ought to be appointed or more than may rightly be appointed (Dan. IX:14; Rom. II:5, 6). This is so because He is essentially and necessarily righteous. He does not determine what is right arbitrarily: He expresses and illustrates it naturally; for it is the most vital element of His life. Whatever He wills, therefore, is right; for He can, as we have seen, will only in accordance with His nature, and this is the right itself. Hence, what God is is both the ground and the standard of right. What God is is right, and we ought to do right because of what God is (Lev. XIX:2; Matt. V:48).

(5) His *goodness*, in all its forms, is boundless. It includes (a) benevolence, which has for its objects all sensitive creatures (Ps. CXLV:9); (b) love, which has rational beings for its objects (John III:16); (c) mercy, which has for its objects the miserable (Isa. LXIII:9); (d) grace, which has for its objects the unde-

servicing (Rom. V:8). When any suffer, it is at least because this is right; it cannot be because of lack of power or of mercy in God. When sinners are lost it is at least because His justice so requires; it cannot be because God lacks either the power (Heb. VII:25) or the wish to save them (I Tim. II:4). Hence, "God is love" (I John IV:8). Though He is much else, love is that in which He delights. Moreover, as the expression of His love ever harmonizes with His justice, so His justice is always exercised in love. God never feels so much compassion as when He punishes most severely (Ezek. XXXIII:11).

(6) His *truth* is absolute. He neither will nor can disappoint the promise of His works or of His Word or of His nature. We always know exactly how we shall find Him. Various though He may act, in Himself and in His principles of action, He is and must always be the same (Heb. XIII:8; II Tim. II:13).

**D. God's Relation to the World is as Follows:—**

a. *God is incomprehensible.* We may know Him truly in so far as He has revealed Himself to us, but what even He can reveal of Himself to us is as nothing to what He is. From the nature of the case, the finite can never comprehend the Infinite (Job XI:7-9). Yet we should not on this account distrust our knowledge of God as derived from nature (Rom. I:20; II:15), and from the Bible (John V:39), and, above all, from Christ (John I:18). Though very partial, it must be true. What He who is "the Truth" teaches us cannot but be true. No future revelation can reverse it. Though the love of Christ "passeth knowledge," we may "know" even it (Eph. III:19).

b. *God is immanent in the world.* He is "everywhere present in every point of space and within the inmost constitution of all created things at the same time." He acts from within everything and through its own forces and in accordance with its own laws. Thus He both upholds it in being and determines its being. Hence, "all things live and move and have their being" in Him (Acts XVII:28); and, hence, too, all things reveal Him (Rom. I:20).

c. *God is transcendent.* Though in the world and in closest touch with it, God is, nevertheless, distinct from it, before and above it, and independent of it. The world might be blotted out, but God would exist the same that He is now. He did exist eternally before He brought the world into being. He acts on the world from with-

out as well as from within, directly as well as through the activities which He has given to it. He takes pleasure in the world as the work of His own hands, but He does not need the world for His pleasure; in this, as in all else, He is self-sufficient. As does no other, He feels for the world's sorrow: but this is only because He condescends to do so; He could be absolutely undisturbed by it. In a word, God is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" (Isa. LVII: 15).

**E. In the Unity of the Godhead are Three Persons.**

a. *The one and only God*, indivisible in His essence (Deut. VI: 4), exists necessarily and eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. XXVIII: 19); and though these three are of the same substance and are equal in power and glory and always act together, with one mind and one will, yet are they so truly distinct that one can address the others (John XVII: 5), one can send the others (John XIV: 26), we can pray to each one of them (Eph. III: 14), each one of them, as will be seen later, has a characteristic office in our redemption, and in their manner of existence and of working they are subordinated, the Spirit to the Son and the Son and Spirit to the Father (Matt. XXVIII: 19).

b. *These facts cannot be explained*; there is nothing with which to compare them. Yet they involve no contradiction; the doctrine is not that one person is three persons; it is that one Being exists as three persons.

c. *This is a helpful conception*. It throws some light on the self-sufficiency of God. The ground of this is in the ineffable intimacy and love of the three persons of the Godhead.

**F. The Prerogative arising out of All These Perfections of God is His Sovereignty.**

a. *He both ought to have and does have absolute dominion* over us and all creation (Dan. IV: 35).

b. *His own glory and the exercise of His perfections are and ought to be His eternal purpose and the reason for the whole world*. Because God is both self-existent and the perfection of righteousness and goodness, all beings and things must find their reason in Him, and their highest possible good in making known His excellence (Rom. XI: 36).

## CHAPTER III

### GOD'S WORK OF CREATION AND PROVIDENCE \*

God, because the self-existent, infinite, and perfect personality, has a purpose or plan.

#### **A. The Purpose or Plan of God is Free and Sovereign.**

a. *He plans and acts*, never from outward constraint, never from inherent physical necessity, as a tree grows, nor yet from instinct, as the swallow flies southward on the approach of winter, but always from a sufficient reason (Eph. I: 11).

b. *Unlike ourselves*, this sufficient reason is ever wholly in Himself and not at all in other persons or things (Rom. XI: 34); it is not found in any need that God feels (Acts XVII: 25); but rather in His self-sufficiency, which rejoices thus to express itself; His purpose is in no case suspended on any condition, but as it embraces all events of every kind, so God has determined certainly whatever occurs (Eph. I: 11).

c. A little reflection will show that *all this is necessarily implied in the very conception of God* as well as taught explicitly in the Bible. God could not be the self-existent, infinite, and perfect Personality, if He did not have a plan, or if anything were left out of His plan, or if His plan were determined by anything outside of Himself, or if in Himself there were any, even the least, insufficiency, or if contingency and uncertainty could attach in any case to His plan or its accomplishment.

#### **B. The Design of God's Purpose or Plan is His Own Glory and the Exercise of His Perfections** (Rom. XI: 36).

At this point, too, there is the sharpest contrast between God and ourselves. Because of what God is, He ought to live for Himself; for no other or others than Himself could afford an end so high; and it must be best for the world that He should plan all things for His

\*See "Confession of Faith," Chapters III, IV, V; also "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," Lectures II, III, VII.

own glory; for how could He so bless the world as to use it to make known His infinite love and absolute righteousness?

**C. God begins to carry out His Eternal and All-comprehending and Unchangeable and Infinitely Blessed and Absolutely Righteous Purpose or Plan in His Work of Creation.**

a. *The work of creation is twofold: (1) Immediate creation, or the origination of the material—i. e., the principles and causes of all things (Gen. I: 1). (2) Mediate creation, or the origination of the different forms of things, and especially of different species of living beings, out of the already created material (Gen I: 2-31). The former, of course, was instantaneous and due solely to the act of God; the latter was gradual and the result of the coöperation of God with what He had called into being.*

b. *The distinctive agent in the whole work of creation is the second person of the Godhead, the Son or Word of God (John I: 3).*

c. *The process of creation, from the nature of the case, is and must be incomprehensible to all save God. The basal fact is that the material of the universe was called into being "out of nothing" by the command of the Son of God (Ps. XXXIII: 6; Heb. XI: 3).*

d. *The mediate creation, or the formation of the material thus brought into being, took place in six stages or in six "days." These, as the scriptural usage of the word permits and as science establishes, were periods of indefinite length.*

e. *The whole creation, when finished by God, was, as His nature demanded of His work, "very good" (Gen. I: 31). There was not even a tendency to evil in the world as God made it, and every being and every thing in it was perfectly fitted to realize its inherent end in His supremely glorious plan.*

**D. God goes on in the Execution of His Plan by His Work of Providence.** This includes:—

a. *Preservation.* (1) Having called the material of the world into existence and given to it its form, God continues to uphold it as a whole and in all its parts, properties, and powers (Heb. I: 3; Ps. CIV). (2) This does not mean that living-creatures do not have life in themselves or that things do not exist as real individuals; it does mean that the former do not have life of themselves and that the latter do not exist of themselves. Both, and both equally, de-

pend absolutely on God for their continuance as well as for their creation (Ps. CIV: 27-30).

b. *Government.* Thus God secures certainly and perfectly that the world, as a whole and in every one of its parts, which He has created and is preserving, shall accomplish His purpose or plan.

(1) This government of God is universal and absolute. It effects precisely what God from the first intended (Dan. IV: 35), and it does this without exception. Thus God's control extends over (a) nature (Acts XIV: 17), (b) over the animal world (Job XII: 10), (c) over nations (Dan. II: 21), (d) over individual men (Prov. XVI: 9), (e) over the free acts of men (Prov. XVI: 1), (f) even over sinful actions and states (Ps. LXXVI: 10). Hence, nothing comes to pass which is not providential, nothing which God has not foreseen and brought about in accordance with His eternal and absolutely righteous and infinitely blessed purpose or plan.

(2) God stands, however, in a different relation to different classes of events. (a) To sinful acts and states His relation is permissive. It is, however, never a bare permission. Sinful acts and states occur because God has determined that they should, and to the degree to which and for the ends for which He has determined (Ps. LXXVI: 10). Between them and all other acts and states there is no difference so far as God's control over them is concerned. The difference between God's relation to them and to other acts and states is that, though He freely determines to permit them to occur, He always abhors them (Zech. VIII: 17); and though He determines to permit them for His glory and ever controls and overrules them to this end, He never originates or contributes to the evil in them (James I: 13, 14). (b) To all other than sinful acts and states God's relation, even when not efficient, is positive. He approves them and contributes to them as well as permits and upholds or directs them. Yet here, too, there are important differences: God *coöperates* with the forces of nature in the production of their appropriate effects (I Cor. XV: 38). He so *combines* these forces as specially to determine their appropriate effects when otherwise these would not realize His particular ends. Thus He sends rain at one time rather than at another (James V: 17, 18). He exercises a like control over mankind (Prov. XVI: 9). That is, God does on His immense scale what every man does on his little scale; He so directs nature that it carries out His plan; and what

we call "special" or "extraordinary providences" arise in proportion as the divine direction appears (John XXI: 11). Again, through the truth of the gospel or through the natural light of reason or of conscience, God *acts graciously on all men*, to a greater or less extent, restraining them from evil and persuading them to good (Acts VII: 51). Once more, God *acts immediately*, both on the world and on men. In addition to coöperating with nature and directing it and working through and on the truth revealed in it and to it, He interposes supernaturally in it. He puts out His own hand and performs works called "miracles," which only His own immediate power could have produced (John XI: 43, 44); and He does in the souls of those whom He makes "new men in Christ" what even "the truth as it is in Jesus," though applied and reënforced by Himself, could not by itself have effected (Eph. II: 5).

(3) As to the ultimate method of God's action in any of the ways just mentioned, whether through natural causes or directly, we know nothing save that it must be consistent with God Himself (II Tim. II: 13). (a) This, however, implies: That it is invariably righteous (Gen. XVIII: 25), and that it is perfectly congruous to the nature of His creatures and with the laws of their action. This nature and these laws are His work, and, therefore, it is impossible to think of Him as ever violating them, and He does not suspend them (Gen. VIII: 22). Hence, so far from destroying human freedom, it is God's plan to develop it (Phil. II: 13); and so far from His accomplishment of His plan keeping any who call on His name from salvation, it is precisely because of His fidelity to His plan that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. X: 13). (b) How God's operation can always be thus congruous with the nature of all His creatures and with all the laws of their action will appear when we remember, that God has planned whatever comes to pass and constituted whatever is (Eph. I: 11; John I: 3), that the essence of everything and the relations of all things are comprehended by Him (Ps. CXXXIX; Heb. IV: 13), and that He is ever present and active within the inmost constitution of all things (Acts XVII: 28).

## CHAPTER IV

### THE NATURE AND ORIGINAL STATE OF MAN \*

We have now glanced at the biblical doctrine with respect to God's word, His nature, His purpose and activity. How does all this bear on ourselves? Thus we are led to inquire as to the biblical doctrine of man.

#### A. The Nature of Man.

a. *Man consists of two distinct principles, a soul and a body* (Matt. X:28). (1) The soul of man is a real existence; it itself thinks and feels and wills as truly as the body breathes and eats and moves, and we are conscious that what in us thinks and feels and wills remains identically what it was. Hence, the soul is not a mere series of mental acts or states; it is not a form of the life of God; it is not simply a force; it is a spiritual existence that acts and on which God acts and which has force of its own, as truly an existence as the body itself (Matt. XVI:26). (2) The soul is a real existence distinct and different from the body; it is neither a finer form of the body nor a result of the activities of the body; its existence is its own (Dan. VII:15). (3) Soul and body are, both of them, essential parts of man. The body is not simply "the casket of the soul." If without the spirit or soul the body becomes "dust," so without the body the soul is only "a spirit"; it is not a complete man (Eccl. XII:7).

b. *The soul is the vital, the intellectual, the moral, the religious, principle in man*, that is, the self itself (Matt. XVI:26). It is because we have souls that we are not things; and it is because we are self-conscious, moral, and religious souls, i. e., persons, that we are not mere animals.

c. *The soul of man is free or self-determining*. We can always choose, and we always do choose as we really wish to choose (Matt.

\*See "Confession of Faith," Chapters VII and IX; also "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," Lectures VIII, IX.

XII: 34). That is, as we never choose without a sufficient reason; so that reason is never ultimately in anything external to us, nor in anything merely physical or instinctive even within us, but ever in our own individual wills expressing our own rational natures. Hence, we are invariably responsible for our voluntary acts and for our choices and even for our dispositions; they are our own; they express always our own selves (Josh. XXIV: 15).

d. *The soul of man is naturally immortal.* In this respect also we differ from the animals (Eccl. III: 21): though we depend on God for the continuance of our existence as truly as do they, yet, it being His purpose to sustain us forever, He has constituted our souls for immortality (Matt. XXV: 46).

### **B. The Origin of Man.**

a. *The soul of Adam, the first man, was created immediately by God out of nothing* (Gen. II: 7; Eccl. XII: 7).

b. *Adam's body, however, was formed out of preëxisting material but also by the intervention of God.* It did not grow of itself; nor was it wholly produced by any process of providential but natural evolution: God Himself, in coöperation with nature, worked it up (Gen. II: 7). When we inquire the date, or the precise method of His creation of man we meet the unknown.

### **C. The Original State of Man.**

a. *Man was created in a state of maturity and perfection.* He was created perfectly adapted to the end for which he was made and to the sphere in which he was to move. Though as to many things he must have known much less than we know, he could learn all that his situation required; and though his body must have been sufficiently susceptible to pain to insure his safety, it was not subject, as are ours, to sickness and infirmity (Gen. II).

b. *Man was created "in the image of God"* (Gen. I: 27). He was made like God; and this likeness, as was observed, consists in our intellectual and moral nature. As God is, we are endowed with reason, conscience, and will. Thus, as He is, we are spirits or persons. Hence, we can pray to Him and He can speak to us; and so, because of this community of nature, communion with God and thus religion become possible.

c. *Man was created righteous.* He was precisely what such an intellectual and moral being as he was ought to be (Gen. I: 31). This involved, of course, (1) The harmony and equilibrium of his

constitution. His reason was subject to God; his will, to his reason; his affections and appetites, to his will; his body, to his soul. (2) Knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Col. III:10; Eph. IV:24). By knowledge is meant especially the knowledge of God. Man was created having this; Adam knew God as really as God knew him (Gen. III:8). The principles of the law of God, too, were implanted in his nature (Rom. II:14, 15). By righteousness and holiness is meant, not only that Adam knew his duty perfectly and had all the faculties for its performance, but also that he had the disposition to do it and actually did it. At all times he did and was all that he ought.

d. *Man was created with dominion over the creatures.* This arose from the power with which he was invested and from the express appointment of God. He made man for absolutely universal dominion, so far as creatures are concerned (Heb. II:8).

**D. God's Covenant with Man.** Man, because created in communion with God, was, as we have seen, perfectly righteous, but, because finite, he was not, in and of himself, infallibly righteous. Therefore, God entered into a covenant of life with him. That man might develop himself morally and thus merit, and so become confirmed in and enjoy forever, the fruit of the blessed state of communion with God and consequent righteousness in which he was created, God condescended to make the following agreement with him (Gen. II:16, 17):—

a. *God, on His part, promised to man life* (Luke X:28). (1) Man's body, instead of wearing out, should be continued in vigor forever (Rom. V:12). (2) Man's soul should be supernaturally established in communion with God, in the resulting righteousness, and so in the enjoyment of the divine favor, in which is life (Ps. XXX:5).

b. *God conditioned this covenant on man's perfect obedience* (Gal. III:10). As man was able and disposed to obey, as he was most favorably situated for obedience, and as his present prosperity and true happiness lay in it, so God required this of him if he would be confirmed by Him in it and in the enjoyment of it.

c. *The penalty attached to disobedience was death* (Gen. II:17). In the event of disobedience, (1) the body should be destroyed by disease and violence; and (2) the soul should lose communion with

God and the consequent righteousness, and should become exposed to His wrath and curse (Gen. II: 17; Gal. III: 10).

Such was the supremely favorable and yet unspeakably solemn condition in which man was created and started on his career. He was given the best opportunity conceivable to secure for himself and his posterity perpetually indestructible life and blessedness, though this appointment, of course, necessarily involved the fatal possibility of losing them.

## CHAPTER V

### SIN \*

Perfect and blessed though man's original state was, his present condition is far otherwise. Conscience condemns him (Rom. II: 15, 16). Even when he would do good, "evil is present" (Rom. VII: 21). He is born to trouble (Job V: 7). He is subject to pain and death (Gen. III: 19). The world around him is in like manner and on account of him disordered and miserable (Gen. III: 17; Rom. VIII: 22). Evidently he has fallen from the good and glorious estate in which God created him; he has come under the penalty of the covenant of life; he has not fulfilled his part of it; he has sinned (Rom. V: 12).

#### A. The Nature of Sin.

a. *Sin is not a being or a thing.* It cannot be this: for God made all that is, except Himself (John I: 3); and all that He made was, as He made it, "very good" (Gen. I: 31).

b. *As evil is a state consisting in deviation from good, so sin is a specific evil; it is deviation from law, or lawlessness* (I John III: 4).

c. *The law in the violation or neglect of which sin consists* is not our own happiness, nor the greatest good of the greatest number of beings, nor yet the eternal fitness of things, nor even our own reason; it is that toward which all these point and on obedience to which all these depend, the law of God, the expressed will of Him whose nature is, as we saw, both the ground and the standard of right (Rom. II: 15; III: 19).

d. *The state of lawlessness in which sin consists can be affirmed only of rational and moral beings.* Only such can recognize and feel the claim of God's law; only such, consequently, can be responsible to it; only such, therefore, can transgress or ignore it. The Bible attributes sin to angels and men, but never to the lower animals.

e. *Rational and moral beings can sin in virtue of their voluntary*

\*See "Confession of Faith," Chapter VI.

*nature.* The reason for this is that as inclination from law, in which sin consists, presupposes responsibility to law, so this can be affirmed only of self-determination or voluntariness as distinguished from what is simply created. Thus our natural appetites, desires, and affections, while they may become occasions of sin, are not themselves sinful; they result entirely from the constitution which God gave to Adam, and for which, therefore, if it had been evil, God could not hold him or anyone, save Himself, responsible. Even, however, the merest inclination of these feelings, desires, or appetites from their divinely appointed objects or measure will be sinful; not only are they inclinations from what God has required, they are wholly our own and in no sense God-made. Hence, the Bible says (Jer. XVII:9), "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt." The heart is the voluntary nature; it is self-determination; it expresses what one is himself; it is the man himself; because only it is self-determination, only it can be the man himself (Matt. XV: 19).

f. *Sin can attach to the voluntary nature in every one of its forms.* All our actions not merely mechanical, whether deliberate or only impulsive, can be sinful; and this is as true of our habits and even of our dispositions. In so far as we incline it is our own act or state; and in so far as our own act or state is away from what God requires or is, it is sin (Eph. IV: 18, 19).

### **B. The Origin of Sin.**

a. *The first sin of man was his inclination for knowledge through means forbidden by God* (Gen. III: 1-6).

b. *This inclination expressed:* (1) *Unbelief.* Adam doubted the wisdom of the divine prohibition and the certainty of the divine threatening. (2) *Disobedience.* Adam set his will in opposition to God's will.

c. *This, man's first sinful inclination, was self-originated.* He started this first evil inclination out of nothing, purely by his own self-determination. It must have been so: for although in our case to-day sin is the self-determined result of our own corrupt nature (James I: 14), Adam's nature was "very good"; and although God can and does start good inclinations out of nothing, He can not start evil ones (James I: 13).

d. *There was, however, an external occasion for man's first sinful inclination in the temptation by the serpent* (Gen. III: 1-5); i. e., by

Satan in the form of a serpent (Rev. XX:2). This occasion, though it does not explain, does lighten the mystery which surrounds the beginning of man's first sin.

e. *The true origin of sin, therefore, is to be referred to the fall of Satan and his angels.* (1) When or how or why this took place, we do not know fully. The Bible does not tell us, and there are so many unknown quantities in the problem that reason cannot solve it. (2) We do know, however, (a) from the narrative, that Satan must have fallen before man fell; (b) from God's estimate of the creation, that He made Satan a holy angel, and then he let himself degenerate into a devil; (c) from God's nature, that He abhors sin with infinite abhorrence and could have forever kept Satan from originating it; (d) from God's plan, that He determined to permit it in order to the better making known of His excellence; (e) from God's love, that He would tell us all concerning it, did we need to know; and (f) that, consequently, it must be very wrong as well as foolish for us to let our necessary ignorance on this subject shake our faith in God's goodness, or interfere with our activity or comfort. The child does not cease rejoicing in his father's love for him because he does not know enough to understand all of his father's course before he himself was born.

### **C. The Extent of Sin.**

a. *It is universal.* All men, without exception, are sinners (I Kings VIII:46).

b. *It is all-pervasive.* Every human being is totally depraved (Rom. VII:18). (1) This does not mean that all men are equally bad, or that any man is as bad as he could be, or that anyone is destitute of virtue (Rom. II:14). (2) It does mean that by nature all men are out of communion with God and so are totally—in all their parts, faculties, and powers—cut off from the source of all righteousness (Col. I:21). There is in them no principle of spiritual and moral life. Their very virtues are but picked and fading flowers.

**D. The Reason for the Universality of Sin is to be found in Adam's Relation to All Men** (Rom. V:17-19).

a. *Humanity was constituted a race.* Adam was not only the first of men, but also the common ancestor of all men. Hence, he was called by a generic name, Adam, the Man (Gen. II:7). Mankind, therefore, is not a company of independent individuals, but is

a series the members of which, through descent from a common ancestor and the possession of a common nature, form a unity more truly than do the citizens of a nation (Acts XVII:26). Consequently, as a nation can, they can be acted for by a proper public person and so can themselves be treated as having themselves acted in that person.

b. *As our common ancestor, Adam was a proper public person, and he was appointed by God to be such.* That is, the "covenant of life" referred to in the last chapter was made with him, not for himself only, but also for all his posterity. If he stood his probation, they would be confirmed in righteousness with him. If he fell, they would fall with him (Gen. II:17; Rom. V:12).

c. *Since Adam, as the penalty and consequence of his own sin, lost communion with God; so all his posterity, inasmuch as he acted for them and they in him, are born under his penalty and are subject to the same consequences, and thus, as he came to be, are out of communion with God* (I Cor. XV:22).

d. *If it be asked, Why is it that the fortunes of the race have been thus staked on the conduct of one? it may be said:* (1) That we cannot solve the problem, does not affect the fact that the word of God so teaches positively and plainly. (2) Neither should it lead us to doubt the righteousness of God. This, as we have seen, is always guaranteed by His nature (Gen. XVIII:25). (3) No fairer probation could be conceived than that which the human race had in Adam; for he was created (a) in full possession of his faculties, (b) in the perfect image of God, and (c) in a most favorable environment. (4) It was just such an arrangement as we deem best in national affairs, and, therefore, presumably, as each one of us would have chosen for himself in this matter, could we have been consulted in advance. (5) It was part of a glorious constitution which culminates in the headship of Christ as our Redeemer (I Cor. XV:22).

#### **E. The Consequences of Adam's Sin.**

a. *All men are born guilty before God.* They are under the penalty of His law (Eph. II:3).

b. *All men, therefore, even infants who have never sinned in their own persons, are subject to death, spiritual, physical, eternal* (Rom. VI:23; V:12-14). This is the penalty of Adam's sin.

c. *As spiritual death consists in the loss of communion with God, who is the life of the soul, so in all it must issue:—*

(1) In the absence of the righteousness which Adam forfeited (Job XIV:4).

(2) In "original sin" or general corruption of nature. This is truly and positively sinful (Gen. VI: 5; Jer. XVII: 9). Though sin is rooted only in our voluntary nature, man's intellect and body are affected by it as really as his heart. The former is darkened (Rom. I: 21); the latter is diseased (Rom. VIII: 22); even the ground is cursed for man's sin (Gen. III: 17).

(3) In actual transgressions. All manifest sin as soon as they become old enough for moral action (Prov. XXII: 15).

(4) In utter inability for all spiritual good (Eph. II: 1). (a) This does not mean that original sin or actual transgression destroys any faculty of the soul, or impairs self-determination, or is at once destructive of the natural virtues. (b) It does mean that, though we could keep the whole law if we would, we are not by nature inclined so to do, and we cannot incline ourselves against ourselves; and that the reason why we are not so inclined is that by the corruption of our whole nature our understanding is blinded as to spiritual realities and our tastes and feelings are perverted (I Cor. II: 8, 9, 14). Hence, we cannot even turn to Christ unless God draw us (John VI: 44). We have the faculties to do so, but we can see nothing to *desire* in Him.

Such are the awful as well as universal consequences of the sin of our first parent. Because of it we are all born "children of wrath," and with a nature so corrupt as continually to increase our guilt and also to disable us for all spiritual good.

## CHAPTER VI

### REDEMPTION \*

Redemption is the cure of sin. It is also the revelation, not only to men, but even to angels (Eph. III:9, 10), of "the unsearchable riches of God's grace," the most glorious as well as mysterious trait of His moral character. That we do not find in this a complete explanation of His permission of sin, is simply because no finite mind can appreciate salvation (Rom. XI:33).

#### **A. The Necessity of Redemption arises out of the Sinner's Lost and Helpless Condition.**

a. *He is in such a relation to God that the very righteousness of the latter demands his eternal punishment.* By reason of his sin he has not only lost communion with God, but has come under the everlasting condemnation of His law (Matt. XXV:46; Gal. III:10). Hence, God cannot pardon him any more than the judge may dismiss the convicted criminal. In the latter case the law forbids. In the former case the divine nature, which is the ultimate foundation of law, prevents (II Tim. II:13). A full satisfaction for sin must be rendered (Heb. IX:22). Otherwise, the order and existence of all things would be imperiled, for God himself would be dethroned.

b. *This satisfaction the sinner cannot render for himself.* (1) He is incapable of self-reformation, for he cannot make himself holy (Eph. II:5). (2) If he could, he could meet only the present demands of the divine law, the sins of the past would still cry out for judgment (Matt. XII:36).

c. *The necessity of redemption, while thus absolute as regards the sinner, is, however, only relative as regards God.* (1) If the sinner is to be saved, God must save him (Acts. IV:12). (2) But it is in no sense necessary that the sinner should be saved. (a) Every demand of justice would be met by his punishment. (b) Were

\*See "Confession of Faith," Chapters VII, VIII, X, XI, XII, XIV, XV, XXXIV, XXXV; also "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," Lectures IX, X, XI, XII.

God simply to let His law take its course, He would still do all that He ought and He could still be all that He ought. God cannot be under any, even the least, obligation to save those who deserve only punishment (Eph. II: 1-5).

**B. The Source of Redemption, then, must be God's Undeserved Benevolence for Sinners** (John III: 16):

a. *This love for sinners is not confined to the Son, but is shared equally by each person of the Trinity* (I John IV: 14).

b. *So far from being explicable and natural on the ground of the misery of our race, it is incomprehensible* because: (1) This misery is the just penalty of man's own sin (Rom. VI: 23). (2) Sin is an offense directly against God and so directly against love (I John IV: 8). Hence, the supreme proof of love is that God gave His Son to die for sinners (Rom. V: 8).

**C. God's Compassionate Love for the Sinful and Lost Race of Man expresses Itself in the Choice of an Innumerable Multitude of Them** (Rev. VII: 9) **that He may forever delight Himself in Them and in His "Kindness" to Them** (Eph. II: 7).

a. *That God should thus choose out those who should be the objects of His grace was the necessity of the case, unless all sinners were to receive it alike.*

b. *With regard to God's choice of the sinners whom He will make the objects of His special love, what we have observed as to God's nature and plan assures us:* (1) It is an eternal choice (Eph. I: 4). (2) It is a choice of individuals as individuals (John X: 3). (3) It is a choice unto holiness and eternal life (I Pet. I: 5-9). (4) Its reason in each particular case is in God, and not in any faith or obedience that He foresees in any (Eph. I: 5). It must be so. In the case of those who, as all men, are by nature "dead through trespasses and sins," when God foresees faith and obedience, it can be only because He has determined himself to give them. (5) As to why God does not choose all for eternal life, we may say: (a) It cannot be through any lack of power to save (Heb. VII: 25; Prov. XXI: 1). (b) Neither can it be because of any lack of wish to save (I Tim. II: 4). (c) It must be, therefore, that, for reasons that we cannot yet fully understand, a universal choice would be inconsistent with His righteousness.

**D. The Father carries out this Purpose of Salvation through a Redeemer.**

a. *This redeemer is His "only-begotten and well-beloved Son,"* the second person of the Trinity (John III: 16; Eph. I: 4).

b. *This redeemer, as Adam was, is appointed to be and by the constitution of His person is fitted to be, a public person.* As Adam represented and acted for and in the place of the whole human race before the law of God, so before it the Son of God represents and acts for and in the place of all of the human race given to Him by the Father for redemption from the curse of the law (I Cor. XV: 22; John VI: 39).

**E. God's Purpose in appointing His Son thus to redeem Those Whom He has chosen is:—**

a. *That every one given to the Son for salvation should be saved* (John VI: 39).

b. *That this salvation should be certain from the first* (Rom. VIII: 29, 30), *and that it should be complete* (I Cor. I: 30; Col. II: 10). God would have His "great salvation" perfect as He Himself is.

**F. The Son of God became the Redeemer of All Those given to Him by the Father by taking into Union with Himself Our Nature** (John I: 14; Phil. II: 5-11), **and by putting Himself in our place in the sight of God the righteous Judge** (Gal. IV: 4).

a. *This He did by being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and being born of her* (Luke I: 31, 35). (1) As this birth was supernatural so it did not involve our Redeemer in His mother's corruption. He Himself was "without sin" (Heb. IV: 15). (2) As to the thus constituted person of our Redeemer, we are further taught: (a) He had a complete human nature; i.e., a true body (Heb. II: 14) and a reasonable soul (Matt. XXVI: 38). (b) He had a true divine nature (John I: 1-14). (c) These natures exist in Him entire and distinct, without mixture or confusion (John VIII: 58; Luke II: 52). (d) Though having thus two minds and two wills, He is one person (Rom. IX: 5). (e) -He is thus God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever (Heb. XIII: 8). We cannot explain this, for we know of nothing like it; but it

involves no contradiction, and it is no more incomprehensible than the union of soul and body in our own persons.

b. *Christ put Himself in our place in the sight of God the righteous Judge:* (1) By undertaking to obey every requirement of the law on us (Matt. III:15). (2) By subjecting Himself to the miseries of this life (Isa. LIII:3). (3) By taking on Himself the penalty of the law in our stead (Gal. III:13). (4) By submitting Himself to be buried and to continue under the power of death for a time (I Cor. XX:3, 4).

**G. As Our Redeemer Christ executes Three Offices:—**

a. *The office of a Prophet.* Thus He reveals the will of God for our salvation (1) by His Word (John I:18), and (2) by His Spirit (John XIV:26); and so He causes us to know God.

b. *The office of a Priest.*

(1) Thus He satisfies every demand of the divine law. This He does (a) by taking the place of each one of those given to Him by the Father before the broken law of God (II Cor. V:21), just as Adam stood in the place of each member of the human race before the then unbroken law of God (I Cor. XV:22); (b) by rendering through His perfect earthly and human life the complete obedience due from each one of them (Heb. V:7-9); (c) by enduring in His death on the cross, which was voluntary (John X:18) and penal (Rom. IV:25) and in the strictest sense substitutionary (Mark X:45) and because of His divine personality, as also His obedience, of infinite worth (Heb. IX:14), the righteous wrath of God against their sins (Isa. LIII:5); (d) by rising from the dead as the proof that His obedience and punishment had been admitted by the Father in place of theirs (Rom. IV:25); (e) by ascending to the right hand of the Father ever to urge in their behalf, and specially on the occasion of their particular transgressions, and with all the sympathy made possible by His human nature and temptation (Heb. II:17, 18; IV:15), the merits of His sacrificial life and death already accepted in lieu of theirs (Heb. VII:25).

(2) The effect of Christ's priestly work is threefold: (a) The guilt of every one of the objects of it, as soon as the sinner accepts of it, is taken away (Rom. VIII:1). (b) God is then and thus reconciled to them (Heb. II:17). This does not mean that Christ died to cause God to love those whom He had chosen. On the contrary, as we have seen, it was because of God's compassion for

all sinners that He chose any and gave them to Christ for salvation (John III:16). What it does mean is that Christ obeyed and died and rose and intercedes for those whom God had chosen, that it might become consistent with God's absolute righteousness for Him to make them "the sons" of His special love in rendering them such that He may and can delight Himself in them and they in Him (Rom. III:26). (c) Their relationship to God is completely reversed. As regards the law of God, they have changed places with Christ. He has taken on Himself all their liability to punishment and all their obligation to perfect obedience, and, consequently, God views them and treats them as if they were clothed in all Christ's righteousness (Rom. X:4). Hence, their sins are all pardoned (Eph. I:7); they themselves are accepted as if they had fulfilled every demand of the law (II Cor. V:21); whereas Adam before he fell was only a "servant," they are now adopted into the family of God (I John III:1), being made both brethren of Christ (Rom. VIII:29) and "joint-heirs" with Him (Rom. VIII:17). Thus by redemption they are brought into a far closer relation with God than that which was lost in the fall.

c. *The office of a King.* Thus Christ can and does cause all things to "work together" for the highest good of all given to Him by the Father (Rom. VIII:28). Of this kingship of Christ we may affirm: (1) It is bestowed on Him by the Father as the reward of His obedience and suffering as Redeemer (Phil. II:7-11). (2) Its particular reference is to the salvation of His own people (Eph. I:22). (3) It attaches not to His divine nature exclusively, but to His divine-human personality. A man now sits upon the mediatorial throne (Acts VII:55). (4) It is all-comprehensive. (a) Christ is directing the whole course of providence (Matt. XXVIII:18); this is His kingdom of power. (b) Christ is ruling over His own spiritual people individually (John X:3), and over His professed people collectively organized in the visible church (Matt. XXVIII:19, 20); this is His kingdom of grace. (c) At the consummation all those eternally chosen by God in Christ shall be gathered out of the world and Christ shall reign absolutely over them and completely in them (Rev. XXII:3, 4); this is His kingdom of glory. (5) The effects of Christ's mediatorial rule are: (a) that His people are subdued to Himself (Ps. CX:3); (b) that they are defended against His and their enemies (Acts XVIII:9, 10); (c) that they are en-

abled to derive spiritual blessings from the whole course of providence (I Thess. V:18), so that afflictions, even though the consequences of their sins, can work out glory for them (II Cor. IV:17) and death becomes to them no longer the penalty of sin, but the gate of heaven (II Cor. V:8); and (d) that thus at last they are brought off "more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. VIII:37).

**H. Christ's Work inures also to the Benefit of All Sinners, and not only to Those Who were given to Him for Redemption.**

a. *What He did as the Redeemer of the latter is, and was intended to be, sufficient for and adapted to the redemption of the former* (I John II:2). It could not be otherwise; Christ's work is of infinite worth, and there is no difference between the former and the latter as to the kind of redemption needed (Rom. III:22, 23).

b. *Hence*, (1) the gospel ought to be preached to all men (Mark XVI:15); for (a) God wishes all to be saved (I Tim. II:4), and (b) has provided in Christ a free salvation ample for all and suited for all if only they will take it. (2) Everyone who hears of Christ ought to accept Him as his Saviour; for (a) God wishes him to do so, (b) he cannot be saved unless he does so (Acts IV:12), and (c) the only thing that must or does prevent him from doing so is his own sin. (3) Moreover, it is through the universal offer of the gospel that God's purpose of salvation is carried out, and it is only thus that it can be carried out. Ignorant as to who those are whom He had chosen to bring to accept it, we must offer it to all, if we would offer it to them; and unless it is offered to them, even they cannot believe and so accept it (Rom. X:13-17).

**I. The Entrance of Any into the Redemption thus Graciously and Completely provided by God and wrought out by Christ is through Faith in Christ in His Three Offices, and through It Alone** (Acts XVI:31; Rom. X:13).

a. This does not mean that such faith issues in salvation because it renders us deserving of it; but because it is the arm which lays hold of it, the medium through which it comes to us. This must be so; for saving faith itself is a "gift," and so can merit nothing (Eph. II:8).

b. *Saving faith does not consist in knowledge that Christ is the*

*Saviour of sinners and in assent to this proposition.* It includes such knowledge and assent, but is much more.

c. *It is such a trust in Christ as our Redeemer as enables us, just as we are, to receive and rest on Christ alone for salvation as He is freely offered to us in the gospel* (Acts XV: 11). It is simply taking Christ at His word that "whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John III: 16).

d. *It necessarily involves repentance for our sins* (Acts II: 38). For unless one hates his sins as such and means to try to renounce them, he cannot see any beauty in the Saviour from sin that he should desire Him and so trust in Him.

**J. Hence, we are brought to consider God's Saving Work in Us.**

a. *The necessity for this is threefold:* (1) As the sinner cannot trust in Christ as his Saviour from sin until he hates sin as sin; so though he may dread the punishment of sin, he cannot hate it itself while he is spiritually dead because of it. He can no more hate it than the pig can hate dirt. It is not in the nature of the sinner's self-determination to do so (Rom. VII: 14). If he is to desire the redemption that is in Christ, he must receive a new disposition, he must be born again and from above (John III: 3). (2) Could he accept redemption as he is, it would not be salvation for him. Heaven would be worse than hell to one whose sin, in addition to making a hell of his heart, would cause him to loathe the atmosphere of heaven. If such an one is to appreciate salvation, he needs a new disposition, he must be born again and from above (John III: 3). (3) Were this not so, the righteousness of God would impose the same demand. He cannot, because He may not, save sinners in sin (Heb. XII: 14, 29).

b. *The agent of the new birth is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity* (John III: 5). (1) The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father (John XIV: 26), and also by the Son (John XV: 26). (2) As His mission as Regenerator was included in Christ's eternal purpose of redemption, and was thus included as based on His priestly work; so it has exclusive reference to those who were given to the Son before the foundation of the world for salvation (II Thess. II: 13, 14; Rom. XI: 7), and for whom therefore He acted as high priest.

c. *As to the nature of the new birth, we are taught:* (1) It is an

instantaneous change in the moral nature; for it is a transition from death to life (Eph. II: 5). (2) For the same reason it is a radical change. (3) It is a permanent change, for the life imparted is immortal (Rom. VIII: 28-30). (4) It is a change which affects the whole soul. (a) The mind is enlightened in the knowledge of Christ (Eph. I: 17, 18). (b) The will is renewed (Ezek. XXXVI: 26, 27). (c) The sinner is persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ as He is freely offered in the gospel (John VI: 37, 44, 45). (5) It is a change in which the soul is passive and unconscious. A dead man cannot be instrumental or conscious in making himself alive. (6) Hence, though the new birth is indispensable to salvation, it is not a duty. We ought to repent and believe, for these are our own acts; but we ought to look to God absolutely, for the new birth, for this is and can be His act only and altogether (Rom. IV: 17). (7) Hence, too, arises the glorious certainty that "whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved" (Acts XVI: 31; Rom. X: 13); for such belief is the sure evidence that one has been born of God (I John V: 1).

d. *As to its mode, the new birth, as every beginning of life, is inscrutable* (John III: 8). All that we know is: (1) It is not due to the moral influence of the truths of the gospel; these truths could not have any influence on one who was "dead" to them, and we are explicitly told that "the natural man" cannot even know them (I Cor. II: 14). Teaching, therefore, cannot of itself issue in the new birth. (2) Yet the latter is not without relation to the truth. In the case of adults it presupposes it. Hence, we are said to be "begotten by the word of truth" (James I: 18). The truth of Christ is the atmosphere essential to the life in Christ. The atmosphere could never revive a dead man, but, on the other hand, such an one could never be revived in a vacuum. (3) The new birth is due directly to the creative power of the Holy Spirit of God, and to this alone (John III: 5). The Bible distinguishes carefully between the influence of the truth and the work of the Holy Spirit (II Tim. II: 25); and while it recognizes the necessity of the former, it ascribes the efficiency to the latter (I Cor. III: 5, 6). (4) The creative power of God in effecting the new birth acts in accord with, and not in violation of, the natural and so divinely appointed laws of the soul. God does not cause any to choose His service against their inclination; He makes them "willing in the day of His

power" (Ps. CX:3). (5) The new birth is the result of a sovereign act of God's Spirit. It is not wrought in any on account of their merits, or on account of any nascent faith or sorrow for sin in them; but it is always wrought because of and in accordance with God's eternal purpose of grace (II Tim. I:9). (6) The agency of the Holy Spirit in effecting the new birth is irresistible and so invariably efficacious. As God sends His Spirit to quicken all whom He has chosen for redemption and thus to apply to them the redemption purchased for them by Christ, so He succeeds in every case (John VI:37). It is absurd to suppose that a sinner could defeat the eternal purpose of the Almighty, that the human will could resist the creative power of God.

e. *The results of the new birth are:—*

(1) Conversion. (a) This is the sinner's act as his new life in Christ and by the Spirit begins to assert itself. (b) It consists in a reversal of purpose. As God by the new birth has changed the inclination of the sinner's self-determination, so now he begins to determine himself in accordance with the change (Acts IX:6). (c) It is evidenced by repentance and faith.

(2) A new man. (a) This does not mean a different kind of man. Paul was the same sort of man after God made him "a new creature in Christ Jesus" as before. He retained all the energy naturally characteristic of him (Gal. I:15, 16). (b) It does mean the same man brought under the direction of and energized with the power and life of Christ (Gal. II:20).

No less complete and glorious than this is the redemption which is in Jesus. It is adequate to meet every demand of the divine justice on all men; it secures its certain appropriation by every one of the innumerable multitude for whom it was eternally provided; it does this by giving to each one of them the moral nature and the glorious liberty of the children of God.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.\*

Redemption is in order to the Christian life and its resulting good works, which God "afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. II: 10).

#### **A. The Necessity of the Christian Life arises: —**

a. *Out of the redeemed sinner's new relation to God.* (1) Before his acceptance of redemption he was at enmity against God because under sentence of His law (Eph. II: 15, 16). (2) Since then he is reconciled to God (Eph. II: 14, 15), Christ having satisfied every demand of the law for him and in his stead, and he having laid hold of this "great salvation" through simple trust in the Redeemer. (3) It cannot be, therefore, that the Christian will do good works in order either to earn salvation or to maintain his hold on it. "He that believeth hath eternal life" (John VI: 47). It could not be more surely his than it is his the instant that he believes on Christ as his Saviour. The ransom which the Son of God has paid for him must deliver him absolutely as soon as he accepts it as for him: otherwise, God would deny His own righteousness. (4) It must be, however, that, because of this union with Christ by faith, the sinner will try to "bring forth fruit unto God." Having identified himself with Christ, he must have made the latter's purpose for him his own. Christ's death for his sins must have been in effect his death to his sins (Rom. VI: 1-11). It could no more be otherwise than the drowning man could lay hold of his rescuer and then cease trying to breathe.

b. *Out of the change in the redeemed sinner's spiritual condition.* (1) Before, he was dead to God "through . . . trespasses and sins" (Eph. II: 1). (2) Now he is alive unto God, having been quick-

\*See "Confession of Faith," Chapters XIII, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX, XXI, XXV, XXVI, XXXIV; also "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," Lectures XIII, XIV, XV.

ened by Him (Eph. II:1). He believes on Christ as his Redeemer because by the Holy Spirit he has been united to him as his life (Gal. II:20). (3) It cannot be, therefore, that he will do good works in order that he may enter on eternal life; it could not be his more surely than it is his already; it is no more he who lives, but Christ who lives in him (Gal. II:20). (4) It must be, however, just because God is working in him, that he will strive to develop and so work out his own salvation (Phil. II:12). It could no more be otherwise than a man could give over breathing; he does not breathe in order that he may get life; he breathes because he is alive and for this reason cannot help breathing.

c. *The sinner's own appreciation of his changed relation to God and of his new spiritual condition will both demand and prompt the Christian life.* Gratitude for these mercies of God must constrain him to present himself "a living sacrifice" unto God (Rom. XII:1, 2).

### **B. The Sphere of the Christian Life is Threefold:—**

a. *The kingdom of Christ.* This, as we have seen, is universal. Christ is now the God of providence, and He is "head over all things to the church" (Eph. I:22). (1) He, therefore, who has taken Christ as his Lord and in whose life Christ has become the dominant principle will recognize his responsibility to Him in society, in business, in the family, in the state, in the church. In every department of life he will see that he can do Christ's will and that he ought to do it (I Cor. X:31). (2) In every event also he will recognize the appointment of his King. He will appreciate that nothing comes to pass that Christ has not effected or permitted for His glory in the good of His redeemed ones. Hence, he will feel that in everything he can give thanks and ought to give thanks (I Thess. V:18). Even to this degree will the world become to him the kingdom of his Redeemer and Lord.

b. *The household of God.* In Christ we are no more servants, but sons (Gal. IV:7). Our King reigns for our Father and as our Father. The whole world should be as our home, for it is our "Father's house" (John XIV:2). All our duties are the requirements of His wisdom; all our joys are the expressions of His love; all our afflictions reveal His sympathy; it is our privilege and our duty so to realize His fatherhood that our obedience as servants

will become "the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. VIII: 21).

c. *Communion with Christ.* It is with Him that our new life is hid in God (Col. III: 3). As the world becomes to us God's kingdom and His kingdom our home; so our life in this home consists in following Christ as our Lord, in communing with Him as our own individual Friend, in living in Him as our Life (Gal. II: 20). This is the real meaning of the Christian life. He in whom God chose us before the foundation of the world, who died on the cross for our sins, who "ever liveth to intercede for us"—He dwells in each one of us by His Spirit, and we live by the power and for the glory of His life (I Cor. III: 16). Thus the Christian life is a life for Christ and with Christ because in Christ Himself (John XV: 5).

### **C. The Work of the Christian Life.**

a. *In the sphere of the kingdom it is to develop all the right interests of the world in accordance with their inherent and, therefore, divine purpose.* (1) The original command to "subdue the earth" still holds (Gen. I: 28). It is strengthened by the fact that the world has become the kingdom of our Redeemer. Fidelity to all its interests is now required by loyalty to Him. (2) Particularly is this so in the relationships of society. (a) The affections of the family should be inspired by and subordinated to the love of Christ (Eph. V: 25; VI: 1, 4). (b) The rights which the state secures should be defined in accordance with the law of Christ as its true Head, and the civil rulers who guard these rights should be obeyed and respected as His ministers (Rom. XIII: 1-4).

b. *In the sphere of the household of God it is to make known the gospel of salvation.* United to Christ, the Christian will identify himself with the visible church or the company of Christ's confessed followers (Mark VIII: 34). Thus he will acknowledge his membership in the family of God and will best do his part in the work for the establishment of Christ's kingdom; and as this work is the preaching and teaching and living of the gospel of the grace of God (Mark XVI: 15), so he will seek to have all his activity in the world or kingdom of God contribute to this the supreme function of the church (Mark XVI: 15).

c. *In the sphere of communion with Christ it is to reproduce His character in order that He may become more fully known.* Living in Christ as the branch lives in the vine (John XV: 1-5), the Chris-

tian will strive to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit of Christ (Gal. V:22). Thus his true life will express itself, and as the essence of this life is "to know the love of Christ" (John XVII:3), so his aim will be in all his endeavor to develop in himself and in others the virtues which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and in all of his consequent effort to publish the gospel of salvation, and in all his resulting activity in subduing the world to Christ, his final aim will be that the love of Christ may be known "which passeth knowledge" (Eph. III:19).

#### **D. The Law of the Christian Life.**

a. *The Christian life is under law.* (1) Just because the Christian has been delivered by God from obedience to His law as the condition of eternal life, will he wish to make it the rule of his life (Rom. VII:22). (2) Since Christ came to vindicate the law of God in His expression of His grace, it could not be otherwise (Rom. III:31). (3) It must be so, too; because the Christian life is "hid with Christ in God," and His nature is, as we have seen, both the standard and the ground of right, which is the basis of law.

b. *The whole of the Christian life is absolutely under the law of God.* (1) This law is all comprehensive (I Cor. X:31). (2) The only service that will or should satisfy either God or the Christian is entire obedience (James II:10), perfection of character (Matt. V:48), total consecration (Matt. XVI:24, 25). The cost of our redemption (I Pet. I:19) as well as the perfection of God is the reason for this.

c. *The Bible, and particularly the personal revelation of God in Christ given in it, constitutes the supernaturally revealed and so infallible rule of Christian life* (II Tim. III:16, 17).

d. *The law of God and rule of the Christian life is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments* (Matt. XIX:17). (1) This is so because the Ten Commandments are binding on all men, being founded either on the unchangeable nature of God, as the Ninth Commandment, or on the divinely constituted nature and permanent relations of men in their present state of existence, as the Eighth Commandment. (2) It is so, too, because the Ten Commandments are reaffirmed (Mark X:19), explained, and spiritualized by Christ (Matt. V). (3) The sum of the Ten Commandments is that we should love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. XXII:37-40). (4) This absolutely holy

love, which is the complete fulfillment of the law (Rom. XIII: 10), finds its standard and illustration in Christ's love for His redeemed ones (John XV: 12). (5) This is Christ's "new commandment," the law distinctive of the Christian life (John XIII: 34). The Christian is one who tries to love both himself and others as Christ has loved him.

e. The will of God for each particular Christian and so his particular duty in each particular case, is indicated in the current leadings of providence interpreted by the indwelling Spirit of God, who enlightens our minds to understand their claims and who quickens our consciences to appreciate them. The Holy Spirit, however, always guides by applying the general principles of the Bible to the changing conditions of our providentially directed lives. He never enjoins what is contradictory of, or beyond, the book which He himself inspired to be our complete rule. Hence, the final appeal in every question of duty as of faith must be to the word of God (Isa. VIII: 20).

f. *In the case of what is not commanded or forbidden in the Bible each Christian is required to decide his duty for himself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, with due regard to the recommendations of the church and other constituted authorities, and especially in accordance with the following principles:—*

(1) One ought to do what, in view of all the circumstances, he judges will be most for the glory of Christ (I Cor. X: 31).

(2) Christ cannot be glorified when what one does, though in itself innocent, wounds the conscience of a less developed Christian (I Cor. VIII: 12), or tempts him to violate his conscience (I Cor. VIII: 11).

(3) Still more ought one not to let his less developed brother deny his right to decide for himself in these matters what he himself may or may not do (Rom. XIV: 3). This liberty he is bound to accord to others and to demand from others. Even the church may not authoritatively command or forbid what the Bible has not commanded or forbidden.

#### **E. As to the Nature of the Christian Life, It is:—**

a. *A growth.* It consists in the repetition of that act of faith in which it first evidenced itself. The body lives as well as begins to live by breathing, and the Christian lives in Christ as well as begins to live in Him by believing on Him. We grow in Him as we ad-

venture ourselves on His promises, as we draw on His grace, as we submit to His rule, as we coöperate with Him as He dwells in us and animates us and worketh in us both to will and to work by His Spirit (Phil. II: 13). In a word, we can be sanctified only through faith (Acts XXVI: 18).

b. *It is at best an immature and imperfect growth.* (1) The new birth is the implanting of a new and divine life; it is not the destruction of the old and corrupt nature. During his third foreign missionary tour even Paul wrote that when he would do good evil was present with him (Rom. VII: 14-25). (2) This old nature is never entirely eradicated in this life (Rom. III: 9, 10). Hence, the Christian is never what he would be or ought to be; he never coöperates as he should with the Spirit of God, and the latter in His just and loving sovereignty does not constrain such coöperation.

c. *It is, however, a growth which may and should, even in its immaturity and imperfection, issue in assurance of salvation* (I John III: 14, 18, 19, 21, 24). (1) Such assurance results from the testimony of the Holy Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom. VIII: 15, 16). (2) Though not indispensable to saving faith, it is its appropriate fruit and so ought to be striven after (II Pet. I: 10).

d. *It is, moreover, a growth which is sure to come to maturity and perfection.* When it is correctly judged not to do so, it must have been a spurious growth and the Christian one in name only. (1) Drawing its life from God Himself, it may languish, but it cannot die. (2) Created by Him Himself, He may seem to neglect it, but He must be all the time perfecting it (Phil. I: 6). (3) Christ has so declared (John X: 28). (4) Such, as we have just seen, is the witness of His Spirit. (5) Such is the eternal covenant of God with His Son (John VI: 39, 40). All therefore, who are in Christ must become like Him (Rom. VIII: 29). Were it, in even one case, to be otherwise, He who is "the Truth" would deny Himself; "He cannot deny Himself" (II Tim. II: 13). Such is the absolutely certain as well as supremely glorious issue of the Christian life.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MEANS OF GRACE \*

Ordinarily in His works of providence God acts through means. It is not strange, therefore, that there should be "means of grace" and that our growth in the Christian life should depend on our diligent use of these. It is thus that Christ develops His life in us. These means of grace are:—

#### **A. The Word; i. e., the Bible.**

a. *In itself the Bible is fitted to be so.* Its truths are such and are so presented as to be adapted (1) to make "wise unto salvation" (II Tim. III: 15), and (2) to develop holiness (Acts XX: 32). The Bible contains precisely the spiritual nourishment needed by the Christian life in all its stages.

b. *The Bible is, however, made a means of grace by the attending influence of the Holy Spirit* (I Cor. II: 4). He opens the heart to receive and He enlightens the mind to understand "the things of God" (I Cor. II: 10). Otherwise, because of our natural deadness to such things, they would be to us only "a stumbling block" or "foolishness" (I Cor. I: 23).

c. *This influence of the Holy Spirit is not a supernatural efficiency inherent in the Bible itself, but it is an influence exerted by Him when and how He pleases on and through the truths of the Bible.* Two men may read the Bible, and it save the one and harden and condemn the other (II Cor. II: 16). This is because the former is taught by the Spirit (John XVI: 13), and the other only by his own spiritually dead heart.

d. *This influence of the Spirit may, however, be expected, and may be claimed by Christians, in connection with the appropriate use of the Bible* (Acts XVII: 11, 12). (1) The Bible should be taught and studied (a) diligently (Deut. VI: 6, 7), (b) after careful spir-

\* See "Confession of Faith," Chapters XXV, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXXIV; also "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," Lectures V, XVI, XVII.

itual as well as mental preparation (I Pet. II:1, 2), (c) with prayer (Ps. CXIX:18). (2) It should be received (a) with faith (Rom. I:16), and (b) with love (John VII:17). (3) It should be laid up in our hearts (Ps. CXIX:11). (4) It should be practiced in our lives (James I:25).

e. *The public preaching of the word of God, He is pleased specially to honor as a means of grace* (I Cor. I:21).

### **B. The Sacraments.**

a. *"A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; whercin, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers"* ("Shorter Catechism," Ques. 92; Matt. XXVIII:19; XXVI:26-28).

b. *The design of the sacraments is fourfold:* (1) To represent to the eye the fundamental truths of the gospel. (2) To be badges of Christian discipleship. (3) To be the seals of Christ's covenant with men. (4) To be the means whereby Christ imparts grace to those who receive them rightly.

c. *The necessity of the sacraments depends on* (1) their adaptation to meet the ends just named, and (2) above all, on the command of Christ (Matt. XXVIII:19; I Cor. XI:23, 24). Yet while they are thus appointed and so obligatory, they are not exclusive channels of grace. A believer ought to seek, and ordinarily will seek baptism, but it is never the lack of baptism which is fatal (Mark XVI:16).

d. *The efficacy of the sacraments is not from any virtue in them or in him who administers them, but solely by the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive them* (I Cor. XII:13). This is not because faith renders any deserving of grace, but because only faith can appropriate it.

e. *The sacraments are valid, or what they purport to be, when they conform to the prescriptions given in the Bible concerning them.* (1) The elements employed must be those which Christ ordained. (2) The manner in which those elements are given or received must accord with His directions. (3) The ordinances must be administered with the intention of doing what He commanded.

f. *The sacraments are two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.*

(1) Baptism.

(a) It symbolizes by the cleansing of the body by water the cleansing of the soul in the blood of Jesus. It, therefore, implies a con-

fession of guilt and of depravity, and a profession of the discovery of the remedy for all sin in the blood of Jesus.

(b) It ought, therefore, to be sought by all and to be applied to all who in the judgment of charity may be presumed to be children of God and so with a right to the privileges of His house (Acts II: 38).

(c) As only God can judge the heart, the responsibility of deciding whether one has turned to God in Christ and so is a child of God and a fit subject for recognition as such by baptism is wholly with the applicant himself. The duty of church sessions is limited to denying church membership and baptism to those who give positive evidence of unfitness for them, either because they do not know what baptism means, or because they do not believe what it signifies, or because their lives openly contradict their profession. Church officers who assume more responsibility than this come under the condemnation of Christ (Matt. VII: 1).

(d) The infants also of all who have professed their faith in Christ ought to be baptized: for as baptism is the sign and seal of the covenant of grace, and as the covenant of grace is identical with the promise made to Abraham (Gal. III: 14), and as this promise included his children with him (Gen. XVII: 7), so the children of believers now are heirs of the blessings of this covenant, and thus should receive the divinely appointed sign and seal of it.

(e) The salvation of infants dying in infancy does not, however, depend upon their baptism. Baptism does not make those to whom it is administered heirs of grace: but, in the case of infants, it is administered to those who, we must believe, are already heirs of grace because the faith of their parents shows that they are entitled to be regarded as born such through God's gracious and eternal choice; and since we have good reason to hope, from the analogy between Adam and Christ (Rom. V: 18, 19), that all those who die in infancy are included in this choice, we may well believe that a multitude, who never were baptized, are removed from the evil of this world to the immediate presence of God.

(f) The benefit of infant baptism appears in this, that in it parents formally claim for their children the salvation which God, who cannot fail to keep His word, has promised to give to the children of all believers who sincerely make that claim and continue to believe in His promise and to train their children in accord with it.

(g) As to the mode of baptism, it is essential that there should be a washing with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Thus purification from sin is symbolized, and the recipient is pledged to allegiance to God in that character and in those relations in which He has revealed Himself to us in the plan of salvation. How much water is used and how it is applied are not essential. Sprinkling, immersion, and affusion are all justified by Scripture. Sprinkling, however, is most symbolical of spiritual cleansing (Ezek. XXXVI: 25, 26). Hence, it is to be preferred.

(2) The Lord's Supper.

(a) It is a memorial of Christ (I Cor. XI: 24), and especially of His death for our sins (Matt. XXVI: 27, 28). Thus it speaks to us of guilt and of the atonement.

(b) It is a sacrificial meal, as was the passover feast, the place of which it takes; it is, therefore, a communion of Christians with each other as common participants in Christ's sacrificial death accomplished once for all on Calvary (Matt. XXVI: 27).

(c) In it, to all who come to it in faith, Christ and the benefits of His death for us are signified, sealed, and imparted. We not only remember Him; we claim Him afresh as our sacrificial substitute, and receive Him as such to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

(d) Christ, therefore, is really present at His table and is really partaken of in this sacrament (I Cor. XI: 24, 25). This does not mean that the bread and wine become Christ's flesh and blood, or that His flesh and blood enter into them; but that all the power to save of His body broken and of His blood shed for our sins, and the energy of His own glorified divine human life are communicated to us by the Holy Spirit as we give ourselves anew to Christ at His table, and believing in all that they signify eat and drink the symbols of His body broken and His blood shed for us. As we cannot accept the physical presence of our Lord in the bread and wine and not contradict the senses which He has given us, so we must believe in His dynamical presence to those who have the faith to receive Him, or deny His own words (Matt. XXVI: 26, 27).

(e) The Lord's Supper, then, should be partaken of only by Christians. Others, because spiritually dead, cannot "discern the Lord's body," or perceive the spiritual and so real meaning of this sacra-

ment. Hence, they cannot participate in it without guilt (I Cor. XI: 29).

(f) Yet as the Lord's Supper is for Christians only, so it is for all Christians, however weak or discouraged or sinful. The most sinful, if only they would repent and believe, are the very ones whom our Saviour would feed at His table (Mark II: 17).

### C. Prayer.

a. *In the case of the Christian, prayer is communion with both our Father (Matt. VI: 9) and our Friend (John XV: 14, 15, 16).*

b. Prayer includes petition (I John V: 4), confession (I John I: 9), and thanksgiving (Phil. IV: 6); the model of our prayer is the Lord's Prayer (Matt. VI: 9-13).

c. Prayer is a special means of grace. (1) Because of its effect in us. Nothing can so tend to make one holy as communion with God Himself (Isa. XL: 31). (2) Because of its power with God (Matt. VII: 11; James V: 15). If prayer did not have this power with God, it would lose its power in us. No benefit could come from communion with a God who encouraged petition though knowing it to be only an empty form.

d. *God can respond to our prayers and so can permit Himself to be influenced by them because (1) the laws of the world were constituted by Him and are absolutely under His control, and (2) because prayer, as well as the answer to prayer, enters into His eternal plan. The whole world has been formed from the beginning for the very purpose of providing for the mutual intercourse of the praying children and of the prayer-answering Father.*

e. *Because God is our Father and is omnipotent, we ought to ask Him for everything that we wish, which He has not shown to be contrary to His will (Phil. IV: 6).*

f. *Because God is our Father and is omnipotent, He will answer every acceptable prayer,—if not as we wish, yet as we would wish did we know all that He knows (John XIV: 14).*

g. *The conditions of acceptable prayer are: (1) It must be sincere. (2) It must be offered in submission to the will of God (I John V: 14; Luke XXII: 42). (3) It must be accompanied and followed by the intelligent and diligent use of all the means adapted to secure the answer (James V: 13-15). (4) It must be offered in the name of Christ (John XVI: 23).*

h. *We should be encouraged to pray just because prayer is not*

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*necessary for God's information* (Matt. VI:8). It must, therefore, be to bring us into communion with Himself that He has so largely conditioned His giving on our asking (Ezek. XXXVI:37). He delights to have us pray even more than we need to pray.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LAST THINGS \*

One cannot study God's plan as developed in His works of creation and providence, in the latter more definitely in the permission of sin and especially in the accomplishment of redemption, and in it particularly in the Christian life with its means of grace, and not ask, What is to be the outcome of it all?

**A. Human Probation is to end with Death** (II Cor. VI: 1, 2).

a. *Immediately upon death the good man*—and no man, as we have seen, can be good in God's sight who is not clothed in the robe of Christ's righteousness—*goes to a place of holiness and happiness, and the bad man to a place of suffering* (Luke XVI: 22, 23).

b. *These places and the characters which they imply are permanent and irreversible* (Luke XVI: 26, 31).

**B. The Church as Christ's Army is to push Her Conquests until Jesus is owned the World Over; even by the Jews, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords** (Mark XIII: 10; Rom. XI: 26; Isa. XLV: 22, 23).

**C. Christ Himself will return from Heaven** (I Thess. IV: 16).

a. *He will come in the body* (Acts I: 11).

b. *The time of His return is unknown* (Mark XIII: 26, 32).

c. *He will come unexpectedly* (I Thess. V: 2).

**D. At Christ's Return the Bodies of All Who are Alive shall be so "changed" as to be Incorruptible** (I Cor. XV: 51, 52), **and All the Dead shall be raised Incorruptible.**

a. *This will be effected directly by the almighty power of God* (Phil. III: 21).

b. *The resurrection of the impenitent will be judicial, that they*

\*See "Confession of Faith," Chapters XXXII and XXXIII; also "Popular Lectures on Theological Themes," Lectures XVIII and XIX.

may justly, and so in the body, receive the punishment of the deeds done in the body (John V: 29; II Cor. V: 10).

c. *The resurrection of the redeemed will be gracious*; a consequence of Christ's death and resurrection for them, and for the consummation of their salvation (I Thess. IV: 14).

d. *As to the resurrection bodies of the redeemed, we are taught:* (1) They are identical with the bodies laid away in the graves (John V: 28, 29). (2) They are, however, changed so as to be like Christ's glorified body (Phil. III: 21). (3) Hence, they will be (a) still true bodies (Luke XXIV: 39); (b) yet spiritual bodies (I Cor. XV: 44); i. e., absolutely under the control and government of the Holy Spirit so as to be perfectly adapted to the instincts and faculties of our glorified souls, and to the physical condition of the new heavens and the new earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness."

**E. As to the Condition of Souls between Death and the Resurrection, We are taught:—**

a. *In the case of the impenitent, it is a state of bodiless, penal suffering* (Luke XVI: 23).

b. *In the case of the redeemed, it is a state of bodiless, conscious blessedness.* (1) They are "at home with the Lord" (II Cor. V: 1, 8). (2) They are freed from all sin (Rev. XIV: 13). (3) Their bodies, being still united to Christ, are kept by Him for the resurrection (I Thess. IV: 14). (4) Yet though with Christ and delivered from all sin and sorrow, they are not complete in Him, but await the resurrection and the glory which shall ensue (Rom. VIII: 23).

**F. The Resurrection will be followed by, and will be in order to, the Final and Universal Judgment** (Matt. XXV: 31).

a. *Christ himself will be the Judge* (II Cor. V: 10).

b. *Those to be judged will be Satan and the angels who fell with him* (Jude 6), and all men (II Cor. V: 10).

c. *The law by which all shall be tried will be the revelation which God has made to each one.* (1) Those who have heard the gospel shall be judged by the gospel, and their great sin will be that they have "not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John III: 18). (2) Those who have never heard the gospel shall be judged, by the Mosaic law if Jews, by the law of nature if heathen; and the condemnation of the former will be that they have

disobeyed the law as God revealed it by Moses, and of the latter, that they have broken the law as made known by God in every man's conscience (Rom. II: 12-16).

d. *The judgment shall extend to words and thoughts as well as deeds* (Matt. XII: 36, 37; Heb. IV: 11-13).

e. *The condemnation of the impenitent is on the ground of their own sin; and the purpose of their judgment is to justify to the universe their punishment, already entered into, and all to the praise of God's glorious justice* (Rom. II: 5, 6).

f. *The acquittal and glorification of the redeemed will be on the ground of the righteousness of Christ, who by divine appointment took their place under the law and redeemed them from its curse and rendered its obedience, and the purpose of their judgment is to justify to the universe their blessedness, already entered into, and all to the praise of the riches of God's grace* (Rom. IX: 23).

**G. As to the Condition of Men after the Judgment, We are taught:—**

a. *The impenitent are consigned to "everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels."* (1) This cannot be literal fire; for the Devil and his angels, having no bodies, could not be pained by it. (2) It must, however, signify punishment as real and terrible as fire. (3) The chief elements of this punishment are (a) Exclusion from the presence and favor of God (II Thess. I: 9). (b) Remorse (Mark IX: 44, 46, 48). (c) Despair. (d) Positive judicial inflections, such as the impenitent's environment in hell, over and above the natural consequences of sin. (e) Perpetuity (Matt. XXV: 46). (4) As to this inconceivably awful punishment, it should be further observed: (a) To the impenitent heaven could not be heaven. (b) In every case their punishment is deserved by their own sin. (c) This is true even of the perpetuity of their punishment. Sin is an offense against an infinite Being; such an offense merits an infinite punishment; to be such, punishment must, in the case of a finite creature, be everlasting. (d) Ill desert is determined by a Judge who has our nature, who was tempted in all points as we are, and who, consequently, cannot fail to mitigate the degree of punishment according to all the extenuating circumstances (Luke XII: 47, 48). (e) Terrible though hell must be, it is only "a corner of the universe." The redeemed are called an "innumerable multitude" (Rev. VII: 9); no such description is ever given of the lost. (f) Even

hell cannot be so awful as it would be, were not an absolutely just and infinitely loving God on the throne. To endure even His just wrath must be better than to be crushed by a heartless force or tortured by a cruel tyrant; nor may we forget that even when justice compels Him to be most severe, He never ceases to love. (g) The consideration of this terrible subject ought to lead us to greater activity in bringing the impenitent to Him who can and will save all who come unto Him by faith.

b. *The redeemed enter at once into the "inheritance prepared for them from the foundation of the world"* (Matt. XXV: 34). (1) United to their bodies, their redemption is complete. (2) Delivered from all sin, sorrow, and pain (Rev. VII: 16, 17; XXI: 27), and rewarded for Christ's sake according to their works (I Cor. V: 10), each one is admitted to all the happiness of which he has become capable (Ps. XVI: 11). (3) They know even as they are known (I Cor. XIII: 12). (4) They see Christ as He is (I John III: 2). (5) Together with those who are dear to them in Christ, they will be with Him forever (I Thess. IV: 17). (6) They are changed into His glorious likeness (I John III: 2). (7) Through all the ages to come they will be the recipients of the riches of God's grace in His kindness to them through Christ Jesus (Eph. II: 7).

**H. After the Resurrection and Judgment "cometh the end," the passing away of the present order of things, the introduction of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. III: 12, 13): and then Christ the God-man, "having put all things under His feet," having accomplished every purpose of His mediatorial kingship, while retaining forever His headship over His redeemed people (Luke I: 33), will give up to the Father that dominion over the universe on which He entered at His ascension; and thus the Godhead absolute will be immediately all in all to the creature (I Cor. XV: 24-28). Such is the infinitely glorious and blessed consummation of God's eternal plan.**