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ARTICLE I.

THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL IN ITS THEOLOGICAL RELATIONS.

Recent discussions, conducted partly in this REVIEW, have directed special attention, and attached fresh interest, to the old but unexhausted, the perplexing but infinitely important, question of the Freedom of the Will. Almost from the dawn of philosophy, and the earliest development of theological doctrine, serious thinkers have, in testing their powers of reflection upon it, consciously touched the limits of the speculative faculty. Yet, as it never has been conclusively settled, each generation is attracted to its consideration as by an irresistible impulse. The agitation of it proceeds, and will, no doubt, continue, until the revelations of another and higher sphere of being have been reached. The relations of the question are too widely extended, its practical consequences too far-reaching, to admit of its being jostled out of the field of human inquiry. But important as it is, the keen and protracted discussions of it by the profoundest intellects of the past and of the present leave but little room for the hope of a solution upon merely speculative grounds. Kant and Hamilton have expressed the conviction that the intricacies of the subject cannot be cleared up in the domain of empirical thought. In the light of such confessions, we are not so presumptuous as to suppose that any lucubrations, the utterance of

ARTICLE VII.

THE WISDOM OF MAN VERSUS THE POWER OF GOD.

The Apostle of the Gentiles reminds the Corinthians that, from the very beginning of his ministry among them, his reliance for success was not upon the means upon which they were accustomed to rely for conviction and persuasion,—the resources of logic and rhetoric,—but upon “the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” This does not mean merely a great or powerful demonstration, as if the Holy Ghost were only a mightier logician or a more eloquent orator than any man could be, that his words were weightier and more persuasive than “the enticing words of man’s wisdom.” The difference he signalizes is one of kind, not one of degree only. It is a demonstration of power, energy, physical force, (we use the word physical, simply in opposition to the notion of mere “moral suasion,”) not only presenting the evidence for the truth, but opening the mind to receive it and appreciate it; not only proving Christ to be the only Saviour, the only satisfying portion of the soul, but purging and renewing the soul in order that it might embrace him and rejoice in him; in short, a demonstration which consists in “effectual calling,” “whereby the Spirit, convincing sinners of their sin and misery, enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing their wills, doth persuade and enable them to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to them in the gospel.”

The purpose of all this was that “the faith” of the Corinthians “might not stand in the wisdom of man but in the power of God;” that the faith of believers, as to the efficacy of the gospel and the successful prosecution of the work of the kingdom of God, might not stand in any devices of man, but in the power of the Holy Ghost energizing his own ordinances. This opposition between the wisdom of man and the power of God, in relation to the faith of the Church, we propose to illustrate.

1. There is a sphere in which human wisdom and divine power are not opposed to each other. In the sphere of nature they are

in entire harmony; we might say, even coincident with each other. The wisdom of man, so far as it is exercised in the production of mechanical results, has its foundation in the uniformity of nature, the order of established causes, the system of invariable sequences, in the material universe around us. The instinct of our intellectual constitution prompts us to expect this uniformity. We learn, by enlarging the sphere of observation and experiment, by accumulating a number of particulars, to distinguish between real and apparent sequences, and to determine the essential conditions in which one event succeeds another. Experience modifies and corrects our confidence in the stability of nature, but does not originate or strengthen it. Now it is this confidence in the laws of nature which gives rise to mechanical skill; without it, the right hand would soon lose its cunning. The desired results are produced by accommodating ourselves to these laws, to the properties of things, and to the conditions under which these properties manifest themselves. We become the masters of nature by becoming her servants, and lead her by following her. Hence the famous *dictum*, "Knowledge is power;" the wisest man is the strongest man. But whose power is this? Evidently, the power of Him who is the author of the constitution and course of nature. We hesitate to adopt the statement, that what we call the laws of nature are only general descriptions of the divine operations considered as uniform and invariable, because it would seem to deny that there is any real power in "secondary causes." This we do not deny; we believe that fire has a power to burn. Yet there is a sense in which these laws may be said to be the conditions under which the power of God is ordinarily exercised; and the highest wisdom of man consists, in this department of his activity, in the nicest accommodation of his instruments to these conditions. This power is really, though perhaps unconsciously, the ground of our faith, when we trust in the elastic force of steam to drive our engines, or in the processes of agriculture and the influences of sunshine and shower to provide our bread. In this aspect of the case, the wisdom of man and the power of God are in entire harmony with each other.

2. So far as the activity of man is concerned merely about

physical laws, the result is always the same, under the same physical conditions, whether his moral character be good or bad, whether he lives in the fear of God, or lives only to himself. But in the affairs of common life, the result often shows that there is no such necessary connexion between means and ends. God will assert his own glorious sovereignty, and will have that sovereignty to be recognised; and, therefore, when the *moral* agency of man is concerned, the very wisest schemes are often baffled and confounded. M. Comte himself has again and again remarked, says McCosh, that the phenomena which are the most simple and general and therefore the most easily arranged into a science, are those "which are at the farthest distance from man," and he has furnished the observations from which the conclusion has been legitimately drawn, that "man is impotent in regard to the objects whose laws he can discover, and that he is ignorant and dependent in regard to the objects nearest himself and with which he is most intimately connected;" in other words, that "man's knowledge is in an inverse proportion to his power," that his knowledge is greatest when his control is least: so that while he can with unerring precision predict, centuries beforehand, an eclipse of the sun, he cannot tell whether he shall die a rich man or a beggar; nay, whether, the next moment, he shall be alive or dead. The laws by which the world is governed are sufficiently general to lay the foundation for the exercise of prudence and foresight, but at the same time variable enough in their results—whether through the necessary limitations of the human faculties, or the exercise of the divine sovereignty, it matters not—to show that man is not the architect of his own fortune and the arbiter of his own destiny. The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance (the unknown or unacknowledged cause of these diversities) happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them. Consider the work of God; for who can make

that straight which he hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: hath God also set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him. Even in the life that now is, then, God will have our faith to stand not in the wisdom of man, but in his own power, who worketh when, where, and how he pleaseth. In the very midst of our mechanical and organic theories of the universe and of providence, he rouses us from our Epicurean dreams, by the frustration of our best contrived plans and the disappointment of our most deliberate calculations.

3. But it is in reference to the life to come, and the manifestation of the divine glory in the conception and execution of the plan of salvation, that the opposition between the wisdom of man and the power of God comes out most impressively. Indeed, it seems to have been one of the chief purposes of God in the inspired record of the history of his Church to establish and illustrate this great principle—that the faith of his people must stand not in the wisdom of man, but in his power. When the nation of Israel was about to be set apart as the witness of his existence and government, the dispensation was introduced and authenticated by *miracles*, by visible interpositions of the power of God, outside, if not in contravention, of the “laws of nature.” A miracle is an effect produced by a direct and immediate exercise of power, and an effect palpable to the senses. Such an effect is always a divine σημεῖον, a sign of the presence and power of God, since all power but his is and must be exerted by means of law, indirectly and mediately. The agency of the Creator is concerned in the production of the grain from the seed, by means of the ordinary properties of the soil and the influences of the atmosphere; it is concerned also in raining down manna from heaven upon his people in the wilderness; in the ministry of the ravens to Elijah at the brook Cherith—the most voracious of birds bringing him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening; in sustaining the same prophet forty days and forty nights without food; in the multiplication of the widow’s oil by the hands of Elisha and the feeding of a hundred men by the same prophet with twenty barley loaves; and in the

feeding of thousands by the Saviour with a few loaves and fishes. The power of God, we say, is exercised in all these cases. But how different the impression in the first case and in the rest! In the first case, the finger of God is not seen; in the remainder, it is palpable, and with more or less distinctness, according as the exercise of the power is more or less visibly direct.

If the Israelites had been fed by the harvests of their own hands, as the Egyptians were, how would the world have known that their God was other and greater than the gods of their enemies? But fed and clothed and defended and delivered *as they were*, the verdict rendered even by their enemies was, that their Rock was other and greater. Now, why such a dispensation as this? Plainly, because the ancient Church was to live by faith in the power of God exercised in the way of an "extraordinary providence," and must be educated to that end. The faithless generation quailed and fainted at the report of the spies. God swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest, because they still argued and acted upon the principles of human wisdom and worldly prudence. "The giants, the sons of Anak, are there, and cities walled up to heaven; how can an undisciplined multitude like ours, cumbered with the care of women and children, hope to conquer a warlike race fighting for their homes and their altars?" Sound reasoning truly, and commendable prudence in any other people, but not in men who had witnessed the plagues of Egypt, the drying up of the Red Sea, and the instantaneous discomfiture of an armed and disciplined host with the mightiest monarch of the world at its head; in men who were at the very time miraculously sustained by food from heaven, and surrounded on all sides by multiplied evidences that the God of nature and providence was on their side. They ought to have believed that those impregnable walls would fall down, if need be, at the very blast of their horns, and the stout hearts of those sons of Anak melt like wax at their approach, under the secret touch of Him whose presence had made the solid mountain to smoke and tremble. They had not the faith which was indispensably necessary to qualify them for the rest of God in the land of promise, and were therefore excluded. They could not enter

in because of unbelief. And many years rolled by, years of painful discipline, but discipline under the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, before the younger generation were prepared, by faith in the power of God, for the conquest and permanent possession of that country in which the dust of Abraham had long reposed, the pledge of Jehovah's faithfulness, and the memorial of his own.*

And how gloriously were these lessons renewed under the administration of Joshua and the Judges, when, with the most contemptible weapons of war, the blowing of rams' horns, lamps and pitchers, the jaw-bone of an ass, and an ox-goad, the deliverance of Israel from oppression was accomplished and their victories achieved! And how certainly did disaster and disgrace befall them during their whole history, when they forgot the King of Israel, who is spirit and not flesh, and trusted in horses and chariots for success in battle! Saul was one of the most conspicuous examples of confidence in his own wisdom, and, very naturally, was one of the greatest troublers of the people. He acted in the affair of the Amalekites with the best intentions—*ad majorem gloriam Dei*; he saved the best of the spoil for the honor of the Lord. But how is his officious service received? "What meaneth this bleating in mine ears? and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being

*The use the Apostle makes of this history in the third and fourth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews is very striking. In the case of the Jews we have—1. A promised rest. 2. An extraordinary providence. 3. A faith in such a providence, contradicting the natural instinct of the mind, which prompts it to look for unvarying uniformity in the sequences of nature. In the case of man, under the gospel, we have—1. A promised rest. 2. The righteousness of Christ imputed for justification. 3. A faith in that righteousness contradicting the natural tendency to look to a personal, inherent righteousness as the ground of justification.

king." See 1 Sam. xv., and compare, for the manner in which Saul executed his own vengeance upon "the priests of the Lord," 1 Sam. xxii. 17-19.

But let us look a little more narrowly at some of the instances before referred to, and discover, if we can, the principles embodied in them, by eliminating the transient and accidental from the permanent and essential. It is not an uncommon error, we apprehend, even among intelligent Christians, to suppose that, because the age of miracles is passed, the Church of God stands in a totally different relation to his power from that in which it stood when miracles were wrought. If this supposition were well grounded, it is plain that the records of God's interpositions in the past by miracle would furnish little or no support to our faith except as proofs of his omnipotence, and, therefore, of his ability to aid the Church in the exigencies of her history. This assurance is, indeed, a great thing. But then the question must arise, will God exert this power, and are we entitled to expect and pray for it? It is often said, specially in reference to the success of the ministry at home, and still more specially of the success of the foreign missionary work, that the Church labors under the great disadvantage of not being sustained in her work by miracles. Now, to say nothing of the lessons of history in regard to the efficacy of miracles in the conversion of sinners: that human unbelief was obstinate enough to resist even such evidence; that Christ's own nation, the visible Church of God of that day, not only disowned and rejected him in spite of all his splendid works of power and beneficence, but insulted him by ascribing those works to a collusion with the fiends of darkness; that the heathen, though so powerfully impressed by the miracles of Paul and Barnabas as to be with great difficulty restrained from offering them divine honors, were yet, a little while after, with no difficulty persuaded to stone them:—not to dwell, we say, upon these lessons of history, it is sufficient to call attention to the fact, that the very purpose of the miracle is to reveal a power which is actually exercised and always exercised in the Church by the Spirit of God. The miracle is simply a removing of the veil, that the Church may see the reality behind it. The daz-

zling flash of lightning which illuminates for an instant the road and neighboring objects for a traveller in a very dark night, most certainly does not create those objects which it reveals. The bright light, bright above that of the meridian sun, which prostrated Saul and his companions on their way to Damascus, and the voice which came from the excellent glory, were tokens indeed of the presence and majesty of Jesus, but neither nor both constituted the power which melted and moulded Saul of Tarsus into Paul the Apostle. That power was identically the same with that which every sinner has experienced who has passed from death unto life. The power of God alone can quicken a dead soul; and every instance of regeneration might be called a miracle, if the fact were palpable to the senses of other men. It is as really a miracle, with the exception just named (the capability of being recognised by the senses), as the taking of Jericho, or the defeat of the Midianites by Gideon—the two instances which we propose very briefly to analyse.

In both these instances we find, first, that all the circumstances are so ordered as to show that the whole efficiency is of God, and that the result is due to the direct and immediate exercise of his power. Secondly, that while means are commanded to be used, these means are not natural or physical causes, but conditions under which God, in a way of sovereignty, proposes to exercise his power immediately. Thirdly, that the means are of a sort to require the activity of the Church, to be used by the Church. God's people must be "co-laborers" with him. The walls of Jericho might have been thrown down and the Midianites routed, as the army of Sennacherib was afterwards destroyed before Jerusalem, without the coöperation of the people; and the simple announcement beforehand of the certainty of the event and of the time of its occurrence, would have been sufficient evidence of the presence and power of God. But God would not do the work without the activity of his people. That activity was a *sine qua non*; and its exact mode was minutely prescribed. In this way, and in no other! Fourthly, that yet there is a natural correspondence, to a certain extent, between the means and the ends. The people were to compass the city in a certain

order, in a kind of order of battle, and not as an unorganised mob. Everything was to be done with decorum, as became the people of God. The men who were chosen to overthrow the Midianites were picked men. An army of cowards, it might have been supposed, would suit God's purpose better, as it would make his power more conspicuous. Not so: the cowards were sent home to their wives and children. There was a correspondence between the nature of the work to be done and the character of the instruments to be employed in doing it.

We find the same principles recognised in the New Testament. It is in special application to his preaching that Paul, as we have seen, asserts that our faith is not to stand in the wisdom of man but in the power of God. First, preaching has been ordained as a means of salvation to sinners in order that the efficiency may be acknowledged to be God's and not man's. The treasure has been put in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God. Preaching is "foolishness" to the natural man; but to the spiritual man it is the occasion of revealing the power of God. Secondly, it becomes the occasion of revealing the power of God, because there is no natural efficiency in it to convert the soul. A dead sinner cannot be argued or persuaded out of his grave by any logic or eloquence of man or angel. God alone can raise the dead; and that, too, only by an immediate exercise of his power. Preaching is one of the conditions he has ordained in which this power is to be exercised. Thirdly, this ordinance of preaching is to be observed by the Church, with the greatest zeal and fidelity, as an ordinance of God; and with a steadfast faith in the promised power of the Spirit. Earnest and unceasing prayer is to be made to him that the supply of ministers may be maintained and augmented, and that all who preach may "*so speak, that great multitudes may believe.*" The Church is never to forget that her great work in the world is "prophesying"—prophesying to the dry bones and prophesying to the Spirit; that she is a co-worker with God; that the means by which the victory is to be won, is "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon;"—not the swords, but the "sword;" not the sword of Gideon and the Lord, nor even the sword of the Lord only, but

“the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” The power of God threw down the walls of Jericho in, with, and under the marching round of the church and the blowing of the horns. So Paul ventures to say to those same Corinthians whom he had so solemnly warned against the sin of making the wisdom of man, or anything else save the power of God, their trust, “I have begotten you through the gospel.” Fourthly, there is a correspondence, to a certain extent, between the nature of the end and the character of the means. Truth is the natural aliment of the mind. The good which the truth of God presents and offers to sinners is the only good in which the soul can rest and be satisfied. The presenting of this truth to men by men, and not by angels, is another instance of correspondence. Sinners can better secure attention from sinners, in speaking of sin, and sinners saved can better secure the attention of sinners to be saved, in speaking of salvation, by the operation of the principle of sympathy. Hence the immense importance of the cultivation of the ministry; its improvement in knowledge, in utterance, and, above all, in faith, love and all the other graces of the Holy Ghost. That is a very striking and significant record concerning Paul and Barnabas, alluded to above, that when they came to Iconium, “they so spake, that a great multitude believed.” The exercise of God’s power is represented as determined, in some sense and to some extent, by the manner in which Paul and Barnabas spake; and the manner would be determined, of course, by the spiritual condition of these ministers at the time; and this again would be determined, more or less, by their habitual spiritual condition. There is no special mystery in the statement. The very reason why God has chosen men as his ministers is a reason why some men are more efficient ministers than others, and why the same men are more efficient at one time than at another. The fact that all the real efficiency is of God is a reason why the Church should take special care in the training of her ministers, and why her ministers should take special heed to themselves first and then to their teaching. The Quakers’ conclusion from their doctrine of the Spirit as to the training of the ministry is therefore a gross *non sequitur*, even if the doc-

trine itself be true. Paul was an inspired man, and appointed to be the great theological writer for the Church of all time; but he was an "educated man" before he became an apostle, and his inspiration did not, in his own judgment, absolve him from the obligation, much less extinguish the desire, of self-improvement by reading and study. When aged and a prisoner, and waiting for his departure and for his crown of glory, he begs Timothy, when he comes, to bring not only "the cloak left at Troas with Carpus" to keep his body warm; but "the books and specially the parchments," (these last, probably, the "adversaria" or common-place books, in which he had jotted down thoughts suggested by his readings and meditations).

We propose now to compare with these teachings of God's holy word concerning the relations of his ordinances to his own power and sovereignty, on the one hand, and to the agency of the Church, on the other—some practices which have been authorised and tolerated in the Church. These practices may be distributed under two heads: 1. Those which are clear additions to God's ordinances. 2. Those which involve a wrong use of God's ordinances.

1. As to the first, we remark that they are all self-condemned as additions. The doctrine of our Confession of Faith is as follows: "The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word; and there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed." That this is also the doctrine of Scripture may be seen by consulting the passages cited by the Confes-

sion in the foot-notes. The "circumstances" here referred to are the necessary adjuncts of human actions as such. Time, place, decency, and order are such circumstances. If, for example, there is to be social worship, there must be, as in assemblies for any purpose, an agreement as to the time and place. Every deliberative body, whether of divine or human constitution, must have a presiding officer, if the business is to be done with decorum and despatch. The fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians, as also the eleventh, which are referred to in this section of the Confession in the way of proof and illustration, show what our book means by "circumstances." Under this rule the use of a liturgy or of an instrument of music in the public worship of God, under the Christian dispensation, is to be condemned. No trace of a written liturgy in the Church before the fourth century has been found, nor of the use of an instrument in the service of praise before the ninth. Either, therefore, during all those centuries the Church did not perform the offices of public prayer and public praise with order and decorum, or these additions, which have been made since, are unnecessary, are not "circumstances," in the sense of the Confession.

This definition of the discretionary power of the Church is the only ground which we can hold against Rome. The Church of England, in limiting the discretionary power only by the *prohibitions* of the word, has found itself exceedingly embarrassed in defending itself and its Protestant character against the Romanising party in its own bosom. And we may add that even "the Reformed Episcopal Church," noble as is its testimony for great and fundamental doctrines and against fatal errors, retains a germ of mischief and corruption in retaining the principle of a hierarchy in its government, upon the ground of its having been long in use in the Church and its not being prohibited in the word of God. It seems to us very much the same in principle to say that, as the word of God does not prohibit the government of the Church by a graded hierarchy, we may establish such a government, and to say that, as the word of God does not prohibit the celebration of the Eucharist without the cup, the "*communio sub una*" may be practised. The results of that

view of the Church's discretionary power which limits it only by the prohibitions of the word, ought to give pause to every man who loves the gospel and values the liberty wherewith Christ hath made his people free. True freedom consists in being the slave of Christ, and in emancipation from the bondage of "the commandments of men." The liberty, on the part of the rulers of the Church, to make laws which Christ has not made, is simply and really the liberty to put an intolerable yoke upon the necks of the people. It is true both of the Jewish and of the Papal Pharisees, that "they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." So truly does this spirit of cruel tyranny belong to the essence of this false principle, that we see its working even in the free Presbyterian Church. We have all heard of instances in which the organ has been introduced into a church against the wishes and protests of some of the holiest people in it, people venerable for their age and services, and at the instigation of persons who were venerable neither for age, nor holiness, nor services. If the sufferers whose feelings, and perhaps faith, have been outraged, remonstrate, it is considered a sufficient answer to the remonstrance to say that "it is unreasonable for people to make such an ado about so small a matter." It never occurs to these petty tyrants to ask, why, if it is so small a matter, *they* should make such an ado about it, and trample upon Christ's little ones for the sake of it? The question, here, is not whether the organ be lawful or not. Supposing it to be lawful, nothing can justify its introduction into a church against the wishes of any of the people of God, but a clear command of Christ, either expressed or implied.

This instance suggests another most painful, and yet most instructive, feature of this power as it has been actually exercised. Some of the worst abuses that now exist in the Papal body began with "the people," not the best and most enlightened, but the more ignorant and superstitious. After the establishment of the Church under Constantine, a great influx of the heathen into it took place. They were unwilling to abandon all their heathenish customs, and asked to be tolerated in continuing to observe them.

The better and wiser class of rulers recognised the evil and the peril; but they yielded from the fear "of driving off some from the Church and of preventing others from coming in." They succeeded no doubt. The heathen in the Church were not driven off, and others came in. Some sinners were saved who otherwise—to speak after the manner of men—would not have been saved. But with what result in the long run? The so-called Church of Rome of to-day—a body utterly apostate, whose prevailing power, as we Presbyterians and Protestants generally believe, is destroying and not saving. Who can estimate the mischief wrought by this trust in the wisdom of man, during the weary centuries of darkness, agony, and blood, from Gregory I. to Leo X.? Who can number the souls that have been sent to perdition by acting on the principle of "*οικονομία*," or, as the Jesuits express it, "that the end sanctifies the means"? Who can fail, when he considers what "this doing evil that good may come" has ended in, to sympathise with the indignant exclamation of the Apostle—"whose damnation is just"?

But the rulers who, against their own judgment and convictions, yielded to the wishes of the people, and practically abdicated the authority with which Christ had invested them, what account can they render for preferring to follow the will of the people rather than the will of Christ? Will they say that the voice of the people is the voice of God? Will they say that to God's face? What better can they say than what Saul said, when called to account for not executing God's vengeance on the Amalekites—"the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, the people took of the spoil, etc.;" or than what Aaron said, when called to account for making the golden calf—"let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief . . . So they gave me; then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf"? But neither Aaron's plea nor Saul's availed them anything. Aaron is charged with gratuitous cruelty to the people, in yielding to them; "with bringing a great sin upon them," and "with making the people naked to their shame among their ene-

mies." Saul is informed that, as he had virtually abdicated his authority, according to his own confession, he shall be forced actually to abdicate the throne of Israel, for one who will do all God's will, not his own or the will of the people.

2. The other class of abuses are those which involve a wrong use of ordinances which God has instituted. This is a notorious feature of the Papal body, which has ventured to "frame the mischief by a law," to formulate the error into an article of faith. The eighth Canon of the seventh Session of the Trent Council denounces an anathema against any one who shall say that grace is not conferred by the sacraments *ex opere operato*. The doctrine is, that the sacraments convey grace by the mere fact of the administration, provided the person receiving them opposes no bar to their operation, by an intention to commit, or the actual commission of, mortal sin. An infant, for example, is always regenerated in baptism, because it is incapable of committing sin at the time of receiving baptism. In other words, the ordinances are not "means of grace," in the sense which we have before fully explained, conditions without which the exercise of God's sovereign power is not to be expected, and yet conditions to the mere performance of which the power of God is not tied (see Confession of Faith, Chap. XXVIII. 6); but "laws of grace," physical causes, which produce their effects by a power inherent in themselves. As fire has the property of burning, so baptism has the property of regenerating. As the burning property of fire may be neutralised by the operation of some other law, so the regenerating property of baptism may be neutralised by the law of mortal sin. In the use of God's ordinances as means, we are obliged to acknowledge the sovereignty of his Spirit, in the use of them as laws; that sovereignty is not recognised, but the Spirit is regarded (if regarded at all) only as the invisible nexus by which the physical cause is connected with its effect. Most men, in witnessing the production of a neutral salt by the combination of an acid and an alkali, do not think at all of the power of God which has given the properties to these substances, but only of the chemist whose manipulations have produced the desired result. So in the "christening" of an infant,

most Papists are thinking, we apprehend, only of the manipulations of the priest.

In formulating this doctrine, the Papal body has only formulated an impulse or instinct of our fallen nature, which prompts us, when we have failed to present to God the faith or other spiritual conditions to which his promises have been made, to rely upon the ordinance itself, as if God had so tied himself to it, as to make the effect certain if the ordinance is observed. We have an instance of this perverse instinct at the very beginning of the history of our apostate race. "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever," etc. (Gen. iii. 22.) This passage is sometimes interpreted to mean that God drove out the man from Eden, in order to prevent him from acquiring an immortality in sin and corruption; as if the mere eating of the tree of life would have exempted him from the stroke of death. It seems to us in the last degree unreasonable to suppose that any creature could be invested with that life-giving power which God challenges to himself as his own sovereign prerogative. "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The true meaning of the passage, in our judgment, is very different. The "tree of knowledge of good and evil" was so called, because it was the symbol of God's supreme authority, which makes good and evil to man. Whatever God commands is good because he commands it, and whatever he forbids is evil because he forbids it.* Man, in eating the forbidden fruit, emphatically denies this great principle, and claims by his own will to know (or make) good and evil for himself, becomes "as one of us," or makes himself a god. The "tree of life" was so called

*It is hardly necessary, we trust, to inform the reader that we are not unmindful of the claims of "immutable morality." There are two questions which engage the special attention of the moral philosopher. One is, what is right, and the other is, why are we bound to follow it—the nature of virtue, and the ground or rule of obligation. In answering the first, he appeals to the nature of God as the eternal standard of rectitude: in answering the other, he appeals to the supreme will of God. This will ordains to be observed things which are in themselves right,

because it was the sacramental sign and seal of the promise of life which belonged to the covenant of works, and which would have been fulfilled to man if he had performed the condition of the covenant. If he had acknowledged God to be the all-disposing Lord, he should have had God for his all-comprehending Good. But man failed. He made his own will his law, and yet he attempts to seize upon the promise of life by stretching out his hand to its sacramental sign, as if the promise of life were so bound up with, or so inhered in, its visible sign and seal that the possession of the last necessarily implied the possession of the first. In short, the delusion under which he labored, and which God mercifully rebuked and defeated by putting the tree beyond his reach, was this very delusion of an efficacy in the sacrament *ex opere operato*. The history of the Church is full of instances of the same delusion. The Israelites thought, that, wicked and idolatrous though they were, they had God on their side and must be victorious, if they only had his ark with them. Their enemies seemed to be under a similar delusion, when they got possession of the ark as a part of the spoils of war; they supposed that the God of Israel, too, was in their possession as a conquered divinity, until desolating judgments convinced them of their mistake. One of the commonest and one of the most crying sins of Israel, and one which the prophets constantly rebuke, is this sin of trusting in God's ordinances, without God and against God. To such a pitch of infatuation and madness did they go in this sin, that God pronounced the very sacrifices which he had himself appointed an abomination to him.

Now, to this sin we are all inclined. The Churches of Christ may not convert the abuse and abomination into a law or an

and things which are in themselves indifferent—and the difference between these classes of things has given rise to the distinction between "moral" and "positive" commands. The obligation to obey a "positive" command, however, is moral; and a positive command is better fitted to express the idea of supreme authority, because there is no reason for obedience to a command of this sort, but the expression of will; whereas, in moral commands, the inherent rightness of the thing commanded is an additional reason for obedience. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

article of faith, as the Papists have done. They may and do protest against it as a grave error; and yet practically act as if the error were not an error, but the truth. Does not many a young Presbyterian minister, just from the Seminary, and with all "the arguments" at his tongue's end, feel as if no adversary could resist him? Does not many an experienced minister, who has found out, long ago, that "old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon," occasionally say to himself, when he has preached "a powerful sermon,"—"Surely they cannot resist that"? Does not many a church, when it has invited some "evangelist" or "revival-preacher," and he has graciously accepted the invitation, say to itself—"Now we shall have a revival"? Meantime, there is no special seeking of God by prayer, by repentance, by humiliation, by lamenting the sins which have grieved away the Spirit of God. None of these things are felt to be necessary. The Spirit will come with the "evangelist." Now, what is all this but the delusion of *opus operatum*? And what other effect does the history of the Church entitle us to expect, if we so dishonor the Holy Ghost, than that he will depart, and leave us to eat in bitterness of the fruit of our own way, and to be filled with our own devices? to leave us with our man-converted converts and our man-sanctified saints? with our backsliders and apostates become "twofold more the children of hell" than they were before they passed through our patent process of regeneration?

The foregoing considerations will enable us to form a judgment concerning two very common abuses in our own Church; and we bespeak the candid consideration of our brethren, who do not see them (or, have not seen them) in the same light that we do. They and we, we trust, have the same grand end in view—the glory of Christ and the enlargement and edification of the Church.

The first of these practices which we propose to notice is that of the use of "machinery" in "revivals." By "machinery" we mean all those "measures" over and above the means which God himself has appointed, which have been invented by "evangelists" or "revival preachers" for the purpose of awakening careless

sinner: such as "the anxious bench;" "the altar" to which inquirers are invited in order to be specially prayed for; the reading of letters (which have been procured by solicitation) from young converts or from inquirers; "silent prayer" of the congregation; the calling on certain classes in the congregation to arise and separate themselves from the rest; the roaming over the congregation of certain persons for the purpose of making appeals to individuals; the calling upon certain descriptions of people in the audience to sing certain hymns, and the requiring of the rest not to sing; the demand for unusual postures in parts of the worship, as, for example, kneeling in singing, etc., etc. Measures of this sort are justly called "machinery." The use of them demands no spiritual gifts, no spiritual frame of mind, no piety, nothing, indeed, but the power of physical endurance and—*brass*. We do not deny that some of them have been used by good men, and with an earnest desire to do good; but there is nothing in their own nature which forbids their being used by men who have not one spark of genuine piety. Accordingly, we find that they have been successfully used by wicked men and hypocrites. They belong to the same class of things with the nummeries of Rome. The priest performs the ceremonies prescribed in the ritual, and the business is done. The character of the priest has nothing to do with the efficiency of the ritual. Whether he be a Hophni or a Zadok makes no difference in the result. The patient or recipient "gets through" alike in either case.

If this be a just view, if these measures are a sort of machinery, this is enough to condemn them. God's measures are of a totally different sort. They are moral, not mechanical. They demand for effective use not only piety in the *habit*, but piety in *exercise*. Paul and Barnabas *so* spoke at Iconium, that a multitude believed. It is conceded that God has sometimes graciously made the preaching of unconverted men the means of salvation to sinners. But he has also sometimes made the repetition of a godly man's sermon by a mocking mimic the means of conversion to a boon companion. He has sometimes condescended to speak by the mouth of a Balaam, or even of an ass. People have been converted, we doubt not, at meetings where the machinery has been

fully, and, we may add, shamefully worked. But all this is nothing to the purpose. The question is not what means God may be pleased to use himself, but what he requires or permits the Church to use; and if he has appointed means which demand ordinarily, for their efficiency, high moral and spiritual conditions, then measures which may be as effectively used without as with such conditions cannot be supposed to have his approval; and the use of such measures is arrant will-worship, and betrays a larger faith in the wisdom of man than in the power of God.

We have said that this machinery may be referred to the same class of things with the mummeries of Rome. This suggests a more serious objection to it. The mummeries of Rome have an intimate historical and logical connexion with the Semi-Pelagian position of that body. It is not a question of vital importance, which of the two was chronologically first, the abuse in practice, or the error in doctrine. If both belong to the same organism, it matters not whether the head or the foot came in first. It is enough, for our warning, to know that the head and foot are members of the same body; and that if one be admitted, the other will be apt to follow in time. No such ordinance as that which the Papists call baptism could have a permanent place in a body which was not at least Semi-Pelagian in doctrine. And so it may be truly said that the machinery in question is thoroughly Semi-Pelagian in its affinities. It was introduced in modern times by churches of that doctrinal tendency; it was worked *con amore* by the Pelagianising party in the Presbyterian Church, and condemned by the Presbyterian Church at the time of the schism of 1837; and if not condemned again and put down, it will bring on another Semi-Pelagian schism. It is altogether out of harmony with the doctrine of our Church concerning man's condition as a sinner, and concerning the agency of the Holy Ghost in regeneration. One or the other must in the long run be given up.

This suggests another objection. The use of this machinery brings a multitude of unconverted people into the Church who would not otherwise come into it. The appeal is made to mere natural sensibilities and sympathies; people, specially the young,

honestly mistake this natural feeling and mere impressions on the imagination for religious conviction, or for the sentiments which result from religious conviction; and, without time for testing their sentiments and for manifesting their real nature and origin, they are hurried into the Church and assume the irrevocable vow. A few months are sufficient to reveal the fact of self-deception to a multitude; but they are in the Church; they commit, the greater part of them, no "offence" to warrant their excommunication; and they remain in the Church and of the world. Hence, another fruitful source of apostasy from the faith. By the terms of the supposition, such church members have no spiritual relish for the distinctive doctrines of the gospel; in particular, there is nothing in them which says Amen to the teachings of God's word concerning the desperate power and malignity of sin, and concerning the almighty and sovereign power of the Holy Ghost. The real problem of sin has never been anxiously revolved by them, and they are, consequently, unable to appreciate the Bible soteriology whether of the Son or of the Spirit. The temptation to the preacher, in ministering to such a people, is to say nothing on these topics because the people are not interested in them; and from saying nothing about them, to proceed to direct assaults upon them. This is not an altogether imaginary description of a process of degeneration. If we have not misunderstood the history of Socinianism in the New England churches, its progress was, to a very great extent, due to "the half-way covenant" and other measures which filled the churches with unconverted people. A spiritual experience of the reality and power of the truth is the only security for its preservation. The world in the Church!—this is the great peril. This is doing more to help the cause of Rome and of infidelity, than all the crafty books that are circulated in their interest. This is the peril against which the Church has been warned from the very beginning; and it is a peril into which the use of revival machinery is aiding to plunge us.

Once more: this machinery is not only unauthorised of God, and is, therefore, a sheer addition to his ordinances, as much so as the so-called sacraments of "penance" or "extreme unction"

in the Roman apostasy, but they virtually sanction the *opus operatum* principle. Sinners are encouraged to believe that if they will only put themselves under the operation of the machine, they will get through and be saved.

Finally, there is one argument which ought to prevail with all faithful Presbyterians against the use of these "measures," even if they are not convinced that the measures are in themselves wrong; and that is, that they are a clear addition to the covenant which has been made with one another by the congregations constituting the Presbyterian Church in the United States. This covenant is contained in our standards. We have agreed as to "what the ordinances in a particular church" shall be (Form of Gov., Ch. VII.), and in the "Directory for Worship," the features of the worship to be observed in all our congregations are described. No congregation has the right to introduce any other form of worship and at the same time remain a constituent part of that Church to which these standards belong. It is not improbable that many machinery-using churches in our communion would be scandalised by the introduction into our non-machinery-using churches of a liturgy. But why should they? The covenant is violated, it is true; but the machinery has also broken it. We do not hesitate to say, that if the covenant had to be broken in one way or the other, we should consider the breach by liturgy much the least offensive and dangerous of the two.

The other abuse upon which we propose to expend a paragraph or two, is one connected with another ordinance of God—the ordinance of giving of our substance to him. It is another clear instance of the substitution of "the wisdom of man" for "the power of God," as the ground of faith.

Let us recall, first, what the ordinance of God is, and what his design in it. From the very beginning, God has ordained that he should be worshipped by the offering of that which cost the worshipper something. The first recorded act of solemn worship, that of Cain and Abel, was an act of this sort. Both of these persons made an offering of their property. Under the institute of Moses, not only were offerings of this sort continued on the

largest scale, but the tabernacle, and afterwards the temple, the symbol of the presence of God and of his conversableness with his people, were built of materials furnished by the free gifts of the people. One of the grandest acts of worship ever performed by the Church on earth was that which is recorded of the King of Israel and his people in the last chapter of the first book of Chronicles. Those who deny that "giving" is of the nature of worship must admit that at least *this* act of giving was worship. It is no part of our purpose, however, to discuss this question now. It is enough, if "giving" be conceded to be an ordinance of God, both under the Old Testament and the New, and the essence of it to be the voluntary surrender of a portion of our substance to him.

As to the design of God in establishing it, it may be remarked, first, that it is perfectly clear it was not because he needed the property of his people. "All things come of thee," says David in the chapter just referred to, "and of thine own have we given thee." And in the fiftieth Psalm, God himself asserts, against the preposterous error of the people, that he has no need of anything that they can give, because "the world is his, and the fulness thereof." Secondly, one part of his design is to furnish an appropriate method of acknowledging our dependence upon him as the Sovereign Proprietor of all, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and of expressing our gratitude to him for what we have received. Thirdly, as such an acknowledgment and expression, it would serve and was designed as an instrument of communion with him and so of a growing conformity to him. Fourthly, in all social and public acts of giving, it was designed to be the means of communion with one another to the people of God, as in acts of social prayer or praise; and thereby to confirm their love one to another. Fifthly, it was designed as a means of grace. This is implied in the uses already mentioned, but deserves an articulate statement. Faith, love, gratitude, and devotion are strengthened by a proper observance of this ordinance, as by the proper observance of the ordinances of prayer, singing, hearing the word, Baptism, and the Supper. But the ordinance of giving is a specific medicine for that most fatal and

insidious disease of the soul, "the love of money," "the insatiable desire for more," covetousness. This is a view particularly insisted upon by Paul.

Now, let it be noted that, according to this view of the nature and ends of the ordinance, its whole value and efficacy depend upon its being an ordinance of GIVING. The very moment that the element of a *quid pro quo* is introduced into it, its whole nature is changed, and of course its whole tendency and effect also. It ceases to be the beneficent ordinance of God, and becomes the pernicious contrivance of man. Hence "fairs" and all other methods of raising money for the Church, which appeal to people to help the Church in the way of helping themselves first to something which is offered to their appetites—bodily appetite or otherwise—are wrong in principle. A great deal might be said—it would require a much longer article than this to say it—upon the pernicious and disgusting "abuses" of these methods, abuses which in some places have almost equalled the licentious and frantic excesses of the heathen temples. It might be easily shown that these abuses are the natural results of the maxim that "the end sanctifies the means," and that the only natural limit to the application of the maxim is the limit of a human being's capacity and power to do evil. The descent to hell is easy. All that one has to do is to put one's self on the inclined plane, and make no resistance; and the business is done. But instead of launching out upon such a sea, we content ourselves with pointing out the wrongness of the principle. If the principle be false, its working will be pernicious. Accidental circumstances may modify the manifestations of the evil, but the evil is there, and must in due time manifest itself.

But it is said, that the persons who "get up" a fair, or deliver lectures for the benefit of a church, are real givers, and, it is contended, are the only givers. Surely, there is no harm in pious men and women selling their wares and giving the proceeds to the Church. This is plausible; and we are not disposed to withhold the credit or even the admiration which is due to the zeal, the self-denying zeal of the Tryphenas and Tryphosas, the Eudias and Syntyches, who wear out their health and their lives

in these labors. We doubt not that their good motives, their love to the Saviour, will be suitably rewarded by him. But we think a little consideration will be sufficient to show that their plea will not stand. Why do they not sell their wares as their sisters, who make an honest livelihood by buying and selling, sell theirs? Why do they publish to the world that the proceeds are to be given to the Church, and persuade the buyers that in indulging themselves in ice cream and strawberries at a fair they are doing a pious act, and glorifying God? Why such a display of the charms of their daughters or other young women at the tables? Is not this severe trial of that shrinking modesty which is the great charm of the virgin, a trial to which these noble women would not dream of exposing their young friends for mere gain to themselves? Does God require, can he be pleased with, the sacrifice of that which stands so near to the purity of character in women? We say nothing of the monstrosities of pious women selling themselves, for a promenade to the highest male bidder, and outrages even worse than these which have been reported. We have in our mind, in this argument, the best regulated fair of which we have had any knowledge; and we affirm that our women allow themselves to do things, "for the glory of God," which they could scarcely do for themselves without a blush. It is plain that a fair is not a mere method of getting money by a few persons in order to contribute the money as their money, to the Church. It is a different thing altogether; different in its nature and different in its moral consequences. Then, too, it must be acknowledged by every candid observer of these fairs, and by every pious person who has taken part in the management of them, that there is a strong temptation to unfairness, much stronger than in any ordinary affair of buying and selling, too strong in general to be resisted even by those who could easily resist them, who would scarcely feel the temptation, where only their own private interests were concerned.

It is said again that the money must be gotten, and it cannot be gotten in the way of a free gift. There is no other way. Our first answer to this plea is, that it sounds too much like the maxim, "make money; honestly if you can, but by all means make

money"—a maxim which has drowned multitudes of souls in destruction and perdition. Dr. Johnson once rebuked a man for his dishonest ways, and the man's defence was, "Doctor, you know I must live." "I see no necessity for your living," was the blunt moralist's reply. The end of living is the perfecting of the man in righteousness, and to do unrighteousness in order to live, is to sacrifice the end to the means. A Church, above all, has no *raison d'être* but the promotion of righteousness; and to build or maintain it by unrighteousness, or even by questionable means, is to defeat its only end.* We answer, again, that the meaning of this plea is too often simply and nakedly this: a congregation in a city needs a house of worship; it has the means within itself to build one of a moderate cost, say \$5,000; but a house as handsome and attractive as its neighbors cannot be built for less than \$40,000. What is to be done? Honesty says, "Build a \$5,000 house, and wait until you can build a \$40,000 house." Vanity and unbelief say, "Build your costly house at once, go heavily in debt, and trust to your wits to pay for it." The counsels of vanity and unbelief prevail, the costly house is built, and the congregation enters upon a course of folly and worry which makes many a good man or woman in it wish that the foundation had never been laid. How different the building of the tabernacle and the temple of old! They could not have been built without an extraordinary spirit of liberality among the people, it is true; but whence did that spirit of liberality come? From God; it was the power of his Holy Spirit which moved the hearts of the people to give back to him what they had received from him. This is David's own account of the matter as to the temple. See 1 Chron. xxix. 10-18. Are the gifts of the Spirit

*This plea proceeds also on the supposition that a dollar is a dollar in the kingdom of God. This is a great and grievous error. The widow's mites, our Saviour says, were more than all that the rich men cast into the treasury of their abundance. They were more, not merely in proportion to the property possessed, but because there was expressed in her gift more of the grace which constitutes the kingdom of God—more of faith and of self-denying love. What immense sums have been cast into the Lord's treasury, through the ages, in consequence of that one act of the nameless widow!

less abundant under this dispensation than under the old? The Scriptures are a very clear directory in every case where the means are in the congregation, but the people have not the heart to give. The power of God can give them the heart, and that power will be vouchsafed in answer to prayer—if the proposed work be for the glory of God and the good of the Church. The wisdom of man may devise other means, and the means may be successful after their kind (for even the ostentatious righteousness of the Pharisees had its “reward,” Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16); but no other faith than that which stands in the power of God can glorify him, or be of any real benefit to his Church. The very fact that man’s contrivances to get money for the Church can be worked successfully without the power of God, is against them, as we have already argued against the machinery used in “revivals.” God’s ordinances cannot be worked successfully without his Spirit, and, for this reason, unbelief does not relish them. They require faith, repentance, humility, prayer on the part of those who use them. These graces, again, are the gifts of God, and have to be sought for. God’s way is troublesome to follow, and men prefer to follow their own. When his ordinances fail because they have not been observed in faith and prayer, then something must be substituted for them which will not fail, although faith and prayer be absent.

The use of all these methods of man’s device must, for the reasons just assigned, tend to defeat the very ends for which God instituted the ordinance of giving. His people are not edified. Their sense of dependence upon his power and grace is diminished. Their covetousness is increased. They get so much into the habit of relying upon methods by which others may be induced for “a valuable consideration” to part with their money, that they almost cease to expect gifts. With the decay of faith in God’s power as to the revenues of his kingdom is associated inevitably a decay of faith in his power to convert and sanctify the soul. Behold, on the other hand, the concomitants of “giving”: “and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all. *For* [see the Greek] there was not any among them that lacked," etc. (Acts iv. 32-34). Here is a case of genuine revival by the power of the Holy Ghost. An entire absence of machinery, an entire absence of the *quid pro quo* methods! A fair seldom ends without heart-burnings or divisions. Here all that believed were of one heart and one soul. Oh for a return of such blessed days to God's Church!

In conclusion, let us never forget that the only source of the Church's genuine life is the Holy Ghost. It is by his power that every sinner begins to live; it is by the same power that he continues to live. It is he who seals us unto the day of redemption. Let us not grieve him and so forsake our own mercies. We do grieve him, when we cease to look to him for every spiritual blessing, and for every "temporal blessing" which is needful for the being or well-being of the Church. We grieve him when we substitute our own inventions for his ordinances. We grieve him when we so act as to seem to say to the world that our God will not give us the things that are needed for the glory of his name and the prosperity of his cause; that our Rock is no greater than the world's Rock. The Holy Ghost is the glory of the Church; and when he departs, Ichabod may be in truth written upon her walls—the glory is departed.