

THE

GOSPEL FOUNTAIN,

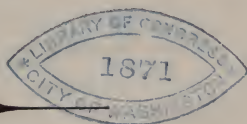
OR THE

ANXIOUS YOUTH MADE HAPPY.

BY JAMES WOOD, D. D.

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened."

"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells
of salvation."



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P R E F A C E.

THE following attempt of the author to furnish familiar instructions to the young, on the Doctrines of Grace, was undertaken at the request of a valued friend. The mode of illustration by anecdotes was also suggested by him. The task has been a pleasing one, though performed by gas-light, and occupying many successive evenings, after the close of official duties which required his attention during the day.

His aim has been to state, prove, and illustrate, in a brief, plain, and scriptural form, some of the great doctrines of the gospel, as embodied more fully in the Standards of the Presbyterian church. In order to avoid making "the book too large," as requested by his friend, two topics have been for the most part omitted, which would otherwise have been discussed. One is *repentance*, which is inculcated in the gospel, in connection with faith. The other is *adoption*, which is one of the benefits of effectual calling, and is especially important in its being a guaranty of the saints' perseverance.

But as these two doctrines are not, as to their nature, matters of controversy between Calvinists and Arminians, they are merely explained incidentally and in few words, without appropriating to their discussion separate conversations.

The anecdotes have been selected from persons of all countries, complexions, and conditions in life; in order to show that depraved human nature and the effects of divine grace, are substantially alike in the whole human family—the high and low, the learned and ignorant, the refined and uncultivated.

The author's design in quoting so much sacred poetry has been to make it apparent that the favourite songs of praise employed by millions of God's people, contain the substance of those doctrines usually styled by Calvinists, the doctrines of grace; and hence that those doctrines are in harmony with the devotional feelings of the renewed heart.

The work is respectfully dedicated to the

YOUTH OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH;

with the author's earnest prayer for their conversion to Christ, and their pious and efficient co-operation in doing good.

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THE GOSPEL FOUNTAIN,

OR THE

ANXIOUS YOUTH MADE HAPPY.



CONVERSATION I.

THE GOSPEL PLAN OF GRACE STATED, AND A
NOTICE OF OUR FALLEN CONDITION.

ONE Sabbath evening, a sensible and serious-minded youth, whom we will call Henry James, said to his father, a minister of the gospel: What is meant by the word *grace*? And what by the phrase, *doctrines of grace*? You employed the term *grace* several times in your discourse this morning, and once or twice, the phrase, *doctrines of*

grace ; but you gave no particular explanation, thinking, no doubt, that all the congregation would understand your meaning.

FATHER. I am glad, my son, to hear you ask these questions. But what did I say, that attracted your special notice ?

SON. You said, father, that the grace of God is a fountain of hope and joy to lost sinners ; that this fountain is opened in the gospel, and that sinners are invited to take of the water of life freely. You also spoke in a similar manner concerning the *doctrines* of grace. I think your language was that the doctrines of grace are wells of salvation, out of which anxious souls may draw an ample supply of peace and comfort.

Mr. James responded : Yes, Henry, you have quoted correctly my ideas, and very nearly my words. It will afford me much pleasure to give you instruction on this momentous subject.

THE TERM GRACE DEFINED.

And first, the word *grace*. The term

grace, as used in the Scriptures, is the opposite of *debt*. It is favour bestowed on the receiver as a *gratuity*, without his having rendered any service to place the donor under obligation to him. A coloured candidate for the ministry, in one of the southern States, when under examination for licensure, was asked by the examiner: What is grace? He replied, "Grace is what I call receiving something for nothing."

This is a capital answer as far as it goes. But to render the definition complete, it requires the further idea, that the receiver is positively *unworthy* of such regard. In common language, indeed, we sometimes employ the word *grace* without connecting with it the idea of unworthiness or demerit. But the grace of God towards us, always includes the idea, not only of favour bestowed gratuitously, *i. e.*, without his receiving any compensation in return, but bestowed on those who are guilty and under his wrath, because this is the condition of all mankind in their present fallen state. In the full

gospel sense of the term, therefore, grace includes pardon and salvation, bestowed on wicked and hell-deserving sinners. Hence the gospel is called "the grace of God that bringeth salvation."

The *doctrines* of grace, continued Mr. James, relate to the *method* by which God bestows his pardoning and saving mercy upon sinners, through the Lord Jesus Christ. A brief statement of the most important of these doctrines is given by the apostle Paul in Eph. i. 7, and ii. 8—10. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." These passages contain those great and glorious truths which lie at the foundation of all human hope. I will state them in detail.

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE ENUMERATED.

These passages, and many other texts, assuming that we are in a fallen and ruined condition, teach,

1. That a *Saviour* has been provided for us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. That we obtain salvation, not by the deeds of the law, but by *faith* in Christ.

3. That our union with Christ by faith is not produced by our own strength, but by the power of God, who renews our hearts by his Spirit, and persuades and enables us to embrace Christ as our only Redeemer.

4. That true faith will purify and sanctify the soul.

5. That inward holiness, or sanctification, will be manifested by corresponding good works; though good works, like sanctification, have their root in faith.

6. That if we are genuine believers in Christ, and adopted into his family, we shall receive daily supplies of divine grace to per-

severe in holiness, until our salvation is complete, and we are received into heaven.

7. That all these acts of grace and mercy towards us, as thus manifested in our own complete redemption, are, from first to last, the result of God's benevolent and sovereign purpose, ordaining us to salvation, through these several preparatory means.

All these great doctrines are distinctly expressed or implied in the few verses just quoted from the epistle to the Ephesians. They are also taught in many other parts of the Scripture. Indeed, they pervade the whole Bible. They constitute the essence of christianity. And I assure you that all which I asserted concerning their character and tendency to inspire hope and impart happiness, has been verified by the experience of God's people; and further, that whatever may be your own views and feelings concerning them now, if you shall truly understand and appreciate them, and be led to embrace Christ who is the centre and substance

of these doctrines, you will find them to be unfailing sources of spiritual comfort.

Henry listened to his father's statement and remarks with fixed attention, and then said: I have not proposed these questions, father, merely for general information, but for my own personal benefit. I feel unhappy, and am anxious to obtain relief. When the hymn was sung to-day, beginning with the words,

“There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;”

I thought I would have given the whole world, if I could have adopted as my own, the latter part of that hymn, closing with the lines,

“Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.”

If the grace of God is a fountain of joy, I desire to know what it is, and also what those doctrines of grace are which constitute the divine plan of salvation. I have

felt thus, in some degree, for some time past; but more to-day, than ever before.

Mr. James replied: I sympathize with you, Henry, in your distress of mind, and shall be glad to relieve you. But I wish you to understand that I regard the single object of your obtaining relief from mental anxiety to be far less important than your obtaining forgiveness of sin, and that you ought to feel so too. It is not wrong for you to desire strongly to be more happy; but you should have a still stronger desire to become holy. Sin is an offence against God, and your first anxiety should be to obtain his mercy and grace. Sin also defiles the soul, and in connection with your desire to be delivered from its guilt and condemnation, you ought to feel a deep concern to be cleansed from its pollution. If you turn to Zechariah xiii. 1. you will perceive that the gospel "fountain is opened for sin and uncleanness." By coming to this fountain, and partaking of the grace of Christ, which is signified thereby, you will

experience joy, and hence, I properly called the grace of God a fountain of joy. Yet your first and chief motive should not be comfort of mind, but deliverance from sin. This, too, is the only path to true happiness. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

I wish, therefore, to direct your thoughts to the serious consideration of your fallen and ruined state as a sinner. I will say something also, about the peace and joy of religion. But the great matter which concerns you above all others, is to learn that the gospel fountain is opened, as I said before, for sin and uncleanness, and, in order to appreciate its sanctifying and saving benefits, you must feel sensible of the sinfulness and corruption of your moral nature; never till then will you come to this fountain, even though it be opened ever so plainly before you. Penitent and believing sinners, and they alone, are made partakers of gospel grace. Such and such only, in the words of Isaiah, "with joy will draw water

out of the wells of salvation." Isaiah xii. 3. Let me then ask you a few questions concerning your own views and feelings on this important subject.

SALVATION BY GRACE IMPLIES A PRECEDING
STATE OF SIN AND MISERY.

Henry James appeared very serious during his father's remarks. I am willing, father, said he, to answer any questions you may think proper to ask; but I desire to state beforehand, that you have received an incorrect impression from my language, if you suppose I meant to express nothing more than a wish for relief, regardless of its nature. Though I do not feel as deep a conviction of my sins as I ought, yet I know that I am a sinner, and my anxiety of mind proceeds, I think, in a great measure, from this cause. But my mind is perplexed with some difficulties on this subject, which I shall esteem it a great favour to have solved.

Mr. James remarked: One of the questions I intended to ask you, was, whether

you feel convinced of your guilt and ruin as a sinner. This you have just answered. And, as the difficulties to which you allude may relate to some, or all of the other points on which I designed to question you, I will modify my proposal, and instead of asking questions, I will first hear and answer those difficulties which occupy and disturb your mind. But I will remark further, before you proceed, that you cannot appreciate the grace of God as revealed in the gospel, or clearly understand and heartily approve the doctrines of grace, unless you are inwardly convinced of your sinfulness, and your absolute need of a better righteousness than your own. The very idea of grace supposes unworthiness in the object, and this unworthiness must be perceived and felt by us, in order to make us the willing and grateful recipients of divine mercy. "They that are whole, says our Saviour, need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Our Lord's meaning is, that the case

of a sinner in seeking salvation, is like a diseased man. When he discovers that he is really and dangerously ill, he will apply suitable remedies, and not before.

It is very important therefore, as a preliminary to our conversations on the doctrines of grace, to settle fully in your mind the truth of God's word concerning our race, that "they are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no, not one." And while you consent to this general proposition, you must also perceive and feel the truth of this description in its application to yourself. I will illustrate this by an anecdote.

AN EXAMPLE OF A SINNER DISCOVERING HIS GUILT.

A negro on the western coast of Africa, once addressed the Rev. Mr. Johnson at Regent's Town, thus: The anecdote is peculiar, and the language broken, but it expresses forcibly the idea I wish to convey: "Yesterday morning, when you preach, you show

me that the law be our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. You talk about the ten commandments. You begin at the first, and me say to myself, 'Me guilty!' the second, 'Me guilty!' the third, 'Me guilty!' the fourth, 'Me guilty!' the fifth, 'Me guilty!' Then you say the sixth, Thou shalt not kill; me say, 'Ah! me no guilty! me never kill some person.' You say, I suppose plenty people live here, who say, 'Me no guilty of that!' Me say again in my heart, 'Ah! me no guilty!' Then you say, 'Did you never hate any person? Did you never wish that such a person, such a man, or such a woman was dead!' Massa, you talk plenty about that; and what I feel that time I can't tell you. I talk in my heart, and say, 'Me the same person!' My heart begin to beat, me want to cry, my heart heave so much me don't know what to do. Massa, me think me kill ten people before breakfast! I never think I so bad. Afterward you talk about the Lord Jesus, how he take off our sin. I think I stand the same like a person that

have a big stone upon him head, and can't walk—want to fall down. O massa, I have trouble too much; I no sleep all night. (He wept much.) I hope the Lord Jesus Christ will take my sins from me. Suppose he no save me, I shall go to hell for ever."

Henry James remarked, I have perceived and felt in my own heart, similar convictions to those expressed by that heathen. My difficulties, father, do not relate to my actual sins, either of thought, word, or deed, but to *original* sin.

ORIGINAL SIN, DIFFICULTIES SOLVED.

My difficulties concerning original sin, said Henry, are the following: Though my conscience tells me, as well as God's word, that I am a sinner; I am often tempted to excuse myself from blame, or at least to palliate my sins, by saying inwardly, that I cannot help sinning, because I was born with a sinful nature; and from this unholy nature all my actual sins proceed. I cannot fully perceive the justice of God in bringing me

into the world in a state of sin and condemnation, while as yet I had committed no actual transgression. For how, I ask myself, can it be just to condemn me for having a sinful nature; since my sinful nature was inherited from my parents, and so back to Adam, whose first transgression brought sin into the world?

Mr. James replied, I might dismiss this subject with a single remark of Newton's. "Many, says he, have puzzled themselves about the origin of evil, but I observe there *is* evil, and that there is a way to escape it, and with this I begin and end." I will not however dispose of the question in this summary manner, but will endeavour to do what I can to relieve you of your difficulty. According to your own statement, you do not think it unjust for God to condemn you for your sinful words, actions, feelings, and thoughts; do you?

HENRY. Oh, no, father; I know it is just to punish me for actual sin, whether it consists in wicked words and actions, or in evil

thoughts and desires. What I say and do, and also what I think and feel, are *my own*, and for these I am of course accountable to God.

FATHER. Suppose, Henry, you should speak or act wickedly, or should have wicked feelings or thoughts, through the influence of some other person tempting you to sin. Would you not in this case be guilty, and deserving of punishment?

HENRY. Yes, sir. The person who tempted me, would commit sin in tempting me; but this would not free me from blame.

FATHER. You are correct, my son, and this illustrates the sin of our first parents. Satan tempted Eve, and Eve tempted Adam. But when Adam cast the blame on the woman, and the woman on the serpent, that is, on Satan, God would not receive their excuses as sufficient, but condemned and punished them.

Thus far, said Henry, I can understand; but did not God condemn their posterity

also? Please, father, explain the justice of this.

Mr. James requested him to repeat the answer in the catechism, to the question, "Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?"

Henry repeated it as follows: "The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression."

Mr. James remarked, I have not requested you to repeat this answer in the catechism, as authority; but as expressing in accurate terms the scripture doctrine on this subject. This catechism contains the most excellent summary of christian doctrine in the world. Yet I do not desire you to receive any doctrine as true, unless you find it taught in the Bible.*

* As the catechism will be often quoted, it may be interesting to the young reader to learn, that it was composed by a committee of the Assembly of Divines, com-

The apostle Paul's language is, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon

monly styled the Westminster Assembly, and having been reported to that body, it received their solemn sanction. That Assembly consisted of one hundred and twenty-one divines, and thirty laymen, from England; and of five commissioners from Scotland. It convened in 1643, by order of the British Parliament, in a part of the celebrated Westminster Abbey. It was composed of Episcopalians, Independents, or Congregationalists, and Presbyterians, the three principal denominations in Great Britain at that time. The Assembly was engaged more than five years and a half in preparing, discussing, and adopting the Confession of Faith, the larger and shorter Catechisms, Directory for Worship, and the Form of Church Government; which with a few alterations, pertaining to civil government, now form "The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." The distinguished Richard Baxter, who was personally acquainted with most of the members, but was not himself one of them, says, "The divines there congregated, were men of eminent learning, godliness, ministerial abilities, and fidelity." "As far as I am able to judge, by all history of that kind, and by any other evidence left us, the christian world, since the days of the apostles, had never a Synod of more excel-

all men, for that all have sinned." Again, "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." These words you perceive are very similar to those in the catechism, and the sense, as I understand them, is the same. The word *covenant* is not used, but they involve a covenant transaction, usually called the covenant of works; and the term covenant is employed by one of the prophets, (Hosea vi. 7,) by way of allusion to Adam; showing that the word itself is scriptural.

Paul's language teaches that Adam, acting by divine appointment, as the federal or covenant head of mankind, fell into sin, and that

lent divines than this, and the Synod of Dort." The standards thus framed by that Assembly, were approved by the House of Commons in 1647; and in 1648, they were adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The Episcopal and Independent churches of England did not adopt them; but their dissent did not relate to scripture doctrines, but to church government; and also with regard to Episcopalians, to the directory for worship. The Calvinistic creed was at that time the common faith of the Protestant, christian world.

in his fall they were brought under condemnation. The covenant of works was an expression of divine condescension and goodness, the effect of which would have been, if it had been kept by Adam, to bring his posterity into a still more intimate and permanent fellowship with God; changing their relation from that of subjects under law, to one of sons and heirs of eternal life. But as Adam failed to keep that covenant, those high privileges were forfeited, and both himself and his posterity were involved judicially in sin and misery. Yet they were not condemned solely on account of Adam's sin, without regard to the moral effect which his sin would have on them; but as including such effect, viz: that they would all be born with corrupt natures. This is stated in the catechism thus; in answer to the question, "Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?" "The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption

of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it."

The corruption of our whole nature is distinctly asserted in the Bible: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." "And were by nature, children of wrath; even as others. If children of wrath by nature, then sinners by nature; because sin alone exposes to wrath. All actual transgressions are traceable to our corrupt nature. "Out of the heart," says our Lord, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." If the heart (which is the same as our moral nature) were not depraved, evil thoughts and desires, and the wicked words and acts which flow from them would not occur. This corruption of our nature is commonly called "original or birth sin."

Henry now said: May I interrupt you, father? Your last sentence brings up my chief difficulty, which I desire to have ex-

plained. I inherited my sinful nature from my parents, and they from theirs; and so back to Adam. Are we accountable for what we inherited from our ancestors?

Mr. James responded: Your sinful nature is not any the less sinful, because you inherited it at your birth, from your parents; nor are the wicked hearts of the whole human race any the less wicked, because they had their origin in the first sin of Adam, the original father of mankind. You feel, you say, that your sinful *desires* and *conduct* are *your own*, though they may be the effect of temptation. In like manner, your *corrupt nature*, which is usually called original sin, is *your own*, though it is the effect of Adam's first sin. If you are accountable for the wicked feelings which flow from your heart, why not for the wicked heart which is the seat of those feelings? Though your heart is not identical with your feelings, but lies back of them; you could not feel at all without a heart, nor have sinful feelings without a sinful heart. And though

your sinful heart or nature was inherited from your parents, it is as much your own heart, and its moral corruption is as much yours, as though you had received them in any other way. Nor is the case altered, in this respect, by going back to Adam. The imputation of the guilt of Adam's first sin to his posterity did not make this sinfulness any the less real. They were condemned as sinful, not as innocent.

HENRY. What do you mean, father, by the imputation of Adam's sin?

FATHER. I mean the penal effects of his first sin upon his posterity, in consequence of his having acted for them in the covenant of works, as their public head and representative. By penal effects, I mean the sin and misery in which they were involved as soon as they were born.

HENRY. Are they really sinful before they commit sin themselves, or are they regarded and treated as sinners by imputation?

FATHER. Both are true. The guilt of Adam's first sin is imputed to them, and

they are also really sinful as soon as they are born. Adam, when acting for his posterity, as their covenant head, stood in a similar relation to the race to what is seen now, when persons mortgage their property for debt, and involve their heirs, as well as themselves, in the losses which often ensue. This illustrates imputation. But besides this legal relation of Adam to his posterity, he also sustained a natural relation as a common father, by which he communicated to them a bias or disposition to sin; and this disposition to sin is odious in the sight of God, before any sinful act has been performed. A disposition to do wrong is hateful even to us, wherever we see it, though the person has yet committed no wicked act.

Henry requested his father to explain this point a little further, saying that the Bible speaks of the fall of angels; but that he had not noticed anything relating to their fall which looked like imputation. What is the difference between the relation of the angels

to each other, with reference to their fall, and Adam's relation to us?

Mr. James replied, God, by a single creative act, formed myriads of holy angels, each one of whom was to stand or fall for himself. But having determined to call into being the human race, he created only a single man, and made him the natural and covenant head of his posterity. And then forming a woman from one of man's ribs, he established the family relation, by means of which the race was to be brought into existence, and also by a law of human nature to be born in the moral as well as mental and bodily likeness of their first parents. Adam and Eve fell from the holy state in which they were created, by eating the forbidden fruit. Their fall produced a sad change in their character and condition; one result of which was, that their children were born sinners. Thus it is recorded in Gen. v. 3, that "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth." The record of man's creation in Gen. i. 27, reads thus: "So

God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." But by the fall, this image was lost, and Adam begat Seth in his own image after he fell, that is, with a depraved and sinful nature; and this moral corruption has continued to flow down from parents to children by natural generation, to the present day. No exception has ever occurred to this universal depravity of our nature, except the Lord Jesus Christ, who being miraculously conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, was not infected with the taint of original sin.

HENRY. Please tell me, father, why you confine your remarks concerning imputation and original sin, to Adam's *first* sin? Why were not his other sins imputed to his posterity as much as his first sin?

FATHER. The covenant of works was made with Adam when he was holy; and his standing or falling was made to depend on the single condition of his not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. His disobedience in that one particular, broke

the covenant, and involved himself and his posterity in ruin. With reference to that one act, the human race were represented in Adam, and by his fall they fell. In his condemnation they were condemned. In other words, human nature was tried in him, and by his transgression it was brought under the curse. Then Adam's representative relation to us ceased. The sins which he committed afterwards, were not committed as our covenant head, but as our natural father.

In the commission of all his subsequent sins, after the first, he stood in the same relation to his posterity, as any other parent does to his descendants.

Henry James having expressed his satisfaction with these explanations, his father remarked further, that we have no more reason for objecting to the divine arrangement in making Adam the federal or covenant head of the human race, and in making original sin in us the consequence of his fall, than we have to complain of that law of divine providence which is constantly seen now, in

the transmission of vicious propensities from parents to children. Adam's moral character having become tainted, that taint or sinful bias was communicated to his offspring by a law of nature, which is constantly operating now, viz: that like produces like. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one."

ILLUSTRATION OF THE FACT THAT ORIGINAL
SIN IS PROPAGATED.

You know, my son, the children of David Thurston. Their father was intemperate; and he died while his boys were young, the oldest not over four years, and the youngest one year. Yet those three boys (all he had) grew up with a fondness for intoxicating drinks; and they are now as intemperate as their father was during his life. I knew their grandfather; and it gives me pain to state that he died a sot. I have known another family of whom it was said, that for three generations, both parents and children, male and female, were given to theft; and

that this disposition was apparent in early childhood. This analogy is not perfect; because some children of vicious parents escape their parents' vices, whereas all of Adam's posterity by ordinary generation, without a single exception, are born sinners. The covenant of works, and the fall of Adam under that covenant, include the entire human race. But these cases are sufficiently apposite to illustrate the doctrine of hereditary depravity. Some large tribes and nations become notorious for possessing certain vicious traits of character; and those traits descend from one generation to another. The apostle Paul wrote concerning the inhabitants of Crete, "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true." But though Paul bears this testimony concerning them, he does not utter a word in extenuation of their guilt. On the contrary, he distinctly teaches that they are highly culpable for their inveterate perverseness of character.

Men may carp at the doctrine of hereditary depravity; but they cannot deny its existence. It is too apparent to escape observation. They may call in question the equity of the divine procedure concerning Adam and his posterity; but the charge is as unreasonable as it would be to accuse Jehovah of having acted unjustly towards our race, in not creating us angels, instead of men. God having in his wisdom determined to make one man and one woman, as the original fountain of human society; to make them after his own image, and in the full maturity of manhood, both in mind and body; and so to order it, that all their descendants should come into the world in a state of feeble infancy, determined most wisely, and with infinite justice and goodness to all concerned, to make the first man the public head and representative of the race, rather than to place each infant child on probation for himself, with the great comparative disadvantages under which he would necessarily lie. This sim-

ple statement of the case places the divine arrangement with Adam, not only above reasonable objection, but as one which is worthy of our gratitude and praise.

Mr. James having paused in his remarks, Henry said: I perceive, father, more clearly than ever before, that I have thought and felt wrong on this subject. I might as well, I find, complain of the divine constitution of human society, and the social liabilities which grow out of it, as to oppose the doctrine of original sin. I thank you, father, for solving my difficulties, and I hope I shall never again, even in thought, call in question the justice of God's dealings with mankind, in this particular.

MR. JAMES'S ADVICE TO HENRY.

Mr. James expressed his gratification in being able to relieve his son's mind of the difficulties under which it had laboured, and then remarked to him thus: Before closing this conversation, Henry, I earnestly advise and exhort you once more, to consider in a

serious manner, the corruption and wickedness of your heart. Through the kind providential influences under which you have lived, accompanied by the restraints of a religious education and the Holy Spirit, you have escaped those outward sins, into which many fall. But external morality, though a duty, is not the whole of religion. You have a depraved and sinful nature, and you ought, with deep humility, and sincere repentance, to approach the throne of divine grace, and seek forgiveness through the Lord Jesus Christ. Read, especially, the fifty-first Psalm, and adopt the language as your own. I also recommend to you the perusal of Dr. Watts's versification of this Psalm; particularly the following stanzas, which contain a humble confession of original sin, and a penitent and believing approach to the fountain of gospel grace :

“ Lord, I am vile, conceived in sin,
And born unholy and unclean ;
Sprung from the man whose guilty fall
Corrupts the race, and taints us all.

- “ Soon as we draw our infant breath,
The seeds of sin grow up for death ;
The law demands a perfect heart ;
But we're defiled in every part.
- “ Great God, create my heart anew,
And form my spirit pure and true ;
Oh ! make me wise betimes to spy
My danger and my remedy.
- “ Behold, I fall before thy face ;
My only refuge is thy grace.
No outward forms can make me clean ;
The leprosy lies deep within.
- “ No bleeding bird, nor bleeding beast,
Nor hyssop branch, nor sprinkling priest,
Nor running brook, nor flood, nor sea,
Can wash the dismal stain away.
- “ Jesus, my God, thy blood alone
Hath power sufficient to atone ;
Thy blood can make me white as snow ;
No Jewish types could cleanse me so.
- “ While guilt disturbs and breaks my peace,
Nor flesh, nor soul, hath rest or ease ;
Lord, let me hear thy pardoning voice,
And make my broken heart rejoice.”

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF GRACE ILLUSTRATED.

If you can adopt these stanzas as your

own, continued Mr. James, *grace* will be in your ears, one of the sweetest words in the English language, and you will be prepared to converse on the doctrines of grace with satisfaction and profit.

Mrs. Isabella Graham expresses in the following pious exercises, the feelings of all genuine believers in Christ: "Glory be to God, Father, Son, and blessed Spirit, for the grace in which I stand. But for grace, I had been a willing slave to sin to this hour. By that same grace, I shall one day attain to victory. My soul waits for thy salvation." The same sentiment is contained in the lines, sung by thousands:

"Oh! to grace, how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!"

These lines express not only what is precious to the christian during life, but what are the support and comfort of his soul in a dying hour.

The Rev. Mr. McLaren, an eminent Scotch divine, when asked, just before his death, by a neighbouring minister: "What are you

doing, brother?" replied as follows: "I am gathering together all my prayers, all my sermons, all my good deeds, all my ill deeds, and I am going to throw them all overboard, and swim to glory on the plank of FREE GRACE."

I am sensible, father, said Henry, that if I am saved at all, my salvation must be owing to divine grace; because I have no righteousness of my own to plead before God; but I fear I know only little as I ought to know, concerning the gospel plan of salvation. Please, father, give me some instruction on this subject, as soon as convenient.

Mr. James readily consented to this request, and enjoined on Henry the frequent reading of God's word, accompanied by prayer and meditation. I enjoin on you these duties, said he, not as being themselves a ground of trust, but as means of enlightening your mind, and benefitting your heart. The family were then called together, and, after engaging in worship, they retired to rest.

CONVERSATION II.

CONCERNING CHRIST OUR REDEEMER.

ON the following Sabbath, Mr. James preached a sermon, with special reference to the inquiry previously made by his son, concerning the doctrines of grace. The words of his text were taken from Eph. i. 7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." He had repeated this text in their former conversation, as containing the first of those glorious truths which relate to the gospel plan of salvation. In his sermon, he discoursed at length upon the wonderful and marvellous scheme of man's redemption. He spoke in a few introductory words of the great love of God the Father, in sending his only begotten and well-beloved Son into the world, as the Saviour of lost men, and of the

great love of God the Son, in consenting to become our Redeemer, and to offer himself as a vicarious sacrifice for our sins. He then proceeded to unfold the nature and necessity of Christ's "redemption;" how it was procured, viz: "through his blood;" one of its blessed results to us, viz: "the forgiveness of sins;" and how it displayed and magnified the "riches" of divine "grace."

The concluding hymn was as follows:

" COME to Calvary's holy mountain,
Sinners ruined by the fall,
Here a pure and healing fountain
Flows to cleanse the guilty soul,
In a full perpetual tide,
Opened when the Saviour died.

" Come in sorrow and contrition,
Wounded, impotent, and blind;
Here the guilty seek remission,
Here the lost a refuge find;
Health this fountain will restore,
He that drinks shall thirst no more.

" Come ye dying, live for ever;
'Tis a soul-reviving flood:

God is faithful, he will never

Break his covenant, sealed in blood ;

Signed, when our Redeemer died,

Sealed, when he was glorified."

GOD'S LOVE FOR SINNERS WONDERFUL.

Henry James heard the discourse with solemn attention ; and in the evening he followed his father into his study, in order that he might converse with him on the subject. He said to his father, When you were discoursing to-day on the subject of man's redemption, and the wonderful display which is made thereby of God's grace, it seemed to me almost beyond belief, that the great Jehovah should thus interpose for our salvation.

Mr. James replied, It would be beyond belief, if we had no other evidence of its truth than human reason. Even the holy angels were surprised at the revelation of this "great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." "Which things," says an inspired apostle, "the angels desire to look into." But we have the most satisfactory

proof that the sacred volume was indited by the Holy Spirit; and the great design of this book is to reveal to us the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. But though undoubtedly true, it is not the less amazing; and it would be so regarded by all who read the Bible, if it had not become familiar to their minds by frequent perusal, and if they were not indifferent to spiritual things.

GOD'S LOVE EXCITING IN THE HEATHEN WON-
DER AND SURPRISE.

Missionaries to the heathen have occasionally found instances in which the first announcement of God's love to sinners, in the gift of his Son, has called forth expressions of extraordinary wonder and surprise. Mr. Nott, a missionary in the South Sea Islands, read a portion of the gospel of John to a number of the natives. When he had finished the sixteenth verse of the third chapter, a native, who had listened with avidity and joy to the words, interrupted him, and said, "What words were those you

read? Let me hear them again!" Mr. Nott read the verse again: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." The native arose from his seat, and said, "Is that true? Can that be true? God love the world, when the world not love him! God so love the world, as to give his Son to die that man might not die! Can that be true?" Mr. Nott again read the verse, "God so loved the world, &c.," told him it was true, and that it was the message God had sent to them; and that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but be happy after death. The overwhelming feelings of the wondering native were too powerful for expression or restraint. He burst into tears, and as these chased each other down his countenance, he retired to meditate in private on the great love of God which had that day touched his soul. He afterwards gave evidence of having embraced the Saviour, and of enjoying that peace and happiness which resulted

from the shedding abroad of God's love in his heart.

JESUS CHRIST, THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD, BECAME MAN.

Mr. James proceeded to remark: Our Saviour Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, possessing a distinct personality, but being the same in essence with God the Father. Thus in the first chapter of John, the same person who is called the "Word," is also called "God," by whom "all things were made, and without him was not anything made that was made." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." How God could become man, that is, God-man, so uniting his divine and human natures, as to possess two distinct natures and but one person, is a mystery which I cannot explain. It is not susceptible of a full explanation. But as the Scriptures teach it, and make it the foundation of the work of our

redemption, it must be received as a fundamental truth, on the same divine authority by which we believe any other incomprehensible truth; such as that God is an uncreated, self-existent, and eternal Spirit. Who, by searching, can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?

HENRY. Do you mean, father, by calling this doctrine *fundamental*, that a sinner cannot be saved, unless he believes Jesus Christ to be both God and man?

FATHER. Yes, Henry, that is what I mean. Unless, as your catechism asserts, "there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory;" the gospel plan of salvation is essentially defective; the shedding of Christ's blood is not adequate to procure our forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit is unable to renovate and sanctify our souls.

Though I am not speaking now of the Holy Spirit, yet it is proper to remark

here, that there is the same necessity for the divinity of the Holy Ghost, as for that of Jesus Christ, and that Scripture proof of the divinity of the Holy Spirit is not wanting. For instance, the Holy Ghost is expressly called God in the sacred Scriptures. Said Peter to Ananias: "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." But I will say more concerning the Holy Spirit hereafter. It is to my purpose to allude to this subject, now, because those who deny the divinity of Christ, likewise deny the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and, on the other hand, those who hold to the one, hold also to the other. The two stand inseparably related to each other in the gospel plan of salvation.

With regard to Christ, Mr. James further remarked: One of the earliest heresies concerning Christ was, that he was not a man, but that he only assumed the appearance of a human being, as the holy angels sometimes did in the first ages of the church.

To this heresy, the apostle John alludes when he says: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God." It is essential that Christ should be a man, in order to suffer and die as an atoning sacrifice. "For without the shedding of blood, there is no remission." As the rock in the wilderness must be smitten by the rod of Moses, before it could become a fountain of water, to furnish drink to the people of Israel; so Christ must be smitten in order to become the source of life and salvation for sinners. Accordingly that rock was a type or emblem of Christ. "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ."

But in order to render his blood a true and proper sacrifice to put away sin; he must be *Divine* as well as human. Hence the Scriptures often assert his Divinity. Paul commences his epistle to the Hebrews,

by affirming in strong language the Divine nature of the Son of God. In the second chapter, he affirms with equal clearness his human nature; and these statements concerning his adorable person, he makes the basis of his subsequent arguments concerning the efficacy of his atonement. Christ "took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He thus assumed a condition which rendered him competent to suffer; but was at the same time, "the brightness of his [God the Father's] glory, and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power."

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE'S OPINION OF CHRIST.

Men of honest and reflecting minds, though making no profession of being theologians, have often been forced to acknowledge the Divinity of Christ. Said Napoleon Bonaparte, in a conversation at St. Helena: "I know men, and I tell you, that Jesus is not a man!" "Alexander, Cæsar,

Charlemagne, and myself, founded empires ; but on what foundation did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force ! Jesus Christ founded an empire upon love, and at this hour, millions of men would die for him." "The religion of Christ proceeds from a mind which is not human."

Our Lord's supreme power and dignity enabled him to lay down his life as a free and voluntary act, and to take it again by rising from the dead, and also to give to his sacrifice infinite value. Thus, "having by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." This doctrine of God's becoming incarnate in order to save sinners, has been the faith of the church ever since the apostolic age, and it has imparted hope and joy to many an anxious soul. For a hundred and fifty years past, the words which were sung at the church to-day, have been employed to express the hearty and grateful sentiments and emotions of myriads of God's people.

“Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find ;
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.

“But if Immanuel’s face appear,
My hope, my joy begins ;
His name forbids my slavish fear,
His grace removes my sins.”

CHRIST DYING TO ATONE FOR OUR SINS.

Henry James sat with an earnest countenance, while his father was making these remarks, and then said, Please to explain to me, father, why it was necessary for Christ to die in order to our obtaining forgiveness of sins. You have often told me that if a person should do me wrong, and afterward express sorrow for his offence, I ought to forgive him. And God himself says in his word, that “he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall find mercy.”

Mr. James replied, It is your duty to forgive those who have injured you, because Christ has enjoined upon all a forgiving spirit, even though the offence be often re

peated. See Matt. xviii. 21, 22, and Luke xvii. 3, 4. He also inspired one of his apostles to write: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Rom. xii. 19. But his directions to us as individuals are not designed as a rule for his own conduct as our moral governor. These directions are not designed even for *us*, except as individuals. He requires civil rulers to execute justice on the guilty, and for some crimes he enjoins the infliction of capital punishment. With regard to his promise of mercy to those who confess and forsake their sins, it is a gospel promise, not made irrespective of the atonement, but in view of it. Repentance is an evangelical duty, not designed as an atonement for sin, nor to take the place of an atonement, so as to render the latter unnecessary; but it has the atonement for its foundation; and hence no promise of forgiveness upon our repentance would have

ever been made, if no atonement had been provided.

HENRY. Did the atonement incline God to be merciful any more than he was before?

FATHER. In a certain sense it did not. God is *love*; and hence he is infinitely disposed to be good and gracious to his creatures. It was his love which provided a Saviour. But there were serious obstacles in the way of his exercising his benevolence in the forgiveness of our sins; obstacles which could not be removed, except by the atonement of Jesus Christ. Though God is merciful, he is also just; and before he could bestow mercy consistently with his justice, and also with his honour as our lawgiver and moral governor, adequate satisfaction must be made in our behalf, by the vicarious obedience and death of Christ, who, by obeying the law, magnified it, and made it honourable; and who by enduring its penalty, was made a sin-offering for us, and so became a propitiation for our sins. To propitiate is to appease the anger

of a person who is offended, and thus render him favourable to the offender.

God's anger was justly provoked by our sins; and the atonement was provided in order that his justice might be satisfied, and his anger appeased. His glorious perfections were thus vindicated and honoured, and the authority of his law and government was maintained. He could now be just, and the justifier of him that believeth. He would thus be *really* just, because his justice was exercised in the penal sufferings of our adorable substitute; and he would *appear* to be just, in the view of all holy intelligences, to whom the gospel plan might be made known. There was no longer any conflict between the different attributes of his adorable character; but they were all harmonized and rendered still more illustrious in the cross of Christ. "Whom [that is, Christ] God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to

declare, I say, at this time his righteousness ; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii. 25, 26.

A TOUCHING ILLUSTRATION OF THE ATONEMENT.

Mr. James now rose and took down from his library a small volume, containing an anecdote of the Rev. Samuel Kilpin, of Exeter, England, and handed it to his son, saying, This little book contains an interesting anecdote which I have employed more than once when preaching on the atonement. It is an appropriate illustration of the great principle which I have just alluded to, viz: the glorious blending together of justice and mercy in the forgiveness of sins. Henry took the book, and read as follows :

"In Mr. Kilpin's school were two boys, brothers, from eleven to twelve years old. One of these children had, after repeated admonition, manifested a determined obstinacy and sulky resistance. Mr. K. told him that the result of such conduct would be a chas-

tisement not easily to be forgotten. He was preparing to inflict it on the still hardened child, when his brother (Paul) came forward and entreated that he might bear the punishment in the place of his brother. Mr. K. remarked, 'My dear Paul, you are one of my best boys, you have never needed chastisement, your mind is tender, I could not be so unjust as to give you pain, my precious child.' The dear boy said, 'I shall endure more pain to witness his disgrace and suffering, than any thing you could inflict on me; he is a little boy, and younger and weaker than I am; pray sir, allow me to take all the punishment. I will bear any thing from you. Oh, do, do sir, take me in exchange for my naughty brother!' 'Well, James,' said Mr. K., 'what say you to this noble offer of Paul?' He looked at his brother, but made no reply. Paul still entreated for the punishment, that it might be finished, and wept. Mr. K. said, 'Did you ever hear of any one who bore stripes and insults to shield offenders, Paul?' 'Oh, yes, sir, the Lord Jesus Christ gave his

back to the smiters for us poor little sinners, and by his stripes we are healed and pardoned. O sir, pardon James for my sake, and let me endure the pain. I can bear it better than he.' 'But your brother does not seek pardon for himself, why should you feel this anxiety, my dear Paul? Does he not deserve correction?' 'Oh, yes, sir, he has broken the rules of the school after repeated warnings; you have said he must suffer; therefore as I know you would not speak an untruth, and the laws must be kept, and he is sullen and will not repent, what can be done, sir? Please to take me, because I am stronger than he.' The boy then threw his arms around his brother's neck, and wetted his sulky, hardened face with tears of tenderness. This was rather more than poor James could stand firmly. His tears began to flow, his heart melted, he sought forgiveness, and embraced his brother. Mr. K. clasped both in his arms, and prayed for a blessing on them from Him of whom it is said, 'He was

wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.' ”

Henry James was so much moved by this touching anecdote, that he could not restrain his feelings—he wept freely. His father remained silent for a few minutes, and then at Henry’s request, he offered a prayer in his behalf that God would give him grace to exercise true faith in Christ.

SUFFICIENCY OF THE ATONEMENT—THE GOSPEL OFFER MADE TO ALL.

When they had risen from their knees, Mr. James remarked that the occurrence in Mr. Kilpin’s school does not illustrate the nature of the atonement, in every particular. No incident which has ever occurred among men, can do this. But it shows clearly and impressively, the main principle of the atonement, viz: Christ’s voluntary surrender of himself to suffer the penalty of the law in our stead; according to that Scripture, “Christ also hath once suffered for

sins—the just for the unjust—that he might bring us to God.”

Christ's sufferings are the means of bringing us to God by opening for us a door of access to God, and by furnishing us a prevailing plea in our supplication to him for mercy and grace. In seeking pardon of sin, we are able to say that God can bestow this favour without dishonouring himself. Yea, that in granting pardon through the atonement of Christ, he may display with increased lustre his adorable perfections. Christ's sufferings also form a true and sufficient ground for inviting all sinners to draw near to God, with the assurance that if they come to him by faith, their sins, however numerous or aggravated, will be forgiven. Christ's words are: “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And again, “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” So in other parts of Scripture the invitation is general: “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the

waters." "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

You are therefore, my son, encouraged and invited to receive the atonement of Christ, and to rely upon it as the ground (and be assured it is the only ground) of your acceptance with God. I am likewise authorized to deliver the same message to all other sinners, as well as to you. So reads the last commission of our Lord to his apostles: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." This commission is based on the inexhaustible sufficiency of the atonement. It is not exhausted either by the lapse of time, or by the great number of sinners who have been made partakers of its benefits. It is as full and free now, for all who come, as it was at first. As the rock smitten by Moses in the wilderness, to which I have before alluded, became a fountain of water, which afforded an abundant supply to the Israelites in all their journeys; so in Christ crucified, there is a boundless store of grace for sin-

ners, an unfailing fountain of hope and joy open for all comers, who "hunger and thirst after righteousness."

Please tell me, father, said Henry James, whether these views accord with the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, and with the sentiments of Calvinistic authors.

Mr. James replied, These sentiments are in perfect harmony with our Confession of Faith, and with those which are held by Calvinists generally. The words of the Confession are, "Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, [that is, the covenant of works,] the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace: wherein he freely offered unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved." To the same effect are the words of the larger Catechism: "The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life

and salvation by him, and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him." Several of our Presbyterian hymns contain a distinct expression of these sentiments.

" Welcome all, by sin oppressed,
Welcome to his sacred rest ;
Nothing brought Him from above,
Nothing but redeeming love."

Again :

" Rivers of love and mercy here
In a rich ocean join ;
Salvation in abundance flows,
Like floods of milk and wine."

Again :

" Delay not, delay not, O sinner, draw near ;
The waters of life are now flowing for thee ;
No price is demanded, the Saviour is here,
Redemption is purchased, salvation is free."

MARROW OF MODERN DIVINITY.

More than two centuries ago, continued Mr. James, Mr. Edward Fisher, a learned and pious Englishman, wrote a treatise entitled "Marrow of Modern Divinity," which has

been highly esteemed ever since by Evangelical Calvinists in England, Scotland, and the United States of America. A new edition of the work has been lately published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication. The author says, "I beseech you consider, that God the Father, as he is in his Son Jesus Christ, moved with nothing but with his free love to mankind lost, hath made a deed of gift and grant unto them all, that whosoever of them all shall believe in his Son, shall not perish, but have eternal life. And hence it was, that Jesus Christ himself said unto his disciples, Mark xvi. 15, 'Go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven;' that is, Go and tell every man without exception, that here is good news for him; Christ is dead for him; and if he will take him, and accept of his righteousness, he shall have him."

An Appendix to this interesting volume, contains answers to twelve queries, proposed by the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, concerning the doctrines of the "Marrow." These answers

were drawn up and subscribed by eleven of the most distinguished and godly Presbyterian Ministers of the Scotch Church. Concerning the gospel offer they say, "We answer to the first part of the question, that by the 'deed of gift or grant unto all mankind,' we understand no more than the revelation of the divine will in the word, affording warrant to all to receive him; for although we believe the purchase and application of redemption to be peculiar to the elect, who were given by the Father to Christ in the counsel of peace, yet the warrant to receive him is common to all. Ministers, by virtue of the commission they have received from their great Lord and Master, are authorized and instructed to go preach the gospel to every creature, that is, to make a full, free, and unhampered offer of him, his grace, righteousness, and salvation, to every rational soul to whom they may in providence have access to speak. And though we had a voice like a trumpet, that could reach all the corners of the earth, we think we would be

bound, by virtue of our commission, to lift it up, and say, 'To you, O men, do we call, and our voice is to the sons of men. God hath so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

I thought, father, said Henry James, that our Confession of Faith teaches the doctrine of *definite* atonement. Is this doctrine consistent with the general offer of salvation to all men?

Mr. James replied, Definite atonement is the doctrine of our Confession; but this doctrine is in perfect harmony with the offer of Christ to all men. The word "atonement" does not occur in our Confession of Faith; but instead thereof, the term redemption is used to describe Christ's mediatorial work. Particular redemption is maintained even by those Calvinistic divines of the present day, who believe in general atonement; and I see not how any can hold to general redemption except Universalists, who believe that all mankind will be finally saved. And yet, as

you have seen, those old divines who were accustomed to employ the word redemption, instead of atonement, believed the gospel offer to be sincerely made to all mankind.

ATONEMENT AND REDEMPTION COMPARED.

Mr. James further remarked, that a comparison of the two words, atonement and redemption, will throw additional light on this subject. Though atonement and redemption are not exactly synonymous, they are closely related to each other. Their relation may be stated thus. The blood of Christ, as an atoning sacrifice, was the means, the end of which was our redemption; "Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ." By the blood of Christ is meant his atonement. The reason assigned in the law of Moses for prohibiting the eating of blood, was that "with the blood atonement is made." The atonement made by animal sacrifices, was typical of Christ's atonement by the shedding of his own blood, the effect of which was our redemption.

Again, the word ransom, used in the sense of atonement, is employed in Scripture to denote the means, and redemption the end, or effect. Our Lord says, that the "Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." And Paul says, with reference to Christ's death, that we are "bought with a price;" meaning by price, the ransom which Christ paid for the redemption of our souls. This is stated in express terms to have been the end of Christ's death. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." Christ's giving himself for us is equivalent to saying that he gave his life a ransom or atoning sacrifice; and the end is declared to be our redemption. In Ex. xxx. 12, 15, 16, the words ransom and atonement are employed as synonymous terms. "They shall give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord," "an offering unto the Lord to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money," "and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congre-

gation," "to make an atonement for your souls." The term ransom is used in the same sense in the book of Job, with reference to Christ's mediation for sinful man. "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom;" that is, I have found an atoning sacrifice to procure his redemption.

Once more. In the only text in the English New Testament, where the word atonement occurs, Rom. v. 11. it signifies reconciliation, which conveys the two-fold idea of God's being reconciled to us and our being reconciled to God, that is, of our being brought into that state of friendship with God which secures our final salvation. Thus reasons the apostle: "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." This glorious consummation of our hopes is denominated in Scripture, "eternal redemption," obtained for us by the atoning blood of Christ, Heb. ix. 12. In these pas-

sages, atonement and redemption cover, substantially, the same ground. They include Christ's sacrifice, and its application to the heart and conscience of sinners; the procuring of pardon and eternal life, and the actual bestowment of these blessings upon the guilty.

What does this comparison show, said Henry, concerning the extent of the atonement?

Mr. James replied: This comparison of atonement and redemption shows that if the word atonement is taken in its full import as planned in the divine mind, and carried forward to its final results, it was definite and limited, that is, it was designed to secure the salvation of those only, who believe in Christ; or in other words, of those only, who were given by God the Father to his eternal Son in the covenant of redemption, who are called in Scripture, God's elect. If it had not been for that covenant, and for the certainty that upon Christ's fulfilling its conditions, he would have "a seed to serve

him," we have no reason to believe he would have become incarnate, or have given himself a sacrifice for sin. Those who were thus given to him, he calls his sheep, for whom he laid down his life. John x. 15. And it was for them, as our Confession and Catechism state, Christ received the promise of the Holy Spirit, "to make them willing and able to believe;" to work in them, likewise, all other saving graces, and to enable them unto all holy obedience.

IN WHAT SENSE CHRIST DIED FOR ALL.

HENRY. Please, father, explain those texts which appear to teach that Christ died for all.

MR. JAMES. Those passages, he "gave himself a ransom for all;" he "died for all;" he "tasted death for every man;" he is the "Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe;" he is "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," and a few others of a similar character, must be interpreted

by a reference to the connection in which they are found. In every case, a careful examination of these passages will show, as I think, that these general terms and phrases are qualified by some connecting words or circumstances, which make them equivalent to saying that he died for all who believe ; or that he died for the Gentiles, as well as the Jews ; or that he died for all classes, ranks, and conditions of men, the poor and ignoble, no less than the rich and great.

But if any insist that some of these texts cannot be thus restricted, but must be taken in their widest import, then I would say that Christ died for all, in the sense of making sufficient provision, by his atoning sacrifice, on which to base the universal offer of the gospel, and not with the design of saving all. This answer is not an evasion, but is all which the language of these and other similar texts requires, in their most extensive sense. If Christ's death formed a sufficient ground for offering pardon to all, then it is no perversion of lan-

guage to say that he died for all, without implying thereby that he designed to save all. This last cannot be true, unless universal salvation be a Bible doctrine, which it is not; or unless Christ failed to carry out his design, and consequently, suffered disappointment, which cannot be admitted for a moment. This sentiment would be the highest dishonour to Christ as God-man, akin to that which robs him of his Divinity.

Henry James listened with intense interest to these remarks. Father, said he, the wonder I expressed in view of the gospel plan of redemption, as unfolded in your sermon, is not diminished by your further observations on this subject. Those words, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace," have been in my mind all the evening. And as you have proceeded with your remarks, I have felt more sensibly, than ever before, the riches of God's grace in the forgiveness of sins, and I have perceived more clearly, how glo-

rious a foundation of forgiveness is the Lord Jesus Christ. If I know my heart, I greatly desire an interest in this redemption.

But, father, continued Henry, I have one or two difficulties which discourage me. Though the atonement is sufficient for all, and the offer is made to all; yet if the gospel provision was not designed to save all, how can all have a valid ground for accepting the offer?

Mr. James replied: The secret purpose of God is not the rule of man's duty, but his revealed will, and Christ says: "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." Sinners are not only warranted to believe this, but are commanded to do so, on the authority of God himself; and every one who thus believes, will be saved.

Henry further remarked: Sometimes when I endeavour to seek the Lord, the thought enters my mind, What if I do seek? If the atonement was not made for me in par-

ticular, I shall not be saved, and my seeking will be in vain. Can you relieve me of this difficulty?

Mr. James replied as follows:

If I cannot relieve you, Henry, of this difficulty, your feeling of uncertainty ought not to keep you back. The four leprous men threw themselves into the hands of the Syrians, and queen Esther went into the king's palace to intercede for her people and kindred, without any assurance of success. It was enough to move them to effort that they might, perhaps, obtain relief. And so ought every sinner to act with reference to seeking the Lord. So ought you to feel and act. In a matter of such moment, the mere hope of success, even though small, ought to move you to effort. Your language should be,

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

But I have a further answer. You are

not left to uncertainty in the matter of coming to Christ. He invites you to come, and promises to receive you. Are not his invitation and promise a sufficient warrant? You virtually call in question his veracity, by asking further assurance before you feel warranted to come.

Again, your earnest seeking of Christ is a scriptural evidence that the atonement was made for you; because our Saviour says, "Seek and ye shall find;" and those who *find* him can have no doubt of their interest in his atonement.

Your only ground for doubt on this point, really exists when you have no desire to seek the Lord, but not when you *feel* this desire. If therefore, the objection which you urge is operating to prevent you from coming to Christ, you have much cause for alarm, and should earnestly pray God to deliver you from this dangerous delusion. But if you have a desire to come to Christ, cherish it; nay, act upon it immediately, and embrace

him as your Redeemer. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

EXPERIENCE OF COWPER, THE POET.

Mr. James proceeded to remark further: The experience of William Cowper the poet, author of "The Task," &c., is an instance, (and there are millions of others,) illustrating the divine efficacy of the atonement, to produce in the mind of an anxious sinner, when he receives Christ, peace, hope, and joy. The following narrative is in his own words. Speaking of his religious experience, he says, "But the happy period which was to shake off my fetters, and afford me a clear opening of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus, was now arrived. I flung myself into a chair near the window, and seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw, was Rom. iii. 25. 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through

the forbearance of God.' Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement he had made, my pardon sealed in his blood, and all the fulness and completeness of his justification. In a moment I believed, and received the gospel."

You remember, Henry, that you alluded in our last conversation to a delightful hymn, which had interested you very much, and you said you would give the whole world if you could adopt the latter part of it as your own. That precious hymn was composed by Cowper; and it was doubtless penned (I know not at what period of his life) to express his own personal experience concerning the plan of salvation. You may, my son, repeat three or four stanzas. Henry repeated as follows:

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day ;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream,
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die."

His father then said, You need not, my son, give the whole world as the purchase money to enable you to adopt these words. Christ offers himself to you without money and without price. Only *believe*. Your conscience will then be at peace, and your soul will be made joyful in the Lord.

Let your faith rest especially on this cardinal doctrine of the *atonement*. All saving knowledge centres in this. In the language of Dr. Spencer, "If our apprehensions and impressions about this are wrong, our reli-

gion will be wrong. In proportion to our error on this point, will be our unhappiness in Christian experience. If we do not catch the true spirit of the doctrine of the atonement, we shall not catch the true spirit of Christian life; and if we live at all to Christ, then it will be a diseased and sickly life; and, instead of resembling those who breathe the pure atmosphere that quickens a heavenly existence, we shall resemble those who breathe the poisoned and pestilent vapours that sometimes float even over the green fields of the Zion of God.

“The atonement is the believer’s breath of life. He can not take a step, he can not speak a word, he can not feel an emotion in religion, without it. It tempers all his hopes, his fears, his faith. It governs his humility, his peace, his love. It guides his gentleness, his goodness. It opens the fountain of his tears. It is the key-note of the song he sings. And when he goes forth to do good, it turns him from the track of the Levite and the Priest, to the better path of the good

Samaritan, who bears his oil and his wine. If this pervading principle becomes corrupted, all else will partake of the taint. If the truth of the principle be all lost, grace will not exist in the soul, and the soul will not be saved."

The hour having arrived for family worship, the conversation closed; and Mr. James and Henry joined the rest of the household in the adjacent room, and engaged in their evening devotions.

CONVERSATION III.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

On the succeeding Sabbath, Henry James read, by his father's request, the first five chapters of Paul's epistle to the Romans, as preliminary to their next conversation, which, Mr. James told him, would be on the doctrine of Justification. When the evening arrived, the time appointed for this conversation, Henry said: In reading those chapters, father, one thing which has struck me forcibly, concerning the doctrine of justification is, that it is closely connected with the death and resurrection of Christ. It seems like a continuation of our conversation on the atonement.

Mr. James replied: Your impression is correct. The vicarious obedience and sufferings of Christ are the foundation and pro-

curing cause of our justification, and of course, we cannot discuss the subject of justification, without referring constantly to Christ's mediatorial work. Thus, Chap. i. 17: "For therein [that is, in the gospel] is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written: The just shall live by faith." Chap. iii. 24-26: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption, that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Chap. iv. 25: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Chap. v. 1, 9: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

To justify a person, continued Mr. James, is to acquit him of any charge, to pronounce him righteous; and yet in these very chapters, in which Paul discusses the doctrine of justification, he proves conclusively, that all men are sinners, and under condemnation. On ordinary principles of reasoning, the inference would be, that our justification is impossible; that we must for ever lie under the wrath of God. And this inference would be a necessary one, and our eternal ruin inevitable, except for the Divine plan of gospel justification. If the dying sinner leaves this glorious doctrine out of view, the prospect which opens before him is a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." When his conscience is awakened to a conviction of his guilt, this apprehension is distinctly felt.

ALARM OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

It is related of William the Conqueror, that on his death-bed he exclaimed, "Laden with many and grievous sins, I tremble. I

am about to be taken soon into the terrible examination of God, and I am ignorant of what I should do. I have been brought up in feats of arms from my childhood; I am greatly polluted with the effusion of much blood; I can by no means number the evils I have done these sixty-four years, for which I am now constrained without stay to render an account to the just Judge."

King William's apprehensions were well founded. "Because God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts xvii. 31. Again, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. v. 10. "So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." Rom. xiv. 12.

“Day of judgment, day of wonders!

Hark the trumpet's awful sound,

Louder than a thousand thunders,

Shakes the vast creation round!

How the summons

Will the sinner's heart confound!”

That famous warrior, said Mr. James, would have gladly given the laurels of a hundred victories, if he could have obtained thereby a saving knowledge of that single verse in Paul's epistle: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And though the crimes of that hero may have been more enormous than those of many others; yet there is no unconverted sinner on earth who would not feel similar apprehensions in view of a future judgment, provided, as I have just said, his conscience was duly awakened to a conviction of his guilt. The question then, “How shall man be just with God?” is one which concerns all; and it ought to be anxiously considered by the light of divine revelation.

Henry James replied, I have frequently of late asked this question with reference to my own case. Though I have never committed any crime against the laws of the land, I have often sinned against God, in thought, word, and deed; in view of which I have felt like saying, "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who could stand?" I know I need a better righteousness than my own to commend me to God.

This is true, said Mr. James, and the only righteousness which can avail you for this end, is the righteousness of Christ.

MORALITY INSUFFICIENT TO JUSTIFY THE
SINNER.—PHILIP III. OF SPAIN.

It is not sufficient for you to say, (though it may be true,) that you are not as wicked as some others, and therefore you expect on this ground to be accepted of God. Philip III. of Spain, was so conscientious in abstaining from vice, that he is reported to have said, that he would rather lose his kingdom, than knowingly offend God. He was

also an observer of the outward forms of religion. But he relied on those things for justification, and not on Christ. Hence when he drew near death, and his mind was seriously turned to the account he must soon render to God, he exclaimed, "Would to God I had never reigned! What doth all my glory profit, but that I have so much the more torment in my death?"

Moral and religious duties are important as fruits and evidences of piety, but if your piety is made to consist in these, it will be found wanting. In order to your justification by works, to say nothing of your corrupt nature, you must have abstained, during every moment of your life, from everything, in thought, word, and deed, which God's law forbids, and have performed everything which his law requires. It is obvious that no human being can be justified on this ground, for "all of us have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

You may now, Henry, if you please, repeat the answer in your catechism to the

question, "What is justification?" This answer contains a scriptural statement on this important subject.

Henry repeated the answer, as follows: "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone."

GOSPEL JUSTIFICATION EXPLAINED.

Mr. James continued, Justification includes *pardon*, the pardon of all our sins, actual and original; our worst acts of sin, whether of thought, word, or deed; and our inward propensities to sin. Pardon is the same as *forgiveness*. "Blessed is he," says David, "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." But pardon is not the whole of justification. It includes also the imputation of Christ's righteousness. By the righteousness of Christ is meant his whole mediatorial work on earth, consisting of his perfect obedience to the divine law, and his endu-

rance of its penalty in our behalf. Sometimes the phrase *merits* of Christ, is used to signify the same thing as *righteousness* of Christ. But the two are not identical. By his merits are meant his personal excellence and dignity, by which his vicarious obedience and sufferings possessed infinite value, and formed a proper basis for the justification of believing sinners. His merits were necessary for the perfection and sufficiency of his righteousness; but his righteousness (not his merits) is imputed to believers for their justification.

HENRY. What is meant, father, by Christ's righteousness being imputed?

FATHER. To *impute* is employed in Scripture as synonymous with *count* or *reckon*.

"To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." "For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." Compare Rom. iv. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10; where impute, count, and reckon, are used interchangeably with each other.

Christ's righteousness is imputed to sinners when it is counted or reckoned to them by God; when he accepts them as righteous in the eye of his law, on account of Christ's having met the demands of the law in their stead, and this imputation takes place when they, renouncing all reliance on their own works, and cordially approving of the gospel plan of justification, receive, and rest upon Christ, as the Lord their righteousness. These sentiments are expressed or implied in the following passages of Scripture: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through

the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Mr. James remarked on these texts, that righteousness has respect to law. The righteousness of the law, under the covenant of works made with Adam, was his own perfect obedience; but by his breaking that covenant, he and his posterity became sinners, and fell under the curse of God's law. Justification by works is therefore impossible, because all are transgressors; their best obedience is imperfect, and an imperfect conformity to the law falls short of that righteousness which the law requires. Thus the law became "weak through the flesh," that is, through our moral corruption. The law continues powerful to condemn, but weak to justify. Hence the necessity of a second covenant—of grace, by which the righteousness of the law was wrought out by our glorious substitute and surety; a righteousness which was perfect, which fully satisfied

the demands of God's law, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by believing sinners, through faith in Christ. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, and his obedience to the law in the place of believers, is accepted of God as though it had been rendered by themselves.

FOLLY OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Mr. James remarked further: Those persons who seek justification by the deeds of the law, place themselves under the covenant of works. They endeavour to do for themselves, what holy Adam failed to accomplish. They also virtually declare by this attempt, that so far as they themselves are concerned, there was no necessity for Christ's vicarious obedience and death. For as Paul says, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." It is therefore great folly and presumption for sinners to expect justification by their own merits, however moral and upright they may be, and, until they abandon all such

expectation, they are not prepared to receive Christ as their Saviour. Self-righteousness was a common sin among the Jews, and it is assigned by Paul, as a reason why they refused to become christians. "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God." And this obstacle is now a most serious hindrance in the way of sinners' coming to Christ. Though reason itself is sufficient to teach them that they are sinners, and that their best works are imperfect, they proudly imagine that they can make atonement for their sins by self-mortification, and purchase heaven by their good deeds. And not until they are completely cured of this vain confidence in themselves, will they feel the necessity, and perceive the excellence and glory of Christ's righteousness. When they are brought to that deep contrition and self-abasement which characterized the publican, they will gratefully receive, and rest on Christ, as

freely offered in the gospel. Their feelings when brought to this state of mind, are well expressed in a hymn, which is sometimes sung in our religious meetings :

“How shall the sons of men appear,
Great God, before thine awful bar !
How may the guilty hope to find
Acceptance with the Eternal Mind ?

Not vows, nor groans, nor broken cries,
Not the most costly sacrifice ;
Not infant blood, profusely spilt,
Will expiate a sinner’s guilt.

Thy blood, dear Jesus, thine alone,
Hath sovereign virtue to atone ;
Here we will rest our only plea,
When we approach, great God, to thee.”

A HOTTENTOT PERCEIVING AND CONFESSING HIS SINS.

Mr. James handed his son a religious paper, saying, Here is a short story of a heathen, whose religious experience may serve to show how you must feel in order to your appreciating and receiving Christ and his righteousness. Henry took the paper and

read as follows: "A poor Hottentot in Southern Africa, lived with a pious Dutchman, who kept up family prayer daily. One day he read, 'Two men went up into the temple to pray.' The poor heathen, whose heart was already awakened, looked earnestly at the reader, and whispered, 'Now I'll learn how to pray.' The christian man read on, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men—.' 'No, I am not; but I am worse,' whispered the Hottentot. Again the pious gentleman read, 'I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess.' 'I don't do that, I don't pray in that manner. What shall I do?' said the distressed heathen. The good man read on, until he came to the publican, who 'would not lift so much as his eyes to heaven.' 'That's me,' cried the trembling pagan. 'Stood afar off,' read the christian man. 'That's where I am,' said the Hottentot. 'But smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner,' continued the pious Dutchman. 'That's me, that's my prayer,' cried the penitent heathen, and

smiting on his breast, he prayed, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' until, like the humble and broken-hearted publican, he went down to his house, a saved and happy man."

When Henry James had finished reading this anecdote, he said, How precious to that Hottentot would have been the sweet hymn we sang at family worship this morning! I think the words would have made his heart glad.

"When on the cross my Saviour died,
God's holy law he satisfied;
My debts he paid, my sins he bore,
And justice now demands no more.

A healing balm his hand bestows,
To cure my wounds, and ease my woes;
And a rich fountain still remains,
To wash away my guilty stains."

Doubtless, said Mr. James, these lines would have delighted him. He must have been instructed in the way of salvation previous to this time, and now, if not before, he embraced Christ by faith, and became a justified man.

HOW FAITH JUSTIFIES.

How is it, father, said Henry James, that *faith* justifies the sinner—rather than repentance, love, humility, or any other grace?

Faith is the instrument of the sinner's justification, said Mr. James, because it receives and rests on Christ and his righteousness. Repentance is necessary to salvation; and hence it always accompanies saving faith. It consists in godly sorrow for sin, followed by a turning from sin unto God. The duty of repentance is often inculcated in the Bible. Our blessed Lord, and also his forerunner, John the Baptist, commenced their public ministry by preaching repentance, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In like manner, Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said to the multitude who were pricked in their hearts and inquired, "What shall we do?" "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins;" and in another discourse, "Repent and be converted,

that your sins may be blotted out." But though repentance leads the soul to seek God, as merciful and gracious, through the Lord Jesus Christ, it is not the grace by which the sinner lays hold on Christ. This is done by faith, and hence faith alone, and not repentance, is the grace by which the sinner is justified.

For the same reason, faith justifies, rather than love, humility, or any other grace. Love views Christ as infinitely excellent and worthy. It is the grace that draws out the soul after him. But the act of receiving him is not performed by love, but by faith. Humility is an essential requisite in the sinner's coming to Christ. It is one element in a broken heart, and a contrite spirit; concerning which David says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." But though humility is important and necessary, it is not the grace by which the sinner apprehends Christ; and hence it is not the instrument of his justification.

It is manifest therefore, continued Mr. James, that faith does not justify, in consequence of its intrinsic excellence. If this were the case, these other graces would have a share in our justification, because they are inherently as excellent as faith. But the meritorious cause of our justification is Christ's righteousness imputed to us; and his righteousness is received by faith alone. This fact shows the reason why our justification is declared to be by *grace*. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." "By grace are ye saved, through faith." "It is of faith, that it might be by grace." Though the sinner cannot be justified by the deeds of the law; yet his justification must have respect to the law; the righteousness of which having been wrought out by Christ, is set over to his account. This would seem to give the transaction a legal character; and in one view of the matter it is legal. God's law is so dear to him, that he must necessarily have respect to its claims in the gospel plan of

justification. Still this plan is marvellously gracious;—gracious in its inception, gracious in its execution, and gracious in the mode of applying its benefits to sinners by faith. As they have no merit of their own, and as their pardon and acceptance as righteous, are derived solely from Christ, there is no other grace so well adapted as faith, to express their renunciation of every other ground of hope, and their entire reliance upon Christ. The language of faith is:

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling,
Naked, come to thee for dress,
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Vile, I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.”

Through faith, believers receive what is freely offered by a gracious God, and, in receiving the gift, they virtually say that they ascribe all the glory of their salvation to his rich and adorable grace.

WHAT IS SAVING FAITH ?

The subject of faith, said Henry James, is very interesting to me. I have often felt almost ready to say, "Lord, I believe;" but before the words were uttered, the question would occur to me, What is faith? Concerning which, my mind has hesitated, and been in doubt. Please explain to me, father, the nature of saving faith.

Mr. James replied: Saving faith must have Christ for its object. Some persons may tell you to submit to God. I have heard this language used in the pulpit. Indeed, it is Scripture language, and is very important in the connection in which it is employed by the sacred writers. But they never use it when directing a sinner how to be saved. On this point they uniformly speak and write to the following effect: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Submission to God's authority is a religious duty, and it follows genuine faith. Yet if inculcated by itself,

it falls short of saving faith. Submission to God as our moral governor, might be inculcated by a Deist, without changing his religious views ; whereas it is essential to a man's being a Christian that he have faith in God's Son. You ought therefore to distinguish between these two things, if you would understand the nature of saving faith.

Again : faith in Christ is more than a mere belief of the doctrine that Christ is the Saviour of sinners ; that he is divine, and, that having assumed our nature, he died as an atoning sacrifice. In addition to your belief of these truths, you must cordially approve of them, and embrace them. " With the heart," Paul says, " man believeth unto righteousness." These words imply that the heart is convinced of its sinfulness and danger, and is moved thereby to seek an interest in Christ. Insensibility and indifference are incompatible with saving faith, because the sinner never looks to Christ for pardon until convicted of sin. " The whole

need not a physician, but they that are sick." And though diseased, they will not apply to a physician, until they perceive themselves to be diseased and are alarmed at their condition. When the sinner is awakened by the Holy Spirit to feel his lost and ruined state, and is enlightened to perceive the ability and willingness of Jesus to save—to save *him*, though the chief of sinners ; then, and not before, is his guilty and anxious heart prepared to trust in Christ for salvation. His simple trust in Christ alone, under this state of mind, according to the scriptural account, is saving faith. He must look entirely without himself or anything he has done, and rest on Christ alone.

Mr. James then appealed to Henry, and asked him whether he could not trust in Christ. Henry hesitated to make a reply ; but at length said : I have often repeated the hymn, commencing with the verse,

“ Just as I am—without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,

And that thou bid'st me come to thee,—
O Lamb of God, I come."

I feel a desire to come to Christ; sometimes I think I can adopt these words as my own; but at other times I fear they are repeated as a form, without any special movement of my heart towards Christ. I have likewise frequently repeated the words of Scripture, "Lord, I believe;" but I could not do this, without adding what follows, viz: "Help thou mine unbelief."

Mr. James remarked in reply: If, Henry, you truly "hunger and thirst after righteousness," Christ's promise is, that you "shall be filled." Your *desire* to come to Christ is therefore an encouraging sign; and if, in the language of the hymn alluded to, you are willing to come just as you are, and to offer no plea but Christ's atoning blood and perfect righteousness, you give evidence of possessing saving faith, and consequently of being in a justified state. Sometimes a person who truly believes, does not enjoy the comfort of faith, from his not understand-

ing fully that the inward act of the soul which constitutes this grace, is simply taking Christ at his word, accepting his *invitation*, and relying on his *promise*. Do this, and you will obtain relief.

SAVING FAITH ILLUSTRATED.

Many illustrations have been given of saving faith, some of which are better adapted to particular cases, and some to others. In some instances the difficulty consists in the want of a proper apprehension of the infinite sufficiency of Christ's atonement. A man who was in trouble of mind, and much harassed as to the nature of true faith, stated to his pastor, that his fears had been great, that he had sinned beyond the reach of mercy; but that while he was thinking on the subject, that portion of scripture was suggested to his mind, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin;" and that resting on this truth he found comfort. The minister very properly told him that this was true faith.

In other cases, the sinner does not trust in Christ *alone*, but partly in himself, and as long as he does this, his anxiety is not relieved. To such a case, the explanation of a pious sailor to his comrade, who was inquiring the way of salvation, was very appropriate. "Faith," said he, "is not anything you have done, or can do ; it is believing and trusting to what Christ has done ; it is forsaking your sins, and trusting for their pardon, and the salvation of your soul, because he died and shed his blood for sin ; and it is nothing else."

Others, again, fail to appropriate to themselves the invitations and promises of God's word.

A minister of the gospel who had been conversing with a young lady in much distress about her soul, at length said to her, "Perhaps you do not understand precisely what you are to believe. You say that you think Christ is willing to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God through him. Now coming to God through him is trusting

with all your heart in the *promises* which he has made; it is believing from your inmost soul that he is willing to save *you*; according to his promise, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.'" "Is that faith?" she exclaimed. "Why did I never see this before?" From that moment she trusted in Christ, and found joy. As previously intimated, the experience of that young lady, when distinctly analyzed, appears to indicate that she had not hitherto appropriated the invitations and promises of Christ to *herself*; but that now she was enabled to do this, and accordingly obtained relief. She now felt like poor Joseph in the tract, whose whole religious experience consisted in repeating with deep emotion, "'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;' poor Joseph is a sinner, and therefore he came to save *me*."

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH SECURES PEACE
WITH GOD.

Henry James appeared to be much interested in his father's remarks and illustrations on the subject of faith; and he inquired further, Please tell me, father, how faith in Christ brings relief and comfort to the anxious soul.

Mr. James replied: Faith in Christ is the instrument of the sinner's justification; and when he becomes justified, he is at peace with God. Thus Paul says, Rom. v. 1. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." As I have already noticed, God's justifying a sinner consists in his pardoning his sins, and accepting him as righteous, on account of the righteousness of Christ imputed to him. When God pronounces a sinner just, it is equivalent to declaring that such a person is at peace with him; that he is no longer his enemy, but his friend. This declaration is made in his word, with regard to every

sinner who believes in Christ. But the divine act of justification, in each particular case, is not always known to the individual the moment he believes; because the exercise of faith is not a matter of such clear and distinct consciousness, that he can immediately feel assured of its existence in the heart. But sooner or later, God communicates this knowledge by his Spirit, called the Spirit of adoption, whereby the believer is enabled to say, "Abba, Father." He then possesses the evidence in his own soul that he has true faith, and hence that he is in a justified state; that his sins are forgiven, and that God has accepted his person. As a fruit of this evidence of God's love, his anxiety and fear are succeeded by peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Mr. James remarked further, that the believer's peace of conscience does not arise from his ceasing to feel that he is a sinner. He never does cease to feel this. But though he is always sensible of his guilt and unworthiness, and always sees in himself cause

for humility and self-abasement; yet his belief that his sins are pardoned, and that he is accepted of God through the merits of Christ, removes that distress of mind which he had previously felt while relying for justification, either wholly or in part, on his own righteousness, and thus seeking to be saved by the old, broken covenant of works, instead of the new covenant of grace. So long as a sinner trusts to his own works, he need not expect to obtain peace of conscience; because he cannot avoid feeling, if truly convinced of sin, that his own works are insufficient to deliver him from condemnation. The language of the law is, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them;" from which Paul argues, that "as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse;" that is, those who rely on the old covenant of works are under condemnation, and they cannot deliver themselves from it by any atonement they can offer, or any works of right-

eousness which they can perform. They may fast and pray—they may give alms, and even lacerate their bodies; but their anxious souls obtain no satisfactory and permanent comfort, until by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, they obtain, and cordially embrace, scriptural views concerning this glorious doctrine of justification by faith.

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF LUTHER.

On this point, continued Mr. James, the life of the great Reformer, Martin Luther, furnishes an instructive illustration. For two years or more after he began to study the Bible, he was in great distress and anguish of spirit, owing, chiefly, to an erroneous impression that he must work out a righteousness of his own, in order to commend himself to God's favour. I will not undertake to decide at what time he first exercised saving faith. The existence of faith in the heart may be compatible with much ignorance and superstition. Admit-

ting, as some think, that he was a true believer, at or about the beginning of the two years now to be noticed ; then his severe and anxious spiritual struggles during that period show the injurious effect of a false religious creed, with regard to a sinner's justification, in obscuring his mind, and preventing him from enjoying the comfort of an enlightened and scriptural belief on this subject.

Here, Henry, said Mr. James, is a volume of D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation. I have marked ten or twelve pages, containing his religious experience at this period. As you have listened to me for some time, I will now listen to you, while you read this interesting account. The substance of what Henry read is as follows, though much abridged :

Luther, being oppressed with a sense of his sins, retired to a cloister, that by prayers, masses, abstinence, and other austerities, he might obtain peace of conscience. Here he found a Bible, (the second he had ever

seen,) and from it he learned with astonishment, that "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." But not being able to understand its true import, this text was to him, for a time, a source of terror, rather than of comfort. He read the Scriptures diligently, and performed, from day to day, many acts which he regarded as meritorious, but without having a clear view of the gospel plan of salvation, or deriving any comfort from his supposed meritorious acts. Having occasion to visit Rome, he stopped for a few days, on his way thither, at a monastery, where the same words came to his mind with extraordinary power, "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." But still the precious truths which these words conveyed, were very partially comprehended; though he began to suspect that they were at variance with that plan of justification by works, from which he had, in vain, been seeking relief.

Luther, arriving at Rome, and learning that an indulgence was promised by the

Pope, to all who should ascend, on their knees, what is called Pilate's staircase; he began to creep up those steps, which he was informed, had been transported in a miraculous manner from Jerusalem to Rome. While he was thus engaged in what he regarded as a meritorious act, the thought which had come to his mind twice before with tremendous force, now entered his inmost soul: "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." He arose in amazement from the steps, up which he was dragging his body; he shuddered at himself; he was ashamed at seeing to what a depth his superstition had plunged him. He fled from the scene of his folly; he was enabled, in due time, to comprehend that righteousness which alone can stand before God; and he received for himself, from the hand of Christ, that obedience which God, of his free gift, imputes to the sinner, as soon as he raises his eyes, with humility, to the crucified Son of Man.

The wonderful change which was produced in Luther's feelings by these new,

scriptural views of Divine truth, and his cordial reception of it by faith, may be best stated in his own words: "Although I was a holy and blameless monk, my conscience was nevertheless full of trouble and anguish. I could not endure those words, '*the righteousness of God.*' I had no love for that holy and just God who punishes sinners. I was filled with secret anger against him. I hated him, because not content with frightening by the law, and the miseries of life, us wretched sinners, already ruined by original sin, he still further increased our terror by the gospel."

"But when by the Spirit of God I understood those words; when I learned how the justification of the sinner proceeds from the free mercy of our Lord, through faith,"

"then I felt born again, like a new man; I entered, through the open doors, into the very paradise of God. Henceforward, also, I saw the beloved and holy Scriptures with other eyes. I perused the Bible. I brought together a great number of passages that

taught me the nature of God's work. And, as previously I had detested with all my heart, these words, 'the righteousness of God,' I began from that hour to value them, and to love them, as the sweetest and most consoling words in the Bible. In very truth, this language of Paul was to me the true gate of Paradise."

Henry James manifested deep emotion while reading this narrative of Luther's experience. He perceived that there was one point especially, which suited his own case. He had been, to some extent, going about to establish his own righteousness, and had not submitted himself, wholly and exclusively, to the righteousness of God. He requested his father to pray for him, that he might be cured of this legal spirit, and be assisted by Divine grace, to trust entirely in the Redeemer, and in his perfect righteousness, a believing view of which imparted such light and comfort to the mind of Luther. With this request, Mr. James immediately complied, and the conversation closed.

CONVERSATION IV.

OUR MORAL IMPOTENCE, AND THE NECESSITY
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO RENEW THE HEART,
IN ORDER TO THE EXERCISE OF FAITH IN
CHRIST.

WITHIN a few days, a decided change appeared to have taken place in Henry James's mind. This was indicated by his cheerful countenance, and also by his singing several times, when alone in his room, the following lines:

“How happy are they
Who the Saviour obey,
And have laid up their treasure above!
Oh! what tongue can express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love!”

When he and his father met on Sabbath evening, agreeably to appointment, to con-

verse further on the doctrines of grace, Mr. James asked Henry whether he had obtained peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Henry replied that he hoped he had. I think, said he, I can trust in Christ as the only Saviour of sinners. I desire no other Saviour, and I feel happy in being able to say, "My Redeemer is mine, and I am his."

Mr. James expressed his gratitude to God for his grace thus bestowed on his son; remarked that he hoped he was not deceived with regard to the nature of the change which had been wrought in him; that he must carefully and prayerfully examine himself, &c., and then added, If, Henry, you are a genuine believer in Christ, you are prepared from your own experience, to give your assent to the great truth, which will form the subject of our present conversation, viz: that our union with Christ by faith, is not produced by our own strength, but by the power of God, who renews our hearts by his Spirit, and persuades

and enables us to embrace Christ as our only Redeemer.

Henry James replied: I am convinced, father, that the change wrought in me, is the work of the Holy Spirit. No effort of mine could have so changed the current of my moral feelings—have given me such new views of Christ, and of God's holy word, and have imparted spiritual comfort to my anxious heart. I can truly say from my inmost soul: "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me; but unto thy name give glory."

THE BELIEVER'S SENSE OF OBLIGATION AND DEPENDENCE ILLUSTRATED.

Mr. James remarked: What you now say of your obligations to God, and your dependence on his grace, accords with the experience of every true Christian. I have never known one who did not feel and speak thus, when thanking God for his mercy to his own soul, or when giving utterance to his pious emotions in other forms of de-

votional feeling. That favourite hymn, commencing,

“Jesus, lover of my soul ;”

is often employed by God’s people to express these sentiments. The Rev. Dr. John Chester, a former minister of the Presbyterian Church, an eloquent preacher, and a delightful singer, used frequently, during his life, to give out to his congregation this hymn, and when singing in private circles, as he often did, he would name this hymn among the first to be sung ; insomuch that the hymn was called by some, “Dr. Chester’s hymn.” He expressed not only his own feelings, but those of all true believers in Christ, when he sung,

“Other refuge, have I none,

Hangs my helpless soul on thee ;”

and not less so, when with a countenance beaming with animation, he came to the closing stanzas :

“Thou of life the fountain art,

Freely let me take of thee ;

Spring thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity."

ERROR CONCERNING HUMAN ABILITY.

But though a sense of obligation to Divine grace, said Mr. James, is felt by all real Christians, yet some, in arguing on the subject of human ability, and who even profess to be Calvinists, appear to talk differently from the language of that hymn. They are not willing, for instance, to use the word *unable*, or other terms of similar import, lest they should seem thereby, to impair the obligation of sinners to repent and believe in Christ, and the obligation of Christians to become perfectly holy. A gentleman once spent a Sabbath in our family. After Church he remarked to me that his pastor did not pray as I did. In what respect? said I. He does not pray that God would *enable* sinners to give their hearts to him. He assumes that they are able already, and he prays that God would *persuade* them. I replied that I used both terms—*persuade and*

enable, and that both are employed in our Catechism, which his pastor professed to receive as containing a correct statement of Scripture doctrine; and if it was scriptural to use the word in preaching, it was equally so to use it in prayer. I referred him to the last clause of the answer to the question, "What is effectual calling?"—"He [the Holy Spirit] doth *persuade and enable* us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel." I told him I did not quote this language as being equal in authority with the holy Scriptures; but as expressing what is held to be scriptural by the Presbyterian Church, and as being therefore a proper phraseology to be used in Presbyterian pulpits.

Henry James remarked: I have lately heard a preacher assert that sinners have a natural ability to repent of sin, and come to Christ without the Holy Spirit. His main argument to prove it was, that repentance and faith are commanded duties, but that God cannot justly command his creatures to do what they are unable to perform. By

the same argument he attempted to prove that Christians are able to become perfectly holy. God, he said, commands them to be perfect, to be holy as he is holy; which command, he affirmed, would be unjust, if a compliance with it were above their natural ability.

Mr. James replied: That style of preaching must have sounded very strange to you, who have been instructed very differently from this. Will you repeat the answer to the question in your Catechism, "Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?" Henry repeated the answer, as follows: "No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed."

Mr. James continued: Did the minister you heard preach, explain what he meant by the term *natural*, before ability?

I think he did, father, said Henry; he said it was the opposite of *moral*.

And did he say that sinners have *moral*

ability to repent, &c.; and that Christians possess moral ability to be perfectly holy, or only *natural* ability?

He admitted, said Henry, that they have not the *moral* ability, without the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit.

The distinction between natural and moral ability, said Mr. James, should not be disregarded, and yet it is not so important in preaching the gospel, as some imagine. The ability, for example, which was held by the minister alluded to, is of no practical value; because, by his own admission, it never leads to any saving results. He doubtless thought he gained something by this distinction, in convincing the sinner of his obligation to love God, and of his guilt in refusing to yield his heart to him. But this is very questionable; for the sinner might reply: "If my natural ability is unable to overcome my moral inability, I am as really impotent in the matter of my conversion, and as dependent on the Holy Spirit to renew my

heart, as though my natural ability were left out of view."

The tendency of the depraved heart, said Mr. James, is far greater towards a legal spirit, which leads the sinner to over-estimate his ability to rescue himself by his own efforts, from his fallen state, than it is to go to the opposite extreme of feeling too weak and helpless, and too dependent on Divine grace. Hence there is generally greater need of convincing the sinner that he is unable to do anything to merit God's favour, than that he has natural ability to love God; which assertion, when it comes to be accurately defined, means no more than the possession of the faculties of a rational and accountable being, capable of loving and serving God; and this no one denies. The argument, that God cannot justly demand of the sinner what he has no ability to perform, may, if thus explained, be admitted as true; meaning by ability, the possession of adequate faculties; but this does not meet the point for which it is adduced.

This assertion amounts to no more than the obvious truth, that God cannot justly require an idiot, or a brute, or a machine to perform the duties of a free, moral agent.

The doctrine of the sinner's inability, ought to be so presented as not to afford any ground of excuse for his unbelief, or his continuance in sin. But with this qualification, it is of the greatest importance that he be made to feel his entire dependence on God's grace for the beginning, progress, and completion of his salvation. This feeling will seldom fail, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to produce that humility and prostration of soul, which form an essential element in a saving change.

DOCTRINE OF ABILITY TESTED BY ITS EFFECT.

In order to test this matter, place yourself on your knees before God. When is it that you feel in the best frame of mind to offer prayer? Is it when you are disposed to rely, in part, on your own strength? or

when you are deeply sensible of your weakness, and the necessity of Divine grace? The Scotch-woman's prayer, when crossing a deep stream of water, may serve to illustrate the difference. Finding herself sinking, she cried out, like Peter, "Lord save, or I perish." But after struggling a short time, and being so near across, that her feet touched the bottom, she said, "Lord, I will trouble thee no more; I can help myself now." Another illustration, of a more serious character, is found in the prayers of the Pharisee and Publican; the one showing a feeling of self-reliance, and the other of impotence and unworthiness. You know which of these was disapproved, and which justified.

IMPOTENCE OF THE SINNER PROVED FROM GOD'S WORD.

Mr. James further remarked: The impotence of the sinner to originate holy exercises, is distinctly indicated in God's word, and this impotence is taught in such connections as to show that the sacred writers

felt no difficulty in teaching, at the same time, the obligation of the sinner to love and serve God. Joshua exhorted the people, saying, "Now therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity, and in truth." .

. . . "And the people answered, and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other Gods." . . . "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God," &c. By this, he meant that they could not serve a holy God without new hearts; and that in forming a resolution to serve him, they must feel their dependence on his grace, and not attempt this service in their own strength.

When the Jews asked our Lord, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God," [that is, the work which God requires of you: See 1, John iii. 23.] "that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." But immediately afterwards, in the same conversation, he said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which

hath sent me, draw him." And before the close of his conversation he repeated the words in a little different form: "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." Christ thus enjoined the duty of faith, and at the same time, taught them that they were in themselves impotent, and must humbly rely on Divine grace to enable them to perform this duty.

Henry James remarked: The minister to whom I alluded, had for his text, the words, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." He affirmed that the *cannot*, in the passages you have quoted, means the same as the *will not*, in his text; that the sinner's *unwillingness* is the only obstacle in the way of his coming to Christ, and that he has the ability to come at any moment if he will.

Mr. James replied: Unless the sinner has also the ability to *will*, he is still spiritually impotent. But Paul says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God; neither, in-

deed can be." The sense of this passage is given in our Confession of Faith, in the following words: "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation ; so as a natural man being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereto."

ILLUSTRATION OF THE SINNER'S OPPOSITION
TO GOD.

The opposition of the unrenewed heart to God, is not as manifest in some persons as in others, and where it is equally apparent, it is not always acknowledged as frankly as in the case of a youth, whose religious experience I saw in print some years ago. On his applying to be received into the communion of the church, he was asked by the pastor: "Do you think that you have been born again?" He replied, "I think I have." "If so," said the pastor, "whose work is that?" "Oh," said he, "God did a part, and I did a

part." "Ah! what part did you do, Sammy?" "Why, I opposed God all I could, and he did the rest."

The words of Christ: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life," teach the sinner's criminality, and hence that his impotence must be so understood as not to palliate his guilt. But it is a perversion of their meaning, to infer from them that the sinner is able to come to Christ without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Nor is it a correct interpretation of the passage to make it teach that the sinner's depravity lies exclusively in the will. All that it teaches is that the will is depraved, without saying anything concerning the other moral faculties. But the Bible asserts elsewhere, that the understanding is depraved, as well as the will. Thus, Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "Neither can he know them." How could he teach in more

express terms the sinner's inability to discern spiritual things? Again: the affections are also depraved. Says the prophet, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." This is equivalent to asserting that our affections are sinful, because the heart is the seat of the affections. The truth is, that our depravity extends to our whole moral nature, and the power to recover ourselves from this ruined state, is not in us, but must be sought in God alone, whose prerogative it is, to "quicken" sinners "who were dead in trespasses and sins," to "put a new spirit within them," and "to deliver them from the power of darkness, and translate them into the kingdom of his dear Son."

The following stanzas, which are so often sung in public worship, express the feelings of all who are truly and savingly convinced of sin. The words contain a distinct confession of our own moral weakness, and our reliance on the efficacy of Christ's blood.

“To the dear fountain of thy blood,
Incarnate God, I fly;
Here let me wash my spotted soul,
From crimes of deepest dye.

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all.”

VIEWS OF THE REFORMERS.

Mr. James then remarked, further: D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation, from which, in our last conversation, you read Luther's experience on the subject of Justification, contains, also an interesting account of the views of the Reformers, concerning our moral impotence as sinners, and the necessity of the Holy Spirit to renew the heart. I have marked several passages for your perusal. If you please, you may read them now. Henry James read aloud several pages of which the following is an abstract, as the whole is too long for this place.

“The helplessness of man—the omnipotence of God, were the two truths that Lu-

ther desired to establish. That is a sad religion, and a wretched philosophy, by which a man is directed to his own natural strength. Ages have tried in vain this so much boasted strength, and while man has, by his own natural powers, arrived at great excellence in all that concerns his earthly existence, he has never been able to scatter the darkness that conceals from his soul the knowledge of the true God, or to change a single inclination of his heart. The highest degree of wisdom attained by ambitious minds, or by souls thirsting with the desire of perfection, has been to despair of themselves. It is therefore a generous, a comforting, and supremely true doctrine, which unveils our own impotency, in order to proclaim a power from God by which we can do all things." "The first, the noblest, the sublimest of all works, says Luther, is faith in Jesus Christ. It is from this work, that all other works must proceed." But, "where can we find this faith, and how can we receive it? This is, in truth, what

it is most important to know. Faith comes solely from Jesus, who was promised and given freely."

Carlstadt, the companion of Luther, held a public debate with Eck, a prominent Roman Catholic priest, on the subject of *free will*. * Carlstadt maintained the proposition which Eck denied, that "man's will before his conversion can perform no good work;" that "every good work comes entirely and exclusively from God, who gives him first the will to do, and then the power of accomplishing;" according to that Scripture which says, "It is God which worketh in you,

* By free will, the Reformers did not mean freedom of the will. This was believed and maintained by them, as firmly as by their adversaries. They meant by free will, a native power in man to recover himself from the ruins of the fall, without the special grace of God. This was held by Pelagius, and more or less by the Romanist Bishops and Priests generally, in the time of Luther. He, and his coadjutors, considered it as dangerous and ruinous to souls, and laboured with all their might to refute and overthrow it.

both to will and to do, of his good pleasure."

A few years afterwards, Melanchthon published his celebrated work, "On the Common Places of Theology;" the like to which, it has been thought, had not been seen for fifteen hundred years. He maintained that "man's justification before God proceeds from faith alone, and that this faith enters man's heart by the grace of God alone."

A little later, the German princes, in the name of the Protestant churches, presented to the Emperor, Charles V., and the Diet at Augsburg, their immortal Confession of Faith, drawn up by Melanchthon, and read by Bayer, one of the chancellors of the Elector of Saxony, in the presence of a large audience, composed of the most distinguished personages in Germany. In this Confession they say, "As regards free will, we confess that man's will has a certain liberty of accomplishing civil justice, and of loving the things that reason comprehends; that man can do the good that is within the sphere of

nature—plough his fields, eat, drink, have a friend, put on a coat, build a house, take a wife, feed cattle, exercise a calling, as also he can of his own movement, do evil, kneel before an idol, and commit murder. But we maintain that, without the Holy Ghost, he cannot do what is righteous in the sight of God."

After the meeting of this Diet, Luther wrote, "I am overjoyed that I have lived until this hour, in which Christ has been publicly exalted by such illustrious Confessors, and in so glorious an Assembly." That Confession was widely circulated, not only in Germany, but in other countries of Europe, and it made an extraordinary impression on the public mind. Even the Romanists were compelled to admit that they could not refute it by an appeal to the Scriptures alone, but must resort to the Fathers and Ecclesiastical Councils; which circumstance drew from the Duke of Bavaria, a Roman Catholic prince, the caustic remark, addressed to Eck, "I understand! I

understand! The Lutherans, according to you, are in Scripture, and we are outside."

After Henry James had finished reading these extracts from D'Aubigné's History, he said: This doctrine, father, appears to have possessed remarkable power to move the hearts, and call forth the exertions of the Reformers, and yet I have heard it objected to the doctrine of the creature's impotence, and of his dependence on God, that its tendency is injurious; that it is a hindrance to the sinner's endeavours to become religious, and discourages the use of the means of grace.

A CONVICTION OF OUR IMPOTENCE IS NOT INJURIOUS, BUT BENEFICIAL.

Mr. James remarked: Self-righteous efforts, that is, efforts which are prompted by a legal spirit, ought to be discouraged; because they hinder the sinner from coming to Christ. Paul said of the Jews, that "they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish

their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God ;” that is, they did not embrace Christ, who “ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” This too, was Paul’s own experience prior to his conversion. He relied on the old covenant of works ; he was proud of his good deeds, and not till his self-righteous spirit was humbled, by a conviction of his ruined and helpless condition, did he feel the necessity of a better righteousness than his own, to justify him, and of greater power than he possessed, to renovate his depraved nature. “ For I was alive without the law, once ; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.” Paul’s meaning is, that with his former view of the law, and his outward observance of its precepts, he thought he was doing quite well. Yet he was really “ without the law ;” that is, he had no just conception of its spirituality. But when he perceived the

extent of its requirements, and his own inward want of conformity to its demands of perpetual and perfect obedience, he "died;" that is, he relinquished all hope of salvation from the works of the law, and was thus prepared to appreciate and accept the provision of the gospel.

To this state of mind, must every sinner be brought, before he will truly understand, approve, and receive the gospel plan of justification; and hence, so far as the doctrine of human inability operates to discourage works of self-righteousness, and produce, in connection with a conviction of demerit, a deep sense of dependence on God's grace, so far it is adapted to benefit, and not to injure the inquiring soul, in obtaining an interest in Christ. A willingness to become nothing, and to do nothing, except to trust in Christ alone, as the Lord our righteousness, is the first and essential work of the sinner, according to the text before quoted. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." And this work is per-

formed, if ever done at all, as the fruit of divine grace. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

A BELIEF OF OUR IMPOTENCE IS NO HINDRANCE TO A PROPER, SCRIPTURAL USE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE.

With regard to the use of the means of grace, Mr. James remarked :

1. That the invitations of the gospel, addressed to sinners, assume their impotence and their dependence on divine grace, and this dependence is made the ground of their encouragement to seek help from God. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help."

2. A conviction of our own impotence will prompt the soul to cry out for Divine help, like Peter, when sinking in the waves, whose language was, "Lord, save, or I perish!"

3. A sense of helplessness, with a conviction of demerit, is necessary in order to render

the use of the means of grace of any avail. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

From these several considerations, it is clear that the doctrine of the sinner's dependence furnishes a sufficient motive to induce him to use the means of grace, with this important advantage over the doctrine of human ability, that the means employed with a feeling of dependence on God, will be successful; whereas, the use of means under the influence of a belief that the sinner is able of himself to do all which God requires, will foster pride and self-confidence, and produce (if any change results from it) a spurious conversion. The difference between the two, is therefore of the most serious character, affecting favourably or unfavourably the eternal welfare of the soul. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," says our Lord, "the flesh profiteth nothing." As though he had said, It is not by a carnal view of Christ that he becomes the bread and water of life to the hungry and thirsty,

but by a spiritual apprehension, produced by the power of the Holy Ghost.

“The Spirit, like some heavenly wind,
Blows on the sons of flesh,
New models all the carnal mind,
And forms the man afresh.”

Henry James now asked his father to explain the nature of that change which is wrought by the Holy Spirit in the sinner's conversion.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Mr. James remarked : You have a scriptural account of this change in your Catechism, which you may repeat. It is the answer to the question, “What is effectual calling?” Henry repeated the answer, as follows: “Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.”

Mr. James then said: When speaking in a previous conversation, of the divinity of Christ, I alluded also to the divinity of the Holy Spirit, with an intimation that I would say more concerning it, at another time. This is the proper place to state more fully the scripture doctrine on this point. When your Catechism asserts that effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, it means that this change is not only the result of a divine influence, but the work of a divine person, viz: the third person in the adorable Trinity. As a divine person, God's Spirit is distinct from the Father and Son, yet the same in essence with them. So the Bible distinctly teaches. The apostle John says, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." Our Lord joins the three together in Christian baptism, in such a manner as to show that they have a distinct personality, and yet are essentially the same. His command was, to baptize "in the name of the Father,

and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Notice: "In the *name*," that is, the one name, God, or Jehovah; yet subsisting mysteriously in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Of the same purport is the apostolical benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." In these words, as well as in the two preceding quotations, it would violate the most obvious rules of biblical interpretation, to make Father and Son persons, and the Holy Ghost only an attribute, or influence; and it would be equally erroneous, to prove from these texts the supreme deity of the Father and Son, and yet deny the divinity of the Holy Ghost. The three persons are all co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal.

What difference does it make, father, said Henry, whether regeneration be the work of the first, second, or third person in the Holy Trinity, provided we ascribe this work to God, and not to ourselves?

Mr. James replied : One important difference lies in this ; that the Scriptures assign to each person in the sacred Trinity a distinct part in the recovery of man from his fallen and ruined state. The Son, and not the Father, came into the world and died for our sins. And the Holy Ghost, and not the Father or Son, applies the redemption purchased by Christ to the hearts of sinners. A different view from this, confounds what God has revealed in his word, as being separate and distinct ; and by confounding the work of the three persons, we confound the persons themselves, and virtually destroy the distinction of persons in the Godhead, thus making the Bible teach Unitarianism, instead of evangelical christianity.

The pious John Bunyan, in answer to the question, What is the doctrine of the Trinity ? replied : " It is that doctrine that showeth us the love of God the Father in giving us his Son, the love of God the Son in giving himself, and the love of the Lord, the Spirit, in his work of regene-

rating us that we may be made to lay hold of the love of the Father by his Son, and so enjoy eternal life by his grace." Again, "The Father's grace saveth no man without the grace of the Son ; neither do the Father and the Son save any without the grace of the Spirit ; for as the Father loves, the Son must die, and the Spirit must sanctify, or no soul must [can] be saved." This statement of Bunyan expresses clearly the scriptural distinction between the three persons in the Godhead, and the part performed by each in the great and wonderful scheme of our salvation.

Mr. James continued : The impotence of the sinner to renew his own heart, and the nature of the change to be wrought, render it necessary that the Holy Spirit should be a divine person, in order to perform this work. It is called a new creation, a quickening of those dead in trespasses and sins, and the exertion of the same power by which Jesus Christ was raised from the grave ; none of which acts could be performed

except by a Divine being. Though the change from nature to grace, is not a physical, but a spiritual change, and though the power employed is not material, but moral; yet God alone, who created the human soul, can gain effectual access to it, and do that in it and for it, by which faith is produced, and in such a way as to do no violence to our moral nature, nor abridge our free moral agency. The Holy Spirit must therefore be God.

EFFECTUAL CALLING.

Mr. James now returned to the question, What is effectual calling? on which he remarked that the first thing done by the Holy Spirit in bringing a sinner to Christ, is to convince him of his sin and misery. "They that are whole, need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." God employs various means, especially his word, to convict the soul of its sinful and ruined condition; but the only efficient

agent is the Holy Spirit, who renders the word and other means of grace effectual to this end. The state of mind to which the sinner is brought, in this first step, is well described by the case of the prodigal son, who, on returning to his father, said: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Also by the case of the publican, who "smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful unto me a sinner."

But even when thus convicted of sin, the sinner walks in darkness, until the Holy Spirit enlightens his mind in the knowledge of Christ. He is like Hagar, who, when wandering with her son, Ishmael, in the wilderness of Beersheba, was reduced to the greatest extremity for want of water, and placing her child under a shrub, and sitting down at a distance, that she might not witness his expiring agonies, she lifted up her voice and wept. There was a well of water near her, but she perceived it not, till "God opened her eyes," when she saw the well,

and gave the lad drink. So Christ is brought nigh to us in the gospel; but the anxious sinner does not discern his suitableness and sufficiency as a Saviour, until enlightened by the Holy Spirit, who "shines in the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

The Holy Spirit likewise renews the will. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." To be willing involves a choice of God as our supreme good; not a choice consisting in a simple volition, or act of the will, in the strict sense of the term; but a choice which includes desire and affection. These were comprehended by the old writers on Mental Philosophy, in a proper definition of the will, which they understood as being that faculty which desires as well as chooses. And in this particular, those writers conformed to Scripture usage. David prays, "Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies." Here *will* is equivalent to power or control, and it involves ill will, hostility. So its opposite,

good will, is sometimes implied in the term will. Paul says, "If I do this thing" [viz: preach the gospel] "willingly," [that is, cordially, "with good will, doing service,"] "I have a reward; but if against my will," [that is, my good will, or cordial inclination,] "a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me." Again, he says, "To will is present with me;" [that is, I have an abiding desire to be conformed to God's holy law,] "but how to perform that which is good I find not." In renewing the will, the Holy Spirit changes the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, into devout love and adoration. He "puts a new spirit within" the heart of the sinner, and "takes away the stony heart out of his flesh, and gives him a heart of flesh." He thus removes his moral impotence, gives him a new disposition, and enables and persuades him to choose God as the portion of his soul, and Jesus Christ as the only foundation of his hope.

Henry James now said: You have described, father, my own experience, as far as

I am able to state the exercises of my mind, for some time past. Are all believers in Christ led to him by these several steps?

Mr. James replied: Those particulars all belong to a full description of a saving change; but they do not always occur in this order. The vital question is not which of them you felt first, or second, or third; but whether you have really felt them all? If you have truly experienced them, in whatever order it may be, then you have scriptural ground to conclude that you have passed from death unto life. The religious experience of Christians has been remarkably uniform, in a substantial agreement on the main points embraced in our present conversation, even when their creeds were not in exact harmony with each other. Their prayers and devotional hymns, also, breathe the same sentiments. This is one reason why I have quoted so much poetry. This has been, in every instance, that kind of poetry which expresses the inward feelings of God's people, and it therefore carries

conviction of its truth to every pious heart. I shall quote more, hereafter, and for the same reason.

EXPERIENCE OF JAMES MONTGOMERY.

The distinguished poet, James Montgomery, though he did not profess to be a Calvinist, was thoroughly one in his inward convictions, if not in theory. He was conscious of his entire depravity and alienation from God ; his moral weakness to perform anything spiritually good, and the necessity of his being conquered by Divine power, in order to his being saved. These ideas could scarcely be expressed in stronger language than that employed by him. His religious experience furnishes an apposite illustration of the power of God's grace in convicting, renewing, and comforting the heart. I will mention some incidents in his life, touching these points.

Henry James, asking pardon for interrupting his father, said, Please, father, inform me, before you proceed, whether Mr.

Montgomery to whom you allude, is the author of that fine poem you presented to me, entitled, "The World before the Flood." I shall be more interested in the narrative, if I know this. Mr. James replied in the affirmative, and repeated a remark of Mrs. Montague: "We have the World before the Flood,—but we have, also, the World after the Flood," alluding to Mr. Montgomery's hymns and minor poems, which have more endeared his name to the Christian world, than his larger and more brilliant poem which you so much admire. Mr. James then proceeded with the narrative, as follows:

Mr. Montgomery's father was a Moravian minister, who, together with his wife, was sent as a missionary to the West Indies. Upon their departure, he placed his son James, then a small boy, at a Moravian school, at Fulneck, Scotland. James, having remained there some years, and not exhibiting much fondness for study, was apprenticed to a pious Moravian tradesman. But after

eighteen months, he abruptly left him, to seek his own fortune. He engaged in business, passed through many trying scenes, wrote poetry, became an editor, and was twice imprisoned for some political articles which issued from the press, under his control. During these trials he had many religious impressions, and he often communicated his feelings in letters to his brother and other friends. In one of these letters, he wrote thus: "Brother! how is it possible that I should hesitate an instant? Why have I not, since I began to write this letter, already by an act of that faith, which is the power of God communicated to his creatures, and to which all things are possible—why have I not already decided my condition for eternity? Is there anything more mysterious in the whole mystery of iniquity, than that a man shall be deeply, dreadfully convinced of sin, and believe, almost without daring to make a reserve, in all the threatenings and judgments of God—yet have no confidence in his promises and de-

clarations of mercy? And this is my case, as nearly as I can express it. Yet I do not, and I dare not utterly despair, when I look at God; but I do and must despair, when I look at myself; and my everlasting state depends upon the issue of the controversy between him and me. If he conquers, I shall be saved; if I prevail against him, I perish."

How strong, and yet how sincere and earnest is this statement! Recollect, it was not made by Mr. Montgomery, in the form of doctrinal belief, but of inward experience, showing that a conviction of his guilt and helplessness, and his entire dependence on God, was produced in his mind, not only by the written word, but by the Holy Spirit.

Yet his conviction of dependence on God, said Mr. James, did not prevent him from using the means of grace. It seems rather to have produced the opposite effect, viz: to prompt and encourage him to perform religious duties. He was a devout reader of the holy Scriptures, retired daily for secret prayer, attended regularly the public worship of God,

and engaged with diligence in promoting the welfare of society. God at length imparted comfort to his anxious and desponding heart, and he united himself to that branch of the church (the Moravian) in the bosom of which he had been nurtured in his youth and childhood. The occasion of his reception into the church, was one of peculiar joy and gratitude to God. In a letter to his brother, he said, "Rejoice with me for this unspeakable privilege, bestowed on so unworthy and ungrateful a prodigal as I have been." He also expressed his feelings in view of this event, by composing those beautiful stanzas which are now sung with delight by thousands of young converts.

" People of the living God,
I have sought the world around,
Paths of sin and sorrow trod,
Peace and comfort nowhere found.

Now to you, my spirit turns—
Turns, a fugitive unblest ;
Brethren, where your altar burns,
Oh, receive me into rest.

Lonely I no longer roam,
Like the cloud, the wind, the wave;
Where you dwell shall be my home,
Where you die shall be my grave.

Mine the God whom you adore,
Your Redeemer shall be mine;
Earth can fill my soul no more—
Every idol I resign."

Henry James now remarked with much emotion: These lines, father, express my own feelings and purposes. Relying on Divine strength, I have come to the fixed resolution to renounce the world, and devote myself to the service of God.

Mr. James expressed the hope that he might receive grace to lead a devout and holy life; and, after engaging in prayer, they separated for the night.

CONVERSATION V.

SANCTIFICATION.

MR. JAMES had intimated to his son Henry, that they would next converse on the subject of Sanctification; and in view of this, he prepared and preached a discourse from the text, "Sanctify them through thy truth—thy word is truth." With *sanctification* for his general theme, his special design was to show the sanctifying efficacy of Divine truth, and particularly the doctrines of grace. All moral and religious truth, Mr. James remarked, has a sanctifying tendency; but this is particularly so, of that class of truths, which are comprehended under the doctrines of grace; which proposition he proved and illustrated by several considerations. To this discourse, he found, on resuming the subject, Henry had paid close attention, as

he was able to repeat much of it with accuracy.

Henry James commenced the conversation by saying: In your discourse this morning, father, you proved the sanctifying tendency of the Calvinistic system of doctrines, in a clearer and more satisfactory manner than I have ever heard before. The sermon has made a strong, and I hope a profitable, impression on my mind. Your reasoning appeared to me very conclusive. And then you selected such appropriate words to sing. I enjoyed them much. One of the verses I remember now :

“ ’Tis thine to cleanse the heart,
To sanctify the soul,
To pour fresh life on every part,
And new create the whole.”

Mr. James replied: I will ask you, in the course of this conversation, to repeat the reasons which I assigned, why the doctrines of grace have a sanctifying tendency. But there are several other points which should be noticed first, according to the method I

pursued in discussing this subject, beginning with the question, What is sanctification?

Henry James remarked: I remember you answered this question in your discourse, by repeating the words of the Shorter Catechism. "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness."

Yes, said Mr. James, I repeated this answer, because it contains a scriptural definition of sanctification, and the consideration of its several parts presents a clear view of the whole subject.

HOW SANCTIFICATION STANDS RELATED TO REGENERATION, AND TO FAITH IN CHRIST.

It is important, continued Mr. James, that we have a clear understanding of the exact relation of sanctification to the commencement of the Christian life. We begin the Divine life by regeneration, which is a

spiritual change wrought instantaneously, by the power of God. Without this change there can be no sanctification ; just as there can be no progress in anything without a beginning. The first act of the new-born soul, and simultaneous with the existence of spiritual life, is faith in Christ ; which, as stated in a former conversation, " is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is freely offered to us in the gospel." In receiving and resting upon Christ, we trust in him for sanctification, as well as for justification. Saving faith is one. We do not, on our first reception of Christ, trust in him for pardon, and, subsequently, by a distinct and separate act, trust in him for sanctification. Our salvation involves our deliverance from the power and pollution of sin, as well as its guilt and condemnation, and hence we cannot be Christians at all, unless we have faith in Christ for sanctification, as well as for justification. This is the definition of saving faith, as given in the Confession of

Faith of the Presbyterian Church. "The principal acts of saving faith, are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone, for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace."

Perhaps the anxious sinner, when he first receives Christ by faith, is more deeply affected with the thought of having received the forgiveness of sins, than as having been favoured with the principle of a new and holy life, to be developed in the work of sanctification; and if this feeling continues to hold the preponderance, it will be an impediment to his progress in holiness. But if he is truly born again, if he exercises that faith by which he can safely infer his justification before God, he has a faith which is in its very nature, sanctifying; and hence, if he supposes himself to be a regenerated man, to have trusted in Christ for salvation, and to have received the pardon of his sins, and yet finds in his heart, no trust in Christ for the sanctification of his soul, he may

justly conclude that he has deceived himself with regard to his religious experience.

SANCTIFICATION MUST NOT BE CONFOUNDED
WITH THE FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE, OR
THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Henry James inquired whether some persons, when they speak of being sanctified, do not intend thereby the full assurance of hope, or the witness of the Holy Spirit that they have been born again.

Mr. James replied: I have noticed its use in this sense, in one or two instances; but it is adapted to mislead, because this is not its ordinary meaning when employed by Calvinistic writers, and because, by using the term in this sense, and connecting therewith, in the same sense, the phrase, "full salvation," which is also done, we are liable to be understood, as agreeing with perfectionists, who have appropriated this phraseology to express their peculiar views. If, therefore, we mean the full assurance of hope, or the witness of the Spirit, better say

so, and not substitute therefor sanctification, nor full salvation. The full assurance of hope is the strong, undoubting confidence of our being the heirs of heaven; and of the same nature, is the assurance indicated by the witness of the Spirit. But sanctification is not an inward impression of our being Christians, but the character which true vital religion produces, consisting of a growing conformity, both in our hearts and lives, to the will of God.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SANCTIFICATION AND JUSTIFICATION.

Henry James asked further: Is sanctification similar in its nature to justification? If not, please, father, explain the difference.

Justification, said Mr. James, consists in the forgiveness of sins, and the acceptance of our persons as righteous, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Sanctification is the purification of our souls from the defilement of sin, and our habitual growth in grace. The Papists disregard this dis-

tion, and make justification and sanctification substantially the same; which they define as consisting of righteousness *infused*, and not of righteousness *imputed*. The difference is great and serious. By thus putting sanctification in the place of justification, they necessarily hold that we are not fully justified until we are perfectly sanctified, and hence they impose various austerities, such as prayers, fastings, self-lacerations, &c., in order to supply the defects of a partial justification. Sanctification always succeeds justification; but it is a pernicious heresy to confound them together, by making the two identical. Christ's righteousness is thereby degraded, as though it did not possess sufficient merit for our justification, and human merit is unduly magnified, by the assumption that our religious acts possess an intrinsic virtue to atone for our sins, at least in part, and to commend us to God's favour. The difference between the two is well expressed in the Catechism, to which I refer you.

DOES SANCTIFICATION INCLUDE GOOD WORKS?

Henry James inquired again, whether good works properly come under the head of sanctification.

Mr. James replied: They might be so included, but the two are not identical. Good works are means, evidences, and fruits of sanctification, rather than sanctification itself. Yet the term sanctification, taken in a wide and comprehensive sense, embraces not only the inward work of grace, but also its outward manifestations. The last clause in the answer you have repeated from the Catechism, viz: "living unto righteousness," comprehends all the moral and relative duties belonging to a religious life. But I shall consider good works under a distinct and separate head, partly because this is the usual method, and partly for the purpose of giving more prominence to the phrase, *good works*, in order to show their true position in the plan of salvation by grace, and their relation to the doctrine of justification by faith.

The other part of the definition, "dying unto sin," or sanctification in its more restricted sense, though involving every good work which is enjoined in the holy Scriptures, relates more directly to the state of the heart, from which good works proceed, as the legitimate fruit of inward grace. Dying unto sin consists in the mortification of our corrupt affections and desires, of our carnal and worldly lusts, and this invariably results in living unto righteousness; that is, living in the exercise of pure and holy desires and affections, and in the practice of holy duties. If, therefore, the two clauses are taken together, then dying unto sin may be described as the purifying of a polluted fountain, or as the restoration of a corrupt and decaying tree to a sound and healthy state; and good works, or living unto righteousness, may be described as the streams which flow from that fountain, thus purified, or as the fruits produced by that tree, thus rendered wholesome and good.

The apostle Paul mentions dying unto

sin, and living unto righteousness, in the same passage, and he teaches that both proceed from Divine grace, as their vital principle. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Again, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not serve sin." "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end, everlasting life." In the present conversation I will consider only what belongs to sanctification, in its restricted sense, viz: as consisting of growth in grace.

SANCTIFICATION INCLUDES THE WHOLE MAN;
IT IS GRADUAL AND PROGRESSIVE.

Mr. James then remarked: Sanctification includes the whole man—both soul and body: "And the God of peace sanctify you

wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The "spirit and soul" are sanctified, when our moral tempers, affections, and powers, are brought under the sway of holy principles. And the "body" is sanctified, when it is delivered from the control of sinful appetites and lusts, and is made the instrument of righteousness unto God. See Rom. vi. 12, 13.

The sanctification of the whole man is forcibly described in the following quotation from the Rev. Thomas Watson, an evangelical English divine: "Have earthly kings their image stamped upon the public coin? But doth not Christ, as King, do a greater thing than that in causing his image to be drawn upon the heart of every one of his subjects? Is it not also the prerogative of this king to engrave his laws upon the hearts of his subjects?" The process, however, is not instantaneous, but gradual. When his image and his laws shall be completely

engraved on the hearts of his people, they will be wholly sanctified, and he will then place them as jewels in his heavenly crown.

Do you say, father, that sanctification is a gradual and progressive work?

Yes, Henry. The Scriptures plainly teach this. Says Paul: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Again: "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." In regeneration, as before stated, there is wrought an instantaneous spiritual change; the principle of holiness is implanted in the soul. In sanctification, this new and holy principle is gradually developed and perfected, until the character is fully restored to the moral image of God.

EVIDENCES OF SANCTIFICATION—DR. GRIFFIN.

Would you know the evidences of sanctification, or growth in grace? They are such as the following: increasing hatred of sin; a growing attachment to God's people; greater love for the Bible and devotional duties; a stronger desire for the progress of Christ's kingdom; increasing resignation to God's will, and a more spiritual and heavenly frame of mind. Most, if not all, of these marks have characterized eminent saints in all ages. The Rev. Dr. Griffin says, in his diary, "The three strongest desires which have habitually influenced me for years are: (1.) To be delivered from sin. If this could be, I could bear anything, and be happy in poverty and disgrace. (2.) To enjoy God. I think I long more for this than for riches or honours, and would give up everything for it. (3.) That God's kingdom may come. When I hear anything favourable to Zion, my heart is glad." These marks, though included under three particu-

lars, embrace in reality, nearly all those which I have mentioned. Those who were acquainted with that eminent minister, knew him to be a growing Christian.

Henry James listened with much attention to these remarks, and said, I think, father, that I desire my own sanctification. In my Scripture readings, such texts as the following have excited in my mind a special interest: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." "Lord, increase our faith," and many others. Those hymns also which breathe the same sentiments I love to repeat. One of them contains the following verse:

" Draw me from all created good,
From self, the world, and sin,
To the dear fountain of thy blood,
And make me pure within."

Mr. James replied: You may probably meet with some who will call you a bigot,

if they see you endeavouring conscientiously to carry into practice the feelings you now express. But you must not be influenced by any such insinuations. The maxims and fashions of the world are adverse to a strictly religious life. Even some who make a profession of religion argue in favour of what they call in practice, a liberal christianity. But you must obey God rather than man. Make Christ your example, and not those who, if they follow him at all, follow him afar off. Do not, however, imagine that a holy life requires moroseness or melancholy. Far otherwise. A sanctified heart forms the most lovely, attractive, and happy character known upon earth. I do not mean that it is attractive to vicious and worldly men. They hated Christ, who was a perfect model of moral excellence. But though such persons may view you with an evil eye, let not their blindness, or prejudice, or hatred prevent you from exhibiting in your temper and conduct, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things

are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." In short, make it your constant endeavour to have "the same mind that was also in Christ Jesus;" "who was holy, harmless, and undefiled." Though perfect sanctification is not attained in this life, there may, and ought to be a constant growth in grace; and our incentives for daily progress in sanctification are not weakened by the fact, that the desired attainment is not fully possessed till we arrive at heaven.

SANCTIFICATION IS IMPERFECT ON EARTH.

Henry James asked his father, whether the Scriptures teach that sanctification is, in all cases, imperfect on earth.

Mr. James replied: Yes, unless where the term *perfect* is used in a qualified and subordinate sense. When it denotes entire freedom from all sin, perfect sanctification has never existed on earth since the fall, except in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Solomon says, "There is no man that sinneth

not." 1 Kings viii. 46. Again: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Prov. xx. 9. Again: "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." Eccl. vii. 20. Paul says, "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." Rom. vii. 21-23. John says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John i. 8.

SCRIPTURAL MEANING OF THE WORD PERFECT.

HENRY. Please tell me, father, what is the meaning of the word *perfect*, as used in the Bible.

Mr. James answered: The sense of the term is modified by the connection in which it stands. Sometimes it must be understood comparatively. Thus Noah and Job were

perfect, in comparison with those around them. At other times it denotes sincerity and consistency. This is the meaning of the Psalmist, when he says, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright ; for the end of that man is peace." Sometimes it signifies symmetry and entireness in the development of our religious character. It is thus used by James in the words, "That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Again, it denotes, in some instances, maturity in our attainments, both intellectual and spiritual. Says Paul, "I speak wisdom among them that are perfect." And further : "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Again, it signifies freedom from those obstructions which impede the exercise of any particular grace. Thus John says, "There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

But finally the term perfect is sometimes employed to mark the highest standard of

Christian attainment at which we ought to aim, and then it is not connected with such qualifying clauses as are expressed or implied in the examples above given; but is used in an absolute sense, with no other inferiority to the moral perfection of God, except what is implied in our being creatures. "Be ye, therefore, perfect," says our Lord, "even as your Father which is in heaven, is perfect." In this sense of the word, Paul affirmed concerning himself: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

SOLILOQUY OF THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

This experience of Paul, continued Mr. James, accords with the feelings of the most

devoted Christians. It is related of the Rev. John Newton, that when his eyes had become dim with age, and when the following Scripture was read to him : " By the grace of God, I am what I am," he uttered this touching soliloquy : " I am not what I *ought* to be. Ah ! how imperfect and deficient ! I am not what I *wish* to be. I abhor that which is evil, and I would cleave to that which is good. I am not what I *hope* to be. Soon, soon, shall I put off mortality, and with mortality, all sin and imperfection. But though I am not what I ought to be, what I wish to be, and what I hope to be, yet I can truly say, I am not what I once was—a slave to sin and Satan ; I can heartily adopt the words of the apostle, and acknowledge with gratitude and praise, ' By the grace of God, I am what I am. '

IMPORTANCE OF SANCTIFICATION.

Henry James gave a fixed attention to these remarks, and said, Wherein, father, lies the importance of sanctification ?

Mr. James replied: Sanctification, or progressive holiness, is an essential characteristic of genuine piety, which Christ compares to "leaven hid in three measures of meal till the whole is leavened." A religion which does not sanctify the heart, is without vitality, and consequently, it possesses no saving power. "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." And holiness is not a mere state, but a *life*; and hence where there is a genuine change of heart, a holy life will as certainly succeed it, as the functions of natural life will succeed the possession of the vital principle.

FEELINGS OF A PIOUS NOBLEMAN.

As soon, therefore, as a sinner is renewed by divine grace, his earnest desire and daily effort will be to avoid sin. The feelings expressed by a pious nobleman, will be, in some good degree, *his* feelings; not as strong and courageous it may be, as those of Count Godomar, but of the same general character. 'He feared nothing,' he said, "so much as sin,

and whatever liberties he had formerly taken, he would rather now submit to be torn in pieces by wild beasts, than knowingly or willingly commit any sin against God."

Sanctification is also important, said Mr. James, from the fact that the Christian's growth in grace is pleasing to God, who requires him to be holy; it does honour to the Holy Spirit, who is the author of his sanctification; and it reflects the image of Christ, who is the model to which believers are to be conformed.

Again, sanctification furnishes a convincing proof of the truth and excellence of religion, and thereby gives the believer greater moral power over the hearts and consciences of sinners, when labouring for their conversion. It also increases his happiness, by securing more of the Divine presence, greater strength to resist the wiles of the devil, a more complete victory over the world, and a brighter hope of future glory.

The following texts, among others, show

the importance of sanctification : “ As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance ; but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ; because it is written, Be ye holy ; for I am holy.” Again : “ Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things, is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure ; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall ; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abun-

dantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

SANCTIFICATION IS THE SPECIAL WORK OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Henry James now inquired concerning the author of our sanctification; to which Mr. James replied: Sanctification is the special work of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the adorable Trinity, though all the three persons are concerned in it. The choice of a people to be redeemed is ascribed to God the Father, and this choice included their sanctification. "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." The work of redemption is ascribed to God the Son, and this includes not only his atoning sacrifice, but his renewing and sanctifying grace. "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Again: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses from all sin." But

though all gracious influences flow to us from the love of God the Father, through the mediation of God the Son, our sanctification is the special work of God the Holy Ghost. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath, from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." Christ's atoning death and living intercession procured the mission and office-work of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit renews and sanctifies the soul, by applying thereto the purchased redemption. In the words of one of our hymns :

"The Holy Spirit must reveal
The Saviour's work and worth :
Then the hard heart begins to feel
A new and heavenly birth."

Again :

“ His Spirit purifies our frame,
And seals our peace with God ;
Jesus and his salvation came,
By water and by blood.”

NO PERSON LESS THAN DIVINE IS ADEQUATE
TO SUBDUE OUR SINS—EXPERIENCE OF
STAUPITZ

As has been already proved, the Holy Spirit is a Divine person. Hence to assert that the Holy Ghost applies the blood of Christ for our sanctification, is the same as affirming that our sanctification is of God. No influence short of Divine grace, is adequate to enable us to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. Staupitz, a cotemporary of Luther, remarked, concerning himself, that before he came to understand the free and powerful grace of Christ, he resolved and vowed a hundred times against a particular sin ; yet could never get power over it, nor his heart purified from it, till he came to see that he trusted too much to his own resolutions, and too little to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit ; but when his faith in

a Divine Redeemer and Sanctifier had engaged against his sin, he obtained the victory.

In my remarks on the work of the Holy Spirit in renewing the heart of the sinner, and in persuading and enabling him to exercise faith in Christ, the doctrine of our dependence on God was fully discussed. The believer is as dependent on God for sanctification, as for regeneration; though there is an important difference between the state of his heart, before and after he experienced the new birth. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." But when he has been born again, he is no longer opposed to God. He has become his friend. He loves his law, and his earnest desire is to become wholly conformed to his will. Yet alas! he finds "a law that when he would do good, evil is present with him;" "a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death." "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against

the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that he cannot do the things that he would." Though, therefore, he desires deliverance—sighs for it—labours for it—struggles for it—he is like Melanchthon, who said that "old Adam was too strong for young Melanchthon." With a feeling of entire weakness, he, by faith, reaches forth and leans upon Divine strength. To apply the definition of faith already given: It is the same faith in kind, by which he first received Christ as his Redeemer. The only difference is, that it is now exercised in continued and repeated acts, and with reference to a want of his soul, not as deeply, yet as sincerely, felt at first as now. As I said, he then, as now, trusted in Christ for deliverance from sin, as well as for justification; but until the work of sanctification is commenced in his regeneration, he is less troubled about the power of sin over his heart, than he is afterwards. His greatest anxiety prior to this is to be delivered from condemnation, but when his anxiety is relieved

on this point, his mind is turned more to the other, and yet with as full a conviction as ever, nay, with an increasing conviction of the unfailing efficacy of Christ's blood to "cleanse from all sin," and the necessity of the Holy Spirit to "take of the things of Christ, and show them unto him," and also to assist him to exercise that faith by the continued acts of which his victory over sin is to be obtained.

ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF DIVINE TRUTH ARE NOT
SANCTIFYING.

Mr. James now adverted to the sermon he had preached, on the sanctifying efficacy of divine truth, and observed to his son: I have postponed for some time the particular points with which this conversation began, viz: the means of sanctification, as adduced in my sermon this morning. I will now ask you some questions concerning that discourse. Can you repeat, Henry, what I said concerning the tendency of divine *truth* to sanctify, as distinguished from error?

Henry James replied: You said that erroneous views of Scripture doctrine are not sanctifying in their tendency, but the reverse. You illustrated this by three examples. One was the doctrine of Christian perfection, as held by some, who understand by it, not absolute freedom from all sin, but freedom from sin committed willingly. They thus confound perfect sanctification with regeneration, and imagine that they possess the evidence of being sanctified, when this evidence proves only that they have been born again. The avoiding of wilful sin is essential to the existence of saving grace, in the heart. The evil tendency of this error is, that the persons holding it, believe themselves to be sanctified when they are not, and hence are apt to neglect the means of further growth in grace. In some instances they omit in their prayers, the petition left by our Lord, for his disciples to repeat till the end of time: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

The second example was the doctrine of

repentance, which, if rightly understood, is an important means of sanctification; but when perverted, as is done by the Papists, produces no such effect. You described evangelical repentance in the words of the Catechism: "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience." These particulars, you said, are scriptural elements of sanctification, and if they are practised daily, the work of sanctification will make constant progress. To prove this, you quoted the words of Paul: "Behold this self same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge."

With regard to the Papists, you remarked that the New Testament word, *repent*, they

translate by the words, "*Do penance* ; in explaining which they include contrition of heart, and yet they make so much more prominent, certain outward acts of self-mortification, which they call attrition, that they mislead their people and satisfy them with superstitious forms and observances, to the neglect of inward penitence for sin.

The third example you adduced, was that of the antinomians, who, though professing to hold the doctrines of grace, entertain distorted views of those doctrines. Because by an act of God's free grace, called adoption, believing sinners "are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God," they erroneously infer that Christ, who came "to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons," absolved believers, not only from the observance of the ceremonial, but also of the moral law. They accordingly deny (as their name imports) that the law of God is a rule of life to Christians, who they allege are

free from its practical requirements as well as from its curse. Some of them carry these views so far as to say that what is sinful in other men, is not sinful in Christians, who, they affirm, (not being under law, but under grace,) are not bound by the ordinary legal requirements which govern unconverted men. Such views of Divine grace, you said, are the opposite of sanctifying. They are pernicious and abominable. You then quoted our Confession of Faith, as follows: "The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons, as others, to obedience thereof, and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator who gave it. Neither doth Christ in the gospel any way dissolve; but much strengthen this obligation. Also the words of Paul: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid: how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?"

PERNICIOUS TENDENCY OF ANTINOMIANISM
ILLUSTRATED—ANECDOTE OF ROWLAND
HILL.

Mr. James commended Henry for the accuracy of this statement, and said: These errors are all pernicious; but the worst of the three is antinomianism, which, under the guise of magnifying divine grace, tends to immorality and dishonesty. An antinomian hearer of the eccentric Rowland Hill, called at his mansion, to bring him to an account for what he regarded as a legal gospel.

"Do you, sir," asked Rowland, "hold the ten commandments to be a rule of life to Christians?" "Certainly not," replied the visitor.

Mr. Hill rang the bell, and, on the servant making his appearance, he said to him, "John, show that man the door, and keep your eye on him until he is beyond the reach of every article of wearing apparel, or other property in the hall."

MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION.

What did I say, continued Mr. James, concerning the scriptural means of sanctification?

You said, father, that the chief means of sanctification, supposing always the existence of genuine faith in Christ, are reading the Holy Scriptures; devout meditation and prayer; constant watchfulness against sin and temptation; occasional fasting; a faithful attendance upon the ordinances of God's house, and the practical cultivation of our benevolent affections. On the last you remarked that a selfish spirit is incompatible with high attainments in holiness, that "covetousness is idolatry," and its opposite, benevolence, assimilates us to God, according to that Scripture, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Hence pious giving, and other benevolent acts, if piously performed, are scriptural means of growth in grace.

And what did I remark about the sanctifying tendency of Divine Providence?

You said, father, that afflictive providences are a discipline of love to God's people, designed and adapted to purify their souls from sin; that they are means of sanctification employed by our heavenly Father, rather than by us; that we are not required to afflict ourselves by voluntary pains; but that we ought, nevertheless, to employ them when sent, as means of sanctification, by exercising a pious resignation to God's will, and also, by our being influenced thereby to a more diligent use of the other means of sanctification before enumerated.

What text did I quote, Henry, to show the sanctifying tendency of affliction?

You quoted, father, a passage in the Hebrews, which I marked at the time. Turning to the 12th Chapter of Hebrews, Henry read as follows: "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather

be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily, for a few days, chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit that we might be partakers of his holiness.

THE SANCTIFYING TENDENCY OF AFFLICTION
ILLUSTRATED.

And here, father, continued Henry, you gave an illustration which I shall never forget. The substance of it was as follows: Several pious persons were conversing about the meaning of a passage in Malachi: "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." One of them said, Let us go into a refinery, (there was one near by,) and see how the precious metals are refined. They entered and found the refiner in a sitting posture, close by the furnace, steadily watching the process. He was asked, Why do you *sit*? In order, said he, to enable me to observe more accurately the progress of the work, to prevent the metal from burning up, by securing a proper

regulation of the heat, and to notice when the work is finished. How do you know, asked one of them, when the work is finished? He replied, When I can see my face in it. The party retired fully satisfied with the explanation. You remarked, God has chosen his people in the furnace of affliction. But he afflicts them in mercy, and with a view to their sanctification, in order to make them partakers of his holiness. When they perfectly reflect his image, their sanctification is complete.

SANCTIFYING TENDENCY OF THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE.

You may now state, said Mr. James, the several reasons which I gave, why the doctrines of grace have a sanctifying tendency. You have given so good an account of the other parts of my sermon, I think you have certainly treasured up these.

Yes, father, I was so much interested in those reasons, that I wrote them down as soon as I returned from church. Shall I

read them? Being permitted to do so, Henry read as follows :

1. The doctrines of grace are sanctifying, because they exalt God. Whatever produces exalted and adoring views of Jehovah, the great and holy God, has a tendency to subdue the power of sin in the heart.

2. The doctrines of grace are sanctifying, because they give us correct views of ourselves as fallen and ruined sinners. These views are adapted to produce humiliation and self-abasement, penitential sorrow and contrition of heart, and hence they are favourable to our sanctification.

3. The doctrines of grace are sanctifying, because they honour Christ as the Saviour of sinners. They honour his person by ascribing to him true and proper Divinity ; they honour the several offices which he sustained as our Redeemer ; and they give him all the glory of our salvation, and make us debtors to his free grace. A proper consideration of these truths forms a powerful motive for us to live to his glory, and to endeavour

to be like him. His very name, *Jesus*, signifies that he would save his people from their sins, and hence it becomes a constant incentive to his disciples to pray and labour to be more and more holy.

4. The doctrines of grace are sanctifying, because they honour the work of the Holy Spirit, who is officially designated by the Father and Son, as the *Sanctifier* of believers. Regeneration and sanctification are his special work, and they are expressly connected in Scripture, with the plan of salvation by grace. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

MR. JAMES EXHORTS HENRY TO A DILIGENT
USE OF THE MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION—
LUTHER, M'CHEYNE, MRS. HAWKES.

When Henry James had finished reading these several reasons, Mr. James remarked:

The sanctifying tendency of the doctrines of grace is a valid proof of their being scriptural and important. Adhere to these doctrines, and let them exert their legitimate influence on your heart and life. Make it your great purpose, from day to day, to become more and more holy. Though *perfect* sanctification is not to be expected on earth, we may approximate to this state; and hence your constant aim should be, "to die more and more unto sin, and live unto righteousness." To this end use diligently the means of sanctification.

Live near to God by prayer. You need not expect to be very holy, unless you often approach the throne of grace, where all holy influences are to be sought. A German pastor in 1530, speaking of Luther, said: "No day passes in which he does not devote at least three hours to prayer and meditation. I once succeeded in hearing him pray.—What energy, what faith in his words! He prays earnestly as a man communing with

God; and with such trust and faith as a man conversing with his father."

With earnest and habitual prayer, connect devout meditation. Meditate especially on your sins, and how you can most effectually obtain the victory over them. "I ought," says the pious and devoted McCheyne, "to look at my sins in the light of the holy law—in the light of God's countenance—in the light of the cross—in the light of the judgment-seat—in the light of hell—in the light of eternity." In this short and pithy quotation, you have materials for the widest range of thought, and containing the most powerful incentives to avoid sin and lead a holy life.

Be watchful also as well as prayerful. Guard against temptations to sin. Be diligent in business. Be careful to maintain good works. Be meek and forgiving. Be kind and benevolent. Be condescending and humble. In short, endeavour to walk in the Spirit, and look to Jesus as the model for your daily conduct. And in all these particulars,

forget not your dependence on Christ to strengthen you in discharging your several duties. A lively and vigorous faith in him is essential to your success in the work of sanctification. Mrs. Hawkes, a pious English lady, wrote to a friend thus: "You want to know how I have been conquering *self*. Alas! I have been only fighting against self, but I am still very far from being a conqueror; and I am thankful to say, as you do, Jesus shows me my strength is in him, and my desire is to be as a little child. When I want to act, I go to him for wisdom and strength. If I feel anger, I run to him and show it to him. When I feel pride rising upon any occasion, I go to him and confess it. To him I take every sin as it arises, every want, every desponding thought. To him I go for every good thought, every good desire, every good word and work, crying—Lord, help me in this—Lord, help me in the other. It is thy grace alone can produce anything good in me. What else is meant by Christ's living in me, and I in

him? It is by this simple faith that we must bring forth good fruits, and to obtain it, we must plead the promises. How are we to be transformed in the spirit of our minds, and to be changed into his image, from glory to glory? Not by looking within, but by looking to Jesus."

Henry James remained silent, being too solemnly impressed to ask any further questions. The family was called together, and Mr. James, before engaging in prayer, read the following hymn, in the singing of which they all cordially united.

" Oh for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free ;
A heart that always feels thy blood,
So freely shed for me :

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My great Redeemer's throne,
Where only Christ is heard to speak ;
Where Jesus reigns alone :

A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine,
Holy, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine."

CONVERSATION VI.

GOOD WORKS.

FROM this time onward, Henry James appeared to obtain clearer views of divine truth, particularly of the nature and evidences of regeneration, and his deportment was indicative of a radical change of heart. He was a diligent reader of the Bible, a regular and devout attendant on social and public worship, conscientious in avoiding all known sin, and faithful and active in his endeavours to do good. After the lapse of several Sabbaths, (Mr. James's official engagements having interrupted their conversations,) Henry said to his father: Since our last conversation, I have thought much on the question, What place do *good works* occupy in the gospel plan of salvation?

Mr. James replied: This question is one
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of much importance. If you intend, by the inquiry, What is the relation of good works to our justification before God? my answer is, that works are wholly excluded. They possess no merit to recommend us to God's favour. This has been noticed already in our conversation on Justification. We are justified by faith alone, and not by the deeds of the law. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." But if you mean to inquire, What is the relation of good works to justifying faith? I answer, that they proceed from it. Faith is the tree, and good works the fruit. Faith is the divinely communicated principle, or the source or fountain of spiritual life, and good works are the outward manifestations of that life in our religious and moral, our personal and social duties. Paul's language is, "We are his [that is, God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." These words immediately follow those just quoted, "Not of works, lest any

man should boast." The whole passage, taken in connection, shows that our acceptance with God as sinners, is by grace alone through faith, without regard to our works; that God brings us into a state of acceptance with him, by creating us anew in Christ Jesus; and that this new creation results in good works, as a cause does in its effect. This connection has been ordained and established by God as a fixed and uniform law in his kingdom of grace.

" Faith must obey her Father's will,
As well as trust his grace ;
A pardoning God is jealous still
For his own holiness."

Henry James inquired, Cannot good works be performed by unregenerate men ?

Yes, said Mr. James, they can be performed, as to their external acts; but not from a pious, evangelical spirit. Good works therefore, when considered as evidences of faith, include both the outward acts, and the inward feelings, motives, and principles of ac-

tion. Grace implanted in the heart possesses a spiritual vitality, which may be called the life of God in the soul; the outward development of which is practical piety. The good works of unregenerate men lack this inward vital principle, and hence they are regarded by God very differently from the good works of true believers.

THE DIFFERENCE IN GOOD WORKS ILLUSTRATED—JEHU AND JOSIAH.

This difference may be illustrated, said Mr. James, by two cases recorded in Scripture, viz: Jehu and Josiah. The most prominent public acts which distinguished their reigns, were similar to each other, viz: the destruction of idols. These acts were good and important, and when considered as public acts, and performed in the discharge of their official duty, they were alike approved by God. The Lord said to Jehu: "Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of

Israel." In like manner God expressed his approbation of Josiah, by promising to bring him to his grave in peace, and that he should not himself see the judgments which would come on the land, for the wickedness of his predecessor Manasseh. But Jehovah regarded those two men, *individually*, in a very different manner. Jehu was actuated by a proud, self-complacent, and vain-glorious spirit. To Jonadab, he said boastingly, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord." Josiah was influenced by pure, pious, and holy motives. His heart was "tender," and he "humbled himself before the Lord." It is recorded of Jehu, that he "took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel, with all his heart." Of Josiah it is said, that "he turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might." Hence though God approved of the acts of Jehu, when officiating as a public servant, in the destruction of idolatry, and rewarded him with temporal good; yet he was displeased with his *per-*

sonal character, and he excluded him, at last, from his heavenly presence. Josiah, on the contrary, was *Jehovah's friend*; and was received, after death, into eternal joy.

THE APOSTLE JAMES'S DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS EXPLAINED.

If, said Henry, our good works have no part in our justification before God, what does the apostle James mean, by saying that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only?

Mr. James replied: The apostle James is describing the nature and evidences of evangelical faith. He teaches that it is not a dead, but a living faith; not a dormant, inactive principle, but one which produces good works; that "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." This circumstance must be taken into account, in ascertaining the sense in which he uses the term *justify*. The meritorious ground of our justification is Christ's righteousness; the instrument is

faith; and faith, in order to be justifying, must be accompanied by good works, in which sense we are justified by works; that is, our works prove that our faith is genuine, and that our justification has a true, evangelical foundation, viz: the righteousness of Christ. His righteousness imputed is always connected with a righteousness implanted, and righteousness implanted produces good works, as its corresponding external fruit.

JAMES AND PAUL COMPARED.

Henry remarked: I have heard it objected that James and Paul do not agree on this subject. Is this so, father?

Mr. James answered: These two apostles are in perfect harmony with each other. The explanation just given of James's language, shows that there is no real discrepancy between him and Paul. If James had been writing to a people of the same legal spirit with those addressed by Paul, he would have doubtless insisted as much on faith as Paul did; and, on the other hand,

if Paul had been addressing antinomian professors of religion, like those to whom the epistle of James was directed, he would have written substantially what James did, concerning the importance of works. Do not misunderstand me. Neither of these apostles taught one doctrine to one class of people, and a different doctrine to another class. I once heard a minister say, speaking of himself, "My preaching is sometimes Calvinistic, and sometimes Arminian." Not so with Paul and James. Both of them, I maintain, uniformly inculcated what we now call the Calvinistic faith; but sometimes one aspect was made especially prominent, and sometimes another aspect, according to circumstances. But both aspects had a good practical tendency. Paul's justification by faith, and James's justification by works, concurred in teaching, with equal clearness, the necessity of a moral, upright, and holy life.

Mr. James further remarked: Justification by works in the sense of the apostle James, as compared with justification by

faith, insisted upon by the apostle Paul, may be illustrated by a vine, the branches of which are full of delicious grapes. Believers, represented by the branches, are united by faith to Christ the true vine; and good works, represented by the grapes, prove that the branches (believers) are connected with the vine, not in appearance only, that is, not merely by a visible profession of faith, but by an internal, vital union; and it is from this union by a living faith, that they receive strength to lead lives of practical godliness. Thus the works of James and the faith of Paul, are only different parts of the Bible-description of the character of evangelical believers, and of their justification through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr. James then handed Henry a Bible, saying: Turn to the 15th chapter of John, and you will see (ver. 1—8.) a beautiful illustration given by our Lord, of the union of believers with him, the true Vine, and of their fruitfulness in good works, which proceeds

from this union. Henry took the Bible, and read as follows: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my word abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

These precious words of Christ, said Mr.

James, contain several important particulars concerning our union with him, viz: its vital character, its productiveness, our dependence on him for its perpetuity, &c. But at present, I wish to direct your special attention to one only, viz: that saving faith produces good works. This is distinctly asserted by our Lord in these words, and hence the inference is conclusive, that the apostle Paul, when he affirmed that works have no part in our justification, must have alluded to the works of the law, or to works performed with a legal spirit; as though fallen sinners could be saved by the old broken covenant of works. He did not mean that works of love and obedience are unnecessary, as the fruit of faith in Christ. Good works of this kind will always characterize a godly man. As Dr. Watts happily expresses it:

“ Green as the leaf, and ever fair
Shall his profession shine ;
While fruits of holiness appear
Like clusters on the vine.”

HOW GOOD WORKS MUST BE PERFORMED.

Henry James now asked, How must good works be performed, in order to render them acceptable to God?

Mr. James replied, This question has been partly answered already, in what I have said about the fruitfulness of faith, in producing good works; and also in my remarks concerning Josiah, who engaged in the good work of reformation among his subjects, from conscientious and pious motives. I will now add that, in connection with "faith and a good conscience," good works must be characterized by *love*; love to God, and love for his commandments; a filial love, which makes our obedience willing and cheerful, a source of satisfaction and delight. Says David, "I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved." And John declares, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous." Good works must also be performed with true,

christian *zeal*; by which I mean that holy fervour which is kindled at the cross of Christ, "who," as Paul says, "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Here, to be zealous of good works, is given as one characteristic of the Lord's redeemed. Yet it is not every kind of zeal that is acceptable to God. Our zeal must not be a blind, bigoted, censorious, persecuting zeal; but an enlightened, humble, benevolent, Christ-like zeal; a zeal in short, which is moulded and tempered by its union with all those preceding characteristics of good works which I have named.

ANSWERS BY SABBATH SCHOOL CHILDREN.

I have read an anecdote, continued Mr. James, which gives a pleasing illustration of the manner in which good works ought to be performed. It was furnished by the children of a Sabbath-school. The superintendent was interrogating the scholars concern-

ing that petition in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."—Said he to them, "You have told me, my dear children, what is to be done—the will of God; where it is to be done—on earth; and how it is to be done—as it is done in heaven. Now I wish you to tell me, how the angels and happy spirits in heaven, do the will of God." The first child replied, "They do it immediately:" the second, "They do it diligently:" the third, "They do it always:" the fourth, "They do it with all their hearts:" the fifth, "They do it all together." Here a pause ensued, and no other children appeared to have a further answer; but at length a little girl arose and said, "They do it without asking any questions."

WHAT DUTIES GOOD WORKS INCLUDE.

Henry James inquired, whether good works included all the duties which devolve on us in our relations both to God and man.

FATHER. Yes, my son; yet they relate more especially to the duties which we owe

to each other; and even here, they are often applied, in a particular manner, to those duties which call into exercise our benevolent feelings. In this sense must be understood the Apostolic injunction, "To do good, and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." But all moral duties are included under the head of good works. Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount is replete with practical precepts, which, if classified, would come under this denomination. Christ teaches us also in that discourse, not only what good works are, but in what spirit they must be performed. In like manner Paul was inspired to write

He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity: he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing

in hope ; patient in tribulation ; continuing instant in prayer ; distributing to the necessity of saints ; given to hospitality."

BENEFICENCE IS PARTICULARLY INCULCATED.

I have often noticed, father, said Henry James, that the duty of beneficence is more frequently inculcated in the holy Scriptures, than almost any other. Can you assign a reason for this ?

FATHER. One reason may be that selfishness is a common infirmity of our fallen nature ; and hence the duty of beneficence would be apt to be neglected, if it were not frequently enjoined in the word of God. Another reason may be found in the fact, that a disposition to do good, assimilates us to the Divine character. "Be ye therefore merciful, even as your Father in heaven is merciful." "God is love ; and he that loveth, dwelleth in God, and God in him." And further, the duty of beneficence, if faithfully practised, is closely connected with our usefulness in the world. By diligent and persever-

ing efforts in well doing, whether by our personal labours for the salvation of souls, or by contributing liberally of our substance to sustain those who are thus engaged, we become the honoured instruments of turning many to righteousness, and of promoting thereby God's declarative glory.

HENRY. Please, father, explain the scripture rule for regulating our religious charities.

FATHER. The proportion required under the Old Testament dispensation, was one tenth of all their increase. The rule laid down in the New Testament is, that we must give according as God has prospered us; which without specifying the exact proportion, preserves the spirit of the Old Testament requirement. By saying that we must lay by us in store every week, that God loves the cheerful giver, &c., the apostle teaches that our benevolent feelings must be kept in constant exercise, that well doing must become a part of our piety, as much as our religious

devotions, and be characterized by unremitting diligence and zeal.

RULES FOR GIVING ILLUSTRATED.

Henry James now said, With your permission, father, I will read a little story on this subject, which I have cut from a newspaper, and which has pleased me very much, and I desire to hear your opinion about it. The story being read, Mr. James remarked: This is a forcible illustration of the whole subject of Christian beneficence, as far as it relates to the giving of our substance for charitable purposes.

The story is as follows: At a missionary meeting among pious negroes in the West Indies, the following resolutions were adopted:

1. We will all give something.
2. We will each give according to our ability.
3. We will give willingly.

At the close of the meeting, a leading negro took his seat at the table, with a pen and ink, to take down what each might con-

tribute. Many advanced to the table and handed in their contributions, some more, and some less. Among the contributors was an old negro, who was very rich, almost as rich as all the rest united. He threw down a small silver coin.

"Take dat back again," said the chairman of the meeting. "Dat may be 'cordin' to de fust resolution, but not 'cordin' to de second."

The rich old man took up the money, and hobbled back to his seat much enraged. One after another came forward, and all giving more than himself, he was ashamed, and again threw a piece of money on the table, saying, "Dar—take dat!"

It was a valuable piece of gold; but it was given in so ill-tempered a manner, that the chairman answered:

"No sir, dat won't do! Dat may be 'cordin' to de fust and second resolutions, but not 'cordin' to de third."

He was obliged to take it up again. Still angry with himself, he sat a long time, until

nearly all were gone, and then advancing to the table, with a smile on his countenance, he laid down a large sum of money.

“Dar, now, berry well,” said the presiding negro, “dat will do ; dat am 'cordin' to ALL de resolutions.”

CONNECTION BETWEEN GOOD WORKS AND THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE.

Henry James expressed himself as being much instructed by this conversation, but added, I desire, father, to obtain more light on one point, viz: What connection is there between good works and the doctrines of grace? Does a belief in these doctrines produce good works?

Mr. James replied: The doctrines of grace have undoubtedly a practical tendency, by furnishing motives to sinners to seek the Lord, and to believers to lead a holy life. The apostle Paul understood this subject, and he was also divinely inspired. God's working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure is adduced by him as a motive to

encourage and prompt us to the discharge of practical duty. His words are, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." In this direction, Paul designs to inculcate, first, a diligent use of the means of grace, and secondly, a faithful performance of those good works which characterize true, evangelical obedience. And the great motive adduced is the good pleasure of God, in working into the heart his grace, the fruit of which he thus enjoins upon us to work out.

With regard to your question, whether a belief in the doctrines of grace actually becomes operative, in inclining the heart to obedience, and producing what the Bible denominates good works, this depends upon the sense which is attached to *belief*. A mere speculative belief in the doctrines of grace is not sufficient for this purpose. There must be a belief of the heart, an experimental knowledge and conviction of

their truth and excellence, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit. These doctrines, when thus believed, are the most powerful supporters of spiritual life, and the most effective incentives to religious duty. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness;" that is, to an interest in Christ's righteousness, imputed for our justification, and to the production of a righteous life; consisting of uprightness, and practical well doing. Grace in the heart is like a fountain, and good works like the streams which flow from it. As a good fountain always produces pure and limpid streams, so Divine grace in the soul produces a holy life. Accordingly the apostle James inquires, "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."

THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS DISTINGUISHED FOR
GOOD WORKS.

Mr. James further remarked, that the power of the doctrines of grace to produce good works, was remarkably illustrated in the life of the Apostle Paul. "By the grace of God," says he, "I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." In this passage Paul asserts first, that he was a debtor to God's grace for the great change which he had experienced; and secondly, that this grace in its primary bestowment, and its continued operation, had produced those abundant labours which characterized his ministry. No one acquainted with his writings can doubt that he was a firm believer in the doctrines of grace; and it is a fair inference from the above statement, that he regarded his religious life as having received its type and character from the effect of those

truths, rendered vital and saving by the Holy Spirit. You know the result. His faith was heroic, his zeal most fervent; his love for souls unquenchable; and his labours constant and self-denying. Henry take the Bible and read Paul's own narrative of what he did and suffered. Henry read as follows: "In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

When Henry had finished reading the

above passage, Mr. James remarked, You perceive that Paul was not a drone. Though he was so earnest in repudiating works, when discoursing on the subject of gospel justification ; yet his faith wrought in him effectually for the production of those graces and duties, which rendered him eminently practical and laborious. And he tells us, that he was not only willing to perform those labours, and endure those sufferings, for the purpose of advancing Christ's kingdom ; but that he " counted not even his life dear unto him, that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." The secret of his ardent zeal, his holy heroism, and his abundant labours, is also virtually explained by himself, in words equivalent to saying, that they were owing to the vital and energetic influence of Divine grace. " Whether we be beside ourselves," says he, " it is to God : or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus

judge that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again."

If Paul had been influenced by ambitious motives, or even by motives of philanthropy, proceeding only from his own natural feelings, without relying on Divine grace, he would have utterly failed in accomplishing his great mission. But trusting in God, and not in his own strength, he was enabled to run with patience the race set before him; as we may now do if we are actuated by the same gracious principles.

"From THEE, the overflowing spring,
Our souls shall drink a fresh supply,
While such as trust their native strength,
Shall melt away, and droop and die.

Swift as the eagle cuts the air,
We'll mount aloft to thine abode :
On wings of love our souls shall fly,
Nor tire amidst the heavenly road."

JOHN HOWARD, THE PHILANTHROPIST.

Mr. James further remarked, I will give another illustration from uninspired biography, showing the efficacious influence of an experimental belief in the doctrines of grace, to produce good works. The name of John Howard, the philanthropist, is familiar to thousands. He was so distinguished for his benevolent and self-denying labours, in ameliorating the condition of suffering and degraded humanity, that previous to his death, one of his friends in England, without his knowledge, proposed to erect a public monument, as a token of the high estimate in which he was held for his philanthropic services. A subscription was commenced for this purpose. But when he heard of the movement he positively declined the honour.

It would protract this conversation to an undue length, to give an account of his labours in detail. "After inspecting the receptacles of crime, of poverty, and of misery, throughout Great Britain and Ireland, he

left his native country to visit the wretched abodes of those who were in want, and bound in fetters of iron, in other parts of the world. He travelled three times through France, four through Germany, five through Holland, twice through Italy, once through Spain and Portugal, and also through Denmark, Sweden, Russia, and part of Turkey. These excursions occupied (with some short intervals of rest at home) the period of twelve years. He gave up his own comfort that he might bestow it upon others. He was often immured in prison, that others might be set at liberty. He exposed himself to danger, that he might free others from it. He visited the gloomy cell, that he might inspire a ray of hope and joy in the breasts of the wretched. Yea, he not only lived, but died in the noble cause of benevolence; for in visiting a young lady, who lay dangerously ill of an epidemic fever, in order to administer relief, he caught the distemper, and fell a victim to his humanity, January 20th, 1790."

Henry James now said: This, father, is an extraordinary narrative. I have formerly read some of these facts concerning Howard, and I have admired him as a philanthropist; but was he a pious man, and a Calvinist?

Mr. James replied: I have taken the above summary of Howard's labours, from an excellent volume now before me, written by Mr. Peter Bayne, of Scotland, and I have marked several passages, which show his religious sentiments. If you will read these passages, Henry, you will not fail, I think, to be satisfied, both as to his piety and his firm belief in the doctrines of grace. Henry took the volume and read as follows: "In early years his nature was stilled, hallowed, and strengthened by religious principle. As he advanced in years, the great truths of Calvinism, or rather that one great truth of Calvinism, 'The Lord reigneth—the Lord, just, sovereign, incomprehensible, in whose presence no finite being can speak—formed a basis, as it were, of adamant, for his whole character.'"

Mr. James then remarked: Calvinism was not with Howard a mere theory. It was deeply seated in his heart. His whole soul was imbued with its humbling and vivifying, its elevating and comforting influence. This will appear by an extract from his diary, which you may next read. Henry read the following:

“HAGUE, *Sunday evening*, }
February 11,” [1770.] }

“I would record the goodness of God, to the unworthiest of his creatures: for some days past, a habitual serious frame, relenting for my sin and folly, applying to the blood of Jesus Christ, solemnly surrendering myself and babe to him, begging the conduct of his Holy Spirit; I hope, a more tender conscience,” evinced, “by a greater fear of offending God, a temper more abstracted from this world, more resigned to death or life, thirsting for union and communion with God, as my Lord and my God. Oh! the wonders of redeeming love! Some hope”

that "even I! through redeeming mercy, in the perfect righteousness, the full atoning sacrifice, shall, ere long, be made the monument of the rich, free grace and mercy of God, through the divine Redeemer. Oh, shout my soul! Grace, grace, free, sovereign, rich and unbounded grace! Not I, not I, an ill-deserving, hell-deserving creature! But, where sin abounded, I trust grace superabounds. Some hope!—what joy in that hope!—that nothing shall separate my soul from the love of God in Christ Jesus; and my soul! as such a frame is thy delight, pray frequently and fervently, to the Father of spirits to bless his word, and your retired moments to your serious conduct in life."

With such devout feelings, said Mr. James, did that remarkable man devote himself to his work of laborious and self-sacrificing benevolence. No one who peruses this extract can fail to perceive the high order of his piety, and the distinctly Calvinistic type of his Theology. In a paper written a few months after the date of this extract from

his diary, he made a formal and solemn dedication of himself to God in this beneficent and extraordinary course of life, and at several subsequent periods, he perused the document, and renewed his covenant engagement. This paper breathes the same pious spirit, and indicates the same theological views as his diary. It is dated at Naples, May 27, 1770. You may read the latter half of this solemn covenant. Henry read as follows :

“Oh, magnify the Lord, my soul, and my spirit, rejoice in God my Saviour ! His free grace, unbounded mercy, love unparalleled, goodness unlimited. And oh, this mercy, this love, this goodness exerted for me ! Lord God, why me ? When I consider, and look into my heart, I doubt, I tremble. Such a vile creature, sin, folly, and imperfection in every action ! Oh, dreadful thought !—a body of sin and death I carry about me, ever ready to depart from God, and with all the dreadful catalogue of sins committed, my heart faints within me, and almost despairs.

But yet, O my soul, why art thou cast down? why art thou disquieted? Hope in God! His free grace in Jesus Christ! Lord, I believe; help my unbelief." "O compassionate and divine Redeemer, save me from the dreadful guilt and power of sin, and accept my solemn, free, and, I trust, unreserved full surrender of my soul, my spirit, my dear child, all I am and have, unto thy hands! Unworthy of thy acceptance! Yet, O Lord God of mercy, spurn me not from thy presence; accept of me, vile as I am—I hope a repenting, returning prodigal. I glory in my choice, acknowledge my obligations as a servant of the Most High God, and now may the Eternal God be my refuge, and thou, my soul, faithful to that God that will never leave or forsake thee!" "Thus, O my Lord and my God, is humbly bold even a worm to covenant with thee! Do thou ratify and confirm it, and make me the everlasting monument of thy unbounded mercy. Amen, amen, amen. Glory to God the Father, God the

Son, and God the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever, amen!" "Hoping my heart deceives me not, and trusting in His mercy for restraining and preventing grace, though rejoicing in returning what I have received of him into his hands, yet with fear and trembling, I sign my worthless name. JOHN HOWARD."

When Henry James had finished reading these several extracts, he said, with manifest emotion, I perceive, father, what Calvinism is, when it takes hold of the heart as well as the head; and I cannot refrain from expressing my love and admiration for that system of religious faith which yields such fruits as these. Principles which produce such deep humility, such exalted adoration toward God, and such entire consecration of the heart and life to his service, must be Divine.

Mr. James responded, Your mode of reasoning, my son, is correct. A tree is known by its fruit. An experimental belief in the doctrines of grace produces the highest order of piety known in the world. The reason

is, that a belief in these doctrines, if it be cordial and saving, developes the religious character, after the true Scriptural model of moral excellence. The grand idea of God's word is salvation by grace; and a believing reception of this truth is made effectual through the agency of the Holy Spirit, to the sanctification of the soul, and the production of a corresponding outward conduct.

The evening was now closed, as usual, by engaging in family worship. The hymn sung concluded with the following stanzas:

Here at that cross where flows the blood
That bought my guilty soul to God,
Thee my new Master now I call,
And consecrate to thee my all.
Do thou assist a feeble worm,
The great engagement to perform;
Thy grace can full assistance lend,
And on that grace I dare depend.

CONVERSATION VII.

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

On the following Sabbath evening, Henry James remarked to his father, I was greatly interested in your sermon to-day; it had so much grace in it; and the closing hymn too was so precious! and I thought I never heard the congregation sing with more animation and delight! But, father, I was surprised to hear A—B— say, as we walked home together, that he would have enjoyed the preaching and the hymn better, if they had not contained the doctrine, “once in grace always in grace.” He said he did not believe this doctrine; that if he could believe this, he should not care what kind of a life he might live, because he would be sure of getting to heaven any how.

ERRONEOUS VIEWS CONCERNING THIS DOCTRINE—ADVICE OF A CLERGYMAN.

Mr. James replied, This young man entertains very erroneous views concerning the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, as understood by those who hold it. His objection assumes, when fully analyzed, not that being once in grace we are always in grace, but that we get to heaven without any grace at all. No person who has felt the power of divine grace in his heart, could express understandingly the profane and impious sentiment, contained in the words of A— B—. His language is a virtual declaration, that if he were certain God would not send him to hell, he would prefer a life of sin to a life of holiness. This kind of perseverance is not the perseverance of saints, but of unconverted sinners; and if persisted in, it will lead to inevitable perdition. A clergyman of my acquaintance, now deceased, who, though not a Presbyterian, held to the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, was once

asked, whether he believed that true Christians could fall from grace. He replied, "I advise you not to try." He meant that if a person is willing to try, this very circumstance places in doubt the genuineness of his Christian experience; or rather it settles the question that he has never met with a saving change.

THE QUESTION OF PERSEVERANCE TRULY STATED.

The doctrine of the saints' perseverance is based on the supposition that the persons in question are the subjects of a saving change of heart, that they are genuine Christians. To talk about the perseverance of saints in such terms as necessarily imply that the individuals in question are not saints, but unregenerated sinners, is absurd. The proper question, and the only proper one, in stating the real point for discussion, is, whether all whom God has effectually called by his grace, and savingly renewed by his Spirit, will persevere in holiness till they ar-

rive at heaven; or whether, being thus regenerated, they may not by apostasy become unregenerate again, and be eternally lost. The same question may be stated in other words, thus: whether all those who have been enabled by Divine grace to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, by a true and saving faith, and to exercise a sincere and holy love to God, will continue thus to believe in Christ and to love God, through their whole lives, and be eternally saved. Or whether they may not totally fall from this state of grace, become unbelievers, and enemies to God, and be accordingly doomed to everlasting perdition.

WHAT THE DOCTRINE OF PERSEVERANCE ASSUMES—A PREACHER COMPLAINED OF.

One of the essential evidences of our being true Christians, continued Mr. James, is that we hate sin and love holiness. A pious life will be our delight. Our habitual desires will be to please God, and it will be our earnest and daily wish and prayer to be conformed

to his holy image. The perseverance of the saints assumes all this, and hence, in conversing on this subject, we must begin with the scriptural characteristics of a saving change of heart; because regeneration is the starting point from which the Divine life commences, and without that, there cannot be, properly speaking, any perseverance in holiness. If A— B— really feels as his language seems to indicate, he is a stranger to experimental religion, and hence he does not understand or appreciate the doctrine of the saints' perseverance. Such a perseverance as his objection implies, is as contrary to the views of Calvinists, as it can be to Arminians. Cautions against sin, and exhortations to holiness, are as important and necessary in the view of those who receive and properly understand this doctrine, as of those who reject it. Hence the relevancy of the reply which was made by a Calvinistic minister, when told that a particular discourse of his was thought, by some of his hearers, to be inconsistent with the

doctrine of the saints' perseverance. He replied: "They have mistaken the drift of my discourse; it was opposed to the perseverance of *sinners*, but not to the perseverance of *saints*." But I shall take further notice of this objection hereafter.

The hymn to which A—B— objects, continued Mr. James, contains the doctrine of perseverance; but in a form so purely devotional, and so exactly in accordance with the inward experience and hopes of God's people, that I have never yet found a truly pious and devout person who did not delight to repeat and sing it. The following is the hymn alluded to. It was composed by the Rev. John Newton, who regarded himself (and what Christian does not?) as a miracle of God's grace.

" Amazing grace ! how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me !
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved ;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed !

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come ;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised grace to me,
His word my hope secures ;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

And when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil,
A life of joy and peace."

A—B— admitted, said Henry, that this hymn is animating to the feelings, and that Christians generally delight to sing it; but they do not reflect, he said, that the Scriptures make perseverance conditional; that God does not promise to keep us except we co-operate with him, indeed, that he is not able to save us without the concurrence of our own minds; whereas this hymn, he said, bases our perseverance solely on God's promises, without any conditions whatever.

GOD'S PROMISES A SAFE GROUND OF RELIANCE.

Mr. James replied, God's promises are as safe a ground of reliance as we can possibly have; and unless he is either unable or unfaithful to fulfil them, the blessings promised can never fail. To limit the power of the Holy One of Israel is impious. The idea is so abhorrent to my views of God, that I feel more like rebuking its wickedness than proving its fallacy. The proof however is easy, both from reason and scripture. If God is able to implant the grace of faith at first in the hearts of sinners, he is able to preserve and keep alive that grace which he has himself implanted. If he is able to deliver the soul at first from the power of the evil one, he is able afterwards to keep that soul from being seduced and destroyed by his wiles. Admitting what A-- B-- asserts, that believers must co-operate with Divine grace, what then? Their agency is not independent of God, but is under his absolute control. Their

co-operation with him is no less the object of his care than their perseverance. The fallacious sentiment that God who created their souls at first, and created them anew in Christ Jesus, is unable to secure from them whatever co-operation is requisite to their perseverance in holiness, involves the denial of his supreme dominion over his creatures, and thereby robs him of his essential glory.

GOD IS ABLE TO KEEP HIS PEOPLE FROM
FALLING.

The holy Scriptures, Mr. James remarked, distinctly assert God's ability to protect his people both from outward and inward foes, and to preserve them unto his heavenly kingdom. Our Lord says of his sheep, (John x. 29) that "none is able to pluck them out of his Father's hand." Paul was inspired to write, (Rom. viii. 38, 39,) "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth,

nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Again, (2 Tim. i. 12,) "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." And again, (Jude 24,) "Unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." In these passages God's ability to save his people extends to the removal of every obstacle which can come in their way, including not only external enemies, but their own liability to declension. "He is able to keep them from falling." If he is able to keep their souls from the snare of the devil, and from all other outward foes, and is able also to preserve them from inward defection, there can be no possible ground for doubt concerning the saints' perseverance arising from the assumption of A-- B-- that God is unable to prevent his people from apostasy. This assumption is utterly

false. It is contrary both to sound reason and the word of God.

I thank you, father, said Henry James, for this explanation. It is a great relief to my mind. The thought is to me a very gloomy one, of committing my soul to the keeping of a Being who is not able to preserve me, or the continuance of whose protection depends on my feeble and imperfect endeavours. If, then, said Mr. James, God is able to keep his people from apostasy, the only questions which need be answered, in order to establish the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, are, Has God promised to keep them? and, Is he faithful to fulfil his promises?

GOD'S PROMISES SECURE THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

Those Divine promises which prove the perseverance of the saints, are of two kinds, viz: those made to Christ with reference to his people, and those made directly to them. I

will consider these promises, therefore, under two heads.

1. The covenant of grace contains a promise from God the Father to God the Son, that "he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." Isa. liii. 11. Alluding to this transaction, Christ says, "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." John vi. 39. Again in our Lord's intercessory prayer, he alludes to the same transaction, saying, (John xvii. 24,) "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." This promise of the Father was made to the Son, in view of his "making his soul an offering for sin, on account of which he should see his seed, &c." Christ fulfilled the terms of this covenant, and just before he offered himself, he expressed his will to his Father, that all his people, both those who had already believed on him, and those who would afterwards believe, should be ad-

mitted to his glory. What stronger security for their perseverance and final salvation could have been given, than is contained in this Divine record?

Agreeably to this covenant, our Lord said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Again, "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Language cannot teach more plainly than is done here, that the will of God the Father, and of God the Son, concur in securing for all believers, supplies of grace on earth, and admission to eternal glory in heaven. If you are sure, Henry, of belonging to the household of faith, you have an interest in that covenant, and may

enjoy the comfort and security of the provisions and promises contained in it :

“For all that come to God by him,
Salvation he demands :
Points to their names upon his breast,
And spreads his wounded hands.

His sweet atoning sacrifice
Gives sanction to his claim :
Father, I will that all my saints
Be with me where I am.

Eternal life, at his request,
To every saint is given :
Safety on earth, and after death
The plenitude of heaven.”

2. But further : similar promises to that which was made by God the Father to his Son, securing the salvation of believers, are made likewise directly by God to his people. “When God made promise to Abraham,” says Paul, (Heb. vi. 13—19,) “because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so after that he had patiently endured,

he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." In this passage, God's promise, made directly to his people, is expressed in the strongest terms; and unless we distrust his faithfulness, there can be no ground for doubting the perseverance of the saints.

In the same epistle, (chap. xiii. 5,) are these words: "He [God] hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The original is remarkably emphatic. It contains five negatives, which in Greek serve to increase the force of the expression, and to

make the promise more and more strong. The sense is well given in the last line of a stanza we often sing :

“ The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes ;
That soul though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake.”

If you will turn to this passage in the Greek Testament, (you have some knowledge of Greek,) you will perceive that the last line of this stanza, containing five negatives, is almost an exact translation of the words of Paul. It is no wonder that the apostle, in view of such an assurance, should add, in the next verse, “ So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.” Nor is it strange that the apostle Peter, with the infinite fountain of gospel grace before him, should call God's promises to his people exceeding great and precious. “ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” Again I

say, God's promises secure the spiritual safety and final salvation of all true believers, provided his faithfulness does not fail.

GOD IS FAITHFUL TO FULFIL HIS PROMISES.

God's faithfulness! exclaimed Henry. You make me almost shudder, father, by suggesting even the possibility of God's being unfaithful to fulfil his promises.

I have not designed to suggest this, said Mr. James, but on the contrary, to express more strongly the certainty of the saints' perseverance, by alluding to so impossible a consequence as must follow the opposite belief, viz: that it makes God an unfaithful being. One of the texts just quoted, assures us that "it is impossible for God to lie;" and in another passage Paul says, with a direct reference to the sanctification and salvation of believers, (1 Thess. v. 23, 24,) "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

IF WE CONFIDE IN THE WORD OF A FRIEND,
WHY NOT IN GOD'S?—A TOUCHING ILLUSTRATION.

We confide in the veracity of our fellow men. Our belief that they will be faithful to their promises, is the foundation of all credit in business. Especially is the word of a parent, or other friend, fully confided in, as affording a most reliable expectation of promised good. A touching instance of this was recently published in New Orleans, where the pestilence has rendered desolate so many households. One of those good Samaritans, who devoted much time to offices of mercy, found a boy one morning lying on the sidewalk, in an unfrequented street, evidently bright and intelligent, but sick. He shook him by the shoulder, and asked him what he was doing there. "Waiting for God to come for me," said he. "What do you mean?" said the gentleman, touched by the pathetic tone of the answer, and the condition of the boy, in whose eye and flushed face he saw the evidences of the

fever. "God sent for mother, and father, and little brother," said he, "and took them away to his home, up in the sky; and mother told me, when she was sick, that God would take care of me. I have no home, nobody to give me anything, and so I came out here, and have been looking so long up in the sky for God to come and take care of me, as mother said he would. He will come, won't he? Mother never told me a lie." "Yes, my lad," said the man, overcome with emotion; "he has sent me to take care of you." His eyes flashed, and the smile of triumph broke over his face as he said, "Mother never told me a lie, sir; but you've been so long on the way." What a lesson of trust, and how this incident shows the effect of never deceiving children with idle tales! As the poor mother expected, when she told her son, "God would take care of him," he did, by touching the heart of this benevolent man with compassion and love to the little stranger.

If a child, said Mr. James, could thus con-

vide in the veracity of a deceased mother, shall not God's children rely on his faithfulness? What if the wicked inquire scoffingly: "Where is the promise of his coming?" let his people rest with confidence on his unfailing word. "It is impossible for God to lie." And his promise is not "yea and nay, but yea and amen," that is, not equivocal and uncertain, but clear and determinate; fully justifying the confidence of Paul in saying, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." And again, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Henry James remarked, One of the hymns sung at church to-day, suggests the inquiry, whether God's promises made to his church are to be interpreted in the same way as those made to individual believers.

Mr. James replied, When God promises

that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church," he refers to his church collectively rather than individually; and so in other similar promises. By thus promising the church's safety, he means that he will preserve and perpetuate a body of true believers on earth; in other words, that he will always have a seed to serve him. But as the church is composed of individual members, those promises are applicable to them; and when so applied, they must be understood as belonging to those only who possess, as well as profess, faith in Christ. Taken in this sense, the words of the hymn to which you refer, though spoken concerning Sion, may be appropriated by all individually, who have scriptural evidence of being christians. The first part of the hymn is as follows :

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Sion, city of our God;
He whose word cannot be broken,
Formed thee for his own abode.

On the Rock of ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou mayest smile at all thy foes.

See the streams of living waters,
Springing from eternal love,
Well supply thy sons and daughters,
And all fear of want remove.

OTHER SCRIPTURE PROOFS OF THE DOCTRINE
OF PERSEVERANCE.

The promises of God, continued Henry, are quite sufficient to satisfy me of the truth of this doctrine; but are there not, father, other scripture proofs which are equally valid?

Most certainly, said Mr. James; proofs which are so explicit and decided, that they would be conclusive, if the promises which relate to this subject were not found in the Bible. But the consideration of these promises has been so interesting to me, and imperceptibly occupied so much time, that I can only specify, in the present conversation, several of those other proofs, without a great

deal of remark. You can reflect upon them at your leisure.

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION PROVES PERSEVERANCE.

Those texts which teach the doctrine of election, said Mr. James, prove also the perseverance of the saints. "We are bound," says Paul, "to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." 2 Thess. ii. 13.

This text teaches that their being chosen of God to salvation included their sanctification, and their sanctification is so connected with their salvation as necessarily to involve their perseverance in holiness. To the same effect, Peter says, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." 2 Pet. i. 10. These words contain two important and connected truths, viz: that by making our calling sure, we make sure our

election, and by making sure both our calling and election, we render it certain that we "shall never fall." Accordingly he adds in the next verse, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." I shall converse with you on the subject of election hereafter; but according to any view of election which I have ever heard taken, it proves the saints' perseverance. Even Arminians hold that persons are elected when they believe, if not before; and Peter affirms that such "SHALL NEVER FALL."

THE SAINTS' PERSEVERANCE MAY BE PROVED
FROM THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD—DR. NET-
TLETON.

Again, the knowledge of God, which is infinite and eternal, furnishes a valid proof of the saints' perseverance. Dr. Nettleton once heard a person say, "I believe that the doctrine of the Saints' Perseverance has been the means of filling hell with Chris-

tians." "Sir," said Dr. N., "do you believe that God knows all things?" "Certainly I do," said he. "How then, do you interpret that text—'I never knew you?'" said Dr. N. After reflecting a moment, he replied, "The meaning must be, I never knew you as Christians." "Is that the meaning?" said Dr. N. "Yes, it must be," he replied, "for certainly God knows all things." "Well," said Dr. N., "I presume you are right. Now this is what our Saviour will say to those who, at the last day, shall say to him, 'Lord, Lord, have we not eaten,' &c. Now, when Saul, and Judas, and Hymeneus, and Philetus, and Demas, and all who you suppose are fallen from grace, shall say to Christ, 'Lord, Lord'—he will say to them, 'I never knew you—I never knew you as Christians.' Where then are the Christians that are going to hell?"

THE POWER OF GOD SECURES THE PERSEVER-
ANCE OF THE SAINTS.

Further: the power of God is continually

exerted to keep believers from totally falling from grace. According to Peter, (1 Pet. i. 5.) they are "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." How strong and emphatic is this language! It involves the assertion that their persons are kept, and their graces are kept; that they are kept by the power of God—outwardly by the power of his Providence, and inwardly by the power of his Spirit—and that he continues his powerful guardianship over them and in them, till grace is made perfect in glory.

" Grace will complete what grace begins,
To save from sorrows and from sins ;
The work that wisdom undertakes,
Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes."

THE ADOPTION OF BELIEVERS INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD PROVES THEIR PERSEVERANCE IN GRACE.

Again, believers are adopted into the family of God, and sustain thereby the relation of children, and this is mentioned in

Scripture as a ground of the certainty of their final salvation. Paul calls it "the adoption of children by Jesus Christ." "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." So confident was he that they would become partakers of the heavenly inheritance, that he says, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The grounds of this assurance are: 1, that adoption is God's act, not ours; 2, that it is an act of free grace, and not of debt; 3, that he does not adopt sinners into his family, till he gives them a new nature; and 4, that those whom he adopts are made younger brethren of the same household, in which Christ is the elder brother. Consequently they are not only heirs of God, but joint heirs with Christ, who is the head and representative of the "many brethren," among

whom he is said to be the "first born." Having ascended on high, he prepared for them mansions in his Father's house, and he will hold them in reserve till the last saint shall reach his eternal home. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is." "I will come again," said Christ, "and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also."

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS IS SECURED BY CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

The intercession of Christ in behalf of his people secures their perseverance in grace. This is involved in my remarks about the covenant of redemption ; but it is entitled to a separate consideration. Our Lord said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan

hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Satan has always desired to have Christ's followers; but his intercession for them prevents their faith from failing. It may partially fail, as Peter's did; but as Christ's prayer secured his conversion, that is, his recovery from his grievous fall, so it secures the repentance and restoration of all true believers, who, through sudden temptation, and the infirmities of the flesh, fall into sin. As David says, speaking of a good man, "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him, with his hand."

You must not infer, said Mr. James, that because Christ intercedes for his people, and thereby prevents them from ruining their souls by total apostasy, therefore their backslidings are any the less offensive to him; or that real Christians will regard his intercession as affording any encouragement or

excuse to neglect their duty. If, in particular cases, it has the effect to produce sloth and sinful indulgence, such persons furnish painful evidence of being strangers to vital piety. They possess that temper of mind which would lead them to imitate Peter in his fall, but not in his repentance. Genuine believers hate sin, and therefore will not indulge in it, under the impression that they will be restored in due time. This will further appear in considering the next proof, the only other I shall give at present, of the saints' perseverance.

THE NATURE OF REGENERATION SHOWS
THE CERTAINTY OF PERSEVERANCE IN
GRACE,—A MINISTER'S VIEWS CHANGED.

Lastly, perseverance in grace is rendered certain from the nature of regeneration. Says John, (2 John iii. 9,) "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The sense of this passage is, that the true born child of

God does not sin willingly and deliberately, and to his utter ruin, like unregenerate persons. This new spiritual birth has renovated his moral nature, altered his moral taste and desire, and thus rendered it morally impossible for him to commit sin from choice, and with satisfaction and delight, as he had previously done. And as this new birth is heavenly and Divine, the germ or seed of Divine grace ever remains in his heart, until it is perfected in heaven.

A minister of my acquaintance, Mr. A., who once belonged to a church holding Arminian views, was convinced of the truth of the Calvinistic creed, and particularly of the saints' perseverance, by reflecting upon this text. He has been preaching the gospel for many years, in connection with a Calvinistic body. I have heard him say that he had been accustomed to quote this text, to prove the doctrine of Christian perfection. But he perceived at length, that if it teaches Christian perfection, it proves not merely that perfection is attainable, but that this is

essential to a state of grace. "He that committeth sin is of the devil. Whosoever is born of God cannot sin, because he is born of God." This interpretation, viz: that it is impossible for Christians to sin, was so contrary to other parts of Scripture, that he was obliged to abandon it. What then was the import of the passage? He perceived on further reflection that it contains a valid proof of the doctrine of the saints' perseverance. It must mean, said he, that they who are born of God do not sin wilfully, as unregenerate men do; and that they cannot become utter apostates, as hypocrites do; because the seed of Divine grace remaineth in them, inasmuch as God, who planted it there, preserves it alive in their hearts, and thus prevents them from falling away. Such was Mr. A.'s exposition, and I doubt not, it is correct.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Henry James expressed much satisfaction with these scripture proofs; and then said,

You know, father, that some persons interpret these texts in a very general and qualified sense; in order, as they say, to make them harmonize with the conditions, cautions, and exhortations, which are contained in other passages which relate to this subject; such as the following: "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Heb. x. 38. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Heb. iii. 12. "Abide in me, and I in you If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." John xv. 4, 6. These texts, they maintain, imply the possibility of falling from grace, and hence the former passages must be understood in consistency with these.

Mr. James replied, All parts of God's word are harmonious, and they must be interpreted by comparing them with each other. But if the general tenor of Divine truth is in favour of the doctrine of the saints' persever-

ance, and not of falling from grace, as I verily believe; then instead of assuming that those texts, which seem to imply the possibility of falling away, certainly teach this, and then endeavouring to make all apparently contrary passages bend to suit this view of the subject; it is far more agreeable to sound criticism, to inquire whether those texts which appear to imply the possibility of total apostasy do not, when rightly understood, fully accord with the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

THE RELEVANCY AND IMPORTANCE OF CAUTIONS AND EXHORTATIONS.

Mr. James further remarked: The co-operation of human and Divine agency in the believer's progress in holiness, which the Bible clearly teaches, furnishes a key to the true interpretation of those cautions, warnings, and exhortations which you have quoted, and all others of a similar character. God treats his people as moral agents. He requires them to use the means of grace.

He warns them against sin. And their perseverance in holiness is carried on by their habitual attention to these Divine cautions, exhortations, and counsels. Hence we perceive their relevancy, their importance, their necessity. But in connection with these, God also teaches them that the grace of perseverance is his gift, and that in the circumstance of their dependence on him, they have their strongest motive for watchfulness and prayer, and for diligence in every christian duty. Thus he says, (Phil. ii. 12, 13,) "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Believers work out what God works in. "Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, they have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Rom. vi. 22.

I have heard it asserted, father, said Henry, that some persons who had actually experienced religion, have lost it, and hence the

possibility of falling from grace is placed beyond doubt.

Mr. James replied, I have also seen persons who professed to have met with a change, and yet afterwards became irreligious. But their change was not radical. "They went out from us, (1 John ii. 19,) but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." A sow that is washed, is a swine still, and will return to her wallowing in the mire. 2 Pet. ii. 22. But suppose the nature of the animal to be changed, so that it is no longer a swine, but a sheep. You will not see it wallowing in the mire any more. "Every man," says John, "that hath this hope in him, [that is, that hath the hope in Christ which characterizes a child of God,] purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure." As I before stated, the grace of Christians may sometimes decline; and they may become cold and neg-

ligent. But their backslidings are only temporary. They are uneasy in that state; and with the prayer of David hourly sent up to God, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit," they are sooner or later restored to their first love.

Henry James remarked again, I have heard it argued, if Adam fell from a state of perfect holiness, why may not Christians, who are imperfect, fall from grace?

Mr. James responded, Adam was under the covenant of works; but Christians are under the covenant of grace. There is a wide difference between the condition of Adam under the covenant of works, and of believers under the covenant of grace. Adam, before his fall, stood by his own personal strength; believers by the power of God. He kept himself; they are sustained by divine grace. This difference is happily illustrated by a remarkable dream of the Rev. John Newton, when he was a young man. Here it is, Henry, in Mr. Newton's own lan-

guage. Let me hear you read it. Henry read as follows :

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE STANDING OF ADAM, AND THAT OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST, BY JOHN NEWTON'S DREAM.

The scene presented to my imagination, was the harbour of Venice, where we had lately been. I thought it was night, and my watch upon the deck, and that, as I was walking to and fro by myself, a person came to me (I do not remember from whence) and brought me a ring, with an express charge to keep it carefully; assuring me that while I preserved that ring, I should be happy and successful; but if I lost, or parted with it, I must expect nothing but trouble and misery. I accepted the present and the terms willingly, not in the least doubting my own care to preserve it, and highly satisfied to have my happiness in my own keeping. I was engaged in these thoughts, when a second person came to me, and ob-

serving the ring on my finger, took occasion to ask me some questions concerning it. I readily told him its virtues, and his answer expressed a surprise at my weakness, in expecting such effects from a ring. I think he reasoned with me for some time upon the impossibility of the thing, and at length urged me, in direct terms, to throw it away. At first I was shocked at the proposal, but his insinuation prevailed. I began to reason and doubt of the matter myself, and at last plucked it off my finger, and dropped it over the ship's side into the water, which it had no sooner touched, than I saw, the same instant, a terrible fire burst out from a range of mountains (a part of the Alps) which appeared at some distance behind the city of Venice. I saw the hills as distinctly as if awake, and they were all in flames. I perceived too late my folly ; and my tempter, with an air of insult, informed me that all the mercy God had in reserve for me was comprised in that ring, which I had wilfully thrown away. I understood that I must

now go with him to the burning mountains, and that all the flames I saw, were kindled upon my account. I trembled, and was in a great agony ; so that it was surprising I did not then awake, but my dream continued, and when I thought myself upon the point of a constrained departure, and stood self-condemned, without plea or hope, suddenly, either a third person, or the same who brought me the ring at first, came to me, (I am not certain which,) and demanded the cause of my grief. I told him the plain case, confessing that I had ruined myself wilfully, and deserved no pity. He blamed my rashness, and asked if I should be wiser, supposing I had my ring again. I could hardly answer to this ; for I thought it was gone beyond recall. I believe, indeed, I had not time to answer, before I saw this unexpected friend go down under the water, just in the spot where I had dropped it, and he soon returned bringing the ring with him. The moment he came on board, the flames in the mountains were extinguished, and

my seducer left me. Then was 'the prey taken from the hand of the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered.' My fears were at an end, and with joy and gratitude I approached my kind deliverer to receive the ring again; but he refused to return it, and spoke to this effect: 'If you should be entrusted with this ring again, you would very soon bring yourself into the same distress. You are not able to keep it; but I will preserve it for you, and whenever it is needful, will produce it in your behalf.' Upon this I awoke in a state of mind not to be described: I could hardly eat, or sleep, or transact my necessary business for two or three days; but the impression soon wore off, and in a little time I totally forgot it, and I think it hardly occurred to my mind again, till several years afterwards. It will appear, in the course of these papers, that a time came, when I found myself in circumstances very nearly resembling those suggested by this extraordinary dream, when I stood helpless and hopeless upon the brink of an awful

eternity, and I doubt not but, had the eyes of my mind been opened, I should have seen my grand enemy, who had seduced me wilfully to renounce and cast away my religious profession, and to involve myself in the most complicated crimes; I say, I should probably have seen him pleased with my agonies, and waiting for a permission to seize and bear away my soul to this place of torment. I should perhaps have seen likewise, that Jesus, whom I had persecuted and defied, rebuking the adversary, challenging me for his own, as a brand plucked out of the fire, and saying, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom!' However, though I saw not these things, I found the benefit; I obtained mercy. The Lord answered for me in the day of my distress; and blessed be his name, he who restored the ring (or what was signified by it) vouchsafes to keep it. Oh, what an unspeakable comfort is this, that I am not in my own keeping! 'The Lord is my shepherd:' I have been able to trust my all in his

hands, and I know in whom I have believed. Satan still desires to have me, that he might sift me as wheat; but my Saviour has prayed for me, that my faith may not fail. Here is my security and reliance; a bulwark, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. But for this, many a time and often (if possible), I should have ruined myself since my first deliverance; nay, I should fall, and stumble, and perish still, after all that the Lord has done for me, if his faithfulness was not engaged in my behalf, to be my sun and shield even unto death. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul.'"

PRACTICAL TENDENCY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE SAINTS' PERSEVERANCE.

When Henry James had finished reading this narrative, he said, I am entirely convinced, father, of the truth of the doctrine of the saints' perseverance. Indeed I have been highly edified and delighted with this conversation on the subject. But if you are not fatigued, I should be pleased to hear you

state your views concerning the practical tendency of this doctrine. I have heard it objected that it furnishes few if any motives to zeal, but on the contrary tends to sloth, and neglect of duty.

I do not deny, said Mr. James, that some who believe this doctrine are negligent of their duty ; but I do deny that their negligence arises from their belief in the saints' perseverance ; unless indeed they entertain, like A-- B--, erroneous views of what the doctrine is, and thus pervert it to their own destruction. Remember that this doctrine is adapted to encourage saints in the divine life, and not to encourage sinners in a life of sin. So long as men are impenitent and unbelieving, this doctrine does not apply to them. When they have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them in the gospel, then the doctrine of the saints' perseverance affords strong incentives to practical godliness. Assuming that they desire to lead holy lives, as genuine Christians always do, this doctrine, so far from having a ten-

dency to make them slothful, is adapted to render them zealous and diligent in good works.

1. The christian life is a work, a "patient continuance in well-doing;" in the performance of which, how cheering it is to be assured on Divine authority, that our "labour will not be in vain in the Lord."

2. The christian life is a race; in the running of which an encouraging motive to activity and perseverance is furnished by the confidence we feel that, through grace, we shall "so run as to obtain" the prize.

3. The christian life is a warfare; and in fighting "the good fight of faith," how animating it is to feel certain, with the apostle Paul, that we shall be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us!"

4. The christian life is a course of filial obedience to God as our heavenly Father; of sincere delight in his law, and an earnest habitual desire to serve and please him. With this state of mind, how well adapted to make us vigilant, prayerful, and obedient, is the belief that God will always exercise

towards us a Father's love, and a Father's care; that he will keep us from dishonouring him by falling into temptation; or if he permits us to be tempted, "he will make a way for our escape;" that when necessary to protect or restore us from backsliding, he will rebuke and chastise us; and that he will sustain, quicken, and sanctify us, until we are made meet for the promised inheritance. If we have no filial regard for our heavenly Father, that is, if we are bastards and not sons, our assurance of hope may influence us to neglect our duty. Just as a wicked and undutiful wretch, having the name of a son, might feel and say concerning a kind and generous father, "My father will not disinherit me, however much I may displease and dishonour him." But provided we have been really born of the Spirit and consequently possess the disposition of children, our assurance of God's continued and unchangeable love is adapted to enkindle in our souls a perpetual and ever increasing zeal in his service.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PRACTICAL TENDENCY
OF THE SAINTS' PERSEVERANCE. CROM-
WELL—HAVELOCK.

To illustrate these views, Mr. James remarked, that certainty of success in any undertaking, operates as a strong incentive to vigorous exertion. Notice the course pursued by candidates for office in securing the votes of their friends. Their constant effort is to keep up the impression that their election is beyond all doubt. It is the same with the officers of an army, who act on the principle that their soldiers will be inspired with double courage, if they can make them feel sure of obtaining the victory. This feeling becomes still more intense and influential, when it is founded on religious sentiment. Cromwell and his army derived their daily sustenance (I mean religiously) from the Bible, David's Psalms, and Calvinistic preaching; and one of the effects was, that in their conflicts with the English cavaliers, they never lost a battle. Havelock, whose name

and memory are rendered illustrious by his energetic and successful attacks on the Sepoys of Northern India, was a pious man, and a firm Calvinist. He often prayed with his soldiers, and accompanied this exercise with instruction in the doctrines and precepts of God's word. Though his conduct in this particular was displeasing to the other officers, yet he gained their confidence to such a degree, that in a previous war with the natives, when soldiers were needed for a difficult service, an officer in high command is reported to have said, "Call out the saints; [meaning Havelock and his men;] Havelock never blunders, and his soldiers never get drunk."

Mr. James remarked further, that the saints' perseverance is a comforting doctrine; and in this world of suffering and bereavement, the consolation which it affords is of inestimable value.

"Why should the soul a drop bemoan,
Who has a fountain near,
A fountain which shall ever run,
With waters sweet and clear?"

No good in creatures can be found,
But may be found in thee :
I must have all things and abound,
While God is God to me."

"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."
"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

These gracious assurances are like oil and wine to the hearts of believers, in their earthly trials and sufferings. They were the solace of Old Testament saints, when they were "destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the

world was not worthy." And in like manner they caused the primitive Christians "greatly to rejoice, though in heaviness through manifold temptations; "knowing that the trial of their faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, would be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

THE DOCTRINE OF PERSEVERANCE IS ADAPTED
TO IMPRESS THE UNCONVERTED—ANECDOTE
OF WHITEFIELD.

To these thoughts, said Mr. James, I must not omit to add, that the hope and comfort contained in the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, are adapted to lead the unconverted to Christ. Though, as I said, this doctrine is for saints, and not for sinners, yet the Holy Spirit often makes use of the privileges of God's children to awaken and convert sinners. Hence this kind of preaching, listened to by the unconverted, is frequently as effective in producing a serious

impression on their minds, as pungent and alarming discourses addressed directly to them. It has been related of the celebrated George Whitefield, who like Paul, "preached publicly, and from house to house," that he was providentially brought into the company of a young preacher of the established church, during a violent storm of thunder and lightning. The young man, who, though a preacher by profession, had been hitherto a stranger to experimental religion, was much terrified by the storm. Whitefield, a decided Calvinist, as you probably know, spoke of the blessed security of believers in Christ, and of his own unbounded confidence in God as his covenant God and Redeemer; after which he repeated with great composure, and with remarkable sweetness of voice, these lines of Watts :

" The God that rules on high,
And thunders when he please ;
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And manages the seas :

This awful God is ours ;
Our Father and our love ;
He will send down his heavenly powers,
To carry us above."

The effect on the young minister was most happy ; resulting, as was believed, in a saving change of heart, and in his becoming an earnest advocate of evangelical religion.

When Mr. James had closed these remarks, Henry said, O father, I wonder how any one can object to so glorious a doctrine ! Not only can I receive it as true, but I can rejoice in it as being suited to make us holy and happy.

The family was now called together for worship, and at Henry's request, they sang the hymn commencing with the stanza,

" The voice of free grace cries, Escape to the mountain,
For Adam's lost race Christ has opened a fountain :
For sin, and transgression, and every pollution,
His blood flows most freely in streams of salvation.
Hallelujah to the Lamb who has purchased our pardon,
We will praise him again when we pass over Jordan."

CONCLUSION.

Two more conversations were prepared for publication in this volume; one on Predestination, and the other on Grace and Comfort. But they will be deferred to form a part of a separate volume; for the reason that their insertion here would make the book too thick for the size of the page. This discovery was not made till so much of the matter was in type as to render it inexpedient to change either the form or plan of the book. These two topics, and the two alluded to in the Preface, but not discussed for want of room, viz: Repentance and Adoption, with one or two others, belonging to the same general subject, will constitute an appropriate sequel to the Gospel Fountain, and form together a connected view of the wonderful scheme of gospel grace. The

whole may be included in two words: GRACE and GLORY. It is grace in its origin, grace in each successive step of its development and progress, and grace in its glorious termination in heaven. In other words, it is grace in the fountain, grace in the streams, and grace in the boundless ocean of eternal joy, in which the divine counsels of mercy gloriously terminate.

What Paul said concerning the great fact of Christ's coming into the world to save sinners, may be applied to the whole scheme of redemption, doctrinal, experimental, and practical: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance." The doctrines discussed in these pages are worthy of all acceptance, because they are true, and ought therefore to be received by all. And they ought also to be received because they are important as well as true. They are truths revealed by God for our salvation ; and their cordial reception, as to their essential features, is a matter of vital interest to all men. Dear youth, consider the importance of the gospel

plan, and embrace it, not only in theory, but in its inward power and life; not with your understanding merely, but with your hearts. The chief value of the gospel consists in its power to save. But in order to this, it must be believed and obeyed, both in the heart and life. This is the sum of saving knowledge. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

The favourable time, dear youth, and perhaps the only time to attend to this great interest is the present. The gospel fountain is now open; the streams of grace and salvation are now flowing along your path, and you are invited to drink and live. But the delay of a single week, a single day, or even a single hour, may essentially change your condition, by placing you for ever beyond the call of the gospel. Pardon is not offered to sinners after death. Trust in the Saviour now, and your eternal salvation is secured.

23 Jan 1860