

# The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation



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# Leaders of the Reformation

The Reformation from Popery in the sixteenth century was the greatest event, or series of events, that has occurred since the close of the canon of Scripture; and the men who are really entitled to be called the “Leaders of the Reformation” have a claim to more respect and gratitude than any other body of uninspired men that have ever influenced or adorned the church. The Reformation was closely connected in various ways with the different influences which about that period were affecting for good the general condition of Europe, and, in combination with them, it aided largely in introducing and establishing great improvements in all matters affecting literature, civilisation, liberty, and social order. The movement, however, was primarily and fundamentally a religious one; and all the most important questions that may be started about its character and consequences, should be decided by tests and considerations properly applicable to the subject of true religion. The Reformers claimed to be regarded as being engaged in a religious work, which was in accordance with God’s revealed will, and fitted to promote the spiritual welfare of men; and we are at once entitled and bound to judge of them and their work, by investigating and ascertaining the validity of this claim.

There are two leading aspects in which the Reformation, viewed as a whole, may be regarded: the one more external and negative, and the other more intrinsic and positive. In the first aspect it was a great revolt against the see of Rome, and against the authority of the church and of churchmen in religious matters, combined with an assertion of the exclusive authority of the Bible, and of the right of all men to examine and interpret it for themselves. In the second and more important and positive aspect, the Reformation was the proclamation and inculcation, upon the alleged authority of Scripture, of certain views in regard to

the substance of Christianity or the way of salvation, and in regard to the organization and ordinances of the Christian church. Many men have approved and commended the Reformation, viewed merely as a repudiation of human authority in religion, and an assertion of the right of private judgment, and of the exclusive supremacy of the Scriptures as the rule of faith, who have not concurred in the leading views of the Reformers in regard to Christian theology and church organization. In this sense, rationalists and latitudinarians have generally professed to adopt and act upon what they call the principles of the Reformation, while they reject all the leading doctrines of the Reformers. Men of this class usually attempt to pay off the Reformers with the credit of having emancipated mankind from ecclesiastical thralldom, established the right of private judgment, and done something to encourage the practice of free inquiry. But while giving the Reformers credit for these things, they have often rejected the leading doctrines of the Reformation upon theological and ecclesiastical subjects, and have been in the habit of claiming to themselves the credit of having succeeded, by following out the principles of the Reformation, in educing, either from Scripture or from their own speculations, more accurate and enlightened doctrinal views than the Reformers ever attained to. There has been a great deal of this sort of thing put forth both by rationalists and latitudinarians who professed to admit the authority of the Christian revelation, and by infidels who denied it. Dr Robertson in his *Life of Charles v.* spoke of some doctrinal discussions of that period in such terms as justly to lay himself open to the following rebuke of Scott, the son of the commentator, in his excellent continuation of Milner's "History of the Church of Christ."

"It is manifest what is the character that Dr Robertson here affects, which is that of the philosopher and the statesman, in preference, if not to the disparagement of that of the Christian divine. This is entirely to the taste of modern times, and will be sure to secure to him the praise of large and liberal views among those who regard a high sense of the importance of revealed truth, and all 'contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,' as the infallible mark of narrow-mindedness and bigotry."

Dr Campbell of Aberdeen, too, who was a very great pretender to candour, has, in the last of his lectures on ecclesiastical history, made it manifest that he considered the chief benefits which the Reformers had conferred upon the world to be, the setting an example of free inquiry, and the exposing of church tyranny, superstitious and idolatrous practices, and clerical artifices; and that he despised all their zealous efforts and contendings in restoring the pure gospel of the grace

of God—the true system of Christian theology—as conversant only, according to the common cant of latitudinarians, with metaphysical subtleties and scholastic jargon.

But the climax, perhaps, of this practice of paying off the Reformers with some commendation of their services in promoting free inquiry, while all their leading doctrines are rejected, is to be found in the facts, that in our own day such a man as Bretschneider wrote a “*Dissertatio de Rationalismo Lutheri*,” and that Wegscheider dedicated his “*Institutiones Theologice Christiane Dogmaticae*,” which is just a system of Deism in a sort of Christian dress, “*Piis Manibus Martini Lutheri*,” mainly upon the ground that he had opened up liberty of thought, and encouraged posterity to advance much farther in the path on which he had entered.

A somewhat different aspect of this matter has been presented by certain writers, who are not disposed to allow to the Reformers even the credit of having encouraged and promoted free inquiry. It has been alleged that there is little or nothing said in the writings of the Reformers about the right and duty of private judgment, and that the absence of this, combined with their great zeal for what they reckoned truth, and their strenuous and vehement opposition to what they reckoned error, proved that after all they were nothing better than narrow-minded bigots. Hallam, in his “*Literature of Europe during the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries*,” has some statements to this effect; and the facts on which he founds are in the main true, though they certainly do not warrant his conclusions.

It must, however, we fear, be conceded to Hallam and others who take this view—1st, that the Reformers were not much in the habit of formally and elaborately discussing, as a distinct and independent topic, what has since been called the right and duty of private judgment; and 2d, that they ever professed it to be their great object to find out the actual truth of God contained in His word, that they were very confident that in regard to the main points of their teaching they had found the truth, and that they were very strenuous in urging that other men should receive it also upon God’s authority. And these facts are amply sufficient to secure for them, in certain quarters, the reputation of being narrow-minded bigots.

The Reformers did not discuss at much length, or with any great formality, the subject of the right of private judgment as a general topic; but they understood and acted upon their right as rational and responsible beings to reject all mere human authority in religious matters, to try everything by the standard of God’s

word, and to judge for themselves, on their own responsibility, as to the meaning of its statements. And by following this course, by acting on this principle, by setting this example, they have conferred most important benefits upon the church and the world.

The fundamental position maintained by the Reformers was this, that the views which they had been led to form, as to what should be the doctrine, worship, and government of the Church of Christ, were right, and that the views of the Church of Rome upon these, points, as opposed to theirs, were wrong. This was the grand position they occupied, and they based their whole procedure upon the ground of the paramount claims of divine truth, its right, as coming from God and being invested with His authority, to be listened to, to be obeyed, and to be propagated: When the Papists opposed them in the maintenance of this position, and appealed on their own behalf to tradition, to ecclesiastical authority, to the decisions of popes and councils, the Reformers in reply pushed all this aside, by asserting the supremacy of the written word as the only standard of faith and practice, by denying the legitimacy of submitting to mere human authority in religious matters, and by maintaining that men are entitled and bound to judge for themselves, upon their own responsibility, as to what God in His word has required them to believe and to do. They asserted these positions more or less fully as circumstances required, but still they regarded them as in some sense subsidiary and subordinate. The primary question with them always was, What is the truth as to the way in which God ought to be worshipped, in which a sinner is saved, and in which the ordinances and arrangements of the Church of Christ ought to be regulated? They were bent upon answering, and answering aright, this important question, and they brushed aside everything that stood in their way and obstructed their progress.

There can be no doubt that the only satisfactory explanation of the conduct of the Reformers is, that they regarded themselves as fighting for the cause of God; and it is creditable to Hallam that, unable, as he admitted, to understand their theology, and having no predilection on their behalf, he should have seen and asserted this, in opposition to the ordinary calumnies of the Papists. But the great, the only really important, question is, Was it indeed the cause of God? or in other words, Was it indeed the truth of God which they deduced from His word, and which they laboured to promote and to enforce? If it was not so, then they have deserved little gratitude, and they can have effected little good. In estimating the value of what God gave to them, and what they have transmitted to us, almost everything depends upon the truth, the scriptural truth, of the

doctrines which they taught and laboured to advance. The highest honour of the Reformers, or rather the principal gift which God gave them, viewed as public teachers who have exerted an influence upon the state of religious opinion and practice in the world, was that, in point of fact, they did deduce from the word of God the truths or true doctrines which are there set forth, and that they brought them out, and expounded and enforced them in such a way as led, through God's blessing, to their being extensively received and applied. Christian theology, in some of its most important articles, had for a long period been grossly corrupted in the Church of Rome, which then comprehended the largest portion of Christendom. The Lord was pleased, through the instrumentality of the Reformers, to expose these corruptions, to bring out prominently before the world the true doctrines of His word in regard to the worship which He required and would accept, the way in which He had provided and was bestowing, and in which sinners were to receive, the salvation of the gospel, and the way in which the ordinances and arrangements of His church were to be regulated; and to effect that these true scriptural doctrines should be extensively disseminated, should become powerfully influential, and should be permanently preserved over a considerable portion of His church. The Lord did this by His Spirit at the era of the Reformation, and He employed in doing it the instrumentality of the Reformers. He guided them not only to the adoption of the right method, the use of the appropriate means for detecting error and discovering divine truth, but what was of primary and paramount importance, He guided them to a right judgment—that is, right in the main and with respect to all fundamental points, as to what particular doctrines were true and false, according to the standard of His own written word. Their unquestionable sincerity and integrity, their unwearied zeal and activity, their great talents and their undaunted courage, would only have shed a false glare around a bad cause, if it was not indeed the cause of God which they were maintaining. Their other good qualities would have tended rather to evil than to good results, if it had not been really error which they opposed and God's truth which they supported. We believe nothing because the Reformers believed it, and we approve of nothing because they practised it; but, judging of them by the same standard which they applied to the Church of Rome, and by which they professed to regulate their own opinions and conduct, because we believe with them that it is the right standard, we are firmly persuaded that what they opposed was error—grievous and dangerous error, and that what they maintained was in the main truth—God's own truth—taught in His word, and applied to them by the teaching of His own Spirit.

There is so much unanimity among the Reformers, so much harmony in the

confessions of the Reformed churches, as to entitle us to speak of the theology of the Reformation as conveying a pretty distinct idea of a particular system of doctrine upon the leading articles of the Christian faith; and we think it can be proved, not only that this theology was sound and scriptural, as compared with what had previously prevailed in the Church of Rome, but that the deviations which Protestants have since made from it have been in the main retrogressions from truth to error. We do not set up the Reformers as guides or oracles; we do not invest them with any authority, or believe anything because they believed it. There is, indeed, no authority in religion but that of God; and authority, in its strict and proper sense, does not admit of degrees. The fact that certain doctrines were taught by some particular class or body of men, is either at once and of itself a sufficient reason why we must embrace them, or else it is of no real weight and validity in determining what we should believe. It is entitled to be "received as authoritative and determining, only when the men in question can produce satisfactory evidence that they have been commissioned and inspired by God. There is a sense, indeed, in which some respect or deference is due to the opinions of others. But this respect or deference should never be transmuted into anything like authority or obligation. It may afford a valid call for careful attention and diligent investigation, but for nothing more. It should have no determining or controlling influence. The Reformers, with respect to all points in which they were substantially of one mind, may be regarded as being upon the whole entitled to more respect and deference than any other body of men who could be specified or marked out at any one period in the history of the church. But it holds true universally, that God has never given to any uninspired man, or body of men, to rise altogether above the influence of the circumstances in which they were placed, in the formation and expression of their opinions upon religious subjects. And even the greatest admirers of the Reformers readily admit that they, all of them, though not in the main features of their theological system, yielded more or less to the various sources of error which prevail among men; and more particularly, that they exhibited, on the one hand, traces that they had not wholly escaped from the corrupting influence of the system in which they had been educated, and on the other hand, what is equally natural, that they were sometimes in danger, in avoiding one extreme, of falling into the opposite one.

These obvious views about the position and services of the Reformers have been suggested to us by the perusal of Principal Tulloch's work on the "Leaders of the Reformation." It is intended as a popular sketch of the main features in the history of Luther, Calvin, Latimer, and Knox; and, regarded in this light, it is fairly entitled to very considerable commendation. We cannot say that the work



displays any great power of thought, or any great extent of research. We have no idea that Dr Tulloch is familiar with the writings of the Reformers, or that he is qualified to appreciate them in connection with the highest departments of the work which they performed. But he has given a very intelligent, interesting, and candid survey of the principal features of the life and the general character and position of the men whom he has selected as the leaders of the Reformation. He has taken considerable pains to understand and to state accurately most of the points he has discussed. He has shown a large measure of fairness and candour in the principal views he has put forth; and he has presented them generally in a very pleasing and interesting style.

Dr Tulloch's book, as a whole, would have been entitled to very considerable commendation, if it had not put forth some very objectionable and dangerous views in regard to the theology of the Reformers, by far the most important feature in their history. The object of the work did not require of Dr Tulloch to enter into theological exposition or discussion, and we might have passed over the work with commending what was commendable in it, if he had entirely ignored theological subjects. But he has not done this. He has put forth certain views in regard to the theology of the Reformers which we believe to be unsound and dangerous, and which we think it incumbent upon us to expose.

The Reformers themselves reckoned it the great duty which they were called upon to discharge, the great work which God gave them to do, to bring out from the sacred Scriptures right views of Christian theology and of church organization, in opposition to those which generally prevailed in the Church of Rome. They believed that they were enabled, by God's grace, to succeed to a large extent in doing this; and all who have since concurred with them in this belief have also, as a matter of course, regarded their success in this respect as a very great service rendered to the church and the world,—as, indeed, the greatest service which they rendered, or could render. We believe that the theology of the Reformation, in its great leading features, both as it respects doctrine in the more limited sense of the word, and as it respects the organization of the church as a society, is the unchangeable truth of God revealed in His word, which individuals and churches are bound to profess and to act upon. Dr Tulloch, we fear, has come to a different conclusion upon this important question, and has plainly enough given the world to understand that, in his judgment, the theology of the Reformation, though a creditable and useful thing in the sixteenth century, and a great improvement on the state of matters that then prevailed in the Church of Rome, has now become antiquated and obsolete, and quite unsuitable to the

enlightenment which characterizes this age.

He does not adduce any specific objections against the theology of the Reformation; but, having attained to a much greater elevation, a far higher platform, than the Reformers ever reached, he coolly but conclusively sets aside the results of all their investigations of divine things, as now scarcely worthy of being seriously examined. This not only, as we have already explained, deprives the Reformers of what all who have in the main adopted their principles have regarded as the greatest honour which God conferred upon them, the greatest service they were enabled to render; but it bears, and, as we believe, bears injuriously, upon a matter of infinitely greater importance than any question affecting the reputation of any body of men, even the accurate exposition of the system of revealed truth. Dr Tulloch does not profess to discuss any theological questions, and his views upon these points are brought out very vaguely and imperfectly. But he has said enough to show that he has given up the theology of the Reformation as untenable and unsatisfactory; and he evidently thinks that all liberal men who are abreast of this enlightened age must do the same. It is quite evident that men's whole views and impressions in regard to the history of the Reformers must be greatly influenced by the admission or the denial, that they were God's instruments in bringing out to a large extent the permanent truth revealed in His word, and in restoring the church to a large measure of apostolic purity; and it is highly creditable to Dr Tulloch that, denying this, he should have treated them with so large a measure of justice and fairness in most other respects. But it was scarcely possible that one who withholds from them their highest and most peculiar honour, should be perfectly just and fair to them in everything else; and there are indications, though not many or important, of his depreciating them even in matters not much connected with their theology. There is not much to complain of in what he says of Luther and Knox, barring their theology, except that he underrates their intellectual powers when he says of the former, that "as a theological thinker he takes no high rank, and has left little or no impress upon human history;" and of the latter, that "as a mere thinker, save perhaps on political subjects, he takes no rank." Few, we think, who have read the principal works of Luther and Knox will concur in this opinion of these men; and even in some of the things which Dr Tulloch himself has recorded about them, there is enough to convince discerning men that they did take high rank as thinkers on theological subjects. Luther, notwithstanding his great mental powers, and the great light he has thrown upon many important topics of discussion, had yet such defects and infirmities as to unfit him very much for being appealed to as a guide or oracle on theological subjects; and

Knox, overshadowed by Calvin, is not so frequently contemplated as a theologian, though his treatise on Predestination proves, we venture to think, that he is entitled to take high rank as a thinker. For the reasons now referred to, neither Luther nor Knox seems to have strongly excited Dr Tulloch's anti-theological zeal, and he certainly deals out to them a large measure of justice and candour, though he does not appreciate fully either their talents or their services.

Calvin, however, as might be expected, does not fare so well in Dr Tulloch's hands. He was so thoroughly the great representative of all that Dr Tulloch seems most heartily to disapprove and dislike,—viz. a distinct and definite system of theological doctrine, and a church organization upon the model of apostolic precept and practice,—that it was scarcely to be expected that the great Reformer would get justice from him. He does not, indeed, so far as we remember, make any direct attempt to depreciate Calvin's intellectual powers, or to dispute his right to take high rank as a thinker." But we have a strong impression that he comes far short of a just appreciation even of Calvin's mental powers and capacities. And it should not be forgotten, that it has become very much the fashion now-a-days, even among Romanists, as a matter of policy, to praise Calvin's talents. Even Audin, his latest popish biographer, who is just as thoroughly unprincipled as the champions of Popery usually are, has given the appearance of something like candour to his "Life of Calvin," by strong statements about his great talents, his literary excellences, and his commanding influence. Dr Tulloch, while he makes no direct attempt to depreciate Calvin's talents, does injustice, we think, in several respects to his general character. He says nothing, indeed, against him which has not been said often before. He just repeats what has been so frequently alleged against Calvin,—his want of the more amiable and engaging qualities, his pride and coldness, his sternness and cruelty. He does not seem to appreciate the purity and elevation of the motives by which Calvin was animated, and of the objects he aimed at. He does not appear to have turned to good account the greater accessibility now-a-days of Calvin's Letters, which are so admirably fitted to counteract some of the prevailing misconceptions of his character, and to show that there was nearly as much about him to love as to admire, as much to excite affection and confidence as veneration and respect. Dr Jules Bonnet, who has done so much to make Calvin's Letters more widely known, describes, in the preface to the English translation, his letters to Farel, Viret, and Beza, as exhibiting the overflowings of a heart filled with the deepest and most acute sensibility." It might have been supposed that no one who had really read the two volumes of Calvin's Letters to which this statement is prefixed, would, have any doubt of its truth and accuracy.

But Dr Tulloch, it seems, has not been able to find anything of this sort; and, accordingly, he disposes of Dr Bonnet's statement in this way —“Overflowing of any kind is exactly what you never find in Calvin, even in his most familiar letters.” We fear that Dr Tulloch must understand the word “overflowing” in a different sense from other men; for if we had space, we could easily produce plenty of extracts from his Letters, which most men, we are confident, would, without any hesitation, declare to be overflowings of the warmest and tenderest feeling, outpourings of the most hearty and cordial kindness and sympathy, and of the purest and noblest friendship. Calvin's character, intellectual, moral, and religious, has been most highly appreciated by the most competent judges; and the collection of testimonies in commendation of him and his works, published in one of the last volumes of the Calvin Translation Society, containing his Commentary on Joshua, is probably unexampled in the history of the human race. But we are not sure if a more emphatic tribute to his excellence and his power is not furnished by the hostility of which he has been the object; often breaking out into furious rancour, and frequently, even when assuming a greatly modified aspect, indicating a strong disposition to depreciate him, and to bring him down to the level of ordinary men. But we cannot dwell longer upon this topic. We must hasten to notice the position which Dr Tulloch has assumed in regard to the theology of the Reformation; and here it will be necessary in fairness to give him an opportunity of speaking for himself. His views are brought out pretty fully in the following extracts:—

“The spiritual principle is eternally divine and powerful. It is a very different thing when we turn to contemplate the dogmatic statements of Luther. So soon as Luther began to evolve his principle, and coin its living heart once more into dogma, he showed that he had not risen above the scholastic spirit which he aimed to destroy. It was truly impossible that he could do so. Not even the massive energy of Luther could pierce through those intellectual influences which had descended as a hoary heritage of ages to the sixteenth century.”

“The Reformation, in its theology, did not and could not escape the deteriorating influences of the scholastic spirit, for that spirit survived it, and lived on in strength, although in a modified form, throughout the seventeenth century. In one important particular, indeed, the scholastic and Protestant systems of theology entirely differed: the latter began their systematizing from the very opposite extreme to that of the former—from the divine and not from the human side of redemption—from God and not from man. And this is a difference on the side of truth by no means to be overlooked. Still the spirit is the same—the spirit

which does not hesitate to break up the divine unity of the truth in Scripture into its own logical shreds and patches, which tries to discriminate what in its moral essence is inscrutable, and to trace in distinct dogmatic moulds the operation of the divine and human wills in salvation, while the very condition of all salvation is the eternal mystery of their union in an act of mutual and inexpressible love. This spirit of ultra-definition—of essential rationalism—was the corrupting inheritance of the new from the old theology; and it is difficult to say, all things considered, as we trace the melancholy history of Protestant dogmas, whether its fruits have been worse in the latter or in the former instance. The mists, it is true, have never again so utterly obscured the truth; but that dimness, covering a fairer light, almost inspires the religious heart with a deeper sadness.”

“While thus claiming for Calvinism a higher scriptural character, it would yet be too much to say that Calvinism, any more than Lutheranism, or latterly Arminianism, was primarily the result of a fresh and living study of Scripture. Calvin, no doubt, went to Scripture. He is the greatest biblical commentator, as he is the greatest biblical dogmatist of his age; but his dogmas, for the most part, were not primarily suggested by Scripture; and as to his distinguishing dogma, this is eminently the case. Like Luther, he had been trained in the scholastic philosophy, and been fed on Augustine; and it was no more possible for the one than for the other to get beyond the scholastic spirit or the Augustinian doctrine. An attentive study of the ‘Institutes’ reveals the presence of Augustine everywhere; and great even as Calvin is in exegesis, his exegesis is mainly controlled by Augustinian dogmatic theory.”

“This appeal to an earlier catholicity on the part of the reformed theologies—this support in Augustine—beyond doubt greatly contributed to their success in their day. For few then ventured to doubt the authority of Augustinianism, and the theological spirit of the sixteenth century hardly at any point got beyond it. It was a natural source of triumph to the great Protestant confessions against the unsettled unbelief or more superficial theologies which they encountered, that they wielded so bold and consistent a weapon of logic, and appealed so largely to an authoritative scriptural interpretation. Calvinism could not but triumph on any such modes of reasoning or of biblical exegesis as then prevailed; and so long as it continued to be merely a question of systems, and logic had it all its way, this triumph was secure.

“But now that the question is changed, and logic is no longer mistress of the field; now, when a spirit of interpreting Scripture which could have hardly been

intelligible to Calvin generally asserts itself—a spirit which recognises a progress in Scripture itself—a diverse literature and moral growth in its component elements, and which at once looking backward with reverence and forward with faith, has learned a new audacity, or a new modesty, as we shall call it, according to our predilections, and while it accepts withal the mysteries of life and of death, refuses to submit them arbitrarily to the dictation of any mere logical principle; now that the whole sphere of religious credence is differently apprehended, and the provinces of faith and of logical deduction are recognised as not merely incommensurate, but as radically distinguished,—the whole case as to the triumphant position of Calvinism, or indeed any other theological system, is altered. An able writer in our day (Mansel, in his Bampton Lectures) has shown with convincing power what are the inevitably contradictory results of carrying the reasoning faculty with determining sway into the department of religious truth. The conclusions of that writer, sufficiently crushing as directed by him against all rationalistic systems, are to the full as conclusive against the competency of all theological systems whatever. The weapon of logical destructiveness which he has used with such energy, is a weapon of offence really against all religious dogmatism. What between the torture of criticism, and the slow but sure advance of moral idea, this dogmatism is losing all hold of the most living and earnest intelligence everywhere. And it seems no longer possible, under any new polemic form, to revive it. Men are weary of heterodoxy and of orthodoxy alike, and of the former in any arbitrary and dogmatic shape still more intolerably than the latter. The old *Institutio Christiana Religionis* no longer satisfies, and a new *Institutio* can never replace it. A second Calvin in theology is impossible. Men thirst not less for spiritual truth, but they no longer believe in the capacity of system to embrace and contain that truth, as in a reservoir, for successive generations. They must seek for it themselves afresh in the pages of Scripture, and the ever-dawning light of spiritual life, or they will simply neglect and put it past as an old story.”

These extracts fully justify the statements we have made in regard to the scope and tendency of this book; and in commenting upon them in order to show this, we shall speak of the theology of the Reformation and Calvinism as substantially identical; not meaning by Calvinism the personal opinions of Calvin, but the leading features of the Calvinistic system of theology as distinguished from the Arminian and Socinian systems. In this sense Calvinism may be fairly called the theology of the Reformation, as it was certainly, though with different degrees of accuracy and fulness, maintained by the great body of the Reformers, and professed in most of the confessions of the Reformed churches. We never

hesitate to call ourselves Calvinists, though there are some of Calvin's opinions which we reckon erroneous; and in adopting this designation, we mean simply to convey the idea that we are firmly persuaded that the fundamental principles of the Calvinistic system of theology, as generally set forth in the symbolical books of churches usually reckoned Calvinistic, are taught, and can be proved to be taught, in Scripture, as the revealed truth of God. And here a practical difficulty at once arises in dealing with Dr Tulloch. If we were to judge of him solely from the statements contained in this book, we would have little hesitation in saying that he is not a Calvinist in the sense above explained. But of course we are aware that he has, like ourselves, subscribed a Calvinistic creed, and that he holds an office, the chief duty of which may be said to be to expound this creed. We have therefore scarcely a right to say that he is not a Calvinist, unless he had said so more explicitly perhaps than he has done. And in anything we may say bearing on this point, we wish it to be understood that we make no categorical assertion as to what Dr Tulloch's theological opinions in point of fact are, and that we intend merely to set forth what seem to us to be the scope and tendency of the views indicated in this book. With this explanation, we have no hesitation in saying that we are unable to comprehend how any intelligent Calvinist could have published the statements we have quoted; and that they are plainly fitted to lead to the conclusion that the author has renounced, if he ever held, the theology of the Reformation. It is a significant fact, that Dr Tulloch, though a professor of theology, has not, from the beginning to the end of his book; given any distinct indication that he is a Calvinist, or made any profession of regarding the Reformers as having succeeded in the main in bringing out God's truth from His word. There are several statements which look like a profession of Calvinism, but which, when carefully examined, are clearly seen to come short of this. But we are not confined to negative materials. We are plainly told that Calvinism once triumphed, but that this triumph was temporary, and is long since over; that no theological system can now occupy a triumphant position, since we have at last reached a demonstration of the incompetency of all theological systems whatever.

Dr Tulloch's position is pretty distinctly indicated in the somewhat enigmatical deliverance, "The old *Institutio Christianse Religionis*' no longer satisfies, and a new *Institutio* can never replace it." There is a sense in which we could assent to the notions suggested by this quotation. But in the sense in which Dr Tulloch evidently understands it, we regard it as unsound and dangerous. "The old '*Institutio Christianse Religionis*' no longer satisfies." Every Calvinist will admit this to be true, if it be understood to mean merely, that there are views set forth

in the “Institutes” of Calvin which can be proved from Scripture to be erroneous, and that the progress of discussion since his time has indicated defects existing in that work, and improvements that might be made upon it, as to the arrangement of the subjects, the mode in which several topics are presented, singly or in their relation to each other, the comparative prominence assigned to them, and the validity of all the proofs by which they are supported. There are points coming under these various heads, in which the “Institutes” do not now satisfy; and we hold it to be a mark of the respect to which Calvin and the “Institutes” are entitled, to be prepared to specify the grounds of our dissatisfaction. But those things about the “Institutes” which do not satisfy us are few and unimportant, and do not materially affect the present and permanent value of that great work. It is plainly in an entirely different sense from this that it no longer satisfies Dr Tulloch and other men of progress in the present day. He evidently regards it as having proved an entire failure in regard to its main substance, its principal contents or materials, and its leading design. The materials of which the “Institutes” are composed are, of course, just the leading doctrines of Scripture, according to the view which Calvinists, from Augustine to the present day, have always taken of their meaning and import. And the main question in judging of any work which professes to exhibit in a scientific or systematic form the leading principles of Christian theology must of necessity be, Are the materials of which it is composed, or the doctrines which it expounds and defends, accordant in the main with Scripture? Are they as a whole the views which Scripture teaches, and which it warrants and requires us to believe, as immutable truth resting upon divine authority? Every Calvinist who has read Calvin’s “Institutes,” of course, believes that the materials of which that work is composed are in the main the doctrines of God’s word, and therefore possessed of unchangeable verity. Most Calvinists have also been of opinion, that the great doctrines of Christian theology are upon the whole about as well arranged, as ably and accurately expounded, and as satisfactorily and conclusively defended in Calvin’s “Institutes” as they ever have been or can be. We do not exact of every Calvinist that he must concur in this commendation of Calvin’s “Institutes.” But, of course, no man can call himself a Calvinist unless he believe that the leading doctrines set forth in the “Institutes” are indeed taught by God in His word. And it is not very likely that any man could be found, who, while professing to hold the Calvinistic doctrines taught in the “Institutes,” should at the same time assert that either he himself, or any one else, could expound them more ably and defend them more conclusively than Calvin has done.



But it is of comparatively small importance in what light the “Institutes” ought to be regarded, viewed merely as a specimen of Calvin’s powers and achievements. The only vital question is this—Are the leading doctrines taught in the “Institutes” true and scriptural? Was the theology of Calvin, in its fundamental principles, correctly derived from the word of God? This is a vital question. We answer it in the affirmative, and we consider ourselves warranted in asserting that Dr Tulloch has answered it in the negative. There is, as was natural in the circumstances, a good deal of vagueness and confusion in his statements upon this subject. It was scarcely to be expected that he would at first speak out in an explicit and manly way. Men of progress in theology usually require to grope their way for a time, through hedges and along bye-ways. But with all the vagueness and confusion which characterize his statements, he has, we think, afforded sufficient grounds for charging him with maintaining,

1st, That the main features of the theology of the Reformation, the leading doctrines of the Calvinistic system, are not revealed to us in the word of God.

2d, That the Reformers erred in their whole theological system, because they had erroneous notions of the true province of logic, of the object and design of the sacred Scriptures, and of the way and manner in which they ought to be interpreted and applied in the formation of our religious opinions.

3d, That the crude and erroneous notions of the Reformers in regard to the province of logic, and the method of explaining and applying Scripture, being corrected and taken away, it is now a fixed and settled thing that all theological systems are incompetent.

We believe that these three propositions exhibit accurately the sum and substance of Dr Tulloch’s teaching upon the most important subject touched on in his lectures. It would afford us sincere gratification if Dr Tulloch could and would repudiate these views, and show that we had no sufficient grounds for imputing them to him. But this, we fear, is hopeless; and the next best thing would be, that he should plainly admit that he holds these positions in substance, and having thus come into the open arena, should boldly and manfully defend his convictions. The reputation of the Reformers, the settlement of any questions that may be started about the amount of the commendation that should be bestowed upon them, and about the grounds on which it should be based,—all this is insignificant. But the question of the truth or falsehood of the theology of the Reformation is too important to be trifled with. There may turn out to be

nothing formidable in the attack now made upon it; but, from the magnitude of the interests involved, we like always to see who are the assailants, and what means of assault they have provided.

A combination seems to exist at present for the purpose of undermining and exploding the theology of the Reformation, without meeting it fairly and openly in the field of argument. A man of higher standing than Dr Tulloch has yet reached, one who has rendered many important services to the cause of Christian truth, Mr Isaac Taylor, has lent a helping hand to this object, by publishing (anonymously) the following statement:—

“The creeds and the confessions of the Reformation era were, indeed, with scrupulous care based upon the authority of Holy Scripture, and, looking at them simply as they stood related to the manifold corruptions of the twelve centuries preceding, they might well claim to be scriptural. But in what manner had they been framed? A certain class of texts having been assumed as the groundwork of Christian belief, then a scheme of theology is put together accordingly, whence, by the means of the deductive logic, all separate articles of faith are to be derived. As to any passages of Scripture which might seem to be of another class, or which do not easily fall into their places in this scheme, they were either ignored, or they were controlled, and this to any extent that might be asked for by the stern necessities of the syllogistic method.”

Dr Tulloch has not put forth anything against the Reformers so discreditable as this, but he evidently occupies ground the same in substance, so far as concerns the erroneousness both of the process by which they investigated divine truth, and of the results which they reached. He cannot, indeed, be so forgetful of the history and writings of the Reformers as to be capable of believing what Mr Taylor has said about a “certain class of texts.” But in all other respects there is a wonderful harmony between them. They concur not only in the belief that the theology of the Reformation is fundamentally unsound and untenable, but also in their leading views of the errors attaching to the process by which this erroneous result was reached. They both think that it was the “deductive logic” that was the main cause of all the mischief, combined with certain erroneous notions of the way in which the Scriptures ought to be used and applied, meaning by this, apparently, just the doctrine of inspiration as it has been usually held by the Christian church, and its immediate consequences. They both expect an entirely new theology, which is to replace the superannuated logical theology of the Reformation. They expect this first from abandoning the deductive logic, and

then from the introduction of new modes of biblical exegesis. Mr Taylor, indeed, held out to the world the prospect of a new “exegetical method,” which was to work wonders in reforming theology. We are not aware that this exegetical method has yet made its appearance. But Dr Tulloch speaks as if the new and improved process of investigating divine truth, and of explaining and applying the Bible, were already in operation, and had already succeeded not only in bringing down Calvinism to the dust, but even in doing something to introduce a simpler and sounder theology. In the quotation we have given from him, he calls it a certain “spirit of interpreting Scripture,” which he describes in terms very magniloquent, but not such as to convey to us any very definite idea of what this spirit is, or where it is to be found. We would like to know something about this “spirit of interpreting Scripture,” which is to work such wonders and to effect such improvements in theology. But as Dr Tulloch assures us that it “could hardly have been intelligible to Calvin,” we fear we must renounce all hope of ever catching a glimpse of its import.

Dr Tulloch’s work contains no theological discussion, and therefore we are not called upon to engage in theological discussion in reviewing it. There is no distinct specification of what it is in the theology of the Reformation, or in the system of Calvinism, which is unsound and untenable. There is no specification of what it was that was erroneous in those old modes of reasoning or of biblical exegesis, which led to the temporary triumph of Calvinism, or of what are the grounds of that new “spirit of interpreting Scripture,” which has demolished Calvinism and introduced a sounder, that is, a more scanty and obscure, theology. We do not refer to the absence of anything of this sort as if it were a defect in a book which does not profess to discuss theological topics. We refer to it for the purpose, first, of expressing a doubt whether it was quite right and fair in Dr Tulloch to introduce what has so unfavourable a bearing upon the theology generally professed in Scotland, without entering into theological discussion, or setting forth with some fulness the grounds of the views expressed; and secondly, of showing that we are not called on, in reviewing Dr Tulloch’s book, to engage in theological discussion, since he has not given us anything distinct and substantial to answer.

The nearest approach to anything like definiteness which Dr. Tulloch makes under this general head of the theology of the Reformation, is an allegation to the effect that the Reformers formed their system of doctrine by carrying to an unwarranted length the practice of drawing inferences from Scripture statements, and by exercising greatly too much their logical faculties in classifying,

combining, and expanding the materials which Scripture affords. But even this is only a vague generality, of no real value or use, apart from its proved applicability to actual processes of investigation which have been adopted by individuals or bodies of men, and to actual theological results which have been brought out. No one can well dispute, that men are entitled and bound to use their intellectual powers, not only in investigating the meaning of particular statements, but in classifying and combining a number of statements, in order to bring out as the result the full teaching of Scripture upon the subject to which the statements relate, and that we are to receive, as resting upon divine authority, not only -what is “expressly set down in Scripture,” but also what “may, by good and necessary consequence, be deduced from Scripture.” It is admitted, on the other hand, that men have often gone too far in making deductions from scriptural statements, and especially, what is with many a great bugbear in the present day, in making deductions from doctrines assumed to be already established, upon the principle of what is sometimes called the analogy of faith. But though these are dangers to be guarded against, we fear that no rules can be laid down, marking out distinctly what is warrantable and legitimate in these respects and what is not; and therefore no decision upon these points can be founded upon mere vague general declamation about dangers and excesses. Each case in which error, either in the process adopted or in the result brought out, is alleged, must be judged of and decided upon its own merits. The theology of the Reformers is not to be set aside merely because men have often gone to an extreme in making deductions from scriptural statements, nor even because they themselves have sometimes erred in this respect. We insist that their theology, as a whole, and every doctrine which enters into their system, shall be judged of fairly and fully by the standard of Scripture, and of Scripture used and applied according to its real character and design. We embrace the theology of the Reformation just because we think we can prove, that all the particular doctrines which constitute it are taught in Scripture, rightly interpreted and applied; and while, on the one hand, we undertake the responsibility of asserting and proving this, we must, on the other hand, insist that any one who repudiates the theology of the Reformation, shall distinctly specify what the errors of the system are, and bring forward the evidence from Scripture that they are errors.

But Dr Tulloch assures us that Mr Mansel, in his “Bampton Lectures,” has conclusively established the incompetency of all theological systems whatever. Mr Mansel has not proved, and has not professed to prove, this. The fundamental principle of Mr Mansel’s book is really and in substance just the doctrine which has always been a familiar commonplace with orthodox divines, *viz.* that the

human faculties are unable adequately to comprehend all truths and all their relations, and that men have therefore no right to make their full comprehension of doctrines, or their perception of the accordance of doctrines with each other, the test or standard of their truth. And the principal merit of the work is, that it brings out this very important but very obvious and familiar principle in a philosophic dress, establishes it upon philosophic grounds, and connects it with the best philosophy of the age. The most legitimate and valuable application of Mr Manse's principles, so far as theological subjects are concerned, is to expose the unwarrantable presumption of the objections commonly adduced against the leading doctrines that seemed to be taught in Scripture, on the ground of their alleged contrariety to reason. We admit that his principles would also preclude the competency of founding a positive argument in support of the mysterious doctrines of theology, on what may be called rationalistic grounds derived from their intrinsic nature or mutual relation. But this is not sufficient to warrant Dr Tulloch's allegation that they establish the incompetency of all theological systems, because it is not by any such unwarrantable rationalistic process that theological systems are formed. The advocates of every theological system profess to find in Scripture all the materials of which their system is composed, and to be prepared to defend every doctrine they hold, and their system as a whole, by the authority of Scripture. The Reformers professed to derive their whole theology from Scripture, and undertook to produce evidence from Scripture for every doctrine they inculcated. And so do all Calvinists still. They may find some confirmation of their doctrines individually, and of their system as a whole, in considerations derived from natural reason and the exercise of their logical faculties. But they refer to Scripture as affording the chief direct positive proof of all they teach, and they undertake to show that the materials which Scripture furnishes, rightly and rationally used and applied, establish every part of their theological system. Calvinists do not pretend that, when they have proved some one of their doctrines from Scripture, they can derive all their other doctrines from this one by mere logical deduction. They profess to produce direct positive proof from Scripture sufficient to establish every one of them, and to have recourse to rational considerations only for confirming the proof, and especially for answering, or rather disposing of objections. In regard, then, to every one of the doctrines which enter into our theological system, we profess to show that it accurately expresses or embodies the sum and substance of what is asserted or indicated in Scripture upon the point. There is nothing in Manse's "Bampton Lectures," or anywhere else, which proves, or even appears to prove, that there is anything in this process which is incompetent or unwarrantable, or involves a transgression of the just "limits of religious thought." If there be men

who mainly rest the truth of their doctrines individually, or of their systems as a whole, upon any other ground than this reasonable and competent application of scriptural materials, they cannot plead on their behalf the example of the Reformers, or any of the best defenders of Calvinism. We base all the doctrines of our system upon statements contained in Scripture; we undertake to prove them by a fair and rational application of the materials which Scripture furnishes; and there is no ground for alleging that the processes required in doing this, whether conducted so as to lead in point of fact to a correct result in any particular case or not, go beyond the fair and legitimate exercise of men's mental powers. We are entitled to demand that our scriptural proofs shall be fairly faced and disposed of, in place of the whole subject being set aside as incompetent, upon the ground of a piece of palpably irrelevant metaphysics.

These remarks may be illustrated by selecting an instance of a particular doctrine; and we shall choose with this view the great doctrine of justification, which in some aspects may be regarded as the great distinguishing feature of the theology of the Reformation.

Dr Tulloch has given a statement of this great doctrine of Luther in a somewhat mystical and not very intelligible style, to which it is not worth while to advert. What we have to do with at present is this, that he complains that Luther and the defenders of the theology of the Reformation, in place of being contented with some vague generalities upon this subject, should, by definition and exposition, have drawn it out into precise and definite propositions, alleging in substance that the whole process by which this is done is unwarrantable and incompetent, and that the result is not truth, but error. Let us take one of these precise and definite descriptions of justification, and see how the case stands; and in order to give Dr Tulloch every advantage, we shall select it from a period when the odious process of what he calls "ultra-definition" had been carried somewhat farther than was done by the Reformers, and when, of course, all that he reckons so objectionable was most fully developed. About the middle of the seventeenth century, an assembly of divines put forth the following statement of what they believed to be taught in Scripture on the subject of justification:—

"Those whom God effectually calleth, He also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them as their righteousness, but

by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves—it is the gift of God.”

Everyone acquainted with the history of theological discussion, knows that this remarkable statement not only affirms positively and explicitly certain great truths, but by plain implication denies certain errors opposed to them, which have been held by Papists and Arminians to be taught in Scripture; and the question raised by it is this,—Are the doctrines asserted, or the doctrines denied, here, revealed to us in Scripture as true? It is quite possible that some men may refuse to adopt either of these alternatives, and may contend that Scripture teaches a third doctrine upon the subject of justification, different from either,—or that it does not teach any definite doctrine whatever upon the points here brought under consideration, and furnishes no materials for an intelligent and rational decision among the contending creeds. Our position upon the subject is clear and decided, and we wish to understand distinctly the position of any one whose views upon these matters we may be called upon to consider. We believe that the statement quoted from the “Confession of Faith” presents an accurate embodiment of the sum and substance of what Scripture warrants and requires us to believe upon the subject of justification; and we hold ourselves bound to produce, in suitable circumstances, the Scripture proof that all the Protestant Calvinistic doctrines there asserted are true, and that all the Popish and Arminian doctrines there denied are false. In what precise way Dr Tulloch would define his position in regard to this matter, we can scarcely venture to say. We presume he will not affirm, that he believes either the one or the other set of opinions to be taught in Scripture, and to be binding upon mens consciences. He is not likely, we should suppose, to put forth a third set of opinions upon these points, different from the other two. The ground which, it would seem, he must take, in order to escape from the degradation of professing, in this nineteenth century, a precise set of opinions upon justification, is to maintain that Scripture does not furnish materials for laying down any such definite doctrines upon the subject. And this can -be established only in one or other of two ways: either by producing some direct general proof of it a priori, as an abstract position; or by following the method of exhaustion, and proving in detail that not one of the attempts which have been made to deduce a definite doctrine of justification from scriptural materials has succeeded. There is thus a vast deal to be done beyond what has ever yet been attempted, before the great doctrine of justification as set forth in the confessions of the Reformed churches can be exploded, and the way opened up for restoring that obscurity and confusion in

regard to the way of a sinner's justification, which the Reformers did so much to dissipate, and which the men of progress in the present day seem so anxious to bring back.

There is one theological topic on which Dr Tulloch has given something like a deliverance, and it may be worth while to advert to it as a specimen of the new or advanced theology. In treating of the controversy between Luther and Erasmus on the subject of the bondage or servitude of the will, he gives the following sage and satisfactory deliverance regarding it:—

“It would be idle for us to enter into the merits of this controversy; and in truth, its merits are no longer to us what they were to the combatants themselves. The course of opinion has altered this as well as many other points of dispute, so that under the same names we no longer really discuss the same things. There are probably none, with any competent knowledge of the subject, who would care any longer to defend the exact position either of Luther or of Erasmus. Both are right and both are wrong. Man is free, and yet grace is needful; and the philosophic refinements of Erasmus, and the wild exaggerations of Luther, have become mere historic dust, which would only raise a cloud by being disturbed.”

And in referring to the same point as controverted between Calvin and Pighius, he disposes of it in this way:—

“So far as the merits of the controversy are concerned, it cannot be said that he is any more successful than the German Reformer. He is here and everywhere more simple and cautious in his statements, but his cold reiterations and evasions really no more touch the obvious difficulties than Luther's heated paradoxes.”

The great controversy, then, about the bondage of the will, to which the Reformers attached so much importance in their discussions with the Romanists, and the Calvinists in their discussions with the Arminians, Dr Tulloch pronounces to have been a mere logomachy,—a question of no practical importance whatever,—unworthy, it would seem, of receiving any serious consideration. Here, again, we fear that Dr Tulloch's deliverance must be held to imply a denial that the doctrine taught by the Reformers is really revealed to us in Scripture. That doctrine, as set forth by the Westminster divines, is, that “man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation.” Luther, in defending this doctrine in reply to Erasmus, has made some rash and exaggerated statements, which no one adopts.



But Calvin, in defending the same doctrine in reply to Pighius, has, as Dr Tulloch admits, avoided these excesses. And, independently of all peculiarities of individuals, we would like to know how Dr Tulloch would deal with the doctrine as stated by the Westminster divines. Is that too a mere logomachy, which is just as true and as false as the opposite doctrine taught by Papists and Arminians? Are there really no materials in Scripture for deciding either for or against the great Reformation doctrine of the bondage or servitude of the will of fallen man to sin? Is the whole of the process of investigating the meaning of Scripture for the decision of that question, as it has been conducted on both sides, unwarrantable and illegitimate? Or is there really an utter want of materials in Scripture for determining the question, either on the one side or on the other? The way in which Dr Tulloch has spoken in regard to this important doctrine of the Reformation suggests and warrants such questions as these; and we would like to see him meet them, as well as those formerly proposed in regard to justification, openly and manfully, in order that we might, if possible, learn something about that “spirit of interpreting Scripture,” of which Dr Tulloch discourses so magniloquently and unintelligibly, and by which Scripture seems to be rendered so inadequate to be “a light unto our feet and a lamp unto our path.”

There is another important subject, in regard to which the Reformers have been generally regarded as having rendered good service to mankind, *viz.* the right organization of the Christian church. This, in one aspect, might be comprehended under the general head of theology or doctrine, as it consists essentially in bringing out a portion of the mind and will of God as revealed in His word. But it is common, and in some respects useful, to distinguish them, and Dr Tulloch has given them a separate treatment. The questions to be entertained and settled upon this subject are these: Has God given us in His word any indications of His will with respect to the worship and government of His church, which are binding in all ages? and if He has, what are they?

It is generally conceded that the Reformers restored the church to a large measure of apostolic purity and simplicity with respect to worship and government. But it cannot be said that they reckoned this matter so important as the restoration of sound doctrine, or that they were to so large an extent of one mind in the conclusions to which they came. In this as well as in theology, more strictly so called, Calvin was the great master-mind, who stamped his impress most distinctly upon the church of that and of every subsequent period. His own contributions to the establishment of principle and the development of truth,

were greater in regard to church organization than in regard to any other department of discussion,—of such magnitude and importance, indeed, in their bearing upon the whole subject of the church, as naturally to suggest a comparison with the achievements of Sir Isaac Newton in unfolding the true principles of the solar system. The Christian church is mainly indebted to Calvin, much more than to any other man, for bringing out distinctly, pressing upon general attention, and establishing, the following great principles:—

1st, That it is unwarrantable and unlawful to introduce into the government and worship of the church anything which has not the positive sanction of Scripture.

2d, That the church, though it consists properly and primarily only of the elect or of believers, and though, therefore, visibility and organization are not essential, as Papists allege they are, to its existence, is under a positive obligation to be organized, if possible, as a visible society, and to be organized in all things, so far as possible—its office-bearers, ordinances, worship, and general administration and arrangements—in accordance with what is prescribed or indicated upon these points in the New Testament.

3d, That the fundamental principles, or leading features, of what is usually called Presbyterian church government, are indicated with sufficient clearness in the New Testament as permanently binding upon the church.

4th, That the church should be altogether free and independent of civil control, and should conduct its own distinct and independent government by presbyteries and synods, while the civil power is called upon to afford it protection and support.

5th, That human laws, whether about civil or ecclesiastical things, and whether proceeding from civil or ecclesiastical authorities, do not per se—i.e. irrespective of their being sanctioned by the authority of God—impose an obligation upon the conscience. .

Calvin professed to find all these principles more or less clearly taught in Scripture; and we have no doubt that he succeeded in proving that they are all sanctioned by the word of God, and that thus they may be said to embody the permanent binding constitution of the Christian church. We do not say that none of these principles had ever been enunciated till Calvin proclaimed them. But some of them had never before been so clearly and explicitly set forth. None of

them had ever before been so fully brought out in their true meaning, and in their complete evidence. And the presentation of them all in combination, expounded and defended with consummate ability, and at the same time with admirable moderation and good sense, furnishes a contribution to the right permanent organization of the Christian church such as no man ever made before, and no man could have an opportunity of making again. Calvin may be said, in a sense, to have settled permanently the constitution of the Christian church, not by assuming any jurisdiction over it, or by any mere exercise of his own talents and sagacity, but simply because God was pleased to make him the instrument of bringing out from the sacred Scriptures the great leading principles bearing upon the organization of the church, which till that time had been very much overlooked, and had been far from exerting their proper influence. We believe that the leading principles which Calvin inculcated in regard to the organization of the church, never have been, and never can be, successfully assailed; while there is certainly no possibility of any one being able again to bring out from Scripture a contribution of anything like equal value.

Of course, everything depends upon the settlement of the question, whether or not these principles are taught in Scripture, as truth revealed for the permanent guidance of the church. The general process by which this is to be investigated and ascertained, is perfectly competent and legitimate in all its features, though opposite conclusions have been brought out by different parties who professed to follow it. It has been contended,

1st, That Scripture sanctions the great principles above stated, as the permanent constitution of the church.

2d, That Scripture teaches something which is different from, or exclusive of, or opposed to, these principles, upon all or most of the points to which they relate.

3d, That little or nothing bearing upon matters of worship and government is prescribed to or imposed upon the church, and that there are no adequate materials for deciding upon the truth or falsehood of the two preceding positions.

Something plausible may be adduced in support of each of these three positions. But the question is, Which of them is true? which has really the sanction of Scripture? We embrace the first of them, and profess to be able to establish it by an accurate exposition and a reasonable application of materials which Scripture furnishes. The third of these positions is in substance that which is maintained by

Dr Tulloch and other latitudinarians. He seems to think, that except perhaps in regard to some great general principles, so evident as scarcely to leave room for a difference of opinion, the church is left at liberty to settle questions about government and worship for herself, in the way which she may think best at the time and in the circumstances; that the views upon these subjects brought out by Calvin and the Reformers, though improvements upon the previous condition of things, and well suited to the times, furnish nothing like a pattern of what ought to be the permanent state of the church; and that Scripture cannot be shown to afford materials for deciding those controversies which have been carried on between different churches about questions of government and worship. These are the sort of notions which he indicates plainly enough in such passages as the following:—

“There are two distinct views that may be taken of this part of Calvin’s work. It presents itself, on the one hand, as a moral influence—a conservative spiritual discipline suited to the time, as it was called forth by it; and, on the other hand, as a new theory, or definite reconstitution of the church. In the first point of view it is almost wholly admirable; in the second, it will be found unable to maintain itself any more than the Catholic theory which it so far displaced.” “It is a very different subject that is before us when we turn to contemplate the theocracy of Calvin, in its formal expression and basis as a new and definite outline of church government. In this respect he made more an apparent than a real advance upon the old Catholic theocracy. He took up the old principle from a different and higher basis, but in a scarcely less arbitrary and external manner. There is a kingdom of divine truth and righteousness, he said, and Scripture, not the priesthood, is its basis. The divine word, and not Roman tradition, is the foundation of the spiritual commonwealth. So far all right; so far Calvin had got hold of a powerful truth against the corrupt historical pretensions of Popery. But he at once went much further than this, and said, not tentatively or in a spirit of rational freedom, but dogmatically and in a spirit of arbitrariness, tainted with the very falsehood from whose thralldom he sought to deliver men, ‘This is the form of the divine kingdom presented in Scripture.’”<sup>f</sup> “Presbyterianism became the peculiar church order of a free Protestantism, carrying with it everywhere, singularly enough, as one of the very agencies of its free moral influence, an inquisitorial authority resembling that of the Calvinistic consistory. It rested, beyond doubt, on a true divine order, else it never could have attained this historical success. But it also involved from the beginning a corrupting stain in the very way in which it put forth its divine warrant. It not merely asserted itself to be wise and conformable to Scripture, and therefore divine, but it claimed the

direct impress of a divine right for all its details and applications. This gave it strength and influence in a rude and uncritical age, but it planted in it from the first an element of corruption. The great conception which it embodied was impaired at the root by being fixed in a stagnant and inflexible system, which became identified with the conception as not only equally but specially divine.”J “But were not these ‘elements,’ some will say, really biblical? did not Calvin establish his church polity and church discipline upon Scripture? and is not this a warrantable course? Assuredly not in the spirit in which he did it. The fundamental source of the mistake is here. The Christian Scriptures are a revelation of divine truth, and not a revelation of church polity. They not only do not lay down the outline of such a polity, but they do not even give the adequate and conclusive hints of one; and for the best of all reasons, that it would have been entirely contrary to the spirit of Christianity to have done so; and because, in point of fact, the conditions of human progress do not admit of the imposition of any unvarying system of government, ecclesiastical or civil. The system adapts itself to the life, everywhere expands with it or narrows with it, but is nowhere in any particular form the absolute condition of life. A definite outline of church polity, therefore, or a definite code of social ethics, is nowhere given in the New Testament, and the spirit of it is entirely hostile to the absolute assertion of either the one or the other.” §

In order to establish his position, Dr Tulloch is bound either to produce Scripture evidence in support of the general notions or maxims on which he bases it, or else to prove in detail the utter inadequacy of all the attempts which have been made to show, that any definite views in regard to government and worship ought permanently to guide the churches of Christ. We profess to establish our position by both these classes of argument. In so far as we profess to lay down any general rules, whether of an imperative or of a prohibitory character, and in so far as we urge any specific arrangements as permanently binding, we undertake to produce sufficient evidence from Scripture for all we assert or require. Dr Tulloch has not entered upon any defence of the ground he has taken upon this subject; and therefore we are not called upon to discuss it. But as the loose and dangerous views which he has put forth are very prevalent in the present day, and as they are by no means destitute of plausibility, while, at the same time, we are persuaded that a large share of the favour they have met with is to be ascribed to ignorance and misapprehension, we shall take the opportunity of making a few explanatory observations regarding them.

Of the views generally held by the Reformers on the subject of the organization

of the church, there are two which have been always very offensive to men of a loose and latitudinarian tendency,—viz. the alleged unlawfulness of introducing into the worship and government of the church anything which is not positively warranted by Scripture, and the permanent binding obligation of a particular form of church government. The second of these principles may be regarded, in one aspect of it, as comprehended in the first. But it may be proper to make a few observations upon them separately, in the order in which they have now been stated.

The Lutheran and Anglican sections of the Reformers held a somewhat looser view upon these subjects than was approved of by Calvin. They generally held that the church might warrantably introduce innovations into its government and worship, which might seem fitted to be useful, provided it could not be shown that there was anything in Scripture which expressly prohibited or discountenanced them, thus laying the onus probandi, in so far as Scripture is concerned, upon those who opposed the introduction of innovations. The Calvinistic section of the Reformers, following their great master, adopted a stricter rule, and were of opinion that there are sufficiently plain indications in Scripture itself, that it was Christ's mind and will that nothing should be introduced into the government and worship of the church, unless a positive warrant for it could be found in Scripture. This principle was adopted and acted upon by the English Puritans and the Scottish Presbyterians; and we are persuaded that it is the only true and safe principle applicable to this matter.

The principle is in a sense a very wide and sweeping one. But it is purely prohibitory or exclusive; and the practical effect of it, if it were fully carried out, would just be to leave the church in the condition in which it was left by the apostles, in so far as we have any means of information,—a result, surely, which need not be very alarming, except to those who think that they themselves have very superior powers for improving and adorning the church by their inventions. The principle ought to be understood in a common-sense way, and we ought to be satisfied with reasonable evidence of its truth. Those who dislike this principle, from whatever cause, usually try to run us into difficulties by putting a very stringent construction upon it, and thereby giving it an appearance of absurdity, or by demanding an unreasonable amount of evidence to establish it. The principle must be interpreted and explained in the exercise of common sense. One obvious modification of it is suggested in the first chapter of the "Westminster Confession," where it is acknowledged "that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the church

common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.” But even this distinction between things and circumstances cannot always be applied very certainly; that is, cases have occurred in which there might be room for a difference of opinion, whether a proposed regulation or arrangement was a distinct thing in the way of innovation, or merely a circumstance attaching to an authorized thing and requiring to be regulated. Difficulties and differences of opinions may arise about details, even when sound judgment and good sense are brought to bear upon the interpretation and application of the principle; but this affords no ground for denying or doubting the truth or soundness of the principle itself.

In regard to questions of this sort there are two opposite extremes, into which one-sided minds are apt to fall, and both of which ought to be guarded against. The one is to stick rigidly and doggedly to a general principle, refusing to admit that any limitations or qualifications ought to be permitted in applying it; and the other is to reject the principle altogether, as if it had no truth or soundness about it, merely because it manifestly cannot, be carried out without some exceptions and modifications, and because difficulties may be raised about some of the details of its application which cannot always be very easily solved. Both these extremes have been often exhibited in connection with this principle. Both of them are natural, but both are unreasonable, and both indicate a want of sound judgment. The right course is to ascertain, if possible, whether or not the principle be true; and if there seem to be sufficient evidence of its truth, then to seek to make a reasonable and judicious application of it.

With regard to the Scripture evidence of the truth of the principle, we do not allege that it is very direct, explicit, and overwhelming. It is not of a kind likely to satisfy the coarse, material literalists, who can see nothing in the Bible but what is asserted in express terms. But it is, we think, amply sufficient to convince those who, without any prejudice against it, are ready to submit their minds to the fair impression of what Scripture seems to have been intended to teach. The general principle of the unlawfulness of introducing into the government and worship of the church anything which cannot be shown to have positive scriptural sanction, can, we think, be deduced from the word of God by good and necessary consequence. We do not mean at present to adduce the proof, but merely to indicate where it is to be found. The truth of this principle, as a general rule for the guidance of the church, is plainly enough involved in what Scripture teaches concerning its own sufficiency and perfection as a rule of

faith and practice, concerning God's exclusive right to determine in what way He ought to be worshipped, concerning Christ's exclusive right to settle the constitution, laws, and arrangements of His kingdom, concerning the unlawfulness of will-worship, and concerning the utter unfitness of men for the function which they have so often and so boldly usurped in this matter. The fair application of these various scriptural views taken in combination, along with the utter want of any evidence on the other side, seems to us quite sufficient to shut out the lawfulness of introducing the inventions of men into the government and worship of the Christian church.

There is no force in the presumption, that, because so little in regard to the externals of the church is fixed by scriptural authority, therefore much was left to be regulated by human wisdom, as experience might suggest or as the varying condition of the church might seem to require. For, on the contrary, every view suggested by Scripture of Christianity and the church, indicates that Christ intended His church to remain permanently in the condition of simplicity as to outward arrangements, in which His apostles were guided to leave it. And never certainly has there been a case in which it has been more fully established by experience, that the foolishness of God, as the apostle says, is wiser than men; that what seems to many men very plausible and very wise, is utter folly, and tends to frustrate the very objects which it was designed to serve. Of the innumerable inventions of men introduced into the government and worship of the church, without any warrant from Scripture, but professedly as being indicated by the wisdom of experience, or by the Christian consciousness of a particular age or country, to be fitted to promote the great ends of the church, not one can with any plausibility be shown to have had a tendency to contribute, or to have in fact contributed, to the end contemplated; while, taken in the mass,—and of course no limitation can be put to them unless the principle we maintain be adopted,—they have inflicted fearful injury upon the best interests of the church. There is a remarkable statement of Dr Owen's on this subject, which has been often quoted, but not more frequently than it deserves; it is this—"The principle that the church hath power to institute any thing or ceremony belonging to the worship of God, either as to matter or manner, beyond the observance of such circumstances as necessarily attend such ordinances as Christ himself hath instituted, lies at the bottom of all the horrible superstition and idolatry, of all the confusion, blood, persecution, and wars, that have for so long a season spread themselves over the face of the Christian world." It is no doubt very gratifying to the pride of men to think that they, in the exercise of their wisdom, brought to bear upon the experience 'of the past history of the church, or (to accommodate



our statement to the prevalent views and phraseology of the present day) in the exercise of their own Christian consciousness, their own spiritual tact and discernment, can introduce improvements upon the nakedness and simplicity of the church as it was left by the apostles. Perhaps the best mode of dealing with such persons, is to call upon them to exemplify their own general principle, by producing specific instances from among the innumerable innovations that have been introduced into the church in past ages, by which they are prepared to maintain that the interests of religion have been benefited;—or, if they decline this, to call upon them for a specimen of the innovations, possessed of course of this beneficial character and tendency, which they themselves have devised and would wish to have introduced; and then to undertake to show, what would be no very difficult task, that these innovations, whether selected or invented, have produced, or would produce if tried, effects the very reverse of what they would ascribe to them.

There is a strange fallacy which seems to mislead men in forming an estimate of the soundness and importance of this principle. Because this principle has been often brought out in connection with the discussion of matters which, viewed in themselves, are very unimportant,—such as rites and ceremonies, vestments and organs, crossings, kneelings, bowings, and other such ineptiae,—some men seem to think that it partakes of the intrinsic littleness of these things, and that the men who defend and try to enforce it, find their most congenial occupation in fighting about these small matters, and exhibit great bigotry and narrow-mindedness in bringing the authority of God and the testimony of Scripture to bear upon such a number of paltry points. Many have been led to entertain such views as these of the English Puritans and of the Scottish Presbyterians, and very much upon the ground of their maintenance of this principle. Now, it should be quite sufficient to prevent or neutralize this impression, to show, as we think can be done, 1st, That the principle is taught with sufficient plainness in Scripture, and that, therefore, it ought to be professed and applied to the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs. 2d, That, viewed in itself, it is large, liberal, and comprehensive, such as seems in no way unbecoming its divine Author, and in no way unsuitable to the dignity of the church as a divine institution, giving to God His rightful place of supremacy, and to the church, as the body of Christ, its rightful position of elevated simplicity and purity, 3d, That, when contemplated in connection with the ends of the church, it is in full accordance with everything suggested by an enlightened and searching survey of the tendencies of human nature, and the testimony of all past experience. And with respect to the connection above referred to, on which the impression we are combating is chiefly based, it is

surely plain that, in so far as it exists de facto, this is owing, not to anything in the tendencies of the principle itself or of its supporters, but to the conduct of the men who, in defiance of this principle, would obtrude human inventions into the government and worship of the church, or who insist upon retaining them permanently after they have once got admittance. The principle suggests no rites or ceremonies, no schemes or arrangements; it is purely negative and prohibitory. Its supporters never devise innovations and press them upon the church. The principle itself precludes this. It is the deniers of this principle, and they alone, who invent and obtrude innovations; and they are responsible for all the mischiefs that ensue from the discussions and contentions to which these things have given rise.

Men, under the pretence of curing the defects and shortcomings, the nakedness and bareness, attaching to ecclesiastical arrangements as set before us in the New Testament, have been constantly proposing innovations and improvements in government and worship. The question is, How ought these proposals to have been received? Our answer is, There is a great general scriptural principle which shuts them all out. We refuse even to enter into the consideration of what is alleged in support of them. It is enough for us that they have no positive sanction from Scripture. On this ground we refuse to admit them, and, where they have crept in, we insist upon their being turned out, although, upon this latter point, Calvin, with his usual magnanimity, was always willing to have a reasonable regard to times and circumstances, and to the weaknesses and infirmities of the parties concerned. This is really all that we have to do with the mass of trumpery that has been brought under discussion in connection with these subjects. We find plainly enough indicated in Scripture a great comprehensive principle, suited to the dignity and importance of the great subject to which it relates, the right administration of the church of Christ,—a principle “majestic in its own simplicity.”

We apply this principle to the mass of paltry stuff that has been devised for the purpose of improving and adorning the church, and thereby we sweep it all away. This is all that we have to do with these small matters. We have no desire to know or to do anything about them; and when they are obtruded upon us by our opponents, we take our stand upon a higher platform, and refuse to look at them. This is plainly the true state of the case; and yet attempts are constantly made, and not wholly without success, to represent these small matters, and the discussions to which they have given rise, as distinctively characteristic of English Puritans and Scottish Presbyterians; whereas, in all their intrinsic

littleness and paltriness, they are really characteristic only of those who contend for introducing or retaining them.

It was a great service, then, that Calvin rendered to the church when he brought out and established this principle, in correction of the looser views held by the Lutheran and Anglican Reformers. If all the Protestant churches had cordially adopted and faithfully followed this simple but comprehensive and commanding principle, this would certainly have prevented a fearful amount of mischief, and would, in all probability, have effected a vast amount of good. There is good ground to believe, that, in that case, the Protestant churches would have been all along far more cordially united together, and more active and successful in opposing their great common enemies, Popery and Infidelity, and in advancing the cause of their common Lord and Master.

There is another principle that was generally held by the Reformers, though not peculiar to them, which is very offensive to Dr Tulloch and other latitudinarians, *viz.* the scriptural authority or *jus divinum* of one particular form of church government. This general principle has been held by most men who have felt any real honest interest in religious matters, whether they had adopted Popish, Prelatic, Presbyterian, or Congregational views of what the government of the church should be. The first persons who gave prominence to a negation of this principle, were the original defenders of the Church of England in Queen Elizabeth's reign, Archbishop Whitgift and his associates, who scarcely ventured to claim a scriptural sanction for the constitution of their church. They have not been generally followed in this by the more modern defenders of the Church of England, who have commonly claimed a divine right for their government, and not a few of whom have gone the length of unchurching Presbyterians and Congregationalists. But they have been followed by some men in every age who seemed anxious to escape from the controlling authority of Scripture, that they might be more at liberty to gratify their own fancies, or to prosecute their own selfish interest.

From the time of Whitgift and Hooker down to the present day, it has been a common misrepresentation of the view's of *jure divino* anti-prelatists, to allege, that they claimed a divine right— a positive Scripture sanction—for the details of their system of government. Dr Tulloch seems to have thought it impossible to dispense with this misrepresentation; and accordingly he tells us that Presbyterianism “not merely asserted itself to be wise and conformable to Scripture, and therefore divine, but it claimed the direct impress of a divine right

for all its details and applications.” This statement is untrue. There may be differences of opinion among Presbyterians as to the extent to which a divine right should be claimed for the subordinate features of the system, and some, no doubt, have gone to an extreme in the extent of their claims. But no Presbyterians of eminence have ever claimed “the direct impress of a divine right for all the details and applications” of their system» They have claimed a divine right, or scriptural sanction, only for its fundamental principles, its leading features. It is these only which they allege are indicated in Scripture in such a way as to be binding upon the church in all ages. And it is just the same ground that is taken by all the more intelligent and judicious among jure divino Prelatists and Congregationalists.

Dr Tulloch, in the last of the quotations we have given from his book, endeavours to prove that no form of church government was or could have been laid down in Scripture, so as to be permanently binding upon the church. His leading positions are embodied in this statement:—

“The Christian Scriptures are a revelation of divine truth, and not a revelation of church polity. They not only do not lay down the outline of such a polity, but they do not even give the adequate and conclusive hints of one. And for the best of all reasons, that it would have been entirely contrary to the spirit of Christianity to have done so; and because, in point of fact, the conditions of human progress do not admit of the imposition of any unvarying system of government, ecclesiastical or civil.”

Dr Tulloch admits that the Scriptures are “a revelation of divine truth;”<sup>5</sup> and since the truth revealed in them is not the theology of the Reformation, we hope that some time or other he will enlighten the world as to what the “divine truth” is which they do reveal. As to the position that “the Scriptures are not a revelation of church polity/<sup>5</sup> we venture to think, that it is possible that something may be taught in Scripture on the subject of church polity for the permanent guidance of the church; and if there be anything of that nature taught there, then it must be a portion of the “divine truth” which the Scriptures reveal. Whether anything be taught in Scripture on the subject of church polity, must be determined, not by such an oracular deliverance as Dr Tulloch has given, but by an examination of Scripture itself, by an investigation into the validity of the scriptural grounds which have been brought forward in support of the different theories of church government. Dr Tulloch will scarcely allege, that there is nothing whatever taught in Scripture as to what should be the polity of the

church; and if there be anything taught there upon the subject, it must be received as a portion of divine truth. He is quite sure, however, that the sacred Scriptures “not only do not lay down the outline of such a polity, but they do not even give the adequate and conclusive hints of one.’<sup>5</sup> Here we are directly at issue with him. We contend that not merely “hints,” but what may be fairly called an “outline 55 of a particular church polity, are set forth in Scripture in such a way as to be binding upon the church in all ages.

We admit, indeed, that when this position is discussed in the abstract as a general thesis, a good deal of the argument often adduced in support of it is unsatisfactory and insufficient, as well as what is adduced against it. When the position we maintain is put in the shape of an abstract proposition, in which the advocates of all the different forms of church government— Papists, Prelatists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists—may concur; in other words, when the general position is laid down, that a particular form of church government, without specifying what, is sanctioned by Scripture, we admit that the materials which may be brought to bear in support of this position are somewhat vague and indefinite, and do not tell very directly and conclusively upon the point to be proved. The strength of the case is brought fully out only when it is alleged that some one particular form of church government specified, as Prelacy or Presbyterianism, is sanctioned and imposed by Scripture. The best and most satisfactory way of establishing the general position, that the Scripture sanctions and imposes a particular form of church government, is to bring out the particular principles, rules, and arrangements in regard to the government of the church which are sanctioned by Scripture, and to show that these, when taken together, or viewed in combination, 'constitute what may be fairly and reasonably called a form of church government. By this process not only is the general proposition most clearly and directly established, but, what is of much more importance, the particular form of church government which Scripture sanctions, and which, therefore, the church is under a permanent obligation to have, is brought out and demonstrated.

Attempts, indeed, have been made to prove and to disprove the general thesis in the abstract by a priori reasonings, but most of these reasonings appear to us to possess but little force or relevancy. It is contended on a priori grounds, on the one hand, that there must have been a particular form of church government laid down in Scripture; and it is contended on similar grounds, on the other hand, that this could not be done, or that it was impossible consistently with the general nature of the Christian church, and the circumstances in w'hich it was, and was

to be, placed. But the truth is, that nothing which can be fairly regarded as very clear or cogent can be adduced in support of either of these abstract positions, unless the idea of a form of church government be taken, in the first of them, in a very wide and lax, and in the second, in a very minute and restricted sense. On the one hand, while there is a large measure of a priori probability, that Christ, intending to found a church as an organized, visible, permanent society, very different in character from the previously subsisting church of God, especially in regard to all matters of external organization and arrangement, should give some general directions or indications of His mind and will as to its constitution and government, we have no certain materials for making any assertion as to the extent to which He was called upon to carry the rules He might prescribe as of permanent obligation, or for holding that He might be confidently expected to give rules so complete and minute as to constitute what might with any propriety be called a form of church government. And, on the other hand, while it is evident that the Christian church was intended to be wholly different in external organization from the Jewish one, and to have no such minute and detailed system of regulations, as being intended for all ages and countries; and while on these grounds, but little, as compared with the Jewish system, was to be subjected to precise and detailed regulations, and something might thus be left to the church to be determined by the light of nature and providential circumstances, —there is no antecedent improbability whatever, arising from any source or any consideration, in the idea that Christ might give such general directions on this subject as, when combined together, might justly have the designation of a form of church government applied to them. On these grounds we do not attach much weight to those general a priori considerations, by which many have undertaken to prove, on the one hand, that Christ must have established a particular form of government for His church, or, on the other hand, that He could not have done so; and we regard the case upon this whole subject as left in a very defective and imperfect state, until the advocates of the principle of a scripturally sanctioned or jure divino form of church government, have shown what the particular form of church government is which the Scripture sanctions, and have produced the evidence that Scripture does sanction that form, and, of course, a form—which will be a sufficient answer to the allegation that He could not have done so.

We think we can prove from Scripture statement and apostolic practice, the binding obligation of certain laws or rules, and arrangements, which furnish not only “hints,” but even an “outline of church polity,” and which, when combined together, may be fairly said to constitute a form of church government. In this

way, we think we can show that there is a particular form of church government which, in its fundamental principles and leading features, is sanctioned and imposed by Scripture, viz., the Presbyterian one.

If the general a priori considerations which have been frequently brought into the discussion of this subject are insufficient to establish the true position, that Scripture does sanction one particular form of church government, much less are they adequate to establish the false position that it does not. Dr Tulloch, as we have seen, asserts that we have “the best of all reasons” to show that the Scriptures do not lay down even an outline” of a church polity. But his “best of all reasons” are not likely to satisfy any but those who are determined beforehand to be convinced. His reasons are two:—1st, “It would have been entirely contrary to the spirit of Christianity to have done so;” 2d, “The conditions of human progress do not admit of the imposition of any unvarying system of government, ecclesiastical or civil.” This is the whole proof which he adduces; and these he calls “the best of all reasons.” This, forsooth, is to prove that it is impossible that even the “outline” of a church polity could have been set forth in Scripture as permanently binding. Even Divine Wisdom, it would seem, could not have devised an outline of a church polity which would have been accordant with “the spirit of Christianity and the conditions of human progress.” Our readers, we presume, will not expect us to say anything more for the purpose of refuting and exposing this. “The spirit of Christianity and the conditions of human progress” might have had some bearing upon the question in hand, if there had been on the other side the maintenance of the position, that the Scriptures imposed upon the church a full system of minute and detailed prescription of external arrangements, similar in character and general features to the Jewish economy. But when it is considered how entirely different from everything of this sort is all that is contended for by intelligent defenders of the divine right of a particular form of church government, most men, we think, will see that Dr Tulloch’s appeal, for conclusive evidence against its possibility, to the spirit of Christianity and the conditions of human progress, is truly ridiculous.

The disproof of the position, which has been received so generally among professing Christians, that Scripture does sanction and prescribe the outline of a church polity, cannot be effected by means of vague and ambiguous generalities, or by high-sounding declamation. It can be effected, if at all, only by the method of exhaustion; that is, by the detailed refutation of all the different attempts which have been made to establish from Scripture the divine right of a particular

form of church government. And this species of work is much more difficult, requires much more talent and learning, than declaiming about “the spirit of Christianity and the conditions of human progress.”

At the same time, we must admit that it has become somewhat common and popular in modern times, to scout and ridicule the advancing of a claim to a divine right on behalf of any particular form of church government. This has arisen partly, no doubt, from the ignorant and injudicious zeal with which the claim has been sometimes advocated, even by those whose views upon the subject of church government were, in the main, sound and scriptural; but principally, we are persuaded, from certain erroneous notions of the practical consequences that are supposed to follow necessarily from the establishment of this claim.

All Papists and many Prelatists, in putting forth a claim to a divine right on behalf of their respective systems of church government, have openly, and without hesitation, deduced from their fancied success in establishing this claim, the conclusion that professedly Christian societies which had not their form of government were, for this reason, to be refused the designation and the ordinary rights of Christian churches, or even to be placed beyond the pale within which salvation is ordinarily possible. This mode of procedure, in applying the claim to a divine right, universal among Papists, and by no means uncommon among a certain class of Prelatists, must appear to men who know anything of the general genius and spirit of the Christian system, and who are possessed of any measure of common sense and Christian charity, to be absurd and monstrous; and by many the disgust which has been reasonably excited by this conduct, has been transferred to the general principle of claiming a *jus divinum* on behalf of a particular form of church government, from which it was supposed necessarily to flow. All this, however, is unwarranted and erroneous. Presbyterians and Congregationalists have as generally set up a claim to a divine right on behalf of their systems of church government as Papists and Prelatists have done; but we do not remember that there has ever been a Presbyterian or a Congregationalist of any note who unchurched all other denominations except his own, or who refused to regard and treat them as Christian churches merely on the ground that they had adopted a form of government different from that which he believed to have, exclusively, the sanction of the word of God.

But many seem to suppose that Presbyterians and Congregationalists, in not unchurching other denominations on the ground of rejecting what they believe



respectively to be the only scripturally sanctioned form of church government, are guilty of an amiable weakness, and fall into inconsistency, by declining to follow out their assertion of a jus divinum in judging of others, to its natural and legitimate consequences. This notion is erroneous and unjust, as will appear by attending to the true state of the case. All that is implied in claiming a divine right for Presbyterianism, for instance, is that the person who does so believes, and thinks he can prove, that Christ has plainly enough indicated in His word His mind and will, that the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism should always and everywhere regulate the government of His church. Prelatists and Congregationalists, professing equally to follow the guidance of the sacred Scriptures and to submit to the authority of Christ, have formed a different and opposite judgment as to the true bearing and import of the materials which Scripture furnishes upon this subject, and have in consequence set up a different form of government in their churches. This being the true state of the case, the sum and substance of what any candid and intelligent Presbyterian, even though holding the jus divinum of presbytery, has to charge against them is just this,—that they have mistaken the mind and will of Christ upon this point, that they have formed an erroneous judgment about the import of the indications He has given in His word, as to howT He would have the government of His. church to be regulated. And this, which is really the whole charge, does not, upon principles generally acknowledged, afford of itself any sufficient ground for unchurching them, or for refusing to recognise and treat them as Christian churches. It is a serious matter to adopt and to act upon erroneous views in regard to any portion of divine truth, anything which God has made known to us in His word, and we have no wish to palliate this in any instance. But let the case be fairly stated, and let the principles ordinarily and justly applied to other errors be applied to this one. There can be no possible ground for holding, that the adoption and maintenance of an error on the subject of the government of the church, by words or deeds, involves more guilt, or should be more severely condemned, than the adoption and maintenance of an error upon a matter of doctrine in the more limited sense of that word; and on the contrary, there is a great deal in the nature of the subject, viewed in connection with the general character, spirit, tendency, and objects of the Christian economy, and in the kind and amount of the materials of evidence which Scripture affords us for forming a judgment upon such questions, which indicates that errors in regard to government should be treated with less severity of condemnation, and should less materially affect the intercourse of churches with each other, than errors (within certain limits) with regard to doctrine, which are not usually considered to warrant the unchurching of other denominations, or to form an insuperable

obstacle to the maintenance of friendly relations with them.

These grounds, on which we establish the unwarrantableness and unfairness of the common allegation, that claiming a divine right for one particular form of church government, implies the unchurching of other denominations who may have come to a different conclusion as to the bearing of the Scripture testimony upon this subject, apply equally to the wider and more comprehensive principle, formerly explained, of the unlawfulness of introducing anything into the government and worship of the church which is not positively sanctioned by Scripture. Lutherans and Anglicans generally contend that this principle is not taught in Scripture, and, on this ground, refuse to be so strictly tied up in regard to the introduction of ceremonies and regulations. We believe that, in denying this principle, they have fallen into an error in the interpretation and application of Scripture, and that the ceremonies and regulations which, in opposition to it, they may have introduced, are unlawful, and ought to be removed. But we never imagined, that because of this error in opinion, followed to some extent by error in practice, these denominations were to be unchurched, or to be shut out from friendly intercourse, especially as the scriptural evidence in favour of the principle, though quite sufficient and satisfactory to our minds, is of a somewhat constructive and inferential description, and as differences sometimes arise among those who concur in holding it about some of the details of its application.

If these views, which are in manifest accordance with the dictates of common sense, and with principles generally recognised in other departments of theological discussion, were admitted, there would be much less disinclination to yield to the force of the Scripture evidence in support of the two principles which we have explained, and which form, we are persuaded, the only effectual security for the purity of church administration, and the authority of church arrangements.

But there are, in every age, some men who seem anxious to have the reputation of being in advance of all around them in the enlightened knowledge of theological subjects, and who, with this view, are very desirous to escape from the trammels of implicit deference to the authority of Scripture. The great source of error in religious matters is, that men do not fully and honestly take the word of God as their rule and standard. They may profess to do so, and they may do so to some extent; but there have been many contrivances, by which men have laboured to undermine the authority of Scripture as a rule of faith and practice,

while professing to respect it, and have virtually set up themselves or their fellow-men as the ultimate standard of truth. Papists and Quakers, Rationalists and Traditionalists, Fanatics and Mystics, all undermine the supreme authority of Scripture, and substitute something else in its room: and the elements of the leading notions of these various parties, singly or in combination, are now in extensive operation amongst us. Indeed, one of the most remarkable features of the present age, is the extent to which these different, and apparently opposite, elements are combined even in the same persons, and co-operate in producing the same result. There are persons of some influence in the religious world, in the present day, in regard to whom it would not be easy to determine under which of the heads above mentioned they might most fairly be ranked—men who seem to be at once traditionalists, rationalists, and mystics, and who, under the influence of a combination of the elements of these different systems, set aside, to a considerable extent, the authority of Scripture, and pervert the meaning of its statements, or, at least, come far short in turning the Scriptures to good account, or in deriving from them the amount of clear and definite knowledge of divine things which they are fitted and intended to convey.

It might be a useful and interesting subject of investigation, to bring out a view of the way in which these different and opposite tendencies are, in the present day, combined in producing error and unsoundness, and especially indefiniteness and obscurity, on religious subjects. The great bugbear, indeed, now-a-days, is the inculcation of clear and definite doctrines upon theological topics. Men seem now quite willing to employ any pretence, derived from any quarter, for discountenancing definite and systematic views of Christian truth, and for bringing back again over the church all the confusion and obscurity of the dark ages. The men of progress in the present day seem to have resolved to gain distinction by extinguishing light, and plunging back into darkness; and they evidently hope that in this way they will acquire the reputation of being very advanced and very profound.

In every age since the revival of letters, there has been a class of men who were anxious to distinguish themselves from those around them by going ahead, by turning aside from the path which most of their friends and associates were pursuing, and by taking what they reckon a more advanced and elevated position. What they may happen to regard as constituting the advancement and elevation which minister to their self-complacency, may depend upon a great variety of causes and influences. But it has not usually been found very difficult to discover something or other which might be made to appear advanced and

elevated, although it really was not so when tried by any standard reasonably and legitimately applicable. In this way, men of a certain stamp have usually found it easy enough to get up some plausible grounds for regarding and representing themselves as liberal and enlightened, and the generality of those around them as narrow-minded and bigoted; and at present, the greatest credit in theological matters is to be gained, it seems, by taking as little as possible from Scripture, by repudiating all clear and definite views upon doctrinal subjects, and by displaying a “voluntary humility” in striving to get back to the primeval condition of ignorance and obscurity. This condition of comparative ignorance and obscurity might be harmless and innocent before errors were broached and controversies were waged, but it has now become for ever unattainable on the part of intelligent and educated men, and if it were attainable, could be realized only through a sinful refusal to improve the opportunities which God has given us of acquiring an accurate knowledge of His revealed will. There is, indeed, a bigotry which is despicable and injurious, the bigotry of those who refuse to practise any independent thinking, who slavishly submit to mere human authority, who never venture to entertain the idea of deviating in any point from the beaten track, and denounce as a matter of course all who do so, who can see only one side of a subject, or perhaps only one corner of one side of it, who are incapable of forming a reasonable estimate of the comparative importance of different truths and different errors, who contend for all truths and denounce all errors with equal vehemence, who never modify or retract their opinions, who have no difficulties themselves and no sympathy with the difficulties of others. We meet occasionally with bigots of this sort, and they are very despicable and very mischievous. There is also a species of progress, which is creditable and praiseworthy, exhibited by men who are thoroughly conversant with, and reasonably deferential to, the attainments of the churches and the achievements of the great theologians of former times, who can comprehensively survey and judiciously estimate the past, who can read the lessons “of doctrine, reproof, and correction” which it is fitted to suggest, who are thus by the study of the past qualified in some measure to anticipate and to guide the course of discussion in the future, and who, while, it may be, only confirmed by their researches and meditations in the soundness of their own leading convictions, have learned, at the same time and by the same process, a larger measure of friendly forbearance for those who differ from them. This is a kind of progress which should ever be regarded with approbation and respect, and in which all of us, according to our capacities and opportunities, should be seeking to advance. But this is a very different kind of thing from the latitudinarianism which finds its representatives in every age, and which at bottom is little better than a desire of notoriety, and an

affectation of superior wisdom where no superior wisdom exists. We believe that the general run of latitudinarians, or men of progress, to be found in every generation of theologians from the Reformation to the present day, have upon the whole been as ignorant, as narrow-minded, and as self-conceited, as the bigots. We have no respect for any of the “men of latitude” and progress in the present day regarded as theologians; we have a very decided conviction, that the leading views in which the generality of the Reformers concurred, both with respect to the substance of Christian theology and the organization of the Christian church, can be fully established from Scripture; and we certainly never shall be shaken in this conviction by vague generalities, high-sounding pretensions, or supercilious declamation. But we have no wish to remain in darkness while the light is shining all around us. And we promise that, if Mr Isaac Taylor or Dr Tulloch will abandon the vague and equivocal declamation which they have put forth on this subject, if they will plainly and explicitly declare what are the Reformation doctrines on theological and ecclesiastical subjects which must now be dismissed as untenable, producing at the same time the detailed proof that these doctrines are not sanctioned by Scripture rightly interpreted and applied, we shall give them a careful and deliberate hearing; and we shall examine their statements with the more earnestness and respect, if they not only refute the theology of the Reformation, but at the same time expound and establish a different theology that may be entitled to take its place.

The really vital questions which all men are called upon to solve as well as they can, are these:—What ought we to believe concerning God and ourselves, concerning Christ and the way of salvation, concerning the church and the sacraments? We have long held, that men who made a thorough and adequate, an accurate and comprehensive, use of the materials furnished by Scripture, would be constrained to admit, that the true, answer to all these questions is, in substance, what is set forth in the confessions of the Reformed churches, the most important body of uninspired documents in existence. But the subject is too vitally important to be set aside as altogether beyond the pale of further investigation, and we would not refuse to attend to any feasible attempt to show that these questions ought to be answered in a different way.

Dr Tulloch rejects the views which the Reformers derived from Scripture upon these points. But he has not told us what other views Scripture requires us to adopt, and he has given us nothing but some dark, mysterious hints, as to the nature of the process by which it may be shown that the theology of the Reformation will not do for the nineteenth century. We know something of the

process by which Arminians and Socinians, rationalists and latitudinarians, have laboured to show that the theology of the Reformation is not taught in Scripture. We are well satisfied that nothing more formidable can be adduced against it than has been brought forward, consistently with an honest admission in any sense of the divine authority of Scripture; and we are confirmed in this conviction by the fact, that some of the most learned modern German critics have admitted that the apostles believed and taught the leading doctrines of the Reformers, while they of course refuse to believe anything so irrational upon the authority of apostles. Surely it is high time that Mr Isaac Taylor should develop his new “exegetical method” which is to revolutionize theology, and that Dr Tulloch should unfold his “spirit of interpreting Scripture,” which could have “hardly been intelligible to Calvin,” but which, it seems, is quite adequate to demolish Calvinism. Whatever this mysterious method or spirit may be, we are not afraid of it. Let it be brought freely out to the open field of conflict, and let it do its best to overturn the theology of the Reformation. We have no anxiety about the result.

One of the worst passages in Dr Tulloch’s book is the conclusion of his sketch of Luther. It is so bad that we must quote it at length:—

“They were consistent in displacing the Church of Rome from its position of assumed authority over the conscience, but they were equally consistent, all of them, in raising a dogmatic authority in its stead. In favour of their own views, they asserted the right of the private judgment to interpret and decide the meaning of Scripture, but they had nevertheless no idea of a really free interpretation of Scripture. Their orthodoxy everywhere appealed to Scripture, but it rested in reality upon an Augustinian commentary of Scripture. They displaced the mediaeval schoolmen, but only to elevate Augustine. And having done this, they had no conception of any limits attaching to this new tribunal of heresy. Freedom of opinion, in the modern sense, was utterly unknown to them. There was not merely an absolute truth in Scripture, but they had settled, by the help of Augustine, what this truth was; and any variations from this standard were not to be tolerated. The idea of a free faith holding to very different dogmatic views, and yet equally Christian,—the idea of spiritual life and goodness apart from theoretical orthodoxy,—had not dawned on the sixteenth century, nor long afterwards. Heresy was not a mere divergence of intellectual apprehension, but a moral obliquity—a statutory offence—to be punished by the magistrate, to be expiated by death. It is the strangest and most saddening of all spectacles to contemplate the slow and painful process by which the human

mind has emancipated itself from the dark delusion, that intellectual error is a subject of moral offence and punishment, as if even the highest expressions of the most enlightened dogmatism were or could be anything more than the mere gropings after God's immeasurable truth—the mere pebbles by the shore of the unnavigable sea—the mere star-dust in the boundless heaven, pointing to a 'light inaccessible and full of glory, which no man hath seen, neither indeed can see.' It required the lapse of many years to make men begin to feel—and it may still require the lapse of many more to make them fully feel—that they cannot absolutely fix in their feeble symbols the truth of God; that it is ever bursting with its own free might the old bottles in which they would contain it; and that consequently, according to that very law of progress by which all things live, it is impossible to bind the conscience by any bonds but those of God's own wisdom (word) in Scripture—a spiritual authority addressing a spiritual subject—a teacher, not of 'the letter which killeth, but of the Spirit which giveth life.'”

We have not now space for exposing, as it deserves, this remarkable and significant passage. We can only suggest a few hints as to its import and bearing.

1. Dr Tulloch makes the statement absolutely and without qualification, that heresy is not a “moral obliquity,”—that it is “a dark delusion that intellectual error is a subject of moral offence and punishment.” Is this anything different from what Warburton, a century ago, denounced as “the master sophism of this infidel age, the innocence of error”?

2. When Dr Tulloch intimates his approbation of “the idea of a free faith, holding to very different dogmatic views, and yet equally Christian,” we presume he just means, in plain English, to tell us, that Calvinism, Arminianism, and Socinianism, are all equally Christian.

3. In this passage he seems to confound or mix up together all interference with heresy or “intellectual error” in religious matters, whether by the civil or the ecclesiastical authorities, as if all exercise of ecclesiastical discipline on such grounds, were just as unwarrantable and offensive as persecution, in the shape of the infliction of civil pains and penalties on the ground of error in religion. This confounding of things that differ, was one of the leading artifices of the infidels and semi-infidels, who discussed these subjects in the early part of last century, the Tindals and Collinses, the Hoadleys and Sykeses.

4. Dr Tulloch seems here to employ another sophism derived from the same not

very respectable source, when, upon the grounds that creeds and confessions are human productions, and of course exhibit indications of human imperfections, and that they are not fitted to serve all the purposes to which they have been sometimes applied, he would intimate that they are of no worth or value whatever, and are not fitted to serve any good or useful purpose. His views upon this point are certainly not brought out clearly and explicitly, but what has now been stated, seems, so far as we can judge, to be the substance of what he intended to indicate, especially in the last sentence of the quotation. There is a notion which seems to be pretty prevalent in the present day, though as yet in a somewhat latent and undeveloped form, and which produces some sympathy in the minds of many with what is said in disparagement of creeds and confessions. It is a doubt, at least, whether creeds and confessions, which are to be made terms of ministerial communion, and, of course, grounds of division among churches, should be so long and so minute as some of them are. We have noticed of late some indications of this feeling in men who are far superior to the vulgar aversion to creeds, and whom there is no reason to suspect of unfaithfulness to their own confession. We admit that this is a fair and reasonable topic for discussion, and we are not aware that, as distinguished from some of the other branches of the controversy about confessions, it has ever yet been subjected to so thorough, deliberate, and comprehensive an investigation as its importance deserves. We have no wish to encourage the raising of a discussion upon this subject. But we see symptoms which seem to indicate, that it is likely to be pressed upon the attention of the churches, and it may be well that men should be turning their thoughts to it.

5. Men who are familiar with the common cant of latitudinarians, w'll easily see that some of the statements contained in this passage, especially those which speak of the influence of Augustine, and of an "Augustinian commentary of Scripture," are intended to convey such notions as these,—that the Reformers derived their leading theological views, not from the word of God, but from the writings of Augustine; that they adopted Augustine's views, not because they had satisfied themselves of their . accordance with Scripture, but from deference to his authority, or from some other adventitious, or accidental, or, it may be, un- t worthy, cause; that having adopted Augustinian views for some other reason than their accordance with Scripture, they then did what they could to bend and twist Scripture to the support of Augustinianism, and that in this way they brought out of Scripture what is not to be found there, what it does not sanction. All this Dr Tulloch's statements seem to us to imply. It would have been more creditable to him to have openly and explicitly asserted it. But as he has



produced no evidence in support of these notions, we could only meet even an assertion of them by a denial of their truth. We assert, that the notions which Dr Tulloch here indicates with regard to the theological views of the Reformers are not true; and in flat contradiction to them we assert, that the Reformers' adopted Augustine's views because satisfied, as the result of careful and deliberate investigation, that they were in accordance with the teaching of Scripture; that they were right in entertaining this conviction; that they brought out the evidence of the scriptural authority of the doctrines of Augustine much more fully and satisfactorily than he himself had done; in short, that they proved conclusively and unanswerably, that Augustinianism or Calvinism is revealed to us by God in His word.

The substance of what he seems to allege here against the Reformers, we have no doubt he would direct equally against those benighted men who in this nineteenth century are willing to acknowledge themselves Calvinists. He perhaps thinks that we too have been led to profess Augustinian or Calvinistic doctrines, not from an intelligent and honest study of the sacred Scriptures, but from some adventitious, irrelevant, inadequate, perhaps unworthy, motive or influence, and that we are perverting, or in some way or other misapplying, the materials furnished by Scripture, in order to procure support to our opinions. Dr Tulloch has no right to expect that any mere assertion of his on such a subject will carry much weight or excite much feeling. But since he has not hesitated to set aside the theology of the Reformation, the theology which has generally been professed in Scotland from the Reformation to the present day, and to do this in circumstances which did not admit of theological discussion, we think it probable that he is willing and ready to bring forward the grounds on which his views upon this subject are based. We must presume, after what he has said, that he is prepared to give to the world a detailed exposure of the theology of the Reformation, a new "Refutation of Calvinism." He can scarcely avoid attempting something of this sort, and we venture to assure him beforehand that he will not succeed.

# Luther

It is admitted by all Christians that the church is, in some sense, the organ and the representative of Christ upon earth. This principle, true in itself, is very liable to be abused and perverted. It is perverted grossly in the hands of Romanists, when it is represented as implying that the church, as a visible society, has virtually the same power and authority, the same rights and prerogatives, as its Master in heaven. The general principle about the church, understood in this sense, and combined with the assumption that the church of Christ upon earth is the church which acknowledges the authority of the Bishop of Rome as Christ's vicar, is the foundation of the papal claims to supremacy and infallibility. The same principle is also employed largely to defend or palliate some of the more offensive consequences of these claims, and some of the more offensive modes of enforcing them. On the ground of this identification of Christ and the church, the opponents of the church come to be regarded as the enemies of Christ, and His vicar is held to be entitled to deal with them, so far as he can, just as Christ may deal with those who continue finally obstinate and impenitent enemies to His cause. In this way Papists come to subordinate everything, in the mode in which they regard and deal with their fellow-men, to the fancied honour and interests of the church, and to look upon the opponents of the church not as their fellow-men, whom they are bound to love, but simply as the enemies of Christ, whom they are entitled to injure. It is deeply engrained on the minds of Romanists, that those who are beyond the pale of the true church forfeit the ordinary rights of men and members of society; and that, especially when they take an active and prominent part in opposing and injuring the church, they ought to be treated as outlaws or as wild beasts.

It is this identification of the church and its visible head, the Pope, with Christ

himself, that produces and accounts for that extraordinary subordination of everything to the interests of the church which is so remarkable a feature of Popery; and that explains the persecutions which Romanists have at all times been quite willing to perpetrate. All this may be regarded as exhibiting the natural and appropriate result of Popish principles, and as, in some sense, rather helping, when viewed in connection with certain tendencies of human nature, to palliate the cruelties which have disgraced the history of the Church of Rome. But there is an abuse of the principle which has been often acted upon by Papists, though not often openly avowed, and which is altogether destitute of any appearance-of excuse; it is that of acting as if it were held that men who oppose and resist the Church of Rome not only forfeit thereby the ordinary rights and privileges of men, of neighbours, and of relatives, but lose all right even to claim that the ordinary rules of integrity and veracity should be observed in regard to them. It has been no uncommon thing for Papists to act as if not only the social and domestic affections, and the duties connected with them, but even the laws of immutable morality, were to be subordinated to the interests of the church. This is the principle involved in the decision of the Council of Constance, and often acted upon in the Church of Rome, about keeping faith with heretics. That decision was intended to sanction the doctrine that heretics, the open enemies of the church, have no right to demand the fulfilment of engagements and promises, and that no pledges given to such persons should ever be allowed to stand in the way of any scheme for promoting the church's objects. These notions exert a constant and abiding influence upon the minds of most Romanists, even of many who would shrink from embodying them in formal propositions. The consummation of what is most discreditable in this matter is to be found in the fact, that some Jesuit writers have openly proclaimed the lawfulness of putting forth deliberate and intentional slanders for the purpose of injuring their enemies,—a fact established by Pascal in the fifteenth of his “Provincial Letters,” and one that ought to be remembered and applied in judging of the reliance to be placed upon the statements of Romish controversialists.

With such views and impressions prevailing among Romanists, it was not to be expected that the Reformers, who did so much damage to the Church of Rome, would be treated with justice or decency. Accordingly, we find that a most extraordinary series of slanders against the character of the leading Reformers, utterly unsupported by evidence, and wholly destitute of truth and plausibility, were invented and propagated by Romish writers. Luther and the other Reformers were charged, in Popish publications, with heinous crimes, of which no evidence was or could be produced; and these accusations, though their

falsehood was often exposed, continued long to be repeated in most Popish books. With respect to the more offensive accusations that used to be adduced against the Reformers, a considerable check was given to the general circulation of them, by the thorough exposures of their unquestionable falsehood which were put forth by Bayle in his Dictionary, a work which was extensively read in the literary world. Papists became ashamed to advance, in works intended for general circulation, allegations which Bayle's Dictionary had prepared the reading public to regard, without hesitation, as deliberate falsehoods, though they continued to repeat them in works intended for circulation among their own people. Scarcely any Romish writers who pretended to anything like respectability, have, for a century and a half, ventured to commit themselves to an explicit assertion of the grosser calumnies which used to be adduced against the Reformers. Some of them, however, have shown a considerable unwillingness to abandon these charges entirely, and like still to mention them as accusations which were at one time adduced, and which men may still believe if they choose.

But while Romanists have now ceased wholly or in a great measure to urge the grosser charges which they used to bring against the Reformers, their general principles and spirit continue unchanged; the outward improvement in their conduct being owing solely to fear or policy, and not to any real advancement in integrity and candour. It is emphatically true of almost all the defenders and champions of Popery, that they fear nothing but a witness and a judge, and do not scruple to misrepresent and slander their enemies, so far as they think they can do this with impunity to themselves and benefit to their cause. They confine themselves now, in a great measure, to charges of a less heinous nature than those which before Bayle's time they were in the habit of adducing, and to charges which have some appearance at least of evidence to rest upon. But these lighter and more plausible accusations are in general almost as unfounded as the others. Protestants, of course, do not regard the Reformers as either infallible or impeccable. They believe that most of them held views, upon some points, more or less erroneous, and that all of them gave abundant evidence that they were stained with the common infirmities of humanity. But they regard them as men who were specially qualified and raised up by God for the advancement of His own cause, for bringing out the buried truth and reforming the corrupted church, who were guided by God's word and Spirit to views, in the main accurate, of the leading principles of Christian doctrine, and who, in the habitual tenor of their lives, furnished satisfactory evidence of acting under the influence of real religion and genuine piety. Believing this concerning the Reformers, Protestants

feel it to be both their duty and their privilege to defend them from the assaults of adversaries, and especially to refute anything that may seem to militate against the truth of the statement now given, of what they believe as to the general character and position of these illustrious men.

The great general position which Romanists are anxious to establish by all they can collect against the Reformers, from their writings or their lives, from their sayings or their doings, is this, that it is very unlikely that God would employ such men in the accomplishment of any special work for the advancement of His gracious purposes. In dealing with this favourite allegation of Romanists, Protestants assert and undertake to prove the following positions:—1st That the allegation is irrelevant to the real merits of the controversy between us and the Church of Rome, which can be determined only by the standard of the written word; 2d, that the allegation is untrue,—in other words, that there is nothing about the character of the Reformers as a whole which renders it in the least unlikely that God employed them in His own special gracious work; and 3d, that the general principle on which the allegation is based can be applied in the way of retort, with far greater effect, to the Church of Rome. Protestants, by establishing these three positions, effectually dispose of the Romish allegation. It is with the second of them only that we have at present to do, and even on it we do not mean to enlarge.

Romanists have taken great pains to collect every expression from the writings of the Reformers, and to bring forward every incident in their lives, that may be fitted—especially when they are all presented nakedly and in combination—to produce an unfavourable impression as to their motives and actions. In the prosecution of this work, they are usually quite unscrupulous about the completeness of their quotations and the accuracy of their facts, and in this way they sometimes manage to make out, upon some particular points, what may appear to ignorant or prejudiced readers to be a good case. In dealing with the materials which Papists have collected for depreciating the character of the Reformers, and thus establishing the improbability of God having employed them as His instruments in restoring divine truth, and in reforming the church, there are three steps in the process that ought to be attended to and discriminated, in order to our arriving at a just and fair conclusion:—

1st, We must carefully ascertain the true facts of the case as to any statement or action that may have been ascribed to them or to any one of them; and we will find, in not a few instances, that the allegations found in ordinary Popish works

on the subject are inaccurate, defective, or exaggerated,—that the quotation is garbled and mutilated, or may be explained and modified by the context, —or that the action is erroneously or unfairly represented in some of its features or accompanying circumstances.

2d, When the real facts of the case are once ascertained, the next step should be to form a fair and reasonable estimate of what they really involve or imply, taking into account, as justice demands, the natural character and tendencies of the men individually, the circumstances in which they were placed, the influences to which they were subjected, the temptations to which they were exposed, and the general impressions and ordinary standard on such subjects in the age and country in which they lived.

3d, There is a third step necessary in order to form a right estimate of the common Popish charges against the Reformers, and of the soundness of the conclusion which they wish to deduce from them, viz. that we should not confine our attention to their blemishes and infirmities, real or alleged, greater or smaller, but take a general view of their whole character and proceedings, embracing, as far as we have materials, all that they felt, and said, and did, and endeavour in this way to form a fair estimate of what were their predominating desires, motives, and objects, of what it was that they had really at heart, and of what was the standard by a regard to which they strove to regulate their conduct.

A careful application of these obviously just and fair principles will easily dispose of the materials which Papists have so assiduously collected for the purpose of injuring the character of the Reformers, and convince every intelligent and honest inquirer, that there is not one of the leading men among them who has not, with all his errors and infirmities, left behind him sufficient and satisfactory evidence, so far as men can judge of their fellow-men, that he had been born again of the word of God through the belief of the truth, that he had honestly devoted himself to God's service, and that in what he did for the cause of the Reformation he was mainly influenced by a desire to promote the glory of God, to advance the prosperity of Christ's kingdom, and to secure the spiritual welfare of men.

But Romanists are not the only persons who have misrepresented and calumniated the Reformers. Many have sympathized with and abetted the efforts of Romanists to damage the character of the Reformers, who had not the palliation, such as it is, which they can plead of avenging the damage done to

their church, and who seem to care nothing about Popery and Protestantism as such. What Dr M'Crie said of John Knox holds equally true of the other Reformers, and has been perhaps more fully realized in the case of those of them who exerted a still wider and more commanding influence:—

“The increase of infidelity and indifference to religion in modern times, especially among the learned, has contributed in no small degree to swell the tide of prejudice against our Reformer. Whatever satisfaction persons of this description may express or feel at the reformation from Popery, as the means of emancipating the world from superstition and priestcraft, they naturally despise and dislike men who were inspired with the love of religion, and in whose plans of reform the acquisition of civil liberty, and the advancement of literature, held a subordinate place to the revival of primitive Christianity.”

There has scarcely ever been an infidel or semi-infidel declaimer against bigotry and intolerance, however insignificant, who has not attempted something smart about Calvin burning Servetus.” Both Lord Brougham and Mr Macaulay have sunk to the level of rounding off a sentence in this way. And Luther, from his peculiar position and history, and from his special weaknesses and infirmities, has furnished very copious materials to so-called Protestant, as well as to Popish, calumniators. A combination of circumstances has had the effect of late years of bringing out, in this country, from different classes of writers, a good deal of matter fitted and intended to damage the character of the Reformers. Those who laboured long to un-Protestantize the English Church before they left it to join the Church of Rome, were of course anxious to depreciate the Reformers; and Newman and Ward, who are now both Romanists, did what they could in this way. Moehler, a Romish divine of learning and ability, whose Symbolism has been much commended and read, has laboured skilfully to excite strong prejudices against the theological views of the Reformers, and has succeeded all the better because of the appearance of candour and moderation which he presents, as compared with the generality of Popish controversialists. Mr Hallam, in his “History of the Literature of Europe during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” was naturally led to speak of the writings of the Reformers; but having only a very partial acquaintance with their works, and not being able, as he candidly enough admits, to understand much of their theology, he very seriously misrepresents them, and especially Luther. Hallam’s great learning, accuracy, and impartiality upon general and ordinary topics, are universally admitted; but he was very imperfectly acquainted with the writings of the Reformers; and experience seems to afford abundant evidence that men

may be candid and impartial on most questions of a historical, political, and literary kind, and yet be strongly prejudiced on religious subjects. This we believe to be the case with Mr Hallam, while, as might be expected, his depreciatory criticisms upon the Reformers and the Reformation are now triumphantly quoted by Popish controversialists as the concessions of “an eminent Protestant authority.” And, lastly, Sir William Hamilton, whose reputation stands so deservedly high as a philosopher and a man of erudition, has thought proper to go out of his way in order to indulge in some attacks upon the character of the Reformers, first in an article in the Edinburgh Review for 1834, on the Admission of Dissenters to English Universities; and again, in 1843, in a pamphlet on the controversy about the appointment of pastors, which produced in that year the Disruption of the Church of Scotland.

In consequence of these things, the late lamented Archdeacon Hare undertook the defence of Luther in a very elaborate and admirable dissertation, bearing the form of a note to his work on the “Mission of the Comforter,” published in 1846. In this note, marked by the letter W, which extended to above 300 pages, Mr Hare, with great ability, with admirable scholarship, and a thorough knowledge of the subject, defended Luther from the misrepresentations of Hallam, Newman, Ward, Moeller, and Sir William Hamilton. Soon after, Sir William published his still incomplete edition of the works of Reid, with notes and supplementary dissertations, and subjoined to it an advertisement, dated November 1846, in which he promised to publish soon, and previously to any other work, a production entitled, Contributions towards a True History of Luther and the Lutherans. Part I., containing notice of the Venerable Archdeacon Hare and his Polemic” These “Contributions” have not yet appeared; but in 1852, Sir William gave to the world “Discussions on Philosophy and Literature, Education and University Reform,” in which in republishing the article from the Edinburgh Review containing his original attack upon Luther, he added to it some notes, taking “notice of Archdeacon Hare and his Polemic.” Mr Hare had been requested by many, who were satisfied and delighted with his defence of the Reformers, to publish his note as a separate work; and accordingly, after the publication, in 1852, of his “Contest with Rome,” which we regard as upon the whole the ablest, and in some respects the most valuable of his works, his time, we believe, was chiefly occupied, amid the interruptions of declining health, in preparing materials for subjoining to his defence of Luther abundant proofs and illustrations, with an exposure of Sir William’s recent notes.

It is a great loss to theological literature that Mr Hare’s health and life were not



spared to enable him to complete this work. The “Vindication of Luther,” published nearly a year ago, soon after his death, and now lying before us, is merely a revised republication of the note W in the “Mission of the Comforter,” though forming by itself a goodly octavo. All that was available of what he had been preparing for the new edition is the mere references to above eighty notes, which we have no doubt would have contained a treasure of interesting and valuable materials. Sir William’s notes to his Discussions do not contain, or profess to contain, the evidence of his most offensive charges against Luther — charges made nine years before—evidence which he has been repeatedly challenged to produce. With the exception, indeed, of a grand theological display, abounding in blunders, on the doctrine of Assurance, Sir William’s new matter consists chiefly of an attack upon Mr Hare. Mr Hare might very easily have repelled and retorted Sir William’s charges against him, without producing any great amount of valuable matter; but, from the number and character of the references which have been preserved and published, there is every likelihood that the notes would have been an enduring monument of his talents and scholarship, and of his many noble and beautiful qualities of character. We, therefore, deeply lament that he w’as not spared to complete this work, while we estimate very highly what he has done, and regard his “Vindication of Luther” as a very valuable contribution to theological literature, and an important service rendered to the cause of that Protestant evangelical truth which Luther was honoured to be the great instrument of reviving.

We believe that on some important points Mr Hare’s doctrinal views were defective and erroneous; but he had certainly imbibed very thoroughly both the general spirit and the specific theology of Luther. He was firmly established, both theoretically and practically, in Luther’s great article of a standing or a falling church,— the doctrine of justification by faith alone. His cordial appreciation of this great doctrine, and his hearty love and esteem for Luther, whose qualities as a man were in many respects so very different from his own, are among the things which satisfy those who know him only from his writings, that he lived by faith on the Son of God, that he had a claim to the love of all Christ’s people for the truth’s sake that was in him; while he combined, in no ordinary degree, almost all those claims to respect and affection which are inferior only to this one. We are convinced that Mr Hare’s reputation, like Dr Arnold’s, will grow and extend after his death; and that even those who differed most widely from some of his doctrinal views, will be more and more persuaded that his early death was, humanly speaking, a serious loss to the cause of Christ.

Mr Hare's thorough knowledge of Luther, and cordial affection for him, admirably fitted him for defending the Reformer from the numerous attacks which have recently been made upon him from a variety of quarters. We do not say that all that he has written in vindication of Luther is characterized by strict impartiality and by rigid accuracy. Love may operate in perverting men's judgments as well as hatred. But still love is the right state of mind to cherish in forming a judgment of our fellow-men, and its presence will pervert the judgment much less widely, and much less injuriously, than the opposite feeling. In regard to many subjects, indeed, it may be said that the prevalence of love in the heart is necessary to forming a sound and accurate judgment; and the character of the Reformers is one of the subjects to which this observation applies. Mr Hare's love to Luther has on one or two occasions led him to judge more favourably, or rather less unfavourably, of Luther's conduct than perhaps a review of the whole circumstances would warrant, and to soften or slur over some of his rash and offensive expressions. But while this may be conceded, it is not the less true that his representation of the character and opinions of Luther is immeasurably more just and accurate than that given by his opponents; and that in his "polemic" with them, he has established a most decided superiority.

There is a great deal about Luther's character and history to call forth admiration and love; while there is also a good deal about him to afford an excuse to those who, from whatever cause, whether as Papists or on some other ground, are disposed to regard him with opposite feelings. With many high and noble endowments, both from nature and grace, both of head and heart, which in many respects fitted him admirably for the great work to which he was called, and the important services which he rendered to the church and the world, there were some shortcomings and drawbacks both about his understanding and his temperament; the results and manifestations of which have afforded many plausible handles to his enemies, and have occasioned corresponding annoyance and difficulty to his friends.

Luther occupied a position, and exerted an influence in the history of the church, and altogether manifested a character, well fitted to secure for him the admiration of all who are interested in the advancement of Christian truth, or qualified to appreciate what is noble, magnanimous, fearless, and disinterested. We have abundant evidence of his continuing to retain the common infirmities of human nature, aggravated in some respects by the system in which he had been originally educated, by the condition of society in the age and country in which he lived, and the influences to which, after he commenced the work of

reformation, he was subjected; but we have also the most satisfactory evidence of his deep piety, of his thorough devotedness to God's service, of his habitual walking with God, and living by faith in the promises of His word. No one who surveys Luther's history and writings, and who is capable of forming an estimate of what piety is, can entertain any doubt upon this point.

The leading service which Luther was qualified and enabled to render to the church, in a theological point of view, was the unfolding and establishing the great doctrine of justification, which for many ages had been grossly corrupted and perverted; and bringing the truth upon this subject to bear upon the exposure of many of the abuses, both in theory and practice, that prevailed in the Church of Home. His engrossment, to a large extent, with this great doctrine, combined with the peculiar character of his mind, led him to view almost every topic chiefly, if not exclusively, in its relation to forgiveness and peace of conscience, to grace and merit; and thus fostered a certain tendency to exaggeration and extravagance in his doctrinal statements. Besides this defect in Luther's theology, giving it something of one-sidedness, he had some features of character which detract from the weight of his statements, and from the deference to which otherwise he might have appeared entitled, and which we feel disposed to accord to such a man as Calvin. He was naturally somewhat prone to indulge in exaggerated and paradoxical statements, to press points too far, and to express them in unnecessarily strong and repulsive terms. And this tendency he sometimes manifests not only in speaking of men and actions, but even in theological discussions. He was not characterized by that exact balance of all the mental powers, by that just and accurate perception of the whole relations and true importance of things, and by that power of carefully and precisely embodying in words just what he himself had deliberately concluded, and nothing more, which, in some men, have so strong a tendency to persuade us to give ourselves up to their guidance, under a sort of intuitive conviction that they will not lead us often or far astray from the paths of truth. In Luther's works, with a great deal to admire, to interest and impress, we often stumble upon statements which remind us that we must be on our guard, that we must exercise our own judgment, and not follow him blindly wherever he may choose to lead us. The leading defects of his character may be said to be:—1st, The impetuosity of his temperament, leading often to the use of exaggerated and intemperate language, both in conversation and in writing; though, as has been frequently and truly remarked, very seldom leading him into injudicious or imprudent actions, amid all the difficulties in which he was involved: and 2d, a certain species of presumption or self-confidence, which, putting on the garb of

better and higher principles, sometimes made him adhere with great obstinacy to erroneous opinions, shutting his understanding against everything that could be brought forward in opposition to them; and made him indulge sometimes in rather ridiculous boasting. The result of all these qualities was, that he has left many statements of an intemperate and exaggerated description, which have afforded a great handle to his enemies, and which, when collected and set off by being presented in isolation from accompanying statements and circumstances, and in combination with each other, are apt to produce a somewhat uncomfortable impression.

And then consider how this extraordinary man, of so peculiar a mental character and general temperament, was tried and tested. He occupied a very singular position, and was subjected to very peculiar influences. He was tried in a very unusual measure, with almost everything fitted to disturb and pervert, to elevate and to depress, with fears and hopes, with dangers and successes. Let it be further remembered, that of this man, who was so constituted and so circumstanced, there have been preserved and published no fewer than about 2300 letters, many of them private and confidential effusions to his friends; and that a great deal of his ordinary conversation or table talk has been recorded and transmitted to us, without our having any good evidence of its being accurately reported.

It is surely not to be wondered at that it should be easy to produce many rash, extravagant, inconsistent, and indefensible sayings of Luther. And if, notwithstanding the tests to which he has been subjected, he still stands out as unquestionably a man of high religious principle, of thorough and disinterested devotedness to God's service, and of many noble and elevated qualities,—all which most even of his depredators, except the Popish section of them, will probably concede,—how thoroughly base and despicable is it in any man to be grasping at opportunities of trying to damage his character and influence, by collecting and stringing together (perhaps exaggerating and distorting) his rash and inconsistent, or it may be extravagant and offensive, sentiments and expressions. Papists, of course, are labouring in their proper vocation in trying, *per fas aut nefas*, to damage Luther's character. Popish controversialists are ever ready to sacrifice conscience, and every manly and honourable feeling, to the interests of the church; and Tractarians, following in their footsteps, have imbibed a large portion of their spirit.

Of Mr Hare's "Vindication of Luther," about ninety pages are devoted to an

exposure of the Tractarian attacks upon him by Newman and Ward, who have since joined the Church of Home; about forty to an exposure of a Popish attack upon him by Moehler; and the remaining 170 pages are occupied with an answer to the assaults of “the great Protestant authorities,” Mr Hallam and Sir William Hamilton.

Newman had attacked Luther only incidentally, and somewhat cautiously, in his book on “Justification and though he is convicted of several misrepresentations of Luther’s opinions, he is upon the whole let easily off. Newsman had spoken slightly of Luther, as not being, like Augustine, a father of the church, but merely the founder of a school. This has given occasion to Mr Hare to indite the following very fine and striking passage:—

“But though Luther was not what was technically termed a father, and could not be so, from the period when, for the good of mankind, it was ordained that he should be born, yet it has pleased God that he, above all other men since the days of the apostles, should, in the truest and highest sense, be a father in Christ’s church, yea, the human father and nourisher of the spiritual life of millions of souls, for generation after generation. Three hundred years have rolled away since he was raised, through Christ’s redeeming grace, from the militant church into the triumphant; and throughout those three hundred years, and still at this day, it has been and is vouchsafed to him,—and so, God willing, shall it be for centuries to come,—that he should feed the children of half Germany with the milk of the gospel by his Catechism; that he should supply the poor and simple, yea, and all classes of his countrymen, with words wherewith to commend their souls to God when they rise from their bed, and when they lie down in it; that in his words they should invoke a blessing upon their daily meals, and offer up their thanks for them; that with his stirring hymns they should kindle and pour out their devotion, both in the solemn assembly and in the sanctuary of every family; that by his German words, through the blessed fruit of his labours, they should daily and hourly strengthen and enlighten their hearts, and souls, and minds, with that Book of Life in which God’s mercy and truth have met together, His righteousness and peace have kissed each other, and are treasured up for the edification of mankind unto the end of the world. If this is not to be a father in Christ’s church, I know not what is. Nay, more, his spiritual children are not confined to his own country. The word of truth which he was sent to preach, has sounded from land to land, and was heard in our land also, coming as it did from the home of our forefathers, for the purification of the church, and for the guiding of numberless souls away from a vain confidence in the works of the

flesh, to a living trust in their Saviour.”

Mr Ward’s assaults, originally published in the *British Critic*, and afterwards collected in his book entitled “*Ideal of a Christian Church*,” are likewise based chiefly upon Luther’s doctrine of justification, which is grossly misrepresented, in order to afford materials for accusing him of Antinomianism. Mr Ward is conclusively convicted of gross incompetency and unfairness, nay, of bitter spite. But really the allegation that Luther was an Antinomian is so thoroughly contradicted by the whole tenor of his writings, and by the whole course of his life, and is so utterly destitute of all evidence, except some rash, unbecoming, and exaggerated statements about the law, the real meaning of which is evident enough to every candid inquirer, that we do not think it necessary to dwell upon this topic.

Mr Hallam’s attack upon Luther rests chiefly upon the same general ground, and is directed to show that he has made statements of an Antinomian tendency. His mode of dealing with this subject has more the appearance of honest ignorance than Mr Ward’s. He is certainly, as Mr Hare has proved, and as indeed he himself acknowledges, very imperfectly acquainted with Luther’s works. He is also, from whatever cause, pretty strongly prejudiced against him. He plainly enough indicates that he had been somewhat influenced, in judging of Luther, by the representations of Bossuet; and as this is a topic to which we shall have occasion afterwards to advert, in pointing out Sir William Hamilton’s obligations to the great Popish champion, we quote an interesting passage from this section of the *Vindication*:—

“An explanation, however, of this, and of much more, seems to be afforded by the first sentences in Mr Hallam’s remarks on Luther: ‘It would not be just, probably, to give Bossuet credit in every part of that powerful delineation of Luther’s theological tenets, with which he begins the *History of the Variations of Protestant Churches*. Nothing, perhaps, in polemical eloquence, is so splendid as this chapter. The eagle of Meaux is there truly seen, lordly of form, fierce of eye, terrible in his beak and claws. But he is too determined a partisan to be trusted by those who seek the truth without regard to persons and denominations. His quotations from Luther are short, and in French. I have failed in several attempts to verify the references.’ Mr Hallam, who here and elsewhere expresses such fervent admiration for Bossuet’s eloquence, says of Luther’s Latin works: ‘Their intemperance, their coarseness, their inelegance, their scurrility, their wild paradoxes that menace the foundations of religious morality, are not

compensated, so far at least as my slight acquaintance with them extends, by much strength or acuteness, and still less by any impressive eloquence.' To me, I own, in the face of this mild verdict, Luther,—if we take the two masses of his writings, those in Latin and those in his own tongue, which display different characters of style, according to the persons and objects they are designed for, in the highest qualities of eloquence, in the faculty of presenting grand truths, moral and spiritual ideas, clearly, vividly, in words which elevate and enlighten men's minds, and stir their hearts and control their wills,—seems incomparably superior to Bossuet; almost as superior as Shakespeare to Racine, or as Ullswater to the Serpentine. In fact, when turning from one to the other, I have felt at times as if I were passing out of a gorgeous, crowded drawing-room, with its artificial lights and dizzying sounds, to run up a hill at sunrise. The wide and lasting effect which Luther's writings produced on his own nation and on the world, is the best witness of their power.

“I should not have touched on this point unless it were plain that Mr Hallam's judgment on Luther had been greatly swayed by the ‘Histoire des Variations.’ It is somewhat strange to begin one's account of a man with saying, that ‘it would not be just, probably, to give credit in every part’ to what a determined, able, and not very scrupulous enemy says of him, writing with the express purpose of detecting all possible evil in him and his cause. In truth, what could well be less just than this supererogatory candour? In no court of law would such an invective be attended to, except so far as it was borne out by the evidence adduced. Mr Hallam says he had failed in several attempts to verify the references. If he had succeeded, he would probably have found that the passages cited are mostly misrepresented. How far the misrepresentation is wilful, I do not take upon myself to pronounce. Bossuet's mind was so uncongenial to Luther's, so artificial, so narrow, sharing in the national incapacity for seeing anything except through a French eye-glass; his conception of Faith, as I have had occasion to remark elsewhere, was so meagre, so alien from Luther's; and the shackles imposed upon him by his church so disqualified him for judging fairly of its great enemy,—that we need not be surprised at any amount of misunderstanding in him when he came forward as an advocate in such a cause. Still, however fiercely the ‘eagle of Meaux’ may have desired to use his beak and claws, he might as well have pecked and clawed at Mount Ararat as at him whom God was pleased to endow with a mountain of strength, when He ordained that he should rise for the support of the church out of the flood of darkness and corruption.

“Here, as the assertion I have made concerning Bossuet’s misrepresentations should not be made unsupported by proofs, I will cite two or three examples, showing how the quotations from Luther, which in his pages seem very reprehensible, become innocent when viewed along with the context in their original home. Nor shall these examples be culled out from the six books employed in the attack on Luther. They shall be taken from the first sections of that attack; thus they will better illustrate the manner in which it is carried on.”

This is followed up by what is certainly very conclusive proof that both Bossuet and Mr Hallam have put forth some gross misrepresentations of Luther’s sentiments.

Mr Hallam and Mr Ward are about equally incompetent to form a correct estimate of Luther’s theological views; but Mr Hallam is much the more fair and honest of the two. Mr Ward labours to collect evidence from all quarters against Luther, and Mr Hare gives the following summary of the results of his researches:—

“The evidence which Mr Ward’s learning has collected in this matter, is a quotation taken from the English translation of ‘Au din’s Life of Luther;’ two quotations from the English translation of ‘Moehler’s Symbolic;’ a quotation from an article of his own in the British Critic, which appears there to have been borrowed from the French translation of Moehler; and certain extracts from an article in the Edinburgh Review, and from a pamphlet on the recent schism in the Church of Scotland. Verily, a formidable array of witnesses, picked out with a due recognition of the judicial maxim, that second-hand testimony is to be rejected! To one point, however, they do bear conclusive testimony, which is confirmed by all the rest of the volume, namely, to Mr Ward’s utter incompetency for pronouncing an opinion on any question relating to the German Reformation.” The quotations from Audin are not of much importance; but Mr Hare subjects to a thorough scrutiny the materials which Ward has borrowed from Moehler and Sir William Hamilton; and the investigation of these things forms the most important portion of his Vindication. Moehler’s Symbolism has been so much praised of late, having been even pronounced to be the most formidable attack on Protestantism since the time of Bossuet, that it may be interesting to our readers to know something of the general character of this work, and of the answers it has called forth. On these points Mr Hare writes as follows:—



“Here,—as Moehler’s work has been translated into English, as it has been much bepraised by our Romanizers, and has evidently exercised a great deal of influence among them, and as it is well calculated to foster most delusive prejudices against the Reformation, and in favour of the Church of Rome, in readers prepared by visions about the glories of the middle ages, and who are ready to regard the Protestant churches as outcasts from the pale of Christianity, because, through whatever cause, they have adopted a different form of government,—let me be allowed to remark, that, able as the Symbolik certainly is, considering the cause it has to maintain, and plausible as it must needs seem to such as have nothing more than a superficial acquaintance with the topics which it discusses, still, in addition to the errors already spoken of, its value in the service of truth is destroyed by two pervading fallacies. In the first place, while the author’s professed object, as is intimated by his title, is to compare the Protestant Symbolical Books with those of the Romish church, in order to ascertain and examine the doctrinal antitheses between them, he soon finds out that if he confines himself to these deliberate dogmatical expressions of doctrine he shall not be able to make out a case; therefore he scrapes together all sorts of passages, not merely out of professedly dogmatical treatises,—which, under certain restrictions, would be allowable,— but out of occasional pamphlets, out of sermons, out of private letters, nay, even out of Luther’s ‘Table Talk,’ to kindle and fan an odium which he cannot otherwise excite. Yet it is plain that such a procedure can only mislead and dupe the reader with regard to the great subject-matter of the controversy; which is not, whether such and such individual Protestants may not at times have written extravagantly or unadvisedly, but is instituted to determine the relative value of the body of truth set forth by each church in the solemn confession of its faith. Strange too it may seem, that the thought of the ‘Lettres Provinciales’ did not come across him, and warn him of the tremendous retribution he might provoke. Moreover, after he has thus craftily shifted the whole ground of the contrast, so that, while it is nominally between the symbolical declarations of doctrine recognised by the opposite churches, in lieu of the Protestant symbolical declarations, he is continually slipping in whatever errors he can pick up in the most trivial writings of the Reformers, and these too not seldom aggravated by gross misrepresentations, —even this does not content him: a like trick must be played with the other scale. As the one side is degraded below the reality, the other is exalted above it. The fallacy spoken of above, in p. 32, runs through the whole book. The opposition of the Reformers is represented as having been directed not against the gross corruptions and errors which prevailed when they began the conflict, but against the modified exposition of Romish doctrine, drawn up with

such singular adroitness at the semi-reformation of Trent: nay, even this is often refined and spiritualized by the interpolation of views belonging to the theology and philosophy of the nineteenth century. Hence it is not to be wondered at that Moehler's work should impose on such readers as do not see through these fallacies, but suppose his representations of the opposite parties to be correct.

“Yet its influence ought to have been exploded long ago. For never in the history of controversies was there a completer victory than that gained by the champions of Protestant truth who replied to it. Indeed, the attack, instead of being injurious, was eminently beneficial to the German Protestants. It led them to examine the foundations of their strength,—to bring out the divine armour of truth stored up in the writings of the Reformers. Among the answers which Moehler called forth, some, which are highly spoken of,—for instance, Hengstenberg's and Marheineke's,—I have not seen; but the two that I have read are triumphant. That by Nitzsch is a masterly assertion and vindication of the great Protestant principles which Moehler assailed, and its calm and dignified tone and spirit, its philosophic power and deep Christian wisdom, render it one of the noblest among polemical works. Baur, on the other hand, takes up his Herculean club and smashes Moehler's book to atoms. Immeasurably superior to his adversary, through his vast learning and wonderful dialectic power, he pursues him through sophism after sophism, unravels fallacy after fallacy, and strips off mis-statement after mis-statement, till he leaves him at last in a condition of pitiable nakedness and forlornness. In several of Baur's other works, the Hegelian predominates over the Christian, to the great disparagement and sacrifice of Christian truth; and his criticism has of late years become extravagantly destructive; even in his answer to Moehler, his philosophy at times is too obtrusive. But his vindication of the doctrines of the Reformation, and his exposure of the Tridentine fallacies, as well as of Moehler's, is complete.”

Moehler has produced and given prominence to what is certainly the worst and most offensive passage that has yet been found in Luther; and Mr Hare has carefully considered it, and conclusively defended it,—not certainly from the charge of great rashness, extravagance, and offensiveness, in point of phraseology, but from that which the words, taken by themselves, seem at first view to suggest, *viz.* of embodying a deliberate exhortation to the practice of immorality. As this will probably continue for some time to be a favourite topic of invective with Romanists and Romanizers, it is proper that we should give some general idea of the point, while we must refer to the Vindication for particulars. The passage from Luther, as given in the English translation of

Moehler's Symbolism, is this: "Sin lustily (*pecca fortiter*), but be yet more lusty in faith, and rejoice in Christ, who is the conqueror of sin, of death, and of the world. Sin we must, so long as we remain here. It suffices, that through the riches of the glory of God, we know the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world. From Him no sin will sever us, though a million times in a day we should fornicate or commit murder." The question here naturally occurs, To whom was this startling statement addressed? And it is no unimportant point in Luther's defence, that these words form part of a letter addressed to Melancthon in 1521, when Luther was living in concealment in the Wartburg. Mr Hare refers to this topic in this way:—

"Verily it does seem here as though hell were casting up its spray into heaven. Still, after our ample experience of the manner in which words may be misrepresented, and after the thousand thousand proofs afforded by Luther's writings and life that he did know something of the gospel, we will not be disheartened. At all events, we will try to make out what these awful words can mean,—to whom they can have been said,—for what purpose. Were they said to Simon de Montfort when he marched against the Albigenses? or to Alva when he entered on his government in the Netherlands? or to Louis XIV. when he revoked the Edict of Nantes? or to poor Mary when she mounted the throne after the death of her brother Edward? Were they a dram administered to Charles IX. and to Catherine of Medicis on the eve of St Bartholomew? or a billet doux sent to Charles II. during the progress of his conversion? or were they a motto written up in the halls of the Inquisition? or can it be that Luther was once engaged in a friendly correspondence with Munzer? or with Alexander VI.? No; but to Melancthon, of all men that ever lived! Not to Munzer; not to Alexander VI.; not to Leo X.; not to Clement VII.; but to Melancthon! A strange person, truly, to choose as the confidant of such a doctrine,—as the recipient of such an exhortation! The tempter, against whom Luther so often battled, must for once have gained complete possession of him, and turned him into an instrument for destroying the soul of his younger friend."

Mr Hare then proceeds to show, from a careful consideration of the circumstances in which, and the objects for which, the letter was written, and from an accurate analysis of the train of thought that runs through it, how it was that Luther came to use such words, without, of course, having had the remotest intention of teaching that sin was a light matter, or encouraging Melancthon to commit it. We must refer to the Vindication for the details of all this, but we will quote the concluding passage:—

“Now in the passage of Luther which we are considering, the real offensiveness lies in the monstrous exaggeration of the language. The indignation bestowed upon him might, indeed, have been bestowed most deservedly upon the truly atrocious and blasphemous proposition whereby the venders of indulgences, whom he assailed, tried to lure purchasers for their trumpery,— *Venias papales tantas esse, ut solvere possint hominem, etiamsi quis per impossibile Dei Genitricem violasset.* Such a proposition is indeed an abomination in the sight of God and man; yet this doctrine, which Mr Ward might well call too bad for the devils, the flagitious hierarchy encouraged; or at least they would not repress and condemn their emissaries for proclaiming it, even when called upon and earnestly implored to do so. Luther’s proposition, on the other hand, is fundamentally true; his words render it probable that he was thinking of David’s crimes; the addition of millies millies, as everybody acquainted with his writings will recognise at once, is a mere Lutheranism. Most readers will remember his answer to Spalatin, with regard to the advice of his friends, who would have dissuaded him from venturing to Worms, that even if there were as many devils in Worms as there were tiles on the house-tops, still he would go thither. So, again, in his grand letter to the Elector from the Wartburg, when he declares his resolution of returning to Wittenberg, he says he will not be withheld by fear of Duke George. This I know full well of myself if affairs at Leipsic were in the same case as now at Wittenberg, I would ride thither even though (your Electoral Grace must forgive my foolish speech) it were to rain pure Duke Georges for nine days, and each one of them were nine times more furious than this. These instances are notorious; a multitude of similar ones might be cited from Luther’s writings, especially from those belonging to this critical period of his life, when all his powers were stretched beyond themselves by the stress of the conflict. To our nicer ears such expressions may seem in bad taste. Be it so. When a Titan is walking about among the pigmies, the earth seems to rock beneath his tread. Mount Blanc would be out of keeping in Regent’s Park; and what would be the outcry if it were to toss its head and shake off an avalanche or two? Such, however, is the dulness of the elementary powers, they have not apprehended the distinction between force and violence. In like manner, when the adamantine bondage in which men’s hearts, and souls, and minds had been held for centuries, was to be burst, it was almost inevitable that the power which was to burst this should not measure its movements by the rules of polished life. Erasmus did so; Melancthon did so: but a thousand Erasmuses would never have effected the Reformation; nor would a thousand Melancthons, without Luther to go before him and to animate him.”

We now proceed to consider Sir William Hamilton's attacks upon Luther and the other Reformers. These Mr. Hare has exposed fully and with severity—great, but not greater than they deserve. Sir William entered upon the work of assailing the character of the Reformers spontaneously and without call. In an article in the *Edinburgh Review* for 1834, on the Admission of Dissenters to English Universities, he laid hold of an excuse for making the averment, "That there is hardly an obnoxious doctrine to be found among the modern Lutherans (the Rationalists) which has not its warrant and example in the writings of Luther himself;" and proceeded to establish this position by what he calls a "hasty anthology of some of Luther's opinions, and in his own words, literally translated." He then gives quotations from Luther, under the three heads of speculative theology, practical theology, and biblical criticism. Under the first head, his quotations consist only of four short passages upon the one subject of the procedure of God in regard to sin and sinners. Under the second, he merely gives some extracts from a single document, setting forth the grounds on which Luther and Melancthon gave their consent to the Landgrave of Hesse marrying a second wife, while, at the same time, he continued to live with the first. He has thus brought forward only one topic under the head of speculative theology, and only one topic under the head of practical theology. And on neither of these two topics can it be said that the modern Lutherans follow the "warrant and example in the writings of Luther himself," though it was professedly to establish this that Sir William collected his "hasty anthology." Nine years afterwards,—at the era of the disruption of the Church of Scotland,—Sir William published a pamphlet on the election of pastors, entitled, "Be not Schismatics, be not Martyrs by Mistake; a Demonstration that the principle of non-intrusion, so far from being fundamental in the Church of Scotland, is subversive of the fundamental principles of that and every other Presbyterian Church Establishment." In this pamphlet he again, without any provocation, assailed the character of the Reformers, though this had nothing more to do with the election of pastors than with the admission of Dissenters into English universities. In this pamphlet, indeed, he retracted the charge which, nine years before, in the *Edinburgh Review*, he had brought against the Reformers in connection with the Landgrave's second marriage, that they were guilty in that affair of a "skulking compromise of all professed principle." But he retracted this charge only to substitute another in its room,—viz. that they approved of polygamy as good and lawful, nay, that they wished to have polygamy sanctioned by the civil law, and did something, though unsuccessfully, in order to bring about this result. And to this new form of the charge under the head of practical theology, he added the offensive allegation, that Luther publicly preached in recommendation of

incontinence, adultery, and incest. As some of these charges against Luther had not been broached before by any of his opponents, it will be proper to give the very terms in which they were, for the first time, promulgated to the world, by Sir William Hamilton, at Edinburgh, in the year of grace 1843:—

“Look, then, to the great author and the great guide of the great religious revolution itself—to Luther and Melancthon; even they, great and good as they both were, would, had they been permitted by the wisdom of the world to carry their theological speculations into practice, have introduced a state of things which every Christian of every denomination will now confess, would not only have turned the Reformation into a curse, but have subverted all that is most sacred by moral and religious law.

“Among other points of papal discipline, the zeal of Luther was roused against ecclesiastical celibacy and monastic vows; and whither did it carry him? Not content to reason against the institution within natural limits and on legitimate grounds, his fervour led him to deny explicitly, and in every relation, the existence of chastity, as a physical impossibility,—led him publicly to preach (and who ever preached with the energy of Luther!) incontinence, adultery, incest even, as not only allowable, but, if practised under the prudential regulations which he himself lays down, unobjectionable, and even praiseworthy. The epidemic spread,—a fearful dissolution of manners throughout the sphere of the Reformer’s influence was, for a season, the natural result. The ardour of the boisterous Luther infected, among others, even the ascetic and timorous Melancthon. Polygamy awaited only the permission of the civil ruler to be promulgated as an article of the Reformation; and had this permission not been significantly refused (whilst, at the same time, the epidemic in Wittenberg was homeopathically alleviated, at least, by the similar but more violent access in Munster), it would not have been the fault of the fathers of the Reformation if Christian liberty has remained less ample than Mohammedan licence. As it was, polygamy was never abandoned by either Luther or Melancthon as a religious speculation: both, in more than a single instance, accorded the formal sanction of their authority to its practice,—by those who were above the law; and had the civil prudence of the imprudent Henry VIII. not restrained him, sensual despot as he was, from carrying their spontaneous counsel into effect, a plurality of wives might now have been a privilege as religiously contended for in England as in Turkey.”

“I do not found merely or principally upon passages known to Bossuet, Bayle,

etc., and through them to persons of ordinary information. These, I admit, would not justify all I have asserted in regard to the character of the doctrine preached by Luther.

“I do not find my statement of the general opinion of Luther and Melancthon in favour of polygamy on their special allowance of a second wife to Philip the Magnanimous, or on any expressions contained in their Consilium on that occasion. On the contrary, that Consilium, and the circumstances under which it was given, may be, indeed always have been, adduced to show that in the case of the Landgrave they made a sacrifice of eternal principle to temporary expedience. The reverse of this I am able to prove, in a chronological series of testimonies by them to the religious legality of polygamy as a general institution, consecutively downwards from their earliest commentaries on the Scriptures and other purely abstract treatises. So far, therefore, was there from being any disgraceful compromise of principle in the sanction accorded by them to the bigamy of the Landgrave of Hesse, that they only, in that case, carried their speculative doctrine (held, by the way, also by Milton) into practice; although the prudence they had by that time acquired rendered them, on worldly grounds, averse from their sanction being made publicly known. I am the more anxious to correct this general mistake touching the motives of these illustrious men, because I was myself, on a former occasion, led to join in the injustice.”!

It was in these circumstances, and with such a case before him, that Mr Hare prepared and published in 1846 his elaborate and most valuable Note in defence of Luther in the second volume of the “Mission of the Comforter,” and revised it for republication in a separate form previously to his death in 1855, notwithstanding Sir William’s threat of an answer in 1846, and his attempt at self-defence, or rather at retaliation, in the notes to his “Discussions,” published in 1852. When a man in Sir William’s position comes forward ultroneously, and without call adduces such charges as these against Luther and his fellow-reformers, he must lay his account with his allegations being narrowly scrutinized, and his evidence, if he produce any, being carefully sifted. Sir William’s acknowledged eminence as a philosopher and a man of erudition, gives a certain influence to anything he may choose to -dye, and makes it the more necessary that such statements as those we have quoted from him should be scrutinized with care, and, if found erroneous, exposed with all plainness.

The facts, that Sir William brought forward such charges, couched in such a tone and spirit, first in an article in the Edinburgh Review, on the Admission of

Dissenters to English Universities, and then again, nine years after, in a pamphlet on non-intrusion, or the election of pastors, indicate very plainly a certain animus with respect to the men so assailed: which is not disproved by his calling Luther and Melancthon “great and good men and by his assuring us that, a so far from disliking Luther, we admire him with all his aberrations (for he never paltered with the truth), not only as one of the ablest, but as one of the best of men.” On the same page where this profession occurs, Sir William has made the following statements about the Reformer, —statements, it should be noticed, published for the first time in 1852:—“Luther was betrayed into corresponding extravagances by an assurance of his personal inspiration; of which, indeed, he was no less confident than of his ability to perform miracles. He disclaimed the pope, he spurned the church, but, varying in almost all else, he never doubted of his own infallibilityThe man who made these statements knows, and every man who has ever read anything concerning Luther knows, that in 1545, the year before his death, the great Reformer wrote a preface to a collected edition of his works, which began with these words:—“I have long and earnestly resisted those who wished my books, or rather the confusions of my lucubrations, to be published; both because I was unwilling that the labours of the ancients should be covered up by my novelties, and the reader hindered from reading them, and because now<sup>7</sup>, by God’s grace, there are many methodical books, among which the Commonplaces of Philip excel, by which the theologian and the bishop may be beautifully formed, especially since the sacred Scriptures may now be had in almost every language; while my books, as the want of method in the events occasioned and necessitated, are, indeed, but a rude and indigested chaos, which it is not easy now even for myself to bring into order. Induced by these considerations, I wished all my books to be buried in perpetual oblivion, that there might be room for better ones.” This preface also contains the following statements:—“But, before all things, I beseech the pious reader, and I beseech him for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, that he would read these productions with judgment, nay, with much compassion;” “I narrate these things, excellent reader, for this reason, that, if you are about to read my little works, you may remember that I have been one of those who, as Augustine writes of himself, have made progress by writing and teaching, and that I am not one of those who from nothing suddenly become great, though they have done, or tried, or experienced nothing, but with one glance at Scripture exhaust its whole spirit.” Sir William knows that in the same year, 1545, Melancthon, with Luther’s consent, published a collection of the “Disputations or Propositions,” put forth and discussed by him in the theological school at Wittenberg, from 1519 to 1545; and that Luther wrote a preface to them, which began with these words:—“I



permit these 'Disputations or Propositions' of mine, handled from the beginning of my cause in opposition to the papacy and the kingdom of the Sophists, to be published, chiefly in order that the greatness of the cause, and the success therein divinely granted to me, may not exalt me. For in these is clearly shown my ignominy,—that is, my weakness and ignorance, which led me at first to try the matter with the greatest fear and trembling."

Sir William knows, and even "persons of ordinary information" know, that innumerable statements, similar in substance and spirit to what have been quoted from these two prefaces, are found in Luther's writings; and yet, knowing all this, he ventures to assert, that Luther had "an assurance of his personal inspiration," and "never doubted of his own infallibility." Every one knows, that on some occasions Luther showed a dogged obstinacy in maintaining errors, and an unwarranted confidence that they were truths, and that he occasionally talked about himself in a style that somewhat resembled presumptuous, self-complacent boasting. Sir William, we dare say, could easily produce a copious anthology of this sort. But this would be no sufficient proof of the truth of the charge, that Luther "was assured of his personal inspiration," and "never doubted of his own infallibility," even though it were not contradicted by the passages we have quoted, and by many others of similar import. These passages conclusively disprove the charge, unless, indeed, it be alleged that they were altogether hypocritical, and expressed feelings which Luther never entertained; and no human being but a thorough-bred Papist could be base enough to believe this."

The adduction of this baseless charge against Luther, and the adduction of it for the first time in 1852, six years after Mr Hare had exposed the charges of 1834 and 1843, must satisfy every intelligent man, that Sir William's statements about the character of the Reformer are entitled to no weight or deference, and ought to be received with the strongest suspicion.

Sir William has turned over a good many books, and picked up a good deal of information of a miscellaneous and superficial, though often recondite, description, upon some theological subjects, and evidently thinks that he is entitled to treat with contempt all the existing professional cultivators of theological literature. The eminence he has reached in his own department, the confidence with which he dogmatizes on theological and ecclesiastical topics, and the real extent of his knowledge regarding them, though it is much less than he claims credit for, are fitted to give weight to his statements with a certain class of the community; while, at the same time, as we are persuaded, and think

we can prove, he has gone astray in almost all the instances in which he has meddled with that class of subjects. Sir William resembles Bayle in many respects,—in the vigour and versatility of his intellect, in the variety and extent of his erudition, and in his propensity to deal with ecclesiastical questions; but he is greatly inferior to that famous sceptic in real love for historical accuracy, in patient and deliberate investigation of the materials of proof, and, above all, in that sound judgment, strong sense, and practical sagacity, which, in dealing with historical evidence, are far more valuable than metaphysical depth or subtilty. Sir William has some of Bayle's bad qualities, without his good ones; and this furnishes an explanation of the position which we do not hesitate to lay down, *viz.* that in all the leading instances in which he has taken up theological or ecclesiastical questions, he has exhibited not only blundering and inaccuracy, but a state of mind and feeling offensive to the real friends of truth and righteousness. We think the time has come when this position should be openly and explicitly laid down and pressed upon public notice, in order to prevent the mischief which the influence of Sir William's name is fitted to do, in matters in which no deference whatever is due to him, and which no man must be permitted to misrepresent; and we willingly avail ourselves of the assistance of Mr Hare's admirable Vindication, in order to establish this, so far as concerns his offensive attack upon Luther and his fellow-reformers.

We have already mentioned that Sir William's original attack upon Luther, published in the Edinburgh Review for 1834, and repeated in the "Discussions" in 1852, consisted chiefly of an ascription to him of erroneous and dangerous opinions: — 1st, On speculative theology; 2d, On practical theology; and 3d, On biblical criticism;—and that he promised to give Luther's opinions "in his own words literally translated," thereby professing to have himself translated Luther's words from a personal examination of the original. The whole of what he produces as a specimen of Luther's speculative theology, consists of four short sentences, amounting in all to eight lines, and bears upon the one point of the purposes and procedure of God in regard to sin and sinners. Now Mr Hare has proved that these eight lines, given originally in the Review without any references, and as if they were one continuous extract, are made up of four scraps from different parts of the treatise, "De Servo Arbitrio;" and that they were taken not from the original, but from Bossuet's "History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches," where they are given with some deviations from the original that are fitted to make them rather more offensive. Mr Hare's proof that Sir William's extracts had, been taken mediately or immediately from Bossuet was so perfectly conclusive, that it could not possibly be answered or evaded,

and Sir William was under the necessity of having recourse either to confession or to silence. He chose the former and more honourable alternative; though to a man of his peculiar temperament such a confession must have been very painful and mortifying, especially as in the interval between the commission of the offence and Mr Hare's public exposure of it, he had disclaimed founding "upon passages known to Bossuet, Bayle, etc., and through them to persons of ordinary information." As confession is not an exercise in which Sir William often indulges, and as our readers, who are probably more familiar with his boastings, may be anxious to see how he performs it, we give it in his own words:—

"In regard to the testimonies from Luther under this first head, but under this alone, I must make a confession. There are few things to which I feel a greater repugnance than relying upon quotations at second-hand. Now those under this head were not taken immediately from Luther's treatise, 'De Servo Arbitrio,' in which they are all contained. I had indeed more than once read that remarkable work, and once attentively, marking, as is my wont, the more important passages; but at the time of writing this article, my copy was out of immediate reach, and the press being urgent, I had no leisure for a reperusal. In these circumstances, finding that the extracts from it in Theoduls Gasimahl corresponded, so far as they went, with those also given by Bossuet, and as, from my own recollection (and the testimony, I think, of Werdermann), they fairly represented Luther's doctrine; I literally translated the passages, even in their order, as given by Von Stark (and in Dr Kentsinger's French version). Stark, I indeed now conjecture, had Bossuet in his eye. I deem it right to make this avowal, and to acknowledge that I did what I account wrong. But, again, I have no hesitation in now, after full examination, deliberately saying, that I do not think these extracts, whether by Bossuet, or by Stark and Bossuet, to be unfairly selected, to be unfaithfully translated, to be garbled, or to misrepresent in any way Luther's doctrine; in particular his opinions touching the divine predestination and the human will."

Sir William's defence, in substance, is, that he, or rather Bossuet, had not really misrepresented Luther; and that the statements as they stand in the original are as strong and startling as in Bossuet's French or in his own English. This of course has nothing to do with the matter, in so far as it involves a question of scholar-like acting. But as, in this aspect of the affair, Sir William has frankly confessed that he acted wrong, we shall say nothing more about it. We cannot, however, concede that Bossuet and Sir William have correctly exhibited Luther's actual statements. Mr Hare has proved their incorrectness, though perhaps he has

somewhat overrated the magnitude of the differences in point of substance between the original and the translations. There is only one of the four scraps to which Sir William in his defence refers specifically or with any detail; and a brief notice of what he says about it. will prove that even in what he says “now, after full examination, deliberately,” he has not reached complete accuracy. The second of the four sentences given in the Review,—and given as if it were part of one and the same passage along with the other three, this of itself being fitted to convey an unfair impression, even though the whole had been correctly translated,—is in these words: “All things take place by the eternal and invariable will of God, who blasts and shatters in pieces the freedom of the will;” and he now, “after full examination,” gives it in his “Discussions,” in the same words, except that he substitutes “which” for “who.” Bossuet’s French — Sir William’s original — is this: “Que sa prescience et la providence divine fait que toutes choses arrivent par une immuable, eternelle, et inevitable volonte de Dieu, qui foudroie et met en pieces tout le libre arbitre.” Sir William’s remark upon this passage is as follows: “I must not, however, here forget to acknowledge an error, or rather an inadvertence of mine, which has afforded a ground for Mr Hare to make, as usual, a futile charge against Bossuet. In the second of the above extracts, not having Luther’s original before me, I had referred the relative pronoun to i God,’ whereas it should have been to ‘the will of God.’ In the versions of Stark and Bossuet it is ambiguous, and I applied it wrongly.”J Now it is not true, as Sir William here asserts, that it was his error or inadvertence in translating Bossuet’s “qui” by “who,” while it might equally mean “which,” that led Mr Hare to charge Bossuet with misrepresenting Luther’s meaning. Mr Hare has said nothing suggesting or implying this, and he has made statements plainly precluding it. But the strange thing is, that while Sir William’s statement necessarily implies that in Luther’s original there is a relative pronoun, on the right application and translation of which the sense somewhat depends, the fact is, that no such relative pronoun exists except’ in Bossuet; that Sir William has not yet, “after full examination,” fulfilled his promise to give us “Luther’s opinions in his own words literally translated;” and that the difference between what Luther said and what Sir William continues to ascribe to him is not wholly unimportant. The original passage in Luther consists of two sentences as follow: “Est itaque et hoc in primis necessarium et salutare Christiano nosse, quod Deus nihil præsicit contingenter, sed quod omnia incommutabili et seterna, infallibilique voluntate et prævidet et proponit et facit. Hoc fulmine sternitur et conteritur penitus liberum arbitrium. Ideo qui liberum arbitrium volunt assertum, debent hoc fulmen vel negare, vel dissimulare, aut alia ratione a se abiffere.”

Now there is no relative pronoun here, to connect the crushing of the free-will either with the Deus or the voluntas, as Bossuet and Sir William represent it. Sir William originally ascribed it to the Deus; he now ascribes it to the voluntas: whereas Luther ascribes it to neither; but breaks off from them into a new sentence, and ascribes it to hoc fulmen. What this fulmen was must be ascertained from the general scope of the passage; and when this is taken into account, it becomes perfectly manifest that the crushing of free-will is ascribed neither to the Deus nor to the voluntas, strictly speaking, but to the great truth or fact, that God certainly foresees and governs all things. Even if this difference were more insignificant than it is, this would be no excuse for giving so garbled an extract from Luther, and so incorrect a translation of his words. Bossuet did not promise to translate literally, and yet he has given Luther's words more fully and correctly than Sir William, who did. Bossuet has acted unfairly, indeed, in overleaping the barrier of the sentence, in extinguishing the fulmen, and in ascribing the crushing of the free-will directly to the voluntas, if not to the Deus. Sir William adopts this inaccuracy from him, and he continues to adhere to it even 66 after full examination" of the original; while he also perpetrates the additional unfairness of leaving out the first part of the sentence, by the introduction of a portion of which even Bossuet indicated, that it was the foreknowledge and providence of God about which Luther was here discoursing.

This is a very curious specimen of blundering. But its importance, we admit, lies chiefly in its bearing upon Sir William, and the question of the reliance to be placed upon the accuracy of his statements. That rash and exaggerated sentiments and expressions may be produced from Luther's writings upon a variety of subjects, is quite well known, and no intelligent Protestant would think of disputing this. That statements of this sort are to be found in his treatise "De Servo Arbitrio," in reference to the decrees and providence of God, has always been abundantly notorious. That some of the statements quoted by Bossuet and Sir William do, even as they stand in the original, express Calvinistic doctrines in an unnecessarily and unwarrantably harsh and offensive form, we do not hesitate to admit. Indeed, it is a very remarkable fact, that not only the rash and impetuous Luther, but also the cautious and timid Melancthon, did, in their earlier works, make more unwarrantable and startling statements about the decrees and the agency of God, in their bearing upon men's actions, than Calvin ever uttered. When the Lutherans, in the next generation, abandoned the Calvinism of their master, they were very much at a loss what to make of his treatise "De Servo Arbitrio," which, in its natural and obvious meaning, seemed to be the production of one who, as was said of Beza, was Calvinio Calvinior.

The most devoted admirers of the Megalander, as they usually called him, admitted, of course, that there are some rash and exaggerated statements in the work. But that is very little to their purpose; for Calvinists, too, admit the truth of this, and contend that, even abstracting everything that might rank under this head, the treatise plainly and explicitly asserts the fundamental principles of the Calvinistic system of theology. In the year 1664, Sebastian Schmidt, an eminent Lutheran divine, and professor of theology at Strasburg, published an edition of Luther "De Servo Arbitrio," copiously provided with annotations, "quibus," as is set forth in the title-page, "B. Vir ab accusatione, quasi absolutum Calvinianorum, vel durius, aliquod Dei decretum in libro ipso statuerit, prsecipue vindicatur." The annotations, of course, are utterly unsuccessful in effecting the object to which they are directed, viz. proving that Luther did not, in this work, teach Calvinistic doctrines. No amount of straining or perversion is adequate to effect that. Schmidt's annotations resemble very much a Socinian commentary upon the beginning of John's Gospel; and it is rather a curious coincidence, that those scraps which Sir William has paraded are duly provided by Schmidt with annotations, intended to show, not that they present Calvinism in a harsh and offensive form, but that they do not go so far as to teach Calvinism at all.

The compelling Sir William to confess publicly, that, in giving a view of Luther's opinions on speculative theology, he had got his whole materials at second-hand, was an offence not to be forgiven; and accordingly he brings out, in connection with this topic, an assault, or rather a series of assaults, upon the Archdeacon, evidently intended to be murderous. This great philosopher, when he engages in theological controversy, exhibits odium plusquam theologicum. Our readers, we are sure, will not wonder at any little severity we have exhibited in dealing with him, when they read the following choice specimens of invective, culled from a few pages of the notes to the "Discussions." "Mr Hare's observations under this head of speculative theology exhibit significant specimens of inconsistency, bad faith, and exquisite error. I shall adduce instances of each. But his baseless abuse—that I shall overpass." "He is only a one-sided advocate, an advocate from personal predilection and antipathies; and even as such, his arguments are weak as they are wordy." "Lord Bacon says of some one, i has only two small wants; he wants knowledge and he wants love.' But with the Archdeacon, w-e cannot well restrict his wants to two; for he lacks logic besides learning and love; and a fourth—withal a worse defect—is to be added, but a defect which it is always painful to be forced to specify." "Mr Hare is not the champion for Luther; and if he be effectually counselled, the farrago

will not again see the light” (this refers to Mr Hare’s intimated purpose to republish Note W,—a purpose accomplished in the volume now lying before us), “for it is simply a verbose conglomeration of what I shall refrain from characterizing; the author making more mistakes or misrepresentations than the note—however confessedly prolix and garrulous—exhibits paragraphs. But the Archdeacon of Lewes neither learns nor listens. He is not content to enjoy his ecclesiastical good fortune in humility and silent thankfulness. He will stand forward; he will challenge admiration; he will display his learning; he will play the polemic; and thus exposes to scorn not merely himself,” but also, as Sir William goes on to assert, with some detail, the church of which he was a dignitary. Now what is the cause, and what the ground of this violent outbreak, of this alarming exhibition of a philosopher in a fury? The cause of it is simply this, that Mr Hare has laid before the public conclusive proof that much, we do not say all, of what Sir William has here alleged against his antagonist, is true O O j of himself. And the ground of it is nothing more than this, that Mr Hare’s work, when carefully scrutinized, exhibits a few instances of the oversights, errors, and partialities, which may be pointed out, more or less, in nineteen-twentieths of the most respectable controversial works that ever were produced, and in which Sir William’s polemic specially superabounds. No man with a sound head and a sound heart can read Sir William’s onslaught on Mr Hare, of which we have given some specimens, without seeing that the charges are grossly exaggerated, and have really no solid foundation to rest on. We would not go so far as to allege that all that Sir William charges upon Mr Hare is true of himself; but we have no hesitation in saying, that any one who might choose to allege this, could, without difficulty, produce a much more plausible piece of pleading in support of his allegation than Sir William has done. This is so manifestly the true state of the case, that we do not think it necessary to go into detail to defend Mr Hare against an assault which was evidently intended to destroy him, but which, from its very recklessness, has proved perfectly powerless.

It was very natural that Sir William should take under his protection Bossuet, to whom, in common with “persons of ordinary information,” he had been indebted for his specimen of Luther’s speculative theology; and, accordingly, he says of him, “In this note I have spoken of Bossuet, signifying my reliance upon the accuracy of his quotations; and I am as fully convinced of his learning and veracity as of his genius.” As Mr Hare had adduced satisfactory evidence of Bossuet’s unscrupulous unfairness, Sir William could scarcely do less than guarantee his veracity: and he could do this the more easily, as, in all probability,

he never had carefully investigated the subject. But the truth is, that Bossuet's character for veracity was conclusively settled, in the estimation of all intelligent and competent judges, before the publication of his "History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches," by the tremendous exposures made of him by Dr Wake, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, in his "Exposition of the Doctrine of the Church of England," and his two Defences of it. We have no doubt that in these works, which have been republished in Bishop Gibson's "Preservative against Popery," Wake has conclusively convicted Bossuet of deliberate lying, in repeated instances; and these not bearing merely on the primary subject of controversy between them, viz. the original publication of Bossuet's "Exposition of the Doctrine of the Catholic Church," but also on several other topics unconnected with it. And in regard to the "History of the Variations," though it is characterized by extraordinary skill and dexterity, and is indeed in all respects one of the most plausible and effective pieces of special pleading ever produced, and though it generally avoids gross and palpable falsehoods, yet it too has, we think, been proved to be utterly destitute of fairness and candour. We think it scarcely possible for any man to read with care and discrimination, Basnage's "Histoire de la Religion des Eglises Reformees," without being satisfied of the truth of this statement. 'Papists still boast of his "History of the Variations" as unanswerable. We believe that it has been most thoroughly answered by Basnage, in so far as it is argumentative, that everything like argument in it has been completely demolished, and that its author has been sadly exposed; while we cannot but admit, that even when everything needful to satisfy the understanding has been provided, the admirable skill and adroitness of the advocate of error has not only made the best of a bad cause, but may probably have left some painful doubts and uncertainties upon the minds of a considerable class of readers.

The argument of Bossuet's work lies within a very narrow compass. It is this. Variations in doctrine afford an evidence of error; Protestants have from the first been constantly varying in the doctrines they professed to hold: and, therefore, their views are erroneous. In opposition to this, it has been proved—1st, That the maxim about variations proving errors is not true, or is only partially true, in the sense in which alone it can serve Bossuet's purpose in argument; 2d, That some of the variations which he ascribes to Protestants are produced, and that many more are greatly swelled in importance and magnitude, by his own misrepresentations; and 3d, That the argument, in so far as it has any weight, may be retorted with far greater force upon the Church of Rome. These positions have been proved by Basnage in the most satisfactory and conclusive manner; so



that, so far as argument is concerned, the book has been thoroughly demolished. But Bossuet's great art throughout the whole work is, that he has contrived to bring in, in the most skilful and dexterous way, a great deal that is fitted to damage the characters of the Reformers, and thus to leave an uncomfortable impression upon men's minds, even when his argument, properly so called, is seen to be wholly untenable. Bossuet's want of integrity, so far as this work is concerned, is exhibited chiefly in producing and magnifying variations, by misrepresenting the views of the Reformers and other Protestants; and we think it scarcely possible for any one to read Basnage carefully, without being convinced, that it was only policy that restrained him from practising the grosser and more palpable frauds in which most Popish controversialists' indulge, and that with admirable skill he has systematically carried his misrepresentations just as far as he thought, upon the whole, to be safe or expedient.

We have really no pleasure in making such statements about Bossuet, who, in spite of his want of integrity in matters in which the interests of his church were concerned, was not only possessed of splendid mental endowments, but even of something like a certain elevation and nobility of general character. Integrity in matters in which the interests and reputation of the church are concerned, it is hopeless to expect of almost any Popish controversialist. Arnauld and Nicole, the famous Jansenists, were the two other great contemporary champions of Popery; and they have certainly furnished far better evidence that they were really men of religious and moral principle than can be produced in favour of Bossuet. And yet we have great doubts whether they held fast their integrity. We greatly admire all these men, though we do not put them in the same category; and while we would not pervert or explain away any matters of fact as to what they said or did, we feel strongly disposed to palliate their aberrations, by laying a portion of the responsibility upon the demoralizing and conscience-searing system to the influence of which they were subjected. It always deepens our indignation against the Man of Sin, the Mystery of Iniquity, when our attention is called to anything which reminds us that that system reduced a man so noble in many respects as Bossuet was, to such artifices, and imperilled, at least, the integrity of such men as Arnauld and Nicole. We dismiss this subject with the following admirable remarks of Mr Hare on the famous "History of the Variations," which we believe to be just and sound:—

"Indeed, if anything were surprising among the numberless παραλογα of literature, one should marvel at the inordinate reputation which the 'Histoire des Variations' has acquired, not merely with the members of a church glad to make

the most of any prop for a rotten cause, but among Protestants of learning and discernment. One main source of its celebrity may be in that spirit of detraction which exercises such a baneful power in all classes of mankind, ever since Cain slew his brother on account of his righteousness; in the eagerness with which all listen to evil-speaking and slander, finding little diminution of their pleasure though it be strongly seasoned with lying; in that want of sympathy with heroic and enthusiastic spirits which is so prevalent among men of the world, and the great body of men of letters, and their consequent satisfaction at seeing what towers beyond their ken cast down to the ground. Able as the 'Histoire des Variations' doubtless is, if regarded as the statement and pleading of an unprincipled and unscrupulous advocate, it is anything but a great work. For no work can be great unless it be written with a paramount love of truth. This is the moral element of all genius, and without it the finest talents are worth little more than a conjuror's sleight-of-hand. Bossuet, in this book, never seems even to have set himself the problem of speaking the truth, as a thing to be desired and aimed at. He pretends to seat himself in the chair of judgment, but without a thought of doing justice to the persons he summons before him. He does not examine to ascertain whether they are guilty or not. His mind is made up beforehand that they are guilty; and his only care is to scrape together whatever may seem to prove this, that he may have a specious plea for condemning them. Never once, I believe, from the first page to the last, did he try heartily to make out what the real fact was. He is determined to say all possible evil of the Reformers; to show that they went wrong at every step, in every deed, in every word, in every thought; to prove that they are all darkness, with scarcely a gleam of light. Hence his representation of Luther is no more like him than an image made up of the black lines in a spectrum would be like the sun. Bossuet picks out all the bad he can find, and leaves out all the good. But as even this procedure would poorly serve his purpose, the main part of his picture consists of sentences torn from their context; which, by some forcible wrench, some process of garbling, by being deprived of certain limiting or counterbalancing clauses, by being made positive instead of hypothetical, or through some of the other tricks of which we have seen such sad instances in these pages, are rendered very offensive. With regard to the Landgrave's marriage, his treatment of Luther is more like the ferocity of a tiger, tearing his prey limb from limb, and gloating over it before he devours it, than the spirit which becomes a Christian bishop."

This leads us to advert to Sir William's charges against Luther under the head of practical theology. We have already mentioned that the only materials originally

produced under this head were extracts from the document in which Luther, Melancthon, and some other divines of that period, gave their permission or consent to the Landgrave of Hesse marrying a second wife while his first wife continued to live with him. This story is, of course, a great favourite with Popish controversialists. It is an especial favourite with Sir William. He produced it in the Edinburgh Review in 1834; and again, a second time, nine years later, in his pamphlet in favour of the intrusion of ministers, though he now changed materially the nature of the accusation which, in connection with this matter, he adduced against the Reformers. In the notes to the original article, as republished in the "Discussions" in 1852, he has not brought forward much additional matter, so far as Luther and Melancthon are concerned; the chief fruits of his continued researches into this apparently congenial subject being, that he is at last able to boast —whether truly or not we do not know—that he is now acquainted, he believes, with all the publications relative to this story, and that he has collected a considerable quantity of additional matter (certainly unknown before to "persons of ordinary information"), in order to blacken the character of Melander and Lening, two Protestant ministers who signed the document about the marriage along with Luther and Melancthon, and who might, without any detriment to the public, have been left in the obscurity from which Sir William's extraordinary information has dragged them.

It is unpleasant to have to discuss such a subject as this, and it is not easy to see what benefit the public can derive from the discussion of it; but if Sir William Hamilton persists in dwelling upon it, and in pressing it upon public attention, and if he is resolved to employ it for unjustly damaging the character of the Reformers, he thereby imposes upon others a necessity of dealing with it, instead of leaving it wholly in his hands, and allowing him to use it for purposes which many believe to be unjust and injurious. Sir William may probably allege that he is merely bringing out what is true, and that all truth ought to be proclaimed and made known. We do not admit that all that he has put forth upon this subject is true; and if it were we would still take the liberty of regarding it as not creditable to any man to manifest a special anxiety to press such truths upon public attention without any apparent call to do so, and to labour to bring them out in their most offensive and aggravated form. Circumstances may occur in which anything that is really true may be brought out and proclaimed without impropriety by parties concerned in, or called to meddle with it; but it is not the less true that we are entitled to judge of men by the selection they make of the topics which they seem most anxious to press upon our notice. Sir William, no doubt, will claim to himself the credit of having been influenced in all he has

done in this matter by pure love of truth; but we think we can venture to assure him, that his character would have stood much higher this day in the estimation of honourable men, if he had never meddled with the second marriage of the Landgrave of Hesse, and had left it to be handled by Romanists and Romanizers. We do not mean to go into details upon this painful subject. We can merely suggest a few hints, as to what ought to be thought of this affair, and of Sir William's mode of dealing with it.

Luther's conduct in this matter has not been approved of by Protestants, but, on the contrary, has been given up as indefensible. They have differed somewhat in the severity of their censures, and in the grounds on which they rest their condemnation of his conduct, but they have not undertaken to vindicate it. Basnage, in his reply to Bousset's "History of the Variations," at once admits that Luther's Conduct was wrong; and so does Seckendorff, in his great work, "De Lutheranism." This undoubtedly is the right and honest course to pursue in the matter; though it is no doubt quite fair to see that the case is fully and correctly stated, and not exaggerated or perverted. Mr Hare has successfully exposed several unfair and malicious misrepresentations of Bossuet in his commentaries upon this subject; and has also pointed out the unfairness of the selection of the passages by Sir William from the principal document connected with this affair. Upon this last point he says:—

"When we compare them with the whole body from which they are torn, they who admire ingenuity, in whatsoever cause it may be displayed, will be struck with the dexterity shown in garbling the opinion of the divines, so as to render it as offensive as possible. The main part of it, wherein they perform their duty of spiritual advisers honestly and faithfully, telling the Landgrave of the evils likely to arise from his conduct, and of the divine wrath which he was provoking by his sinful life, is wholly left out; so that it seems as if they had had no thought of their pastoral responsibility, but readily consented to do just what the Landgrave wished, and were solely deterred by fear of the shame it might bring on themselves and on their cause."

The proper antidote to this unfairness of Sir William's, is to give the document in full. This Mr Hare has done, and to his pages we must refer for it. Mr Hare has brought out fully the leading features of this transaction, and has suggested almost everything that could be said in palliation of the conduct of the Reformers in this matter. He goes rather farther than we are prepared to do in palliation of what they did. We cannot but admit that his love for Luther has

somewhat perverted his judgment,—has made him judge rather too favourably. At the same time he has proved conclusively, that there were some material palliations of their conduct; and has shown that it involves gross ignorance or injustice to judge of the bare facts of the case by the notions and feelings of our own age and country, without taking into account the views that prevailed on such subjects in the sixteenth century, and the way in which they were then often discussed. This is of itself sufficient to establish the injustice and unfairness of the course which Sir William has pursued in the matter. But let us briefly advert to his more formal charges, based upon this transaction. Originally he accused them of the “skulking compromise of all professed principle;” meaning, of course, that in giving their consent to the Landgrave’s bigamy, they sanctioned what they knew to be sinful, under the influence of selfish and secular motives, connected with the general interests of the Reformed cause, to which the goodwill and the support of the Landgrave were very important. This is the view usually given of the transaction by Popish controversialists. But Sir William, in his pamphlet in favour of intrusion, withdraws this charge, and substitutes another in its room; alleging that they approved of polygamy as lawful and warrantable, and, of course, acted in the matter in accordance with their own convictions,— their anxiety for the concealment of the marriage arising, on this second theory, not from the belief that it was sinful, but merely from prudential considerations to avoid scandal. He adheres to this latter view in his “Discussions.” According to the former view of the matter, the conduct of the Reformers in consenting to the Landgrave’s second marriage was a sin, being produced by the operation of sinful motives, and tending directly to bring about the commission of sin. According to the latter view, it was an error of opinion, or what, from its heinous and offensive character, might be called a heresy. But though the charge, as originally put, involved a sin, and in its second form was merely an error, most people in modern times will probably regard it as being quite as damaging to the character of Luther and Melancthon to have inculcated the lawfulness of polygamy, as to have been tempted, upon a particular occasion, to have given consent to the doing of what was sinful.

Mr Hare concurs in the general idea involved in Sir William’s second deliverance upon the subject, *viz.* that the conduct of the Reformers is to be regarded rather as an error than as a sin, though he reaches that conclusion by a different course, and maintains the incorrectness of several of Sir William’s positions, especially of his leading one, which ascribes to Luther and Melancthon a belief in the lawfulness of polygamy under the Christian dispensation. The leading features in his view of the case are exhibited in the

following quotations:—

“When we examine the whole opinion connectedly, we are compelled to reject the excuse which Sir W. Hamilton so kindly proposes, in order to rescue Luther from the fangs of the Edinburgh Reviewer. For, from first to last, it is plain that the licence, which the divines declare themselves unable to condemn, is meant by them to be regarded as a dispensation, and not as authorizing or sanctioning polygamy; and this is the main reason why they are so earnest in requiring that the second marriage, if entered upon, should be kept secret, lest it should be looked upon as the introduction of a general practice. Polygamy, as a general practice, they altogether condemn; because they conceive that our Lord’s words in the passage referred to re-establish the primary, paradisiacal institution of monogamy. At the same time, while they see that polygamy, though contrary to the original institution, is sanctioned in the Old Testament, both by the practice of the patriarchs and by the express recognition of it in the book of Deuteronomy, they do not find any passage in the New Testament directly and absolutely forbidding it. Here we should bear in mind what their rule, especially Luther’s, was. When the word of God seemed to him clear and express, then everything else was to bow to it: heaven and earth might pass away, but no tittle of what God had said. On the other hand, where no express Scripture could be produced, he held that all human laws and ordinances, and everything enjoined by man’s understanding on considerations of expediency, however wide that expediency might be, is so far flexible and variable, that it may be made to bend to imperious circumstances in particular cases.

“Thus the document itself forces us to decline Sir W. Hamilton’s plea, that Luther was merely giving his sanction in a single instance to that which he desired at heart to establish generally, the patriarchal practice of polygamy.”

Then follows a careful investigation of Luther’s general views on the subject of polygamy, as indicated in his writings, and of his presumed concurrence in the suggestion which Melancthon made to Henry VIII. of England, that it would be less objectionable to take a second wife than to divorce his first; after which he states thus the ground on which he thinks Luther acted in sanctioning the Landgrave’s second marriage:—

“But though we must reject the plea that the advice given to the Landgrave is an instance of the predilection which the Reformers, on principle, entertained for polygamy, the evidence adduced abundantly proves, that, in sanctioning a

dispensation in what appeared to them a case of pressing need, they were not acting inconsistently, but in thorough consistency with the principles which they had avowed for years before. To us, indeed, the notion of such a dispensation will still be very, offensive; but we must beware, as I have already remarked, of transferring the moral views and feelings of our age to Luther's. The canon law admitted the necessity of dispensations, which, in matrimonial cases, were especially numerous. One of the main objects of the scholastic casuistry was to determine under what limitations they are admissible, as may be seen in our own authors on this branch of practical theology, such as Taylor; and the great importance of casuistry is beginning to be recognised anew by recent writers on ethics. The ignorant prater may cry, that Luther ought to have thrown all such things overboard, along with the other rubbish of Romanism. But it was never Luther's wont to throw things overboard in a lump. His calling, he felt, was to preach Christ crucified for the sins of mankind,—Christ, of whose righteousness we become partakers by faith. Whatever in the institutions and practices of the church was compatible with the exercise of this ministry, he did not assail unless it was flagrantly immoral. The sale of dispensations, the multiplication of cases for dispensations, in order to gain money by the sale of them, he regarded as criminal; and the abolition of such dispensations, where they have been abolished, the reprobation they he under, are owing, in no small measure, to him. But the idea of law which manifested itself to him, convinced him that positive laws can only partially express the requirements of the supreme law of love, for the sake of which they must at times bend; and when he consulted his one infallible authority, he found that his heavenly Master's chief outward conflict during His earthly ministry, was to assert the supremacy of the law of love, which the Pharisees were continually infringing, while they stickled pertinaciously for the slightest positive enactment."

He sums up the matter in this way:—

"Such, then, is the amount of Luther's sin, or rather error—for sin I dare not call it—in this affair, in which the voice of the world, ever ready to believe evil of great and good men, has so severely condemned him, without investigation of the facts; although the motives imputed to him are wholly repugnant to those which governed his conduct through life. He did not compromise any professed principle, as the reviewer accuses him of doing: he did not inculcate polygamy, as the pamphleteer charges him with doing. But inasmuch as he could not discover any direct, absolute prohibition of polygamy in the New Testament, while it was practised by the patriarchs and recognised by the law, he did not

deem himself warranted in condemning it absolutely, when there appeared, in special cases, to be a strong necessity, either with a view to some great national object, or for the relief of a troubled conscience. Here it behoves us to bear in mind, on the one hand, what importance Luther attached, as all his writings witness, to this high ministerial office of relieving troubled consciences; and it may mitigate our condemnation of his error,— which, after all, was an error on the right side, its purpose being to substitute a hallowed union for unhallowed licence,—if we remember that Gerson had said openly, a century before, expressing the common opinion of his age, that it was better for a priest to be guilty of fornication than to marry. Such was the moral degradation of the church under the Egyptian bondage of ordinances, that even so wise and good a man could deem it expedient to sacrifice the sacred principles of right and purity, the sense of duty, and the peace of the soul, for the sake of upholding the arbitrary enactment of a tyrannical hierarchy. Indeed, the clamour which has been raised against Luther for this one act by the Romish polemics, is perhaps, among all cases of the beam crying out against the mote, the grossest and the most hypocritical.

“Nor should we forget what difficulties have in all ages compassed the settlement of special matrimonial cases. They may perhaps be less now in England than in other countries, notwithstanding the grievous scandals which attend them even here; and there is always a prejudice inclining men to suppose that their own condition is the normal one for the whole human race: but if we compare the laws of marriage which prevail in the various branches of Christendom, and know anything of their moral effects as manifested in family life, we shall perceive how hard it is to lay down any one inviolable rule. What the obscurity and uncertainty of the law was in Luther’s time, we may estimate from the conflicting answers which were returned to the questions mooted with reference to Henry VIII.’s divorce. On the other hand, we should try to realize what the Bible was to Luther,—the source of all wisdom, the treasure-house of all truth, the primordial code of all law, the store-room from which, with the help of the Spirit, he was to bring forth every needful weapon to fight against and to overcome the world and the devil,—how, if the Bible had been put in the one scale, and all the books of all the great thinkers of the heathen and Christian world had been piled up in the other, they would not have availed, in his judgment, to sway the balance so much as a hair’s-breadth. It was not much the practice of his age—least of all was it Luther’s—to estimate the lawfulness and propriety of an act by reference to its general consequences. He did, indeed, bethink himself of the evil that would ensue, if the dispensation were regarded as



a precedent, and therefore did he insist on its being kept secret: but he did not duly consider how impossible it was that such a step, taken by a man of so impetuous a character, should be kept secret; nor how terrible the evils would be if every pastor were to deem himself authorized to give similar counsel; nor how perilous it is to take the covering of secrecy for any acts, except such as are sanctioned by the laws of God and man, while the moral feeling of society throws a veil over them.”

Since it is necessary to discuss such painful and delicate topics, in consequence of Sir William’s offensive conduct in forcing them upon public attention, we prefer employing the words of another to our own. We are very thankful to Mr Hare for vindicating Luther so well, and we shrink from enlarging upon the subject. But justice demands one or two observations.

Sir William alleges that Luther maintained the lawfulness, or, as he says, “the religious legality,” of polygamy, even under the Christian dispensation; and he has been threatening the world for nearly thirteen years with the publication of what he calls “an articulate manifestation,” “a chronological series of testimonies,” in support of this charge. There is nothing new, certainly, in this allegation. It was brought forward by Bellarmine,| who has been followed in this by the generality of Popish controversialists. It has also been adduced by the defenders of polygamy, that they might have some respectable countenance to their abominations, as may be seen in the famous, or rather infamous, “Polygamia Triumphatrix” of Lyser. We do not suppose that Sir William’s “articulate manifestation,” if it ever see the light, will contain anything but what has been known and discussed before. There is, indeed, some difficulty in ascertaining precisely and certainly what Luther’s views were on some points connected with polygamy. There is some confusion and inconsistency in his statements. At one time he certainly drew somewhat wide and incautious inferences from the practice of the patriarchs in this respect, extending to polygamy what our Saviour said of divorce, that, under the old economy, God permitted it because of the hardness of men’s hearts. But he seems at length to have become quite settled in the conviction, that under the Christian dispensation polygamy was forbidden by the authority of our Saviour; and if so, Sir William’s allegation that “polygamy was never abandoned by Luther as a religious speculation” is unfounded.

But it must be noticed and remembered that Sir William has gone farther than this, and asserted that Luther and Melancthon wished polygamy to be

sanctioned by the civil authorities, and did something, though unsuccessfully, directed to bring about this result. All this is fairly implied in the language he has employed; and this involves a new charge, one which, so far as we know and remember, has not before been advanced against them either by Papists or polygamists. This point specially needs to be proved; and when Sir William produces his “articulate manifestation,” this special discovery of his own must be duly commended and established, by an exhibition of the proof which has eluded the researches of all previous depreciators of the Reformers.

We are not quite satisfied, as we have hinted, with some of the grounds on which Mr Hare has based his vindication of Luther in this matter. We do not see that anything short of Sir William’s position, that Luther believed in “the religious legality” of polygamy, is altogether adequate to take his conduct out of the category of a sin, and to invest it with the character of an error. We believe that the transaction involved both an error in judgment and a sin in conduct, the error, indeed, somewhat palliating the sin. Luther and Melancthon held, as Mr Hare has shown, that this was a matter on which dispensations might sometimes be granted for special reasons, on extraordinary emergencies. And this belief may be said, in a sense, to have palliated their conduct, by bringing the subject of a dispensation before them as what might be lawfully entertained. But even if this opinion had been true, instead of being erroneous, the question would still remain, whether or not this was a case for a dispensation to marry a second wife; and, at this point, we fear it must be admitted that the element of direct and palpable sinfulness comes in. Even supposing that dispensations may be lawful in some cases of this sort, there seems to be no fair ground for holding that the Landgrave’s was a case warranting a dispensation; and what is specially pertinent to the point in hand, there is no sufficient ground to believe that Luther and Melancthon really believed it to be a case warranting a dispensation. We cannot but conclude, from a deliberate survey of the whole case, that Luther and Melancthon were substantially satisfied that the Landgrave, in marrying a second wife, was guilty of sin; and that, therefore, in giving their consent to his doing this, they were themselves sinning. It was a solitary offence, with much to palliate it on a variety of grounds, but still it was a sin, committed under the influence of temptation; and as such it ought to be condemned.

It is an interesting and instructing circumstance, that one spot, in some respects similar, stains the character of John Knox; and we could not possibly find words that would, in our judgment, describe Luther’s conduct in this matter more correctly than those in which Dr M’Crie has described a transaction in the life of

our own Reformer:—

“In one solitary instance, the anxiety which he felt for the preservation of the great cause in which he was so deeply interested, betrayed him into an advice, which was not more inconsistent with the laws of strict morality, than it was contrary to the stern uprightness and undisguised sincerity which characterized the rest of his conduct.”

The third head of Sir William’s original attack upon Luther was Biblical Criticism; and under this head he collected, chiefly from the “Table Talk” some rash and offensive statements ascribed to Luther, in which he is represented as speaking disparagingly of some of the books of Scripture. Mr Hare has here again convicted Sir William of several blunders, and one of them Sir William has been constrained to confess in the notes to his “Discussions.” But this topic is not worth dwelling upon. To collect and parade an “anthology” of rash and exaggerated statements from Luther, and especially to take materials for doing this from the “Table Talk,” is about as unfair an occupation as can well be conceived; and if Sir William had confined himself to this, we would not have thought it worth while to have given him any disturbance, beyond denouncing his conduct in the terms it deserved. .

But it must not be forgotten that there is one other very gross and heinous charge which Sir William has brought against Luther, a charge never, so far as we know, adduced before, and of which, though it was fabricated by himself, and published to the world nearly thirteen years ago, he has not yet attempted to produce any evidence. It is stated and disposed of by Mr Hare in the following brief extract:—

“The other charges, that Luther ‘publicly preached incontinence, adultery, incest even, as not only allowable, but, if practised under the prudential regulations which he himself lays down, unobjectionable and even praiseworthy,’ cannot be refuted in the same summary manner. I might cite a number of passages against incontinence from his writings: I might show that he often expressed a wish that adultery were punished capitally. But I will not waste words upon such accusations, proceeding from a witness whose testimony has been proved again and again to be utterly worthless. When a dear friend, whose faith and righteousness have been approved during a long life, under many severe trials, is said to have committed unheard-of enormities, without any specification of when, where, how, or what, one is fully warranted in replying that the assertions

cannot possibly be true. Therefore I will merely defy Sir W. Hamilton to bring forward evidence in support of these atrocious charges. Should he attempt to do so, and adduce any passages beyond those which have been satisfactorily explained by Harless in the seventh volume of his Journal, I shall deem myself bound to use my best endeavours to set them on a right footing. At the same time, let me remark, that I trust he will not have the assurance to quote certain sayings, which explicitly refer solely to cases of impotence, as substantiating his allegations. Should he shrink from this test, finding that he cannot stand it, what can a generous, nay, what can an honest man do in his place, but come forward with an open recantation, and a humble acknowledgment of the wrong he has done to one of the noblest pillars of Christianity, one of the greatest benefactors of mankind?"

Sir William has certainly brought himself under very peculiar obligations, to prove, if he can, his own special charges against Luther, *viz.* that he wished to have polygamy sanctioned by the civil authorities, and that he recommended, under certain restrictions, incontinence, adultery, and incest. And these, after all, are the most important points involved in this controversy, whether as affecting the character of Luther or Sir William Hamilton. If Sir William cannot conclusively establish these charges, there are no words too strong to characterize his conduct in adducing them. And yet we do not suppose that his friends will advise him to attempt to establish his accusations. He is sure to fail in the attempt. We do not pretend to possess a very thorough acquaintance with Luther's writings; but, from what we do know of his works and of his character, we are very confident that these odious charges cannot be established; while we are well aware that, if the attempt is made, this will involve the bringing forward of a great deal of matter most unsuitable to be made the subject of public discussion. Sir William, indeed, has placed himself in such a situation that he can neither speak nor be silent without justly incurring discredit and reproach. He has been much better employed since 1843 than in defending his extraordinary pamphlet of that year. He has since that time rendered most important services to the world in the highest departments of philosophical speculation. He has yet much to do in developing and promulgating his philosophical views; and we trust he will be spared to do this. We are not in the least afraid of him. We have perfect confidence in the goodness of our cause, and in the imprudence of our opponent. We have exposed, with all plainness, his attack upon the character of the Reformers, undeterred by the warning which the very peculiar complexion of his assault upon Archdeacon Hare seems fitted and intended to convey; and we have done so because we believed this to be the

discharge of an important public duty. But we would rather avoid incurring, unnecessarily, the responsibility of calling him out again on theological and ecclesiastical questions; because we are very certain that this is a field where he can gain no credit to himself and confer no real benefit on his fellow-men, and where he might exhaust time and strength that may be employed more honourably for himself, and more beneficially for the world.

We have been, of necessity, so much engrossed with the weaknesses and infirmities of Luther,—with the defects of his character,—that it would be an act of injustice to him if we were to conclude without reminding our readers of his strong claims to our esteem and affection as a man, and of the invaluable services which he was made the instrument of rendering to the church and the world. The first of these points is beautifully touched upon by Mr Hare, in the conclusion of his “Vindication:”—

“To some readers it may seem that I have spoken with exaggerated admiration of Luther. No man ever lived whose whole heart, and soul, and life, have been laid bare as his have been to the eyes of mankind. Open as the sky, bold and fearless as the storm, he gave utterance to all his feelings, all his thoughts: he knew nothing of reserve: and the impression he produced on his hearers and friends was such, that they were anxious to treasure up every word that dropped from his pen or from his lips. No man, therefore, has ever been exposed to so severe a trial: perhaps no man was ever placed in such difficult circumstances, or assailed by such manifold temptations. And how has he come out of the trial? Through the power of faith, under the guardian care of his heavenly Master, he was enabled to stand through life; and still he stands, and will continue to stand, firmly rooted in the love of all who really know him. A writer quoted by Harless has well said, ‘I have continually been more and more edified, elevated, and strengthened by this man of steel, this sterling soul, in whom certain features of the Christian character are manifested in their fullest perfection. His image, I confess, was for some years obscured before my eyes. I fixed them exclusively on the ebullitions of his powerful nature, unsubdued as yet by the Spirit of the Lord. But when, on a renewed study of his works, the holy faith and energy of his thoroughly German character, the truth of his whole being, his wonderful childlikeness and simplicity, revealed themselves to my sight in their glory; then I could not but turn to him with entire, pure love, and exclaim, His weaknesses are only so great, because His virtues are so great.’”<sup>f</sup> These are the feelings which every rightly constituted and adequately informed mind will cherish towards Luther as a man; and the services which he was enabled to render to the

church and the world were such as to entitle him to be ever regarded with the profoundest admiration and gratitude. His great leading service, in so far as the highest of all interests are concerned, was the entire destruction of the doctrine of human merit, and the thorough establishment of the great scriptural truth of a purely gratuitous justification through faith alone as the means or instrument of uniting men to Jesus Christ, and of applying to them all that He did and suffered in their room; together with the vigorous and unshrinking application of these great principles to the exposure of all the mass of erroneous doctrines and of unauthorized and sinful practices, by which the Church of Rome had been leading men, formally or virtually, theoretically or practically, to pervert the gospel of the grace of God, and to build their hopes for eternity upon a false foundation. Under this general description may be comprehended, more or less directly, most of the theology which the writings of Luther contain. This was the work which God raised him up and qualified him to achieve; and a more important work, one more fraught with glory to God and benefit to man, was probably never committed to any one who had not been endowed with the gift of supernatural inspiration. Luther's previous training and experience before he appeared publicly as a Reformer, were manifestly fitted and intended to lead him to understand practically the true way of a sinner's acceptance and deliverance from guilt and bondage; for, after being awakened to some sense of divine things, and of his own relation to God, he went long about to establish his own righteousness, before he was brought into the glorious liberty of God's children. This was evidently the best preparation for the work to which he was destined. He had tried all other methods of obtaining deliverance and peace, with the utmost earnestness, and in circumstances in many respects favourable. He had been driven from every refuge of lies, and shut up to an absolute submission to the righteousness of God,—the righteousness which is of God by faith. He had been compelled, and he had been enabled, to fight his way through all the formidable obstacles which the current doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome interposed to men's rightly discerning and appreciating their true condition as helpless sinners, and the scriptural method of their deliverance, and was thus eminently fitted for opening up to the miserable victims of Romish delusion, the danger to which they were exposed, and the only sure way in which deliverance and enlargement were to be obtained. This object he zealously and faithfully prosecuted during the remainder of his life, keeping it principally in view in his exposition of divine truth, and in his interpretation of the word of God.

The doctrine of justification, notwithstanding the peculiarly full, formal, and

elaborate exposition which the Apostle Paul was guided by the Spirit to make of it, became very soon involved in obscurity and error; and though some, no doubt, in every age— apparently decreasing, however, in number, in every succeeding century—were practically, and in fact, led by God’s grace to rest for their own salvation upon the one foundation laid in Zion, yet it is, to say the least, somewhat doubtful whether, after the age of the men who had held personal intercourse with the apostles (from none of whom have we anything like detailed expositions of Christian doctrine), any man can be produced who has given, or who could have given, a perfectly correct exposition of the whole of Paul’s doctrine upon this vitally important subject. Confusion and error upon this point continued to increase and extend,—even Augustine giving the weight of his deservedly high authority to views defective and erroneous regarding it,—until, by the admirable skill with which the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome were adapted to foster and satisfy those notions upon this subject to which depraved men are naturally disposed, all scriptural views of the method of justification had, for many centuries before the Reformation, disappeared from the world; and while there was still a vague, unmeaning, and inoperative acknowledgment of Christ as a Saviour, the great body of His professed followers were practically and in reality relying upon their own works and merits, and upon the works and merits of other sinful creatures like themselves, for the salvation of their souls.

This was the condition in which Luther found the professing church in regard to theology and religion. He was guided, by the work of the divine Spirit upon his own understanding and heart, through the word, to appreciate aright men’s utter helplessness and inability to do anything to merit or deserve the forgiveness of their sins and the enjoyment of God’s favour; to see that salvation and all its blessings are purchased for men by Christ, and are freely imparted to them individually by God’s grace through the instrumentality of faith; and to feel that the practical reception of these doctrines is the only sure provision for producing holiness of heart, and peace and joy in believing. And his life was mainly devoted to the exposition of these fundamental principles of Christian truth, and the application and enforcement of them in opposition to all the corruptions and abuses, theoretical and practical, of the Church of Rome. He was enabled to bring out his views on these subjects so clearly and convincingly, and to establish them so firmly upon the basis of scriptural authority, that in substance they were adopted by all the other Reformers, embodied in the confessions of all the Reformed churches, including the Church of England, and that they were always held with peculiar clearness and steadiness in the Lutheran Church, until

the rationalism of last century swept away all regard to the authority of God's word, and all right conceptions of men's actual relation to God and the gospel method of salvation. There is little else in Luther's theological works than what may be said to be involved, more or less directly, in the exposition and application of these great truths; but there is all this set forth with much clearness and vigour, and applied with much energy and success. He scarcely seems ever to have proposed it to himself as an object to open up the whole system of scriptural truth in its connection and details, and to unfold it in its various aspects. Human merit and ability on the one hand, and on the other full and purely gratuitous justification, as indispensably necessary for men, and actually provided and offered by God through Christ, are at once the points from which he ever starts, and the centres around which he ever moves: and by thoroughly establishing the one upon the ruins of the other, he has thrown a flood of light upon the most fundamental articles of Christian truth, and upon the interpretation of the most important portions of the word of God.

Luther can scarcely be said to have investigated with much care, or to have discussed with much success, any department of divine truth, which was not more or less directly connected with these fundamental points; but then, both from the nature of the case and the forms which the corruption of the divine method of justification had assumed in the Church of Home, the exposition and application of these topics led him to traverse a much wider field of divine truth than might at first sight be supposed. Still, as he certainly did not possess the comprehensive far-reaching intellect of Calvin, he views most topics only in their bearings on a sinner's acceptance, without always taking in all the different aspects in which they are presented to us in Scripture. It may be worth while to illustrate this by an example.

Luther, especially during the earlier part of his career (and the same holds true, in some measure, of his immediate followers), in treating of the worship of God, and the load of ceremonies with which the Church of Home had encumbered and disfigured it, manifests an inadequate sense of the sinfulness of idolatry, viewed simply as such, or as a direct offence against God, and scarcely any sense of the sinfulness of man's introducing rites and ceremonies into the worship of God, simply upon the ground that God had not authorized or required them. He seems to think that the great evil of the Romish rites and ceremonies—even those which, upon scriptural principles, should be chiefly and primarily denounced as idolatrous, and therefore directly and immediately involving a sin against God, independently of all other considerations and consequences—lay in the notion of



merit that was conjoined with them,—in the idea which the church inculcated, that through these rites and ceremonies men were either meriting God's favour, or at least securing for themselves an interest in the merits of other creatures. No doubt this view might be justly regarded as being the crowning iniquity of the Popish system, that which most directly and immediately brought it to bear injuriously upon the salvation of men. But Luther seems to have seen little evil in these rites and ceremonies, except for the opinion of their meritoriousness, inculcated along with their observance; and would probably have been little disposed to object to them had they not been formally and explicitly represented by the church in this light, which, of course, brought them into collision with the Scripture doctrine of justification. But this view, though true, so far as it went, and very important, did not go to the root of the matter; and it was assigned to Zwingli, and still more fully to Calvin, to bring out the guilt of idolatry, as directly and immediately, in every instance, a sin against God, irrespective of all other consequences,—and to establish further the important principle, that God has given sufficiently clear indications in His word, that it is His will that no rites and ceremonies are to be introduced into His worship, except those which He himself has sanctioned,—a principle which might have been commended to Luther's approbation, if not by its direct and appropriate scriptural evidence, though that is clear enough, at least through an appeal to experience, which clearly proves, that whenever unauthorized rites and ceremonies are introduced into the worship of God, there is a strong and never-failing tendency in men to regard the observance of them as meritorious in God's sight.

So far as concerns the exposition of those fundamental truths, on which he chiefly dwelt, the main grounds on which, with some show of reason, he has been charged with exaggerated and paradoxical statements, are his indiscriminate abuse of the Law, his seeming to deny that it has any legitimate bearing upon regenerate men, and to deny also that there is anything really good or holy, even in believers. The way in which Luther sometimes speaks of the Law, especially in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, is certainly unbecoming and indecent; but it is plain enough, from a fair and impartial survey of his whole doctrine upon this subject, that he really meant nothing more in substance than to shut it out, as Paul does, from all direct share in the justification of a sinner, and to illustrate its utter unfitness to serve the purposes of those who are seeking justification by deeds of Law. Some of his incautious statements about the relation of believers to the Law, gave rise afterwards to a controversy, in the Lutheran Church, which was settled at length, along with many of those other internal disputes, in the Formula Concordiae, in 1588, under

the title, “De tertio usu Legisbut Luther certainly never really gave any countenance to Antinomian principles, and strenuously inculcated the necessity and obligation of holiness of heart and life. And his declarations about the non-existence of anything truly good or holy in regenerate persons, though somewhat strongly and incautiously expressed, did not really mean more than what we all believe to be a great scriptural truth, viz. that the best actions of believers are stained with such imperfection and sin, that they can have nothing justifying, and nothing properly and intrinsically meritorious, about them.

But the great error of Luther, that which gives the most unfavourable impression of his character and mental structure, and which, in its influence, most extensively injured his usefulness and obstructed the cause of the Reformation, was his obstinate adherence to the unintelligible absurdity, commonly called Con substantiation, —the real presence, not of Christ but of Christ’s body and blood in the Lord’s Supper, or the co-existence, in some way, of the real flesh and blood of Christ, in, with, or under, in, cum, or sub, the bread and wine in the Eucharist. This was a real remnant of Popery, to which, after throwing off almost everything in the doctrine of the Papists upon this subject that makes it valuable to them and offensive to us, viz. transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of the one into that of the other, as implying the annihilation of the substance of the bread and wine,—the sacrifice of the Mass, —and the adoration of the host founded on this transubstantiation, he adhered with an obstinacy and intolerance most discreditable and most injurious to the Reformed cause. This was the chief subject of controversy among the Reformers in the earlier period of their labours. The controversy upon this point occupied a great deal of time and attention that might have been much better employed in opposing the common enemy; it produced at length an entire separation and much alienation of feeling among them; it thus led to other disputes and contentions, and tended at last to fix down the Lutheran Church in a much wider deviation from the scriptural orthodoxy of Calvin upon other points than Luther himself could have consistently approved of, or than, without this separation or alienation, would probably have been exhibited. The chief responsibility of controversies, and of all the evils that flow from them, lies upon those who take the wrong side on the merits of the points in dispute, because, if they had taken the right side of the question, as they ought to have done, there would have been no controversy. And in this Sacramentarian Controversy, as it was called, Luther certainly appeared to as little advantage in the moral character of the spirit which he manifested, as in the soundness of the doctrine which he maintained.

Papists have been accustomed to dwell with great complacency on the changes which took place in Luther's views during several years after he published his thesis upon Indulgences; and on this ground to taunt him with his inconsistencies, and to taunt Protestants with being blind followers of the blind. Audin says, "What is the Lutheran doctrine? Is it faith minus indulgences, as in 1518; faith minus the priesthood, as in 1519; faith minus the sacraments of orders and extreme unction, as in 1520; faith with only two sacraments, as in 1521; or faith minus the mass and the worship of the saints, as in 1522?" So far as the charges here referred to affect Luther himself, they merely indicate the gradual progress of an honest mind, following the guidance of the Spirit and word of God from darkness to light; and as to Protestants, even those of them who are commonly called Lutherans from their adopting the leading views of divine truth, in which Luther soon settled, they do not affect them at all. But these men seemed determined to make Luther a pope, whether he himself, and those who have adopted his leading principles solely because they believed them to be sanctioned by Scripture, will or not. They are so prepossessed with the duty of receiving their own opinions implicitly from the mouth of a fellow-sinner, that they seem to be incapable of conceiving of such a thing as other men deriving theirs from the word of God, and believing only what they are persuaded is sanctioned by its statements. Protestants do not regard Luther as a pope: they ascribe to him no infallibility, they receive no doctrine because he taught it; and as to Luther himself, he always fully confessed, that when he first raised his voice against indulgences, he was little better than a blind Papist; that he was involved in great ignorance and error; that he had yet a great deal to learn, and that he learned slowly and gradually. He retracted his errors fully and frankly whenever he was convinced of them, and during the whole progress of his views, gave the most satisfactory evidence of thorough integrity and love of truth. And it should further be noticed, that before he appeared publicly as a Reformer, he had already adopted, in substance, upon the testimony of God's word, all those fundamental principles in regard to the natural condition of man, and the way of his acceptance and deliverance, which he continued to hold through life; and that the changes which his opinions underwent after that period, arose mainly, as is evident from even Audin's statement, from his gaining progressively a deeper insight into the mystery of Popish iniquity, from the expansive influence of the vital principles of Christian truth which God had implanted in his heart, in throwing off, one after another, the foul incrustations in which Popery wraps men's spirits, and from his applying fully and fearlessly the touchstone of the word of God, and of the great doctrine of a free justification purchased by Christ and imparted through the faith that unites with Him, to all

the fearful mass of corruptions by which the Romish system has perverted the principles of God's oracles and the gospel of His grace. Luther's opinions seem to have become settled within five or six years after the publication of his thesis; and we do not find any evidence, that after that period they received any material modification.

It may be proper to allude in conclusion to a question which has been much discussed in subsequent times, *viz.* whether Luther held the peculiar opinions on doctrinal points which are usually associated with the name of Calvin. When Luther's followers, in a subsequent generation, openly deviated from scriptural orthodoxy on these points, they set themselves to prove that Luther had never held Calvinistic principles; and for several succeeding generations, Lutheran authors, in general, indulged in the most bitter and malignant vituperation of Calvin and his doctrines, more even than that which generally prevailed among writers of the Church of England during last century. But we have no hesitation in saying, that it can be established beyond all reasonable question, that Luther held the doctrines which are commonly regarded as most peculiarly Calvinistic, though he was never led to explain and apply, to illustrate and defend, some of them so fully as Calvin did. We need go no further in proof of this, than to his famous work, "De Servo Arbitrio," published in 1525, in reply to Erasmus, in which he has unequivocally asserted the most peculiar and generally obnoxious tenets of Calvinism, in respect to God's sovereign agency in pre-ordaining all things; in conferring, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, all spiritual blessings; and in thus determining, according to His own good pleasure, the eternal destinies of men; and has asserted them with an unshrinking boldness, and, we might say, with a rashness and offensiveness of statement which can certainly not be paralleled in the works of Calvin himself. There is no ground for alleging that Luther ever retracted the sentiments contained in this work. Indeed, at a much later period of his life, in 1537, he expressly declared that of all his works, his treatise, "De Servo Arbitrio," and his larger "Catechism," were the only ones which he now regarded as written with due care and accuracy. The Lutherans are therefore obliged to attempt to explain away the strong statements of this very valuable work, and to extract out of them their manifestly Calvinistic sense, under the cover of admitting, that the work does contain some rash and incautious declarations; and in perusing some of their attempts of this sort, one is often reminded, by the boldness of their perversions, of a Socinian commentary upon the first chapter of John's Gospel. It has also been asserted, that in his Commentary upon Genesis, the last work he published, he substantially though not formally retracted any peculiarly

Calvinistic principles which he might previously have taught. But there is no good ground for this allegation; for, upon a fair examination of the passages in the commentary, it appears plain, that they do not contain, even in substance, any retraction of his former views, but merely cautions to guard against the abuse of them,—against their being applied in an erroneous and injurious way; while it is certain that cautions to the same effect, as full and strong, and in every respect as judicious and practical, abound in the writings of Calvin himself. It is highly creditable to Luther, that while he was not led to dwell at much length upon the illustration and defence of some of the doctrines which are commonly reckoned Calvinistic peculiarities, he yet had the sagacity to see, that without including in his system these peculiar doctrines, it was impossible to maintain and to expound fully and consistently the sovereign agency of God in the salvation of sinners, or to give to the Sovereign Ruler and Disposer of all things the place which He claims to himself.

# The Reformers and the Doctrine of Assurance

Sir William Hamilton, in the course of his attack upon Archdeacon Hare, introduces a lengthened and elaborate historico-theological statement, chiefly upon the subject of Assurance. We quote the passage, as it is the text of our present discourse:—

“Assurance, Personal Assurance, Special Faith (the feeling of certainty) that God is propitious to me, that my sins are forgiven,—(Fiducia, Plerophoria Fidei, Fides Specialis),—Assurance was long universally held in the Protestant communities to be the criterion and condition of a true or saving faith. Luther declares that ‘he who hath not assurance spews faith out;’ and Melancthon, that ‘assurance is the discriminating line of Christianity from Heathenism.’ Assurance is, indeed, the punctum saliens of Luther’s system; and an unacquaintance with this, his great central doctrine, is one prime cause of the chronic misrepresentation which runs through our recent histories of Luther and the Reformation. Assurance is no less strenuously maintained by Calvin; is held even by Arminius; and stands, essentially, part and parcel of all the confessions of all the churches of the Reformation, down to the Westminster Assembly. In that synod assurance was, in Protestantism, for the first, indeed only time, formally declared ‘not to be of the essence of faith;’ and,

accordingly, the Scottish General Assembly has subsequently, once and again, condemned and deposed the holders of this, the doctrine of Luther, of Calvin, of all the other churches of the Reformation, and of the older Scottish church itself. In the English, and more articulately, in the Irish Establishment, assurance still

stands a necessary tenet of ecclesiastical belief. (See Homilies, Book I. Number iii. Part 3, specially referred to in the eleventh of the Thirty-nine Articles; and Number w. Parts 1 and 3; likewise the sixth Lambeth Article.) Assurance was consequently held by all the older Anglican churchmen, of whom Hooker may stand for the example; but assurance is now openly disavowed without scruple by Anglican churchmen, high and low, when apprehended; but of these, many, like Mr Hare, are blissfully incognizant of the opinion, its import, its history, and even its name.

“This dogma, with its fortune, past and present, affords, indeed, a series of the most curious contrasts. For it is curious that this cardinal point of Luther’s doctrine should, without exception, have been constituted into the fundamental principle of all the churches of the Reformation; and, as their common and uncatholic doctrine, have been explicitly condemned at Trent. Again, it is curious that this common and differential doctrine of the churches of the Reformation should now be abandoned virtually in, or formally by, all these churches themselves. Again, it is curious that Protestants should now generally profess the counter doctrine, asserted at Trent in condemnation of their peculiar principle. Again, it is curious that this, the most important variation in the faith of Protestants, as, in fact, a gravitation of Protestantism back towards Catholicity, should have been overlooked, as indeed, in his days, undeveloped, by the keen-eyed author of ‘The History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches.’ Finally, it is curious that, though now fully developed, this central approximation of Protestantism to Catholicity should not, as far as I know, have been signalized by any theologian, Protestant or Catholic; whilst the Protestant symbol (‘Fides sola justificat’—‘Faith alone justifies’), though now eviscerated of its real import, and now only manifesting an unimportant difference of expression, is still supposed to mark the discrimination of the two religious denominations. For both agree that the three heavenly virtues must all concur to salvation; and they only differ, whether faith, as a word, does or does not involve hope and charity. This misprision would have been avoided had Luther and Calvin only said, ‘Fiducia sola justificat,’ \_\_\_\_\_

‘Assurance alone justifies;’ for on their doctrine assurance was convertible with true faith, and true faith implied the other Christian graces. But this primary and peculiar doctrine of the Reformation is now harmoniously condemned by Catholics and Protestants in unison.”

We hope to be able to prove that this elaborate statement contains about as large

an amount of inaccuracy as could well have been crammed into the space which it occupies; and if we succeed in doing this, we may surely expect that Sir William's authority upon theological subjects will henceforth stand at least as low as zero.

It may help us to form an estimate of the accuracy of Sir William's history of this subject, if we begin with a brief statement of what were the views of the Reformers and the Romanists upon this point, and of what was the general course which the discussions regarding it followed. That the Reformers generally held very high views upon the subject,—that they were in the habit of speaking very strongly of the importance and necessity of men being personally assured about their own salvation,—is of course well known to every one who has the slightest acquaintance with their history and writings. The causes that tended to produce a leaning towards what may be regarded as exaggerated views and statements upon this subject, were chiefly these two:—1st, Their own personal experience as converted and believing men; and 2d, The ground taken by the Romanists in arguing against them.

The Reformers, speaking of them generally as a body, and with reference to their ordinary condition, seem to have enjoyed usually an assurance of being in a state of grace, and of being warranted to count upon salvation. God seems to have given to them the grace of assurance more fully and more generally than He does to believers in ordinary circumstances. And this is in accordance with the general course of His providential procedure. The history of the church seems to indicate to us two positions as true, with reference to this matter,—viz. 1st, That assurance of salvation has been enjoyed more fully and more generally by men who were called to difficult and arduous labours in the cause of Christ, than by ordinary believers in general; and 2dly, That this assurance, as enjoyed by such persons, has been frequently traceable to special circumstances connected with the manner of their conversion as its immediate or proximate cause. So it certainly was with the Reformers. The position in which they were placed, and the work they were called upon to do, made it specially necessary that they should enjoy habitually the courage and the strength which spring from a well-grounded assurance of salvation. This, accordingly, God gave them; and He gave them it in many cases, as He has often done in subsequent times, by so regulating the circumstances which preceded and accompanied their conversion, as to satisfy them, almost as if by a perception of their senses, that they had passed from death unto life. The Reformers having been in general, for these reasons and by such processes, assured ordinarily of their own salvation, were



not unnaturally led, from this cause, to give great prominence to the subject of assurance, and to regard and to represent it as in some way or other necessarily connected with the Christian faith, and as an indispensable constituent element of the Christian character.

But, in the second place, the Reformers were the more induced to adhere to this view, and to exert themselves to establish and defend it, in consequence of the ground that was taken up by their Popish antagonists. The Romanists then, as well as now, were accustomed to allege that it was impossible for Protestants to have any certainty of the soundness of their views, or of the safety of their position,—that though they might be able to produce plausible and apparently satisfactory pleadings in support of what they taught, they could have no adequate ground for perfect assurance of its truth; while Romanists had a firm ground for absolute certainty in the testimony or authority of the church. There were three important subjects to which chiefly the Romanists were accustomed to apply this alleged point of contrast between their position and that of the Reformers. They were accustomed to allege that Protestants, upon Protestant principles, could have no certainty, and nothing more than a probable persuasion, 1st, That the books generally received, or any particular books specified, were possessed of divine authority; or 2d, That this and not that was the meaning of a scriptural passage, or the substance of what Scripture taught upon a particular topic; or 3d, That any particular individual was now in a state of grace and would be finally saved. The more reasonable Romanists did not deny that there were rational considerations bearing upon the establishment of the divine authority of the books of Scripture, sufficient to silence and confute infidels; or that, by the ordinary rules and resources of exegesis, something might be done towards settling the meaning of many scriptural statements; or that men, by a diligent and impartial use of scriptural materials, combined with self-examination, might attain to good hope with respect to their ultimate salvation. But they denied that Protestants could ever attain to full and perfect certainty upon any of these points,—could ever reach such thorough and conclusive assurance as the authority of the church furnished to those who received it. Protestants, in dealing with this allegation, were not unnaturally led to maintain, that upon all these subjects they had, or might have, not merely a probable persuasion, but a strict and absolute certainty, and to labour to unfold the grounds of the certainty to which they laid claim. It was here that many of the Reformers were led to propound views which appear to have been somewhat extreme and exaggerated, both in regard to the kind and degree of the certainty they contended for, and the grounds on which they professed to establish its

reality and legitimacy. Protestants are not infallible any more than Papists. Neither the great Reformers of the sixteenth century, nor the great systematic divines of the seventeenth, are to be implicitly followed. The truth is, that God has never yet given to any body of uninspired men to rise altogether, and in every respect, in their mode of dealing with the doctrines of His word, above the influence of their circumstances. There has never been any uninspired man, or any company of uninspired men, that has not given some indication of the imperfection of humanity, in their mode of dealing with some portion or other of divine truth. The Reformers, as a body, are unquestionably more entitled to deference in matters of theological doctrine than any other body of men who have adorned the church since the apostolic age. But there can be no reasonable doubt that there are some doctrinal points on which many of them have gone astray, either from retaining something of the corruption of the Popish system which they had abandoned, or, what is about equally natural and probable, in consequence of the imperfection of human nature, from running into an extreme opposite to that which they had forsaken.

It is pretty evident that the Papists, by taunting the Reformers with their want of certainty on the three points to which we have referred, drove them into the assertion of extreme and untenable positions. The Reformers claimed for their convictions and conclusions on these questions a kind and degree of certainty which the nature of the subject did not admit of, and they fell into further errors in endeavouring to set forth the grounds or reasons of the certainty or assurance for which they contended. They contended that they had, or might have, a perfect and absolute certainty in regard to all those matters,—a certainty resting not only upon rational grounds and a human faith, as it was called, but upon supernatural grounds and a divine faith, such as their Popish opponents were accustomed to ascribe to the authority of the church when it set forth any doctrine and called upon men to believe it as revealed by God. And as a substitute for the authority of the church, the Popish ground for an absolute assurance and divine faith, the Reformers were accustomed to bring in the agency of the Holy Spirit, as producing certainty or assurance; and they did this not unfrequently in a way that seemed to be liable to the charge at least of confusion and irrelevancy.

The Reformers ought not to have allowed the Romanists to drag them into perplexed metaphysical discussions as to the nature and grounds of the certainty with which they held then convictions upon the important topics to which we have referred. They would thus have escaped the temptation to which, we think,

it must be admitted they sometimes yielded, of straining matters in order to get something like a ground for a kind and measure of certainty which the nature of the case did not admit of.

It was enough that they could produce adequate rational grounds for all their convictions,—grounds which fully satisfied their own minds, and which they could defend conclusively against the objections of gainsayers, as being sufficient and satisfactory reasons of assent. This was all that their opponents had a right to demand; and this was all that could legitimately come into a controversial discussion. The vividness and efficacy of these convictions might be somewhat affected by the kind and degree of evidence bearing upon the particular topic under consideration, or by the qualities of their mental constitution and habits, or by other collateral and adventitious influences. But a real conviction or assent, based upon rational grounds, which were perfectly satisfactory to their own minds, and the relevancy and validity of which they could triumphantly defend against all opponents, was quite sufficient, whether this might be called a certainty of faith or not; and if this conviction did not produce in their minds such a sense or feeling of assurance as they desired, if it did not prove so practically efficacious as they wished, it would be quite reasonable that they should ask the special blessing of God, the agency of the Holy Spirit, to bring about these results. And their prayers might be answered, the Spirit might be given, and the strongest, the most vivid, and the most efficacious certainty or assurance might be produced, without anything like a special revelation, and without the introduction of any new or additional grounds or reasons for the conviction. The Reformers, however, in their eagerness to claim for their convictions the very highest certainty or assurance, and to assign an adequate cause for this, by substituting the Holy Spirit instead of the church, went sometimes to the unwarrantable extreme of ascribing to the Holy Spirit not merely a subjective influence upon men's understandings and hearts, but an objective presentation of new and additional grounds and reasons for belief.

These general observations apply to the way in which the Reformers met the allegations of the Romanists, about their want of certainty or assurance in regard to all the three subjects formerly mentioned, *viz.* the divine authority of the books of Scripture, the meaning of scriptural statements, and the certainty of personal salvation. In order to have a sure and at the same time a compendious way of getting the highest assurance, even the certainty of faith, upon all these subjects, they substituted the Holy Spirit instead of the church; and to make this serve the same purpose in argument as the church does among Romanists, they

were led to employ some modes of statement about the Spirit's operation which are not sanctioned by Scripture, though exhibiting perhaps rather confusion of thought than positive error. But we cannot dwell upon this general topic, and must return to the special subject of the assurance of personal salvation, with which alone we have at present to do.

The Reformers in general enjoyed ordinarily the assured belief that they were in a state of grace, and would be finally saved. They felt the importance of this grace in the arduous work in which they were engaged. They saw abundant ground in Scripture for the general position, that believers might be and should be assured of their own salvation. They inculcated this position upon their followers, persuaded that personal assurance would at once tend to preserve them from the perverting influence of Popish sophists, and fit them for doing and bearing all God's will concerning them. The Romanists, on the other hand, laboured to show that believers could have no full and well-grounded assurance that they had attained to a condition of safety, except either by special revelation or by the testimony of the church; their object of course being to make men feel themselves entirely dependent upon the church for security or certainty on all subjects of interest and importance, and to deprive them of the energy and confidence which a well-founded assurance of personal salvation was fitted to produce, in contending against the prestige of ecclesiastical authority and influence. The Reformers, in order to show that the assurance which might be attained without either a special revelation or the testimony of the church was full and perfect, were led to identify it with our belief in the doctrines of God's word, and to represent it as necessarily included or implied in the act or exercise of justifying and saving faith; nay, even sometimes to give it as the very definition of saving faith, that it is a belief that our own sins have been forgiven, and that we have been brought into a state of grace. This seemed to be an obvious and ready method of giving to the belief of our personal safety for eternity the very highest degree of certainty, and hence many of the Reformers were tempted to adopt it.

This view was certainly exaggerated and erroneous. It is very evident that no man can be legitimately assured of his own salvation simply by understanding and believing what is contained or implied in the actual statements of Scripture. Some additional element of a different kind must be brought in, in order to warrant such an assurance; something in the state or condition of the man himself must be in some way ascertained and known in order to this result. It may not, indeed, always require any lengthened or elaborate process of self-

examination to ascertain what is needful to be known about men themselves, in order to their being assured that they have been brought into a state of grace. The circumstances that preceded and accompanied their conversion may have been such as to leave them in no doubt about their having passed from darkness to light. Their present consciousness may testify at once and explicitly to the existence in them of those things which the Bible informs us accompany salvation. But still it is true, that another element than anything contained in Scripture must be brought in as a part of the foundation of their assurance. And when they are called upon to state and vindicate to themselves or to others the grounds of their assurance, they must of necessity proceed in substance in the line of the familiar syllogism, “Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved; I believe, and therefore,” *etc.*

There is no possibility of avoiding in substance some such process as this; and while the major proposition is proved by Scripture, the minor can be established only by some use of materials derived from consciousness and self-examination. There are no positions connected with religion which can be so certain as those which are directly and immediately taught in Scripture, and which are usually said to be believed with the certainty of faith or of divine faith. The introduction of an element, as necessary to the conclusion, derived from a different source, *viz.* from the knowledge of what we ourselves are, must be admitted in fairness to complicate the evidence, and to affect the kind if not the degree of the certainty or assurance that may result from it. It is unwarrantable to give as the definition of saving faith, the belief that my sins are forgiven; for it is not true that my sins are forgiven until I believe, and it holds true universally, that God requires us to believe nothing which is not true before we believe it, and which may not be propounded to us to be believed, accompanied at the same time with satisfactory evidence of its truth; and if so, the belief that our sins are forgiven, and that we have been brought into a state of grace, must be posterior in the order of nature, if not of time, to the act of faith by which the change is effected, and cannot therefore form a necessary constituent element of the act itself, cannot be its essence or belong to its essence.

It is not very surprising that Luther should have made rash and exaggerated statements upon this subject as he did upon others. But it is certainly strange, that a man of such wonderful soundness and penetration of judgment as Calvin should have said, as he did say, “We shall have a complete definition of faith, if we say that it is a steady and certain knowledge of the divine benevolence towards us, which, being founded on the truth of the gratuitous promise in

Christ, is both revealed to our minds and confirmed to our hearts by the Holy Spirit;" and that this in substance should have been pretty generally, though not universally, received as a just definition or description of saving faith, both by Lutheran and Calvinistic divines, for the greater part of a century. We cannot but look upon this as an illustration of the pernicious influence of men's circumstances upon the formation of their opinions,—a view of the matter decidedly confirmed by the fact, that neither Luther nor Calvin, nor the other eminent divines who have sanctioned this notion of the nature and import of faith, have been able to carry it out in full consistency, but have become entangled in contradictions. Luther, indeed, contradicted himself very explicitly upon this point; for while there are passages in his works which very unequivocally represent personal assurance as necessarily involved in saving faith, and while this doctrine is taught in the Confession of Augsburg, and in the Apology for it<sup>3f</sup>—both which works are symbolical in the Lutheran church,—it is easy enough to produce from his writings passages in which a broader and more correct view is given of the nature of saving faith, as having respect directly and primarily only to truths and promises actually contained in Scripture, and of course only secondarily and inferentially to anything bearing upon our personal condition and prospects. Calvin never contradicted himself so plainly and palpably as this. But in immediate connection with the definition above given from him of saving faith, he has made statements with respect to the condition of mind that may exist in believers, which cannot well be reconciled with the formal definition, except upon the assumption that the definition was intended not so much to state what was essential to true faith and always found in it, as to describe what true faith is or includes, in its most perfect condition and in its highest exercise. As the passage is valuable in itself, and is well fitted to throw light upon the real views of the Reformers, and to illustrate the danger of judging of what these views were from a superficial examination of their writings or of isolated extracts from them, we shall quote it at some length, though we fear most men will be of opinion that Calvin has not very fully solved the difficulty which he started:—

"But some one will object that the experience of believers is very different from this; for that, in recognising the grace of God towards them, they are not only disturbed with inquietude which frequently befalls them, but sometimes also tremble with the most distressing terrors. The vehemence of temptations to agitate their minds is so great, that it appears scarcely compatible with that assurance of faith of which we have been speaking. We must therefore solve this difficulty, if we mean to support the doctrine we have advanced.

When we inculcate that faith ought to be certain and secure, we conceive not of a certainty attended with no doubt, or of a security interrupted by no anxiety; but we rather affirm that believers have a perpetual conflict with their own diffidence, and are far from placing their consciences in a placid calm never disturbed by any storms. Yet, on the other hand, we deny, however they may be afflicted, that they ever fall and depart from that certain confidence which they have conceived in the divine mercy. The Scripture proposes no example of faith more illustrious or memorable than David, especially if you consider the whole course of his life. Yet that his mind was not invariably serene appears from his innumerable complaints, of which it will be sufficient to select a few.....To render this intelligible, it is necessary to recur to that division of the flesh and the spirit which we noticed in another place, and which most clearly discovers itself in this case. The pious heart therefore perceives a division in itself, being partly affected with delight through a knowledge of the divine goodness, partly distressed with sorrow through a sense of its own calamity; partly relying on the promise of the gospel, partly trembling at the evidence of its own iniquity; partly exulting in the knowledge of life, partly alarmed by the fear of death. This variation happens through the imperfection of faith; since we are never so happy during the present life as to be cured of all diffidence, and entirely filled and possessed by faith. Hence those conflicts, in which the diffidence which adheres to the relics of the flesh rises up in opposition to the faith formed in the heart. But if in the mind of the believer assurance be mixed with doubts, do we not always come to this point, that faith consists not in a certain and clear, but only in an obscure and perplexed knowledge of the divine will respecting us? Not at all. For if we are distracted by various thoughts, we are not therefore entirely divested of faith; neither, though harassed by the agitations of diffidence, are we therefore immersed in its abyss; nor if we be shaken, are we therefore overthrown. For the invariable issue of this contest is, that faith at length surmounts those difficulties from which, while it is encompassed with them, it appears to be in danger.”

Other proofs might be adduced that the Reformers, when judged of as they should be, by a deliberate and conjunct view of all they have said upon the subject, did not carry their doctrine of assurance to such extremes as we might be warranted in ascribing to them because of some of their more formal statements, intended to tell upon their controversies with Romanists regarding this matter. And more than this, the real difference between the Reformers and the Romanists upon the subject of assurance, when calmly and deliberately investigated, was not quite so important as the combatants on either side

imagined, and did not -really respect the precise questions which persons imperfectly acquainted with the works on both sides might naturally enough regard it as involving.

With respect to the nature of saving faith the principal ground of controversy was this, that the Romanists held that it had its seat in the intellect, and was properly and fundamentally assent (*assensus*); while the Reformers in general maintained that it had its seat in the will, and was properly and essentially trust (*fiducia*). The great majority of eminent Protestant divines have adhered to the view+s of the Reformers upon this point, though some have taken the opposite side, and have held faith, properly so called, to be the mere assent of the understanding to truth propounded by God in His word; while they represent trust and other graces as the fruits or consequences, and not as constituent parts and elements, of faith. This controversy cannot be held to be of very great importance, so long as the advocates of the position, that faith is in itself the simple belief of the truth, admit that true faith necessarily and invariably produces trust and other graces, —an admission which is cheerfully made by all the Protestant defenders of this view, and which its Popish advocates, though refusing in words, are obliged to make in substance in another form. There is an appearance of greater simplicity and metaphysical accuracy in representing faith as in itself a mere assent to truth, and trust and other graces as its necessary consequences. But the right question is, What is the meaning attached in Scripture to the faith which justifies and saves? Upon this question we agree with the Reformers in thinking, that in Scripture usage faith is applied, in its highest and most important sense, only to a state of mind of which trust in Christ as a Saviour is a necessary constituent element. This question about the nature of justifying faith is not determined in the Westminster Confession, the leading symbol of the great body of Presbyterians throughout the world; and it is well that it is left in that condition, for if it had been settled there in accordance with the views of the Reformers and the compilers of the Confession, this would have excluded from the Church of Scotland Dr John Erskine and Dr Thomas Chalmers.

There was not among the Reformers, and there has not been among modern Protestants, unanimity as to what is involved in the *fiducia* which is included in justifying faith. The generality of modern divines and some of the Reformers held that this *fiducia* was just trust or confidence in Christ's person, as distinguished from mere belief of the truth concerning Him, and as involving some special application or appropriation to ourselves of the discoveries and



provisions of the gospel, but not, directly and immediately, any opinion or conviction as to our actual personal condition; while the generality of the Reformers, and some modern divines, especially those known in Scotland as Marrow-men, have regarded it as comprehending this last element also, and have thus come to maintain that personal assurance is necessarily and directly included in the exercise of saving faith, or belongs to its essence.

But though a considerable number of the Reformers held this view, and although, as we have explained, they were probably led into the adoption of it by their controversy with the Romanists, yet the truth or falsehood of this view did not form the real or main subject of controversy between them. The leading topic of discussion was this, Whether, without any special revelation, believers could and should (possent et deberent) be assured of their justification and salvation. This was practically the question that was controverted. It is one of great practical importance, and orthodox Protestant divines, in general, have continued ever since to concur with the Reformers in answering it in the affirmative. But though this was practically the real point controverted, — though the Papists were most anxious to persuade men that they could attain to no certainty upon this point, except either by a special revelation or by the testimony of the church, —yet this was not just the precise form which the question assumed in the controversy; and the reason of this was one which we have already hinted at, viz. that the more reasonable Romanists shrank from meeting the question, as thus put, with a direct negative, and fell back upon the topic of the kind or degree of the assurance or certainty that was ordinarily attainable by believers. Into this discussion of the nature and grounds of the certainty that might attach to this matter, the Reformers were unfortunately tempted to follow their opponents. In the heat of controversy many of them were led to lay down the untenable position, that the certainty or assurance ordinarily attainable by believers was of the highest and most perfect description,—that it was the certainty of faith, or, as they sometimes expressed it, the certainty of divine faith, the same certainty with which men believe in the plainly revealed doctrines of God's word. And then, again, it was as an argument or proof in support of this extreme and untenable position as to the kind or degree of certainty, that they were led on to assert, that this personal assurance was necessarily involved in justifying faith,—nay, was its distinguishing characteristic, and belonged of course to its essence.

That the account now given of the subordinate, and as we might call it accidental place held in the doctrinal system of the Reformers by their extreme views of the nature of the certainty or assurance which they asserted, and of the argument

which they advanced in support of it, is well founded, may be shown by the important fact, that while many of them taught these views in their private writings, and in some of their polemical and practical treatises, they did not introduce them into their confessions of faith, into compositions intended to be symbolical and to define the terms of ministerial communion. They are taught, indeed, as we have mentioned, in the Confession of Augsburg, and the Apology for v it. They are also set forth pretty explicitly in the Saxon and Wirtemberg Confessions, which are both Lutheran documents,—the first having been composed by Melancthon, and the second by Brentius. But they are not taught in the confessions of the Reformed or Calvinistic churches. The earliest confessions of the Reformed churches are the two Confessions of Basle, and there is no statement of them to be found there. Calvin had undoubtedly taught in his “Institutes,” and also in his i( Catechism” of Geneva, that saving faith necessarily includes or implies personal assurance. But he did not introduce any statement to this effect into the Confession of the French Protestant Church. It is doubtful, indeed, whether Calvin composed the French Confession, or only revised and sanctioned it. But this latter view is enough for our present purpose; and besides, if the Confession was not originally composed by Calvin, it was composed by Antony Chandieu or Sadeel, and he had taught in his own writings the same viewTs as Calvin upon this subject, though neither he nor Calvin seems to have thought of introducing them into the Confession. In the Palatine or Heidelberg Catechism, which was not originally intended to be symbolical, but was rather adapted for popular instruction, faith is described as necessarily comprehending assurance. The Belgic Confession, composed in 1563, contains no assertion of these views, though its authors probably believed them, as they afterwards added the Heidelberg. Catechism to their Confession as symbolical. The later Helvetic Confession, composed in 1566, and approved of by most of the Reformed churches, gives no countenance to these peculiar opinions. And lastly, the Synod of Dort, in 1618, representing almost all the Reformed churches, not only gave no sanction to these views, but made statements which can scarcely be reconciled with them, and which form part of the evidence by which it may be shown, that a more careful and exact analysis of these matters was leading men’s minds rather in a direction opposite to the views of the Reformers upon this subject, and thus paving the way for the more explicit rejection of them by the Westminster Assembly.

Now, let it be remembered that we do not assert that the authors of these documents did not hold the same views as Luther and Calvin upon the subjects of faith and assurance, and the relation subsisting between them. We concede

that, generally speaking, they did hold the same views as these leading Reformers. We concede, too, that in some of these confessions there are expressions employed which indicate plainly enough, to competent judges, that they held these views. But these concessions being made, we still think it a consideration of great importance, that they did not distinctly embody them in their confessions of faith, as this proves that they did not really occupy any such place in their system of theology as some of their statements, made in the heat of controversy, might lead us to suppose.

The account we have given of the views of the Reformers and the Romanists upon the subject of faith and assurance, and of the course which the discussion regarding it took, is sufficient, at once and of itself, if it be well founded, to overturn some of Sir William's leading positions in his history of this matter. But we must now look at his statements more closely and directly. His first leading position is this:—

“Assurance, Personal Assurance, Special Faith (the feeling of certainty that God is propitious to me, that my sins are forgiven,— *Fiducia, Plerophoria Fidei, Fides Specialis*),—Assurance was long universally held in the Protestant communities to be the criterion and condition of a true or saving faith” Here the first thing to be noted is the assumption, that “personal assurance, special faith,—*fiducia, plerophoria fidei, fides specialis*,” do, in the writings of the Reformers, all mean one and the same thing; and that this one thing is “the feeling of certainty that God is propitious to me, that my sins are forgiven.” We could easily show that this assumption involves great ignorance of the *usus loquendi* of the Reformers, that the different words are used in different senses, and that the same word is used in different senses by different authors. But it is not worth while to dwell upon this point. The statement, that “assurance was long universally held in the Protestant communities to -be the criterion and condition of a true and saving faith,” is not correct. For it has been proved that i Peter Martyr, Musculus, and Zanchius, three of the most eminent! divines at the period of the Reformation, did not hold this view of the nature of saving faith. The allegation that “assurance is the *punctum saliens* of Luther's system” is one which no man acquainted with Luther's writings can believe. The assertion that “assurance stands, essentially, part and parcel of all the confessions of all the churches of the Reformation down to the Westminster Assembly,” is utterly untrue. We have already explained how this matter stands as a question of fact, in regard to the earliest and most important confessions. If Sir William's assertion had any foundation in truth, the passages teaching the doctrine of

assurance might easily be produced. But no such passages have been or can be produced, because they have no existence.

Sir William is in substance right in saying, that in the Westminster Assembly assurance was formally declared not to be of the essence of faith; and he is right also in saying, that this was then done for the first time by an ecclesiastical synod, though, as we have already remarked, the Synod of Dort paved the way for it. It is of more importance to remark, that this decision of the Westminster Assembly has been generally acquiesced in ever since by the great body of Calvinists and Presbyterians over the world.

Sir William's next statement, *viz.* that on the ground of this deliverance of the Westminster Assembly, "the Scottish General Assembly has once and again deposed the holders of this, the doctrine of Luther and Calvin, of all the other churches of the Reformation, and of the older Scottish church itself," is a curious mixture of truth and error, though the error preponderates. If the doctrine that assurance is not of the essence of faith be plainly asserted in the standards of a church, and be thus explicitly assented to by every minister as a condition of his ordination, it does not appear why it should be held up as something monstrous, that men who may come afterwards to reject this doctrine should forfeit their office as ministers in that church, though it would no doubt be a very painful thing to have to cut off a brother who held no erroneous views except upon this one point. Sir William's statement is plainly fitted and intended to convey the impression that cases of this kind have occurred in the Church of Scotland; or, that men have been deposed merely because they held the views of the Reformers upon this point, while they were not charged with any other doctrinal errors. This impression is erroneous. No such cases have ever occurred. In the only instances, and they have been very few, in which ministers holding that assurance is of the essence of saving faith have been subjected to ecclesiastical discipline, this error was held in conjunction with the much more serious one of universal atonement, or universal pardon, which it naturally tends to introduce; and it was no doubt the maintenance of this second and more serious error that reconciled the heart and conscience of the church to the infliction of censure.

Sir William's assertion, that the doctrine of assurance being of the essence of faith was that "of the older Scottish church itself,"

has an appearance of truth about it, but it is fitted likewise to convey a false impression of the facts of the case. There is sufficient evidence that the older

Scottish church, or the first generation of Protestant ministers in Scotland, held in general the same views of faith and assurance as were taught by Luther and Calvin. But they had not embodied these views in any public symbolical documents, or required the belief of them as a term of ministerial communion; and yet this is plainly the impression which Sir William's statement is fitted to produce. In the old Scottish Confession of Faith, prepared by John Knox, and adopted by the General Assembly in 1560, these views are certainly not asserted. It contains nothing on this or any other subject, which might not be assented to by men who had subscribed the Westminster Confession. The only thing bearing upon these views that can in any sense be regarded as a deliverance of the church, is, that the National Covenant of 1581 contains a condemnation of the "general and doubtful faith of the Papists;"—a statement which, whatever we may know otherwise of the opinions of its authors, is far too vague to commit the church, or any who subscribed the document, to the definite doctrine, that assurance is of the essence of saving faith.

Sir William's next statement is an astounding one: "In the English, and more articulately in the Irish Establishment, assurance still stands a necessary tenet of ecclesiastical belief." This, we presume, will be a piece of news to the clergy of the English and Irish Establishments. We venture to assert, that not one of the 18,000 or 20,000 clergymen who represent the United Church of England and Ireland, has ever imagined that he had come under an obligation to believe and to teach "assurance;"— by which of course Sir William means, as the whole scope of the passage shows, notwithstanding the obscurity and confusion of his language, the doctrine that assurance of personal salvation is essential to, and is necessarily included or implied in, justifying faith. But Sir William has referred to proofs and authorities upon this point, and what are they? He gives them thus:—"See Homilies, Book i. Number iii. Part 3, specially referred to in the eleventh of the Thirty-nine Articles; and Number w. Parts 1 and 3; likewise the sixth Lambeth Article." The authorities here referred to are two, viz. the first Book of the Homilies, and the Lambeth Articles.

Now, in regard to the Books of the Homilies, we think it can be shown, 1st, That they are not properly symbolical books of the Church of England, so that the clergy are to be held bound to maintain and teach everything contained in them; and 2d, That though the Homilies contain plain enough indications that the views entertained by most of the Reformers were held also in the Church of England, they do not exhibit distinct and definite statements of these peculiar opinions.

The extent to which the Church of England is committed to the Homilies is this, that in her 35th Article she has declared that “the second Book of Homilies doth contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies; and therefore we judge them to be read in churches by ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood by the people,”—and that the 11th Article refers to one of the Homilies for a fuller setting forth of the doctrine of justification. Now this does not necessarily imply, and has never been regarded as implying, that the Church of England took her ministers bound to believe and to teach everything contained in these books. The Homilies were intended to furnish materials for popular instruction, and not to regulate the terms of ministerial communion. A conscientious man, who had subscribed the Articles, would not, indeed, consider himself at liberty, without first renouncing his position, to oppose the general scope and main substance of the views of doctrine and duty contained in the Homilies; for, by subscribing the Articles, he has declared this to be godly and wholesome: but the most conscientious men would deny that they were committed to all and everything contained in the Homilies. And they would take this ground, not from loose views of what subscription to symbols implies, but because they have never subscribed the Homilies, or done anything equivalent to this. In short, what is said in the Articles about the Homilies does not make the Homilies Articles, does not raise them to the same level, does not incorporate them with that primary and fundamental symbol. The statement in the 7th Article, that “the three Creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for they may be proved by, most certain warrants of holy writ,” no doubt incorporates the Creeds with the Articles, and makes them equally binding; but nothing like this is said about the Homilies, and therefore they stand upon a different footing. On these grounds we contend, that an incidental statement of the doctrine of assurance in the Homilies, would not have afforded an adequate ground for Sir William’s allegation, that this doctrine “still stands a necessary tenet of ecclesiastical belief.”

We have now to remark, in the second place, that anything said about this doctrine in the Homilies is not only incidental, but indefinite. The principal passages bearing upon the point are these:—“For the right and true Christian faith is, not only to believe that the Holy Scriptures and all the foresaid articles of our faith are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence in God’s merciful promises, to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ; whereof doth follow a loving heart to obey His commandments.” And again: “And this [a quick or living faith] is not only the common belief of the articles of our faith,

but is also a true trust and confidence of the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and a steadfast hope of all things to be received at His hands.” While these statements are quite explicit in rejecting the idea that saving faith is the mere belief of the truth, they do not definitely decide in favour of any one precise view of the nature, object, and grounds of the fiducia, or trust, which they describe. When these matters came to be more exactly and elaborately discussed in the seventeenth century, distinctions were introduced and applied, which tended to throw much light upon the subject, and which now require to be known and kept in view, in order that we may form a right estimate of the true import even of the vague and indefinite statements of former writers. It may be proper to illustrate this point by a specimen or two, as it admits of extensive application. Le Blanc, Professor of Theology at Sedan to the French Protestant Church, of whom we shall have afterwards occasion to speak more fully, gives the following statements of the differences which have been exhibited among Protestant divines upon this subject:—

“Hic observandum est, fiduciam apud doctores Reformatos pluribus modis sumi, adeoque plures eorum qui hac in parte diverse loquuntur, idem reapse inter se sentire; alios vero qui videntur eodem modo loqui, revera tamen quoad sensum inter se discrepare.”

If this be so, it would require a great deal more of careful and patient research than Sir William ever gave to this or to any other theological subject, to enable him to thread his way through its intricacies, and to entitle him to speak with confidence of his success in doing so. Again, Le Blanc says, more particularly:—

“Præcipui vero scholæ Reformatæ theologi de fiducia varie loquuntur, dum quidam dicunt fiduciam esse partem fidei primariam, et proprium illius actum, alii vero istud negant et docent fiduciam esse quidem fidei prolem atque effectum, sed non tamen actum ejus proprie dictum; ac præterea fiducise nomine, alii quidem istud, alii vero aliud, intelligunt.”

He then mentions four different senses in which this fiducia, trust or confidence, has been understood by Protestant divines, the first two of which are thus described:—

“Primum ergo, fiducise nomine intelligitur actus ille per quem in Deum recumbimus, illi innitimur, et ei adhaeremus, tanquam fonti et auctori salutis, ut

vitam et salutem ab eo consequamur. Secundo, fiducia apud multos designat firmam persuasionem de gratia et venia a Deo impetrata et de nostra cum eo reconciliatione.”

Turretine explains the distinctions applicable to this matter with his usual masterly ability, in this way:—

“Diversitas quae inter orthodoxos occurrit oritur ex diversa acceptione fiduciae, quae trifariam potest sumi. 1. Pro fiduciali assensu seu persuasione quae oritur ex iudicio practice intellectus de veritate et bonitate promissionum evangelicarum, et de potentia, voluntate, ac fidelitate Dei promittentis. 2. Pro actu refugii et receptionis Christi, quo fidelis, cognita veritate et bonitate promissionum, ad Christum confugit, illum recipit et amplectitur et in illius meritum unice recumbit. 3. Pro confidentia seu acquiescentia et tranquillitate animi quae oritur ex refugio animae ad Christum et ejus receptione. Primo et secundo significato fiducia est de essentia fidei et bene a theologis dicitur ejus forma; sed tertio, recte ab aliis non forma sed effectus fidei dicitur, quia nascitur ex ea, non vero eam constituit.” We have made these quotations chiefly for the purpose of illustrating the position, that as these distinctions were not present to the minds of the Reformers, but were the growth of later speculation, we should not attribute to them any one of these distinct and definite opinions, without specific evidence bearing upon the precise point to be proved, and should not allow ourselves to be carried away by the mere words, trust and confidence, certainty and assurance, without a full and deliberate consideration of the whole evidence bearing upon the meaning of the statements. The statements may be so definite as to indicate what of the views that were subsequently developed were held by the parties under consideration, or they may not. The statements of the Catechisms of Geneva and Heidelberg are so expressed, as to convey the doctrine that personal assurance is of the essence of saving faith; the confessions of the Reformed churches do not in general teach this doctrine; and the Homilies of the Church of England resemble more the confessions than the catechisms. Even if they were symbolical and authoritative, they would not make “assurance,” in the precise and definite sense in which Sir William here uses the word, “a necessary tenet of ecclesiastical belief.”

Sir William’s second proof of his position is the “sixth Lambeth Article.” The history of the Lambeth Articles affords an irrefragable proof that Calvinism was the generally received doctrine of the great body of the highest authorities in the church and universities of England, and of the mass of the English clergy, in the



latter part of the reign of Elizabeth and of the sixteenth century: while nothing is more certain and notorious than that they never received the sanction of the church in its public official character; that they never were imposed by any authority, civil or ecclesiastical; and that there is not a shadow of ground for alleging, that any Anglican clergyman is, or ever was, under any appearance of obligation to believe or teach anything contained in them, the sixth Article or any of the other eight.

But even if the Lambeth Articles were symbolical and authoritative, they would not impose an obligation to teach the precise and definite doctrine which is the subject of Sir William's allegation. The sixth Article is in these words:—*u* Homo vere fidelis, id est, fide justificante praeditus, certus est plerophoria fidei, de remissione peccatorum suorum et salute sempiterna sua per Christum.” It would manifestly require something much more definite than this, to tie down men to the maintenance of the position, that personal assurance is necessarily included in saving faith and belongs to its essence. It simply says, “A true believer is certain with the assurance of faith.” It does not say that every believer is so, at all times; it defines nothing about the nature of the process by which the certainty is produced, or the ground on which it rests; it specifies nothing of the relation subsisting between faith and assurance: and on these grounds it is totally unfit for the purpose for which Sir William referred to it. The truth is, that a man might honestly subscribe this Lambeth Article, without being thereby committed to more than the position which, as we have explained, formed, the real subject of controversy between the Reformers and the Romanists, *viz.* that the believer may and should, be assured of his forgiveness and salvation.

Sir William, however, not only asserts that assurance, in the sense in which it has been so often explained, “still stands a necessary tenet of ecclesiastical belief” in the English Establishment, but he further says, that it does so “more articulately” in the Irish. He gives no other references than those we have examined, to the Homilies and the Lambeth Articles, and of course none bearing upon the alleged greater “articulateness” of the Irish Church in this matter. The truth probably was this: Sir William must have known that the Lambeth Articles are not, and never were, of any authority in the Church of England; and he would scarcely have ventured to refer to them as establishing anything about the obligations of the clergy of that church. But he had probably read somewhere that the Lambeth Articles, though never imposed upon the Church of England, were, through Archbishop Usher's influence, sanctioned and adopted in the Church of Ireland, — a statement which is true in substance, though not strictly

correct; and this was probably the whole of the knowledge on the ground of which he thought himself entitled to assert the greater articulateness of the Irish Church, and to refer to the sixth Lambeth Article. In “the Articles of Religion agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops, and the rest of the clergy of Ireland, in the Convocation holden at Dublin in the year of our Lord God 1615,” the whole of the Lambeth Articles are embodied, though with some additions and verbal alterations. The subject of assurance is thus stated in No. 37, under the head “Justification and Faith:”—

“By justifying faith, we understand not only the common belief of the articles of Christian religion, and a persuasion of the truth of God’s word in general, but also a particular application of the gracious promises of the gospel to the comfort of our own souls; whereby we lay hold on Christ with all His benefits, having an earnest trust and confidence in God, that He will be merciful to us for His only Son’s sake. So that a true believer may be certain by the assurance of faith of the forgiveness of his sins, and of his everlasting salvation by Christ.”

It is somewhat difficult to say whether this could, with truth, be said to be more “articulate” than the statements quoted from the “Homilies.” The first sentence does seem to embody rather more of the tone and spirit of the Catechisms of Geneva and Heidelberg, though it is very far from being explicit in declaring their peculiar views upon this point. But then, in the second sentence, which is in substance a translation of the sixth Lambeth Article, there is an alteration which rather tells on the other side, —“may be certain,” instead of “certus esta change which confirms the view above given of the real meaning of the Article, and brings it nearer to the great fundamental Protestant position, *vere fidelis potest et debet certus esse*. There is nothing, then, in these Irish Articles of 1615 to commit any one who may receive and adopt them, to the doctrine that assurance is of the essence of faith. Sir William, however, probably meant the greater articulateness, which he predicated of the Irish Church, to refer to the more formal ecclesiastical sanction given to these statements in the Irish than in the English Establishment; and our answer to this is, that for two centuries past neither the Irish Church nor any of its bishops or clergymen, have furnished any ground whatever for the allegation, that they were under any obligation to teach the doctrine of assurance, beyond what is implied in subscription to the English Articles. There was a period, indeed, when the Irish Articles, and, of course, the Lambeth Articles, were invested with some authority in Ireland, but that period was brief, and has long since gone by. An investigation into the history and standing of the Irish Articles can now possess a merely historical value, and

determines no question of present duty. It is curious and interesting, however; and we would refer those who desire full information upon this subject to Hardwick's "History of the Articles of Religion,"—a book which, notwithstanding its strong anti-Calvinistic prejudices, we cannot but commend most highly for ability and learning and general fairness. We must again request our readers to notice and remember what is suggested by the fact, that Sir William made this assertion about the Churches of England and Ireland.

But perhaps Sir William's grandest display is to be found in the second paragraph of the passage on which we are commenting, where he brings out the "series of the most curious contrasts" which "this dogma, with its fortunes, past and present, affords."

He swells the number of these curious contrasts, by repeating what is really one and the same idea, in two or three different forms. He gives five "curious contrasts," but the first three turn upon a single point, and the substance of them may be embodied in one position, which, indeed, is the sum and substance of what Sir William is most anxious to establish, *viz.* that the whole of the Reformed churches have not only abandoned the doctrine of assurance, the fundamental doctrine of the Reformation, but have all adopted the opposite Popish doctrine, which was taught by the Council of Trent when it condemned the doctrine of the Reformers.

Before adverting to this leading position, we must notice his fourth and fifth specimens of "curious contrasts." He states them thus:—

"Again, it is curious, that this, the most important variation in the faith of Protestants,—as, in fact, a gravitation of Protestantism back to Catholicity, — should have been overlooked, as, indeed, in his days undeveloped, by the keen-eyed author of<sup>4</sup> The History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches.' Finally, it is curious, that, though now fully developed, this central approximation of Protestantism to Catholicity should not, as far as I know, have been signalized by any theologian, Protestant or Catholic."

If this variation was "undeveloped" in Bossuet's time, it does not seem "curious" that it should have been overlooked by him, even though he was "keen-eyed;"<sup>99</sup> while we admit that it is "curious," if true, that "it should not have been signalized by any theologian, Protestant or Catholic," until Sir William Hamilton discovered and promulgated it. But the truth is, that this

variation—for there was a doctrinal variation upon this point, though certainly it was not of such magnitude as Sir William alleges— was developed in Bossuet’s time, and was not overlooked by him, but was distinctly set forth, though not much enlarged upon, in his “History of the Variations.” Indeed, all Sir William’s assertions upon these points are wholly untrue. That this variation was not overlooked by Bossuet, is proved by the following extract from his “History of the Variations”

“Les ministres qui ont ecrit dans les derniers tems, et entr’autres, M. de Beaulieu (Le Blanc), que nous avons vu a Sedan, un des plus savans et des plus pacifique de tous les ministres, adoucissent le plus qu’ils peuvent le dogme de rinamissibilite de la justice et meme celui de la certitude de salut: et deux raisons lesy portent: la premiere est l’eloignement qu’en ont eules Lutheriens, a qui ils veulent s’unir a quelque prix que ce soit: la seconde est l’absurdite et l’impiete qu’on decouvre dans ces dogmes, pour peu qu’ils soient penetres. ... Toutes les fois que nos Reformes desavouent ces dogmes impies, louons-en Dieu, et, sans disputer da vantage, prions les seulement de considerer que le Saint Esprit ne pouvait pas etre en ceux qui les ont enseignes, et qui ont fait consister une grande partie de la Reforme dans de si indignes idees de la justice Chretienne.”

So far from this variation not having been signaled before, it actually formed one leading subject of a controversy that was carried on between theologians of distinguished eminence, both Protestant and Romanist, before the publication of Bossuet’s “History of the Variations;” and as this topic not only conclusively disproves Sir William’s assertions, but is fitted to throw light upon the general subject under consideration, we will give a brief notice of the controversy referred to.

In 1665, Louis le Blanc, Lord of Beaulieu, Professor of Theology in the College of the French Protestant Church at Sedan, a man of great ability and learning, published “Theses Theologicse de Certitudine quam quis habere possit et debeat de sua coram Deo justificatione.” In these Theses, he described it as a misrepresentation of Papists, to allege that Protestants held, among other things, that personal assurance was necessarily comprehended in justifying faith and belonged to its essence; and explained what he held to be the doctrine generally taught by Protestants upon this subject. He represented their doctrine as being substantially this, that believers can and should be assured of their being forgiven and being in a state of grace, and that the want of this assurance was faulty and sinful; but that this assurance was not the proper act of justifying and

saving faith, and did not belong to its essence, since faith might exist for a time without it; that it was a result or consequence of faith, posterior to it in the order of nature, and frequently also of time; that though this assurance might be called an act of faith, it was but a secondary and reflex, not a primary and direct act of faith; and that while the certainty attaching to this personal assurance might be called a certainty of faith, it was so named in an improper sense, since it did not rest immediately and exclusively upon what was actually contained in God's word, but partly also upon a reflex act concerning ourselves. These are in substance the views in regard to faith and assurance which are set forth in the Westminster Confession, prepared twenty years before; and Le Blanc, without any parade of proofs or authorities, declared them to be then generally prevalent among Protestants. The prevalence of these views of course implied, and was seen and admitted to imply, a variation, or a departure from those held by the generality of the Reformers.

About seven years after, in 1672, the famous Antony Arnauld, Doctor of the Sorbonne, the friend and associate of Pascal and Nicole, published his work entitled, "Le Renversement de la Morale de Jesus Christ, par les Erreurs des Calvinistes touchant la Justification" and as he meant to make the doctrine of assurance play an important part in proving that the Calvinists overturn the morality of Jesus Christ, he adduced at length the evidence that Calvinists teach that "every believer is assured with the certainty of divine faith of his own justification and salvation and he gives "a refutation of a professor of Sedan, who had abandoned the common sentiments of his sect, concerning the certainty of divine faith, which they think that every believer has of his justification and salvation." Arnauld's evidence in support of the ascription of this opinion to Protestants is derived chiefly from the writers of the sixteenth century, and terminates with the Synod of Dort in 1618, which, he alleges, sanctioned it: and as Le Blanc in his Theses had not produced any authority, Arnauld, in refuting him, just referred to the evidence he had already adduced. In 1674, Le Blanc published "Theses Theologicas de fidei justificantis natura et essentia, in quibus valise Protestantium sententise referuntur et expenduntur, et breviter refelluntur quas super ea re quidam liber recens Scrip-tori harum Thesium imputat." These Theses, as well as the former ones, were afterwards embodied in his great work commonly called "Theses Sedanenses," of which the third edition was published at London in 1683. In these Theses concerning the nature and essence of justifying faith, he goes very fully into the whole subject, examines the authorities bearing upon it, and defends himself from the charges which Arnauld, in his "Renversement," had brought against him, of abandoning the

common views of Protestants, and of concealing and misrepresenting their true doctrines. Le Blanc, of course, did not deny that there had been many eminent Protestant divines who taught that personal assurance was necessarily included in saving faith. But he contended and proved, that from the time of the Reformation downwards, there had always been some eminent Protestant writers who had taken a broader and more correct view of the nature of saving faith and of the relation between it and assurance,—that in recent times the number of divines who held this view had •been progressively increasing,—that nearly thirty years before this it had obtained a great triumph, by being distinctly set forth in the Westminster Confession, whose sentiments upon this point had been generally approved of by Protestant writers; and that, on all these grounds, Arnauld and the Papists were acting unwarrantably in asserting that the opposite view was that which had always been and still was held by Protestants. He claims in support of his views the concurrence of Zanchius, Peter Martyr, Musculus, Perkins, Bishop Davenant, and the other English divines who attended the Synod of Dort, Ames, Du Moulin, Walseus, Wittichius, Mestrezat, *etc.* He expresses his concurrence in the statements of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and repeatedly refers to it in disproof of the allegation of the Romanists, that opposite views had up till that time been generally maintained among Protestants. Le Blanc admitted that, in the earlier period, views different from his and from those of the Westminster Confession, were more generally prevalent; but he contended that, in later times, matters had changed, and the balance had turned to the other side. He, of course, did not deny that there had been a variation here in the history of Protestant doctrine, though he did not think the change which had been brought about was one of great intrinsic importance, and maintained that, from the beginning, there had been some Protestants who held the views which had ultimately gained the ascendancy.

This elaborate dissertation of Le Blanc was not only approved of in general by Protestant divines, but it convinced an eminent Romish theologian of that period, Le Fevre, a doctor of theology of the Faculty of Paris, that Arnauld had misrepresented Protestants, in ascribing to them generally the doctrine of assurance. He expressed this opinion in a work written against Protestantism; and this again called forth the redoubtable Jansenist, who published, in 1682, “*Le Calvinisme Convaincu de nouveau de Dogmes Impies contre ce qu’en on ecrit, M. Le Fevre, etc., et M. Le Blanc,*” *etc.* In this work Arnauld went over the ground again without throwing much additional light upon it, or shaking any of Le Blanc’s main positions.

In the meantime a new combatant had entered the field. This was the famous Peter Jurieu, a man of singular talents and activity, who had formerly been professor at Sedan. In 1675 he published his “Apologie pour la Morale des Reformes, ou Defense de leur doctrine touchant la Justification, la perseverance des vrais saints, et la certitude que chaque fidele peut et doit avoir de son salut,” in reply to Arnauld’s “Renversement.” This work Claude, the most distinguished defender of Protestantism in France, pronounced to be “one of the finest books that had appeared since the Reformation.” The first two books of it treat of justification and perseverance, and the third and last of certitude or assurance. He takes very much the same ground as Le Blanc, denying that Arnauld was entitled to charge upon Protestants in general the doctrine that assurance is of the essence of faith, though admitting ' that this doctrine was extensively taught among them in the sixteenth century. He adduces a portion of the evidence of this, referring to Le Blanc’s Theses for additional testimonies, and shows very ably and ingeniously, that neither the earlier nor the later doctrine was chargeable with the odious consequences which Arnauld had laboured to fasten upon them. He takes some pains to bring out the difference between the belief men have in articles of faith, and the assurance they have of their own forgiveness, and to show that men might doubt about their salvation without ceasing to be true believers. He exposes very ably and conclusively the futility of the attempt of Arnauld to draw an argument in favour of Popery from the concessions made by Le Blanc and others, as to the variations in the doctrine of Protestants, and even an approximation again in some minor doctrinal matters to the Church of Rome; and points out the folly of making so much ado about differences of so little intrinsic importance as those which had been exhibited, or might still subsist, among Protestants on the subject of assurance.

Le Blanc and Jurieu were both men of very fine talents and of extensive learning. Both have rendered important services to the cause of truth, and both have also done it some injury. Le Blanc had a great desire to reconcile the differences of contending sects and parties, and laboured to show that the points of difference among them, when calmly and deliberately examined, were not of great importance, and resolved many of them into mere logomachies. He applied this principle to some of the topics controverted between Protestants and Papists, and not merely to topics so unimportant, comparatively, as assurance, but even to some branches of the great doctrine of justification,—a circumstance of which Nicole has skilfully availed himself in his work entitled, “Prejuges Legitimes contre les Calvinistes.” As Le Blanc brought extensive theological learning, and a singularly ingenious and discriminating mind, to bear upon this subject, his

“Theses Sedanenses” must be regarded as a dangerous book for the young student of theology, who might be in danger of being misled by it into an underestimate of the importance of having clear views and definite convictions upon many topics usually discussed in polemic divinity; while it is certainly a work of the very highest value to the more mature theologian.

Jurieu is probably very much under-estimated by those whose knowledge of him has been derived, not from the perusal of his own writings, but from other sources. His reputation has suffered greatly in consequence of his having quarrelled with Bayle, who, after having formerly praised him and his writings in the highest terms, pilloried him through the whole of his Dictionary, making frequent occasions for assaulting him. Jurieu had some qualities which laid him open to such assaults. With great ability and penetration, and great mental energy and activity, he had a rashness and recklessness about him that often led him into scrapes, and afforded many a handle to his enemies,—to personal enemies, as Bayle,—or to opponents in controversy, as Bossuet. He threw himself with such eagerness into every one of the many controversies in which he engaged, that he seemed for the time to see everything through that medium, appeared to contend for victory quite as much as for truth, and was ever anxious to turn everything to the account of the present controversial occasion. All this produced sometimes a carelessness and rashness both in the statement of facts and in the employment of arguments, which his friends could not defend, and which his enemies skilfully improved.

This was just the kind of man whom Bayle was peculiarly qualified to expose; and he has done his best to turn his opportunities to good account. But all who are acquainted with Jurieu's works, know that he was a man of very fine powers, that he has rendered very valuable services to truth in the discussion of some important questions, and has inflicted some deadly wounds even upon such opponents as Bossuet, Arnauld, and Nicole. Though his reputation has been damaged by Bayle's Dictionary, yet the mischief has been in some measure repaired by a very full, elaborate, and interesting life, in which justice is done him, in Chauffepie's Supplement to Bayle.

Arnauld, Le Blanc, and Jurieu, are all first-class names in theological literature. Their labours ought to have been known to a man of Sir William's pretensions; and yet we have seen that he has asserted, that a topic which formed a subject of formal and lengthened controversy between them, was unnoticed and unknown until it was “signalized” by himself. We could easily prove that this variation has



been “signalized” by many theologians. But it is unnecessary to dwell upon this point. We shall quote one specimen, as it embodies at the same time a good summary of the chief reasons that tended to produce the change. It is taken from a common work of an eminent divine, published in the latter part of the seventeenth century, “Marckii Compendium Theologias.”

“Non diffitendum interim, de hac ipsa fiduciali applicatione diversum sentire quoque nostros. Dum antiquiores juxta catachesim nostram faciunt hunc Actum fidei essentialem, ad justificationem et salutem necessarium, sed non absque antecedenti amplexu et connexa resipiscentia concipiendum; Recentiores vero plures volunt potius esse earn fidei ipsius et justificationis consequens, quod abesse possit, fide et salute manente, 1. Turn ob multorum vere Christum apprehendentium perpetuas dubitationes; 2. Turn ad vitandas magis Pontificiorum, Arminianorum, et schismaticorum strophas, qui vel homines ad securitatem hoc fidei actu duci, vel obligari ad falsum credendum cum remissio fidem sequatur, vel pro omnibus juxta hoc officium credench mortuum esse Christum, clamant; 3. Turn denique, quod hsec fiducia magis Dei beneficium speciale paucioribus proprium, quam officium commune sit.”

We should now proceed to the more formal consideration of the leading position which, as we have seen, forms the substance of Sir William’s first three “curious contrasts,”—viz. that the whole of the Reformed churches have not only abandoned the doctrine of assurance, the fundamental doctrine of the Reformation, but have all adopted the Popish doctrine which was taught by the Council of Trent, when it condemned the doctrine of the Reformers. But we are prevented from going so fully into the discussion of this position as we would have liked to have done, and had collected materials for doing. We have now only space for a few hints.

Sir William calls the doctrine of assurance—that is, of course, the doctrine that assurance of personal salvation is necessarily included in saving faith—the “fundamental principle of all the churches of the Reformation,” “the common and differential,” “the primary and peculiar,” doctrine of the Reformation. Some of the Reformers made strong and exaggerated statements about the importance of their peculiar opinions upon this point; and Nicole, and other old Popish controversialists, in dealing, as with a known and familiar thing, with that variation, which was unknown to all theologians until Sir William “signalized” it, have endeavoured to show that a change upon a topic so important should have led men to return to the Church of Rome. Yet neither Reformers nor

Romanists, even in the heat of controversy, have ever put forth such extravagant exaggerations upon this point as those we have quoted from Sir William. To represent the doctrine of assurance as “the fundamental principle of all the churches of the Reformation,” carries absurdity upon the face of it. From the very nature of the case, no doctrine upon such a subject could be the fundamental principle of the Reformed churches. If the Reformers had been contented, as they should have been, with asserting the general position that believers can and should be assured of their own salvation, and if the Romanists had ventured to meet this general position with a direct and unqualified negative, even in that case no sound-minded man, whatever he might have been tempted to say in the heat of controversy, could have deliberately regarded this difference as fundamental. But while this was really and practically the controversy between them, yet, as we have explained, the formal or technical ground of contention was reduced within still narrower limits,—the Papists professing to deny the doctrine of their opponents only with this explanation, that by assurance they meant the infallible certainty of divine faith, by which men believed the great doctrines of religion; and many of the Reformers, injudiciously and incautiously accepting this explanation, and bringing forward the notion that personal assurance is necessarily included in saving faith, as an argument in support of it. The controversy thus turned in form upon the kind or measure of the certainty attaching to men’s convictions on the subject of their own state and prospects, and the grounds on which the actual certainty contended for might be established. It is impossible that any particular doctrine upon such points as these could “have been constituted into the fundamental principle of all the churches of the Reformation;” and therefore Sir William’s position might be safely and reasonably rejected, even by those who have no great knowledge of these matters.

Sir William plainly asserts, that a precise and definite doctrine upon this subject was, in opposition to the Reformers, laid down by the Council of Trent, and that this Popish doctrine has now been adopted by all the Protestant churches. But this notion, though not altogether destitute of an apparent plausibility, has no real foundation in truth. It is no doubt true that in so far as there has been a deviation from the views generally held by the Reformers, it has proceeded in a direction which tends to diminish the differences between Protestants and Papists. But, indeed, it can scarcely be said with truth, that either the Reformed churches or the Church of Rome were formally and officially committed to any very definite doctrine upon this subject. There is nothing, as we have seen, precise and definite upon this topic in the confessions of the Reformed churches. There is

nothing so definite in any of the Calvinistic confessions of the sixteenth century, in favour of assurance being of the essence of saving faith, as there is in the Westminster Confession on the other side. With respect to the deliverances of the Council of Trent upon this subject, we have to remark, 1st, That they condemned several positions which had not been laid down by the Reformed churches, but merely put forth by individual Reformers, and which Protestants, both at the time and since, have thought untenable and exaggerated; 2d, That a difference of opinion existed in the council itself, and that this prevented their giving any very definite, positive deliverance. Catharinus, one of the most eminent divines of that period, maintained in the council views upon the subject of assurance substantially the same as those held by the generality of the Reformers; he continued to hold these views; and after all the deliverances of the council had been passed, he maintained that none of his positions had been condemned, and that he was still at liberty to profess them. Indeed, while the whole tone and spirit of the deliverances of the council upon this subject is adverse to the views of the Reformers, its chief formal deliverance is just this, “Nullus scire valet certitudine fidei, cui non potest subesse falsum, se gratiam Dei esse consecutum;” where the matter is thrown back very much upon the point, that the certainty claimed is the certainty of faith, and where some additional materials for metaphysical speculation are provided, by the class we have put in italics.

The view we have given of these points, in their bearing upon the state of the question, is fully confirmed by what we find in Cardinal Bellarmine when treating of this topic.<sup>f</sup> After admitting the existence of different opinions on the subject in the Council of Trent and in the Church of Rome, he gives this as the doctrine held by the great body of Romish theologians in opposition to the errors both of Protestants and Romanists, “Non posse homines in hac vita habere certitudinem fidei de sua justitia, us exceptis quibus Deus speciali revelatione hoc in dicare dignatur;” and in giving more formally the state of the question, he puts it in this way, “Utrum debeat aut possit aliquis sine speciali revelatione, certus esse certitudine fidei divinae, cui mdlo modo potest subesse falsum, sibi remissa esse peccata.” Here we see the controversialist stands intrenched behind the “certitudo fidei divinae cui nullo modo,” etc., and calls upon his opponent to prove that the certitude or assurance to which he lays claim, is possessed of such qualities, and is based upon such grounds, as these phrases are understood to indicate. But while the great Popish controversialist takes care at first to intrench himself behind these safeguards, he afterwards brings out somewhat more fully and freely, though still not without precaution, what he and Romish writers in

general have inculcated upon this point. { He lays down and undertakes to prove the four following positions:—"1. Non posse haberi certitudinem fidei de propria justitia,"—a denial of the Protestant "potest;" 3. "Neminem teneri ad illam habendam etiamsi forte posset haberi,"—a denial of the Protestant "debet;" 3. "Non expedire ut ordinarie habeatur;" 4. "Reipsa non haberi nisi a paucis, quibus a Deo specialiter justificatio propria reve-latur." These positions formed then, and in substance they form still, the real points of divergence between Protestants and Papists upon the subject of assurance. The technicalities of the controversy are somewhat altered, while its substance remains the same. The grand question still is, as it has always been, Is it practicable, obligatory, and expedient, that believers should be assured of their justification and salvation? Upon this question the Reformed churches have always maintained, and still maintain, the affirmative; while the Romanists, for obvious reasons, have always taken the other side. Modern Protestants, as the result of a more careful, deliberate, and unembarrassed examination of the subject than the Reformers were able to give to it, have become indifferent about the question, whether this assurance should be called the certainty of faith, or have plainly admitted that this designation was an improper one; and they have modified also an extreme view about the precise relation subsisting between assurance and saving faith,—a view which seems to have been suggested by a desire to establish the warrantableness of this designation. This is really the sum and substance of the variation,—of the change which has taken place.

We are confident that no one who is competently acquainted with this subject, and who surveys the history of the discussions regarding it with calmness and deliberation, can fail to see that this is the true state of the case. And if this, or anything like this, be indeed the true state of the case, what an extraordinary misrepresentation must be the view given of the matter by Sir William Hamilton! His view is to be exposed and overthrown by establishing these two positions:—1st, That, from the nature of the case, no doctrine upon the subject of assurance could have been the fundamental principle of the Reformers; and 2d, That the difference between the Reformers and the generality of modern Protestant divines is not one of fundamental importance, even when regarded merely in its relation to this non-fundamental subject, and of course sinks into insignificance when viewed in its relation to the general system of Protestant doctrine.

Sir William seems to have been half conscious of this; and therefore he makes an attempt, in conclusion, to involve the great Protestant doctrine of justification in

one common ruin with the comparatively small doctrine of assurance. He represents it as a consequence of the change which he alleges has taken place in the views of Protestants in regard to assurance, that “the Protestant symbol (‘Fides sola justificat,—Faith alone justifies’), though now eviscerated of its real import, and now only manifesting an unimportant difference of expression, is still supposed to mark the discrimination of the two religious denominations. For both agree that the three heavenly virtues must all concur to salvation, and they only differ whether faith, as a word, does or does not involve hope and charity.” This would be the most dangerous of all Sir William’s misrepresentations, were it not rendered innocuous by its extravagance. Even if the deviation from the views of the Reformers, and the return to Popish notions upon the subject of assurance, had been as great as Sir William represents it, this would not have affected the differences between Protestants and Romanists upon anything really involved in the doctrine of justification. Sir William’s statement, though applied only to the doctrine that faith alone justifies, seems fitted and intended to convey the impression, that the whole Protestant doctrine of justification has been exploded and abandoned; and, therefore, the first remark we have to make upon it is this,—that there are some important differences between Protestants and Romanists on the subject of justification, which are not directly touched even by the position, that faith alone justifies. We refer, of course, to the vitally important questions, 1st, as to the meaning and import; and 2d, as to the cause, or ground, or foundation, of justification. Even though the doctrine that faith alone justifies were “eviscerated,” Protestants might and should maintain their whole controversy with Romanists upon these fundamental points. We remark, in the second place, that all that is important in the Protestant doctrine, as comprehended under the head that faith alone justifies, is untouched by any change that has taken or could take place in regard to assurance. The two main questions usually discussed between Protestants and Romanists under this head are these:— 1st, Is there anything else in men themselves which stands in the same relation to justification as faith does?—Protestants answering this question in the negative, and Papists contending that there are six other virtues, as they call them, including, of course, hope and charity, which stand in the very same relation to justification. Protestants admitted that all these virtues do and must exist in justified men, and might thus, in a sense, be said, to use Sir William’s phrase, “to concur to salvation;” but they wholly denied that they have any such bearing as faith has upon the justification of a sinner. 2nd, In what capacity or respect is it that faith justifies? Is it as an instrument, or as a condition, or as a meritorious cause? Surely it is quite plain, that, even if a man had come to believe all that is taught by the Council of Trent upon the subject of assurance,

he might still, without any inconsistency, maintain all the doctrines of the Reformers upon these important points.

Sir William adverts to the fact, that the deviation from the views of the Reformers upon the subject of assurance, which he represents as an abandonment of “the fundamental principle of all the Reformed churches,” is embodied in the Westminster Confession; and yet there can be no doubt that the whole doctrine of the Reformers upon the subject of justification is set forth with most admirable fulness and precision in the eleventh chapter of that document, while no ingenuity, however great, could devise even a plausible pretence for alleging that there is any inconsistency in this.

We have some apprehension that the controversial spirit is rising and swelling in our breast, and therefore we abstain from making any reflections upon the extraordinary inaccuracies which we have considered it our duty to unfold. But we would like to attempt something in the way of expounding and inculcating the great truth taught in Scripture, and set forth in the Westminster Confession, upon the subject of assurance. That it is practicable, obligatory, and expedient, that believers should be assured of their justification and salvation, was, not certainly, “the fundamental principle of all the Reformed churches,” but the fundamental principle of the teaching of the Reformed churches on the subject of assurance. It is fully and clearly declared in the Westminster Confession. It has been held professedly by the whole body of Calvinistic divines, both before and since the variation which Sir William has signalized. And yet we fear it has at all times been too much neglected, both theoretically and practically, viewed both as declaring a truth and enforcing a duty. We believe that the prevailing practical disregard of the privilege and the duty of having assurance, is, to no inconsiderable extent, at once the cause and the effect of the low state of vital religion amongst us—one main reason why there is so little of real communion with God as our reconciled Father, and so little of real, hearty devotedness to His cause and service. Some sense of the sin and danger of neglecting this subject occasionally arises in men’s minds, and is, from time to time, pressed upon the notice of the church; but in many cases such attempts have only led to controversial discussions, and have failed in producing any beneficial practical results. It is not easy to keep the exact high road of truth; and men, filled with some one important idea or object, are very apt to run into exaggerations and extremes. Upon no subject has this been more conspicuously the case than on that of assurance; partly, perhaps, because of the influence of Luther, Calvin, and their associates. It has happened repeatedly in the history of the church, that

pious and zealous men, impressed with the importance of getting a larger share of attention to the subject of assurance, have been led into the adoption of untenable and erroneous positions concerning it. Then the champions of orthodoxy have buckled on their armour, and have demonstrated by irrefragable logic, that these positions are characterized by, it may be, confusion, inconsistency, and error; and then men, satisfied upon this point, settle down again upon their lees, and think no more of the importance of coming to a decisive adjustment upon the question as to what is their present relation to God, and what are their future prospects. This is the abuse, not the use of controversy. The uses of theological controversy are, to expose error, and to produce and diffuse clear and correct opinions upon all points of doctrine. It is the church's imperative duty to aim at these objects, and controversy seems to be as indispensable with a view to the second as to the first of them. But it is an evil and an abuse, when the exposure of error is made to serve as a substitute for the realization and application of what is admitted to be true. This has repeatedly, in the history of the church, taken place in regard to the subject of assurance; and this result, again, has, we are persuaded, been productive of injurious consequences to the interests of true religion, and tended to keep the church at a low point in the scale of devotedness and efficiency.

# Melancthon and the Theology of the Church of England

These are two great works, of permanent value, and must be regarded as most important accessions to the theological literature of the present age. They are, indeed, almost wholly republications of books which have been in existence for nearly three centuries. But many of the books of which they are composed were so scarce as to be practically inaccessible, and they are now brought within the reach of all, and provided fully with every necessary literary apparatus. Bretschneider of Gotha started the idea of editing and publishing a complete Corpus Reformatorum, and began with putting forth, in 1834, the first volume of the whole writings of Melancthon. The work proceeded very, slowly, one volume only being usually published annually. Bretschneider died during its progress, and the work has very recently been brought to a close under the superintendence of Bindseil, who is professor of philosophy and librarian at Halle. The last volume, the twenty-eighth, was just ready in time to admit of its being deposited in the foundation-stone of the pedestal of a brazen statue of Melancthon, erected at Wittemberg on the 19th of April last, the tricentenary anniversary of his death. We do not know whether the works of any more of the Reformers are to be brought out in the same style, and with similar completeness and apparatus. It would certainly be an inestimable service to theological literature to produce such an edition of the whole works of the other leading Reformers. But the length of time that has been occupied with the publication of Melancthon is somewhat discouraging. It is a great boon, however, to have given us such an edition of the whole works of the "Preceptor of Germany."

The Parker Society was instituted in 1840, "for the publication of the works of



the fathers and early writers of the Reformed English Church and in the course of fourteen years gave to the world, fifty-five volumes of most interesting and valuable matter, including a most important collection of Letters not before published, which had been written by the English Reformers to their continental correspondents, and have been preserved in different libraries, but especially in that of Zurich. The Parker Society was instituted, and its proceedings were conducted, under the influence of decidedly anti-Tractarian views. It was intended to bring out the predominance of the doctrinal and evangelical element, as opposed to the sacramental, the hierarchic, and the ritualistic, among the founders of the Church of England,—the thoroughly anti-Popish character of the whole position they assumed,—their full sympathy in spirit and feeling, and their substantial identity in opinion, with the continental Reformers; in short, to make it palpable that the Church of England, as settled in the time of Edward and Elizabeth, was very different, in the most important respects, from what it was made by Charles and Laud, and from what the Tractarians have again attempted to make it. The works of the Parker Society contain a great storehouse of matter of the highest value and importance, viewed both historically and theologically. As a whole, they thoroughly establish the true historical position of the Church of England, as settled by its fathers and founders; and at the same time furnish materials amply sufficient to prove, that the great leading anti-Popish, anti-Tractarian, evangelical features of its constitution, in so far as they agreed with those of the continental Reformed churches, are truly scriptural and primitive.

A similar work was attempted, and to a considerable extent executed, in the early part of this century, by the Hev. Legh Eichmond, whose pastoral labours and popular writings were so largely blessed. When it was attempted to put down the piety and orthodoxy that grew up so remarkably in the Church of England in the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, by the allegation, that those who held evangelical and Calvinistic views might indeed be Methodists and Dissenters, but could not be regarded as true Churchmen, it was thought proper to bring out the evidence, that the fathers and founders of the Church of England,—the great body of the most influential divines of that church during the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth,—not only held what are commonly reckoned evangelical views concerning the doctrines of grace, but were chiefly decided, though moderate, Calvinists. With this view Mr Richmond undertook, with the assistance of some friends, to edit a republication of “The Fathers of the English Church.” This work was published in portions from 1807 to 1812, it was completed in eight volumes, and exerted an extensive and

wholesome influence. It is, of course, greatly inferior in extent and completeness, and in its literary apparatus, to the works of the Parker Society. But there is one point in which it has the advantage of its successor, *viz.* in going back to the men who suffered for their Protestantism in the reign of Henry VIII. The Parker Society restricted itself, with the exception of Tyndale, to works published after the accession of Edward; whereas Richmond's "66 Fathers of the English Church" gives us the works of Frith, Barnes, Lancelot, Ridley, and others, who were confessors or martyrs under Henry, who are on every account deserving of the highest respect and esteem, and who have left behind them unequivocal evidence that they had embraced the whole substance of the theological views of Augustine and Calvin. .

The Parker Society, by its invaluable series of publications, may be said to have finally established, beyond the possibility of answer, the true theological views and position of the great body of the fathers and founders of the Church of England; to have proved conclusively, that nearly all the Anglican Protestant divines who flourished during the reign of Edward and Elizabeth were, like the Reformers of the continent, Calvinistic in their doctrinal views, and that they did not reckon of much importance, or defend confidently and on high grounds, the points on which the Church of England differed, as to government and worship, from the continental churches. Men who have been trained up in the denial of these positions may continue to adhere to their old prejudices; but we scarcely think it possible that another generation can grow up in the disbelief of them, unless great care be taken to shut out everything like intelligent, independent, and candid investigation.

In the discussions which have taken place in regard to the theological views that prevailed among the founders of the Church of England, and might therefore be supposed to be embodied in her public symbols, Melancthon has usually had much prominence assigned to him, and has been turned to great account, especially by those who were anxious to disprove the opinion upon this subject which we have represented as now fully established. He has been employed, as a sort of medium of probation, for showing that the founders of the Church of England were not Calvinists. It has been strenuously contended, that the men who prepared and established the Anglican symbols had adopted the theological views of Melancthon, and that his views were opposed to those of Calvin and the other Reformers. It is in this way that the republication of Melancthon's works, and the series of works by the Parker Society, are historically connected with each other; so that we must take them both into account in seeking to form a

right estimate of the original theology of the Church of England, and especially of its accordance with that of the generality of the Reformers. Before attempting some explanation of this matter, it may be proper to point out somewhat fully the position, influence, and tendencies of Melancthon, in a theological point of view.

For nearly the whole of Luther's public life, Melancthon, who was one of his colleagues in the University of Wittemberg, was closely and intimately associated with him in all his labours, and undoubtedly rendered important services to the cause of the Reformation and the interests of Protestant truth. It would be easy enough to point out how much benefit resulted to the church, from the influence upon each other, and upon their common cause, of these two men, acting together with the utmost harmony during a long period, though so strikingly different from each other both in talents and character, both in gifts and graces. But we cannot dwell upon this. Melancthon's actions and writings do not afford nearly such abundant materials as Luther's do, that furnish a handle to his enemies to depreciate his character; though his friends, that is, the friends of the Reformation, have been perhaps more perplexed as to the way in which they ought to estimate and represent it. In many respects he was a perfect contrast to Luther. He had none of Luther's vehemence and impetuosity of temperament, none of his presumption and self-confidence. He had less, not only than Luther, but than the generality of men, of irritability and pugnacity; and on all these accounts he both incurred less personal enmity, and has left scarcely any materials in the way of violent invective, intemperate language, rash and exaggerated statements, to be collected by his enemies, and paraded to the injury of his character. There is scarcely anything that gives so much advantage to a man's enemies as the use of intemperate language, or that affords more ready and more plausible materials for exciting a prejudice against him. And as Melancthon did not indulge in this practice, his reputation has not been exposed to the same rude assaults which have been so often directed against Luther's.

A recent Popish publication says that all the Reformers, "with perhaps the exception of Melancthon, were coarse hypocrites;" while the fact is, that there are much more plausible grounds for charging Melancthon with hypocrisy than any one of them,—if by that be meant keeping back his real opinions, and acting as if they were different from what they were.

The character of Melancthon is one which it is indeed very difficult to describe with fairness and accuracy; and, with the materials we possess, it would be an easy matter for an ingenious person to draw two different sketches of him, which

might represent him in very different lights, and which yet might both possess not only plausibility, but a considerable portion of truth. Bossuet has devoted the fifth book of his “History of the Variations” to Melancthon, and has exerted his great skill and ingenuity in exaggerating and aggravating all his weaknesses and infirmities, in putting the worst construction upon all his shortcomings in word and deed, and thus producing the most unfavourable impression of his character and motives; and the various features which he has introduced into the picture, can be all supported by a certain amount of plausible evidence. On the other hand, Scott, in his very valuable continuation of “Milner,” gives his general opinion of Melancthon in the following words:—“On the whole, after reading nearly two thousand of his letters and numerous others of his papers and writings, I confess that I cannot but regard him as one of the loveliest specimens of the grace of God ever exhibited in our fallen nature. And though this may surely be regarded as somewhat of an exaggerated statement, yet we have no doubt that Scott has given such explanations of what seems at first sight most objectionable in Melancthon’s public conduct, especially in regard to the Interim, and has produced such abundant and satisfactory materials in proof of his personal excellence, as to afford conclusive evidence to any person of candour and impartiality, that he was not only a man of genuine piety and decided Christian principle, but that he was eminently distinguished by the unusual degree in which he possessed and exhibited some, though certainly not all, of the graces of the Christian character.

But our object is not to settle what Melancthon’s character was, or to describe it and show it forth. It is rather to indicate some of the lessons which a survey of his character and history may be fitted to suggest to students of theology and to ministers of the gospel. And this, were it to be done at length and in detail, would be a task of considerable difficulty. It brings us at once into contact with what is by far the most serious and important difficulty, in surveying the history of the church and of theological discussions, *viz.* hitting the right medium in judging of men and actions, between bigotry on the one hand and latitudinarianism on the other; between sanctioning, on the one side, a contentious and pugnacious spirit, leading men unnecessarily to disturb the peace of the church by fighting for points which are unimportant in themselves, which divide the friends of Christ’s cause, and which there may be no very obvious and urgent call to contend for in existing circumstances; and sanctioning, on the other, the selfish and cowardly disposition, combined with an inadequate sense of the claims of truth, which so often leads men to decline contending when contending is a duty even at all hazards, under pretence that the

matters in dispute are unimportant. Both tendencies have been very fully exhibited in the history of the church, and in their practical operation have been fraught with the greatest mischief.

The tendency to latitudinarian indifference is usually exhibited when religion is in a low or declining condition. The tendency to unnecessary contention about matters unimportant in themselves, or not coming home to our circumstances, and not requiring at the time to be contended for, is usually a symptom of a somewhat more healthy condition of things,—a condition in which Satan scarcely ventures to attempt, in the first instance, to seduce men into latitudinarian indifference to truth, but seeks rather to take advantage of their zeal for truth, combined, of course, as it is in all men, with the operation of inferior motives, to involve them in unnecessary contentions about unimportant matters, that waste their strength and energy, that lead the love of many to wax cold; and thus tend to bring on that low and declining state of religion in which the opposite policy of tempting men into latitudinarian indifference to truth may be tried with success, and tried with the more success, because of the natural reaction from the low-minded and offensive bigotry that preceded it. On this general ground, we are persuaded that unnecessary contentions about matters which do not deserve, or do not at the time require, to be contended for, is the temptation with which good and pious men, occupying public situations, are most apt to be beset, and against which, therefore, they ought most carefully to guard. Latitudinarian indifference to truth does not very easily find its way into the hearts of men who have any real sense of ch-vine things and of their own responsibility to God, and who are raised by Christian principle above the influence of selfish and worldly motives in their grosser and more palpable forms; whereas there are many worldly and selfish motives, neither so low in themselves, nor so palpable in their ordinary operation, as the love of money, which are very apt to mingle with men's zeal for truth, and tend to involve them in the guilt of being wanton disturbers of the peace, or obstructors of the unity and harmony, of the church. And the instances have always been, and still are, numerous and deplorable, in which a few men, influenced probably in the main by pious and creditable motives, but generally possessing somewhat less than the ordinary share of good sense and sound judgment, and more than the ordinary share of vanity and self-conceit, by taking up and fighting some point, perhaps unimportant in itself, or not lying within the sphere of their responsibility, have gained for themselves some notoriety, and have succeeded in doing a good deal of mischief.

These reflections of course have suggested themselves rather in the way of contrast with those which the case of Melancthon is more directly and immediately fitted to call forth. Melancthon unquestionably exhibited the opposite, or latitudinarian, extreme of compromising or sacrificing the claims of truth; and it is as a warning against this danger, that his example ought to be chiefly and most directly applied. But we have thought it proper to make these observations, that it might not be supposed that the danger of imbibing his spirit, and of following his example, is the only one against which men are called upon to guard, or that there is no risk of good men being tempted to engage in unnecessary contention, or in wanton disturbance of the peace and harmony of the church. The great error and sin of Melancthon was, that in order to put an end to contention, and to promote peace and union, he was tempted, upon a variety of occasions, to do or to give his consent to what plainly amounted to a compromise or sacrifice of scriptural doctrine, —to a sinking or abandoning of a testimony which he was called upon to bear for God's truth. This appeared chiefly in the form of his being willing to slur over important truths in vague and general expressions, which might be adopted by different parties who were not really agreed; and this not for the purpose of ascertaining how far parties who confessedly differed, and who still meant to keep up a distinct testimony upon the points in which they differed, agreed with each other,—for this, in certain circumstances, might be both lawful and expedient, nay, even obligatory, — but with the express and avowed object of the parties uniting together upon the footing of abandoning any other public testimony for truth than the very vague and general one in which they might have come to agree. This of course was the object aimed at in all the conferences and negotiations which he had with the Romanists, and in all the discussions which took place with regard to the Interim. And this is a course that is generally full of peril and beset with temptation—temptation to be unfaithful to the truth to which men have been enabled to attain, and which it is still incumbent upon them to hold fast and to set forth.

No one, indeed, would deny, as an abstract truth, that individuals and churches may have been led in providence to assert and to embody, in their public profession, truths which, though it was at the time a duty to contend for them because they were" openly impugned, are yet not of so much intrinsic importance as to authorize their being made permanently grounds of division and separation; and that, therefore, it is an open question for individuals and churches to consider occasionally, as they may seem called in providence, whether the maintenance of some particular doctrine, as a part of their public

profession, should continue to prevent their union with others with whom, on other points, they are agreed. But though it would be manifestly absurd to deny this as a general position, its practical application is attended with great difficulty, and requires much care and caution, much prudence and circumspection. The practical question in such cases will usually turn mainly upon the point, whether the dropping a truth from a public profession, or wrapping it up in more vague and general terms, really amount, in the circumstances, to a virtual denial of it, or involve in any way a dereliction of the duty which men owe to it. And when the question is brought to this point, there are usually strong temptations, covered over with plausible pretences, which are likely to lead men to compromise truths which they ought to have maintained.

Melancthon, probably, would never have been prevailed upon to renounce or deny, in words, any of the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession; but he was tempted, again and again, to do what, in all fair and honest construction, amounted to a virtual renunciation or denial of them, though, no doubt, he did not regard it in that light. And, indeed, the great lesson which his conduct is fitted to impress upon us is this, that in certain combinations of circumstances, there is great danger that even good men may be tempted, from a desire of peace and unity, to compromise the truth of God which had been committed to them, and that against this danger, and everything that might lead to it, we are required most carefully to guard. There can be no doubt that an unscriptural longing for peace and unity—for there is such a thing, springing of course not from pure Christian love, but from the infusion of some carnal and worldly motives and influences, or from mere natural temperament—has, on a variety of occasions, led to corruption and compromise of God's truth, on the part both of individuals and churches. And we are thus reminded that, in so far as concerns the discharge of the duty which we owe to God's truth, we are surrounded with dangers upon the right hand and the left, and that we have much need to examine carefully the motives by which we may be influenced in these matters, and to seek and depend upon divine guidance and direction—practising, indeed, because of the abounding difficulties of the subject, much forbearance in judging of others, and exercising much rigour in judging of ourselves.

The grievous shortcomings of Melancthon in this matter, his being so often led into what amounted to a virtual betrayal or compromise of truth, have been usually ascribed to the timidity of his disposition. But this is to be taken with some explanation. There is no reason to believe that Melancthon dreaded any temporal consequences to himself, or that he was influenced by a regard to any

selfish or worldly considerations in the gross and open form in which they usually present themselves to men's minds—in other words, by anything really inconsistent with moral integrity. He was afraid of the evils of contention, and he was afraid of injuring the cause which he loved; and these motives, good in themselves, but operating with unreasonable and undue force, and leading to an inadequate sense of the claims of divine truth, and of the responsibility connected with its full and honest maintenance, and tending to exclude a due measure of reliance upon God's providence and promises, led him into those compromises by which he grievously injured truth and damaged his own reputation. In this way he has become useful to the church, partly, at least, by exhibiting to future generations a striking warning, that even good men, who are raised above the influence of fear and selfishness in their gross and palpable forms, may yet, through certain weaknesses and infirmities, be led to do much injury to the cause which they sincerely desire, and would be willing at all merely personal sacrifices, to promote.

Luther has given a most interesting testimony to Melancthon's superiority to fear and worldliness, in all matters that concerned himself personally, while he thought him unnecessarily and weakly anxious about the public cause; and we have also a similiar testimony from Calvin, in a letter addressed to Melancthon himself, while faithfully expostulating with him about his conduct in the adiaphoristic controversy—a letter which is most honourable to its author, while it does ample justice to him to whom it was addressed. "Though I am confidently persuaded you never were driven by the fear of death to turn aside a hairbreadth from the line of duty, yet it is possible your mind may be open to the influence of fear of a different description. I know how you shrink from the charge of a repulsive rigidity and stiffness. But remember the servant of Christ must make light when duty requires it of his reputation, as well as his life. Not that I am so little acquainted with you, or so unjust to you, as to think you, like vainglorious and ambitious men, dependent upon the breath of popular applause. But I doubt not you are sometimes subject to compunctions visitings of this kind:—'Is it the part of a wise and considerate man to divide the church for trifles? Is not peace so precious, that it deserves to be purchased at the price of some inconveniences? What madness is it so tenaciously to hold to every punctilio as to risk the whole substance of the gospel?' I suspect that you were formerly too much affected by such suggestions urged upon you by artful persons, and I candidly state my apprehensions to prevent the divine greatness of soul which I know belongs to you being now restrained from freely exerting itself. I would rather suffer along with you a thousand deaths, than see you



survive a surrender of the truth. Perhaps my fears are vain, but you cannot too carefully guard against giving the wicked any occasion of triumph through the faults of your temper.”

Melancthon’s weaknesses and infirmities originated partly in his intellectual tendencies and capacities, though even these, it should ever be remembered, are very much under the control of moral causes, and are therefore comprehended within the sphere of moral responsibility. He seems to have had considerable difficulty in making up his own opinion, clearly and decidedly, upon great questions, especially those which were fraught with important practical bearings; and this appeared very clearly in the history of his theological sentiments. Melancthon adopted, generally speaking, the theology of Luther; and, perhaps, it may be said that the chief, if not the only real service which he rendered to the cause of sound Christian theology was, that he explained and defended the leading tenets of Luther with much dexterity, perspicuity, and elegance, abstaining commonly from those exaggerated and paradoxical statements, by which Luther sometimes gave unnecessary offence and called forth needless prejudice, and that he thus contributed largely to their reception among the educated and intelligent classes. This was the service for which Melancthon was specially fitted; this was the work which he performed; and, in performing it, he became the instrument of conferring important benefits upon the church, and greatly advancing the cause of scriptural truth. This statement, however, must be restricted in its application to the doctrines which Melancthon continued decidedly and permanently to hold, among those great truths which Luther was chiefly instrumental in restoring to the church. And there are some points in Luther’s system of theology, in regard to which it is not easy to determine with certainty whether Melancthon continued really to hold them or not. There is, indeed, good reason to fear that his dubious and uncertain course in regard to some doctrinal points, tended, in the long run, to favour the introduction into the Lutheran church of a much more lax and unsound system of theology. He seems to have attained at length to sound and scriptural views on the sacramentarian controversy, and to have abandoned Luther’s doctrine of consubstantiation, or the corporal presence of Christ in the Eucharist. But he never had the courage and manliness, even after Luther’s death, to make a public and explicit declaration of his change of sentiment, though Calvin faithfully expostulated with him on the impropriety of his conduct. Though, however, his opinions upon this point tended to a much closer approximation to the standard of truth, the tendency upon other points of still greater importance seems rather to have been in the opposite direction.

His principal works, of a more strictly theological kind, are the "Apology for the Confession of Augsburg," and the "Loci Communes." The Apology may be justly regarded as a very valuable and satisfactory vindication of the leading Protestant doctrines, in so far as they occupied a prominent place in Luther's teaching, and had been set forth in the Augsburg Confession, not directly including, however, what are usually reckoned the peculiarities of the Calvinistic system; though Luther certainly held these peculiar doctrines, and there is no good reason to think that he ever abandoned them. Melancthon, so far as we can judge from his Apology, seems for the time to have been benefited rather than injured by the perilous negotiations in which he was involved at the diet of Augsburg in 1530, and in which he showed such deplorable weakness; and this work contains no evidence of what has sometimes been alleged, *viz.* that Luther's controversy with Erasmus led Melancthon to modify some of the views which he had formerly held, but which Luther continued to maintain, as to the natural bondage or servitude of the human will in reference to everything spiritually good.

The first edition of his Loci Communes was published in 1521, when he was only twenty-four years of age. He published a second, greatly enlarged and altered, in 1535; and again a third, with considerable, though less important, changes, in 1543; and it is the alterations introduced into these different editions, that have occasioned the chief difficulties and discussions as to the real sentiments of Melancthon upon some doctrinal questions. In the first edition he had maintained the very highest predestinarian and necessitarian tenets. He there asserted, that "since all things happened necessarily according to the divine predestination, there is no such thing as liberty in our wills;" that the Scriptures teach that all things happen necessarily;" "they take away liberty from our wills by the necessity of predestination." This was a doctrine which Calvin never taught, and which forms no necessary part of the Calvinistic system, though it has been held by some Calvinistic theologians. Calvin held, and the Westminster Standards expressly teach, that man, as originally created, had a liberty of will, which fallen man has not; and consequently he held, that any necessity or bondage which he ascribed to the human will as it is, was based, not upon man's mere relation to God as a dependent creature,—not upon God's predestination, or His foreordaining whatsoever comes to pass, and His certainly executing His decrees in providence, although He does so,—but upon the entire depravity which has been superinduced upon his nature by the fall. The high doctrine which Melancthon originally taught, he seems to have soon abandoned, as it is wholly expunged from the two subsequent editions of the Commonplaces. But

there is good reason to doubt, whether in abandoning this doctrine, which Calvin never held, he did not cast off along with it some principles which are plainly taught in the word of God, and which have been generally held by Calvinistic divines. Melancthon, indeed, asserted in all the editions of his *Commonplaces*, and seems, upon the whole, to have maintained consistently through life, the doctrine which was held in common by Luther and Calvin, as to the entire depravity of human nature and the utter impotency of the will of man, as he is, to any spiritual good; although (for there is scarcely anything about Melancthon in which we are not annoyed with deductions and drawbacks) there are not wanting some expressions in the later editions, which have afforded plausible grounds to those who took the unscriptural side in what was called the Synergistic controversy that disturbed the Lutheran Church chiefly after his death, for alleging that he was not wholly opposed to some sort of co-operation or synergism of the human will with the gracious agency of God, even in the first movements towards regeneration. Calvin published, in 1543, contemporaneously with the last edition of Melancthon's *Commonplaces*, his "*Defensio sanse et orthodoxe doctrine de Servitute et liberatione liumani arbitrii,*" and prefixed to it a dedication to Melancthon, in which he spoke of him in the most friendly and eulogistic terms; and Melancthon, in acknowledging it, says that he agreed with Calvin's views upon these subjects, but still with a qualification, which, with a man of his temperament, so unwilling on some occasions to speak out his mind fully and openly, might cover or conceal differences not immaterial. After giving a brief summary of his opinions upon these subjects, he adds, "*et quidem scio hsec cum tuis congruere, sed sunt παχύτερα et ad usum accommodata.*" We do not estimate the authority of Melancthon so highly as to be very anxious to get his testimony in favour of Calvin's views; but it is only fair to Melancthon himself, to give due weight to a statement of agreement which is creditable to him, especially as nothing has been produced from his works sufficiently explicit to prove, that he ever materially deviated from scriptural truth upon these important points.

There is reason to fear that he abandoned, or, at least, that he became utterly afraid to state distinctly and explicitly, the doctrine of predestination, or unconditional personal election to eternal life, as taught in Scripture, and held and expounded by Augustine and Calvin. The section upon predestination in the later editions of his *Commonplaces*, may be regarded, with some plausibility, either as a specimen of great confusion, or of studied and careful reticence; but in no other light can it be justly represented. And in either case, considering what he had taught upon this subject in the first edition, there is reason to fear that his

timidity, his tendency to shrink from decided views upon great and difficult questions involving important practical bearings, had led him, in his heart, to abandon an important scriptural truth, though he had not the courage openly and fully to admit and proclaim the conclusion to which he had come, if, indeed, he had come to any very definite conclusion regarding it.

With respect to the great doctrine of justification by faith through the imputed righteousness of Christ,—the establishment of which was the distinguishing service which Luther was honoured to render to the cause of truth and religion,—it is but justice to Melancthon to say, that in whatever vague, general, and ambiguous terms he might have been tempted to express it, in order to promote peace, and effect an adjustment with the Church of Home, his own actual sentiments regarding it seem never to have varied, or to have been turned aside from scriptural truth. It was asserted, indeed, by a body of Lutheran theologians in 1569, a few years after his death, that on one occasion he had used this expression, “quod proecipue fide justificamur,” which was certainly a deplorable and shameful compromise of the sola fides, for which Luther and he had so long and so strenuously contended; but then, it is added in the way of palliation, that this was done “tempore magne angustise et metus,” and that he afterwards condemned it himself. His works, however, steadily and consistently maintain the scriptural doctrine of justification, and he has rendered no unimportant service to the cause of Christian truth by his defence of this fundamental doctrine of the Reformation. Bossuet, indeed, after having laboured to prove that Melancthon’s opinions upon most points were loose and fluctuating, held with no firmness and stability, is candid enough to admit, that there was one point on which he did not vary, and which formed an impassable barrier between him and the Church of Home,—the only thing, indeed, as Bossuet alleges, which fixed him firmly upon the Protestant side,—and this was the doctrine of justification by imputed righteousness.

Whatever, then, may have been Melancthon’s personal excellences as a man and a Christian, and whatever his services to the cause of Protestant truth, we see about him very plain indications of tendencies, which should impress us with a sense of the great danger of imbibing his spirit, and following his example, in matters connected with the public interest of God’s cause. He had about him weaknesses and infirmities which tended to lead him, first, to adopt erroneous and defective views of divine truth; and second, to fail in doing full justice in the face of dangers and difficulties, even to what he still believed to be true. Our first duty, so far as concerns the public interest of God’s cause in the world, is to

find out the truth which is sanctioned by His word, and then to assert, maintain, and defend it so far as we have any call or opportunity to do so,—guarding with special care against any course of action which might be fairly held to involve, directly or by implication, a renunciation or denial of any part of it. And these are not duties in which the example of Melancthon is fitted to afford us much direct assistance, though it may serve as a beacon to warn us against dangers and temptations that might lead to come short in the discharge of them. There is much about Melancthon, the influence of which is fitted to add grace and beauty to our Christian profession, to lead us to adorn the doctrine of our God and Saviour, and to commend it to the favourable acceptance of others; but these things, however valuable, are of less intrinsic importance, than the great duty of ascertaining and holding up the whole truth of God, and of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

The question as to the precise views of Melancthon upon some of the theological topics to which we have now referred, has been pretty fully discussed in this country, in connection with the controversy as to the doctrinal sense of the Articles of the Church of England, and the opinions of those who framed them. It is very certain that, during the whole of the long reign of Elizabeth,—in many respects the most important and interesting period in the history of the Church of England,—the great body of her divines, and of her ecclesiastical authorities, including every name of eminence to be found in her communion, were Calvinists. It is equally certain that, for the last two centuries, a decided majority of her clergy have been anti-Calvinists, while there has always been a respectable minority who adhered to the theology of Augustine and the Reformers. As the Articles have continued unchanged for 300 years, while the theological views that prevailed in the church have varied so much, this has led at different times to a great deal of discussion as to what the Articles really mean, or w'ere intended to mean, and as to what subscription to them may be fairly held to imply. Calvinists generally have contended that the natural, obvious sense of the Articles is Calvinism,—moderate Calvinism indeed, cautiously and temperately expressed,—that the great body of those who prepared the Articles in Edward's time, as well as of those who adopted and established them in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, with very little change, and exactly as they now stand, were Calvinists,— and that, on all these grounds, Calvinists need have no hesitation in subscribing them. The more timid and charitable Calvinists have been disposed to admit, that there is an opening left for men subscribing the Articles who had not embraced the peculiarities of Calvinism; while many profess their inability to conceive how this can be done, without putting the Articles to a degree of

straining and torture that is unwarrantable and dangerous. The Arminians, of course, labour to show, that there is nothing in the Articles to preclude them from subscribing them; and the more intelligent, conscientious, and modest among them, scarcely venture to take higher ground than this,—not presuming to deny the perfect warrantableness of Calvinists entering the ministry of the Church of England, and undertaking all the obligations which this implies. Some of the more reckless among them, as for instance Bishop Tomline, Archdeacon Daubeny, and Archbishop Laurence, have ventured to assert that the Articles explicitly contradict the Calvinistic doctrine, and of course should shut out all who adhere to it. But the more moderate Arminians have generally leant rather to the side of merely asking admission for themselves, without pretending to exclude their opponents. Bishop Burnet was preeminently qualified to judge on such a question, both in its historical and theological aspects; and he, though himself a decided Arminian, has candidly admitted, that “the 17th Article seems to be framed according to St Austin’s doctrines,” that “it is very probable that those who penned it meant that the decree was absolute;” and that “the Calvinists have less occasion for scruple (in subscribing it than the Arminians) since the Article does seem more plainly to favour them.”

The aspects in which this subject obviously presents itself are not such as to reflect much credit upon the Church of England. It is a very awkward and painful thing to see so much controversy going on among themselves, as to what those Articles which they have all subscribed really mean, or were intended to mean. Some contend that they teach Calvinism; others, that they teach Arminianism; others, that they teach both; and others again, that they teach neither, but some other scheme of doctrine different from both. Sometimes they denounce one another as dishonest in subscribing the Articles in a sense of which they do not fairly admit; and sometimes they unite in lauding the wisdom and moderation of their church, in leaving an open door for the admission of men of different and opposite opinions. It is quite possible that churches may carry to an unwise and unreasonable extent, the number and minuteness of the doctrinal definitions which they embody in their symbolical books, and to which they require conformity. But there is no ground whatever to believe that the framers of the English Articles were in the least influenced by any such wise and moderate views as have been sometimes ascribed to them; the Articles were expressly and avowedly intended “for avoiding diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion;” and a considerable number of them are occupied with topics which are comparatively unimportant in a general summary of Christian doctrine.

The way in which the controversy has been conducted upon the anti-Calvinistic side, has certainly not been creditable to most of those who have taken part in it. In general, those who have denied the Calvinism of the English Articles have displayed a low standard, both of knowledge of the subject and of fair dealing. The study of systematic theology has always been greatly neglected in the Church of England, partly, perhaps, because of the equivocal character of the theology of her Articles, and of the earnest desire of many of her clergy to make her theology more equivocal than it is; and without a thorough acquaintance with systematic theology, both in its substance and its history, men are very incompetent to discuss the questions, whether the Articles are Calvinistic or Arminian, or both, or neither. Such questions cannot of course be intelligently or satisfactorily handled, except by men who thoroughly understand what Calvinism is, and what Arminianism is; and this cannot be attained without a real familiarity with the works of the ablest men who have discussed these subjects on both sides, and at different periods. A man may be an Arminian though he is not aware of it, and even honestly, though ignorantly, denies it; and this ignorance and confusion as to what Calvinism is, and as to what Arminianism is as opposed to it, are plainly exhibited by the late Mr Stanley Faber, and by Mr E. Harold Browne, the present Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. There is, indeed, good reason to believe, that there prevails among the clergy of the Church of England, a great want of intelligent acquaintance even with the status quaestionis in the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians. We would not hesitate to undertake to prove, that the same charge might be established against almost all who have at any time professed to show that the English Articles are not Calvinistic. We are not, indeed, inclined to speak with much severity of those who merely, plead, that while they cannot see satisfactory grounds for embracing the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism, they, at the same time, do not see that these doctrines are so plainly and explicitly set forth in the Articles, as to make it impossible for them to subscribe them. This ground may be maintained with considerable plausibility, and when maintained without any palpable violations of integrity and propriety, would not exclude its supporters from a fair claim to respect. But we cannot make the same admission in regard to those men who boldly aver that the Articles shut out Calvinism, and that they cannot be honestly subscribed by Calvinists.

Before proceeding to make some observations upon the subject of the theology of the Church of England, it may be proper to give some notices of the literature of the question, or of the leading features in the history of the very interesting controversial discussions which have been carried on regarding it.

That during the whole reign of Elizabeth, and the greater part of that of James, Calvinism prevailed almost universally among the men of ability and learning, of station and influence, in the Church of England, and was then generally regarded as being most fully accordant with its authorized symbols, has been incontrovertibly established, by evidence multifarious in kind and superabundant in degree. This is proved by the whole history of the proceedings connected with the Lambeth Articles and the cases of Baro and Barret in 1595, the Irish Articles in 1615, and the Synod of Dort in 1618-19. The discussion of this topic as a subject of public controversy, seems to have commenced with the proceedings in the case of Dr Richard Montague, one of the leading agents of Archbishop Laud, in introducing Tractarianism and Arminianism. His work entitled "Appello-Caesarem" was published in 1625. It was intended to defend himself against the charge, founded upon a previous work, of leaning towards Arminianism and Popery; and it attempted to show that the Arminian and semi-Popish views objected to, were not contradicted by anything in the authorized formularies of the church. The House of Commons, which at that time was very theological and very sound in its theology, passed a vote condemning his Appeal, as tending to bring in Popery and Arminianism, in opposition to the religion by law established. But what was of more importance so far as the interests of truth are concerned, the work was formally and elaborately answered by Dr George Carleton, then Bishop of Chichester, who had been a few years before the head of the English delegates sent to the Synod of Dort, and had proved himself fully worthy of so honourable a position. Dr Carleton's work was published in 1626, and is entitled "Examination of those things wherein the author of the late Appeal taketh the doctrines of the Pelagians and Arminians to be the doctrines of the Church of England." The work is one of much interest and value, both from its author and the position it occupies in the controversy. It is remarkable, among other things, for the distinct assertion, that there had been, up till that time, no real difference in doctrinal matters between the Conformists and the Puritans. Carleton died in 1628, and through Laud's influence Montague was appointed to succeed him in the see of Chichester.

Arminianism continued to advance, and, in 1630, Prynne, the famous lawyer, published his "Anti-Arminianism, or the Church of England's old antithesis to new Arminianism." This is a vast collection of documentary evidence to prove, that from the earliest times, and especially since the commencement of the Reformation in the time of Henry VIII., the Church of England had been decidedly opposed to Arminian views, and had professed the great principles of Augustinian or Calvinistic doctrine. This work gave mortal offence to Laud and



his faction, who were now all-powerful, and was understood to be the principal cause of the barbarous punishment which was soon afterwards inflicted upon Prynne, though his *Histriomastix* was made the pretence for it. It is a remarkable instance of providential retribution, that Prynne became ultimately the chief instrument of accomplishing “Canterbury’s doom,” as he called one of his books against Laud, and bringing him to the scaffold. Prynne was a man of great research and industry, as well as thorough integrity. But he had not a well-balanced or discriminating mind. He had a much greater power of swallowing than of digesting. He was in the habit rather of numbering than weighing his proofs and testimonies. His “*Anti-Arminianism*,” therefore, like his other works, contains a prodigious storehouse of materials in the way of quotations and references, much more than sufficient in the gross to establish his leading position, but requiring some caution and sifting in the particular application of them. He declares that up till the time when he wrote he could mention only five men who had come forward publicly to defend Arminianism. These were Barret and Baro, —whose cases were mixed up with the history of the Lambeth Articles, and the proceedings against whom sufficiently proved that, in the last decade of the sixteenth century, the whole learning and influence of the Church of England were Calvinistic,—Thompson, who, he says, “was a dissolute, ebrious, profane, luxurious English-Dutchman,” and who, in 1614, published a treatise against the perseverance of the saints, which was answered by Dr Hobert Abbot, Bishop of Salisbury,—Montague, already mentioned, successively Bishop of Chichester and Norwich,—and Dr Thomas Jackson, a man of a much higher class than any of them. Prynne’s testimonies certainly require to be winnowed, but we have no doubt that he has produced and indicated materials, which, taken in cumulo, are amply sufficient to prove ten times over, that during the whole century intervening between the time when he wrote and the first dawning of the Reformation under Henry VIII., the prevailing current of opinion with all competent judges among the clergy of the Church of England was Calvinistic, as opposed to Arminian,—and that the fundamental principles of Calvinism, though cautiously and temperately expressed, were embodied, and were intended to be embodied, in the church’s authorized formularies.

The next work in the order of time is the great storehouse of materials on the Arminian side. It is by Dr Peter Heylin, a worshipper and tool of Laud, whose life he wrote, under the designation of *Cyprianus Anglicus*. Heylin’s work was published in 1659, and is entitled, “*Historia Quinqu-Articularis, or a Declaration of the Judgment of the Western Churches, and more particularly of the Church of England, in the five controverted points reproached in these last times by the*

name of Arminianism.” It contains an elaborate discussion of most of the materials bearing upon the question, as to the original theology of the Protestant Church of England. The materials are discussed and applied with a good deal of ingenuity and boldness, and the work is in many respects well fitted to make an impression, because of its author’s apparently full knowledge of the subject, and the confidence with which he takes up his positions. Heylin had very much the same intellectual defects as Prynne, and in addition, we fear, he laboured under more serious infirmities as a thorough and unscrupulous partisan. He had read a great deal, but he was very imperfectly acquainted with theology properly so called, and Archbishop Usher once said of him that he should be sent to learn his catechism. He has been convicted of having exhibited in this and in his other works a great deal of blundering and misrepresentation. So certain and notorious is this, that Archdeacon Blackburne, in the “Confessional,” did not hesitate to describe him as “a man lost to all sense of truth and modesty whenever the interests or claims of the church came in question and that the late Dr M’Crie, after exposing a strange display of ignorance made by Bishop Coplestone, adds, “A modern writer who could trust Heylin as an authority, deserved to fall into such ridiculous blunders.”

This work of Heylin was answered by Henry Hickman, a man of very superior learning and ability, and one of the ministers ejected by the Bartholomew Act of 1662. His reply was published in 1673, and entitled, “*Historia Quinqu-  
Articularis Exar-ticulata, or Animadversiones on Dr Heylin’s Quinquarticular  
History.*” This work of Hickman’s is a very masterly and effective exposure of Heylin’s incompetency, especially in the more theological departments of the argument, and it contains within a short compass a large amount of accurate and important information, embodied in a very terse and vigorous, though unpolished, style. It ought to have deprived Heylin of all respect and influence, and must have done so if it had been read. But it does not seem to have ever attained any considerable circulation, and, in consequence, the great body of the English clergy continued, like Coplestone, to believe Heylin, and to “trust in him as an authority.”

The next occasion on which the question of the Calvinism of the English Articles was discussed, was when it was brought, somewhat incidentally, into the Arian controversy. In 1721 Dr Waterland published a work entitled, “*The Case of Arian Subscription considered,*” in answer to the attempt which had been made by Dr Samuel Clarke to show, that those who, like himself, denied the true and proper divinity of the Son, could honestly assent to the formularies

of the church. Dr Sykes, who was one of Clarke's leading supporters, and who showed himself ever ready and willing to defend any bad cause that needed support, published a reply to this, called, "The Case of Subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles considered." In this pamphlet he laid down the position, that the Articles are, and were intended by their compilers to be, Calvinistic; and that Dr Clarke and his friends could as clearly prove that Arians could honestly subscribe them, as Dr Waterland and his friends could prove that Arminians could do so. This was rather galling as an argumentum ad hominem, and Waterland published a "Supplement to the Case of Arian Subscription," in which he attempted to answer this and the other arguments of Sykes, while Sykes rejoined in a Reply to the Supplement. Waterland certainly has not made much of the point raised by Sykes about the Calvinism of the Articles; he has done little more than give a brief summary of the materials collected by Heylin; and this was rather low work for a man of Waterland's high and well-merited reputation. Sykes, who was no more a Calvinist than a Trinitarian, has certainly not proved that an Arian subscriber can make out as plausible a case as an Arminian one; but he has proved, and in this he has defeated his antagonist, that the fathers and founders of the Church of England were Calvinists, and intended the Articles to be taken in a Calvinistic sense. Waterland, indeed, in discussing this point, gives plain indications of not knowing well what to say, or where to plant his foot. He sets out with boldly averring—"For my own part, I think it has been abundantly proved that our Articles, Liturgy, etc., are not Calvinistical." But after giving a summary of this abundant proof, and having had to face the 17th Article, he winds up with this very lame and impotent conclusion—"the presumption rather lies against Calvinism;" "I am rather of opinion that the Article leans to the antiCalvinian persuasion."

This is not very encouraging, but most who have since discussed this subject on the same side have referred to and commended Waterland's pamphlet, apparently for the purpose of giving their cause the prestige of his well-earned reputation for great ability and learning, and for invaluable services to truth in defending the proper and supreme divinity of our Saviour.

About fifty years after this, a variety of causes led to the renewal of discussions concerning the meaning and object of the English Articles, such as, the publication of "Blackburne's Confessional," advocating very loose and unsound views on the general subject of creeds and confessions, but at the same time maintaining that Sykes had conclusively established against Waterland the Calvinism of the Articles,—the application to Parliament in 1772 by many

clergymen to be released from the obligations of subscription,—and the expulsion of the “Methodist” students from Oxford. Sir Richard Hill, brother of Rowland, defended the expelled students, by showing that their opinions on doctrinal subjects were the same as those of the founders of the Church of England, in a pamphlet entitled, “*Pietas Oxoniensis*;” and when Dr Nowell published a reply to this, it called forth, in 1769, from Toplady, then a young man, but of very fine talents and of great promise, a crushing answer, entitled, “The Church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianism, and the case of Arminian subscription particularly considered.” This he afterwards expanded into a regular treatise, which he published in 1774, in two volumes, entitled, “*Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England*.” This work is highly creditable to his talents and learning, and is perhaps, upon the whole, the most complete and satisfactory book we have, devoted to this subject. He is perfectly conclusive in discussing all the main topics that bear upon the settlement of the question, but he gets rather beyond his depth in dealing with what he calls the Arminianism of the Church of Rome, a subject with which he was evidently acquainted very imperfectly.

The only work of that period, on the other side, which has attained to any standing, or is now known, is Dr Winchester’s “*Dissertation on the 17th Article*,” published in 1773, a temperate and sensible work, though not displaying much either of strength or ingenuity in managing the cause. It was republished in 1803, both separately and in the “*Churchman’s Remembrancer*.”

We have already had occasion to refer to the revival of the discussion about the historic Calvinism of the Church of England, in the end of the last century and the beginning of the present, in consequence of the great advance which then took place in Christian piety and orthodoxy. In reply to the numerous and virulent attacks then made on the evangelical clergy, Mr Overton published, in 1801, a volume entitled, “*The True Churchman ascertained, or an Apology for those of the Regular Clergy of the Establishment who are sometimes called Evangelical Ministers*.” This is an able and elaborate work, and certainly establishes satisfactorily, that those of the evangelical clergy who were moderate Calvinists held the same doctrinal views as the fathers and founders of the Church of England. In 1803, Archdeacon Daubeny, some of whose statements in his previous publications had been refuted by Overton, produced a bulky reply to the “*True Churchman*,” in an octavo volume of nearly 500 pages, to which he gave a title, framed after a model which was common enough among the older controversialists, but which modern civilisation has exploded. It was called,

“Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae, in which some of the false reasonings, incorrect statements, and palpable misrepresentations, in a publication entitled, etc., are pointed out.” Overton’s “True Churchman” is singularly free from “false reasonings, incorrect statements, and palpable misrepresentations;” while Daubeny’s *Vindiciae* superabounds in these beauties, as was conclusively proved in two works published in 1805, the one entitled, “Candid Examination of Daubeny’s *Vindiciae*,” republished from the *Christian Observer*, and the other by Mr Overton, entitled, “Four Letters to the Editor of the *Christian Observer*.”

In 1802, a pamphlet was published, chiefly occasioned by Overton’s work, entitled, “The Articles of the Church of England proved not to be Calvinistic,” by Dr Kipling, Dean of Peterborough, and Deputy Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. This production has been very highly commended, but it is, we think, a singularly poor affair. Its leading feature is the adduction of statements and quotations as antiCalvinistic, which no intelligent Calvinist would hesitate to adopt. As this is really a prominent characteristic of most of the works on the same side, it may be proper to signalize it, by quoting Overton’s description of it as exhibited by Kipling, and in contrast with the applause with which his work was received.

“No reasoning can be more futile than that of Dr Kipling upon this subject. It is capable of the fullest demonstration, that, by the same process, the learned Dean might prove the complete antiCalvinism of Calvin himself. It is a fact, which nothing but the most perfect disingenuity or ignorance of the subject can controvert, that nine-tenths at least of the arguments extracted from our Articles and Liturgy, by which the Dean endeavours to prove the utter repugnancy of these forms to the theology of Calvin, may also be extracted from Calvin’s own writings. Yet this reasoning of Dr Kipling is continually represented as ‘demonstrative and incontrovertible;’ as possessing ‘uncommon merit;’ as ‘invincible’ and not less clear than ‘mathematical demonstration itself;’ as having ‘proved to demonstration’ the point he had to establish; as ‘decisive’ on the question, and such as ought to ‘set it at rest for ever.’ These verdicts, too, the reader will perceive, are pronounced by the professed guardians of truth and religion, by writers who highly extol each other as learned divines!”

The “Bampton Lecture” for 1804 was preached by Dr Richard Laurence, then Regius Professor of Hebrew in Oxford, and afterwards Archbishop of Cashel, and it is entitled, “An Attempt to illustrate those Articles of the Church of England which the Calvinists improperly consider as Calvinistic.” Dr Laurence

was a man of superior learning and ability; he has made some valuable contributions to our theological literature; his “Bampton Lecture” contains a great deal of interesting and valuable matter, it has been republished repeatedly—the fourth and last edition having come out in 1853—and it is now justly regarded as the standard work on the Arminian side. On these grounds it will be needful for us to notice it more fully. At present we merely mention it in its chronological order.

The controversy was renewed by the publication, in 1811, of Bishop Tomline’s well-known work, “The Refutation of Calvinism.” He had given, in a previous work, “Elements of Christian Theology,” the common Arminian interpretation of the Articles; and in the “Refutation” he gives fully the argument against Calvinism, not only from Scripture and the Fathers, but also from the history and formularies of the Church of England. This work was at one time prodigiously commended. Indeed, we have a recollection of having once looked into a book by an Episcopalian clergyman, in which it was extolled as one among the four or five greatest works (“Butler’s Analogy” being mentioned as one) the Church of England has produced. The book has long since found its level, and is now regarded as a very mediocre production, displaying considerable diligence in the collection of materials, but an utter want either of ability or of fairness in the application of them. Scott’s “Remarks” upon it are a full and conclusive, though from the plan pursued of following his opponent step by step, a somewhat tedious exposure of the “Refutation;” and they establish the great superiority, in all respects, of the rector over his bishop, of the inmate of the humble parsonage of Aston Sandford over the occupant of the venerable palace of Buckden.

The “Inquiry into the Doctrines of the Reformation, and of the United Church of England and Ireland, respecting the ruin and recovery of Mankind,” published in 1814, by the Rev. W. B. Mathias of Dublin, is a valuable compilation, consisting almost wholly of extracts, and turning to good account, so far as the “United Church” is concerned, the writings of its fathers and founders, which had been made accessible by Leigh Richmond’s work formerly referred to.

This brings us down to the present day, when the discussion about the theological views of the founders and the formularies of the Church of England has been renewed, and in a somewhat different aspect, in connection with the controversy about baptismal regeneration. Dr Goode, now Dean of Ripon, to whose great learning and ability as an opponent of Tractarianism and a defender of evangelical truth, we have repeatedly borne a cordial testimony, published, in

1849, a most valuable and important work on this subject, entitled, "The Doctrine of the Church of England as to the Effects of Baptism in the case of Infants,"—the great general object of which was to show, that those who rejected the Tractarian doctrine of baptismal regeneration might conscientiously undertake all the obligations connected with the ministry of the church, including of course the use of the baptismal service. One leading argument which he employs, in order to establish this general position, is in substance this: No one who embraces the Calvinistic system of theology can consistently believe the High Church doctrine of baptismal regeneration; the great body of the fathers and founders of the Church of England, the men who prepared her formularies, her Articles and Liturgy, in the reign of Edward, and established them, with scarcely any change and almost precisely as we now have them, in the reign of Elizabeth, were Calvinists; and, consequently, there can be no inconsistency between a reception of these formularies and a rejection of the Tractarian doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

The different positions which go to make up this argument, Dr Goode has discussed with great talent and erudition. We are not called upon to express an opinion upon the question, whether he has fully established his general conclusion. We have not, indeed, examined the whole matter with sufficient care, to entitle us to pronounce a judgment upon the main question involved. But we have no doubt that he has conclusively established the position, that the great body of the leading English divines, both during the short reign of Edward and the long reign of Elizabeth, were Calvinists, and of course would not admit anything into the public formularies of the church which was inconsistent with Calvinism. To the proof of that position he has devoted the third chapter of his work, consisting of above one hundred pages, "On the school of theology to which our Reformers and early divines belonged." He has not contented himself, as most controversialists on such questions do, with merely borrowing the materials provided by his predecessors, but has subjected the whole of the old materials to a fresh and independent examination; and has also turned to good account some very important new materials, furnished by the "Zurich Letters," now for the first time published by the Parker Society. He has not spent much time in refuting the attempts of the Arminians to establish their position. He is occupied mainly with adducing the direct positive evidence on the other side; and that evidence is such as to be plainly and palpably unanswerable. With all competent and fair-minded men, it must now be held to be settled, that the Reformers and the early divines of the Church of England belonged to the Calvinistic school of theology. It follows from this that there can be nothing in

her formularies which does not admit, at least, of a Calvinistic interpretation; while it may still be a question, to what extent they have introduced their Calvinism into the formularies, and thus in a sense imposed it upon the church.

Archdeacon Wilberforce, who had not then joined the Church of Rome, published an answer to Dr Goode's book, under the title of "The Doctrine of Holy Baptism," displaying, as all his works do, very considerable learning and ingenuity. He does not give much prominence to the consideration of the question, whether the founders of the Church of England were Calvinists or not. He in a great measure evades this question, and considers it his best policy to rest directly and immediately upon the position, that the formularies, as they stand, do clearly and certainly teach baptismal regeneration—teach it so clearly and certainly, that no indirect or collateral evidence can affect the proof of this doctrine being taught in them. He asserts, indeed, that the formularies of the Church of England were not drawn up by Calvinists; but for the proof of this, so far as the Articles are concerned, he just refers to Laurence's "Bampton Lectures and in regard to the mass of conclusive evidence adduced by Dr Goode on the other side, he can scarcely be said even to look at it. He protests "against the injustice with which Goode treats Archbishop Laurence" and opposes to his "hostile judgment" a high eulogium pronounced upon the "Bampton Lectures" by Mr Stanley Faber, in his work on "Primitive Election." Mr Faber has not shown such a discriminating judgment, or such a full and comprehensive knowledge of the bearings and relations of the subject of which he treats, as to entitle his opinion, upon any topic involved in the discussion, to much respect. But still Laurence was a man of very superior learning and ability. His "Bampton Lecture" is the most learned and elaborate attempt that has ever been made to show that the Articles of the Church of England are not Calvinistic, and it seems to be now generally regarded by the Arminians as their standard defence. In addition to the commendations of it by Faber and Wilberforce, it is represented as satisfactory and conclusive, along with Winchester's Dissertation on the 17th Article, by one quite entitled to be ranked with these men, the late Archdeacon Hardwicke, whose striking and premature death, a year or two ago, among the Pyrenees, was universally regarded as a great loss to our theological literature. On these accounts it will be proper to give a somewhat fuller notice of Laurence's work; and this will lead us into the merits of the subject.

The injustice with which Wilberforce alleges that Goode treated Laurence, is brought out in the following passage:—



“I cannot but enter my humble protest against the remarkable partiality and superficial character of the work above referred to (Archbishop Laurence’s ‘Bampton Lectures’), and consequently the erroneous nature of the view it gives of the subject of which it treats; and I trust that the few facts I am about to mention will be sufficient to put the reader on his guard against its statements.”

We give only one specimen of the facts by which Goode has established the truth of this charge:—

“And here, again, I must notice the remarkable partiality displayed by Archbishop Laurence in his ‘Bampton Lectures.’ From a perusal of these Lectures, one might suppose that Melancthon was the only one of the foreign Reformers invited to this country by Cranmer, and the invitations addressed to him are very carefully recorded; while the fact is, that, with this single exception, almost all, if not all, who were invited to this country by Cranmer, to aid him in the work of reformation, were of the Reformed churches, and therefore of Zwinglian or Calvinistic views.”

In addition to the facts adduced by Goode, we may mention some specimens of Laurence’s mode of discussing this subject, which will convince most men that, to whatever cause it is to be ascribed, he was incapable of exercising discrimination, or of manifesting ordinary fairness, when he had Calvin or Calvinism to deal with.

He thus announces his general opinion of Calvin, which will probably be received by most people as a novelty:—‘No man, perhaps, was ever less scrupulous in the adoption of general expressions, but perhaps no man ever adopted them with more mental reservations, than Calvin.’ The man who could believe and assert this would assuredly scruple at nothing.

“‘Horribile quidem decretum fateor!’ were the precise expressions which he used when shuddering at ‘his own favourite idea of irrespective reprobation.’ The quoting Calvin’s words, in order to convey to English readers the idea that he confessed that his doctrine concerning the divine decree was horrible, when it is notorious and unquestionable that he only intended to represent it as awful, fitted to call forth deep emotions of awe and solemnity, as an inscrutable and alarming mystery, just as he speaks of the “*horribilis Dei majestas*,”|| is merely an instance of the universal unfairness exhibited by the Anglican Arminians. There is not a man among them, from the highest to the lowest, who has been

able to deny himself the pleasure and the triumph of quoting Calvin's alleged confession about the "horrible decree." Thus far Laurence stands on the same level with a crowd of associates —defendit numerus; but in the way in which he has brought out this point there is a special unfairness, which has not often been equalled. "Irrespective reprobation" (an expression which of itself conveys a misrepresentation) is not the subject of which Calvin is speaking. He is treating only of the implication of the human race in the penal consequences of Adam's first sin, and of the purpose and agency of God in relation to the fall and its results. It is surely time that antiCalvinists, who profess any regard for truth or decency, should drop this topic of the "horrible decree," after having made it do duty for a couple of centuries.

In his destitution of solid proof to show that the compilers of the English Articles did not embrace the theological views of Calvin, he has recourse to the following curious piece of evidence:— "If Calvin's system had been adopted by our Reformers, never surely would they have inserted among our Articles that of Christ's descent into hell, which seems to have been directly levelled against one of his peculiar opinions, and one which he thought important." What connection there can be between the grounds for believing either that the English Reformers had, or that they had not, adopted Calvin's system of theology, and the mode in which they dealt with a topic so irrelevant and so unimportant, comparatively, as Christ's alleged descent into hell, it would puzzle most men of common sense to discover. But, besides, the statement of Laurence about the descent into hell, in its relation to Calvin's opinions, is quite inconsistent with the notorious facts of the case. The English Article (the 3d) is simply an adoption of the Article in what is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, which is just the creed of the Roman Church. This topic of the descent into hell did not find its way into the Roman creed till the fifth century, and it certainly ought never to have been introduced into any creed or confession. What tempted the compilers of the English Articles to devote one of them to this topic it is not easy to understand, even though there were some at the time who denied it. But Laurence's notion, that it is "directly levelled against one of Calvin's peculiar opinions," is simply preposterous. It is perfectly notorious that Calvin rejoiced and exulted in the article in the creed about the descent into hell, as explicitly sanctioning "one of his peculiar opinions and he even seems to have so far yielded to a common infirmity of human nature, as to have been disposed, because of its containing this article, to think more favourably of the claim put forth by the Church of Home, on its behalf, to an apostolic origin.f Laurence takes great pains to make out, as affording a presumption against the English Articles being Calvinistic,

that in 1553, when they were first established, Calvin was not much known in England,—that his peculiar theological system had not then attracted much notice, and was not generally received even in the continental Reformed churches; and Faber has followed him in this course of argument. The alleged facts are greatly Overstated; and though they were all true, they would not furnish even a presumption in favour of the conclusion deduced from them. Calvin had fully set forth his system of theology in the first edition of his “Institutes” in 1536; and from the time of his return to Geneva in 1541, he occupied a position of prominence and influence in the Protestant world, certainly inferior to that of no other man, instructing the churches everywhere by his writings, and guiding them by his counsels. Cranmer had repeatedly sought his advice, and urged him to correspond with King Edward. In the beginning of 1552, before proceeding to draw up Articles for the Church of England, Cranmer’s mind was much set upon the preparation of a general confession of faith for the Protestant churches, and with this view he invited to England Calvin, Bullinger, and ‘Melancthon. Calvin’s great work, the *Consensus Genevensis*, or *Treatise de Eterna Dei Predestinatione*, was published in 1551, or very early in 1552; and we have direct and explicit evidence that it did exert an influence on the deliberations and consultations which were going on in England in the course of that year, in connection with the preparation of the Articles. It is but fair to mention, that this evidence was unknown to Laurence, having been published for the first time by the Parker Society in 1846, in the third series of the “Zurich Letters” but it affords a good illustration of the truth, that a just cause is always advanced by the progress of research and discovery. It is found in a letter of Traheron, Dean of Chichester and Librarian to King Edward, written to Bullinger in September 1552, while the Articles were under consideration, and undergoing the revision of various parties, civil and ecclesiastical, but not yet published:—

“The greater number among us, of whom I own myself to be one, embrace the opinion of John Calvin, as being perspicuous and most agreeable to Holy Scripture. And we truly thank God, that that excellent treatise of the very learned and excellent John Calvin, against Pighius and one Georgius Siculus, should have come forth at the very time when the question began to be agitated among us; for we confess that he has thrown much light upon the subject, or rather so handled it, as that we have never before seen anything more learned or more plain.”

We have said enough, we think, to show that, on this question at least,

Archbishop Laurence is entitled to no deference whatever; and that in point of accuracy of statement and solidity of argument, he has sunk to the level of the generality of those who, from Heylin downwards, have undertaken the defence of the same cause.

But it is quite possible, notwithstanding all we have seen, that the book may contain sufficient materials to prove that the Articles are not Calvinistic. The leading feature of the book—determining, however, rather the form into which the materials are thrown than the substance of the materials themselves—is, that it professes to bring out fully and precisely the doctrines that generally prevailed in the Church of Home before the Reformation; and, since the doctrines of the Articles were very much directed against the errors that prevailed, to employ a knowledge of the errors for ascertaining the precise import of the correctives applied. This process is in its general character fair and reasonable, but it requires a more thorough knowledge of the whole subject, and a larger amount both of ability and candour, than Laurence possessed, to turn it to good account, and to bring out of its application results that can be relied upon. The way in which he applies his general principle is to this effect. He brings out fully the thoroughly unsound and Pelagian character of the views which generally prevailed in the church, and especially among the schoolmen, the leading divines of the period, on the subjects of original sin, free will, merit, justification, and predestination. He then assumes, that from the extreme unsoundness of the Popish doctrine, no very large amount of soundness, nothing of an Augustinian or Calvinistic character in the Protestant corrections of it, need be supposed to be necessary or even probable,—that there' might probably be a full and ample repudiation of the Popish error without any leaning towards the other extreme. The practical application he makes of this notion, is to establish it as a sort of general rule, that there is a presumption in favour of the lowest and most moderate interpretation of the doctrinal statements of the Reformers, provided they are still held so sound and evangelical as to convey a condemnation of the grossly Pelagian views which generally prevailed before the Reformation. But there is really no weight in all this. The general position, that a knowledge of the precise opinions which prevailed before the Reformation may be usefully applied in ascertaining the exact import and bearing of the statements adopted by the Reformers upon the same points, is certainly well founded. But there is no ground for the notion which constitutes Laurence's peculiar principle, *viz.* that there is a general presumption in favour of the Protestant deviation from ante-Reformation Pelagianism being the smallest which the words used will admit of. We know of no ground for any such presumption, and we cannot admit it. Our

conviction is, that the great glory of the Reformation, in a doctrinal point of view, is that the Reformers, and especially Calvin, saw and proclaimed that it was necessary, as the only thorough and permanent counteractive to the gross Pelagianism of the Church of Home, and to all the practices based upon it, to go back, decidedly and avowedly, even above and beyond the Calvinism of Augustine to the Calvinism of the New Testament. This certainly was the ground taken by the great body of the continental Reformers, though Melancthon, whose weaknesses and infirmities were so great and palpable, partially abandoned it. And if it is alleged that the Reformers of England took lower and narrower ground than this, and contented themselves with merely condemning and lopping off some of the grosser and more offensive developments of the prevailing Pelagianism, this must be established, not by vague and baseless presumptions, but by direct and positive proof, by a deliberate and detailed examination of the actual doctrines they have propounded on every topic of importance. Laurence has no difficulty in showing, that the doctrines which generally prevailed before the Reformation on the subjects of original sin,, free will, justification, and merit, were of a thoroughly Pelagian complexion, and, of course, might have been contradicted and excluded by statements, upon the part of the Reformers, which did not go beyond the standard of what might now be called Arminianism. But this is of no real value in proving that they stopped there, and did not go on to bring out, as the only complete and effectual antidote to the Pelagianism of the schoolmen, at least the whole Calvinism of Augustine.

It is chiefly, however, with Laurence's discussion of the subject of predestination that we have to do at present. And this differs in several respects from the other topics introduced. On the subjects of original sin, free will, grace, justification, and merit, while there is but one doctrine that is true, there is room for a considerable variety of opinions, more or less plausible, and more or less nearly approximating to the truth, the difference being in degree rather than in kind. But in regard to predestination, there are really just two sides, clearly and distinctly defined, and every man who has formed an intelligent judgment upon the matter must be either a Calvinist or an antiCalvinist,—that is, he must either assert or deny, that God has from eternity chosen some men, certain persons of the human race individually, to salvation through Christ, and has determined to effect and secure their salvation in accordance with the provisions of the covenant of grace. Another difference is, that Pelagian or Arminian views in regard to predestination were not so generally prevalent in the Church of Rome as in regard to the other topics. Some of the most eminent of the schoolmen, while supporting Pelagian views on depravity, justification, and grace, continued

to hold, in substance, Augustinian views in regard to predestination. Their unsoundness in regard to the one class of topics was owing to the want of a careful and humble study of the Bible, and to the low state of personal religion, and their comparative soundness on the other was to be ascribed to the strength and vigour of their intellects, and their fondness for prosecuting profound speculations; while the Calvinism of the Reformers indicated at once, and in combination, the deepest sense of divine and eternal things, in regard to those matters which bear more immediately upon personal duty and experience, and the most profound and elevated conceptions about the deep things of God.

Ignorance or disregard of these points of difference, and of the facts connected with them, has led to a thorough failure in Laurence's attempt to apply his general principle to the subject of predestination. He misrepresents the views that generally prevailed in the church before the Reformation, describing them as more anti-Calvinistic than they were; and he utterly fails to bring out any substantial difference, though he professes to have done so, between the doctrine which he ascribes to the schoolmen, and that which he ascribes to Melancthon and the Lutherans, and which he represents as the doctrine of the English Reformers. Mr Mozley, a man of a far higher order of intellect, and much more profoundly versant in the subjects of which he treats, has proved, in his work on Predestination, that Laurence has misunderstood and misrepresented the views of Thomas Aquinas, the greatest and most influential of all the schoolmen, and has shown that the angelic Doctor, instead of being a low Arminian, as Laurence alleges, was in substance an Augustinian and a Calvinist. Mozley, like most men who have intellect enough and erudition enough to understand this matter, believes and maintains, that there is "no substantial difference between the Augustinian and Thomist and the Calvinist doctrine of predestination." Laurence evidently did not understand the status quaestionis in the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians. He had no clear and definite conception of what Calvinism is, and of what Arminianism is, as opposed to it. Laurence ascribes a certain doctrine on the subject of predestination to the schoolmen and to the Church of Home, and then he alleges that the Lutherans, with whose theological views he identifies those of the Church of England, "differed from the Church of Rome in several important particulars nay, that "they were entirely at variance with her upon the very foundation of the system." The doctrine which he ascribes to the Church of Rome is simply Arminianism, in the form of an alleged election of individuals to salvation, founded on a foresight of their faith, holiness, and perseverance; and the doctrine of the Lutherans and Anglicans, alleged to differ from this, "upon the very foundation of the system," just

consists of the very same Arminianism,—that is, of the same denial of the fundamental principle of Calvinism, put in the form or based upon the ground of an assertion, that election is merely a choice of men in the mass, or taken collectively, to the enjoyment of outward privileges, which they may improve or not as they choose. Laurence's argument is, that since there existed this fundamental difference between the Church of Rome and the Lutheran and Anglican Reformers, it is probable that the latter did not deviate further from the Romish doctrine than this difference indicates. There is a deplorable amount of ignorance and confusion in all this; and though it has not much connection with the argument upon the subject immediately under consideration, it may be proper to give some explanations concerning it, especially as we find some additional blundering on the same subject, and in a different direction, among some of those who have taken part in this controversy on the same side with Laurence.

Dr Tucker, Dean of Gloucester, in his Letters to Dr Kippis, published in 1773, in adverting to the alleged Calvinism of the Church of England, ventured upon the assertion, that, “at the time just preceding the Reformation, the Church of Rome, in respect to predestination, grace, free will, and perseverance, was truly Calvinistical.” This idea tickled the Anglican Arminians greatly. They chuckled over it as a proof that the Church of England must be anti-Calvinistic; while, at the same time, they must have felt somewhat doubtful about the accuracy of the statement as to the matter of fact. Dr Winchester, whose Dissertation on the 17th Article was published very soon after, adopted it as true, and founded an argument upon it; and he was followed in this both by Bishop Tomline, in his Elements of Christian Theology and by Archdeacon Daubeny, in his *Vindiciae*. Laurence knew too much of the subject to swallow this; and, besides, his argument led him to take the opposite tack, to found much upon the opposite position, that the Church of Home was thoroughly Arminian. The argument of Tucker and his followers was this: the Church of Rome was Calvinistic, and therefore the Church of England is probably Arminian. The argument of Laurence was: the Church of Rome was grossly Arminian, and therefore there is a strong probability that the Church of England, in reforming herself, would not go so far away as to embrace Calvinism, but would be contented with adopting a less gross and more refined Arminianism. The common conclusion is false, the argument in both cases is weak and untenable, and the main fact asserted is, in both cases, altogether inaccurate. Before the Reformation, the Church of Rome could not be said to be either Calvinistic or Arminian,—that is, she had not formally and officially committed herself to either side in this great controversy.

She had always professed great respect for the opinions of Augustine, and for the decisions of the African Synods and the Council of Orange in the Pelagian controversy; and she had never, as a church, formally and officially given any doctrinal decision inconsistent with that profession. Thus far she might be said to be Calvinistic. But, on the other hand, it is certain that doctrines of a Pelagian and semi-Pelagian cast had been long sanctioned by a very large portion of her most influential authorities, and especially by many of the schoolmen; so that before the Reformation, Pelagianism might be said to pervade nearly the whole of the ordinary teaching of the church, though it had never been formally sanctioned as authoritative and binding. In these circumstances the Church of Home could not with propriety be said to be either Augustinian or Pelagian, although, in somewhat different senses and aspects, both designations might be applied to her. The Reformers, both in England and on the continent, were led, almost to a man, by the study of the Bible and of the works of Augustine, and, as we believe, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, to repudiate the Pelagianism or Arminianism which prevailed all around them in the ordinary teaching of the church, and to fall back upon the Calvinism of the New Testament and of the Bishop of Hippo. But as the church officially was not at the time committed to oppose Augustinian or to support Pelagian views, the topics involved in that controversy did not form any proper part of the dispute between the Reformers and the Church of Home; and, in consequence, they were not subjected to a full, searching, and exhaustive discussion, until they came to form the subject of disputes among Protestants themselves, in contending first with the Lutherans, when they had thrown off the Calvinism of their master, and afterwards with the Arminians.

It was on this ground that the doctrine of predestination was not formally discussed and decided on in the Council of Trent. It was, however, incidentally brought under the consideration of the council in connection with the subject of free will and justification; and the account which Father Paul has given of the debate that took place, decidedly confirms the impression, which the whole history of all the discussions that ever have taken place upon these matters is fitted to produce, *viz.* that there is a clear line of demarcation between the fundamental principle of the Augustinian or Calvinistic, and the Pelagian or Arminian, systems of theology,—that the true status quaestionis in the controversy between these parties can be easily and exactly ascertained,—that it can, without difficulty, be brought to a point where men may and should say either Ay or No, and according as they say the one or the other, may be held to be, and may be warrantably called, Calvinists or Arminians. But though the



doctrine of predestination was discussed in the Council of Trent, and discussed on the same grounds on which it always has been and must be discussed, between Calvinists and Arminians who understand what they are about, no decision was pronounced upon the subject in any of the leading aspects of the question; and the members of the church were left quite free, as the Jansenists always contended, to maintain, if they chose, the whole theological system of Augustine. The Church of Home has since, indeed, become more deeply tainted with Pelagianism by the doctrinal decisions pronounced in the cases of Baius, Jansenius, and Quesnel. But we are not aware that there is even now any decision of that church, which stands in the way of her members maintaining the whole substance of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination.

While it is certain that the great body of the Reformers adopted in substance the theological system of Augustine, and while it is certain that the system of Augustine was, in its fundamental characteristic features, just the system of Calvin,—the difference between the views of Augustine and Calvin being greatly less in point of intrinsic importance than the differences between Augustine's views and any form whatever of antiCalvinism,—it is not disputed that there were considerable differences among individuals and sections of the Reformers, in the way and manner in which their theological views were developed and applied. Constitutional capacities and tendencies, intellectual and moral, peculiar habits of thought and feeling, specialities occurring in the course of their studies and occupations—all these, variously modified, no doubt, operated in different ways, and to a considerable extent, in influencing their mode of conceiving, representing, and applying doctrines which were in substance the same. And these causes of diversity amid unity ought to be taken into account, and fairly estimated and allowed for, not in judging of truth, but in judging of the men, and in exhibiting towards them due forbearance and fairness.

The men among the Reformers who exhibited the highest mental powers, and exerted the largest amount of influence as individuals in their different spheres, *viz.* Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Knox, were all unequivocal, decided, outspoken Calvinists, and did not hesitate to bring out, defend, and apply their principles. Melancthon went from one extreme to another, and the cause of his deviations both from sound doctrine and sound practice on public questions, is plainly to be traced to weaknesses and infirmities, palpably discernible both in his mental and moral constitution. There is no evidence that Luther ever abandoned or retracted his Calvinism; but there are indications that, in the latter part of his life, he became, probably through Melancthon's influence, less

anxious to give it prominence, and more concerned about guarding against the abuse of it. No other leading man among the Reformers went so far astray in doctrinal matters as Melancthon. Bullinger was a Calvinist, though a very cautious and moderate one, shrinking from some of the more precise and stringent statements of Calvin on particular points. He became more decided and outspoken in maintaining Calvinistic principles as he advanced in life, and as some indications appeared of differences among Protestants themselves, of deviations tending in an anti-Calvinistic direction. We believe that Bullinger had more influence with the English Reformers, and upon the reformation they effected, than either Melancthon on the one side or Calvin on the other; and whether it was because of influence exerted by him or not, the actual theological views adopted by Cranmer and embodied in the Articles, more nearly resembled, in point of fact, the opinions of Bullinger than those of any other eminent man of the period.

It is quite true that Cranmer and his associates, who mainly determined the character of the English Reformation, were a good deal Melancthonian in their general character, tendencies, and sympathies. Cranmer resembled Melancthon both in his excellences and his defects, and would, we fear, in similar circumstances, have gone as far in sacrificing principle and in compromising truth, as Melancthon was ready to have done at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. Indeed it is, and will always remain, something of a mystery, how Cranmer contrived to thread his way through the rocks and quicksands of Henry's reign, without sacrificing his integrity. The English Reformers were, upon the whole, cautious and timid men, who leaned decidedly to the side of peace, quietness, compromise, and who were trained by their peculiar, and in many respects unfavourable, circumstances, to the habit of avoiding, as far as possible, to give offence. There was a decided want of men among them who were possessed of a high and commanding order of intellect, or of the capacity of bold, vigorous, and independent thinking. There was not one man among them qualified, by a combination of intellectual and moral qualities, to stamp his image, as an individual, upon his age or country. There is not one of them who has taken a high place or exerted a lasting influence as a theologian, in the exposition and discussion of important doctrinal questions. There was no native Englishman of the period equal in point of ability and learning, as a theologian, to either of the two men, Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr, whom Cranmer succeeded in getting over from the continent,—whom he placed in the most influential situations, the divinity chairs of Cambridge and Oxford,—with whom, during almost the whole reign of Edward, he was intimately associated,—who must have exerted a great

influence over his mind,—and who were decided Calvinists. There is not one of those who acquired distinction in the church before the accession of Elizabeth who can be regarded as a first-class theologian. Bishop Jewel is the first Anglican churchman to whom he would be disposed to concede that title, and he, as was said by Froude, one of the founders of Puseyism, wrote “very much like an irreverent dissenter.” Latimer and Hooper were excellent and most valuable men, great preachers, and eminently practical and useful, but they had neither capacity nor taste for the higher departments of theological speculation. Bishop Ridley had probably more influence with Cranmer, and was perhaps an abler man than either of them, but he was not a man of a high order of intellect; and it was probably to this and to the want of any great familiarity with theological discussions, and not merely to a feeling of reverential modesty, that we owe his well-known statement about predestination and cognate topics:—“In these matters I am so fearful that I dare not speak further, yea, almost none otherwise, than the very text doth, as it were, lead me by the hand.” There is an element of truth and beauty in this sentiment. But it is thoroughly one-sided; it is wholly unsuitable to what has long been the actual condition of the church; and in its practical application, it is chiefly to favour the supporters of error, those who find their advantage in confusion and obscurity. Ridley’s notion sounds well, and is apt to make an impression at first upon the minds of men who have not examined the subject or studied its history. It might have been practicable and safe to act upon it, if errors and heresies had never arisen to disturb the peace and purity of the church. The great controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries against the Arians and Pelagians put an end to the condition of things in which it might have been possible to act upon Ridley’s notion. This condition of things can never return, and it is now the church’s imperative duty to seek, by turning Scripture to the fullest possible account, by bringing out and combining all that it teaches, explicitly or by good and necessary consequence, to unfold plainly and distinctly the whole scheme of divine truth, and to refute and expose the errors and heresies which may still be striving to gain an ascendancy.

The character and tendencies of Cranmer and Ridley, determined to a large extent the general type of the English Reformation. It was in the main cautious, timid, compromising. This applies to some extent even to its theology, but not to such an extent as to have made the theology Arminian, or even neutral, but only so far as to have made it moderate Calvinism. The proof that the great body of those who were concerned in preparing the English Articles in the reign of Edward, and in establishing them again in the reign of Elizabeth, were in their own personal convictions Calvinists in doctrine, though averse to all extreme

views, and to all strong and incautious statements, and anxious to guard against the practical abuse of their doctrines, is, we are persuaded, perfectly conclusive and unanswerable. As a whole, it cannot be touched; and the evidence in support of this position is gaining in strength, and has gained in our own day, by the progress of research and investigation. We cannot, of course, pretend either to adduce the evidence, or to answer what has been brought forward on the other side. Those who wish to see this evidence fully adduced and cleared from objection, will find all this in the books already mentioned by Prynne, Hickman, Toplady, Overton, and Goode; and if they are capable of estimating evidence, and possessed of a reasonable measure of impartiality and candour, they will not be moved by anything that has been produced upon the other side by Heylin, Winchester, Daubeny, Tomline, and Laurence.

The Calvinism, however, of the fathers and founders of the Church of England, does not at once and ipso facto settle the Calvinism of the Articles and the Liturgy. It proves, indeed, that there is nothing anti-Calvinistic in the formularies of the church, and that no Calvinist need have any hesitation about approving of them, unless they could be shown to be palpably self-contradictory. But still it is possible, that, though Calvinists themselves, they may have abstained from making an explicit profession of Calvinism a term of communion. They may have intended to leave an open door both for Calvinists and Arminians, and with this view may have prepared their public symbols in such indefinite and ambiguous terms as would exclude neither, because they might be assented to by both. This is about as much as the more respectable Arminians venture to assert, and it is all to which they can manage to give anything like plausibility. We are not concerned to prove that Arminians cannot honestly subscribe the Articles. This is a question not so much for strangers, as for themselves and for their fellow-churchmen. But the ground taken by such men as Daubeny, Tomline, and Laurence, that the Articles are inconsistent with Calvinism, and must exclude all honest Calvinists, we cannot but protest against as an outrage upon historic truth. We have never been able to understand how any one but a Calvinist could comfortably subscribe the 17th Article. But we have no wish to press this. We admit that it is very cautiously and temperately expressed, and that it would have been easy, if its compilers had so intended, to have made it more stringently, explicitly, and undeniably Calvinistic. What we maintain is, that its most natural and obvious meaning is Calvinistic,—that there is no evidence, internal or external, fitted to lead us to doubt that it teaches, and was intended to teach, Calvinism,—and that all the attempts which have been made to show that it is positively anti-Calvinistic, have been mere exhibitions of incompetency or of

something worse.

We can only make a few observations upon the 17th Article. The most important parts of the Article, the beginning and the end, are as follow:—

“Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, He hath constantly decreed by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God’s purpose . by His Spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God’s mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

“Furthermore, we must receive God’s promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture, and in our doings that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.”

Now, the first reflection that occurs on reading this is, that there is not one word or phrase in it to which any Calvinist can object or ever has objected. Every Calvinist sees in it a plain and explicit statement of his fundamental principle, that God hath from eternity chosen some men in Christ, and resolved to deliver and save them, and that, in consequence of this election, these men, so chosen, are enabled to believe in Christ, are justified and regenerated, are enabled to lead holy lives, and are preserved unto salvation. This is plainly what the Article states, and this is just a simple unequivocal declaration of the fundamental, the only fundamental, principle of Calvinism. Calvinists could easily introduce certain expressions, suggested by later controversies and the sophisms and evasions to which they gave rise, which would make the Article more undeniably and exclusively Calvinistic; but no one has ever felt the slightest difficulty about the statements, as plainly and obviously, without comment or explanation, teaching the Calvinistic doctrine of election.

It has been strongly alleged by Arminians, that the caution or caveat contained in the last sentence is inconsistent with Calvinistic opinions, and was intended to exclude them. But this is a sheer misrepresentation. No Calvinist has ever had the slightest difficulty about approving of this caveat, because it is quite

notorious, that this mode of speaking is universal among Calvinistic divines in unfolding the practical application of their doctrine,—that the second part of the statement is given in the very words of Calvin himself,—and that the first part of it, too, is found in substance, though not verbatim, in his writings. No Calvinist can have any difficulty in showing the perfect consistency of this caveat with his doctrine concerning predestination. But no Arminian can give any intelligible reason why such a caveat should have been introduced, except in connection with a previous statement of Calvinistic predestination. It is only the Calvinistic, and not the Arminian, doctrine that suggests or requires such guards or caveats; and it is plainly impossible that such a statement could ever have occurred to the compilers of the Articles as proper and necessary, unless they had been distinctly aware, that they had just laid down a statement which at least included the Calvinistic doctrine. Calvinists have always regarded it as a strong confirmation of their doctrine, that the Apostle Paul so plainly intimates, that he expected that almost as a matter of course, men would adduce against his doctrine the same objections which have, in every age, been adduced against Calvinism, but which nobody would ever think of adducing against Arminianism. Upon the same principle, the caveat introduced into the end of the 17th Article is a plain proof that the Calvinistic doctrine was at least included in the preceding statements. The common allegation that this caveat excludes Calvinism is purely ridiculous.

While Calvinists find nothing in the 17th Article but what is in full accordance with their ordinary train of thinking, and with the usual language of their most eminent writers, Arminians are obliged to distort and pervert it. Bishop Tomline, in his *Elements of Christian Theology*, does it in this way:

“Those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, are that part of mankind to whom God decreed to make known the gospel; and it is to be observed that this expression does not distinguish one set of Christians from another, but Christians in general from the rest of mankind; and, consequently, ‘to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation,’ does not mean actually saving them, but granting them the means of salvation through Christ.”

This surely ought to repel and disgust honest men, and yet it is in substance the interpretation which must be put upon the Article, as well as upon the statements of Scripture, by the Arminians. Sometimes the idea is put in a more gross and offensive form, as when Dean Kipling, in discussing this subject, lays it down as the doctrine of the founders of the Church of England, that “every person is an elect, whom some duly authorized minister of the gospel has baptized in the

Christian faith;”<sup>f</sup> and sometimes it is glossed over with more skill and plausibility, as by Archbishop Laurence in his “Bampton Lectures.” But the leading idea is the same: “chosen in Christ” means, chosen as Christians, *i.e.* chosen to enjoy the outward privileges of the church; and as to God’s having decreed to deliver them from curse and damnation, and to bring them by Christ to eternal salvation, this just means that God decreed to give to them the enjoyment of the outward means of grace, the final result being left entirely dependent upon themselves, upon their improvement of their privileges.

Laurence dwells at considerable length upon the expression “chosen in Christ,” and labours to show that this was intended to support Arminianism and to exclude Calvinism, alleging that the expression was selected for the purpose of intimating that “God predestinated His elect in Christ, or the Christian church, to salvation,”—that the only election is, “the election of a collective mass on account of Christ,”—and that He “predestinates to the adoption of children, those who duly receive and apply the means of salvation which He has thus gratuitously provided for them.” The argument founded upon the expression “chosen in Christ,” the only thing in the leading section of the Article alleged to have the appearance of being anti-Calvinistic, can be easily disposed of.

1st, In the clause “whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind,” the words “in Christ,” alleged to teach the Arminian notion of the election of the visible church to the outward means of grace as being the only election, were added on the revision of the Articles in Elizabeth’s reign, in 1562, having formed no part of the Article as it was prepared in Edward’s reign. But the insertion of these words could not have been intended to serve an Arminian purpose, for it is notorious, and is generally conceded by our opponents, that most of those who had the management of the ecclesiastical affairs in Elizabeth’s reign were decided Calvinists, even when this is not conceded in regard to Cranmer and his associates. This concession indeed could not decently be refused, when it is notorious that in 1562, immediately after the Articles as they now stand had been passed in Convocation, Bishop Jewel wrote to Peter Martyr, then at Zurich, in the following terms:— “As to matters of doctrine, we have pared everything away to the very quick, and do not differ from your doctrine by a nail’s breadth”!

2d, The phrase “chosen in Christ” is a scriptural expression; and as the Calvinists of course think that they can interpret it in entire accordance with their theological views, it is just as unwarrantable to infer Arminianism, as it would

be to infer Calvinism, from the mere adoption of it.

3d, The expression is used in the whole series of undeniably Calvinistic confessions, both in those prepared before and after the Arminian controversy—in the Scottish Confession of 1560, as well as in the Westminster one, in the French, Belgic, and Helvetic, and in the canons of the Synod of Dort.

All these things are quite notorious, and they are perfectly conclusive against Laurence's argument; but the Anglican anti-Calvinists seem to be ignorant enough of theology, to look upon him as an oracle, and to believe such statements as these because he makes them. The truth is, that the first attempt to employ this expression in a controversial way for Arminian purposes, was made by the Lutherans, when, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, they were shuffling out of the Calvinism of their master. They wished still to maintain, if they could, that election was gratuitous,—a position which even Melancthon held to the last,—and that it was not to be traced to anything in men themselves. These positions of course cannot be held intelligently and consistently by any but Calvinists. But first the Lutherans, and afterwards Arminius, attempted to involve this whole matter in obscurity and confusion, by representing Christ as the cause and foundation of election, and by trying to show that this implied, that men were elected as Christians, or because of their relation to Christ. Calvinists had no difficulty in showing the sophistical and evasive character of this attempt, and proving that under a profession of honouring Christ, it assigned to Him a place in the scheme of salvation which Scripture does not sanction; and that in so far as men are concerned, it plainly implied, when stripped of the vagueness and confusion thrown around it, either, that election is only to the outward privileges of the church, or that, if it be supposed to refer to eternal life, it is based upon a foresight of men's faith,—that is, that it is not gratuitous, but really founded upon something in men themselves. The exposure of this Lutheran and Arminian sophistry produced some interesting, though occasionally rather intricate, discussion, on topics which seem to be utterly unknown among the Anglican Arminians, but which are now quite indispensable to a thorough acquaintance with the subject, and of which a masterly summary is given in Turretine's Theolog. Elenct.

There is nothing, then, in the 17th Article, but what in its natural and obvious meaning is most fully accordant with Calvinism, and seems to have been intended to teach the fundamental principle of that system of theology, while the attempts which have been made to disprove this, and to bring in an Arminian



interpretation of it, can be shown to be utterly unsuccessful.

This is quite sufficient to establish the Calvinism of the Article, especially when viewed in connection with the known sentiments of its compilers. But the evidence is further strengthened by comparing it with the section on predestination in the later editions of “Melancthon’s Commonplaces.” All who deny the Calvinism of the Article maintain that it was derived from Melancthon’s writings, and was intended to embody the views which he came ultimately to adopt. But we think it scarcely possible for any one at all versant in these matters, to compare the Article with Melancthon’s section on predestination, without seeing a marked contrast between them. We cannot give quotations, or go into any detail upon this point; but we think it manifest that the 17th Article is much more clearly and explicitly Calvinistic, or rather is much more like, and comes much more near to, Calvinism, than anything to be found in Melancthon’s later writings. If the compilers of the Articles had really meant to leave the only question of fundamental importance on the subject of predestination undecided,—and this, as we have said, is about as much as the more respectable defenders of Arminianism usually venture to allege,—they had before them, in the section upon this subject in the later editions of “Melancthon’s Commonplaces,” a very fair attempt at saying nothing—that is, at professing to explain the matter without decidedly and explicitly taking either side. But they did not take this course; for the 17th Article is, to say the very least, not nearly so obscure and ambiguous as the exposition of Melancthon; from which the inference is plain, that though on some points they may have followed Melancthon, they here put themselves under the surer and steadier guidance of Calvin, or at least of Bullinger.

Arminians, in discussing this subject, usually try to take advantage of the concession, which we cannot withhold from them, that the founders of the Church of England were moderate, as distinguished from extreme or ultra Calvinists, and that the doctrine of the Article is moderate Calvinism. They are disposed to scout the idea of moderate Calvinism as an inconsistency and absurdity, —to insinuate that men should not be held to be Calvinists at all unless they have embraced all the points of the system in its most detailed and developed form, — and to allege that since this is not true of the Anglican Reformers, they should not be regarded as Calvinists. This whole notion is plainly exaggerated and untenable, and confounds things that differ. It is quite warrantable and fair to press men with the consequences or results of the principles they profess, in order to show them that, in right reason, they ought

either to abandon their principles, or else embrace the ulterior views to which they can be shown legitimately to lead. But it is unwarrantable to draw inferences as to what, in point of fact, men's principles are, from our views of what consistency would seem to require of them. Men are not to be disbelieved when they tell us, as a matter of fact, that in their convictions they have come thus far, but that they stop here, merely because we think that either they should not have come so far, or that, if they did, they should have advanced farther. The subject we are at present considering is essentially a matter of fact,—a question as to what views certain men did embrace and profess,—and it should be determined by the ordinary evidence applicable to such a matter of fact, *viz.* the statements and procedure of the parties themselves, and not by any inferences and deductions of ours, in the soundness of which they do not acquiesce. These Anglican Arminians, most of whom have given abundant evidence that they do not understand what Calvinism is, presume to set up an arbitrary standard of Calvinism; and if men do not come up to this standard, they infer, not merely that they are not Calvinists, but that they do not in point of fact hold, whatever they may profess, any of the leading doctrines usually regarded as Calvinistic. All this is utterly unwarrantable and extravagant, and it is the more so when we have to deal, as in this case, not merely with the personal convictions of individuals, but with the public formularies which they prepared for the church. The same qualities and influences which made Cranmer and his associates only moderate Calvinists, in their own personal convictions, were likely to operate still more powerfully when they were preparing public documents for the church, to which other men were to be required to assent. Here it is quite natural to expect, that they would be still more moderate Calvinists than they were in their own individual convictions. All this is quite natural and intelligible, and it affords no reasonable ground for doubting, that as individuals they honestly and sincerely held all the Calvinism which, by their statements and actions, they have professed, or that they really meant to embody in the formularies of the church all the Calvinism which is there indicated. Moderate Calvinism, as distinguished from Calvinism of a more definite and detailed description, may be an indication of something defective in men's mental and moral capacities or tendencies, or it may be traceable to some qualities and feelings, good and creditable in the main, but carried out to an unwarrantable excess. But this is no reason why men should have ascribed to them inferences and deductions from their principles which they do not themselves perceive or admit, or should have any doubt thrown upon the trustworthiness of their professions as to what they do hold.

For ourselves, we do not affect the designation of moderate Calvinists. We believe the whole Calvinism of the canons of the Synod of Dort, and of the Confession of the Westminster Assembly, and we are willing to attempt to expound and defend, when called upon, the whole doctrine of these symbols, to show that it is all taught or indicated in Scripture. We have been only confirmed in our Calvinism by all the study we have given to this subject. But while our own personal convictions of the truth of a fully; developed Calvinism have become confirmed by continued study, we have at the same time, and by the same process, been taught a larger measure of forbearance towards those who differ from us on some of the questions connected with these profound and mysterious subjects,—and especially towards those who do not see their way to go so far as we think warrantable, in explaining and defining some points, and who, while, it may be, not explicitly denying what we believe to be true, yet rather shrink from the more detailed and definite explanations which we regard as true and warrantable. The more we have studied these subjects, the more have we become convinced, that the one fundamental principle of Calvinism,—that the admission or denial of which constitutes the real line of demarcation between Calvinists and antiCalvinists, is the doctrine of predestination in the more limited sense of the word, or of election, as descriptive of the substance of the teaching of Scripture with regard to what God decreed or purposed from eternity to do, and does or effects in time, for the salvation of those who are saved; and that every man ought to be held by others, and ought to acknowledge himself, to be a Calvinist, who believes that God from eternity chose some men, certain persons of the human race, absolutely and unconditionally, to salvation through Christ, and that He accomplishes this purpose, or executes this decree in time, by effecting and securing the salvation of these, men in accordance with the provisions of the covenant of grace. Of all the doctrines usually discussed between Calvinists and Arminians, and commonly held by Calvinists to be taught in Scripture, this doctrine of election is at once the most important in itself, and the most clearly revealed in God’s word. In regard to the other doctrines of the Calvinistic system of theology, as set forth by the Synod of Dort and the Westminster Assembly, we believe, 1st, That they can be all sufficiently and satisfactorily established by scriptural evidence bearing directly upon each particular topic; and 2d, That they may be all legitimately and conclusively deduced in the way of consequence or inference from the great doctrine of election. It is men’s duty to ascertain what God has revealed upon all these matters in His word, and to exercise their rational faculties in estimating and developing the logical relations of these doctrines with each other. And, for ourselves, we have no doubt that the full legitimate use and improvement of the

word of God and of our rational faculties, ought to lead men to the firm belief and the open maintenance of the doctrines generally held by Calvinists, with regard to what is commonly, though improperly, called reprobation, the nature and extent of the atonement, the certain and insuperable efficacy of grace, and the final perseverance of all believers. We believe that when men deny, or even decline or refuse to profess, the doctrines generally held by Calvinists upon these subjects, they are in so far to be held as coming short in the discharge of their duty and the improvement of their privileges in regard to the truth of God, But we are disposed to practise more of indulgence and forbearance towards perplexities and confusions, or even positive errors, on these questions, than on the great fundamental principle of election, partly because of the difference among them in respect of intrinsic importance, and partly because of the difference in the clearness and fulness of the Scripture evidences by which they are supported.

At present, however, we have to do, not with abstract speculations, but with the construction of evidence bearing upon a matter of fact, viz. what opinions were actually held by certain parties. The general allegation here is, that the founders of the Church of England were not Calvinists; and one reason adduced in support of it is, that while there may be some ground for holding that they believed in the Calvinistic doctrine of election, they did not believe in certain other doctrines which have been usually regarded as necessary parts of the Calvinistic system of theology. And our general answer, based upon the grounds already referred to, is, that it is unwarrantable to draw inferences as to what men's opinions in point of fact are, from what consistency on their part seems to us to require; and that we not only acknowledge, but must claim, every man as a Calvinist who believes in the Calvinistic doctrine of election, even though, from disadvantages and drawbacks in some of the features of his mental and moral constitution, or of his position and opportunities, he may be involved in perplexity and confusion, or even positive error, in regard to some of the other doctrines usually held by Calvinists. This is a sufficient answer to the argument in general; and when we examine the special grounds by which the general position is commonly supported, we find that they can be shown to be irrelevant, inaccurate, and inconclusive. We can only refer to them, and that only in their purely historical aspects, as bearing upon the matter of fact which we have been investigating. They are chiefly these:—

I. The 17th Article, it is said, cannot be Calvinistic, because it contains nothing whatever about reprobation, which is alleged to be an essential part of the

Calvinistic system. Reprobation properly means a statement of the doctrine of Scripture as to what God purposed from eternity, and does in time, in regard to those men who ultimately perish. Now, every Calvinist admits, that there is comparatively little indicated in Scripture concerning this awful and mysterious subject, and that what can be known about it must be partly learned in the way of inference and deduction, from the much clearer and fuller information given in Scripture concerning God's purposes and procedure in regard to those who are saved. This consideration shows the unworthy and dishonourable character of the efforts usually made by Arminians to thrust in the discussion of reprobation before that of election, notwithstanding that the latter is both much more important in itself, and much more fully revealed in Scripture, than the former. But this consideration also shows how probable it is, that men of a timid and cautious temperament, though firmly believing in the doctrine of election, might not hold themselves called upon to say anything about reprobation, especially when preparing public formularies. This idea was acted upon at that period by men who were undoubtedly Calvinists. There is no statement of reprobation in the Scottish Confession of 1560, or in the Second Helvetic of 1566, which was approved of by almost all the Reformed churches, though the authors of these documents were decided Calvinists, and the documents themselves are undoubtedly Calvinistic. This topic is stated very briefly and compendiously even in the French and Belgic Confessions; and it was only the perverse, offensive, and discreditable conduct of the Arminians at the Synod of Dort, in thrusting this topic into prominence and priority, that rendered it necessary for the church to put forth a somewhat fuller statement of its nature and position. It is indeed the proceedings of heretics that have all along, and in every age, produced and necessitated the more full and detailed explanations and definitions which the church has been led to put forth. And one reason why heretics have such a bitter hatred of these explanations and definitions is, because they feel that in this way their errors are exposed, and grave suspicions are sometimes excited as to their integrity.

But we have said more than enough to show that the omission of any mention of reprobation affords no presumption against the Calvinism of the 17th Article.

II. Another favourite allegation of the Arminians upon this subject is, that the Articles and Liturgy cannot be Calvinistic, because they teach the doctrine of universal redemption, and this entirely precludes Calvinism. This topic is thus put by Waterland, in a passage which has been often quoted or referred to since by controversialists on the same side, and which is a fair enough specimen of the

accuracy of the facts and the conclusiveness of the reasonings prevalent in that class of writers:—"In the year 1618, our divines at the Synod of Dort had commission to insist upon the doctrine of universal redemption as the doctrine of the Church of England, which one doctrine, pursued in its just consequences, is sufficient to overthrow the whole Calvinian system of the five points."

Now, the assertion that the English divines at the Synod of Dort had commission to insist upon the doctrine of universal redemption is not true, though it is not wholly destitute of a colourable pretext. No such commission or instruction was given to them, or was acted on by them, though some of them were favourable to that doctrine. And Waterland, we believe, could have produced, if called upon, no direct authority for the statement, except an unsupported assertion of Heylin's. The futility of the argument drawn from this doctrine against the Calvinism of the Church of England, will appear from the following considerations:—

1. This doctrine of universal redemption is of such a nature that, as experience proves, it is easy to produce abundance of quotations that seem to assert it, and that do assert something like it, from authors who did not believe it, and never intended to teach it.
2. A great variety of doctrines pass currently under the general name of universal redemption, graduating from the grosser form, which would exclude not only all Calvinistic principles, but all right conceptions of a vicarious atonement, even as held professedly by Arminians themselves, to the comparatively harmless form, in which it seems to be little else than an unwarranted and exaggerated mode of embodying the truth, that the offers and invitations of the gospel are to be addressed to all men, to men indiscriminately without distinction or exception.
3. It is perfectly certain that a considerable number of eminent divines, who undoubtedly believed the whole of what is usually held by Calvinists, both in regard to election and reprobation, have professed to maintain the doctrine of universal redemption. This does not afford a presumption that the doctrine is true, but it furnishes a proof that the fact that men hold it is no evidence that they are not Calvinists. This statement applies to Cameron and Amyraut, to Daille and Claude, to Davenant and Baxter; and to come down to our own times, to Thomas Scott and Ralph Wardlaw. We have never been at all impressed with the reasonings of these men in favour of universal redemption; but we cannot, because of what we reckon their error upon the subject, consent to their being

handed over to the Arminians.

Waterland's statement is peculiarly inexcusable, because the mention of the Synod of Dort ought to have suggested to him the name of Bishop Davenant, and he ought to have known that we have a work of Davenant's entitled, "Dissertationes Duse prima de Morte Christi, altera de Prsedestinatione et Reprobatione and that, while the first of these is a very able defence of the doctrine of universal redemption, as it has been usually held by men who professed Calvinistic views upon other points, the second is a most thorough and masterly exposition and defence of the views ordinarily held by Calvinists in regard to election and reprobation. Indeed, we do not believe that there exists a better or more satisfactory vindication of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, in both its branches of election and reprobation, than the second of these two Dissertations.

III. The third and last of the positions sometimes taken up by those who deny the Calvinism of the English Articles and Liturgy is, that these formularies are opposed to the doctrine of the certain perseverance of all believers or saints, and that this doctrine is a necessary part of Calvinism. It is certainly a necessary part of Calvinism, that all those whom God has absolutely chosen to salvation shall be saved; and no man ever held the Calvinistic doctrine of election without believing this. But this is not the question that is discussed in connection with the views of some of the early English divines about perseverance or apostasy. They all admitted that all the elect would certainly persevere, and could not fall away; but some of them seem to have held that some men, though not elected to salvation, might attain to faith and conversion, and yet, because not elected, might fall away and finally perish.

It has been alleged that the 16th Article of the Church of England sanctions this view, and we admit that there is a good deal to countenance it in Augustine. There is no real difficulty in the 16th Article, which Calvinists have always subscribed without hesitation, as being true so far as it goes, and as not contradicting any of their principles. Augustine's error and confusion upon this subject seems to be traceable in some measure to his having embraced, more or less fully and explicitly, the mischievous heresy of baptismal regeneration; and it is probably owing to the same cause that there have always been, from the time of Bishop Overall down to the present day, some highly respected Anglican divines who preferred the opinion of Augustine to that of Calvin in regard to the possible apostasy of some who had been brought to faith and repentance, while

agreeing with them both in maintaining the great principle, that God from eternity chose some men, certain persons, to salvation, and that in carrying out this electing purpose He effects and secures the salvation of every one of those whom He has chosen in Christ. It is quite unwarrantable to represent this as a difference of vital importance between Augustine and Calvin, in relation to the great distinctive features of the theological system which they held in common, and which they have done more than any uninspired men to commend to the acceptance of the people of God. And it is deserving of special notice, that on this particular point Cranmer followed Calvin, and not Augustine;f so that we have the fullest and most direct authority for maintaining, that nothing of an antiCalvinistic complexion upon the subject of perseverance or apostasy is, in so far as the intention of the compilers is concerned, to be found in the Anglican formularies.

We have spoken strongly as to the futility of the arguments derived from these subjects of reprobation, universal redemption, and perseverance, in support of the alleged matter of fact of the antiCalvinism of the Anglican formularies; for it is, we think, very clear and certain, that no considerations deduced from these topics can be of any avail in weakening the evidence for, or in strengthening the evidence against, the position, that these symbols teach, and were intended to teach, the fundamental principles of the Calvinistic system of theology. But while we cannot allow that there is any difficulty whatever in disposing of the attempts to refute the historical proof of the doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England, by inferences derived from these doctrines, we willingly admit that these doctrines in themselves, viewed in their nature and meaning, in their evidence and application, and in their relation to each other, and to the scheme of divine truth as a whole, involve profound and inscrutable mysteries. They lead at once into the most arduous and difficult questions with which the mind of man has every grappled. The investigation of the doctrines of reprobation, universal redemption, and perseverance, requires us to grapple with the most arduous and difficult of all topics in the fields both of scriptural exegesis and theological speculation; and no one has ever prosecuted this investigation in a right and becoming spirit without having been impressed with a sense of the profound difficulties attaching to it, and without being led in consequence to regard differences of opinion on some points with forbearance and kindly consideration, however decided may have been the conclusions to which he himself has come.

Still men should ascertain and profess the whole of what is taught or indicated



on these subjects in Scripture, and they should not allow mere caution or timidity, or any other feeling or motive, even though it should assume the form of reverence or modesty, to interfere with the discharge of this duty. While reticence, perplexity, confusion, and even positive error upon some of the features of these profound and solemn subjects may be treated with forbearance, all due allowances being made for peculiarities in men's constitution and circumstances, they should never be approved of or encouraged. Men should be warned of these shortcomings and infirmities, and exhorted to guard against them. We are persuaded that there are many of the evangelical clergy in the Church of England, who come far short of doing justice to God's truth in these matters, nay, come far short even of what their own convictions, defective and confused as they often are, should lead them to do. There are not a few of the evangelical clergy, men of genuine and elevated piety, and faithful and devoted ministers, who, while really believing in the Calvinistic doctrine of election, seem to shrink from making an explicit public profession of their judgment, or from giving it anything like prominence. We suspect that in some instances they are half afraid to think, or read, or speak about the subject of election, lest they should be led to form, or should be suspected of having formed, definite or decided opinions on what are reckoned the higher or more mysterious departments of the subject connected with reprobation, the extent of redemption, and the certainty of perseverance. Whatever may be the precise cause of this mode of acting, and whatever the precise forms it may assume in different individuals, it is a great weakness and infirmity, and it involves or produces a neglect or disregard of the duty they owe to God's truth, and to God's cause on earth as virtually identified with the proclamation or diffusion of His truth. From the number and variety of the grounds on which men of this class, who are substantially Calvinists at heart and in their own convictions, labour to excuse themselves from openly and explicitly admitting and proclaiming this,—ranging from the elevated sophistry of men of high intellect and learning like Mr Mozley, down to the mawkish sentimentality of the weakest of the brethren,—it would almost seem as if an open profession of Calvinism still led, in the Church of England, to something like martyrdom. We fear that some of the evangelical clergy, who are really Calvinists in substance and at heart, are deficient in the manly, outspoken independence and courageous integrity of the Newtons and Scotts of a former generation. We believe that it would advance the peace of mind of many of these excellent men, and increase their efficiency and usefulness as preachers of the gospel and defenders of God's truth, if they would bring out their theological convictions more definitely and prominently,—if, by a deeper study of these subjects, they were led to form, and if, by a deeper sense

of the responsibility connected with this department of the duty of Christian ministers, they were led to profess more detailed and definite views of doctrine, and thus to identify themselves more cordially and avowedly with the leading principles of that system of theology which has been embraced in substance by a large proportion of the ablest and best men that have ever adorned the Church of Christ,—which was adopted by the whole body of the Reformers with scarcely a single exception, and even by those timid and cautious men who presided over the reformation of the Church of England, and prepared her authorized formularies.

We believe that one reason why so many of the evangelical clergy rest contented with very obscure and indefinite views upon many theological subjects is, that, from a variety of causes, they are led to shrink from investigating them; and that their Calvinism, such as it is, is to be traced, not to a careful study of the subject, or the exercise of their mental powers, but rather to their own personal experience. There is not a converted and believing man on earth, in whose conscience there does not exist at least the germ, or embryo, of a testimony in favour of the substance of the Calvinistic doctrine of election. This testimony may be misunderstood, or perverted, or suppressed; but it exists in the ineradicable sense which every converted man has, that if God had not chosen him, he never would have chosen God, and that if God, by His Spirit, had not exerted a decisive and determining influence in the matter, he never would have been turned from darkness to light, and been led to embrace Christ as his Saviour. This is really the sum and substance of Calvinism. It is just the intelligent and hearty ascription of the entire, undivided glory of their salvation, by all who are saved, to the sovereign purpose, the infinite merit, and the almighty agency of God,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And all that Calvinists ask is, that men who have been constrained to believe, and feel this to be true in surveying the way by which God has led them, would embody their convictions in distinct and definite propositions; and that finding these propositions fully supported by the sacred Scriptures, they would profess and proclaim them as a portion of God's revealed truth.

There is, indeed, a vast amount of evidence that can be adduced in favour of the Calvinistic doctrine of election, when this doctrine is looked at nakedly and by itself,—evidence from Scripture, reason, and experience,—evidence which is fitted to impress, and has impressed, equally men of the highest and most soaring intellect, and of the most devoted and childlike piety. But at present we have to do not with arguments and proofs, but only with authorities and

testimonies; and on this subject the general position we are anxious to impress is this, that in favour of the Calvinistic doctrine of election, as descriptive of the substance of what Scripture teaches with respect to the divine purposes and procedure in regard to the salvation of those who are saved, there is a mass of testimonies in the experiences, convictions, and impressions of religious men, greatly superior both in amount and value to what may appear upon a superficial view of the matter. These testimonies, indeed, are often clouded and obscured, brought out in a very vague and imperfect way, and enveloped in much darkness and confusion. But still, viewed collectively and in the mass, and estimated fairly in a survey of the history of the church and of the experience of God's people, they do furnish a powerful confirmation to the proper proofs from Scripture and reason, for the Calvinistic representation of what God purposes and does for the salvation of His chosen.

And with respect to that department of the general subject on which not Calvinists but Arminians are so fond of enlarging, viz. the purposes and procedure of God in regard to those of the human race who ultimately perish, Calvinists undertake to show —1st, That they only follow, humbly and reverentially, the imperfect indications given us in Scripture on this profoundly mysterious subject; 2d, That while desirous to dwell chiefly upon the subject of election, as being both more important in itself, and more fully and clearly set before us in Scripture, they have been compelled, by the perverse and vexatious importunity of their opponents, to give more prominence to the subject of reprobation than they had themselves any desire to give it; and 3d, That the inscrutable mysteries attaching to this subject, apply in reality not to the Calvinistic representation of it, but to the actual realities of the case,—to facts which all parties admit, and which all are equally bound and equally unable to explain,—the facts, namely, of the fall of the whole human race into an estate of sin and misery, and of this fearful state becoming permanent in regard to a portion of the race; in other words, the one great fact of the existence and the permanence of moral evil among God's rational and responsible creatures.

The Bible assumes or asserts, while it scarcely professes to explain, these two great facts of the fall of the whole human race into a state of sin and misery, and of the result that a portion of the race is to be left for ever in that condition. But its leading primary object is to unfold the great scheme of mercy by which God has effectually provided for the salvation from this state of sin and misery of an innumerable multitude, which, for anything that has been made known to us, may, in the ultimate result of things, comprehend a great majority of the

descendants of Adam. God has devised such a scheme as this, to the praise of the glory of His grace. He has made it known to us, that we may share in its blessings, that we may attain to salvation ourselves,—may assist, as the instruments, in His hand, in promoting the salvation of our fellow-men,—and may be prepared for ascribing, with all our hearts, in time and through eternity, glory and honour and blessing to Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father.

# Zwingli and the Doctrine of the Sacraments

It is a very common practice of Popish writers to represent Protestantism and the Reformation as thoroughly identified with Luther, with his character, opinions, labours, and achievements. Protestantism, according to a mode of representation in which they are fond of indulging, and which is not destitute of a certain measure of plausibility, is a new religion, never heard of till it was invented by Luther, and traceable to him alone as its source and origin. Having thus identified the Reformation and Protestantism with Luther, they commonly proceed to give an account of him whom they represent as the author of our faith, bringing out, with great distortion and exaggeration, everything about his character and history, about his sayings and doings, which may be fitted to excite a prejudice against him, especially as contemplated in the light in which they, not we, represent him, *viz.* as the author and founder of a new religious system. Independently of the utterly unfounded and erroneous assumptions in point of principle and argument on which this whole representation is based, it is altogether untrue as a mere historical fact, that Luther occupied any such place in regard to the Reformation and Protestantism, as Papists—for controversial purposes—are accustomed to assign to him. He was not the only person who was raised up at that period to oppose the Church of Rome, and to bring out from the word of God other representations of apostolic Christianity than those which the Papacy inculcated and embodied. It is quite certain that, in different parts of Europe, a considerable number of persons, as early as Luther and altogether independently of him, had been led to deduce from the sacred Scriptures doctrines substantially the same as his, even the doctrines which may be said to constitute the fundamental principles of Protestantism. In France,

Lefevre and Farel, of whom so very interesting an account is given by Dr' Merle D'Aubigne in the twelfth book of his "History of the Reformation," had been led to adopt, and to promulgate, to a certain extent, the leading doctrines of the Reformation before Luther appeared publicly as a Reformer; and they certainly stand much more in the relation of something like paternity to Calvin, and to all that he was honoured to achieve, than Luther does. And if an open breach with the Church of Rome, and the organization of a Protestant church, previously to and independently of Luther, are insisted upon as necessary to the character and position of a Reformer, we can point to Zwingli and his associates, the Reformers of German Switzerland.

Zwingli, indeed, was honoured to perform a work, both as a reformer and as a theologian, which entitles him to special notice; and we intend at present giving a brief account of the doctrines which he taught, the place which, he occupied, and the influence which he exerted, in regard to theological subjects.

The important movement of which Zwingli might be said to be the originator and the head was wholly independent of Luther; that is to say, Luther was in no way whatever, directly or indirectly, the cause or the occasion of Zwingli being led to embrace the views which he promulgated, or to adopt the course which he pursued. Zwingli had been led to embrace the leading principles of Protestant truth, and to preach them in 1516, the year before the publication of Luther's Theses; and it is quite certain that all along he continued to think and act for himself, on his own judgment and responsibility, deriving his views from his own personal and independent study of the word of God. This fact shows how inaccurate it is to identify the Reformation with Luther, as if all the Reformers derived their opinions from him, and merely followed his example in abandoning the Church of Home, and organizing churches apart from her communion. Many at this time, in different parts of Europe, were led to study the sacred Scriptures, and were led further to derive from this study views of divine truth substantially the same, and decidedly opposed to those generally inculcated in the Church of Rome. And more particularly it is certain that Luther and Zwingli—the two men who, in different countries, may be said to have originated the public revolt against Rome and the organization of Protestant churches—were wholly independent of, and unconnected with, each other, in the formation of their opinions and their plans, and both derived them from their own separate and independent study of God's word.

We need not dwell upon Zwingli's general character as distinguished from his

theological opinions; for, indeed, it has never been subjected to any very serious or formidable assaults. He was in a great measure free from those weaknesses and infirmities which have afforded materials for charges, in some degree true, and to a much greater extent only plausible, against both Luther and Melancthon. He usually spoke and acted with calmness, prudence, and discretion, and at the same time with the greatest vigour, intrepidity, and consistency. He gave the most satisfactory evidence of being thoroughly devoted to God's service, and of acting under the influence of genuine Christian principle; and his character was peculiarly fitted in many respects to call forth at once esteem and affection.

He has been sometimes charged, even by those who had no prejudice against his cause or his principles, with interfering too much in the political affairs of his country, and connecting religion too closely with political movements. And, indeed, his death at the battle of Cappell has been held up as an instance of righteous retribution,—as an illustration of the scriptural principle, that “he that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword.” Though this view has been countenanced by some very eminent and influential names in the present day, we are by no means sure that it has any solid foundation to rest upon. We do not know any scriptural ground which entitles us to lay it down as an absolute rule, that the character of the citizen and the patriot must be entirely sunk in that of the Christian minister,—anything which precludes ministers from taking part, in any circumstances, in promoting the political well-being of their country, or in seeking, in the use of lawful means, to have the regulation of national affairs directed to the advancement of the cause and kingdom of Christ. Ministers certainly show a spirit unworthy of their office, and indicate the low state of their personal religion, when they ordinarily give much time or attention to anything but the direct and proper business of their office, and when they act as if they believed that the success of Christ's cause was really dependent upon political changes, upon results to be accomplished by human policy and human laws; and scarcely anything short of downright immorality tends more powerfully to injure their usefulness, than engaging keenly in the ordinary contentions of political partisanship which may be agitating the community. But since they are not required to abandon wholly the discharge of the duties, or the exercise of the rights, which devolve upon them as citizens, or to become indifferent to the temporal welfare or prosperity of their country; and since it can scarcely be disputed that, in point -of fact, the way in which national affairs have been regulated and national laws framed has often materially contributed to the obstruction or the advancement of Christ's cause,—it seems scarcely fair at once to condemn the conduct of those who may have done something directed to the

object of securing the right regulation of national affairs, by means of vague allegations about the spirit of Christianity and the use of carnal weapons, *etc.* etc., without a careful examination of the particular things done, viewed in connection with the whole circumstances in which they took place. Many countries were so situated at the time of the Reformation, that it was scarcely possible to keep political and religious matters entirely distinct, and scarcely practicable for men who were interested in the welfare of true religion to abstain from taking part in the regulation of national affairs; and the narrower the sphere of action, the more difficult, or rather impracticable, did such separation and abstinence often become. What John Knox did, was compelled to do, and did with so much advantage to his country, in Scotland, it was at least equally warrantable and necessary for Zwingli to do in the small canton of Zurich, and in the Helvetic Confederation. And while this may be said generally of his taking some part in the regulation of the public affairs of his country, we are not aware that any evidence has been produced, that he either recommended or approved of any of the public proceedings of Zurich and her confederate cantons, which were clearly objectionable on grounds of religion, equity, or policy. It is well known that he disapproved, and did what he could to prevent, the steps that led to the war in which he lost his life; and it was in obedience to the express orders of the civil authorities, and in the discharge of his duties as a pastor, that, not without some melancholy forebodings, he accompanied his countrymen to the fatal field of Cappell. We cannot dwell upon this subject, but we have thought it proper to express our doubts whether the disapprobation which some eminent men in the present day have indicated of Zwingli's conduct in this respect is altogether well founded. We confess we are inclined to regard this disapprobation as originating rather in a narrow and sentimental, than in an enlarged and manly, view of the whole subject; and to suspect that it may have been encouraged by an unconscious infusion of the erroneous and dangerous principle of judging of the character of Zwingli's conduct by the event,—of regarding his violent death upon the field of battle as a sort of proof of his Master's displeasure with the course he had pursued. But we cannot dwell upon historical and biographical matters, and must proceed to notice Zwingli's theology.

Though he preached the gospel, and inculcated the leading principles of Protestantism, in 1516, it was not till 1519 that he was called to come forth publicly in opposition to the Church of Home, and it was in 1522 that his first works were published; so that, as his death took place in 1531, when he was only forty-seven years of age, his public labours as a Reformer extended only over a period of twelve, and as an author over a period of nine, years. And when we



attend to the multiplicity and abundance of his public labours, and the character of the four folio volumes of his works produced in this brief space, we are constrained to form the highest estimate both of his ability and his industry. His works are chiefly occupied with the exposition of Scripture, and with unfolding and defending the doctrines which he had deduced from the word of God, in opposition to the errors of the Papists and the Anabaptists,—or, as he commonly called them, the Catabaptists,—and in opposition to Luther and his followers, on the subject of the presence of Christ's flesh and blood in the Eucharist. It is deplorable, indeed, to find, that through Luther's error and obstinacy, so large a portion of the brief but most valuable life of Zwingli was of necessity occupied in exposing the unintelligible absurdity of consubstantiation.

Zwingli was not endowed with the fire and energy, with the vigorous and lively imagination, or with the graphic power of Luther; but his understanding, upon the whole, was sounder, and his mental faculties were better regulated and more correctly balanced. He had not been led either by the course of his studies or by his spiritual experience,—that is, God's dealings with his soul in leading him to the knowledge and belief of the truth,—to give such prominence as Luther did to any particular departments or aspects of divine truth. He ranged somewhat more freely over the whole field of Scripture for truths to bring out and enforce, and over the whole field of Popery for errors to expose and assail; and this has given a variety and extent to his speculations, which Luther's works do not perhaps exhibit in the same degree. And as he was eminently distinguished for perspicacity and soundness of judgment, he has very generally reached a just conclusion, and established it by judicious and satisfactory arguments from Scripture. There are errors and crudities to be found in Zwingli's works, but they are not perhaps so numerous as in Luther's; and several instances occur in which, on points unconnected with the sacramentarian controversy, and without mentioning Luther's name, he has corrected some of the extravagances and overstatements in which the great Saxon Reformer not unfrequently indulged. Indeed, considering the whole circumstances in which Zwingli was placed, the opportunities he enjoyed, the occupations in which he was involved, and the extent to which he formed his views from his own personal independent study of the sacred Scriptures, he may be fairly said to have proved himself quite equal to any of the Reformers, in the possession of the power of accurately discovering divine truth, and establishing it upon satisfactory scriptural grounds.

His theology upon almost all topics of importance, derived from his own independent study of the word of God, was the same as that which Luther

derived from the same sacred and infallible source, as was fully proved by the Articles agreed upon at the conference at Marburg in the year 1529. This conference is one of the most interesting and important events in the history of the church, both in its more personal and in its more public aspects. It was a noble subject for the graphic pen of Dr Merle D'Aubigne, who has certainly done it ample justice, and whose narrative of it, in the thirteenth hook of the "History of the Reformation," is singularly interesting, and admirably fitted to exert a useful and wholesome influence. We do not know that ever, on any other occasion in the history of the church, four such men as Luther and Melancthon, Zwingli and Oecolampadius met together in one room, and sat at the same table discussing the great doctrines of theology. Luther's refusal to shake hands with Zwingli, which led that truly noble and thoroughly brave man to burst into tears, was one of the most deplorable and humiliating, but at the same time solemn and instructive, exhibitions of the deceitfulness of sin and of the human heart the world has ever witnessed.

The importance of the Marburg conference in its more public aspects lies in this, that it was the first formal development, both of the unity and the divergence of the two great sections of the first Reformers, who had, independently of each other, derived their views of divine things from the study of the word of God. At this conference, the leading doctrines of Christianity were embodied in fifteen Articles, and both parties entirely agreed with each other in regard to fourteen and two-thirds of the whole—comprehending almost everything that could be regarded as fundamental in a summary of Christian truth. Even in regard to the Lord's Supper they agreed upon most matters of importance, and differed only on this question, "Whether the true body and blood of Christ be corporally present in the bread and wine?" And in regard to this question of the corporal presence, they promised to cherish Christian love towards one another "as far as the conscience of each will allow"—*u quantum cujusque conscientia feret.* Luther's conscience unfortunately would not allow him to go far, in the way of Christian love, towards those who denied the unintelligible dogma which he defended so strenuously; and the mischiefs that arose from this controversy, and from the Way in which it was conducted, especially by Luther and his followers, including its indirect and remote consequences, have been incalculable in amount, and are damaging the cause of Protestantism, and benefiting the cause of Popery, down to the present day. Luther and his followers are the parties responsible for this controversy, and for all the mischief which, directly and indirectly, immediately and remotely, it has occasioned, 1st, and principally, because they were palpably and wholly wrong on the merits of the question; and

2d, because they also displayed a far greater amount of the injurious influences which controversy usually exerts upon the spirit and conduct of men, than their opponents did. How many have there been in every age who, while destitute of all Luther's redeeming qualities, have displayed largely the grievous infirmities which he exhibited in the sacramentarian controversy, and like him have laid all the responsibility of this upon their conscience, which compelled them to stand fast for the truth; and how great the mischief which persons of this stamp have done to the church, by their number and audacity, notwithstanding their insignificance individually!

The subjects on which the orthodoxy of Zwingli has been chiefly assailed are the doctrine of original sin and the salvation of the heathen; and, on the ground of statements which he made on these subjects, the Papists have been accustomed to accuse him of Pelagianism and Paganism. In regard to the first of these topics, *viz.* the doctrine of original sin, on which Bossuet and other Papists have adduced heavy charges against Zwingli's orthodoxy, as if he denied it altogether, it has, we think, been proved that when a full and impartial view is taken of his whole doctrine, he does not materially deviate from the standard of scriptural orthodoxy on the subject of the natural and universal depravity of man; and that the peculiarities of his statements, upon which the charge is commonly based, really resolve into differences chiefly about the precise meaning and the proper application of words. He seems to have been anxious to confine the proper meaning of the word *peccatum* to an actual personal violation of God's law, and to have been disposed to call the natural depravity of man, the source or cause of actual transgression, by the name of a disease, *morbus*, rather than of a sin or *peccatum*. But though he attached unnecessary importance to this distinction, he has clearly defined his meaning, explained in what sense men's natural propensity to violate God's law is or is not *peccatum*; he has fully expressed his accordance in the great scriptural doctrine, that all men do, in point of fact, bring into the world with them a depravity of nature, a diseased moral constitution, which certainly, and in every instance, leads them to incur the guilt of actual transgressions of God's law, and which, but for the interposition of divine grace, would certainly involve them in everlasting misery. The Marburg Articles were prepared by Luther, who had been led to entertain suspicions of Zwingli's orthodoxy upon other points than the real or corporal presence, and among others on original sin, and were no doubt intended by him to test Zwingli's soundness in the faith. Yet Zwingli had no hesitation in subscribing the proposition which Luther prepared upon this point, *viz.* "*Credimus peccatum originis, ab Adamo in nos carnali generatione propagatum, tale peccatum esse,*

quod omnes homines condemnet, et nisi Christus opem nobis su& morte et vita tulisset, seterna morte nobis in eo moriendum fuisset, neque unquam in regnum dei et beatitudinem seternam pervenire potuissimus.” This in all fairness must be held to establish Zwingli’s substantial orthodoxy in regard to the universality and the fatal consequences of man’s natural depravity; and the suspicion afterwards expressed by Luther as to Zwingli’s soundness upon this subject, without any new cause having been afforded for the suspicion, should be regarded merely as a specimen of the unjust and ungenerous treatment which he too often gave to the sacramentarians and others who opposed him. It is proper to mention that Milner has given a very defective and unfair representation of Zwingli’s views upon this subject, as if he were anxious to establish a charge of error against him; and that the unfairness of Milner’s statements has been pointed out, and Zwingli satisfactorily vindicated from the imputation, by Scott, in his excellent Continuation of Milner.

Zwingli’s adoption of this Article upon original sin also proves, that he did not deviate quite so far from sound doctrine in his views about the salvation of the heathen, as might at first sight appear from some of his statements upon this point. He has indeed plainly enough intimated, as some of the fathers have done, his belief that some of the more wise and virtuous heathen were saved and admitted to heaven; and in specifying by name some of the individuals among them whom we might expect to meet there, such as Hercules and Theseus, he has certainly not shown his usual good sense. But he never meant to teach (and his subscription to the above-quoted Article, as well as the whole tenor of his writings, proves it) that men may be saved “by framing their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of the religion they profess.” On the contrary, he constantly taught that men, if saved at all, were saved only on the ground of Christ’s atonement, and by the operation of God’s grace. But he thought, without any sufficient scriptural warrant, that the benefits of Christ’s death might be imparted to men, and that their natures might be renewed by God’s agency, even though they were not acquainted with any external supernatural revelation, and that some of the heathen did manifest such moral excellence as to indicate the presence of God’s special gracious agency. This was certainly seeking to be wise above what is written. We are not called upon to be making any positive affirmations as to what God can do or may do, in extending mercy to individuals among men. But the principle is clearly revealed to us in Scripture, that the general provision which God has made for saving men individually from their natural guilt and depravity, is by communicating to them, through the medium of an external revelation, and impressing upon their hearts by His Spirit, some

knowledge of the only way of salvation through a Redeemer and a sacrifice; and this truth, solemn and awful as it is, we are bound to receive as the ordinary rule of our opinions and practice, abstaining from all unwarranted speculations, and resting satisfied in the assurance that the Judge of all the earth will do right. Still there may be said to be less of error and presumption in the notion that a knowledge of divine truth has been communicated extraordinarily to some men who were not acquainted with an external supernatural revelation, than in the notion that men may be saved merely by framing their lives according to the light of nature, and the particular religion, whatever it may be, with which they may happen to have been acquainted; and to the benefit of this difference in degree, such as it is, Zwingli is entitled, though his mode of discussing the subject cannot be vindicated.

There is nothing in the Articles of Marburg bearing very directly and explicitly upon the doctrines which are usually regarded as the peculiarities of the Calvinistic system, though we are persuaded that none but Calvinists can hold, with full intelligence and thorough consistency, the great scriptural doctrines which are there set forth concerning the natural guilt and depravity of man, the way of salvation through Christ, gratuitous justification, and the production of faith and regeneration by God's immediate agency. Still, as some men do not perceive and admit the necessary connection between these great doctrines and what they call the peculiarities of Calvinism, the question may still be asked, whether Zwingli agreed with Calvin in those peculiar doctrines with which his name is usually associated. And in answer to this question, we have no hesitation in saying,—what is equally true of Luther,—that though Zwingli was not led to dwell upon the exposition, illustration, and defence of these doctrines so fully as Calvin, and although he has not perhaps given any formal deliverance on the irresistibility of grace and the perseverance of the saints, in the distinct and specific form in which these topics came to be afterwards discussed, yet in regard to the universal foreordination and efficacious providence of God, and in regard to election and reprobation, he was as Calvinistic as Calvin himself.

It is rather singular that both Mosheim and Milner have denied this position, though it can be most fully established. Mosheim says, that “the celebrated doctrine of an absolute decree respecting the salvation of men, which was unknown to Zwingli, was inculcated by Calvin,” and Milner says, “On a careful perusal of Zwingli's voluminous writings, I am convinced that certain peculiar sentiments, afterwards maintained by Calvin, concerning the absolute decrees of God, made no part of the theology of the Swiss Reformer.” This statement of

Milner's is very cautiously expressed, and contains no specification of the precise points upon which Zwingli and Calvin are said to have differed. But it is quite plain, from the whole scope of the passage where this extract occurs, that Milner just means in substance to say, as Mosheim does, that while Luther, as he admits, though Mosheim denies this too, was, on the subject of predestination and the decrees of God, a Calvinist, Zwingli was not. Scott, however, whose representations of the theological sentiments of the Reformers are very full and accurate, and whose Continuation of Milner is, on this account, peculiarly valuable, and deserving of the highest commendation, has fully proved that the representations of Mosheim and Milner upon this point are perfectly erroneous. It is indeed scarcely possible that they could ever have read Zwingli's "Elenchus in Strophas Catabaptistarum," or his treatise, "De Providentia Dei." In these treatises he has clearly and unequivocally expressed his sentiments upon this subject, in full conformity with those afterwards taught and expounded by Calvin, while it cannot be alleged that he has contradicted them in any part of his writings. It may be worth while to give one or two brief extracts from these works in confirmation of this position. In his "Elenchus," he gives the following statement as a summary of Paul's argument in the Epistle to the Romans:—"Fide servamur, non ex operibus. Fides non est humanarum virium sed dei. Is ergo earn dat us quos vocavit, eos autem vocavit quos ad salutem destinavit, eos autem ad hanc destinavit quos elegit, elegit autem quos voluit, liberum enim est ei hoc atque integrum, perinde atque figulo, vasa diversa ex eadem massa educere. Hoc breviter argumentum et summa est electionis a Paulo tractatse." And in his commentary upon this summary of Paul's argument, he makes it clear, beyond all possibility of reasonable doubt, that he believed, upon Paul's authority, that God, by an absolute decree, chose some men to everlasting life, and made effectual provision that they should be saved,—a choice or election made without regard to anything foreseen in them, but solely according to the counsel of His own will. And in his treatise, "De Providentia Dei," he has a chapter, the sixth, on "Election," in which he fully explains his views in such a way as to leave no room for doubt as to their import, and makes some statements even about reprobation, quite as strong as any that ever proceeded from Calvin. Indeed he here expressly tells us, that in his early life, when he was engaged in the study of the schoolmen, he held, as most of them did, what we should now call the common Arminian doctrine of God's electing men to life because He foresaw that they were to repent and believe the gospel, and that they would persevere in faith and good works. "Quae mihi sententia, ut olim scholas colenti placuit, ita illas deserenti et divinorum oraculorum puritati adhserenti, maxime displicuit." And then he proceeds to show, with a clearness and a force not

unworthy of Calvin himself, that this Arminian doctrine is utterly inconsistent with the perfections and moral government of God, and necessarily makes men, whatever its supporters may profess to maintain about the divine sovereignty, the absolute arbiters of their own everlasting destiny,— the true authors of their own salvation.

Many other extracts of a similar kind will be found in Hottinger and Scott.<sup>f</sup> They are amply sufficient to establish, that Zwingli concurred with Luther in teaching those great doctrines which have brought so much odium on the name of Calvin, before that great man had been led even to form his views of divine truth; for Luther's treatise "De Servo Arbitrio" was published when Calvin was seventeen, and Zwingli's treatise "De Providentia Dei" when Calvin was twenty years of age.

These mis-statements of Mosheim and Milner about the theological views of Zwingli, are rather remarkable specimens of the "humanum est errare," and are fitted to remind us of the little reliance that should be placed upon second-hand authorities. Mosheim further lays it down, that Zwingli and Calvin differed from each other, not only in regard to predestination, but also in regard to the power of the civil magistrate in religious matters, and the doctrine of the sacraments. On the first of these points, Mosheim is right in saying of Calvin, "that he circumscribed the power of the magistrate in matters of religion within narrow limits, and maintained that the church ought to be free and independent, and to govern itself by means of bodies of presbyters, synods, or conventions of presbyters, in the manner of the ancient church, yet leaving to the magistrate the protection of the church, and an external care over it." These were the views of Calvin; and they have been the views ever since of the great body of those who have usually been ranked under his name, as opposed to Erastianism on the one hand, and to Voluntaryism on the other. But Mosheim falls into inaccuracy and exaggeration when, in contrast with these views of Calvin, he alleges, that "Zwingli assigned to civil rulers full and absolute power in regard to religious matters, and, what many censure him for, subjected the ministers of religion entirely to their authority." There is no warrant for ascribing such extreme views upon this subject to Zwingli, who, though he did not restrain the power of the civil magistrate within such narrow bounds as Calvin assigned it, was not nearly so Erastian as Mosheim himself and the generality of Lutheran writers. There is no ground, indeed, for believing that Zwingli ever attained to a distinct conception of the great scriptural principle, which has been generally held by Calvinists, *viz.* that Christ has appointed in His church a government in the

hands of ecclesiastical office-bearers, distinct from, independent of, and not subordinate in its own sphere to, the civil magistrate. But he certainly showed that he was decidedly in advance of Luther and Melancthon on this question, and that he was altogether opposed to the leading principle which chiefly Erastus laboured to establish, by ascribing fully and unequivocally the power of excommunication solely to the church itself, and not to the civil magistrate. And with respect to the wider and more general subject of the province and function of the civil magistrate in regard to religion, Zwingli may perhaps be regarded as holding the main substance of what sound principle demands, in maintaining, as it can be proved that he did, that all the powers conceded to the civil authorities of Zurich in religious matters were exercised by them as representing the church, and only with the church's own consent. We do not believe that the church can lawfully concede or delegate to the civil authorities any power which Christ has conferred upon her. But still there is a fundamental difference between this principle of Zwingli's and the proper Erastian tenet, which ascribes to the civil magistrate jurisdiction or authority, not merely *circa sacra*, but in *sacris*, as inherently attaching to his office.

But perhaps the most interesting topic of discussion connected with the investigation of the opinions of Zwingli, is his doctrine on the subject of the sacraments. A very general impression prevails, and it is certainly not altogether without foundation, that Zwingli held low and defective views upon this subject. He is usually alleged to have taught, that the sacraments are just naked and bare signs or symbols, emblematically and figuratively representing or signifying scriptural truths and spiritual blessings; and that the reception of them is a mere commemoration of what Christ has done for sinners, and a profession which men make before the church or one another of the views which they have been led to entertain upon the great doctrines of Scripture concerning the way of salvation, as well as a public pledge to follow out consistently the views thus professed; and there are undoubtedly statements in Zwingli's writings which seem fairly enough to imply, that this was the whole doctrine which he taught concerning the sacraments. This doctrine was generally regarded by Protestants, especially after Calvin had published his views upon the subject, as being defective, and though true so far as it went, yet coming far short of bringing out the whole truth taught in Scripture regarding it. And as the Papists were accustomed to bring it as a serious charge against the Reformers, that they explained away the whole mystery and efficacy of the sacraments, the Protestant churches became anxious to disclaim the view which Zwingli had seemed to sanction. Accordingly, in the original Scottish Confession, prepared by John



Knox, and adopted by the church in 1560, it is said, "We utterly condemn the vanity of those who affirm sacraments to be nothing else but naked and bare signs." Similar disclaimers are to be found in many of the other confessions of the Reformed churches, and in the writings of the generality of the Protestant divines of that period; though there is some good reason to doubt, whether there be adequate grounds for alleging that Zwingli held the sacraments to be nothing else but naked and bare signs, and though there is considerable difficulty in ascertaining in some cases what those meant to affirm who were anxious to repudiate this position. It is very manifest that Zwingli, disgusted with the mass of heresy, mysticism, and absurdity which had prevailed so long and so widely in the church on the subject of the sacraments, leant very strongly to what may be called the opposite extreme of excessive simplicity and plainness. It is not wonderful that he did not succeed perfectly in hitting the golden mean, or that the reaction against the monstrous and ruinous system which had been wrought out and established in the Church of Rome, tempted him to try to simplify the subject of the sacraments beyond what the Scripture required or sanctioned. We believe that he did to some extent yield to this temptation; but we are persuaded, at the same time, that he rendered services of the very highest value to the church, by the light which he threw upon this important and intricate subject.

There is some difficulty in ascertaining precisely what Zwingli's views upon the subject of the sacraments were, and there is some ground to think that, towards the end of his life, he ascribed a higher value and a greater efficacy to these ordinances than he had once done. In his great work, "De Vera et Falsa Religione," published in 1525, he admits that he had spoken of the sacraments somewhat rashly and crudely, and indicated that his views were advancing in what Protestants generally would reckon a sound direction. It is true, indeed, that in a later work published in 1530, his "Ratio Fidei," he continued to assert, "Sacramenta tam abesse ut gratiam conferant, ut ne adferant quidem aut dispensent." But many Protestants, who were far enough from regarding the sacraments as naked and bare signs, have denied that the sacraments confer grace; and indeed it is only in a very limited and carefully defined sense that any persons intelligently opposed to the doctrine of the Church of Rome admit this position. In a work published in the same year, in defence of his "Ratio Fidei," he declared that he was quite willing to concur in anything that might be said in commending and exalting the sacraments, provided that what was spoken symbolically was understood and applied symbolically, and that the whole honour of whatever spiritual benefit was derived was ascribed to God, and not either to the person administering them, or to any efficacy of the outward

elements or actions. And in the last work which he wrote, and which was not published till after his death, the “*Expositio Fidei*,” he gave some indications, though perhaps not very explicit, of regarding the sacraments not only as signs but as seals,—as signs and seals not only on the part of men, but of God,—as signifying and confirming something then done by God through the Spirit, as well as something done by the receiver through faith. This is the great general principle which has been usually held by Protestants upon the subject, and is commonly regarded as constituting the leading point of difference between what is often represented as the Zwinglian doctrine of the sacraments being only naked and bare signs, and that generally held by the Protestant churches. We cannot assert that Zwingli has brought out very distinctly and explicitly this important principle, that the sacraments are signs and seals on the part of God as well as of men; and therefore we cannot assert that his doctrine, though it is true so far as it goes, brings out the whole of what Scripture teaches upon this subject, or deny that he leaned unduly and excessively to the side of plainness and simplicity in the exposition of this topic. But we are persuaded that he manifested very great strength and vigour of mind in his speculations upon this matter, and that he aided greatly the progress of scriptural truth in regard to it.

It was in the highest degree honourable to Zwingli that he so entirely threw off the huge mass of extravagant absurdity and unintelligible mysticism, which from a very early period had been gathering round the subject of the sacraments, and which had reached its full height in the authorized doctrine of the Church of Rome. This was an achievement which Luther never fully reached, either in regard to baptism or the Lord’s Supper. Zwingli’s rejection of the whole of the erroneous and dangerous doctrine in regard to the sacraments which had been inculcated by the schoolmen, and sanctioned by the Church of Rome, was, in the circumstances in which he was placed, one of the most arduous and honourable, and in its consequences one of the most important and beneficial, achievements which the history of the church records. The great general principles by which Zwingli was guided in the formation and promulgation of his views in regard to the sacraments were these:—1st, That great care should be taken to avoid anything which might appear to trench upon the free grace of God, the meritorious efficacy of Christ’s work, and the almighty agency of His Spirit in bestowing upon men all spiritual blessings; and 2d, That whatever external means of grace may have been appointed, and in whatever way these means may ordinarily operate, God must not be held to be tied or restricted in the communication of spiritual benefits to the use of anything of an external kind, though He has himself appointed and prescribed it; and 3d, That the most

important matter connected with the subject of the sacraments is the state of mind and heart of the recipient; and that, with reference to this, the essential thing is, that the state of mind and heart of the recipient should correspond with the outward act which, in participating in the sacrament, he performed. Zwingli was deeply persuaded that the right mode of investigating this subject was not to follow the example of the Fathers, in straining the imagination to devise unwarranted, extravagant, and unintelligible notions of the nature and effects of the sacraments, for the purpose of making them more awful and more influential, but to trace out plainly and simply what is taught and indicated in Scripture regarding them. By following out this course, conscientiously and judiciously, he was led in the first place to repudiate the whole huge mass of absurdity and heresy which the Fathers and the schoolmen had accumulated around this subject; and in the second place, to lay down and to apply the three great general principles above stated, which were fitted not only to exclude much grievous error, but to bring in much important and wholesome truth. Zwingli, in these ways, rendered valuable service to the church, and has done much to put the general subject of the sacraments upon a sound and safe footing.

Zwingli's mental constitution gave him a very decided aversion to the unintelligible and mystical, and made him lean towards what was clear, definite, and practical. He had a strong sense of the great injury that had been done to religion by the notions which had long prevailed in regard to the sacraments. And under these influences it is not surprising that, while discarding a great deal of dangerous error, he should have left in abeyance some portion of wholesome truth. He leant to the side of what was clear, palpable, and safe; and in the circumstances in which he was placed, this was the right side to lean to. It is not surprising that he did not stop precisely at the right point, and that he carried the work of demolition somewhat too far. And when we consider what a mass of unintelligible and incredible absurdities, to the deep degradation of the human intellect,—and what a mass of heresies, perverting the way of salvation and tending to ruin men's souls,—had been invented by the Fathers and the schoolmen, and sanctioned by the Church of Home on the subject of the sacraments, we cannot but sympathize with Zwingli's general spirit and tendencies in regard to this matter, and rejoice in the large measure of success which attended his investigations. It is indeed a matter of fundamental importance, and perhaps more indispensable than anything else towards preparing men for a rational, intelligent, and beneficial reception of the sacraments, and guarding against self-deceit and danger in the use of them, that they have distinct and accurate conceptions of what the outward elements and

actions signify or represent, and of what is professed or implied in the reception of them; that is, of what is the state of mind and heart on the part of the recipient which the reception of them indicates or proclaims. It is in a great measure from inattention to this fundamental point, that so many in every age have been led to participate in the sacraments, who were thereby making a false profession, and of course injuring their own souls; while they were entertaining unfounded expectations of getting spiritual blessings without having any anxiety or concern about what is ordinarily necessary with a view to that result. Zwingli rendered a most important service by bringing out this great principle, which had been almost entirely buried, and pressing it upon the attention of the church. He came short indeed of the truth in his doctrine as to the nature and efficacy of the sacraments, by not bringing out fully what God does, or is ready and willing to do, through their instrumentality, in offering to men and conferring upon them, through the exercise of faith, spiritual blessings. But he laid a good foundation, on which the whole truth taught in Scripture might be built, when he directed special attention to the true significance and import of the outward elements and actions; and pressed upon men the paramount necessity of seeing to it, that the state of their mind and heart corresponded with the outward signs which they used—with the outward actions which they performed.

To all this amount of commendation in connection with the exposition of the sacraments we believe Zwingli to be well entitled, while the true amount of his shortcoming or deficiency it is not very easy to estimate. Indeed, in regard to this latter point, it should not be forgotten, that of the important document commonly called the “Consensus Tigurinus,”—in which was embodied a statement of the fundamental principles about the sacraments, which were held in common by the churches of Geneva and Zurich, as represented by Calvin and by Bullinger the successor of Zwingli, —Calvin declared his conviction, that “if Zwingli and Oecolampadius, these most excellent and illustrious servants of Christ, were now alive, they would not change a word in it.”

We do not consider it necessary to dwell longer upon the examination of the opinions of Zwingli in regard to the sacraments. Indeed we do not intend to bring forward anything further that is connected with the personal history of the great Reformer of German Switzerland. We propose now to give some exposition of the general doctrine or theory of the sacraments, as it has been held by the Reformed churches,—and especially as it has been set forth in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms which were prepared by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and which are still received as symbolical by the great

body of Presbyterians over the world.

A grievous corruption of the scriptural doctrine of the sacraments appeared very early in the church: it spread far and wide, and exerted a most injurious influence upon the interests of true religion. Confusion and, exaggeration very early appeared in speaking of these ordinances, or the “tremendous mysteries,” as some of the Fathers called them; and this confusion and exaggeration soon led to a substitution of the mere observance of outward rites for the weightier matters of the law—for the essential features of Christian character and conduct. Even in the second century we find plain indications of a tendency to speak of the nature, design, and effects of the sacraments, in a very inflated and exaggerated style,—a style very different from anything we find in the New Testament. We have a striking instance of this in the famous passage on the Eucharist, occurring near the end of the first Apology of Justin Martyr, the very earliest of the Fathers who was not contemporary with the apostles. Romanists contend that this passage teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation; Lutherans, that it teaches consubstantiation; and most other men, that it teaches neither the one nor the other. All men of candour admit that the passage is obscure and ambiguous; and all men of sense should have long ago come to the conclusion, that it was not worth while to spend any time in investigating its meaning. It holds true of this, as of many other passages in the writings of the Fathers which have given rise to much learned discussion in modern times, that it really has no definite meaning; and that if we could call up its author, and interrogate him on the subject, he would be utterly unable to tell us what he meant when he wrote it. This tendency to exaggeration and extravagance, to confusion and absurdity, upon the subject of the sacraments, increased continually, in proportion as sound doctrine upon matters of greater importance disappeared and vital religion decayed, until, in the Middle Ages, Christianity came to be looked upon by the great body of its professors, as a system which consisted in, and the whole benefits of which were connected with, a series of outward ceremonies and ritual observances. The nature, design, and effects of the sacraments occupied a large share of the attention of the schoolmen; and indeed the exposition and development of the Romish and Tractarian doctrine upon this subject, may be justly regarded as one of the principal exhibitions of the anti-scriptural views and the perverted ingenuity of the scholastic doctors. An exaggerated and unscriptural view of the value and efficacy of the sacraments was too deeply engrained into the scholastic theology, and was too much in accordance with the general policy of the Church of Home, and the general character and tendency of her system, to admit of the Council of Trent giving any sanction to the sounder views which had been

introduced by the Protestants, especially by that section of them who have been called the Reformed, to distinguish them from the followers of Luther.

The doctrine of the Church of Rome upon this subject is set forth in the first part of the decree of the seventh session of the Council of Trent, which treats de Sacramentis in genere, and in statements made in treating of some of the other sacraments individually. The leading features of their doctrine on the general subject of the sacraments are these, that “through the sacraments of the church all true righteousness either begins, or when begun is increased, or when lost is repaired;” “that men do not obtain from God the grace of justification by faith alone without the sacraments, or at least without a desire or wish to receive them;” “that the sacraments contain the grace which they signify or represent, and confer it always upon all who receive them, unless they put a bar or obstacle in the way” (ponunt obicem),— that is (as they usually explain it), unless they have at the time of receiving the sacrament a deliberate intention of committing sin; and that they confer or bestow grace thus universally ex opere operato,— that is, by some power or virtue given to them and operating through them. The application of these principles, which constitute the general doctrine or theory of the sacraments in the Romish theology, to the sacrament of baptism, and to the fundamental blessings of forgiveness and regeneration which it signifies or represents, plainly implies—what indeed the Council of Trent expressly teaches—viz. that baptism is the instrumental cause of justification, which with Romanists comprehends both forgiveness and regeneration; that all adults receive when baptized, unless they put a bar in the way, these great blessings; that all infants, being unable to put a bar in the way of the efficacious operation of the sacrament, receive in baptism the forgiveness of original sin and the renovation of their moral natures; and that no sin of unbaptized persons, not even the original sin of those who die in infancy, is forgiven without baptism. This is in substance the doctrine in regard to the sacraments which is taught by the modern Tractarians of the Church of England, and which indeed, in its main features, may be said to have been always held by High Churchmen. Some of them shrink, indeed, from speaking so plainly on some points as the Council of Trent has done, especially on the opus operatum; but there is no difficulty in showing that -all High Churchmen must concur in substance with the general sacramental theory of the Church of Rome. The essential idea of the Popish and Tractarian doctrine upon this subject is, that God has established an invariable connection between the sacraments as outward ordinances, and the communication by himself of spiritual blessings, of pardon and holiness; with this further notion, which naturally results from it, that He has endowed these

outward ordinances with some sort of intrinsic power or inherent capacity of conveying or conferring the spiritual blessings with which they are respectively connected. This is what is, and indeed must be, meant by the sacramental principle, about which High Churchmen in the present day prate so much; and notwithstanding their efforts to wrap it up in vague and indefinite phraseology, it is plainly in substance just the doctrine which was established by the Council of Trent. It is a necessary result of this principle, that the want of the outward ordinance,—not the neglect or contempt of it, but the mere want of it,—from whatever cause arising, deprives men of the spiritual blessings which it is said to convey or confer. Romanists have found it necessary or politic to make some little exceptions to this practical conclusion; but this is the great general result to which their whole scheme of doctrine upon the subject leads, and which ordinarily they do not hesitate to adopt and to apply.

In opposition to all these views, Protestants have been accustomed to maintain the great principle, that the only thing on which the possession by men individually of the fundamental spiritual blessings of justification and sanctification is, by God's arrangements, made necessarily and invariably dependent, is union to Jesus Christ, and that the only thing on which union to Christ may be said to be dependent, is faith in Him; so that it holds true, absolutely and universally, that wherever there is faith in Christ, or union to Him by faith, there pardon and holiness—all necessary spiritual blessings — are communicated by God and received by men, even though they have never actually partaken in any sacrament, or in any outward ordinance whatever. Scripture, we think, plainly teaches this great truth, that as soon as, and in every instance in which, men are united to Christ by faith, they receive justification and regeneration; while without or apart from personal union to Christ by faith, these indispensable blessings are never conferred or received. Every man who is justified and regenerated is certainly admitted into heaven, whether he have been baptized or not; and there is no ground in Scripture for maintaining either that every one who has been baptized has been forgiven and regenerated, or that those who have not been baptized have not received these great blessings.

If this great general principle can be established from Scripture, it must materially affect some of the views which Romanists and Tractarians hold in regard to the sacraments, and especially in regard to their necessity and importance. Romanists, indeed, are in the habit of charging Protestants with holding that the sacraments are unnecessary or superfluous. But this is a misrepresentation. In perfect consistency with this great doctrine, which

represents the possession of spiritual blessings and the ultimate enjoyment of heaven, as dependent absolutely and universally upon union to Christ through faith and upon nothing else, we maintain that the sacraments which Christ instituted are of imperative obligation, and that it is a duty incumbent upon men to observe them when the means and opportunity of doing so are afforded them; so that it is sinful to neglect or disregard them. Upon the subject of the necessity of the sacraments, Protestant divines have been accustomed to employ a distinction, which, like many other scholastic distinctions, brings out very clearly the meaning it was intended to express, *viz.* that the sacraments are necessary, *ex necessitate praecepti non ex necessitate medii*;—necessary *ex necessitate praecepti*, because the observance of them is commanded or enjoined, and must therefore be practised by all who have in providence an opportunity of doing so, so that the voluntary neglect or disregard of them is sinful; but not necessary *ex necessitate medii*, or in such a sense that the mere fact of men not having actually observed them either produces or proves the non-possession of spiritual blessings,—either excludes men from heaven, or affords evidence that they will not in point of fact be admitted there. Regeneration or conversion, as implying a thorough change of moral nature, is necessary, both *ex necessitate praecepti* and *ex necessitate medii*. It is necessary, not merely because it is commanded or enjoined, so that the neglect or omission of it is sinful, but also because, from the nature of the case, the result cannot be attained without it; inasmuch as it holds true, absolutely and universally, in point of fact and in the case of each individual of our race, that except we be born again we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. No such necessity can be established with respect to the sacraments, though Romanists and Tractarians assert this, and must do so in order to carry out their principles consistently.

But while this great general principle about spiritual blessings and eternal happiness being dependent upon union to Christ and upon nothing else, is inconsistent with the Popish and Tractarian notions of the necessity of the sacraments, and furnishes a strong presumption against the higher views of the importance and efficacy of these ordinances, it does not of itself give us any direct information as to what the sacraments are,—as to their nature, objects, and effects. Protestants profess to have a certain theory or doctrine in regard to the sacraments, as well as Romanists and Tractarians. A definition of the sacraments—or, throwing aside the technical scholastic meaning of the word definition, a description of the leading features of the sacrament, or a statement of the main positions held concerning them—is properly the sacramental principle; although that phrase has been commonly employed in the present day in a more limited



and specific sense. At the time of the Reformation the name Sacramentarian was applied by Luther to Zwingli and his followers, to convey the idea that they explained away or reduced to nothing the value and efficacy of the sacraments; while Zwingli, throwing back the nickname, protested that it might be applied with more propriety to those who made great mysteries of the sacraments, and ascribed to them a value and importance beyond what Scripture warrants. The justice of this statement of Zwingli has been confirmed by the aspect which the discussion of this topic has assumed in the present day. The Tractarians seem to think that none ought to be regarded as really believing in sacraments, except those who concur with the Church of Rome in holding that there is an invariable connection between the outward sign and the spiritual blessing signified, and that the outward ordinance exerts a real efficacious influence in producing the internal result. This, accordingly, is what they mean by the sacramental principle, on which they are fond of enlarging, and of which they claim to themselves a sort of monopoly. And this is the sense in which the phrase is now commonly used. But the sense in which the expression ought to be employed, is just to designate the fundamental idea of the general doctrine of Scripture on the subject of the sacraments; and in this sense, of course, Protestants have their sacramental principle as well as Romanists and Tractarians.

We believe that Scripture furnishes sufficient materials for giving a general definition or description of the sacraments, or of a sacrament as such; and we call this the sacramental principle, or the true doctrine of Scripture concerning the sacraments. The Reformers put forth their sacramental principle, or their general doctrine concerning the sacraments, in opposition to the views which prevailed at the time in the Church of Rome, and which were afterwards established by the Council of Trent. Definitions and descriptions of the sacraments were in consequence introduced into all the Confessions of the Reformed churches; and the investigation of the nature, the objects, and the effects of the sacraments has continued ever since to hold a place in theological discussions. Since the time when Calvin succeeded in bring the churches of Geneva and Zurich to a cordial agreement upon this subject, in the adoption of the Consensus Tigurinus in 1549, there has been no very great difference of opinion concerning it among Protestant divines, although there have occasionally been individuals who showed an inclination either towards the Popish and superstitious, or towards the Socinian and Rationalistic doctrine, and although the Church of England, from her unfortunate baptismal service, has been repeatedly placed in a most difficult and deplorable position. But though there is no great difference of opinion among the Reformed churches, and

among Protestant divines, concerning the general doctrine of the sacraments, there seems to have sprung up in modern times a great deal of ignorance and confusion in men's conceptions upon this subject. While the sacraments individually, baptism and the Lord's Supper, have been a good deal discussed in some of their aspects, the general doctrine of sacraments, as equally applicable to both, or to any other ordinances for which the designation of a sacrament might be claimed, has been very much overlooked. Even the boasting of the Tractarians about the sacramental principle, has not led to much discussion about the nature and design of the sacraments in general. The two latest works, so far as we know, which have been published under the title of the Doctrine of the Sacraments, contain nothing whatever on the general questions to which we have adverted. In the year 1838 a work was published, entitled "The Doctrine of the Sacraments," extracted from the "Remains of Alexander Knox," who was the friend and correspondent of Bishop Jebb, and whose writings seem to have contributed in no small degree to the rise and growth of Tractarianism; and this work discusses, with no little ability, many questions about baptism and about the Lord's Supper, but it contains nothing about the sacraments in general, or about sacraments as such. This statement likewise applies to a recent work of Archbishop Whately, the latest we believe he has published. In 1857 he put forth a work, entitled "The Scripture Doctrine concerning the Sacraments, and the Points connected therewith;" and it contains an able discussion on some points connected with baptism, and on some points connected with the Lord's Supper, but nothing whatever on the general nature, objects, and effects of the sacraments.

The disregard of this topic has tended to produce a great deal of confusion and error in men's conceptions upon the whole subject. We are in the habit of seeing baptism and the Lord's Supper administered in the church, and are thus led insensibly, and without much consideration, to form certain notions in regard to them, without investigating carefully their leading principles and grounds, and especially without investigating the relation in which they stand to each other, and the principles that may apply to both of them. We believe that there is scarcely any subject set forth in the confessions of the Reformed churches, that is less attended to and less understood than this of the sacraments; and that many even of those w<sup>h</sup>o have subscribed these confessions, rest satisfied with some defective and confused notions on the subject of baptism and on the subject of the Lord's Supper, while they have scarcely even a fragment of an idea of a sacramental principle, or of any general doctrine or theory on the subject of sacraments.

We are persuaded that it would tend greatly to enable men to understand more fully, what we fear many subscribe without understanding, if they took some pains to form a distinct and definite conception of what is taught in the confessions of faith in regard to sacraments in general, and then applied these views to the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper separately. It is quite true that the Scriptures can scarcely be said to contain any statements which bear very directly and formally upon the topics usually set forth in confessions of faith, and discussed in systems of theology, under the head *De Sacramentis* in genere, or to give us anything like full and systematic information about the general subject of the sacraments as such. But the New Testament plainly sets before us two outward ordinances, and two only, the observance of which is of permanent obligation in the Christian church, and which manifestly resemble each other in many respects, both in their general character as emblematic or symbolical institutions, and in their general purpose and object as means of grace,—that is, as connected in some way or other with the communication and the reception of spiritual blessings. As these two ordinances evidently occupy a peculiar place of their own in the general plan of the Christian system, and in the arrangements of the Christian church, it is natural and reasonable to inquire whether there are any materials in Scripture for adopting any general conclusions as to their nature, design, and efficacy, that may be equally applicable to them both. And, accordingly, what is usually given as the definition or description of the sacraments, or of a sacrament as such, is just an embodiment of what it is thought can be collected or deduced from Scripture, as being equally predicable of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Of course nothing ought to be introduced into the definition or description of the sacraments, which cannot be proved to be equally and alike applicable to all the ordinances to which the designation of a sacrament is given; and the less men find in Scripture that seems to them equally applicable to both ordinances, the more meagre is their sacramental principle, or their general doctrine in regard to the nature and design of the sacraments.

The Reformed confessions and Protestant divines, in general, have agreed very much in the definition or description of the sacraments, though there is a considerable diversity in the clearness and distinctness with which their doctrine upon this subject is unfolded. It can scarcely, we think, be denied that the general tendency, even among the Reformers, was to exaggerate or overstate the importance and efficacy of the sacraments. Zwingli's views were a reaction against those which generally prevailed in the Church of Rome; but the extent to which he went rather reacted upon the other Reformers, and made them again

approximate somewhat in phraseology to the Romish position. This appears more or less even in Calvin, though in his case there was an additional perverting element—the desire to keep on friendly terms with Luther and his followers, and with that view to approximate as far as he could to their notions of the corporal presence of Christ in the Eucharist. We have no fault to find with the substance of Calvin’s statements in regard to the sacraments in general, or with respect to baptism; but we cannot deny that he made an effort to bring out something like a real influence exerted by Christ’s human nature upon the souls of believers, in connection with the dispensation of the Lord’s Supper, —an effort which, of course, was altogether unsuccessful, and resulted only in what was about as unintelligible as Luther’s consubstantiation. This is perhaps the greatest blot in the history of Calvin’s labours as a public instructor; and it is a curious circumstance, that the influence which seems to have been chiefly efficacious in leading him astray in the matter, was a quality for which he usually gets no credit, *viz.* an earnest desire to preserve unity and harmony among the different sections of the Christian church.

But, independently of any peculiarity of this sort, we have no doubt that the general tendency among Protestant divines, both at the period of the Reformation and in the seventeenth century, was to lean to the side of magnifying the value and efficacy of the sacraments, and that some of the statements even in the symbolical books of some churches are not altogether free from indications of this kind. But while this is true, and should not be overlooked, there is not nearly so much ground for the allegation, and in so far as there is ground for it, it does not apply to points of nearly so much importance, as persons imperfectly and superficially acquainted with the history of theological discussion have sometimes supposed. Indeed, blunders have occurred in connection with this subject which are perfectly ludicrous.

Dr Phillpotts, the present Bishop of Exeter, a man of very considerable skill and ability in controversy, and respectably acquainted with some departments of theological literature, asserted, in a charge which he published in 1848, that several of the confessions of the Reformed churches—specifying “the Helvetic, that of Augsburg, the Saxon, the Belgic, and the Catechism of Heidelberg”—agreed with the Church of Rome and the Church of England in teaching the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Dr Goode, now Dean of Ripon—who has done most admirable service to the cause of Christian Protestant truth, by his crushing and unanswerable exposures of Tractarianism, and who, in point of learning and ability, is one of the most creditable and successful champions the

Evangelical party in the Church of England has ever had—thoroughly exposed this “astounding statement,”— “this most extraordinary blunder.” He showed that it arose from a very imperfect and superficial acquaintance with their theology as a whole; and proved that the construction thus put upon some of their statements was, in the first place, not required by anything they had said; and, in the second place, was precluded, not only by the views set forth in some of these documents on the subject of election, but by the views taught in all of them on the general character and objects of the sacraments, and the persons for whom they are intended, and in whom alone they produce their appropriate effects. The exposure was so conclusive, that Dr Phillpotts felt himself constrained to withdraw the statement in the second edition of his charge; but tried to cover his retreat by an unfounded allegation, that the documents to which he had referred were self-contradictory.

It was upon the same grounds which misled the Bishop of Exeter, that the same allegation of teaching baptismal regeneration has recently been adduced against “the deliverance of the Westminster divines in the Shorter Catechism on the subject of baptism.” It is very certain that the Westminster divines did not intend in this deliverance, or in any other which they put forth, to teach baptismal regeneration. A contradiction is not to be imputed to them, if by any fair process of construction it can be avoided; and it is in the highest degree improbable that they should have contradicted themselves upon a point at once so plain and so important. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration, whatever else it may include, is always understood to imply, that all baptized infants are regenerated. Now there is nothing in the Shorter Catechism which gives any countenance to this notion, or indeed conveys any explicit deliverance as to the bearing of baptism upon infants. The notion that the Shorter Catechism teaches baptismal regeneration, must, we presume, be based upon the assumption, that the general description given of the import and object of baptism, is intended to apply to every case in which the outward ordinance of baptism is administered. But there is no ground for this assumption. The general description given of baptism must be considered in connection with the general description given of a sacrament, and it is the disregard of this which is one main cause of the ignorance and confusion so often exhibited upon this whole subject. In accordance with views which we have already explained, the description of a sacrament is intended to embody the substance of what is taught or indicated in Scripture, as being true equally and alike of both sacraments. Of course, all that is said about a sacrament not only may, but must, be applied both to baptism and the Lord’s Supper, as being in all its extent true of each of them.

The definition or description given of a sacrament in the Shorter Catechism is, that it “is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.” In order to bring out fully the teaching of the Catechism on the subject of baptism, we must, in the first place, take in the general description given of a sacrament, and then the special description given of baptism, and we must interpret them in connection with each other as parts of one scheme of doctrine. Upon this obvious principle we say, that the first and fundamental position taught in the Shorter Catechism concerning baptism is this, that it (as well as the Lord’s Supper) “is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.” It is of fundamental importance to remember, that the Catechism does apply this whole description of a sacrament to baptism, and to realize what this involves. In addition to this general description of baptism as a sacrament, common to it with the Lord’s Supper, the Catechism proceeds to give a more specific description of baptism as distinguished from the other sacrament. It is this,—“Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, our partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord’s.” Now the only ground for alleging that this teaches baptismal regeneration, must be the notion, that it applies in point of fact to all who have been baptized, and that all who have received the outward ordinance of baptism are warranted to adopt this language, and to apply it to themselves. But the true principle of interpretation is, that this description of baptism applies fully and in all its extent only to those who are possessed of the necessary qualifications or preparations for baptism, and who are able to ascertain this. And the question as to who these are, must be determined by a careful consideration of all that is taught upon this subject. Much evidently depends upon the use and application of the pronoun our here; that is, upon the question, Who are the persons that are supposed to be speaking, or to be entitled to speak,—that is, to employ the language in which the general nature and object of baptism are here set forth? The our, of course, suggests a we, who are supposed to be the parties speaking; and the question is, Who are the we? Are they all who have been baptized? or only those who are capable of ascertaining that they have been legitimately baptized, and who, being satisfied on this point, are in consequence able to adopt the language of the Catechism intelligently and truly? Now this question is similar to that which is often suggested in the interpretation of the apostolical epistles, where the use of the words we, us, and our, raises the question, Who are the we that are supposed to be speaking? that

is, Who are the we, in whose name, or as one of whom, the apostle is there speaking? And this question, wherever it arises, must be decided by a careful examination of the whole context and scope of the passage. In the Catechism we have first a general description given of a sacrament, intended to embody the substance of what Scripture is held to teach or indicate, as equally and alike applicable to both sacraments. One leading element in this description is, that the sacraments are for the use and benefit of believers, and this principle must be kept in view in all the more specific statements afterwards made about either sacrament. This consideration, as well as the whole scope of the statement, clearly implies, that the description given of baptism proceeds upon the assumption, that the persons who partake in it are possessed of the necessary qualifications,—that is, that they are believers, and do or may know that they are so.

This principle of construction is a perfectly fair and natural one. It has always been a fundamental principle in the theology of Protestants, that the sacraments were instituted and intended for believers, and produce their appropriate beneficial effects only through the faith which must have previously existed, and which is expressed and exercised in the act of partaking in them. This being a fundamental and recognised principle in the Protestant theology of the sacraments, it was quite natural that it should be assumed and taken into account in giving a general description of their objects and effects. And the application of this principle of interpretation to the whole deliverances of the Westminster divines upon the subject of the sacraments, in the Confession of Faith and in the Larger Catechism as well as in the Shorter, introduces clearness and consistency into them all, whereas the disregard of it involves them in confusion and inconsistency.

On the grounds which have now been hinted at, and which, when once suggested, must commend themselves to every one who will deliberately and impartially examine the subject, we think it very clear and certain, that the we, suggested by the our in the general description of baptism, are only the believers who had been previously set forth as the proper and worthy recipients of the sacraments; and that consequently the statement that “baptism signifies and seals our ingrafting into Christ,” etc., must, mean, that it signifies and seals the ingrafting into Christ or those of US who have been ingrafted into Christ by faith. This construction, of course, removes all appearance of the Catechism teaching baptismal regeneration.

The truth is, that the only real difficulty in the case is precisely the reverse of that which has been started. The difficulty is, not that the Catechism appears to teach that infants are all regenerated in baptism, but that it appears to teach that believers are the only proper recipients of baptism, as well as of the Lord's Supper; while yet at the same time it also explicitly teaches, that the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized. This will require some explanation, while at the same time the investigation of it will bring us back again to the main subject which we wished to consider,—viz. the true doctrine of the Reformed churches, and especially of the Westminster standards, in regard to the nature, objects, and effects of the sacraments in general.

The general view which Protestants have commonly taken of the sacraments is, that they are signs and seals of the covenant of grace; that is, of the truths which unfold the provisions and arrangements of the covenant, and of the spiritual blessings which the covenant provides and secures,—not only signifying or representing Christ and the benefits of the new covenant, but sealing or confirming them, and in some sense applying them to believers. As the sacraments are the signs and seals of the covenant, so they belong properly to, and can benefit only, those who have an interest in the covenant, the *foederati*; and there is no adequate ground for counting upon their exerting their appropriate influence in individual cases, apart from the faith which the participation in them ordinarily expresses, and which must exist before participation in them can be either warrantable or beneficial. These are the leading views which Protestant divines have usually put forth in regard to the sacraments in general,—that is, their general nature, design, and efficacy. In looking more closely at the doctrines of Protestant churches upon this subject, it is necessary to remember, not only that, as we have already explained, they usually assume, in their general statements, that the persons partaking in the sacraments are duly prepared, or possessed of the necessary preliminary qualifications, but also that, when statements are made which are intended to apply equally to baptism and the Lord's Supper, or when the general object and design of baptism are set forth in the abstract,—they have in their view, and take into their account, only adult baptism, the baptism of those who, after they have come to years of understanding, ask and obtain admission into the visible church by being baptized.

This mode of contemplating the ordinance of baptism is so different from what we are accustomed to, that we are apt to be startled when it is presented to us, and find it somewhat difficult to enter into it. It tends greatly to introduce



obscurity and confusion into our whole conceptions on the subject of baptism, that we see it ordinarily administered to infants, and very seldom to adults. This leads us insensibly to form very defective and erroneous conceptions of its design and effects, or rather to live with our minds very much in the condition of blanks, so far as concerns any distinct and definite views upon this subject. There is a great difficulty felt—a difficulty which Scripture does not afford us adequate materials for removing—in laying down any distinct and definite doctrine as to the bearing and efficacy of baptism in the case of infants, to whom alone ordinarily we see it administered. A sense of this difficulty is very apt to tempt us to remain contentedly in great ignorance of the whole subject, without any serious attempt to understand distinctly what baptism is and means, and how it is connected with the general doctrine of the sacraments. And yet it is quite plain to any one who is capable of reflecting upon the subject, that it is adult baptism alone which embodies and brings out the full idea of the ordinance, and should be regarded as the primary type of it, —that from which mainly and principally we should form our conceptions of what baptism is and means, and was intended to accomplish. It is in this aspect that baptism is ordinarily spoken about and presented to our contemplation in the New Testament, and we see something similar in tracing the operations of our missionaries who are engaged in preaching the gospel in heathen lands.

Adult baptism, then, exhibits the original and fundamental idea of the ordinance, as it is usually brought before us, and as it is directly and formally spoken about in the New Testament. And when baptism is contemplated in this light, there is no more difficulty in forming a distinct and definite conception regarding it than regarding the Lord's Supper. Of adult baptism we can say, just as we do of the Lord's Supper, that it is in every instance, according to the general doctrine of Protestants, either the sign and seal of a faith and a regeneration previously existing, already effected by God's grace, or else that the reception of it was a hypocritical profession of a state of mind and feeling which has no existence. We have no doubt that the lawfulness and the obligation of infant baptism can be conclusively established from Scripture; but it is manifest that the general doctrine or theory just stated, with respect to the import and effect of the sacraments, and of baptism as a sacrament, cannot be applied fully in all its extent to the baptism of infants. The reason of this is, because Scripture does not afford us materials either for laying down any definite position as to a certain and invariable connection between baptism and spiritual blessings, — that is, for maintaining the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; or for stating such a distinct and definite alternative with respect to the efficacy of the ordinance in

individuals, as has been stated above in the case of adult baptism and the Lord's Supper. But notwithstanding these obvious considerations, we fear it is a very common thing for men, just because they ordinarily see infant, and very seldom see adult, baptism, to take the baptism of infants, with all the difficulties attaching, to give a precise and definite statement as to its design and effect in their case, and to allow this to regulate their whole conceptions with respect to this ordinance in particular, and even with respect to the sacraments in general. This is a very common process; and we could easily produce abundant evidence, both of its actual prevalence, and of its injurious bearing upon men's whole opinions on this subject. The right and reasonable course is plainly just the reverse of this,—viz. to regard adult baptism as affording the proper fundamental type of the ordinance,—to derive our great leading conceptions about baptism from the case, not of infant, but of adult, baptism, viewed in connection with the general theory or doctrine applicable to both sacraments; and then, since infant baptism is also fully warranted in Scripture, to examine what modifications the leading general views of the ordinance may or must undergo, when applied to the special and peculiar case of the baptism of infants.

These views were acted upon, though not formally and explicitly stated, by the Reformers in preparing their confessions of faith, and in their discussions of this subject. It is impossible to bring out from their statements about the sacraments a clear and consistent sense, except upon the hypothesis that, in laying down their general positions as to the nature, objects, and effects of the sacraments, they proceeded upon the assumption, that those partaking in these ordinances were duly qualified and rightly prepared; and more particularly, that the persons baptized, in whom the true and full operation of baptism was exhibited, were adults,—adult believers. The Council of Trent, in their decrees and canons on the subject of justification, which in the Romish system comprehends regeneration, and of which they asserted baptism, or the sacrament of faith, as they call it, to be the instrumental cause, dealt with the subject on the assumption that they were describing the process which takes place in the case of persons who, after they have attained to adult age, are led to embrace Christianity and to apply for baptism. And we find that the Reformers, in discussing these matters with their Romish opponents, accommodated themselves to this mode of putting the case; and having thus adult baptism chiefly in their view, were led sometimes to speak as if they regarded baptism and regeneration as substantially identical. They certainly did not mean to assert or concede the Popish principle, of an invariable connection between the outward ordinance and the spiritual blessing; for it is quite certain, and can be

conclusively established, that they rejected this. They adopted this mode of speaking, which at first sight is somewhat startling, 1st, because , the Council of Trent discussed the subject of justification chiefly in its bearing upon the case of those who had not been baptized in infancy, and with whom, consequently, baptism, if it was not a mere hypocritical pretence, destitute of all worth or value, was, in the judgment of Protestants, a sign and seal of a faith and regeneration previously wrought and then existing; and 2dly, because it was, when viewed in this aspect and application, that their great general doctrines, as to the design and efficacy of the sacraments in their bearing upon the justification of sinners, stood out for examination in the clearest and most definite form. This was the true cause of a mode of speaking sometimes adopted by the Reformers, which, to those imperfectly acquainted with their writings, and with the state of theological discussion at the time, might seem to countenance the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

It was very important to bring out fully and distinctly the nature and character of the sacraments as signs and seals of the covenant of grace and its benefits, the import of the profession implied in partaking in them, and the qualifications required for receiving them rightly; and then to connect the statement of their actual effects with right views upon all these points. This process was at once the most obvious and the most effectual way of shutting out the erroneous and dangerous notions upon the subject of the sacraments that prevailed in the Church of Rome. It was very important, with this view, to give a compendious and summary representation of what was set forth in Scripture as the sacramental principle or theory, as being equally applicable to both sacraments; and to keep steadily before men's minds the consideration, that this could be held to be fully realized and exhibited only in those for whom the sacraments were mainly intended, and who were duly prepared for receiving and improving them aright. Their minds were filled with these principles, and they were anxious to set them forth, in opposition to the great sacramental system which had been excogitated by the schoolmen, and sanctioned by the Church of Rome. And it was because their minds were filled with these principles, that, though strenuously opposing the tenets of the Anabaptists, they yet saw clearly and admitted the somewhat peculiar and supplemental position held by infant baptism. They held it to be of primary importance to bring out fully the sacramental principle as exhibited in its entireness in adult baptism and the Lord's Supper; and in aiming at accomplishing this, they were not much concerned about putting forth definitions or descriptions of the sacraments or even of baptism, which could scarcely be regarded as comprehending infant baptism, or as obviously and

directly applying to it. They never intended to teach baptismal regeneration, and they have said nothing that appears to teach it, or that could be supposed to teach it, by any except those who were utterly ignorant of the whole course of the discussion of these subjects as it was then conducted. They never intended to discountenance infant baptism; on the contrary, they strenuously defended its lawfulness and obligation. But they certainly gave descriptions of the general nature, design, and effects of the sacraments, which, if literally interpreted and pressed, might be regarded as omitting it, or putting it aside.

It is impossible to deny, that the general description which the Shorter Catechism gives of a sacrament teaches, by plain implication, that the sacraments, so far as regards adults, are intended only for believers; while no Protestants, except some of the Lutherans, have ever held that infants are capable of exercising faith. It also teaches, by plain implication, in the previous question, the 91st, that the wholesome influence of the sacraments is experienced only by those who “by faith receive them.” All this is applied equally to baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Its general import, as implying a virtual restriction of these ordinances to believers, is too clear to be misunderstood or to admit of being explained away. And then, again, the apparent discrepancy between this great principle, and the position that “the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized,” is too obvious to escape the notice of any one who deliberately examines the Catechism with a view to understand it. These considerations would lead us to expect to find that the discrepancy is only apparent, and that there is no great difficulty in pointing out a mode of reconciliation. The mode of reconciliation we have already hinted at. It is in substance this, that infant baptism is to be regarded as a peculiar, subordinate, supplemental, exceptional thing, which stands indeed firmly based on its own distinct and special grounds, but which cannot well be brought within the line of the general abstract definition or description of a sacrament, as applicable to adult baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

The Westminster divines, then, have given a description of a sacrament, which does apply fully to adult baptism and the Lord’s Supper, but which does not directly and in terminis comprehend infant baptism. This, which is the plain fact of the case, could only have arisen from their finding it difficult, if not impossible, to give a definition of the sacraments in their great leading fundamental aspects, which would at the same time apply to and include the special case of the baptism of infants. This, again, implies an admission that the definition given of a sacrament does not apply fully and in all its extent to the

special case of infant baptism; while it implies, also, that the compilers of the Catechism thought it much more important to bring out fully, as the definition of a sacrament, all that could be truly predicated equally of adult baptism and the Lord's Supper, than to try and form a definition that might be wide enough and vague enough to include infant baptism,—a topic of a peculiar and subordinate description. This is the only explanation and defence that can be given of the course of statement adopted in the Catechism.

It may possibly occur to some, that since it is certain that the compilers of the Catechism held that it was the children of believers only that were to be baptized, and that they were to be baptized on the ground of their parents' faith, and the general principle of covenant relationship based upon this, the word believers, in the definition of a sacrament, might include infants, viewed as one with their believing parents, and virtually comprehended in them. But, besides that this leaves untouched the statement which implies that spiritual benefit is derived from the sacraments only by "those who by faith receive them," we think it quite plain and certain, from the whole scope of the statement given in answer to the question, What is a sacrament? that the believers to whom the sacraments represent, seal, and apply Christ and His benefits, are those only who themselves directly and personally partake in the sacraments, and not those also who, though not believers themselves, may be admitted to one of the sacraments because of their relationship to believers.

A similar doubt might be started about the meaning and application of the parallel passage in the Larger Catechism. A sacrament is there described as "an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, in His church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of His mediation, to strengthen and increase their faith," *etc.* Now there can be no doubt that, according to the prevailing opinions and the current *usus loquendi* of the period,—and, as we believe, in accordance with Scripture,—the expression, "those that are within the covenant of grace," might include the children of believers, who were regarded as *foederati*, and as thus entitled to the "*signa et sigilla foederis.*" But it is quite certain that the expression is not used here in this extended sense, or as including any but believers. For this sentence goes on immediately, without any change in the construction, and without any indication of alteration or restriction in regard to the persons spoken of, to say, that the sacraments were instituted "to strengthen and increase their faith,"—implying, of course, that the persons here spoken of had faith before the sacraments came to bear upon them, or could confer upon them any benefit.

There can, then, be no reasonable doubt that the Shorter Catechism, in defining or describing a sacrament, restricts itself to the case of adult believers; and the only way of reconciling the definition with its teaching on the subject of infant baptism is by assuming that it is not to be applied absolutely and without all exception in other cases; and that infant baptism, though fully warranted by Scripture, does not correspond in all respects with the full sacramental principle in its utmost extent and clearness, as exhibited in adult baptism and the Lord's Supper, and must therefore be regarded as occupying a peculiar and supplemental position. We know no other way of showing the consistency with each other of the different statements contained in the Catechism. The principle we have explained refutes the allegation of inconsistency or contradiction, and resolves the whole difficulty into a certain concession on the subject of infant baptism,—a concession not affecting the scriptural evidence for the maintenance of the practice of baptizing infants, but merely the fulness and completeness of the doctrinal explanation that should be given of its objects and effects.

The explanation we have given upon this point is in full accordance with the views set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and in the confessions of the Reformed churches generally. They all of them assert the scriptural authority of infant baptism, while at the same time most of them, though with different degrees of clearness, present statements about the sacraments or about baptism, which do not very fully and directly apply to the baptism of infants. We have been the more disposed to give some time to the explanation of the peculiar position and standing of the topic of infant baptism, because it is not merely indispensable to the intelligent and consistent exposition of the Shorter Catechism, but also because ignorance or disregard of it produces much error and confusion in men's whole views with respect to the sacraments in general. Men who have not attended to and estimated aright this topic of the peculiar and subordinate place held by the subject of infant baptism are very apt to run into one or other of two extremes.—viz. 1st, That of lowering the true sacramental principle, as brought out in the general definition of a sacrament, and as exhibited fully in the case of adult baptism and the Lord's Supper, to the level of what suits the special case of infant baptism; or 2d, That of raising the explanation propounded of the bearing and effect of infant baptism, up to a measure of clearness and fulness which really attaches only to adult baptism and the Lord's Supper. And as error is generally inconsistent, and extremes have a strong tendency to meet, cases have occurred in which both these opposite extremes have been exhibited by the same persons, in connection with that one source of error and confusion to which we have referred. . The truth, as well as

the importance, of some of the points which have been referred to in the course of the preceding statements, will appear more clearly as we proceed to explain more fully and formally the general doctrine of the sacraments as set forth in the Westminster symbols, in accordance with the other confessions of the Reformed churches.

The doctrine of the sacraments, or the sacramental principle, in the proper import of that expression, is intended, as we have explained, to embody the sum and substance of what is taught or indicated in Scripture, as equally and alike applicable to both the ordinances to which the name of a sacrament is commonly given. Of course, nothing ought to be introduced into the definition or description of a sacrament, but what there is sufficient scriptural ground, more or less direct and explicit, and more or less clear and conclusive, for holding to be predicable equally and alike of baptism,—that is, adult baptism and the Lord's Supper. Besides the scriptural statements that bear directly upon these two ordinances separately, there are views suggested by their general character and position, taken in connection with general scriptural principles, to which it may be proper, in the first instance, to advert. There is not a great deal in Scripture that can be said to bear very directly upon the question, What is a sacrament? but there is a good deal that may be deduced from Scripture by good and necessary consequence.

There are two different aspects in which the sacraments are to be regarded,—1st, Simply as institutions or ordinances whose appointment by Christ stands recorded in Scripture, and whose celebration in the church, according to His appointment, may be contemplated or looked at by spectators; and 2d, as acts which men perform, transactions in which men individually take a part;—that is, they may be regarded either as mere instituted symbols, or also, and in addition, as symbolic actions which men perform.

Viewed in the first of these aspects as symbols, they merely signify or represent (these two words are generally used synonymously in this matter) spiritual blessings, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant, and the scriptural truths which make known, unfold, and offer these blessings to men; while, in regard to the second aspect of them, this much at least must be evident in general, that the participation in the sacraments by men individually, is on their part an expression or profession of a state of mind and feeling, with reference to the truths which the outward symbols represent, and the blessings which they signify. Viewed in the first of these aspects as mere symbols, which have been

instituted and described in Scripture, and which may be contemplated or looked at, it is evident that the sacraments are merely, to use an expression which Calvin and other Reformers applied to them, appendages to the gospel,—that is, merely means of declaring and bringing before our minds in another way, by a different instrumentality, what is fully set forth in the statements of Scripture. In baptism, viewed in this light, God is just telling us, by means of outward symbols instead of words, that men in their natural condition need to be washed from guilt and depravity, and that full provision has been made for effecting this, through the shedding of Christ's blood and the effusion of His Spirit. In the Lord's Supper, in like manner, He is just telling us that Christ's body was broken and that His blood was shed for men; and that in this way, full provision has been made, not only for restoring men to the enjoyment of God's favour, and creating them again after His image, but for affording them abundance of spiritual nourishment, and enabling them to grow up in all things unto Him who is the Head. The sacraments as symbols thus teach, by outward and visible representations, the leading truths which are revealed in Scripture concerning the w'ay of salvation; and teach them in a manner peculiarly fitted, according to the principles of our constitution, to bring them home impressively to our understandings and our hearts.

And it is important to notice that, even in this simplest and most elementary view of the sacraments, they may truly and reasonably be called seals as well as signs,—they may be said not only to signify or represent, but to seal. A seal is something external, usually appended to a deed or document, or impressed upon a substance which forms the subject of negotiation or arrangement, and it is intended to strengthen or confirm conviction or faith, expectation or confidence. A seal in this sense, the only sense in which it can apply to the sacraments, is a thing of no real intrinsic value or importance apart from the engagement ratified. Its use and efficacy are purely conventional. Seals are based, indeed, upon a natural principle in our complex constitution, in virtue of which external objects or actions connected with, or added to, declarations, engagements, or promises, are regarded as tying or binding more strongly those from whom these deeds or documents proceed, and as thus tending to strengthen and confirm the faith and the hope of those to whom they are directed. It is this principle in our constitution which is the source and origin, the rationale and defence, not only of the sealing of deeds and documents,—that is, of the practice of appending a seal to the signature of the names attached to them,— but of the whole series of outward significant rites and ceremonies, which in all ages and countries have been associated with covenants and treaties, with bargains and barterings. These



sealings, and other similar rites and ceremonies, which in such variety have prevailed in all ages and countries in connection with transactions of this sort, have been always regarded and felt as somehow binding the parties more strongly to' their respective statements and engagements, and as thus strengthening their reliance upon each other, in reference to everything that had been declared or promised. And yet it is quite plain, that these sealings and other rites and ceremonies usually connected with compacts and bargains, can scarcely be said to possess any value apart from the engagement sealed, or to exert a real influence in effecting any important result. The only essential things in transactions of this sort are the deeds or documents, embodying a statement of the things arranged or agreed upon, with all their circumstances and conditions, and the signatures of the parties, binding themselves to the terms set forth in the deed.

Applying these obvious principles to Christianity and salvation, it is plain that the essential things, as bearing on the practical result, are arrangements and proposals, made and revealed by God, understood and accepted by men. It is indispensable that men understand the import of the offers and proposals made to them, be satisfied that they come from God, and then accept and act upon them. The covenant of grace is thus substantially a proposal made by God to men, which is accepted by them; and the essential things are, the substance of the proposal set forth as in a deed or document, and the concurrence of the parties, as if attested by their signatures. The sacraments, according to the views which have generally prevailed among Protestants, are signs and seals of this covenant,—that is, as signs they embody in outward elements (for we are not speaking at present of the sacramental actions) the substance of what is set forth more fully and particularly in the written word; and this additional, superadded, external embodiment of the provisions and arrangements, is regarded as occupying the place and serving the purpose of a seal appended to a signature to a deed; not certainly as if it could very materially affect the result, so long as we had the deed and the signatures, but still operating, according to the well-known principles of our constitution, in giving some confirmation to our impressions, if not our convictions, of the reality and certainty or reliability of the whole transaction.

But we proceed to advert to the second and higher view that must obviously be taken of the sacraments. They were intended not so much to be read about or to be looked at, as to be participated in. Men are individually to be washed with water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and they are

individually to eat bread and to drink wine at the Lord's table, in remembrance of Christ. This being the case, the questions naturally arise, What is the meaning and what the object of those acts which they perform? Why did God require these things at their hands? What is the effect which the doing of these things is intended to produce? and, What are the principles which regulate and determine the production of the resulting effects! Now, as bearing upon the answer to these questions, there are some positions which are generally admitted, and are attended with no difficulty. The two leading aspects in which the sacraments, viewed as actions which men perform, are represented in Scripture are,—first, as duties which God requires of us; and second, as means of grace or privileges which He appoints and bestows. And again, under the first of these heads, viz. commanded duties, there are two views that may be taken of them,— 1st, as acts of worship; and 2d, as public professions of Christianity. It is, of course, men's duty to render to God the acts of worship, and to make the professions, which He requires of them. The sacraments seem plainly to possess these two characters. In participating in them we are rendering an act of worship to God, and we are making a public profession by an outward act, and all this He has required at our hands, or imposed upon us as a duty. If this be so, then it follows that any general principles which are indicated in Scripture, or involved in the nature of the case, as being rightly applicable to acts of worship and to public professions, must be applied to them. Whatever is necessary to make an act of worship reasonable and acceptable to God, and whatever is necessary to make a public profession intelligent and honest, must be found in men's participation in the sacraments, in order to make it fitted to serve any of its intended purposes. And this most simple and-obvious view of the general nature and character of the sacramental actions ought not to be overlooked or forgotten, as it is well fitted, when remembered and applied, to guard us both against error in doctrine and delusion in practice.

It is the second of these views of them, however,—that which represents them as outward public professions,—which bears more immediately upon their mode of operation and their actual effects, as privileges or means of grace. All admit that the sacraments embody or involve a public profession of a certain state of mind and feeling. Indeed, this is plainly implied in their character as symbolical or emblematical ordinances. We cannot conceive that it should have been required as a duty of those to whom the gospel is preached, that they should be baptized and should partake in the Lord's Supper, unless this washing with water, and this eating bread and drinking wine, symbolized and expressed some state of mind, some conviction or feeling or purpose, bearing upon their relation to God, and

the salvation of their souls. That participation in the sacraments is a discriminating mark or badge of what may be called, in some sense, a profession of Christianity, and that it involves an engagement to perform certain duties, is admitted by all, even those who take the lowest views of their nature and design. And all orthodox divines hold that this constitutes one end and object of the institution of these ordinances, though they regard it only as a subordinate one. In the very important document formerly referred to, called “Consensus Tigurinus,” prepared by Calvin, and embodying the agreement among the Swiss churches on the whole subject of the sacraments, while it is admitted that there are various ends and objects of the sacraments,—such as, that they may be marks and badges of a Christian profession and union or brotherhood,—that they may be incitements to thanksgivings and exercises of faith and a pious life, and engagements binding to this,—it is laid down, “that the one principal end of these ordinances is, that God, by them, may attest, represent, and seal His grace to us.” This mode of statement is in accordance with the views generally entertained by the Reformed divines, and it is adopted in the Westminster Confession,<sup>f</sup> where, after describing it as the end or object of the sacraments “to represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him,” it adds, evidently in the way of suggesting some additional points of less fundamental importance, “as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church and the rest of the world, and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ.” These subordinate ends of the sacraments, connected with their character and functions as badges of a public profession and solemn engagements to duty, do not in themselves require lengthened explanation, as they are simple and obvious, and have not given rise to much discussion, except in so far as the question has been raised, as to the precise import and amount of the profession which participation in the sacraments involves.

This is a question of some difficulty and importance; and it is intimately connected with the investigation of the great primary end or object of the sacraments, and with their character and function as means of grace. It is generally admitted by Protestant divines, that the sacraments are signs and seals of the covenant of grace,—that is, of the truths and promises setting forth the provisions and arrangements which may be said to constitute the covenant, and of the spiritual blessings which the covenant offers and secures; and these terms, accordingly, are applied to them in almost all the confessions of the Reformed churches. But even where there is a concurrence in the use of these epithets, there is still room for error and confusion on some important topics connected with this matter. The leading questions connected with the sacraments may be

ranked under two heads,—1st, What are their objects or ends, comprehending the purposes for which they were instituted, and the effects which they actually produce? and 2d, Who are their proper subjects, the parties for whom they were intended, those who are qualified to partake in them lawfully and beneficially? These two heads of investigation, which may be briefly described as respecting, the first the objects, and the second the subjects, of the sacraments, are very closely connected with each other. The settlement of either of these questions would go far to determine the other. If we had once ascertained what is the leading primary object of the sacraments, there would be no great difficulty in deducing from this, viewed in connection with other doctrines plainly taught in Scripture, what kind of persons ought to partake in them; and if we once knew who are the parties that ought to partake in them, we might from this infer a good deal, positively as well as negatively, in regard to the purpose they were intended to serve. On some grounds it would seem to be more natural and expedient to begin with examining the objects or ends of the sacraments. But as we have been led, in the arrangement we have adopted, to advert to the view of the sacraments as badges of a public profession, and as the consideration of this topic, which has not yet been completed, is connected rather with the examination of the subjects than the objects of the sacraments, we shall consider, in the first place, in contemplating them as means of grace, the question, Who are the parties for whom they were intended? We are the less concerned about following what might seem to be the more strictly logical order, because our object is rather explanation than defence; it is rather to bring out what the doctrine of the Reformed confessions, and especially of the Westminster symbols, on the general subject of the sacraments is, than to establish its truth and to vindicate it from objections;—as we have in view chiefly the case of those who have professed to believe these symbols, but who still exhibit a great deal of ignorance in regard to their meaning and import.

We have mentioned, as the first and most general division that obtains on the subject of the sacraments, that they may be regarded either, first, as duties which God requires; or second, as means of grace. The difficulties which have arisen, and the discussions which have been carried on respecting them, have turned chiefly upon their character and functions as means of grace. It is universally admitted that the sacraments are means of grace; and the great general idea involved in this position is this, that they are institutions which God intended and appointed to be, in some sense, the instruments or channels of conveying to men spiritual blessings, and in the due and right use of which men are warranted to expect to receive the spiritual blessings they stand in need of. In this wide and

general sense, even those who hold the lowest view of the sacraments admit that they are means of grace; while it is also true that the great differences in doctrine which have been maintained by different churches on the whole subject of the sacraments, resolve very much into the different senses in which the position that they are means of grace may be explained. In the wide sense above stated, the position that the sacraments are means of grace may be conclusively inferred from the fact, that God has appointed them, and required the observance of them at our hands. As the outward acts which constitute the observance of the sacraments are in themselves not moral, but merely positive or indifferent, we are warranted to believe that God appointed them solely for our benefit, and because He intended them to be in some way instruments or channels of conveying to us spiritual blessings.

The Romish doctrine upon this subject is, that the sacraments contain the grace which they signify; that they confer grace always and certainly, where men do not put an obstacle in the way; that they do this *ex opere operato*, or by some sort of physical or intrinsic power bestowed upon them, apart from the state of mind of the recipient; that baptism is the instrumental cause of justification, as including both remission of sin and regeneration; and that the Lord's Supper invariably conveys spiritual nourishment. There are some points, however, involved in the exposition of these doctrines, which have not been explicitly settled by the authority of the church, and in regard to which some latitude is left for a difference of opinion. Among Protestants, again, High Churchmen, and men disposed to exalt the value and efficacy of the sacraments, have generally adopted, or at least approximated to, the Romish doctrine as explained by its more reasonable defenders, and have been disposed to allege that the controversies with the Church of Rome upon this subject, resolve very much into disputes about words or points of no great importance; while sounder Protestants have, in general, met the Romish doctrines with decided opposition. At the same time it must be admitted, that it is not easy to fix -upon any definite modes of statement, which can be said to be distinctly Protestant as opposed to Romanism, about the true character and functions of the sacraments as means of grace, viewed apart from the doctrine held with regard to their subjects and objects. It is generally supposed that the strongest statement to which the Church of Rome is pledged on this point is, that the sacraments "contain the grace which they signify or represent," implying that the grace resides or is laid up in them, and that they give it out; and yet Calvin, in his "Antidote to the Council of Trent," seventh session, admits that there is a sense in which it is true "*sacramentis contineri gratiam quam figurant.*" He asserts also that those who allege, that by

the sacraments grace is conferred upon us when we do not put an obstacle in the way, overturn the whole power of the sacraments; while he distinctly admits that the sacraments are instrumental causes of conferring grace upon us, though the power of God is not tied to them, and though they produce no effect whatever apart from the faith of the recipient. And, moreover, we find, upon a principle formerly explained, that in dealing (sixth session) with the position that baptism is the instrumental cause of justification, he rather objects to the omission of the gospel or the truth, and to the high place assigned to baptism, than meets the position of the council with a direct negative. His statement is this: "It is a great absurdity to make baptism alone the instrumental cause. If this be so, what becomes of the gospel? Will it not even get into the lowest corner? But, they say, baptism is the sacrament of faith. True; but when all is said, I will still maintain that it is nothing but an appendage to the gospel (evangelii appendiceal). They act preposterously in giving it the first place; and this is just as if one should say that the instrumental cause of a house is the handle of the workman's trowel. He who, putting the gospel in the background, numbers baptism among the causes of salvation, shows thereby that he does not know what baptism is or means, or what is its function and use." It would be easy to show that there are many other eminent divines who have differed from each other as to the phraseology that ought to be employed in explaining the position that the sacraments are means of grace, some asserting and others denying that they are causes of grace,—that they confer, or convey, or bestow spiritual blessings,—while yet there is no very material difference of opinion among them; as is evident from their agreement in regard to the two important questions, as to the persons for whom the sacraments are intended, and the purposes they were instituted to serve. And on this ground we shall now, as has been intimated, consider —1st, the subjects, and 2d, the objects, of the sacraments; assuming only, in the meantime, that the position, universally admitted, that the sacraments are means of grace, implies that, in some way or other, they are employed by God as instrumental or auxiliary in bestowing upon some men some spiritual blessings.

1. Let us first advert, then, to the subjects of the sacraments, or the persons for whom they were intended. We have already seen that, both in the Larger and the Shorter Catechism, the Westminster Assembly have distinctly laid down the position that the sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are intended for believers, for men who had already and previously been led to embrace Christ as their Saviour; and that they were not in the least deterred from the explicit assertion of this great principle by its appearing to exclude or ignore the practice

of infant baptism, which they believed to be fully sanctioned by Scripture. This great principle is not set forth in the Confession of Faith quite so explicitly as it is in the Catechisms, but it is taught there by very plain implication. The Confession lays it down as the first and principal end or object of the sacraments, of both equally and alike, “to represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him,”—this last clause implying, that those for whom the sacraments were intended, have already and previously acquired a personal interest in Christ, which could be only by their union to Him through faith. It further, in speaking still of the sacraments, and of course of baptism as well as the Lord’s Supper, asserts that “the word of institution contains a promise of benefit to worthy receivers;” and worthy receivers, in the full import of the expression, are, in the case of adult baptism, believers. In the next chapter, the twenty-eighth, the description given of baptism manifestly applies only to believing adults. It is there described as a “sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.” It is quite true that infants, as well as adults, though incapable of faith, must be ingrafted into Christ, and must receive regeneration and remission; and that without this, indeed, they cannot be saved. But the statement in the Confession plainly assumes, that each individual baptized not only should have the necessary preliminary qualifications, but should be himself exercised and satisfied upon this point; and should thus be prepared to take part, intelligently and consciously, in the personal assumption of the practical obligations which baptism implies.

This is sufficient to show that the teaching of the Confession is quite in harmony with that of the Catechisms, though upon this particular point it is not altogether so explicit. It holds true, indeed, generally—we might say universally—of the Reformed churches, as distinguished from the Lutheran, and of almost all the Reformed theologians, that though firm believers in the divine authority of infant baptism, they never hesitate to lay down the general positions, that the sacraments are intended for believers; that participation in them assumes the previous and present existence of faith in all who rightly receive them; and that they produce their appropriate beneficial effects only through the operation and exercise of faith in those who partake in them. The Reformed divines, not holding the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, did not regard the baptism of infants as being of sufficient importance to modify the general doctrine they

thought themselves warranted to lay down with respect to the sacraments, as applicable to adult baptism and the Lord's Supper. And it is interesting and instructive to notice, that the adoption by the Lutherans of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, led them to be much more careful of laying down any general statements, either about the sacraments or about baptism, which virtually ignored the baptism of infants. They are much more careful than the Reformed divines, either expressly and by name to bring in infant baptism into their general definitions or descriptions, or at least to leave ample room for it, so that there may be no appearance of its being omitted or forgotten. It may be worth while to give a specimen of this. Buddaeus, one of the best of the Lutheran divines, a man whose works exhibit a very fine combination of ability and good sense, learning and evangelical unction, in treating of the effect of baptism, which, he says, may also be regarded as the end or object of the ordinance, lays it down, that it is "with respect to infants, regeneration, and with respect to adults, the confirming and sealing (*confirmatio et obsignatio*) of the faith of which they ought to be possessed before they are admitted to baptism." In contrast with this, many of the Reformed divines asserted, without any hesitation, that the great leading object and effect of the sacraments, and of course of baptism as well as of the Lord's Supper, was just the *confirmatio fidei*,—that is, the confirming and strengthening of the faith, which must, or at least should, have existed in the case of adults before either sacrament was received.

This, however, bears rather upon the objects than the subjects of the sacraments. And in returning to the latter of these topics, we would lay before our readers, what we regard as a very complete and comprehensive summary of the doctrine of the Reformed churches upon this point, in the words of Martin Vitringa, in his "Adnotationes" to the *Doctrina Christianae Religionis per Aphorismos summam descripta* of Campegius Vitringa:—

"From these quotations it clearly appears, that the common doctrine of our divines concerning the proper subjects of the sacraments amounts to this:—

"1st, That the sacraments have been instituted only for those who have already received the grace of God,—the called, the regenerate, the believing, the converted, those who are in covenant with God; and also that it is proper for those to come to them who have true faith and repentance.

"2d, That they who receive the sacraments are already, before receiving them, partakers through faith of Christ and His benefits, and are therefore justified and



sanctified before they take the sacraments.

“3d, That faith is the medium, the mouth, and the hand, by which we rightly receive and perceive the sacraments.

“4th, That the faith of those who lawfully receive the sacraments is confirmed and increased by them, and that they are more closely united to Christ.

- “5th, That those only who receive the sacraments in faith have, in the use of them, the promise of the remission of sins and of eternal life bestowed, sealed, and applied in a singular way, just as if God were addressing them individually, and were promising and sealing to them remission of sins and eternal life; and thus believers are rendered more certain about their communion with Christ and His benefits, so that they can certainly determine that Christ belongs to them with His gifts.

“6th, That by the sacraments the promises of the covenant of grace are offered and sealed, under the condition of true faith and penitence.

u7th, That only true believers and true penitents, using the sacraments worthily, receive not only the signs, but also the things signified, which are sealed to them, and also that they only receive them with benefit and advantage.

“8th, That God wishes the sacraments to be administered to those who are possessed of true faith and unfeigned repentance; but that the ministers of the church ought to admit to the sacraments those who make a profession of faith and penitence, and do not openly contradict it Jby their life and conduct , and that they, before coming to the sacraments, ought to be admonished to try themselves, whether they have true faith and repentance, lest, being destitute of faith and repentance, they should receive the sacraments to their condemnation.

“9th, That unbelieving and impenitent persons receive only the naked signs but not the things signified; that nothing is sealed to them; that, moreover, they profane and contemn the sacraments; and that from this profanation and contempt the sacraments not only do not benefit but hurt them, and bring to them condemnation and destruction; and then, that the sacraments, when administered to unbelieving and impenitent persons, remain sacraments so far as God is concerned, but so far as concerns the unbelieving and impenitent, lose the nature and power of a sacrament.

“10th, That the sacraments do not, in the first instance, bestow grace, faith, and penitence, and are not the instruments of producing the beginnings of faith and penitence, but only confirm, increase, and seal them.”

It will be observed that all these important doctrinal statements are made concerning the sacraments, and of course are intended to apply equally and alike to baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and that the sum and substance of what is here asserted of both these ordinances is, that, in the case of adults, they were intended only for persons who have already been enabled to believe and repent, and that it is believers only who do or can derive any benefit from partaking in them, all others using them only to their own condemnation. We do not adopt every expression in this summary just as it stands. But we have no doubt that, in its substance, it is in full accordance with the teaching of Scripture, and of the Reformed as distinguished from the Lutheran churches. Upon the second of these points, indeed,—the historical question’ of the identity of these views with those of the Reformed churches and of the leading Reformed divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,—Vitringa has produced his evidence at length.

His quotations fill about twenty pages, and are certainly amply sufficient to establish his position. They prove that the quotation we have produced, contains a correct summary of the doctrine of the Reformed churches in regard to the proper subjects of the sacraments. Vitringa gives extracts from eight or ten of the confessions of the Reformation period, and from above fifty of the most eminent divines of that and the succeeding century. He has thus brought together a vast store of materials, abundantly sufficient to establish his position, so far as authority is concerned; and we think it may be worth while to give the names of the divines from whom he produces his extracts. They are Zwingli, Cæcolampadius, Bucer, Musculus, Bullinger, Calvin, Beza, Zanchius, Ursinus, Olevianus, Sadeel, Whitaker, Aretus, Sohnius, Polanus, Chamier, Junius, Perkins, Bucanus, Kuchlinus, »Acronius, Trel-catius, Scharpius, G. J. Vossius, Maccovius, Walaeus, Rivetus, Amyraldus, Altingius, Forbes, Voetius, Wendelinus, Cocceius, Hottinger, Heidanus, Maresius, Venema, Burman, Maastricht, Witsius, Turretine, Heidegger, Leydecker, Braunius, Marckius, Roell, Meyer, Gerdes, Wyttenbach; in short, all the greatest divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here is a storehouse of names and quotations, which might enable any one to set up as an erudite theologian by means of a stock of second-hand authorities.

We are dealing at present only with the historical and not with the scriptural view of the case; but we may briefly advert to the kind of proof by which it can be shown, that the proper subjects of the sacrament are only believing and regenerated men. The general place or position of the sacraments seems plainly to indicate that they were intended only for those who had already been led to embrace Christ, and had been born again of His word. It is evident, from all the representations given us on this subject in the inspired account of the labours of the apostles, that men first of all had the gospel preached to them, were warned of their guilt and danger as sinners, and were instructed in the way of salvation through Christ; and that thus, through the effectual working of God's Spirit, they were enabled to believe what they were told, to embrace Christ freely offered to them, and to receive Him as their Lord and Master. They were told, among other things, that it was Christ's will that they should be baptized, and should thereby publicly profess their faith in Him, and be formally admitted into the society which He had founded. When, in these or in similar circumstances, and upon these grounds, a man asks and obtains the administration to him of baptism (of course we speak at present only of adults, for, upon grounds formerly explained, we must form our primary and leading conceptions of the import and object of this ordinance from the baptism of adults, and not of infants), the application seems plainly to carry upon the face of it, a profession or declaration, that he has been led to choose Christ as his Saviour and his Master, and is determined in every way to follow out this profession of entire dependence and of implicit subjection. If faith and regeneration are necessary preparations and qualifications for baptism, they must of course exist in all who come to the Lord's table, which, from its nature, and from the place it occupies in the apostolic history, must manifestly come after baptism.

These obvious general considerations tell in favour of the position, that the sacraments were instituted and intended only for believers; and this view is confirmed, by a closer examination of the particular features and provisions of the ordinances themselves. In regard to the Lord's Supper, it is generally admitted, that it is intended for, and can be lawfully and beneficially partaken of only by, those who have already been received into God's family, and are living by faith in His Son. An attempt, indeed, was made in the course of the Erastian controversy, as conducted at the time of the Westminster Assembly, to set up the notion that the Lord's Supper is a converting ordinance, and may therefore be rightly partaken of by those who have not yet believed and been regenerated. But this notion, manifestly got up merely for the purpose of undermining ecclesiastical discipline, was unanswerably exposed by George Gillespie, in the

third book of his “Aaron’s Hod Blossoming.” And when a similar notion was, with a similar purpose, promulgated about a century later among the Congregationalists of New England, it was again put down, with equal ability and success, by Jonathan Edwards, in his “Inquiry into the Qualifications for Communion.” The notion has not again, so far as we are aware, been revived in any such’ circumstances as to entitle it to notice. It is otherwise in regard to baptism. Some men seem to shrink from laying down the position, either that the sacraments, or that baptism, should be held to be intended for believers, and of course to require or presuppose faith and regeneration, because this leaves out and seems to exclude the case of infant baptism,—a difficulty which neither the Reformers nor the compilers of the Westminster standards, though decided paedobaptists, allowed to influence or modify their statements. Others take wider and more definite ground, and endeavour to establish a great disparity between baptism and the Lord’s Supper as to their import and objects, and to disprove the equal applicability to both these ordinances, of the definition and description usually given of a sacrament. No one, indeed, can deny, that there are some points in which baptism and the Lord’s Supper stand alone and resemble each other. All admit that both these ordinances are emblems or symbolical representations of scriptural truths, fitted and intended to embody and to exhibit the great doctrines revealed in the word of God concerning the salvation of sinners. This description is undoubtedly true of these ordinances so far as it goes. It is admitted by all Protestants, that this description applies equally and alike to baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and that there are no other institutions under the Christian economy to which it does apply. But the question is, Can we not get materials in Scripture for giving a more complete and specific account of what is equally true of these two ordinances, and may therefore be set forth as the full and adequate description of the sacraments? and more especially, have we not materials for making statements of a more precise and specific kind, both about the subjects and the objects of these ordinances, that shall apply equally to both of them? This at least is what has been generally maintained and acted upon by Protestant divines. They have embodied the substance of these materials in their description of a sacrament; and the leading features of this description, as set forth in the Westminster standards, are, that both ordinances, equally and alike, are intended for believers, and represent, seal, and apply to believers Christ and His benefits.’

So far as concerns the subjects of the sacraments, the topic with which at present we have more immediately to do, it is generally admitted, that partaking in the Lord’s Supper implies a profession of faith in Christ, and is therefore

warrantable and beneficial only to believers. But many, and we fear a growing number, refuse to admit this principle as applicable to baptism. It is contended, not only that infants who are incapable of faith ought to be baptized (a position which all the Reformers and all the confessions of the Reformed churches decidedly maintained, though they did not allow it to affect their general definition of a sacrament), but also that adults may be admitted to baptism, though they are not, and do not profess to be, believers and regenerate persons,—baptism, it is alleged, not expressing or implying a profession of believing in Christ, but only a profession of a willingness to be instructed in the principles of Christianity. This notion is flatly opposed to the leading views with respect to the sacraments which have always prevailed in the Protestant churches, and been embodied in the Reformed confessions. But it seems now to prevail to a considerable extent among the Congregationalists of this country. And we fear that it is likely to continue to prevail, because while it can be defended with considerable plausibility in argument, it has also this important practical advantage, that it furnishes a warrant, or an excuse, for baptizing the infants of persons who could not be regarded as qualified to be members of the Christian church in full standing, or as admissible to the Lord's table. There is a very elaborate and ingenious defence of this view of the import and object of baptism, and of the absence of all similarity in these respects between it and the Lord's Supper, in Dr Hailey's work, entitled, "Baptism, the Designation of the Catechumens, not the Symbol of the Members, of the Christian Church," which Dr Wardlaw, in reply to whom chiefly it was written, did not answer, and which Dr W. Lindsay Alexander has pronounced to be unanswerable. We think it can, and it certainly should, be answered. But this we cannot attempt at present, our object being chiefly explanation rather than defence. The attempt to make so wide a gulf between baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to extend the application of baptism beyond the range of the membership of the church, so as to include all who are placed, by their own voluntary act, or that of their parents, under the church's superintendence and instruction, while neither in connection with their own baptism nor that of their children are they held to make a profession of faith and regeneration, is, of course, flatly opposed to the definition or description of a sacrament, given in the confessions of the Reformed churches as applicable to both ordinances. It is also, we are persuaded, inconsistent with every consideration suggested by the symbolic or emblematic character of the ordinance as an outward act, implying a declaration or profession of a certain state of mind and feeling on the part of the person baptized, and with all that is asserted or indicated in Scripture as to the connection between baptism on the one hand, and remission and regeneration on the other.

It is, as we have explained, of fundamental importance in judging of these symbolical ordinances, to attend to the profession implied in the outward act, and to the correspondence between the outward act and the state of mind and heart of the recipient. When a man asks, in obedience to Christ's commands, to be solemnly washed with water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and when, in compliance with this request, he has baptism administered to him, he seems as plainly and as explicitly to make a profession of faith in Christ, as when he applies for and obtains admission to the Lord's table. Baptism, indeed, may be said to be a formal and solemn entering into Christ's service, implying a promise to be thereafter governed and guided by Him. And it surely is this, at least, —that is, this is just about as low a view as can be taken of the ordinance, and of the act of engaging in it. But even this view of it implies, that in the honest and intelligent reception of baptism, such views of Christ are professed as presuppose the existence of saving faith. Men cannot honestly and intelligently enter Christ's service, and profess their unreserved submission to His authority, unless and until they have been led to adopt such views of what is revealed in Scripture concerning Him, as imply and produce true faith in Him as a Saviour. Why should any man desire and ask to be washed with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, unless he has already been led to adopt such views of the three Persons of the Godhead, and of the way of salvation, as must have led him to embrace Christ as all his salvation and all his desire? In short, an application to be baptized, and the being actually baptized as the result of the application, plainly imply a profession, that the person so acting has been already led to believe in Christ, to receive and accept of Him as his Saviour and his Master; and that he intends to profess or declare, by being baptized, the views he has been brought to entertain concerning Christ, and the relation into which he has been led to enter with respect to Him, and to pledge himself to the discharge of all the obligations which these views and that relation impose. When this state of mind and feeling has not been produced, we cannot conceive that the baptism of an adult can be an honest and intelligent act. The nature of the act itself, and the almost universal consent of the Christian church, in every age and country down till the present day, attach this meaning and significance to the baptism of an adult; and if so, the baptism of any one who has not believed and been born again, must be a hypocritical form.

This view of the matter is confirmed, we think, by all that is said in the New Testament, whether in explicit statement or in indirect allusion, concerning the relation between baptism and the great spiritual blessings which are invariably connected with faith in Christ, *viz.* remission and regeneration. The relation

subsisting between baptism and these fundamental blessings involves a discussion of the whole topics comprehended in the controversy about baptismal justification and regeneration; and on this we cannot enter. It seems to us pretty plain, that the scriptural statements which are usually brought to bear upon the settlement of this controversy, and which are founded on by the advocates of baptismal regeneration, imply that some connection subsists between baptism, in the legitimate use of it, and these fundamental blessings; while the view which, has been devised by modern Congregationalists, and is defended by Dr Hailey, seems to deny any connection whatever between them. The texts referred to seem to imply either, that baptism, in the right and legitimate use of it, is a sign or symbol, a seal and a profession of remission and regeneration, as previously conferred and then existing in the party baptized; or else that regeneration is produced or bestowed in baptism, and through the instrumentality of that ordinance. The first of these views is, we are persuaded, that which is sanctioned by Scripture, and certainly it has been generally taught by the Reformed churches. The latter is the common Popish and Tractarian doctrine; and though it has no solid scriptural ground to rest upon, it can be defended from Scripture with some plausibility, and this is more, we think, than can be said, so far as concerns this branch of the argument, in favour of the notion that baptism may be rightly and honestly applied for and received by men who have not already and previously received faith in Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of their sins, and the regeneration of their natures. We would only say, before leaving this subject, that we cannot but regard the serious error to which we have adverted, as affording another illustration of a danger formerly mentioned, that, namely, of allowing the notions or impressions which the special exceptional case of infant baptism is apt to suggest, to influence unduly our views about baptism in general, and even about the sacraments as a whole. The giving undue prominence to the special case of infant baptism, is very apt to blind men's eyes to the strength of the evidence, that baptism in its general import and object—that is, adult baptism in its legitimate use—implies a profession of faith in Christ, and can therefore be rightly received and improved only by believers; while at the same time the temptation to reject this great scriptural principle, which is so explicitly set forth in almost all the confessions of the Reformed churches, is strengthened by the opening thus made, for giving baptism to the children of those who do not make a profession of faith, and who would not, or should not, have been admitted to the Lord's Supper.

2. We must now proceed to advert to the second leading division of the subject, viz. the objects of the sacraments, or the purposes for which they were instituted,

and which they are fitted and intended to serve,—or, what is virtually the same thing, the beneficial effects which men are warranted to expect, and do receive, from the right use of them. There is, as we have mentioned, a very close connection between this topic and that which we have already considered. If the sacraments were intended for believers, —if their proper subjects are those only who have already been united to Christ, and been born again of His word,—then it follows that they could not have been fitted or intended to be auxiliary or instrumental in bestowing or producing anything which is implied in the existence of saving faith, or in effecting anything which is involved in, or results from, saving faith, wherever it exists. Upon the ground, then, of what has been already set forth under the former head, it follows, not only that justification and regeneration are not bestowed or produced in or by baptism, but that they must have been already bestowed and produced before baptism can be lawfully or safely received. This is a principle of fundamental importance, and it is confirmed by all that is taught us in Scripture, both with respect to the subjects and the objects of the sacraments. There is, indeed, no principle more important with reference to this whole matter, whether viewed theoretically or practically, whether regarded as an exposition of truth, or as a security against corruption and abuse, than that the sacraments are intended for believers, and of course must have been fitted to aid them in some way or other in the great work of carrying on the life of God in their souls, in promoting their growth in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. The sacraments are means of grace, — that is, they are ordinances or appointments of God, which are intended to be in some way auxiliary or instrumental in conveying to men spiritual blessings. The blessings conveyed by the sacraments, and to be expected from the right use of them, cannot of course be those which, according to God's arrangements, are conveyed to men, and must exist in and be possessed by them, before the sacraments can be lawfully and honestly received. It is a fundamental principle of scriptural doctrine, that justification and regeneration are necessarily and invariably connected with faith, and that they are contemporaneous with it, whatever may be the precise relation subsisting among them in the order of nature. Whoever has been enabled to believe in Jesus Christ has been justified and regenerated; he has passed through that great ordeal on which salvation depends, and which can occur but once in the history of a soul. And if these principles are well founded, then the spiritual blessings which the sacraments may be instrumental in conveying, can be those only which men still stand in need of, with a view to their salvation, after they have been justified and regenerated by faith. And these are the forgiveness of the sins which they continue to commit, a growing sense of God's pardoning mercy, and grace and



strength to resist temptation, to discharge duty, to improve privilege, and to be ever advancing in holiness; — or, to adopt the language of the Shorter Catechism in describing the blessings which accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, they are a assurance of God’s love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.” There is nothing asserted or indicated in Scripture to preclude the conveyance of any or all of these blessings, through the instrumentality of the sacraments, as well as of the other means of grace. On the contrary, there is good scriptural ground wdiy believers should expect to receive, in the right use of the sacraments, any or all of these blessings, according as they may need them. And accordingly, it is the general doctrine of the Reformed confessions, that the great leading object of the sacraments—the main purpose which they were designed and fitted to accomplish—is just to be instrumental or auxiliary in conveying these blessings to those who have believed through grace, in producing these results in those who have already been renewed in the spirit of their minds, and to do this mainly, if not solely, by strengthening and confirming their faith.

We have already had occasion to quote the principal passages in which this doctrine concerning the great leading object or design of the sacraments is set forth in the Westminster symbols, but it may be proper to advert to them somewhat more formally in this connection. In the Confession of Faith, the main position laid down regarding the sacraments is this, that they “are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him; as also,” *etc.* Here the general nature and character of the sacraments is declared to be, that they are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace; and the principal object —the leading design, on account of which they were instituted by God— is said to be “to represent Christ and His benefits, and to confirm our interest in Him.” The “representing Christ and His benefits” applies more properly to the sacraments in their character and functions as signs; “the confirming our interest in Him,” in their character and function as seals. The representing or signifying Christ and His benefits,—that is, the blessings of the covenant of grace, and the doctrines or promises which unfold and offer, and which, when believed and applied, instrumentally convey or bestow them,—applies more immediately to the mere symbols or elements, and to the preaching of the gospel to all, without distinction or exception, which is involved in the selection and appointment of such symbols, as recorded in the New Testament. The “confirming our interest in Him” brings under our notice the more limited and specific object of the

sacraments, as brought out in the actual individual participation in them by persons duly qualified and rightly prepared. This latter statement suggests at once, as a fundamental point in the doctrine of the sacraments,—and, of course, as true of baptism as of the Lord’s Supper,—that they are intended only for those who have already obtained an interest in Christ by faith, and that they are designed to benefit these persons mainly by confirming this interest in Christ, which they have already acquired, and which they must have possessed before they could lawfully and beneficially partake even in the initiatory sacrament of baptism. This important principle is also explicitly declared in the 19th chapter of the Confession, which treats of Saving Faith. Concerning saving faith, it says, that “it is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word, by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.” Here the increasing and strengthening of saving faith, previously produced and already existing, is ascribed to the administration of the sacraments, and of course is predicated equally and alike of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and this incidental, though most explicit, assertion of the principle, that the sacraments were designed to increase and strengthen saving faith, shows how familiar the minds of the compilers of the Westminster Confession were with a doctrine, which is now very much ignored by many who profess to follow in their footsteps.

The same doctrine as to the objects of the sacraments is very explicitly set forth in the Larger Catechism, where, in answer to the question, What is a sacrament? it is said, that “a sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in His church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of His mediation, to strengthen and increase their faith and all other graces, to oblige them to obedience, to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another, and to distinguish them from those that are without.” We have already shown that, according to the strict grammatical construction of this sentence, the expression, “those that are within the covenant of grace,” is used simply as synonymous with believers, and not in the wider sense in which it might include also the children of believers; and that, therefore, the Larger Catechism agrees with the Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism, in setting forth this great doctrine in regard to the subjects of the sacraments, *viz.* that they are intended for believers, for those who have already received the gift of faith; not meaning to exclude the baptism of infants,—which was regarded as fully sanctioned by scriptural authority,—but virtually conceding, 1st, That the full and adequate idea of a sacrament, as exhibited in adult baptism and the Lord’s Supper, does not directly and thoroughly apply to

the case of infant baptism; and 2d, That it is of more importance to bring out fully and explicitly, the sacramental principle,—the true and full doctrine of the sacraments, —as applicable to adult baptism and the Lord’s Supper, than to attempt to lay down some more vague and diluted view upon this subject, which might include the special and peculiar case of the baptism of infants. This being assumed, we see that the Larger Catechism, in entire accordance with the Confession of Faith, gives it as the true account of the general nature and character of the sacraments, that e( they signify, seal, and exhibit” the benefits of Christ’s mediation to believers, and that their primary leading object is to strengthen and increase faith and all other graces, where these have been already produced. The three other objects here assigned to the sacraments, viz. “to oblige them to obedience, to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another, and to distinguish them from those that are without,”—all, be it observed, applicable only to believers,—are usually described by theologians, and were no doubt regarded by the Westminster divines, as the secondary or subordinate objects or ends of the sacraments. And it is plain that, in respect of intrinsic importance in their bearing upon the salvation of sinners, they do not stand upon the same level with the great object and result of strengthening and increasing faith and all other graces, and thereby signifying, sealing, and exhibiting the benefits of the covenant of grace.

The general definition or description of a sacrament given in the Shorter Catechism is very explicit in declaring, that the proper subjects of the sacraments are believers, though it does not bring out so formally and fully what are their objects or ends, except in so far as the truth upon this point is implied in their general nature and character. But as the statement in the Shorter Catechism is that with which most people in Scotland are familiar, though in many cases, we fear, familiar only with the words, without understanding the meaning, it may be proper to give a somewhat full and formal explanation of it, even though this may involve some repetition. It is this: a A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by sensible signs Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.”

1. This statement explicitly asserts, as we have shown, that the sacraments, baptism as well as the Lord’s Supper, are intended for believers, and produce their appropriate beneficial results only in those who by faith receive them; while it assumes or takes for granted, that those who partake in them are duly qualified for doing so, by the possession of that faith which, in receiving them, is professed or declared.

2. The things which are represented, sealed, and applied to believers in the sacraments are, “Christ and the benefits of the new covenant not some of the benefits of the covenant, however important and fundamental, but these benefits as a whole,—everything, including both a change of state and of character, which is invariably connected with saving faith; not the covenant of grace, regarded merely as a statement or exposition of a certain compact or transaction revealed in Scripture and bearing upon the salvation of sinners, but the grace of the covenant, or the blessings which the covenant offers, conveys, and secures. Any attempt to represent baptism, or the water the application of which constitutes baptism, as representing or signifying remission,—apart from regeneration, or regeneration apart from remission,—and any attempt to explain the difficulty about sealing by distinguishing between the covenant of grace and the grace of the covenant, and alleging that sacraments are seals of the covenant, but are only signs or symbols of spiritual blessings,—is precluded by the terms of this statement, and still more explicitly by the further explanation given in the Confession of Faith and Larger Catechism.

3. “Christ and the benefits of the new covenant” are here declared to be equally and alike “represented, sealed, and applied and this one complex position being predicated of them, it cannot, in consistency with this statement, be alleged that these benefits, or any of them, are either represented and not sealed, or sealed and not represented, in reference to any one class or section of legitimate and worthy recipients. The admission of the accuracy of this description of a sacrament implies, that there is a sense in which Christ and His benefits are, in baptism and the Lord’s Supper, not only represented and signified, but also sealed and applied to believers.

4. The “signify, seal, and exhibit” of the Larger Catechism are evidently identical with the “represented, sealed, and applied” of the Shorter,—“signify” being synonymous with “represent,” and “exhibit” with “apply.” And in considering these expressions, we have first to advert to the question of the consistency of this account of the nature and character of the sacraments, with the view which, as we have seen, is given in these symbols, of their main object, their principal design. There is no difficulty in perceiving how the signifying and sealing here ascribed to the sacraments accord with the doctrine which represents their leading object to be, to confirm or strengthen a faith previously existing, and thereby to contribute to convey the blessings which believers still need. Signifying and sealing naturally suggest the idea, that the things signified and sealed not only exist, but are actually possessed by those to whom they are

signified and sealed. Whatever may be the precise kind of influence and effect indicated by these words, they assume or imply, that the things of which they are predicated have been already bestowed or conveyed, and are now held or possessed. The sacraments are for believers. In describing their general nature and character, it is usually assumed that the persons who receive them are duly qualified by the possession of faith; by receiving the sacraments, they express and exercise their faith; they thus have all the great fundamental blessings, the possession of which is invariably connected with the existence of faith, signified and sealed to them; and the tendency and effect of this are to strengthen and increase their faith, and thereby to convey to them more fully and abundantly those other blessings of which they still stand in need.

But while the signifying and sealing ascribed to the sacraments are plainly, whatever may be their precise meaning and import, quite accordant with the general doctrine taught concerning their objects, there seems to be more difficulty about “exhibiting” or “applying.” Do not these words convey the idea of conferring or bestowing what was not previously possessed? Do they not thus sanction the notion that Christ and His benefits are conveyed or bestowed, not previously to the lawful reception of the sacraments, but in and by the use of them? Now, in opposition to this notion, we take the position, that the doctrine that the sacraments are for believers, and assume the previous existence in worthy recipients of the great spiritual blessings with which saving faith is invariably connected, is far too explicitly and too fully set forth in the Westminster symbols, in accordance with the general doctrine of the Reformed churches, to admit of its being set aside or involved in uncertainty, on the ground of a single vague and ambiguous expression, even though there were greater difficulty than there is, in interpreting that expression in harmony with the general strain of their teaching. The proof of this in the statements of the Confession and Catechisms is too clear to require the application of any collateral and subordinate evidence. But it so happens that we have evidence of this sort, which would be conclusive as to what was the doctrine which the Westminster divines intended to teach upon this point, even though the language of their symbols, taken as a whole, had been much more ambiguous than it is. This evidence we find in statements contained in Samuel Rutherford’s “Due Right of Presbyteries,” and in George Gillespie’s “Aaron’s Rod Blossoming.” Rutherford and Gillespie are, literally and without any exception, just the two very highest authorities that could be brought to bear upon a question of this kind, at once from their learning and ability as theologians, and from the place they held and the influence they exerted in the actual preparation of the

documents under consideration. That Rutherford held the views about the sacraments which we have ascribed to the Westminster standards, is quite certain, from the following quotations from the work above referred to:—

“All believers as believers, in foro Dei before God, have right to the seals of the covenant; those to whom the covenant and the body of the charter belongeth, to those the seal belongeth; but in foro ecclesiastice, and in an orderly church way, the seals are not to be conferred by the church upon persons because they believe, but because they profess their believing; therefore the apostles never baptized Pagans, but upon profession of their faith.” “Certainly, God ordaineth the sacraments to believers as believers, and because they are within the covenant, and their interest in the covenant is the only true right of interest to the seals of the covenant; profession doth but declare who believe and who believe not, and consequently who have right to the seals of the covenant, and who not; but profession doth not make right, but declareth who have right.”

There is no great difficulty connected with the Lord’s Supper, so far as concerns the point now under consideration. The difficulty applies only to baptism, and in regard to baptism the following statements of Rutherford are conclusive:—

“1. Baptism is not that whereby we are entered into Christ’s mystical and invisible body as such, for it is presupposed we be members of Christ’s body, and our sins pardoned already before baptism come to be a seal of sins pardoned. But baptism is a seal of our entry into Christ’s visible body, as swearing to the colours is that which entereth a soldier to be a member of such an army, whereas, before his oath, he was only a heart-friend to the army and cause.

“2. Baptism, as it is such, is a seal, and a seal—as a seal—addeth no new lands or goods to the man to whom the charter and seal is given, but only doth legally confirm him in the right of such lands given to the man by prince or state. Yet this hindereth not; but baptism is a real legal seal, legally confirming the man in his actual visible profession of Christ, remission of sins, regeneration, so, as though before baptism he was a member of Christ’s body, yet, quoad nos, he is not a member of Christ’s body visible, until he be made such by baptism.” \_

Gillespie, in like manner, has the following explicit statement upon this subject:  
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“The Papists hold that the sacraments are instrumental to confer, give, or work

grace; yea, *ex opere operato*, as the schoolmen speak. Our divines hold that the sacraments are appointed of God, and delivered to the church as sealing ordinances, not to give, but to testify what is given; not to make, but to confirm saints. And they not only oppose the Papist's *opus operatum*, but they simply deny this instrumentality of the sacraments, that they are appointed of God for working or giving grace where it is not. This is so well known to all who have studied the sacramentarian controversies, that I should not need to prove it; yet that none may doubt of it, take here some few instead of many testimonies."f Nay, what is somewhat remarkable, and singularly pertinent to our present purpose, we find that the same difficulty which we are now considering is stated and answered by Gillespie, and that his answer to it is virtually a commentary upon the passage we are examining, and establishes the sense in which it was understood by those who may be regarded as its authors,—thus not only proving that the doctrine we have asserted is to be maintained, notwithstanding its apparent discrepancy, with one expression, but at the same time showing in what way this apparent discrepancy is to be explained. The remarkable passage is as follows:—"You will say, peradventure, that Protestant writers hold the sacraments to be, 1, Significant or declarative signs; 2, Obsignative or confirming signs; and 3, Exhibitive signs, so that the thing signified is given or exhibited to the soul." Now these three points are manifestly identical with the three words employed in the Catechisms,—“signify, seal, and exhibit,” in the Larger; and “represent, seal, and apply,” in the Shorter. The main question is, What is meant by the third point, exhibit and apply, or exhibitive signs? and Gillespie's answer is this:—

“I answer, that exhibition, which they speak of, is not the giving of grace where it is not (as is manifest by the afore-quoted testimonies), but an exhibition to believers, a real, effectual, lively application of Christ, and of all His benefits, to every one that believeth, for the staying, strengthening, confirming, and comforting of the soul. Our divines do not say that the sacraments are exhibitive ordinances, wherein grace is communicated to those who have none of it, to unconverted or unbelieving persons.

“By this time it may appear (I suppose) that the controversy between us and the Papists, concerning the effect of the sacraments (setting aside the *opus operatum*, which is a distinct controversy, and is distinctly spoken to by our writers,—setting aside also the *causalitas physica* and *insita*, by which some of the Papists say the sacraments give grace, though divers others of them hold the sacraments to be only moral causes of grace), is thus far the same with the present

controversy between Mr Prynne and me, that Protestant writers do not only oppose the opus operatum and the causalitas physica and insita, but they oppose (as is manifest by the testimonies already cited) all causality or working of the first grace of conversion and faith in or by the sacraments, supposing always a man to be a believer and within the covenant of grace before the sacrament, and that he is not made such, nor translated to the state of grace in or by the sacrament.”

We think it of some importance to show, that these views of the sacramental principle, or of the doctrine of the sacraments, which, though so clearly and fully set forth in the Westminster standards, have been so much lost sight of amongst us, were openly maintained by the leading divines of the Church of Scotland during last century. Principal Hadow and Thomas Boston may be regarded as the heads of two different schools of theology in Scotland in the early part of last century, and; as happens not unfrequently in theological discussions, they divided, we think, the truth between them in the points controverted. They have both left very explicit statements of their views upon this subject of the sacraments, especially in regard to baptism, about which alone there is any difficulty, so far as concerns the points we have been considering. Principal Hadow lays down this position, that the commonly received doctrine of the Reformed churches does not “ascribe any other virtue or efficacy to baptism, than what is moral and objective, in representing and signing the promises, confirming of faith, and exhibiting or applying the promised benefits of the covenant unto believers, by way of a sign and seal, which still supposeth grace already conferred on those in whom this sacrament hath its due operation;” and he supports this and one or two other positions of a similar import and tendency by quotations from Zwingli, Bullinger, Peter Martyr, Musculus, Polanus, Wollebius, Aretius, Calvin, Beza, Spanheim, Turretine, Heidegger, Bucer, Zanchius, Ursinus, Parseus, Wendelinus, Rivet, Walseus, Hoornbeck, Essenius, Leydecker, Mastricht, Witsius, Alting, Maresius, Gomarus, Maccovius, Ames, Arnoldus, Danseus, Chamier, Amyraut, Du Moulin,—thus furnishing, like Vitringa, a great storehouse of materials for a theological display.

Boston’s views are brought out in the following extract from his “Miscellany Questions in Divinity:”—

“The sacraments are not converting but confirming ordinances; they are appointed for the use and benefit of God’s children, not of others; they are given to believers as believers, as Rutherford expresses it, so that none other are



subjects capable of the same before the Lord. Either must we say they have no respect at all to saving grace, or that they are appointed as means of the conveyance of the first grace,—that is, to convert sinners,—or finally, for confirmation of grace already received. If it be said they have no respect at all to saving grace, then baptism cannot be called the baptism of repentance, nor are persons baptized for the remission of sins, nor can it be looked on as a seal of the righteousness of faith, all which is evidently against Scripture testimony. If it be said they are appointed as means of the conveyance of the first grace, then, first, either there are none converted before baptism, which is manifestly false, or else baptism is in vain conferred on converts, which is no less false. But surely in vain are means used to confer on any that which they had before. Second, it were unfaithfulness to Christ and cruelty to men to withhold the sacraments from any person whatsoever. Were it not soul-murder to withhold the means of conveyance of the first grace from any, and unfaithfulness to Him who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth? But that the sacraments, and particularly baptism, are not to be conferred on all promiscuously, none can deny. Wherefore it remains that they are indeed appointed for confirmation, which doth necessarily suppose the pre-existence of grace in the soul, seeing that which is not cannot be confirmed.”

These quotations confirm everything we have said as to the doctrine which has been regarded by the most competent judges as taught in the Westminster standards. We give only one other short quotation from Dr John Erskine, probably the greatest divine in the Church of Scotland in the latter part of last century:—

“Scripture sufficiently proves that the sacraments of the New Testament are signs and seals of no other covenant than that covenant of grace which secures eternal happiness to all interested in it. And the partaking of them manifestly implies a partaking of covenant blessings on the one hand, and the exercise of faith on the other. To begin with baptism: John baptized for the remission of sins, and so did Christ’s disciples. We are told that baptism saves us; and by baptism we are said to put on Christ, to die, to be buried, and to rise with Him, because the water in baptism represents and seals that blood of Jesus which cleanseth from the guilt of sin, and purchases for us the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, and all other needful blessings. Baptism, then, is a seal of spiritual blessings; and spiritual blessings it cannot seal to the unconverted.”

We have now explained the doctrine taught in the Westminster standards

concerning the subjects and the objects of the two sacraments of the Christian church,—that is, the persons who can lawfully and beneficially partake in them, and the purposes which, in these persons, they are fitted and intended to accomplish. Another question still remains to be considered, *viz.* Have we any further information as to the way and manner in which the sacraments produce their appropriate effects, or as to the principles which regulate the production of the results? So much mischief has been done to the souls of men by the perversion or abuse of the sacraments, that we consider it necessary, in connection with this branch of the subject, to state again distinctly what is, of course, obviously implied in the views we have explained, *viz.* that men who outwardly partake in the sacraments without having been previously led to believe in Christ Jesus, can derive from them no benefit whatever. Persons who are still unbelieving and impenitent, do not, in receiving baptism or the Lord's Supper, discharge a duty, or perform an acceptable act of worship, or enjoy and improve a privilege or mean of grace. On the contrary, they are only committing a sin, because they are presumptuously engaging in a sacred service, while destitute of the qualifications which God has required, and because, in the very act of outwardly receiving the sacraments, they are making a false and hypocritical profession; they are declaring by deeds the existence of a certain i state of mind and heart, corresponding to the outward act they are performing, while it has really no existence. The sacraments can be expected to become the means of grace, or the channels of conveying spiritual blessings, only when men rightly receive them, —that is, when they are duly prepared for the reception of them, and when they faithfully improve them for their intended objects. With respect to the due preparation, there are required what the old divines used to call an habitual and an actual, or a general and a special, preparation. The habitual or general preparation is, of course, faith, without which already existing there can be no warrant for participating in the sacraments, and no capacity of benefiting by them; and the actual or special preparation is just faith in exercise, under the influence of right views and suitable impressions of our own wants and necessities at the time, and of the nature, character, and objects of the ordinance, whether it be baptism or the Lord's Supper, in which we are about to engage.

It is only in these circumstances that the sacraments can be expected to prove means of grace. The question thus becomes limited to this, In what way, or through what process, do the sacraments become instrumental in conveying spiritual blessings to those persons who, having previously believed in Christ, and been justified and regenerated, receive these ordinances under a due sense of

regard to Christ's authority, and from a sincere desire to share more abundantly in the blessings of which they still stand in need, and which are all treasured up in Him? Now as to the way and manner, the process and regulating principles, according to which these men derive benefit from receiving the sacraments, the word of God has certainly not given us much direct information. And this, indeed, is just a part or a consequence of a more general truth, *viz.* that Scripture does not ascribe to the sacraments any such prominence or influence in the way of contributing to men's salvation, by conveying to them spiritual blessings, as the Popish or Tractarian theory does. There are, indeed, some important negative truths bearing upon this subject, which are clear and certain, and which it is important to remember and to apply, as the great securities against error and abuse. Most of these have been referred to already, but it may be proper now to state them together, and in this connection. They are chiefly these—

1. That the sacraments do not occupy any such place in the scheme of God's arrangements, as to make the participation in them, or in either of them, necessary to the possession and enjoyment of any spiritual blessing, or to entire meetness for heaven.
2. That no spiritual blessings are derived from the sacraments, without the previous existence and the present exercise of true saving faith.
3. That the sacraments become effectual means of grace and salvation, not from any virtue—that is, any power or worth, personal or official—in him who administers them, nor from any virtue in them,—that is, from any intrinsic efficacy inherent in them, and resulting *ex opere operato*,—and that they do not operate certainly and invariably in conveying any spiritual blessings.
4. That the sacraments are not seals of spiritual blessings in any such sense as implies that they are attestations to the personal character or spiritual condition of those who receive them, or that the mere reception of the sacraments is to be held as of itself furnishing a proof, or even a presumption, that those receiving them are true believers, and may be assured that they have reached a condition of safety.

These truths, it will be observed, are to a large extent negative. They consist mainly of denials of certain notions about the nature and necessity, the subjects, objects, and effects of the sacraments, which are very apt to spring up in men's minds, and which have been openly maintained by Romanists and High

Churchmen. And when we reflect upon the extent to which these unwarranted and extravagant notions about the sacraments have prevailed, and upon the fearful amount of injury they have done to the souls of men, we reckon it about sufficient to know, that in the case of adults they are not intended for those who have not already faith and regeneration; that they do not produce any beneficial results which may not be comprehended under the general head of aiding and assisting believers in carrying on the work of sanctification in their hearts; and that they do not directly and of themselves furnish any evidence, that faith and regeneration have been produced, and that the work of grace has begun. Let men firmly believe and carefully apply these negative doctrines, and they will thus be preserved from error and delusion, and at the same time will be able, if they carefully improve what they know, and wait upon God for His blessing, to derive from the sacraments all the spiritual benefits they were ever fitted and intended to be the means of conveying. „

There is really nothing more declared or defined upon this point in Scripture, or in the Westminster symbols, except what may be implied in or deducible from their general character as signs and seals of the covenant of grace. The general idea suggested by the word seal is that of confirming; and there is no great difficulty in seeing how this idea may be applied to the sacraments, without imagining that they are in themselves attestations on God's part to men's individual character and condition, or that they involve anything very exalted or mysterious. There is, first of all, the general consideration, that Christ having expressly appointed these two special ordinances to be instruments or channels of conveying to men spiritual blessings, in addition to what may be called the more ordinary means of grace, the word and prayer, we have in this very circumstance special grounds for confidently expecting His special blessing when we receive and use them aright. This consideration is well fitted to confirm us in our determination to improve the sacraments to the uttermost, and in our confident expectation of deriving spiritual benefit from doing so.

And when we look more particularly to the character of the sacraments as outward actions of a symbolic import, we see plainly that they have an individualizing, appropriating bearing or tendency, which fits them specially for being made the instruments in the hand of the Spirit of guiding us to a personal application of divine truth to our own condition and circumstances, and thus sealing or confirming our faith, love, and hope. A believer, in partaking of the sacraments, stands forth, plainly and palpably, as making a personal profession of his faith in Christ, and giving a personal promise and pledge to persevere in

faith and obedience. The natural tendency of this is to lead him to realize more fully his actual position, obligations, and prospects as a believer, and this warrants the confident expectation that the Spirit will actually employ it for accomplishing this result. But the sacraments are to be regarded as signs and seals on the part of God as well as of man. And in this aspect their sealing or confirming character comes out in this way: God, by giving to a believer, in the ordinary course of His providence, an opportunity of partaking in the sacraments, does not indeed thereby attest or indorse his personal character and standing as a believer, but He may be said to single him out and to deal with him in his' individual capacity,—addressing to him personally, and in a manner and circumstances peculiarly fitted to come home with power to his understanding, heart, and conscience, the great truths of Scripture, with the knowledge, belief, and application of which all spiritual blessings are connected; and thus intimating His readiness and willingness to bestow, in connection with these ordinances, all needful spiritual blessings, in accordance with all that He has revealed in His word, as regulating His conduct in such matters. Viewed as signs and seals on God's part, the sacraments may be fairly regarded as signifying or intimating this; and the declaration of all this in such circumstances, and with such accompaniments, is well fitted to exert a sealing or confirming influence upon the minds of believers.

The substance of this matter may be embodied in these two positions,—1st, That the Holy Spirit ordinarily employs the sacraments, when received by persons duly qualified and rightly prepared, as means or instruments of conveying to them clearer views and more lively and impressive conceptions of what He has done and revealed in His word; with respect to the provisions and arrangements of the covenant of grace, and their special application to men individually. And 2d, That the Holy Spirit, acting in accordance with the principles and tendencies of our constitution, ordinarily employs the sacraments, as means or instruments of increasing and strengthening men's faith with reference to all its appropriate objects, and thereby of imparting to them, in greater abundance, all the spiritual blessings which are connected with the lively and vigorous exercise of faith,—that is, all those subordinate blessings—as in a certain sense they may be called—which accompany and flow from justification and regeneration.

We have now stated the substance of what is suggested by Scripture, and set forth in the Westminster standards, concerning the way and manner in which the sacraments become means of grace, and produce their appropriate beneficial effects; and, indeed, more generally, concerning the nature and character, the

subjects and the objects, the end and the effect, of these ordinances. And we have done so under the influence of a strong desire and determination to avoid the very common and very injurious tendency, either directly to overrate the value and efficacy of the sacraments, or to furnish facilities and encouragements to others to overrate them, by leaving our statements on these subjects in a condition of great vagueness and confusion. Any attempts to assign to them greater dignity, value, and efficacy than we have ascribed to them, or to invest them with a deeper shade of mystery, are, we are persuaded, not only unsanctioned by Scripture, but inconsistent with the fair and legitimate consequences of what it teaches, and are fitted to exert an injurious influence upon the interests of truth and holiness. The strong natural tendency of men to substitute the tithing of mint, anise, and cumin, for the weightier matters of the law,—to substitute the observance of outward rites and ceremonies for the diligent cultivation of Christian graces and the faithful discharge of Christian duties,—is strengthened by everything which, professedly upon religious grounds, either adds to the number of the rites and ceremonies which God has prescribed, or assigns even to prescribed rites and ceremonies an importance and an efficacy beyond what He has sanctioned. In the second of these ways, as well as in the first, the truth of God has been grievously perverted, and the interests of practical godliness have been extensively injured. Almost the only rites and ceremonies permanently binding upon the Christian church are baptism and the Lord's Supper; and these have been in every age so distorted and perverted by exaggeration and confusion, as to have proved, in point of fact, the occasions of fearful injury to men's souls. It is true that men have sometimes exhibited a tendency to go to the opposite extreme, to depreciate instituted ordinances, and to reduce their importance, value, and efficacy below the standard which the word of God sanctions. But the tendency to overvalue the sacraments, and to make the observance of them a substitute, more or less avowedly, for things of much greater importance, is far more common and far more dangerous; more dangerous, at once, because it is more likely to creep in, and to gain an ascendancy in men's minds, and because, when yielded to and encouraged, it exerts a more injurious influence upon the highest and holiest interests, by wrapping men in strong delusion in regard to their spiritual condition and prospects, and leading them to build their hopes of heaven upon a false foundation.

We have confined ourselves to an explanation of the sacramental principle, or the general doctrine or theory of the sacraments as applicable to both these ordinances—a subject greatly neglected and misunderstood. We have referred to

baptism and the Lord's Supper only in so far as this was necessary for illustrating something connected with the exposition of the general doctrine. We have had no occasion to dwell upon the Lord's Supper, because the application of the general doctrine of the sacraments to it is plain enough, and because there is no serious difficulty connected with it, unless we had gone into the discussion of the kind and manner of the presence of Christ in this ordinance, which we regard as one of the most useless controversies that ever was raised. We have been obliged to dwell at some length on baptism, and especially infant baptism, chiefly because of the peculiar place which infant baptism holds,—a peculiarity, the ignorance or disregard of which has introduced much error and confusion into men's views upon this whole subject, The peculiarity is, that infant baptism really occupies a sort of subordinate and exceptional position; while, at the same time, this peculiarity being overlooked, and infant baptism coming much more frequently under our notice than adult baptism, we are very apt to allow the specialties of this peculiar case to modify unduly our views, not only of baptism, but even of the sacraments in general.

The views we have set forth upon this subject may at first sight appear to be large concessions to the anti-paedobaptists,—those who deny the lawfulness of the baptism of infants; and to affect the solidity of the grounds on which the practice of paedobaptism, which has ever prevailed almost universally in the Christian church, is based. But we are firmly persuaded, that a more careful consideration of the whole matter will show, that these views—besides being clearly sanctioned by Scripture, and absolutely necessary for the consistent and intelligible interpretation of the confessions of the Reformed churches, and especially of the Westminster symbols—are, in their legitimate application, fitted to deprive the arguments of the anti-paedobaptists of the plausibility they possess. It cannot be reasonably denied, that they have a good deal that is plausible to allege against infant baptism. But we are satisfied that the plausibility of their arguments will always appear greatest to men who have not been accustomed to distinguish between the primary, fundamental, and complete idea of this ordinance as exhibited in the baptism of adults, and the distinct and peculiar place which is held by infant baptism, with the special grounds on which it rests. We cannot conclude without simply stating the following leading positions that ought to be maintained and set forth, in order to guard against error and delusion on the subject of infant baptism:—

1st, That Scripture, while furnishing sufficient materials to establish the lawfulness and obligation of infant baptism, does not give us much direct

information concerning it,—does not furnish materials for laying down any very definite deliverances as to its proper effects in relation to individuals; and that the whole history of the church inculcates the lesson, that upon this subject men should be particularly careful to abstain from deductions, probabilities, or conjectures, beyond what Scripture clearly sanctions.

2d, That while believers are under the same obligation to present their infant children for baptism as to be baptized themselves, if they have not been baptized before, no infants ought to be baptized, except those of persons who ought themselves to be baptized as adults upon their own profession, and who, being thus recognised as believers, are not only entitled but bound to be habitually receiving the Lord's Supper.

3d, That while believers are warranted to improve the baptism of their children in the way of confirming their faith in the salvation of those of them who die in infancy, and in the way of encouraging themselves in a hearty and hopeful discharge of parental duty towards those of them who survive infancy, neither parents nor children, when the children come to be proper subjects of instruction, should regard the fact that they have been baptized, as affording of itself even the slightest presumption that they have been regenerated; that nothing should ever be regarded as furnishing any evidence of regeneration, except the appropriate proofs of an actual renovation of the moral nature, exhibited in each case individually: and that, until these proofs appear, every one, whether baptized or not, should be treated and dealt with in all respects as if he were unregenerate, and still needed to be born again of the word of God through the belief of the truth.



# John Calvin

John Calvin was by far the greatest of the Reformers with respect to the talents he possessed, the influence he exerted, and the services he rendered in the establishment and diffusion of important truth. The Reformers who preceded him may be said to have been all men who, from the circumstances in which they were placed, and the occupations which these circumstances imposed upon them, or from the powers and capacities with which they had been gifted, were fitted chiefly for the immediate necessary business of the age in which their lot was cast, and were not perhaps qualified for rising above this sphere,—which, however, was a very important one. Their efforts, whether in the way of speculation or of action, were just such as their immediate circumstances and urgent present duties demanded of them, while they had little opportunity of considering and promoting the permanent interests of the whole scheme of scriptural truth, or the whole theory and constitution of Christian churches. After all that Luther, Melancthon, and Zwingli had done, there was still needed some one of elevated and comprehensive mind, who should be able to rise above the distraction and confusion of existing contentions, to survey the wide field of scriptural truth in all its departments, to combine and arrange its various parts, and to present them as a harmonious whole to the contemplation of men.

This was the special work for which God qualified Calvin, by bestowing upon him both the intellectual and the spiritual gifts necessary for the task; and this He enabled him to accomplish. God makes use of the intellectual powers which He bestows upon men, for the accomplishment of His own purposes; or rather He bestows upon men those intellectual powers which may fit them naturally, and according to the ordinary operation of means, for the purposes which He in His sovereignty has assigned to them to effect. He then leads them by His grace to

devote their powers to His glory and service, He blesses their labours, and thus His gracious designs are accomplished.

Calvin had received from God mental powers of the highest order. Distinguished equally by comprehensiveness and penetration of intellect, by acuteness and soundness of judgment, his circumstances in early life were so regulated in providence that he was furnished with the best opportunities of improving his faculties, and acquiring the learning and culture that might be necessary with a view to his future labours. Led by God's grace early and decidedly to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and to devote himself to the service of Christ, he was also led, under the same guidance, to abandon the Church of Rome, and to devote himself to the preaching of the gospel, the exposition of the revealed truth of God, and the organization of churches in accordance with the sacred Scriptures and the practice of the apostles. In all these departments of useful labour his efforts were honoured with an extraordinary measure of success. Calvin did what the rest of the Reformers did, and in addition he did what none of them either did or could effect. He was a diligent and laborious pastor. He gave much time to the instruction of those who were preparing for the work of the ministry. He took an active part in opposing the Church of Rome, in promoting the Reformation, and in organizing Protestant churches. Entering with zeal and ardour into all the controversies which the ecclesiastical movements of the time produced, he was ever ready to defend injured truth or to expose triumphant error. This was work which he had to do in common with the other Reformers, though he brought higher powers than any of them to bear upon the performance of it. But in addition to all this, he had for his special business the great work of digesting and systematizing the whole scheme of divine truth, of bringing out in order and harmony all the different doctrines which are contained in the word of God, unfolding them in their mutual relations and various bearings, and thus presenting them, in the most favourable aspect, to the contemplation and the study of the highest order of minds.

The systematizing of divine truth, and the full organization of the Christian church according to the word of God, are the great peculiar achievements of Calvin. For this work God eminently qualified him, by bestowing 'upon him the highest gifts both of nature and of grace; and this work he was enabled to accomplish in such a way as to confer the greatest and most lasting benefits upon the church of Christ, and to entitle him to the commendation and the gratitude of all succeeding ages.

The first edition of his great work, "The Institution of the Christian Religion," was published when he was twenty-seven years of age; and it is a most extraordinary proof of the maturity and vigour of his mind, of the care with which he had studied the word of God, and of the depth and comprehensiveness of his meditations upon divine things, that though the work was afterwards greatly enlarged, and though some alterations were even made in the arrangement of the topics discussed, yet no change of any importance was made in the actual doctrines which it set forth. The first edition, produced at that early age, contained the substance of the whole system of doctrine which has since been commonly associated with his name,—the development and exposition of which has been regarded by many as constituting a strong claim upon the esteem and gratitude of the church of Christ, and by many others as rendering him worthy of execration and every opprobrium. He lived twenty-seven years more after the publication of the first edition of the Institutes, and a large portion of his time during the remainder of his life was devoted to the examination of the word of God and the investigation of divine truth. But he saw no reason to make any material change in the views which he had put forth; and a large proportion of the most pious, able, and learned men, and most careful students of the sacred Scriptures, who have since adorned the church of Christ, have received all his leading doctrines as accordant with the teaching of God's word.

Commonplaces—the only one published before Calvin produced the first edition of his "Institutes"—was not to be compared to Calvin's work, in the accuracy of its representations of the doctrines of Scripture, in the fulness and completeness of its materials, or in the skill and ability with which they were digested and arranged; and in the subsequent editions, while the inaccuracy of its statements increased in some respects rather than diminished, it still continued, to a considerable extent, a defective and ill-digested work, characterized by a good deal of prolixity and wearisome repetition. It was in these circumstances that Calvin produced his "Institutes," the materials of which it was composed being in almost every instance the true doctrines really taught in the word of God, and exhibiting the whole substance of what is taught there on matters of doctrine, worship, government, and discipline,—and the whole of these materials being arranged with admirable skill, and expounded in their meaning, evidence, and bearings, with consummate ability. This was the great and peculiar service which Calvin rendered to the cause of truth and the interests of sound theology, and its value and importance it is scarcely possible to overrate.

In theology there is, of course, no room for originality properly so called, for its

whole materials are contained in the actual Statements of God's word; and he is the greatest and best theologian who has most accurately apprehended the meaning of the statements of Scripture,—who, by comparing and combining them, has most fully and correctly brought out the whole mind of God on all the topics on which the Scriptures give us information,—who classifies and digests the truths of Scripture in the way best fitted to commend them to the apprehension and acceptance of men,— and who can most clearly and forcibly bring out their scriptural evidence, and most skilfully and effectively defend them against the assaults of adversaries. In this work, and indeed in almost any one of its departments, there is abundant scope for the exercise of the highest powers, and for the application of the most varied and extensive acquirements. Calvin was far above the weakness of aiming at the invention of novelties in theology, or of wishing to be regarded as the discoverer of new opinions. The main features of the representation which he put forth of the scheme of divine truth, might be found in the writings of Augustine and Luther,—in neither singly, but in the two conjointly.

But by grasping with vigour and comprehensiveness the whole scheme of divine truth and all its various departments, and combining them into one harmonious and well-digested system, he has done what neither Augustine nor Luther did or could have done, and has given conclusive evidence that he was possessed of the highest intellectual powers, as well as enjoyed the most abundant communications of God's Spirit.

The two leading departments of theological science are the exegetical and the systematic. The two most important functions of the theologian are—first, to bring out accurately the meaning of the individual statements of God's word, the particular truths which are taught there; and second, to classify and arrange these truths in such a way as to bring out most fully and correctly the whole scheme of doctrine which is there unfolded, and to illustrate the bearing and application of the scheme as a whole, and of its different parts. And it is important to notice, that in both these departments Calvin stands out pre-eminent, having manifested in both of them the highest excellence and attained the greatest success. He has left us an exposition of nearly the whole word of God; and it is not only immeasurably superior to any commentary that preceded it, but it has continued ever since, and continues to this day, to be regarded by all competent judges as a work of the highest value, and as manifesting marvellous perspicacity and soundness of judgment. There is no department of theological study the cultivators of which, in modern times, are more disposed to regard with

something like contempt the labours and attainments of their predecessors, and to consider themselves as occupying a much higher platform, than the exact and critical interpretation of Scripture; and we think it must be admitted that in modern times greater improvements have been made in this department of theological science than in any other. Yet Calvin's Commentary continues to secure the respect and the admiration of the most competent judges, both in this country and on the continent, even of those who are disposed to estimate most highly the superiority of the present age over preceding generations in the department of scriptural exegesis. And it is perhaps the most striking illustration of the extraordinary gifts which God bestowed upon Calvin, and of the value of the services which he has rendered to Christian truth and to theological science, that he reached such distinguished excellence, and has exerted so extensive and permanent an influence, both as an accurate interpreter of Scripture, and as a systematic expounder of the great doctrines of God's word.

Besides the Commentary upon Scripture and the "Institutes," the leading departments of Calvin's works are his "Tractatus" and his "Epistolae," both of which are much less known amongst us than they should be. The "Tractatus" are chiefly controversial pieces, in defence of the leading doctrines of his system when assailed by adversaries, and in opposition to the errors of the Papists, the Anabaptists, the Libertines, the advocates of compromises with the Church of Rome, and the assailants of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. His "Epistolae" consist partly of confidential correspondence with his friends, and partly of answers to applications made to him from all parts of the Protestant world, asking his opinion and advice upon all the most important topics that occurred, connected with the administration of ecclesiastical affairs in that most important crisis of the church's history. They manifest throughout the greatest practical wisdom and the truest scriptural moderation, as well as warm friendship and cordial affection; and the perusal of them is indispensable to our forming a right estimate of Calvin's character, and of the spirit and motives by which he was animated, while it is abundantly sufficient of itself to dispel many of the slanders by which he has been assailed.

In these different departments of his works, we have Calvin presented to us as an interpreter of Scripture, as a systematic expounder of the scheme of Christian doctrine, as a controversial defender of truth and impugner of error, and as a friend and practical adviser in the regulation of the affairs of the church; and his pre-eminent excellence in all these departments are, we are persuaded, such as justly to entitle him to a place in the estimation and gratitude of the church of

Christ, which no other uninspired man is entitled to share. Calvin certainly was not free from the infirmities which are always found in some form or degree even in the best men; and in particular, he occasionally exhibited an angry impatience of contradiction and opposition, and sometimes assailed and treated the opponents of the truth and cause of God with a violence of invective which cannot be defended, and should certainly not be imitated. He was not free from error, and is not to be implicitly followed in his interpretation of Scripture, or in his exposition of doctrine. But whether we look to the powers and capacities with which God endowed him, the manner in which he employed them, and the results by which his labours have been followed,—or to the Christian wisdom, magnanimity, and devotedness which marked his character and generally regulated his conduct, there is probably not one among the sons of men, beyond the range of those whom God miraculously inspired by His Spirit, who has stronger claims upon our veneration and gratitude.

We believe that this is in substance the view generally entertained of Calvin by all who have read his works, and who have seen ground to adopt in the main the system of doctrine which he inculcated as based upon divine authority. Many men who were not Calvinists have borne the highest testimony to Calvin's great talents and his noble character, to his literary excellences and his commanding influence. But those who are persuaded that he brought out a full, and in the main accurate view of the truth of God with respect to the way of salvation and the organization of the Christian church, must ever regard him in a very different light from those who have formed an opposite judgment upon these subjects. If Calvin's system of doctrine, government, and worship is in the main scriptural, he must have enjoyed very special and abundant communications of God's Spirit in the formation of his convictions, and he must have rendered most important services to mankind by the diffusion of invaluable truth. Men who are not Calvinists may admire his wonderful talents, and do justice to the elevation of his general character, and the purity and disinterestedness of his motives. But unless they are persuaded that his views upon most points were in the main accordant with Scripture, they cannot regard him with the profound veneration which Calvinists feel, when they contemplate him as God's chosen instrument for diffusing His truth; nor can they cherish anything like the same estimate of the magnitude of the services he has rendered to mankind, and of the gratitude to which in consequence he is entitled.

The Calvin Translation Society, which has done a great and useful work by making almost all his writings accessible to English readers, translated and

circulated Professor Tholuck's Dissertation formerly referred to; and subjoined to it a number of testimonies in commendation of Calvin's works, from eminent men of all classes and opinions, of all ages and countries, including not only Calvinists and theologians, but also infidels and Arminians, statesmen and philosophers, scholars and men of letters. These testimonies have been added to from time to time, and being now collected together, they fill above 100 pages in the last volume of his works, which contains the translation of his Commentary upon Joshua» Many more testimonies to the value and excellence of Calvin's writings might have been produced. But this collection as it stands could not probably be matched in the kind and amount of commendation it exhibits, in the case of any other man whose writings and labours were confined to the department of religion.

Indeed, it is probably true that no man whose time and talents were devoted exclusively to subjects connected with Christianity and the church, has ever received so large a share both of praise and of censure. He has been commended in the strongest terms by many of the highest names both in Christian and in general literature; and the strength of their commendation has been generally very much in proportion to their capacities and opportunities of judging. But if he has received the highest commendation, he has also been visited with a vast amount of censure; the one being really, in the circumstances, just about as significant a testimony to his excellence and his influence as the other. The Papists had the sagacity to see that Calvin—by his great talents and the commanding influence which he exerted—was really their most formidable adversary at the .era of the Reformation. And in accordance with their ordinary principles and policy, they endeavoured to ruin his character by the vilest slanders. Most of these calumnies being utterly destitute of all evidence, and therefore disgraceful only to those who invented or repeated them, have long since been abandoned by every Papist who retained even the slightest regard for character or decency, though they are still occasionally brought forward or insinuated. Some of the Lutheran writers of his own time, and of the succeeding generation, mortified apparently that Calvin's influence and reputation were eclipsing those of their master, railed against him with bitter malignity, and were even mean enough sometimes to countenance the Popish slanders against his character. Specimens of this discreditable conduct on the part of the Lutherans, may be seen in the answers made by Calvin himself, and by Beza, to the attacks of Westphalus and Heshusius.

During Calvin's life, and for more than half a century after his death, most of the

divines of the Church of England adopted his theological views, and spoke of him with the greatest respect. But after, through the influence of Archbishop Laud and the prevalence of Arminian and Pelagian views, sound doctrine and true religion were in a great measure banished from that church, Calvin, as might be expected, came to be regarded in a very different light. During most of last century, the generality of the Episcopalian divines who had occasion to speak of him and his doctrines indulged in bitter vituperation against him, and not unfrequently talked as if they regarded him as a monster who ought to be held up to execration. Indeed, we do not know that theological literature furnishes a more melancholy exhibition of ignorance, prejudice, and bitter hatred of God's truth, than the general mode of speaking about Calvin and his doctrines that prevailed among the Episcopalian clergy of last century. Some of them write as if they were ignorant enough to believe that Calvinism and Presbyterianism were invented by Calvin, and were never heard of in the church till the sixteenth century; and when they speak of him in connection with his views about the divine sovereignty and decrees, we might be tempted to think, from the spirit they often manifest, that they looked upon him almost as if he himself were the author or cause of the fate of those who finally perish. It is but fair to say that this state of things has been greatly improved since the latter part of last century. This is owing partly to the high commendation which Bishop Horsley gave to Calvin's writings, and to the public advice which he tendered to the Episcopalian clergy, as one of which they stood greatly in need, viz. to see that they understood what Calvinism was before they attacked it;—but chiefly to that far greater prevalence of evangelical doctrine and true religion, which, though grievously damaged by Tractarianism, still forms so pleasing a feature in the condition of the English Church.

Calvin has also had the honour to receive at all times a very large share of the enmity of “the world of the ungodly,”—of men who hate God's truth, and all who have been eminently honoured by Him to be instrumental in promoting it. Such persons seem to have a sort of instinctive deep-seated dislike to Calvin, which leads them to dwell upon and exaggerate everything in his character and conduct that may seem fitted to depreciate him. It is not uncommon, even in our own age and country, to hear infidel and semi-infidel declaimers, who know nothing of Calvin's writings or labours, when they wish to say a particularly smart and clever thing against bigotry and intolerance,—meaning thereby honest zeal for God's truth,—bring in something about Calvin burning Servetus.

The leading charges commonly adduced against Calvin's character, as



distinguished from his doctrines, are pride, arrogance, spiritual tyranny, intolerance, and persecution. Some of these are charges which, as universal experience shows, derive their plausibility in a great measure from the view that may be taken of the general character and leading motives of the man against whom they may be directed, and of the goodness and rectitude of the objects which he mainly and habitually aimed at. Those who have an unfavourable opinion of a man's general motives and objects, will see evidence of pride, obstinacy, and intolerance in matters in which those who believe that he was generally influenced by a regard to God's glory and the advancement of Christ's cause, will see only integrity and firmness, uncompromising vigour and decision, mixed it may be with the ordinary remains of human infirmity. The piety and integrity of Calvin, his paramount regard to the honour of God and the promotion of truth and righteousness, to the advancement of Christ's cause and the spiritual welfare of men, are beyond all reasonable doubt. And those who, convinced of this, examine his history with attention and impartiality, will have no difficulty in seeing that for most of these charges there is no real foundation; and that, in so far as evidence, can be adduced in support of any of them, it really proves nothing more than that Calvin manifested, like all other men, the remains of human infirmity, especially, of course, in those respects to which his natural temperament and the influence of his position and circumstances more peculiarly disposed him. The state of his health, the bent of his natural dispositions, and the whole influence of his position, occupations, and habits, were unfavourable to the cultivation of those features of character, and those modes of speaking and acting, which are usually regarded as most pleasing to others, and best fitted to call forth love and affection in the ordinary intercourse of life. The flow of animal spirits, the ready interest in all ordinary commonplace things, and the play of the social feelings, which give such a charm to Luther's conversation and letters, were alien to Calvin's constitutional tendencies, and to his ordinary modes of thinking and feeling. He had a great and exalted mission assigned to him; he was fully alive to this, thoroughly determined to devote himself unreservedly, and to subordinate everything else, to the fulfilment of his mission, and not unconscious of its dignity, or of the powers which had been conferred upon him for working it out. With such a man—so placed, so endowed, and so occupied—the temptation, of course, would be to identify himself and all his views and proceedings with the cause of God and His truth,—to prosecute these high and holy objects sternly and uncompromisingly, without much regard to the opinions and inclinations of those around him,—and to deal with opposition, as if it necessarily implied something sinful in those from whom it proceeded, as if opposition to him involved opposition to his Master. Calvin would have been

something more than man, if, endowed and situated as he was, he had never yielded to this temptation, and been led to deal with opponents and opposition in a way which only the commission of the inspired prophets would have warranted.

Calvin did occasionally give plain indications of undue self-confidence and self-complacency, and of a mixture of personal and carnal feelings and motives, with his zeal for the promotion of truth and righteousness. But there is nothing suggested by a fair view of his whole history that is fitted to throw any doubt upon the general excellence of his character, as tried by the highest standard that has ordinarily been exhibited among men; or on the general purity, elevation, and disinterestedness of the motives by which he was mainly and habitually influenced. There is sufficient evidence that he still had, like the apostle, “a law in his members warring against the law of his mind,” and sometimes “bringing him into captivity to the law of sin.” And from what we know, from Scripture and experience, of the deceitfulness of the heart and the deceitfulness of sin, we cannot doubt that there was a larger admixture of what was sinful in his motives and conduct than he himself was distinctly aware of. But this, too, is characteristic of all men,—even the best of them,—and there is really no ground whatever for regarding Calvin as manifesting a larger measure of human infirmity than attaches, in some form or other, to the best and holiest of our race; while there is abundant evidence that, during a life of great labour and great suffering, he fully established his supreme devotedness to God’s glory and service, his thorough resignation to His will, his perfect willingness to labour in season and out of season, to spend and to be spent, for the sake of Christ and His gospel. It was assuredly no such proud, arrogant, domineering, heartless despot as Calvin is often represented to have been, who composed the dedications which we find prefixed to his commentaries upon the different portions of the Bible, and many of his letters to his friends,— expressing often the warmest affection, the deepest gratitude for instruction and services received; and exhibiting a most cordial appreciation of the excellences of others, a humble estimate of himself, and a perfect willingness to be or to do anything for the sake of Christ and of His cause. It was certainly no such man as he is often described, who lived so long on such terms with his colleagues in the ministry, and held such a place, not only in their veneration and confidence, but in their esteem and affection, as are indicated by the whole state of things unfolded to us in Beza’s life of him.

With reference to the principal charge which, in his own as well as subsequent

times, was brought against his motives and temper, Calvin has put on record the following protestation, in a letter written towards the end of his life, in the year 1558:—

“I can with reason boast, however much ungodly men call me inexorable, that I have never become the enemy of one human being on the ground of personal injuries. I confess that I am irritable; and, though this vice displeases me, I have not succeeded in curing myself as much as I could wish. But, though many persons have unjustly attacked me, an innocent, and, what is more, well-deserving man,—have perfidiously plotted all kinds of mischief against me, and most cruelly harassed me,—I can defy any one to point out a single person to whom I have studied to return the like, even though the means and the opportunity were in my power.”

On a ground formerly adverted to, we have no doubt that there was sometimes, in Calvin’s feelings and motives, a larger admixture of the personal and the imperfect than he was himself aware of, or than he here admits. We always shrink from men making professions about the purity of their motives, as we cannot but fear that this indicates the want of an adequate sense of the deceitfulness of sin and of their own hearts, a disposition to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. It would not, we think, have been at all unwarrantable or unbecoming, if Calvin, in the passage we have quoted, had made a fuller admission of sinful motives, which he would no doubt have acknowledged that the Searcher of hearts must have seen in him. And yet we have no doubt that his statement, strong as it is, is substantially true, so far as concerns anything that came fairly under the cognizance of his fellow-men—anything on which other men were entitled to form a judgment. Whatever the Searcher of hearts might see in him, we believe that there was nothing in his ordinary conduct, in his usual course of outward procedure, that could entitle any man to have denied the truth of the statement which he here made about himself, or that would afford any materials for disproving it. And if this or anything like it be true, then the practical result is, that the common notions about Calvin’s irritability, the extent to which he was ordinarily influenced by personal, selfish, and sinful motives, are grossly exaggerated; and that, though this might be said to be his besetting sin,—that to which his constitutional tendencies and the whole influence of his position chiefly disposed him,—there was really nothing in it that entitled any of his fellow-men to reproach him, or that could be justly regarded as anything more than a display of that common human infirmity, which even the best men manifest in some form or degree.

Calvin's superiority to the influence of personal, angry, and vindictive feelings, is very fully brought out in the course he pursued with respect to the men who filled the office of the ministry at Geneva after Farel and he had been driven into exile in 1538, —a topic which has not been brought out in any of the histories of Calvin so prominently as it should have been. Calvin and Farel had been banished from Geneva, solely because of their integrity and boldness in maintaining the purity of the church in the exercise of discipline, by refusing to admit unworthy persons to the Lord's Supper. Their colleagues in the ministry who were not banished, and the persons appointed to succeed them, were of course men who submitted to the dictation of the civil authorities in the exercise of discipline, and admitted to the Lord's table indiscriminately without regard to character. These men were no doubt strongly tempted, in self-defence, to depreciate as much as possible the character and conduct of Calvin and Farel, and to this temptation they yielded without reserve. Three or four months after his banishment, Calvin wrote from Basle to Farel, who had been called to Neufchatel, in the following terms

“How our successors are likely to get on I can conjecture from the first beginnings. While already they entirely break off every appearance of peace by their want of temper, they suppose that the best course for themselves was to tear in pieces our estimation, publicly and privately, so as to render us as odious as possible. But if we know that they cannot calumniate us, excepting in so far as God permits, we know also the end God has in view in granting such permission. Let us humble ourselves, therefore, unless we wish to strive with God when He would humble us.”

A division soon arose at Geneva upon the question, whether or not the ministry of these men ought to be recognised and waited on. Many—and these, as might be expected, were the best men in the city in point of character and the most attached to Calvin —were of opinion that these men ought not to be treated as ministers, and that religious ordinances ought not to be received at their hands. Saunier and Cordier (author of the “Colloquies”), men of the highest character and standing, regents in the college, refused to receive the Lord's Supper at the hands of these men, and were in consequence driven from their posts, and obliged to quit the city. Calvin—who had now taken up his abode at Strasburg—was consulted upon this important question of casuistry, and gave his decision on the side of peace and conciliation, advising them without any hesitation to recognise and wait upon the ministry of these men. And this may surely be regarded as a triumph of reason and conscience over personal and carnal feeling.

In the whole circumstances of this case, as now adverted to, it is very plain that all the lower and more unworthy class of feelings, everything partaking of the character of selfishness in any of its forms or aspects, everything like wounded vanity or self-importance, everything like a tendency to indulge in anger or vindictiveness, must have tended towards leading Calvin to decide this question in accordance with the views of those in Geneva whom he most respected and esteemed. If Calvin had been such a man as he is often represented,—so arrogant and so imperious, so much disposed to estimate things by their bearing upon his own personal importance and self-complacency, and to resent opposition and depreciation,—all that we know of human nature would lead us to expect, that he would have encouraged his friends to refuse all countenance to the existing clergy and to the ecclesiastical system which they administered. The fact that he gave an opposite advice may be fairly regarded as a proof, that the personal and the selfish (in the wide sense of undue regard to anything about self) had no such prominence or influence among his actuating motives as many seem to suppose,—that the lower and more unworthy motives were habitually subordinated to the purer and more elevated,—and that their operation, so far as they did operate, should not be regarded as distinctively characteristic of the individual, but merely as a symptom of the common human infirmity, which in some form or degree is exhibited by all men, even those who have been renewed in the spirit of their minds.

As Calvin's conduct in this matter illustrates not only his elevation above the influence of personal and selfish feeling, but also his strong sense of the importance of respecting constituted authorities, and preserving the peace of the church, it may be worth while to bring out somewhat more fully what he thought and felt regarding it. The great general principle on which he founded his judgment upon this question was to this effect, that the men in office preached the substance of scriptural truth, and administered the sacraments in accordance with scriptural arrangements, notwithstanding the promiscuousness of the admission to partake in them,—and that this being secured, everything else was, in the circumstances, of comparatively inferior importance, and should be subordinated, as a motive in determining conduct, to the respect due to the ministerial office and the persons who in providence held it, and to a regard to the peace of the community. He distinctly admits that the people were entitled to judge for themselves, on their own responsibility, whether or not the ministers preached the gospel, and unless satisfied upon this point, were fully warranted to abandon their ministry,—recognising thus the paramount importance which Scripture assigns to the truth and the preaching of it, as the great determining

element on this whole subject. It has been well said in regard to this matter, that preaching the truth is God's ordinance, but preaching error is not God's ordinance, and is therefore not entitled to any recognition or respect. The ground taken by Calvin recognises this principle, and therefore, though it is abundantly wide and lax,—more so, perhaps, than can be thoroughly defended,—it gives no countenance whatever to the views of those who advocate the warrantableness of waiting upon the ministry of men who do not preach the gospel, but who are supposed to have other recommendations, on the ground of their connection with some particular system or constitution, civil or ecclesiastical. Calvin's first explicit reference to this subject occurs in a letter to Farel, written from Strasburg in October 1538. The question as there put was this, "Whether it is lawful to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper from the hands of the new ministers, and to partake of it along with such a promiscuous assemblage of unworthy communicants?" Calvin's deliverance upon it was this:—

"In this matter I quite agree with Capito. This, in brief, was the sum of our discussion: that among Christians there ought to be so great a dislike of schism, as that they may always avoid it so far as lies in their power. That there ought to prevail among them such a reverence for the ministry of the word and of the sacraments, that wherever they perceive these things to be, there they may consider the church to exist. Whenever, therefore, it happens, by the Lord's permission, that the church is administered by pastors, whatever kind of persons they may be, if we see there the marks of the church, it will be better not to break the unity. Nor need it be any hindrance that some points of doctrine are not quite so pure, seeing that there is scarcely any church, which does not retain some remnants of former ignorance. It is sufficient for us if the doctrine on which the church of God is founded be recognised, and maintain its place. Nor should it prove any obstacle, that he ought not to be reckoned a lawful pastor who shall not only have fraudulently insinuated himself into the office of a true minister, but shall have wickedly usurped it. For there is no reason why every private person should mix himself up with these scruples. The sacraments are the means of communion with the church; they must needs therefore be administered by the hands of pastors. In regard to those, therefore, who already occupy that position, legitimately or not, and although the right of judging as to that is not denied, it will be well to suspend judgment, in the meantime, until the matter shall have been legally adjudicated. Therefore, if men wait upon their ministry, they will run no risk, that they should appear either to acknowledge or approve, or in any way to ratify their commission. But by this means they will give a proof of their patience in tolerating those who they know will be condemned by a solemn

judgment. The refusal at first of these excellent brethren did not surprise nor even displease me.”

Calvin discussed the same subject more fully in a letter addressed in June 1539, “To the Church at Geneva;” and as it is most honourably characteristic of its author, while this topic has not received the prominence in his history to which it is entitled, we shall quote the greater part of it.

“Nothing, most beloved brethren, has caused me greater sorrow, since those disturbances which had so sadly scattered and almost entirely overthrown your church, than when I understood your strivings and contentions with those ministers who succeeded us. For although the disorders which were inseparably connected with their first arrival among you, might with good reason prove offensive to you; whatever may have given the occasion, I cannot hear without great and intense horror that any schism should settle down within the church. Wherefore, this was far more bitter to me than words can express;—I allude to what I have heard about those your contentions, so long as you were tossed about in uncertainty; since, owing to that circumstance, not only was your church rent by division quite openly, but also the ecclesiastical ministry exposed to obloquy and contempt..

Now, therefore, when, contrary to my expectation, I have heard that the reconciliation between your pastors and the neighbouring churches, having been confirmed also by Farel and by myself, was not found to be sufficient for binding you together in sincere and friendly affection, and by the tie of a lawful connection with your pastors, to whom the care of your souls is committed, I felt myself compelled to write to you, that I might endeavour, so far as lay in me, to find a medicine for this disease, which, without great sin against God, it was not possible for me to conceal. And although my former letters had not been very lovingly received by you, I was nevertheless unwilling to be wanting in my duty, so that, should I have no further success, I would at least deliver my own soul. Neither do I so much question your spirit of obedience (of which, indeed, I have proof) towards God and His ministers, as that I can at all fear that this my exhortation will have no weight with you, neither has my sincerity towards you lain concealed. That my advice has not been taken by you, I consider is rather to be imputed to the circumstances of the time, when such was the state of disorder, that it was very difficult indeed to determine what was best. Now at length, however, when your affairs, by the favour of God, are in a more settled and composed state, I trust that you will readily perceive that my only object is to

lead you into the right way; that being so persuaded with regard to me, you may show in reality by what motive you are brought into subjection to the truth. Especially, I ask you to weigh maturely, having put aside all respect of persons, of what honour the Lord accounts them worthy, and what grace He has committed to those whom He has appointed in His own church as pastors and ministers of the word. For He not only commands us to render a willing obedience, with fear and trembling, to the word while it is proclaimed to us, but also commands that the ministers of the word are to be treated with honour and reverence, as being clothed with the authority of His ambassadors, whom He would have to be acknowledged as His own angels and messengers. Certainly so long as we were among you, we did not try much to impress upon you the dignity of our ministry, that we might avoid all ground of suspicion; now, however, that we are placed beyond the reach of danger, I speak more freely my mind. Had I to do with the ministers themselves, I would teach what I considered to be the extent and measure of their office, and to what you also are bound as sitting under their ministry. Since, of a truth, every one must render an account of his own life, each individual for himself, as well ministers as private persons, it is rather to be desired that every one for himself may consider what is due to others, than that he may require what may further be due to him from some one else. Where such considerations have their due weight, then also this established rule will operate effectually, namely, that those who hold the office of ministers of the word, since the guidance and rule over your souls is entrusted to their care, are to be owned and acknowledged in the relation of parents, to be held in esteem, and honoured on account of that office which, by the calling of the Lord, they discharge among you. Nor does the extent of their function reach so far as to deprive you of the right conferred on you by God (as upon all His own people), that every pastor may be subject to examination, that those who are thus approved may be distinguished from the wicked, and all such may be held back who, under the guise of shepherds, betray a wolfish rapacity. This, however, is my earnest wish concerning those who in some measure fulfil the duty of pastors, so as to be tolerable, that you also may conduct yourselves towards them in a Christian spirit, and with this view that you may make greater account of that which may be due by you to others, than what others owe to yourselves.

“This also I will set forth plainly and in a few words. Two things here are to be considered. The one, that the calling of your ministers does not happen without the will of God. For although that change which took place upon our departure may have been brought to pass by the subtlety of the devil, so that whatever followed on that change may justly be suspected by you: in it, nevertheless, the



remarkable grace of the Lord is to be acknowledged by you, who has not allowed you to be left altogether destitute; nor let you fall back again under the yoke of Antichrist, from which He hath once rescued you already. But He rather wished that both the doctrine of the gospel should still exist, and that some appearance of a church should flourish among you, so that with a quiet conscience you might continue there. We have always admonished you that you should acknowledge that overturning of your church as the visitation of the Lord sent upon you, and necessary also for us. Neither ought you so much to direct your thoughts against the wicked and the instruments of Satan, as upon personal and individual sins, which have deserved no lighter punishment, but indeed a far more severe chastisement. I would now therefore once more repeat the same advice. For besides that such is the particular and suitable remedy for obtaining mercy and deliverance of the Lord from that just judgment which lies upon you, there is also another very weighty reason that ought to bring you to repentance; lest peradventure we may seem to bury in oblivion that very great benefit of the Lord towards you, in not having allowed the gospel edifice to fall utterly to ruin in the midst of you, seeing that it has held so together, that as an instance of His direct interference it must be reckoned as a miracle of His power, by which alone you were preserved from that greatest of all calamity. However that may be, it is certainly the work of God's providence, that you still have ministers who exercise the office of shepherds of souls and of government in your church. We must also take into account, that those servants of God who exercise the ministry of the word in the neighbouring churches, have, in order to check such dangerous contests, themselves approved of the calling of those men; whose opinions we also have subscribed, since no better method occurred to us by which we could consult your welfare and advantage. That you are well assured of our conscientious integrity we have no doubt, so that you ought at once to conclude, that we did nothing which was not sincere and upright. But putting out of view even all idea of kindly affection, the very discussion of that delicate point was a proof quite as sincere as could be given on my part, that you would have no obscure instruction from me. Therefore, you must seriously look to it, that you are not too ready to disapprove of what the servants of God judge to be essential to your advantage and the preservation of the church. The other point to be well considered by you is this, that there may be due inspection of their regular discharge of duty, that they may fulfil the ministry of the church. And here, I confess, discretion evidently (nor would I wish to be the author of bringing any tyranny into the church) is required, that pious men should esteem as pastors those who do not stand only on their calling. For it is an indignity not to be borne, if that reverence and regard is to be given to certain personages,

which the Lord himself desires may be assigned only to the ministers of the word. Consequently, I readily grant you concerning that minister who shall not have taught the word of our Lord Jesus Christ, whatever title or prerogative he may put forth as a pretence, that he is unworthy to be considered as a pastor, to whom due obedience can be shown in the ministry. Because, however, it is clear to me in reference to our brethren who at present hold the office of the ministry among you, that the gospel is taught you by them, I do not see what can excuse you, as before the Lord, while you either neglect or reject them. If some one may reply, that this or that in their doctrine or morals is objectionable, I require you, in the first place, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that so far as may be, you will first of all weigh the matter in your mind, and without any hastiness of judgment. For since we all of us owe this on the score of charity to one another, that we may not rashly pass sentence against others, but rather, so far as lies in us, that we hold fast by clemency and justice, much more is that moderation to be practised towards those whom the Lord is pleased to peculiarly distinguish above others. And even although there may be somewhat wanting which might justly be required of them (as to which I am not able to speak definitively, since I have no certain knowledge), you must just consider, that you will find no person so thoroughly perfect as that there shall not be many things which are still to be desired. Wherefore that rule of charity is not duly honoured by us, unless we uphold our neighbours, even with their very infirmities, provided we recognise in them the true fear of God and the sincere desire of following the very truth itself. Lastly, I cannot possibly doubt, in so far as concerns their doctrine, but that they faithfully deliver to you the chief heads of Christian religion, such as are necessary to salvation, and join therewith the administration of the sacraments of the Lord. Wherever this is established, there also the very substance of the ministry ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ thrives and flourishes; and all due reverence and respect is to be observed toward him who is the minister.

“Now, therefore, most beloved brethren, I entreat and admonish you, in the name and strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, that turning away from man your heart and mind, you betake yourselves to that one and holy Redeemer, and that you reflect, how much we are bound to submit entirely to His sacred commands. And if everything He has appointed among you ought deservedly to be held inviolate, no consideration whatever ought so to deflect you from the path of duty, that you may not preserve whole and entire that ministration which He so seriously commends to you. If already you dispute and quarrel with your pastors to the extent of brawls and railing, as I hear has occurred, it is quite evident, from such

a course of proceeding, that the ministry of those very persons in which the brightness of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to shine forth, must be subject to contempt and reproach, and all but trampled under foot. It is therefore incumbent on you carefully to beware, lest while we seem to ourselves only to insult men, we in fact declare war on God himself. Nor, besides, ought it to seem a light matter to you, that sects and divisions are formed and cherished within the church, which no one who has a Christian heart beating in his breast can, without horror, even drink in by the hearing of the ears. But that the state of matters is indeed such where a separation of this kind exists, and as it were a secession between pastor and people, the thing speaks for itself. In conclusion, therefore, accept this admonition, if you wish me to be held by you as a brother, that there may be among you a solid agreement, which may correspond with such a name; that you may not reject that ministry which, for your advantage and the prosperity of the church, I have been forced to approve of without any fear or favour in respect of men. . . . Here, therefore, with the most fervent salutation written by my own hand, do I supplicate the Lord Jesus, that He protect you in His holy fortress of defence; that He may heap on you His gifts more and more; that He may restore your church to due order, and specially that He may fill you with His own spirit of gentleness, so that in true conjunction of soul we may every one bestow ourselves in the promoting of His kingdom.”

We are not prepared to adopt every statement made by Calvin in this letter to the church of Geneva, or in the one to Farel formerly quoted; but we think it very plain, that the decision which he gave upon the important practical question submitted to him, and the main grounds on which he rested it, conclusively disprove some of the more unfavourable prevalent impressions in regard to his character and motives,—especially the supposed undue predominance of pride and arrogance, and more generally of the irascible and vindictive tendencies of human nature. Indeed, we cannot conceive how any one can read Calvin’s letters with attention and impartiality without being satisfied of the injustice of these impressions. Knowing how prevalent, and yet how unreasonable, was the impression of Calvin’s coldness and heartlessness, and of his intemperate violence and imperious arrogance, we once took the trouble of running over the first two volumes of the English translation of his Letters by Dr Bonnet, published at Edinburgh a few years ago, to collect proofs of the falsehood of these impressions, and we noted on the fly-leaf the pages which furnished materials fitted to serve this purpose. We arranged the references under the two heads of—1st, Strong and hearty affection; and 2d, Moderation and forbearance—i.e. moderation in his own judgment upon interesting and important topics,

and forbearance with those who differed from him. Our references under both heads, our evidences of the possession of both these features of character, soon swelled to a large extent, and at length presented a body of proof which seems to us perfectly overwhelming. It may interest and gratify some of our readers, if we give as a foot-note the pages we noted in carrying out this design. They will find in them abundant evidence of Calvin's strong and hearty affection, and also of his moderation and forbearance.

Every one knows that the favourite topic of declamation and invective with the enemies of Calvin, is the share which he had in the death of Servetus. All who, from whatever cause, hate Calvin, and are anxious to damage his reputation, are accustomed to dwell upon this transaction, as if it were one of the most disgraceful and atrocious which history records; until, from disgust at the shameless falsehood, injustice, and absurdity of the common misrepresentations regarding it, we are in some danger of being tempted to view it, and other transactions of a similar kind, with less disapprobation than they deserve.

Gibbon said, that he was "more deeply scandalized at the single execution of Servetus, than at the hecatombs which have blazed at the auto-da-fes of Spain and Portugal." And Hallam has imitated the unprincipled infidel by saying, "The death of Servetus has perhaps as many circumstances of aggravation as any execution for heresy that ever occurred."! The latest writer we have seen upon this subject, Mr Wallace,—we presume a Unitarian minister,—in a work of very considerable research, entitled "Anti-Trinitarian Biography," in three vols., published in 1850, writes about it in the following offensive style:—"A bloodier page does not stain the annals of martyrdom than that in which in this horrible transaction is recorded he describes it as stamping the character of Calvin as that "of a persecutor of the first class, without one humane or redeeming quality to divest it of its criminality or to palliate its enormity," as "one of the foulest murders recorded in the history of persecution and he speaks "of the odium which his malignant and cruel treatment of Servetus has so deservedly brought upon him." While men, who are the avowed opponents of almost everything that has been generally reckoned peculiar and distinctive in the Christian revelation speak on this subject in such terms, other men, whom it would be unfair to rank in this category, deal with this topic in a manner that is far from being satisfactory; and we could point to indications of this both in Dr Stebbing, the translator of Henry's admirable Life of Calvin, and in Principal Tulloch. On these accounts it may be proper to make some observations upon this subject, though we cannot go into much detail.

It is common for those who discuss this subject under the influence of dislike to Calvin, to allege that those who do not sympathize with them in all their invectives against him, are to be regarded as defending or apologizing for his conduct in the matter. Mr Wallace, in the work just referred to, says:— “Among other recent apologists of the stern Genevese Reformer, M. Albert Rilliet and the Rev. W. K. Tweedie (now Dr Tweedie of Edinburgh) stand conspicuous, but their arguments have been ably and triumphantly refuted by a well-known writer in the Christian Reformer for January 1847.”

Now it is not true, in any fair sense of the word, that M. Rilliet and Dr Tweedie are apologists for Calvin in this matter. They both decidedly condemn his conduct; and they merely aim at bringing out fully the whole facts of the case, in order that a fair estimate may be formed of it, and that the amount of condemnation may be, upon a full and impartial examination of all its features and circumstances, duly proportioned to its demerits. Rilliet has evidently no sympathy with Calvin’s theological views, or with his firm and uncompromising zeal for truth. He has acted only the part of an impartial historian. He has brought out fully and accurately the whole documents connected with the trial of Servetus at Geneva, and he has pointed to some of the inferences which they clearly establish, — especially these, that Servetus’s whole conduct during the trial was characterized by recklessness and violence, or by cunning and falsehood; that Calvin was at this time at open war with the prevailing party among the civil authorities of Geneva, on the important subject of excommunication; that they took the management of the trial very much into their own hands, without consulting with him; that Calvin’s interposition in the matter was much more likely to have brought about the acquittal than the condemnation of Servetus; that Servetus knew this, and acted upon it; and that this was the explanation of the reckless violence with which, during one important stage in the trial, he publicly assailed Calvin. The only fair question is, Are these positions historically true? Have they been sufficiently established? M. Rilliet and Dr Tweedie answer in the affirmative, and are in consequence set down as apologists of Calvin. As to Mr Wallace’s allegation that M. Rilliet and Dr Tweedie have been triumphantly refuted in the Christian Reformer for January 1847, this is really little better than blustering. There is nothing in the article referred to that refutes the above-mentioned positions of Rilliet, which must be regarded as now conclusively established. The article is mainly occupied with an attempt to prove that the authorities of Geneva had no jurisdiction over Servetus, since the offence for which he was tried was not committed within their territory, and that there was no law then in force in

Geneva attaching to heresy the penalty of death. The writer has failed in establishing these two positions; but even if he had succeeded in proving them, this would not materially affect the question, so far as concerns its bearing upon Calvin, or the estimate that ought to be formed of the part he took in it. There is more plausible ground for Mr Wallace's allegation that Dr Henry, in his *Life of Calvin*, defends his conduct in this matter, although here, too, there is a great want of fairness manifested by not giving a full view of the biographer's sentiments.

No man in modern times defends Calvin's conduct towards Servetus. No one indeed can defend it, unless he be prepared to defend the lawfulness of putting heretics to death, and this doctrine has been long abandoned by all but Papists. There is no other ground on which Calvin can be defended, for he has distinctly and fully assumed the responsibility of the death of Servetus, though he endeavoured unsuccessfully to prevent his being burned. Some injudicious admirers of Calvin have attempted to exempt him from the responsibility of Servetus's death; and it is quite true that other causes contributed to bring it about, and that it would in all probability have been effected, whether Calvin had interfered in the matter or not. But there can be no doubt that Calvin beforehand, at the time, and after the event, explicitly approved and defended the putting him to death, and assumed the responsibility of the transaction. Some of Calvin's admirers were at one time anxious to free him from the charge, founded on the letter which he was alleged to have written to Farel in 1546, and in which this passage occurs:— "Servetus wrote to me lately, and added to his letter a large volume of his delirious fancies. He intimates that he will come to this place, if agreeable to me. But I will not interpose my assurance of his safety, for if he shall come, if my authority is of any avail, I will not suffer him to depart alive." There is no reason, however, to doubt the genuineness of this letter, which is preserved in the Imperial Library at Paris. And there is nothing in it which is not covered by the notorious facts, that Calvin firmly believed and openly maintained that Servetus, by his heresy and blasphemy, had deserved death,— that it was a good and honourable work to inflict the punishment of death upon him, and professed that he was quite willing to aid in bringing about this result. Entertaining these views, he acted a manly and straightforward part in giving expression to them. If Calvin had been such a monster of cruelty and malignity as he is represented to have been by his slanderers, from Bolsec and Castellio in his own time, to Audin and Wallace in the present day, he would have encouraged Servetus to come to Geneva, and then have got him tried and executed. His letter, then, to Farel, is really no aggravation of what is otherwise

known and unquestionable in regard to Calvin's views upon this subject.

The injustice usually exhibited by Calvin's enemies upon this whole matter should just make his friends the more anxious to take up no untenable position regarding it, to admit fully and at once everything that can be proved as a matter of fact, and to maintain no ground which cannot be successfully defended. His enemies have little or nothing that is plausible to bring forward, beyond what is involved in the general charge of believing and acting on the lawfulness of putting heretics and blasphemers to death, except what is furnished to them sometimes by injudicious friends of the Reformer—taking up ground that cannot be maintained.

But while the conduct of Calvin in the case of Servetus must be judged of mainly and primarily by the truth or falsehood of the doctrine of the lawfulness of putting heretics and blasphemers to death, and while every one now concedes that, tried by this test, it cannot be defended, it is quite possible that there may be other collateral views of the matter, which may materially affect our estimate of the different parties, and tell powerfully in the way either of palliation or of aggravation. Indeed, the only fair and honest question in regard to the case of Servetus, now that the lawfulness of putting heretics to death has been long abandoned, is this—Does Calvin's conduct in the matter furnish evidence that he was a bad or cruel man? Does it prove him to have been in any respect worse than the other Reformers,—that is, worse than the best men of his age This is the only question which is now entitled to consideration, and this question, we venture to assert, must be answered in the negative by every one who is not perverted by hatred of the truth which Calvin taught, by every one who is possessed of impartiality and candour. The leading considerations which prove that this is the only answer that can be given to the question we shall merely state, without enlarging upon them.

1. The doctrine of the lawfulness and duty of putting heretics and blasphemers to death, was then almost universally held, by Protestants as well as Papists,—by men of unquestionable piety and benevolence, if there were any such persons,—and those who were zealous for God's truth were then not only willing but anxious to act upon this doctrine whenever an opportunity occurred. There is no need to produce evidence of this position; but it may be proper to advert here to a statement which seems to contradict it, made by Dr Stebbing, the translator of Henry's Life of Calvin, and adopted from him by Mr Wallace in his Anti-Trinitarian Biography. Dr Stebbing thinks that Henry has gone too far in

defending Calvin, and in his anxiety to repudiate all concurrence in this, he makes the following statement in his preface:—"Henry has defended Calvin in the case of Servetus with admirable ability; but the translator believes still, as he has ever believed, that when men enjoy so large a share of light and wisdom as Calvin possessed, they cannot be justified if guilty of persecution, because they lived in times when wicked and vulgar minds warred against the rights of human conscience." Now this statement obviously and necessarily implies, that in Calvin's time it was only "wicked and vulgar minds" who countenanced persecution, and that Calvin's conduct is indefensible, because he agreed on this point only with the wicked and vulgar, and differed from the better and higher class of minds among his contemporaries. This is what Dr Stebbing has said. But of course he could not mean to say this; for he must have known, if he gave any attention to what he was saying, that the statement is unquestionably false. Every one knows that in Calvin's time the defence of persecuting principles was not confined to the "wicked and vulgar," but was almost universal, even among the best and highest minds. It is to be presumed that Mr Wallace did not perceive the folly or the falsehood of this statement of Dr Stebbing's, when he quoted it with so much gusto, and set it forth as a "well-merited censure from the pen of one of Calvin's most ardent admirers."

2. Servetus was not only a heretic and a blasphemer, but one about whom there was everything to provoke and nothing to conciliate. More than twenty years before his death he had put forth views which led Bucer, one of the most moderate of the Reformers, to declare that he ought to be torn in pieces. He continued thereafter to lead a life of deliberate hypocrisy, living for many years in the house of a Popish prelate, conforming outwardly to the Church of Rome, while at the same time he embraced every safe opportunity of propagating his offensive heresies and blasphemies against the most sacred and fundamental doctrines of Christianity. He repeatedly denied upon oath all knowledge of the books which he had published, and he conducted himself during his trial with reckless violence and mendacity. We do not mention these things as if they excused or palliated his being put to death, but merely as illustrating the unreasonableness and unfairness of attempting to represent the case as one of peculiar aggravation, or as specially entitled to sympathy. Chauffepie, whose article on Servetus in the fourth volume of his Continuation of Bayle's Dictionary is perhaps, upon the whole, the best and fairest view of the subject that exists, says:—"Unfortunately for this great man (Calvin), he is more odious to certain people than Servetus is. They cannot resolve to render him the justice which no impartial person can refuse to him, without doing an injury to his own



judgment.”

3. Servetus had been convicted of heresy and blasphemy by a Popish tribunal at Vienne, and had been condemned to be burned by a slow fire; and he escaped from prison and came to Geneva with that sentence hanging over him. During his trial at Geneva the Popish authorities transmitted the sentence they had pronounced against him, and reclaimed him, that they might carry it into execution. It was then put to Servetus, whether he would go back to Vienne or go on with his trial at Geneva. He preferred to remain where he was; and there is good reason to believe that the determination of the civil authorities at Geneva to pronounce and execute upon him a sentence of death, was in some measure produced by the fear that the Papists would charge them with being indifferent, if not favourable, to heresy, if they spared him. There is abundant evidence that this consideration operated to some extent as a motive upon the conduct of the Protestant churches at the time of the Reformation. As a specimen of this we may refer to Bishop Jewel’s “Apology of the Church of England,” a work which was approved of by the Convocation, and thus clothed with public authority. In the third chapter of the Apology, sect. 2, Jewel boasts that Protestants not only detested and denounced all the heretics who had been condemned by the ancient church, but also that, when any of these heresies broke out amongst them, “they seriously and severely coerced the broachers of them with lawful and civil punishments.” If this was distinctly set forth and boasted of as an ordinary rule of procedure in opposition to Popish allegations, we cannot doubt that the consideration would operate most powerfully in so very peculiar, and indeed unexampled, a case as that of Servetus, in which not only had a Popish tribunal condemned him to the flames, but had publicly demanded his person that they might put that sentence in execution. In these circumstances no Protestant tribunal could be expected to do anything else but pronounce a similar sentence, unless either the proof of the charge of heresy and blasphemy had failed, or they had believed it to be unlawful to put heretics and blasphemers to death.

4. Although Calvin, after having, notwithstanding extreme personal provocation, done everything in his power to convince Servetus of his errors, approved of putting him to death as an incorrigible heretic and blasphemer, he exerted his influence, but without success, to prevent his being burned, and to effect that he might be put to death by some less cruel and offensive process; so that to talk, as is often done, of Calvin burning Servetus, is simply and literally a falsehood.

5. The Reformers generally, and more especially two of the mildest and most

moderate of them all, both in their theological views and in their general character,—Melancthon representing the Lutherans, and Bullinger representing the Zwinglians,—gave their full, formal, public approbation to the proceedings which took place in Geneva in the case of Servetus.

6. Archbishop Cranmer exerted all his influence with King Edward, and succeeded thereby, though not without great difficulty, in effecting the burning of two heretics,—one of them a woman and the other a foreigner,—whose offences were in every respect, and tried by any standard whatever, far less aggravated than Servetus's.

As all these six positions are notorious and undeniable, it must be quite plain to every one who reflects for a moment on what these facts, individually and collectively, involve or imply, that the peculiar frequency and the special virulence with which Calvin's conduct in regard to Servetus has been denounced, indicate, on the part of those who have done so, not only an utter want of anything like impartiality and fairness, but a bitter dislike, to a most able and influential champion of God's truth.

It might be supposed that most men, knowing these facts, would admit that there are many palliations attaching to the death of Servetus, and to Calvin's conduct in the matter; and yet Mr Wallace, as we have seen, as if determined to outstrip in the virulence of his invective all that had been said by Papists and infidels, describes it as being "without one humane or redeeming quality to divest it of its criminality or palliate its enormity." The ground on which men who are fond of railing at Calvin in this style commonly excuse themselves, is an allegation to the effect that he was mainly influenced in this matter by personal and vindictive feelings,—that, under the influence of these feelings, he had been long plotting Servetus's death, and seeking an opportunity of cutting him off,—and that he gave information against him to the Popish authorities at Vienne, and was thus the cause of his being tried and condemned there. These assertions are to a large extent utterly destitute of proof; and in so far as there is any appearance of evidence in support of them as matters of fact, they furnish no foundation for the conclusions which have been based upon them. The general allegation, that Calvin was mainly or largely influenced by personal and vindictive feelings towards Servetus, is destitute of all proof or even plausibility. There is no evidence of it whatever, and there is no occasion whatever to have recourse to this theory. All that Calvin ever said or did in the case of Servetus, is fully explained by his conviction of the lawfulness and duty of putting heretics and

blasphemers to death; and by his uncompromising determination to maintain, in every way he reckoned lawful, the interests of God's truth, and to discharge his own obligations, combined with the too prevalent habit of the age to indulge in railing and abuse against all who were dealt with as opponents. There were very considerable differences in character and disposition between Cranmer and Calvin, but it is in substance just as true of the latter as of the former, that his conduct "was truly the effect of those principles by which he governed himself." Calvin, in his last interview with Servetus, on the day before his death, solemnly declared that he had never sought to resent any personal injuries that had been offered to him,—that many years ago he had laboured, at the risk of his own life, to bring Servetus back to the truth,—that, notwithstanding his want of success, he long continued to correspond with him on friendly terms,—that he had omitted no act of kindness towards him,—until at last Servetus, exasperated by his expostulations, assailed him with downright rage. To this solemn appeal Servetus made no answer, and there is no ground whatever to warrant any human being to call in question its truth or sincerity. The truth is, that there is at least as good evidence that Mr Wallace hates Calvin as that Calvin hated Servetus.

We have seen some specimens of the rancorous abuse with which he assails the Reformer. But we have not exhausted his performances in this way. He assures us that Calvin formed a plan for the destruction of Servetus, and that he prosecuted it for thirteen years before he succeeded in accomplishing his object,—that he "came to the deliberate determination of plotting his destruction,"—that "he was always on the watch for something by which he might criminate Servetus,"—that he "was on the watch for him, and caused him to be apprehended soon after his arrival" in Geneva. These are statements for which no evidence has been or can be produced. They can be regarded in no other light than as mere fabrications. Mr Wallace also gives us to understand, that in his judgment the conduct of Calvin in this matter showed him to be "a man who, under the guise of religion, could violate every principle of honour and humanity." Under the guise of religion! We could scarcely have believed it possible that any man would have insinuated a doubt of the sincerity of Calvin's conviction, that he was doing God service and discharging a duty in contributing to bring about the death of Servetus. The sincerity and earnestness of this conviction do not, of course, furnish any proof that he was right, or supply any materials for defending his conduct. Still this conviction is an important feature in every case to which it applies, and it ought always to be taken into account. We do not believe that Mr Wallace will get much countenance, even from

Papists and infidels, in his insinuation, that Calvin is not entitled to the benefit of it.

His allegation about “violating every principle of honour and humanity,” is probably intended to bear special reference to what has been charged against Calvin in connection with the information against Servetus given to the Popish authorities at Vienne; and this is, indeed, the only feature of the case, the discussion of which is attended with any difficulty. Mr Wallace’s statement upon the point is this:—

“Calvin, who was always on the watch for something by which he might criminate Servetus, soon gave out that this work” (his last work, the “*Christianismi Restitutio*,” which he had got secretly printed without his name at Vienne, and the substance of which he had sent to Calvin some years before) “was written by him. And availing himself of the assistance of one William Trie, a native of Lyons, who was at that time residing at Geneva, he caused Servetus to be apprehended and thrown into prison on a charge of heresy. Some of the friends and disciples of Calvin have attempted to free him from this odious imputation, and he has himself represented it as a calumny; but the fact that Servetus was imprisoned at the sole instigation of Calvin is too well established to admit of dispute. Abundant proofs of it may be found in the accounts of De la Roche, Allwoerden, Mosheim, Bock, and Trechsel.”

We will advert first to Mr Wallace’s references to authorities. He says that abundant proofs that Calvin was the author and originator of the whole proceedings against Servetus at Vienne, may be found in the accounts of De la Roche, Allwoerden, Mosheim, Bock, and Trechsel. We have not read Mosheim and Trechsel, but we are confident that the proofs to be found in the other three authors are not abundant, and are not even sufficient. De la Roche and Allwoerden published before Trie’s three letters to his friend at Lyons, which Calvin is alleged to have instigated and dictated, were given to the public, and therefore were scarcely in circumstances to judge fairly on this question.

De la Roche does not enter into anything like a full and formal investigation of this matter. The main evidence he adduces that Calvin was the author or originator of Trie’s letters, is a statement to that effect made by Servetus himself on his trial, coupled with the fact, that in his judgment Calvin’s denial did not fully meet the precise charge as laid. Allwoerden, whose work is in reality just the first edition of Mosheim’s, goes much more fully into this matter, and

produces additional proofs, though they are not very “abundant” or satisfactory. His authorities are only Bolsec in his Life of Calvin, and the anonymous author of the work entitled, “*Contra Libellum Calvinii*,” etc., in reply to Calvin’s Refutation of the errors of Servetus. Bolsec, indeed, says that Calvin wrote to Cardinal Tournon to give information against Servetus,—that Trie wrote to many people at Lyons and Vienne at the solicitation of Calvin, and that in consequence Servetus was put in prison, t But Bolsec’s Lives both of Calvin and Beza have always been regarded, except by Papists, whose church Bolsec had joined before he published them, as infamous libels, to which no weight whatever is due. The other work referred to has been ascribed to Laelius Socinus and to Castellio; and it is not improbable that both were concerned in the production of it, as is supposed also to have been the case with another work bearing upon this subject, and published under the fictitious name of Martinus Beilins. The author of this work says, that those who had seen Trie’s letters to his Popish friend, “think that they were written by Calvin, because of the similarity of the style,” and that they were of a higher order than Trie could have produced. This is all the evidence he adduces, and it plainly shows that at the time the report rested merely upon conjecture or suspicion. This anonymous and unknown author says also, that “there are some who say that Calvin himself wrote to Cardinal Tournon,”—a statement which shows how thoroughly the whole matter was one of mere hearsay. It is proper also to mention, that it is this work which contains the report, given, however, merely as a hearsay (*sunt qui affirmant*), that Calvin laughed when he saw Servetus carried along to the stake. This report even De la Roche, with all his prejudices against Calvin and Calvinism, denounces as an “execrable calumny,” though it is really a fair enough specimen of the way in which Calvin has been often dealt with. De la Chapelle very happily ridiculed the manifest and palpable insufficiency of this evidence, in this way:—“The contemporary enemies of Calvin only suspected that he was the author of the letter, and behold now-a-days, 170 years after the event, De la Roche and Allwoerden are quite certain of it. Perhaps in another 100 years, it will be found out that it was Calvin himself who carried the letter to Lyons.”

But Trie’s three letters have since been published, and may be expected to throw some light upon this subject. They were procured from Vienne, and published by Artigny in 1749, and they have since been commented upon by Mosheim, Bock, and many others. Bock is one of those referred to by Mr Wallace, as exhibiting “abundant proofs” that Calvin employed Trie to effect the apprehension of Servetus at Vienne. But the truth is, that Bock, though strongly prejudiced

against Calvin, and though unfair enough to allege that he was somewhat influenced by personal and vindictive feelings in this matter, did not profess to produce “abundant proofs” of the point now under consideration; nay, he expressly admits that it could not be proved, though he was strongly inclined to believe it. The whole of what he says upon the subject is this:—“An. Gul. Trie homo, indoctus, proprio motu an Calvini instinctu et consilio hoc fecerit, certo quidem statui nequit non tamen vane videntur conjecturæ hanc illi dictasse epistolam, qua Servetus tanquam hæreticus exurendus, accusabatur.” We accept Bock’s concession that there is no proof but only conjectures, but we do not admit that the conjectures are possessed of any real weight or probability. Mr Wallace could easily have found room, if he had chosen, for a summary of the “abundant proofs” of which he boasts. But it was more convenient just to make a flourish by a reference to Bock and other names, whose works few were likely to examine.

Trie’s letters not only afford no evidence, but do not even furnish any plausible ground of suspicion, that Calvin was in any way connected with, or cognizant of, the origin of this matter,—that is, that it was at his instigation that Trie conveyed information to his Popish friend about Servetus, and the book which he had recently published. So far as appears from the correspondence, Trie’s statement about Servetus and his book seems to have come forth quite spontaneously, without being suggested or instigated by any one. It has every appearance of having come up quite naturally and easily, in the course of correspondence with a friend, who was urging him to return to the Church of Home, on the ground of the unity and soundness of doctrine that prevailed there, as contrasted with the varieties and heresies that were found among Protestants. This naturally and obviously led Trie, as it would have led any one in similar circumstances who happened to be cognizant of Servetus and his book, to tell his friend of what had been going on of late, in the way of heresy, in his own neighbourhood, and in a place where Popish authorities had entire control. In short, there is no ground to believe, or even to suspect, that Calvin was connected with originating or instigating the proceeding, which ultimately led to Servetus’s apprehension by the Popish authorities at Vienne. If men are determined to put the worst possible construction upon everything relating to Calvin, they may have some suspicion that he instigated Trie to write to Vienne about Servetus. But Mr Wallace’s “abundant proofs” can really be regarded in no other light than as downright audacity.

And then it must not be forgotten, that we have from Calvin himself what must

in all fairness be regarded as a denial of this charge. In his Refutation of the errors of Servetus, he intimates that it had been alleged against him, that it was through his agency (*mea opera*) that Servetus had been seized at Vienne. He scouted the idea as absurd and preposterous, as if he had been in friendly correspondence with the Popish authorities; and then he concludes with saying, that if the allegation were true, he would not think of denying it, for he would not reckon it at all dishonourable to him, as he had never concealed that it was through his agency that Servetus had been seized and brought to trial at Geneva. Calvin evidently saw no material difference in point of principle, between doing what was practicable and necessary to bring him to trial at Vienne, and doing what was requisite with the same view at Geneva. He certainly could not mean by this statement to deny what he did do in the way of furnishing materials to be used as evidence against Servetus at Vienne; for what he had done in this respect was quite well known, and was distinctly mentioned in the formal sentence of the Popish authorities, which had been publicly produced in the subsequent trial. He never could have thought of denying this, and therefore he must have meant merely to deny that he was the author or originator of the proceedings; in other words, to deny that he had written himself, or that he had instigated Trie to write, although even of this he indicates that he would not have been ashamed if it had been true.

This leads us to advert to what it was that Calvin did in connection with the proceedings against Servetus at Vienne; and this topic may be properly connected with a statement of Principal Tulloch's on this subject. Dr Tulloch, as might be expected, seems disposed to press the more unfavourable views of this transaction. He describes it as a "great crime,"—he speaks of "the undying disgrace which, under all explanations, must for ever attach to the event,"—and assures us that "the act must bear its own doom and disgrace for ever." Of his more specific statements, the only one to which we think it needful to advert is the following:—

"The special blame of Calvin in the whole matter is very much dependent upon the view we take of his previous relation to the accusation and trial of Servetus by the Inquisition at Vienne. If the evidence, of which Dyer has made the most, were perfectly conclusive, that the Reformer, through a creature of his own of the name of Trie, was really the instigator, from the beginning, of the proceedings against Servetus,—that from Geneva, in short, he schemed, with deep-laid purpose, the ruin of the latter, who was then quietly prosecuting his profession at Vienne,—and, from MSS. that had privately come into his

possession, furnished the Inquisition with evidence of the heretic's opinions,—if we were compelled to believe all this, then the atrocity of Calvin's conduct would stand unrelieved by the sympathy of his fellow-reformers, and would not only not admit of defence, but would present one of the blackest pictures of treachery that even the history of religion discloses. The evidence does not seem satisfactory, although it is not without certain features of suspicion. There can be no doubt, however, that Calvin was so far privy, through Trie, to the proceedings of the Inquisition, and that he heartily approved of them."

This is a curious and significant passage, and seems to indicate that Dr Tulloch occupies the position of one who is "willing to wound, but yet afraid to strike." Dyer's *Life of Calvin*, the authority here referred to by Dr Tulloch, was published in 1850, and is got up with considerable care and skill. Its general object manifestly is, to check and counteract the tendency to think more favourably of Calvin, which had grown up in the community, in connection with the labours of the Calvin Translation Society and other causes. It was this too, probably, that called forth the special virulence of Mr Wallace, whose *Anti-Trinitarian Biography* was published in the same year. But Mr Dyer goes about his work much more cautiously than Mr Wallace. He abstains generally from violent invective and gross misrepresentation, and labours to convey an unfavourable impression by insinuation, supported by an elaborate and sustained course of special pleading in the style of an Old Bailey practitioner, combined with a considerable show of moderation and fairness. The reference which Dr Tulloch, in the passage we have quoted, makes to Mr Dyer, is fitted to convey the impression, that that author goes as far as Mr Wallace in ascribing the whole proceedings connected with Servetus's apprehension at Vienne to Calvin's agency or instigation. But this is not the case. Mr Dyer was too cautious to assert this. He saw and admitted that there is no evidence that Calvin had anything to do with the origination of the matter, —that is, no evidence that Trie's first letter was written at his instigation or with his cognizance.

"The Abbe d'Artigny goes farther than the evidence warrants, in positively asserting that Trie's letter was written at Calvin's dictation, and in calling it Calvin's letter in the name of Trie. It is just possible that Trie may have written it without Calvin's knowledge; and the latter is therefore entitled to the benefit of the doubt. He cannot be absolutely proved to have taken the first step in delivering Servetus into the fangs of the Roman Catholic Inquisition; but what we shall now have to relate will show that he at least aided and abetted it."



It is true, as Dr Tulloch says, that Mr Dyer has made the most of the evidence about Calvin aiding and abetting in the matter. But there is really no mystery or uncertainty about this. What Calvin did in this respect is well known and quite ascertained, though we do not deny that there is room for a difference of opinion, or rather of impression, as to how far it can be thoroughly defended.

The principal sentence in the quotation from Dr Tulloch is a piece of rhetorical declamation, and is characterized by the inaccuracy and exaggeration which usually attach to such displays. It is not alleged by Mr Dyer, or indeed even by Mr Wallace, that Calvin's conduct corresponded, with the description which Dr Tulloch has here pictured of it; and yet his statement plainly implies that Mr Dyer has asserted all this to be true of Calvin, has undertaken to prove it, and has produced evidence in support of it, which, though not, in Dr Tulloch's judgment, sufficient to establish it, is not destitute of weight. We cannot understand what could have tempted Dr Tulloch to dash off such an inflated and exaggerated description of Calvin's conduct, and to ascribe it, without warrant, to the cold and cautious Mr Dyer. He surely could not expect that his assertion, that Mr Dyer had undertaken to prove all this, and thought that he had proved it, would be sufficient to induce some people to believe it or to regard it as probable, even though it "would present one of the blackest pictures of treachery that even the history of religion discloses."

The first charge in this indictment against Calvin, given hypothetically, so far as Dr Tulloch is concerned, but alleged by him to be adduced and believed by Mr Dyer, is, that "the Reformer, through a creature of his own of the name of Trie, was really the instigator, from the beginning, of the proceedings against Servetus." Now Mr Dyer, as we have seen, expressly admits that this position cannot be proved, and Calvin himself has denied it, while declaring at the same time that he would not have been ashamed to acknowledge it if it had been true. The second charge is merely a rhetorical expansion and amplification of the first, with a fine touch added in the end by Dr Tulloch's own hand, without any countenance from his authority, "that from Geneva he schemed, with deep-laid purpose, the ruin of the latter, who was then quietly 'prosecuting his profession (as a physician) at Vienne*The clause which we have put in italics is fitted, and to all appearance was intended, to convey the impression, that Servetus had abandoned the work of propagating heresy and blasphemy, in which he had been engaged more or less, occasionally, for about a quarter of a century,—that he had retired from the field of theology, and was quietly occupied with the practice of medicine, giving no ground of offence to any one, when Calvin devised and*

executed a plot for bringing him to trial and death. Now all this is palpably inconsistent with the best known and most fundamental facts of the case. Every one knows, that the whole proceedings against Servetus, both at Vienne and at Geneva, originated in, and were founded on, the fact of his having just succeeded in getting secretly printed at Vienne, a large edition of his work entitled “Christianismi Restitutio,” in which all his old heresies and blasphemies were reproduced. Servetus had taken every precaution to guard against this work being known in his own neighbourhood, but a large number of copies had been sent to Frankfort and other places for sale, and one copy at least had reached Geneva. Indeed, the substance of the information which Trie’s first letter conveyed to his Popish friend at Lyons was just this, that this book had recently been produced and printed in his neighbourhood, and that Servetus was the author and Arnoullet the printer of it. So far is Mr Dyer from giving any countenance, as Dr Tulloch insinuates, to this rhetorical flourish, about Servetus “quietly prosecuting his profession at Vienne,” that for a purpose of his own—intending to damage Calvin in another way—he calls special attention to the consideration, that Servetus’s printing his book at this time “was an overt act, and furnished something tangible to the Roman Catholic authorities, who would have looked with suspicion on mere manuscript evidence, furnished by a man whom they considered to be a great heretic himself.”

This leads us to advert to the third and last charge in the indictment, *viz.* that “from MSS. that had privately come into his possession, he furnished the Inquisition with evidence of the heretic’s opinions.” This charge, as here stated, is not put quite accurately, but we admit that in substance it is not only adduced but established by Mr Dyer. He puts it thus:—“But this (that is, the admission that there is no evidence that Trie’s first letter was written with Calvin’s knowledge) does not clear him from the charge of having furnished the evidence by which alone Trie’s denunciation could be rendered effectual; and of thus having made himself a partaker in whatever guilt attaches to such an act.”

Calvin did not perceive or admit that there was any guilt attaching either to Trie’s conduct or to his own in this matter; but he certainly did the substance of what is here ascribed to him. The facts are these. Trie, in his first letter to his Popish friend, —in which he told him of the publication of Servetus’s work, and gave the name of the author and printer,—enclosed also the first leaf of the book. His friend communicated this to the Popish authorities, who made some investigation into the case. But so effectual had been the precautions taken by Servetus to secure secrecy, that they could get hold of nothing tangible. Trie’s

friend was in consequence requested to write to him again, and to urge him to furnish, if possible, any additional materials that might throw light upon the matter. In answer to this application, Trie sent about twenty letters, which, a good many years before, Servetus had addressed to Calvin, and which were to be used, not as Dr Tulloch says, “as evidence of the heretic’s opinions,” but as materials for establishing his identity. Trie’s account of the way in which he procured the letters is this, and it is all we know of Calvin’s procedure in this matter:—

“But I must confess that I have had great trouble to get what I send you from Mr Calvin. Not that he is unwilling that such execrable blasphemies should be punished; but that it seems to him to be his duty, as he does not wield the sword of justice, to refute heresy by his doctrines, rather than to pursue it by such methods. I have, however, importuned him so much, representing to him that I should incur the reproach of levity, if he did not help me, that he has at last consented to hand over what I send.”

Calvin had great hesitation in giving up these letters to be employed for this purpose, and it would have been better, perhaps, if he had declined to comply with the application. Not that the matter is one of any material importance, or that his conduct in this affair can affect injuriously his general character in the estimation of intelligent and impartial men; but that it is fitted to give a handle to enemies, and has been regarded with somewhat different feelings, even among those whose prepossessions are all in his favour. Calvin had no doubt as to the lawfulness of his giving up these letters for the purpose of establishing Servetus’s identity. His views as to the way in which heretics ought to be dealt with, and the responsibility which, in consequence, he was quite willing to incur in such cases, prevented any doubt as to the warrantableness of the step proposed. His hesitation seems to have turned only on its becomingness or congruity,—on the propriety of a man in his position taking, in the circumstances, an active part in a criminal process, which might result in the shedding of blood. How far Calvin’s conduct in this matter should be regarded as a violation of the confidence that ought to attach to friendly intercourse, must depend very much upon the circumstances in which the correspondence was begun, and carried on, and ended; and of all this we know nothing, and cannot judge. Taking even the most unfavourable view which any reasonable man can form of the transaction, there is really nothing in it—apart, of course, from its assuming or implying the lawfulness of putting heretics to death—that can be considered very heinous, or that is fitted to create any strong prejudice against

Calvin's general character. There is not one of the leading Reformers against whom more serious charges than this cannot be established.

It is satisfactory to know, that although these letters to Calvin are mentioned among the pieces justificatives in the sentence pronounced upon Servetus by the Popish authorities, they had got, before the sentence was passed, direct and conclusive evidence from other sources, to prove, in the face of his deliberate perjury, that he was Servetus,—though he had lived for thirteen years in Vienne under a different name,—and that he had printed and published the heretical and blasphemous book which had been ascribed to him. Dyer has given a full, and upon the whole a fair, view of this branch of the case.

We did not intend to dwell so long on this matter of Servetus. But since so much has been put forth of late years, by Wallace and Dyer, by Stebbing and Tulloch, fitted to convey erroneous and unfair impressions upon some features of the case, we do not regret that we have been led to enlarge somewhat upon it, although confining ourselves strictly to what seemed to require explanation. The impression which the more temperate and reasonable opponents of Calvin's views chiefly labour to produce with respect to his character is this,—that he was a proud and presumptuous speculator upon divine things, very anxious to be wise above what is written, and ever disposed to indulge his own reasonings upon the deepest mysteries of religion, instead of seeking humbly and carefully to follow the guidance of God's word, without pressing any further than it led him. Now it is perhaps not very unnatural that men who have never read Calvin's writings, and who are decidedly and zealously opposed to his doctrines, may have insensibly formed to themselves some such conception of his general character and spirit, or may have very readily believed all this when they saw it asserted by others. This notion, however, has not only no foundation to rest upon, but it is contradicted by the whole spirit that breathes through the writings of Calvin. We are not at present speaking of the actual truth of his doctrines, but merely of the general spirit in which his examination of God's word and his investigation of divine truth is conducted; and upon this point we have no hesitation in saying, that there is nothing which is more strikingly and palpably characteristic of the general spirit in which Calvin ordinarily conducts his investigations into divine truth, and his speculations on the mysteries of religion, than his profound reverence for the word of God, the caution and sobriety with which he advances, and his perfect readiness at all times to lay aside or abandon every statement, or even mode of expression, that did not clearly appear to him to have the sanction of the sacred Scriptures. And we think it quite impossible

for any man of fairness and candour to read Calvin's writings without being constrained to feel that this was the state of mind and the general spirit which he at least intended and laboured to cherish and to manifest. Men of general fairness and candour may continue, after reading Calvin's writings, to think that he has brought out from the sacred Scriptures, doctrines upon some of the deeper mysteries of religion which are not taught there; and some may even be disposed to allege that, misled by the deceitfulness of the human heart, he did not always know what manner of spirit he was of. But no person, we think, of fairness and discernment can fail to see and admit, that he had laid it down as a rule to himself, to follow humbly, implicitly, and reverentially the guidance of God's word, that he carefully laboured to act upon this rule, and honestly believed that he had succeeded in doing so.

From the nature of the case, it is not easy to prove this by an adduction of evidence. But there are one or two points of a pretty definite description, which may be fairly regarded as confirming it. It was not Calvin's practice to attempt to strain the particular statements of Scripture, in order to bring out more abundant evidence of doctrines which he believed to be true. On the contrary, he has incurred the suspicion of some of the more unintelligent friends of truth, by occasionally admitting that a particular text gave no support to a sound doctrine, in support of which it was commonly adduced. He showed no disposition, in general, to sanction the use of unscriptural phrases and statements in the exposition of scriptural doctrines; and it has been thought that, in some cases,—as in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity for instance,—Calvin, disgusted with the unwarranted and presumptuous speculations of the schoolmen upon this subject, even carried to an extreme his anxiety to adhere to mere scriptural terms and statements in the exposition of this mystery. Now, whether he was right or wrong in the particular cases to which these observations apply, his conduct in this respect indicates a state of mind, a general spirit, and a habit of procedure, very different from what are often ascribed to him, and may be fairly regarded as affording evidence that the great object of his desires and aims was just to ascertain and bring out truly and accurately the mind of God in His word; to submit his understanding and his opinions wholly to the control of the inspired standard; to go as far as Scripture led him, and no farther, in the exposition of divine mysteries. Whether he has in every instance succeeded in this object which he proposed to himself, is, of course, a different question; but we confess we do not know where to find a finer model, in general, of the spirit in which the examination of God's word and the investigation of divine truth ought to be conducted, than in the writings of Calvin; and we are persuaded also, that the

more fully men imbibe his general spirit in this respect, and faithfully act upon it,—a spirit which will lead them equally to go without fear or hesitation as far as Scripture goes, and to stop without reluctance where Scripture stops,—the more firmly will they be convinced that, the great doctrines with which Calvin's name is commonly associated are indeed the very truth of God, and do most fully show forth the perfections of Him “by whom are all things, and for whom are all things.”

We do not mean to attempt anything like theological discussion; but we would like to make a few observations on Calvin's historical position, viewed in relation both to the system of doctrine usually called by his name, and to his principles with respect to the worship and government of the church. The sum and substance of what Calvin aimed at, and to some extent effected, was to throw the church back, for the cure of the evils by which she was polluted and disgraced at the era of the Reformation, upon the Augustinianism (or Calvinism) in doctrine, and the Presbyterianism in worship and government, which he believed to be taught in the New Testament. He of course adopted these views, because he believed that the word of God required this. On the scriptural evidence of his views we are not called upon at present to enter. We can merely advert to one or two features of the aspects which they present historically, especially when contemplated in their bearing upon the condition to which the church had sunk at the time when the Reformation commenced. Doctrine (viewed more especially as comprehending the exposition of the way of life, or the method of the salvation of sinful men), worship, and government,—in short, everything about the church or professedly Christian society, had fallen into a state of gross corruption. There might be difficulties, from want of materials, in pointing out precisely at what times particular corruptions in doctrine, worship, and government were invented and introduced. But it might be supposed that no one could fail to see and acknowledge, that the church of the fifteenth century, viewed both in its Eastern and Western branches,—though it is with the latter that we have more immediately to do,—was very different in all important respects from the church of the first century, as brought before us in the waitings of the inspired apostles. The system, however, which had grown up, and which overspread the church in the fifteenth century, was too firmly rooted in men's passions, prejudices, and selfish interests, to admit of the light of truth, as to what the church should be, being easily let in. The Reformation of the sixteenth century became, in consequence, a severe and protracted struggle, requiring and giving scope for the highest powers and qualities on both sides, both in choosing the ground to be taken, and in keeping or maintaining it. And it is here that the

pre-eminent grandeur and majesty of Calvin shine forth. A profound and penetrating survey of the existing condition and of the past history of the church, combined with the study of the word of God, in leading him to see, that the only thorough remedy, the only effectual cure, for the deplorable state of matters that now prevailed,—the only process that would go to the root of the existing evils and produce a real and permanent reformation, was to reject all palliatives and half measures, and to fall back upon the thoroughness and simplicity of what was taught and sanctioned by our Lord and His apostles.

Perhaps the one most indispensable thing in order to the restoration of true Christianity in the world, was the bringing out from the sacred Scriptures of the whole doctrine of the Apostle Paul in regard to the justification of sinners, and this was the special work which God qualified and enabled Luther to effect. The history of this doctrine of justification is remarkable. In consequence of the particularly full and formal exposition of it which the Apostle Paul was guided by the Spirit to put on record in his Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, Satan seems to have felt the necessity of carrying on his efforts to corrupt it in an indirect and insidious way,—of proceeding by sapping and mining, rather than by open assault. Accordingly, there was scarcely anything like direct and formal controversy on the subject of justification from the time of Paul to that of Luther. But yet the true doctrine of Scripture on the subject had been very thoroughly corrupted. All that is taught in Scripture in regard to it had been thrown into the background and explained away, without being directly and explicitly denied. Notions of an adverse tendency had been introduced, diffused, and mixed up with the general series of ecclesiastical arrangements, connected especially with the efficacy of the sacraments, the conditions and merits of good works, and the interposition of other creatures in procuring the favour of God. By these processes, quietly and insidiously carried on, the doctrine of justification had been greatly corrupted in the church even before Augustine's time, and he did nothing to check the progress of corruption, or to introduce sounder views upon this important subject. Indeed, his own views upon it always continued confused and to some extent erroneous. When Luther was honoured to bring out fully the true scriptural doctrine of justification, which had been concealed and buried so long, the Church of Home rejected it, while all Protestant churches received it. Luther applied very fully the true scriptural doctrine of justification to all the corruptions of the Papal system which were directly connected with it, but he did not do much in the way of connecting the doctrine of justification with the other great doctrines of the Christian system. It was reserved for the comprehensive master-mind of Calvin to connect and combine the Scripture doctrine of

justification as taught by Luther, with the large mass of important scriptural truth set forth in the writings of Augustine. And this combination of Lutheranism and Augustinianism is just Calvinism, which is thus the fullest, most complete, and comprehensive exposition of the whole scheme of Christian doctrine. It went to the root of the prevailing corruption of Christian truth, and overturned it from the foundation.

The grand heresy, which might be said to have overspread the church for many centuries, was in substance this,—that the salvation of sinful men, in so far as they might need salvation, was to be ascribed, not to the one true God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but to men themselves and to what they could do, or to what could be done for them by their fellow-men and other creatures. This, more or less fully developed, was the great heresy which lay under the whole elaborate externalism of the mediaeval and Romish religion. Almost everything that is distinctive, either in the specific tenets and practices, or in the more general features and tendencies, of the full-blown Popery with which the Reformers had to contend, might be traced back, more or less directly, to this great principle; while, on the other hand, almost all the particular features of the system tended to deepen and strengthen in men's minds the comprehensive heresy in which they had their root and origin. Calvin saw that the only effectual way of dealing with this great perversion of the way of salvation, —so well fitted to lead men to build upon a false foundation their hopes of heaven,—the only way to overturn it root and branch, to demolish at once the whole height of the superstructure and the whole depth of the foundation,—was to bring out fully and definitely the whole doctrine of Scripture concerning the place held in the salvation of sinners by the Father, by the Son, and by the Holy Ghost. He made it his great object to bring out and to embody the whole doctrine of Scripture upon these subjects, and accordingly Calvinism is just a full exposition and development of the sum and substance of what is represented in Scripture as done for the salvation of sinners by the three persons of the Godhead. It represents the Father as arranging, in accordance with all the perfections of His nature and all the principles of His moral government, and at the same time with due regard to the actual capacities and obligations of men, the whole provisions of the scheme of redemption, choosing some men to grace and glory, and sending His Son to seek and to save them. It represents the Son as assuming human nature, and suffering and dying as the Surety and Substitute of His chosen people,—of those whom the Father had given Him in covenant,—of an innumerable multitude out of every kindred and nation and tongue,—as bearing their sins in His own body, and bearing them away,—as



doing and bearing everything necessary for securing their eternal salvation. It represents the Holy Spirit as taking of the things of Christ and showing them to men's souls, as taking up His abode in all whom Christ redeemed with His precious blood, effectually and infallibly determining them to faith and holiness; and thus applying the blessings of redemption to all for whom Christ purchased them, and finally preparing them fully for the inheritance of the saints. These are in substance the views given us in Scripture of the way in which sinners of the human race are saved. They are views which, as experience fully proves, are most offensive to the natural tendencies and inclinations of men's hearts; and plainly as they are taught in Scripture, there is a constant and powerful disposition—especially when true religion is in a low or languishing condition—to reject them or explain them away, and to substitute in their room notions which, more or less directly, exclude or contradict them. They certainly had been thoroughly excluded from the practical teaching, and from the whole plans and arrangements of the church, at the period of the Reformation; while it is true, on the other hand,—and it is this with which at present we have more immediately to do,—that these views, and these alone, overturn from the foundation the whole system of notions which then generally prevailed, and which so fearfully perverted the way of salvation.

We believe that it is impossible to bring out accurately, fully, and definitely, the sum and substance of what is taught in Scripture concerning the place which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost hold in the salvation of sinners, without taking up Calvinistic ground,—without being in a manner necessitated to assert the fundamental principles of the Calvinistic system of theology. It is, we believe, impossible otherwise to do full justice, and to give full effect to what Scripture teaches concerning the sovereign supremacy of the Father in determining the everlasting destiny of His creatures,—concerning the death and righteousness of Christ, as of infinite worth and value, and as infallibly efficacious for securing all the great objects to which they are directed,—and concerning the agency of the Holy Spirit in certainly and infallibly uniting to Christ through faith all whom the Father had given to Him, and preserving them in safety unto His eternal kingdom. Those who reject or put aside the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism can, we think, be shown to be practically, and by fair construction, withholding from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, more or less of the place and influence which the Scripture assigns to them in the salvation of sinners; and to be giving to men themselves, or at least to creatures, a share in effecting their salvation which the Scripture does not sanction. And when Calvinistic principles are rejected or thrown into the background, not only

is something, more or less, of necessity taken from the Creator and assigned to the creature, but an opening is made—an opportunity is left—for carrying on this process of transferring to man what belongs to God to almost any extent, until the scriptural method of salvation is wholly set aside or overturned.

Men who profess to derive their opinions in any sense from the sacred Scriptures, must be substantially—whether they will or not, and whether they are aware of it or not—Socinians, or Arminians, or Calvinists. The distinctive characteristic of Socinianism is, that it virtually invests men with the power of saving themselves, of doing everything that is needful for effecting their own salvation. Arminianism virtually divides the work of saving men between God and men, and is more or less Pelagian according to the comparative share and influence which it assigns to the Creator and the creature respectively. Calvinism, and that alone, gives to God the whole honour and glory of saving sinners, —making men, while upheld and sustained in the possession and exercise of all that is necessary for moral agency, the unworthy and helpless recipients at God’s hand of all spiritual blessings. Calvinism not only withholds, in point of fact, from men, any share in the work of effecting their own salvation, and ascribes this wholly to God; but when rightly understood and faithfully applied, it prevents the possibility of any such perversion of the gospel scheme of redemption, of any such partition of the work of men’s salvation. And it is upon this ground that it was so thoroughly adapted, not only to overturn from the foundation the whole system of destructive heresy that had overspread the church at the time of the Reformation, but to prevent, in so far as it might be adopted and carried out, the possibility of the reintroduction of such a dangerous perversion of scriptural principles and arrangements.

Popery, if we view it in relation to the method of salvation, and have respect more to its general spirit and tendency than to its specific tenets, may be said to belong to the head of Arminianism. Papists concur with the Arminians in admitting the divinity and atonement of Christ and the agency of the Spirit; but they concur with them also in not giving to the Son and the Spirit the commanding and determining position and influence in the salvation of sinners which the Scripture assigns to them. Popery thus realizes the general idea above indicated of Arminianism, *viz.* that it divides the work of saving sinners between God and sinners themselves. What may be called the Arminianism of Popery—in a sense which will be easily understood from the explanation that has now been given—was, before the Reformation, of a very Pelagian cast,—that is, the work of saving sinners was practically taken almost entirely from the Creator

and assigned to the creature; —not, indeed, that men in general were represented, according to the Socinian view, as able to save themselves, but, what is the special peculiarity of Popery in regard to this subject, men were represented as on the one hand able to do a good deal for saving themselves, and then as dependent for the remainder, not merely upon the Saviour and the Spirit, but also upon fellow-men and fellow-creatures, upon saints and angels. And for this complicated system of anti-scriptural perversion of the way of salvation, the only effectual cure, the only radical remedy, was the great Calvinistic principle, which distinctly, consistently, and unequivocally ascribes the whole salvation of sinners, from first to last, to the grace and the power of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

This perversion of the way of salvation was most congenial to man's natural inclinations and tendencies. Everything had been done which human and Satanic skill could devise, to give it a commanding influence over the whole current of men's thoughts and feelings. It was firmly established over the whole of Christendom at the Reformation; and if it were to be dealt with at all, it would require the strongest appliances—the most powerful and thoroughgoing influences—to counteract it, to drive it out and to keep it out. And this was what Calvinism, and Calvinism alone, —looking to the natural fitness of things, the ordinary operation of means,—was adequate to effect. Calvin derived his system of doctrine from the study of the sacred Scriptures, accompanied by the teaching of the Divine Spirit. But there is nothing in the fullest recognition of this that should prevent us—especially when we are comparing Calvin with the other Reformers who enjoyed the same privileges—from noticing and admiring the grasp and reach of intellect, the discernment and sagacity, which God had given to Calvin in such large measure, and which fitted him so peculiarly for the station and the work that were assigned to him. And this view of the admirable suitableness of Calvinism to go to the root of the evils that polluted the church and endangered the souls of men at the time of the Reformation, is confirmed by the consideration, that all subsequent deviations from Calvinism in the Protestant churches—whether leading in the direction of rationalism or traditionalism, whether pointing towards Socinianism or Popery—have tended to bring back, in some form or degree, the great ante-Reformation heresy,—the great heresy, indeed, of all times,—that of taking the work of men's salvation from the Creator and assigning it to the creature.

With respect to Calvin's views in regard to the worship and government of the church, we had an opportunity, in discussing Principal Tulloch's "Leaders of the

Reformation,” to state briefly what they were, and to point out their magnitude and importance, as throwing a flood of light upon the whole subject to which they relate. His great principle of the unlawfulness of introducing anything into the worship and government of the church without positive scriptural sanction, evidently went to the root of the matter, and swept away at once the whole mass of sacramentalism and ceremonialism, of ritualism and hierarchism, which had grown up between the apostolic age and the Reformation, which polluted and degraded the worship of God, and which, in themselves and in their connection with unsound views on the subject of justification, were exerting so injurious an influence on men’s spiritual welfare. Any other principle, or rule, or standard that could have been applied to this whole subject, must have been defective and inadequate, and must have left at least the root of the evil still subsisting, to be a source of continued and growing mischief. The fair and full application of Calvin’s great principle, would at once have swept away the whole mass of corruption and abuse which had been growing up for 1400 years; would have restored the purity and simplicity of the apostolic church; and have prevented the introduction of unauthorized and injurious innovations into the Protestant churches, and saved a fearful amount of mischief, occasioned by the efforts made to retain or reintroduce such things.

A fact or two will illustrate the elevation of Calvin’s position in regard to this class of topics. Augustine bitterly deplored the prevalence of rites and ceremonies in his time, and declared that the condition of the Christian church in this respect had become more intolerable than that of the old dispensation. But having, to some extent at least, abandoned the principle of the exclusive authority of the written word in regard to rites and ceremonies,— though he still held it fast in regard to matters of doctrine,—he had no means of grappling with this giant evil,—he did not venture to attempt to do so; and matters continued at least without any improvement in this respect for 1000 years. Luther objected to the mass of rites and ceremonies with which he found the worship of the Christian church overspread, mainly upon two grounds:— 1st, That they had from their number become burdensome and distracting, tending to supersede and exclude other things of more importance; and 2d, That the idea of meritoriousness, which was commonly attached to them, more or less definitely, tended to pervert and undermine the great doctrine of justification. But these principles, though undeniably true, still left the whole subject on a very vague and unsatisfactory footing. Calvin grappled with it in all its magnitude and difficulty, by maintaining, 1st, That they were in the mass unlawful, simply because of their want of any positive scriptural sanction; and 2d, That many of

them, independently of mere tendencies, were positively idolatrous, and were therefore directly and immediately sinful, as being violations of the first and second commandments of the Decalogue.

So much for worship; and then in regard to government, Calvin took the best practicable means both for putting an end to all existing corruptions and abuses, and preventing their recurrence:—1st, By putting an end to anything like the exercise of monarchical authority in the church, or independent power vested officially in any one man, which was the origin and root of the Papacy; 2d, By falling back upon the combination of aristocracy and democracy, which prevailed for at least the first two centuries of the Christian era, when the churches were governed by the common council of presbyters, and these presbyters were chosen by the churches themselves, though tried and ordained by those who had been previously admitted to office; 3d, By providing against the formation of the spirit of a mere priestly caste, by associating with the ministers in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs, a class of men who, though ordained presbyters, were usually engaged in the ordinary occupations of society; and 4th, By trying to prevent a repetition of the history of the rise and growth of the Prelacy and the Papacy, through the perversion of the one-man power, by fastening the substance of these great principles upon the conscience of the church, as binding *jure divino*. These great principles, so well fitted to sweep away all the existing corruptions and abuses in the government of the church, and to prevent their recurrence, are evidently in accordance with the fundamental ideas which the modern theory of representative government is based, and with the leading features of the provision, which has commended itself to all our best and wisest men,<sup>4</sup> for the management of those religious and philanthropic associations which form one of the great glories of our age.

In looking back upon the last three centuries, whether we survey the history of speculative discussion or of the practical influence of Christian churches, we have no reason to be ashamed of our Calvinism or our Presbyterianism; but, on the contrary, are just confirmed in our admiration and veneration for Calvin, or rather in our gratitude to the great Head of the church for all the gifts and graces which He bestowed upon that great man, and for all that He did through Calvin's instrumentality.

# Calvin and Beza

We have given some account of the doctrine promulgated, and of the influence exerted upon important theological questions, by the leading Reformers,—Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin,—keeping in view chiefly the object of furnishing materials for the formation of correct opinions in regard to those aspects of their doctrines, character, and influence, which have been made subjects of controversial discussion in more modern times. We have also given a view of the character and theological position of Melancthon, chiefly because of the influence he seems to have exerted in leading the Lutheran churches to abandon the Calvinism of their master, and even contributing eventually to the spread of Arminianism among the Reformed churches,—and because of the connection alleged to exist, historically and argumentatively, between his views and those of the Church of England. The only other man among the Reformers whom we propose to bring under the notice of our readers is Beza. Beza stood in a relation to Calvin very similar in some respects to that in which Melancthon stood to Luther; and there is this further point of resemblance between him and the Preceptor of Germany, that they were the two great scholars of the Reformation, in the more limited sense in which that word is commonly employed,—that is, they possessed a thorough and critical knowledge of the classical writers of Greece and Rome, they had a great talent and predilection for philological expositions and discussions, and they exhibited, in an eminent degree, that cultivation and refinement both of thought and style, which a thorough acquaintance with classical literature is so well fitted to produce.

Beza was, during the latter years of Calvin's life, most intimately associated with him. He was one of the very ablest defenders of Calvin's system of theology. He succeeded to the high position which Calvin had long held, not only in Geneva,

but in the Protestant world; and was, for a period of above forty years after Calvin's death, the most prominent and influential theologian in the Reformed, as distinguished from the Lutheran, church. He was thirty years of age before he openly and thoroughly abjured the Church of Home,—a step which involved exile from his native country, and the sacrifice both of a handsome private patrimony and lucrative ecclesiastical benefices. But after joining the Reformed church, and settling in Switzerland, first at Lausanne and then at Geneva, he was spared, in providence, for considerably more than half a century in the full vigour of his powers; and during this long period he was enabled, by the excellence of his character, the strength of his intellect, the extent of his erudition and literary acquirements, and by his strenuous and unwearied exertions, to confer the most important benefits upon the church of Christ and the cause of Protestant truth.

He exerted great influence for a very long period in most of the Reformed churches, and in none more than in that of Scotland. He advised and encouraged our own great Reformer, John Knox, in the whole course of his arduous struggle with the Church of Home, and strenuously exhorted him to take care that Scotland should be delivered from Prelacy as well as Popery. He did much to form the character and to direct the views of Andrew Melville, who went to Geneva when a very young man, who was for some years a professor in the university of that city over which Beza presided, and who continued to carry on an intimate correspondence with Beza during the whole of his noble struggle in his native land against Prelatic and Erastian usurpation.

Beza's character, as might have been expected, has been subjected, like that of his great coadjutors in the work of the Reformation, to the most unscrupulous Popish slanders. The grosser charges which have been adduced against him are unsupported by any appearance of evidence, and are utterly unworthy of notice. They are still occasionally adverted to, as well as those of a similar kind against Calvin, by some of the obscurer class of Popish controversialists, though we are not aware that since the publication of Bayle's Dictionary, any Papist, who wished to put on even the appearance of a regard for candour or fairness, has ventured to repeat them. There is, indeed, one charge against Beza's character of a less heinous description, which has a foundation in truth, and of which even the more respectable Romanists have endeavoured to make the most. It is, that in early life he published a volume of poetical pieces, some of which were of a licentious description. The fact is true; but the circumstances of the case, which Popish writers, of course, usually conceal, were these: —The poems were

written before he was twenty years of age, and before he joined the Protestant Church, though it appears that even as early as his sixteenth year he had some religious convictions, and some impression of the falsehood of Popery. He afterwards repeatedly and publicly expressed his contrition for the offence. He did what he could to suppress the circulation of the work, and he at length published, by the advice of his friends, another edition of the poems, in which all that was unbecoming and offensive was omitted. He always, indeed, denied and defied his enemies to prove, that at any time his conduct was such as his poems might have led men to suspect. And it is certain, in point of fact, that some measure of looseness and coarseness in conversation and in writing was not uncommon then, among persons whose general character and conduct were in other respects unobjectionable.

It may be worth while to quote one or two of his expressions of contrition for this juvenile offence, which was at once a sin against the law of God, and at the same time, by furnishing a handle to his enemies, an obstruction, to some extent, to his future usefulness. In 1560, soon after his settlement at Geneva, he published one of the most important of his smaller works, entitled “*Confessio Christianse fidei*.” He dedicated it to his early instructor, Melchior Wolmar, who had been professor of Greek in the universities of Orleans and Bourges, who had the singular honour of being also for a time the preceptor of Calvin, who exerted an important and wholesome influence in the formation of the character and views of his two illustrious pupils, and who has been immortalized by their grateful and affectionate eulogies. In this dedication to Wolmar, Beza gives a brief but very interesting summary of his past history, and refers to the publication of his poems in the following terms:—“As to these poems, no one condemned them earlier, or now detests them more, than I, their unhappy author. I wish they were buried in perpetual oblivion, and that God would grant me that, since what is done cannot become undone, those who read my other writings, so different from these, would rather congratulate me on the Lord’s kindness to me, than continue to accuse one who, of his own accord, confesses and deplors this sin of his youth.” Again, in his note upon Matthew i. 19, having occasion to refer to a statement of an ancient author, about some one who had exposed himself to disgrace by publishing “*versus parum honestos*,” he introduces this reference to his own case,—“*Quod et mihi juveni, necdum in ecclesiam Dei adscito, evenit, quam tamen maculam spero me turn dictis turn factis eluisse.*” All this ought in fairness to have shut the mouths of his enemies. But it had no such effect, and Papists have continued ever since to dilate upon the “*Juvenilia*,” as the poems were called, and to make them much worse than they are, by perverting some of



their statements, which mean no such thing, into actual confessions of heinous crimes. This is the only charge that can be substantiated against Beza's character. It does not affect his position or influence as a Reformer, as it was not till about ten years after the publication of his poems that he joined the cause of the Reformation. And after he did take this important step, he was enabled, by God's grace, for more than half a century, not only to maintain an unblemished public reputation, but to afford, like his fellow-reformers, the most satisfactory evidences of personal piety, of zeal for God's glory, and of devotedness to the cause of truth and righteousness.

Beza's works are, to a large extent, controversial and occasional, —that is, they arose very much out of the particular controversies which at the time engaged the attention of the Reformers,—and on this account perhaps they have been less read in subsequent times than they deserved. They comprehend, however, full discussions of all the various topics which engaged the attention of the Reformers, and affected the cause of the Reformation and the interests of Protestant truth, during the whole of the latter half of the sixteenth century. They thus occupy a very important place in a survey of the history of theological speculation at that important era; and in all of them certainly Beza has afforded abundant proof, that he was possessed of great talents and extensive erudition, and that he was fully qualified in all respects to expound and discuss the most profound and difficult questions in theology. The Church of Rome was still a formidable opponent; and Beza has made some valuable contributions to the Popish controversy, especially in his "Antithesis Papatus et Christianismi," subjoined to his Confession of Faith, in his "Apologia de Justificatione," and in his treatise on "the Notes or Marks of the True Church." The controversy between the Lutheran and the Reformed churches, which had been much embittered in the interval between the death of Melancthon in 1560 and that of Calvin in 1564, continued during the remainder of the century; and Beza was thus under the necessity, as Zwingli had been, of spending a great deal of time and pains in exposing the absurdities of consubstantiation, and of the strange notion invented to explain and defend it, known by the name of the ubiquity or omnipresence of Christ's body. The Lutherans became much more unsound in their general theological views after the death of their master; and they proceeded so far at length as to reject what are commonly reckoned the peculiarities of Calvinism, while they still continued, though very inconsistently, to repudiate, even in the "Formula Concordiae," the semi-Pelagian or Arminian views about synergism or co-operation, to which Melancthon had given some countenance. This change, of course, widened the subjects of controversy

between the Lutheran and Reformed churches; and Beza in consequence was led to write much, and he did it with great ability, on predestination and cognate topics. The fuller discussion which this important subject underwent after Calvin's death, led, as controversy usually does when conducted by men of ability, to a more minute and precise exposition of some of the topics involved in it. And it has been often alleged that Beza, in his very able discussions of this subject, carried his views upon some points further than Calvin himself did, so that he has been described as being *Calvino Calvinior*. We are not prepared to deny altogether the truth of this allegation; but we are persuaded that there is less ground for it than is sometimes supposed, and that the points of alleged difference between them in matters of doctrine, respect chiefly topics on which Calvin was not led to give any very formal or explicit deliverance, because they were not at the time subjects of discussion, or indeed ever present to his thoughts.

The principal subjects in regard to which the allegation referred to has been made, are the question controverted between the Sublapsarians and the Supralapsarians about the order of the divine decrees in their bearing upon the fall of the human race,— the imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity,— the extent of the atonement,—and the nature and import of justification. It may not be uninteresting to explain how the matter stands as to the views of Calvin and Beza respectively upon these important subjects. We mean to devote to this matter the principal portion of our present discussion; and we think it will appear, from the survey, that there is really no very material difference between the theology of Calvin and of Beza, any apparent discrepancy arising chiefly from the usual tendency of enlarged controversial discussion to produce a greater amount of exactness and precision in details; while it may also appear that Beza, by his very able exposition and defence of the doctrines of Calvin, has rendered important services to the cause of scriptural theology and Protestant truth, and has to some extent anticipated that exactness and precision with respect to definitions and distinctions, which are characteristic of the great systematic divines, especially the Dutch and Swiss theological professors, of the seventeenth century. But we must first notice the services of Beza in some other departments of theological literature.

A class of subjects came to be discussed in the latter part of the sixteenth century which had not engaged so much of the attention of the earlier Reformers,— especially the Erastian and the Prelatic controversies,—and in the discussion of these matters Beza bore his part nobly as an able and faithful champion of the

truth. The Erastian controversy, indeed, as conducted between Erastus and Beza, turned mainly upon the particular subject of the excommunication of church members; and it was not till the following century, that the whole of the principles usually regarded by Presbyterian divines as comprehended in the Erastian controversy, were subjected to a full and thorough discussion. Still, even at that early stage, the question was mooted, on which the entire progress of the subsequent discussion, down even to our own day, has made it more and more manifest that the whole controversy hinges,—viz. whether or not Christ has appointed in His church a government, distinct from, independent of, and in its own province not subordinate to, civil magistracy. And on this great question, as well as on the particular topic of excommunication comprehended under it, Erastus took the side which has always been supported by politicians, sycophants, and worldlings, while Beza ably defended that which has been adhered to by all intelligent and conscientious Presbyterians.

The subject of Prelacy was more fully discussed during this period than that of Erastianism, mainly because the Church of England, differing in this from almost all the Reformed churches, adopted a prelatic constitution. Beza entertained very strong and decided views upon this subject, and his two books, the one, “*De Triplici Episcopatu*,” and the other a reply to Saravia’s “*Treatise de Ministrorum Evangelii Gradibus*,” are still important and valuable works in the contest between Presbytery and Prelacy; although Episcopalian controversialists have continued, down even to the present day, to produce garbled and mutilated extracts from Beza as well as from Calvin, to prove that these great men were favourable to the prelatic form of church government. Hadrian Saravia, his principal opponent upon this subject, had been a minister in the Low Countries, and was ultimately settled as a prebend of Canterbury, where he became intimate with Hooker. He, of course, knew well that Beza was a decided Presbyterian, and indeed he gives him the exclusive credit of preventing Prelacy from being adopted in the Reformed churches. “*Nam hoc audeo affirmare, si unus D. Beza episcopos retineri ecclesie judicasset utile, nullae ab us abhorrerent Reformatse ecclesie, quas hodie episcopos nullos admittere primum reformationis esse caput sestimant.*” This is really doing Beza too much honour; for we may confidently assert, that Andrew Melville would have kept Prelacy out of Scotland at least, even if Beza had been tempted to abandon the cause of Presbytery. It is, however, a fine testimony to the important and extensive influence which Beza exerted, in maintaining in the Protestant churches that form of government which has the full sanction of apostolic practice as set before us in the New Testament,—confirmed by the testimony of the only

genuine and authentic remains of apostolic men, the Epistles of Clement and Polycarp,—and which was decidedly approved of by the great body of the Reformers.

Beza was one of the very first who attempted anything in an important department of theological literature, which has since his time received a great deal of attention. We mean what is now usually comprehended under the two heads of criticism and exegesis, — the former including everything bearing upon the settlement of the true text of the Greek New Testament, or of the actual words which should be held to constitute it; and the latter including everything bearing upon the exact grammatical interpretation of all the words and phrases which are found to compose it. And Beza's labours in these departments, including his different editions of the Greek text from MSS., and his translation and annotations or commentary, were such as—considering the circumstances in which he was placed, and the means and opportunities he enjoyed—reflect great credit upon his scholarship and critical acumen. A very unjust and unfair attack has been made upon Beza's character and labours, through the medium of his translation of the New Testament into Latin, and his annotations or commentary upon it, by Dr Campbell of Aberdeen, in the tenth of his "Preliminary Dissertations to his Translation of the Gospels;" and as we remember receiving from the perusal of this Dissertation in our student days an unfavourable impression of Beza, which we have been long satisfied was thoroughly unjust, we think it proper to make some observations upon it.

Dr Campbell's Preliminary Dissertations form a work which is in many respects very valuable,—one of the most important contributions, indeed, which have been made by Scotland to a department of theological study far too little cultivated among us—the critical exposition of the New Testament. It is a work, however, which ought to be read with much caution, as there is not a little about it that is very defective and objectionable, and fitted to exert an injurious influence upon the minds of students of theology. Dr Campbell was a very great pretender to impartiality and candour. But it is very plain, that he had his blinding and perverting prejudices like other men, and that these were not in favour of what we have been accustomed to regard as the most important truths revealed in God's word, or of the men who were most zealous in defending them. We had formerly an opportunity of pointing out how destitute Dr Campbell was of all adequate sense of the importance of sound doctrine, and how incompetent, in consequence, he was to appreciate aright the most important service rendered to the church by the Reformers. Such a man was not

to be expected to have any liking to so able, faithful, and zealous a champion of Scripture truth as Beza was. And accordingly, in the Dissertation formerly referred to, he has made an attack upon Beza's Latin translation of the New Testament, and upon his character generally, which we think belies all his loud and frequent professions of fairness and candour.

The general charge which he adduces against Beza, and which he illustrates by a detail of instances, is that—under the influence of theological prejudice and partisanship—he mistranslates a number of passages, and even acknowledges that he had done this in order to promote his own theological views, or to deprive those of his opponents of some appearance of scriptural support. The case is put by Dr Campbell in a very unfair and exaggerated form, and in such a way as evidently to insinuate a charge against Beza's integrity in dealing with the word of God. He has adduced nothing, however, which—even were it all true and correct—would amount to a proof of anything like a want of integrity. For there is not the slightest ground to allege, that Beza either introduced into his translation, or brought out in his annotations, anything but what he honestly believed to be the true and real mind of God in His word. The charge derives its whole plausibility from these two things:—1st, That Beza was not always sufficiently careful to keep distinct the functions of the mere translator and those of the commentator, and did in consequence sometimes deviate in his translation from the literal meaning of the mere words, that he might bring out more plainly and distinctly what he believed to be the true scriptural sense of the passage; and 2nd, That he sometimes assigned, as the reason for this deviation, that a more literal translation of the mere words would seem to contradict some other portion of Scripture, or some truth which he believed to be taught there,—a statement on which, wherever it occurs, Dr Campbell puts an unfair and offensive construction, as if it were a confession of a dishonourable or fraudulent motive or purpose. Now, this conduct of Beza indicates, no doubt, a defective and erroneous conception of the precise and proper functions of the mere translator, as distinguished from the commentator; but it should not be regarded as inconsistent with integrity, especially when we take into account the circumstances in which the translation was put forth, and the relation between it and the commentary. Beza's translation of the New Testament into Latin was not published, or intended to be used, separately or by itself, but was printed alongside of the original Greek, while the Vulgate Latin version was also inserted in a third parallel column; and the annotations subjoined at the foot of the page, were intended chiefly to explain the reasons of the translation, which was thus virtually embodied in the commentary as a part of it.

The true state of the case will be better understood by adverting to the instances which Dr Campbell found upon; some of which indeed are based upon misrepresentation, and others are mere specimens of wire-drawn criticism and special pleading, illustrating nothing but his unfairness and anxiety to make out a case. One is, that in Acts xvi. 23, Beza has translated the words χειροτονησαντες δε αὐτοις πρεσβυτερους, “quumque ipsis per suffragia creassent presbyteros;”—and this Dr Campbell represents as an unfair translation of the word χειροτονεω, in order to sanction the doctrine of the popular election of ministers. That Beza believed in the doctrine of the right of the Christian people to the substantial choice of their pastors, and that he regarded this passage as a proof of it, is certain; and no man of good sense and sound judgment, who has deliberately and impartially examined his writings, can entertain any doubt of this. But the unfairness of the version cannot be established; for Beza certainly thought, whether rightly or wrongly, and many other competent judges have agreed with him, that he gave here the most literal and exact rendering of the word χηροτονβω, and that any other version would have come short of bringing out the whole meaning of what was implied in it. On several occasions Beza has translated ηταντες ανθρωποι, not by omnes homines, but by quivis homines,—that is, men of all sorts and in all varieties of circumstances, without distinction or exception; and Dr Campbell represents every instance of this sort as an unfair perversion of Scripture to serve Calvinistic purposes. Beza, of course, honestly believed that quivis brought out more accurately the real mind of the inspired writer in these passages than omnes did, as it would have been generally understood; and in this we have no doubt that he was right. It would have been more accordant, however, with correct views of the precise functions of a translator, to have retained the word omnes, and explained its sense in the notes as a commentator. But considering the circumstances formerly adverted to, as to the object of his translation, and the relation in which it stood to his annotations, it is quite unfair to represent this as a violation of integrity. Perhaps the worst case for Beza which Dr Campbell has adduced is his translation of Heb. x. 38, and in this he has been followed by the authors of our authorized version. In this passage Beza has, without warrant from the original, inserted the word quis,—in our version any man,—to prevent the text from appearing to discountenance the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. This was certainly an unwarrantable deviation from the proper functions of a translator; though it ought to be mentioned, in justice to Beza and our translators, that Grotius (in loc.), who did not believe in the Calvinistic doctrine of perseverance, agreed with Beza in thinking that some countenance is given to the insertion by the passage in Habakkuk, here quoted by the apostle; and that—as is noticed by Dean Trench,

in his admirable work “On the Authorized Version of the New Testament, in connection with recent Proposals for its Revision” —the same sense is assigned to the passage upon purely philological grounds by De Wette and Winer, who had no Calvinistic predilections.

The most unwarranted and unjust of Dr Campbell’s instances of Beza’s alleged unfairness, is that founded on, and suggested by, his translation of 1 John iii. 9, —πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ Θεοῦ ἁμαρτιὰν οὐ ποιεῖ, which he translated—*quisquis natus est ex Deo peccato non dat operam*. Of course Beza’s reason for, and object in, translating the last words of the clause, *peccato non dat operam*, —instead of *peccatum non facit*, as the Vulgate has it,—was, as he states explicitly, to avoid the appearance of the passage teaching the doctrine of the sinless perfection of regenerate persons in this life, and thus contradicting many explicit declarations of Scripture.

So far this instance is exactly similar to those already adverted to, in which the proper functions of the translator and the commentator are not kept sufficiently distinct. But Dr Campbell farther makes Beza’s translation of this passage, combined with his annotations or commentary on two other passages,—Matt. v. 20 and vii. 23,—the foundation of a more general and more serious charge against his character and teaching. He distinctly accuses him of having for his object in these passages, “kindly to favour sinners, not exorbitantly profligate, so far as to dispel all fear about their admission into the kingdom of heaven,” and of endeavouring with this view to elude the force of our Lord’s declaration,! and “reconcile it to his own licentious maxims.” He supports this very heavy charge by perverting Beza’s statements in these passages, in order to extract from them the sentiment, that men need have no doubt of getting to heaven unless they were, and continued to be, gross and heinous sinners, Now, this is really, in plain terms, a misrepresentation and a calumny. The passages adduced manifestly afford no ground whatever for the allegation, that Beza intended to teach the doctrine ascribed to him; and we can scarcely persuade ourselves that Dr Campbell himself believed that the proof which he adduced was sufficient to establish his charge. It is perfectly plain that Beza, in the passages quoted or referred to, intended to teach and did teach this doctrine, and no other, *viz.* that the fact that men are still sinners in God’s sight—sinning every day in thought, word, and deed—was not of itself a sufficient reason why they should conclude, that they had not been united to Christ by faith, and why they might not enjoy good hope through grace; while he has never said anything fitted, and much less intended, as is alleged, to lead men to remain at ease in their sins, because sure

of heaven, if only they are “not exorbitantly profligate.” Dr Campbell quotes in the original Latin, a sentence from the middle of Beza’s note on 1 John iii. 4, where this matter is most fully explained, and does so for the purpose of showing that Beza acknowledged, that his object in giving the translation *peccato non dat operam* instead of *peccatum non facit*, was to shut out the appearance of this statement countenancing the doctrine of sinless perfection in this life. But in the sentence almost immediately preceding that which he quotes for this purpose, Beza expressly describes the kind of person to whom his statement applies, whom he regards as unregenerate, and therefore inadmissible into heaven, and shut out from the present hope of it,— not as one who is merely “not exorbitantly profligate,” but as one “who does not strive after holiness, that is, in whom sin reigns,”— *qui sanctitati non studet, id est, in quo regnat peccatum*,—referring, of course, to the apostle’s description of the distinction between the regenerate and the unregenerate, sin reigning in the latter, and still present and very manifest at least to themselves, though not reigning, in the former. And what makes the matter much worse is, that in the words immediately succeeding the extract quoted by Dr Campbell, Beza has expressly and solemnly protested against this very misinterpretation of his meaning, in the following scriptural and most striking and edifying statement:—

“Why do we say this? Is it to discountenance the earnest pursuit of holiness? is it to show that men should not every day be growing in grace? By no means; for we teach that a perpetual progress in holiness is the certain and perpetual effect of faith. Why then do we say this? It is lest Satan should deprive us of our comfort. For if we can conclude that we are in Christ, only when we shall no longer need to offer the prayer, ‘Forgive us our debts,’ who does not see, who does not feel, who does not experience a thousand times every day, that it is quite in vain that this consolation is offered to us?”

Dr Campbell had no right to distort and pervert the plain meaning of Beza’s statements, and to ascribe to him “licentious maxims,” which he had not only never countenanced, but had expressly and solemnly disclaimed. Dr Campbell, it is to be feared, disliked Beza’s Calvinistic doctrine, and probably disliked still more his strict Calvinistic morality and experimental godliness; and the whole of his remarks upon Beza’s translation of the New Testament are characterized by uncandid misrepresentation. It is quite unwarranted to represent Beza’s general character as a controversialist, as marked by a want of fairness and candour. There are some controversialists who—from strong prejudice and impetuosity, from rashness and recklessness, or from something like a sort of natural



obliquity of understanding and a deficiency of sense and judgment—manage their disputes in such a way, that we find some difficulty in determining whether a want of fairness and candour is the worst charge that can be justly adduced against them, and whether we are not warranted in accusing them of a positive want of integrity. But men who are acquainted with Beza's writings, and who can judge of them with anything like impartiality, will have no such difficulty in forming their estimate of his character. They will not only reject the suspicion which Dr Campbell has laboured to raise against his general integrity, but they will be convinced that, though he sometimes indulged most unwarrantably in the severity of invective against opponents, which was then so common, he showed no disposition to take unfair advantages, Or to practise the mere artifices of controversy, but manifested habitually no ordinary measure of impartiality and candour; in short, they will probably conclude, that Beza possessed a much larger amount of integrity and fairness than Dr Campbell did, though he did not make so ostentatious a parade of these qualities.

The chief points, as we have mentioned, on which it has been alleged that Calvin and Beza differed in their theological sentiments, and that Beza was more Calvinistic than Calvin, are the order of the divine decrees in their bearing upon the fall as controverted between the Sublapsarians and the Supralapsarians,—the imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity,—the extent of the atonement,—and the nature and import of justification; and to each of these four points we now propose to advert in succession, contemplating them chiefly in their historical aspects.

I. The controversy between the Sublapsarians and the Supralapsarians is one of no great intrinsic importance, though it has occasionally been discussed with considerable keenness. In modern times, indeed, it is much more frequently and fully dwelt upon by Arminians than by Calvinists. They usually labour to give prominence to this matter, as if it were a topic of great importance, about which Calvinists were at irreconcilable variance among themselves; insinuating at the same time that Supralapsarianism—which is more likely to appear harsh and offensive to man's natural feelings—is the truest and most consistent Calvinism, though in point of fact it has been held by comparatively few Calvinistic theologians. This artifice seems to have been first tried by Baro, the Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, who was compelled by the academical authorities to resign his office because of his anti-Calvinistic notions. It was adopted by Arminius himself; and he has been followed in this by most of those who have been called after his name, including even, though in a less offensive

form, Richard Watson, whose “.Theological Institutes” is the leading text-book of the evangelical Arminianism of the Wesleyan Methodists.

We do not intend to dwell at length upon the topics usually introduced into this controversy, because they scarcely lie within the line of legitimate discussion, and because to give them much prominence is really to countenance the unfair use which the Arminians have commonly made of this subject. It is usually discussed in the works of the great systematic divines of the seventeenth century, under the heads of “The Object of Predestination,” and “The Order of the Divine Decrees.” The question is usually put in this form, whether the object of the decree of predestination, electing some men to eternal life and leaving others to perish, be man unfallen or man fallen; or, in other words, whether we should conceive of God as in the act of electing some men to life and passing by the rest, contemplating men, or having them present to His mind, simply as rational and responsible beings whom He was to create, or as regarding them as fallen into a state of sin and misery, from which He resolved to save some of them, and to abstain from saving the rest. Those who go above and beyond the fall, and regard the object of the decree of predestination as man or the human race, viewed as not yet created and fallen but simply as to be created, are called Supralapsarians; while those who stop as it were before the fall, and regard the object of the decree of predestination as man or the human race, viewed as already fallen into a state of sin and misery, are called Sublapsarians. It is evident that this question virtually resolves into that of the order of the divine decrees,—or the investigation of this topic, how we should conceive of the relation in point of time between the different decrees, or departments of the one decree, of God in regard to the human race. The fundamental Supralapsarian position, as above stated, is virtually identical with this one, —that we ought to conceive of God as first decreeing to manifest His character in saving some men and in consigning the rest to misery; then, in sequence and subordination to this decree, resolving to create man, and to permit him to fall into a state of sin; while the fundamental Sublapsarian position is, that we ought to conceive of God as first decreeing to create man and to permit him to fall, and then as resolving to save some men out of this fallen and corrupt mass, and to leave the rest to perish. The whole history of the discussion which has taken place between Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians shows, that this really embodies the true state of the question; and this again shows, that the question runs up into topics which lie beyond the reach of our faculties, and which are not made known to us in Scripture. And this general position is confirmed by the fact, that both parties admit that there is not any real succession of time in the divine

mind, and that the whole of the decree or decrees of God with respect to the human race are in truth one simple undivided act of the divine intelligence, exercised in accordance with all the perfections of the divine nature.

The views which most naturally and obviously occur in surveying the discussions which have taken place on this subject, are such as these. It seems plainly enough to have been made the principal design of the revelation which God has put into our hands, to inform us of the fall of man from the estate in which he was created into an estate of sin and misery; and especially of the great and glorious scheme which God has devised and executed for saving some men from this condition of guilt, depravity, and wretchedness, and bringing them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer. Accordingly Scripture tells us little or nothing that does not bear more or less directly upon these objects. It tells us very little of God's plans and purposes, except what we see actually being executed or carried into effect, in the process by which some men are saved from the death in sins and trespasses in which all men he, and are prepared for everlasting blessedness. This is the substance of what God is now doing with the race of man, and this is the substance of what He has represented himself in His word, as from eternity decreeing or purposing to do. In the absence of any definite scriptural information, we have no satisfactory materials for ascertaining more than this concerning the divine counsels and plans, and we should carefully abstain from precarious and conjectural speculations upon topics which he so far beyond the reach of our capacities. We can scarcely frame a conception of any plans or purposes which God could have formed concerning the eternal salvation of men, which did not assume or imply, that they were regarded or contemplated as having all fallen into a state of sin and misery, from which some of them were to be rescued. And thus it appears that, practically, any conception we can form of God's act in predestinating some men to life and in passing by the rest, must proceed substantially upon Sublapsarian principles. The Supralapsarian theory is founded rather upon abstract reasonings, by which we follow out the connection of doctrines in the way of speculation, than upon any direct information that is given us in Scripture. And however plausible, or even conclusive, some of these reasonings may appear to be, we can scarcely fail to feel that in prosecuting them we are involved in matters which are too high for us, and with respect to which it is impossible for us to attain to anything like firm and certain footing.

It may be said that all Calvinists agree in everything which almost any Calvinist regards as taught upon this subject in Scripture with clearness and certainty. They all believe that God, according to the eternal counsel of His own will, hath

unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; and they include the fall of Adam in God's eternal purpose, and in His sovereign execution of that purpose in providence. And this of course is the great difficulty, from which Sublapsarians cannot indeed escape, but which seems to be somewhat aggravated upon the Supralapsarian theory. For by that theory, God appears to be represented as more directly and positively decreeing and appointing the fall, — as a mean necessary for carrying into effect a purpose,—conceived of as already formed, of saving some men, and leaving others to perish. Although all Calvinists believe and admit that God foreordained the fall of Adam, and that He decreed to exercise, and did exercise, the same providence or agency in regard to that event, as in regard to the other subsequent sinful actions of men,—“having purposed to order it to His own glory,” —yet most Calvinists have thought it more in accordance with the general representations of Scripture, and with the caution and reverence with which we ought to contemplate the counsels and actings of Him who is incomprehensible, but of whom we know certainly that He is not the author of sin, to conceive of Him as regarding men as already fallen into a state of sin and misery, when He formed the purpose of saving some men and of leaving others to perish.

The difference, then, between Calvinists upon this subject is not of any material importance. It does not affect the substance of the doctrine which all Calvinists maintain in opposition to the Arminians. It is a point rather of abstract speculation upon the logical consequences of doctrines, than a matter of direct revelation; and it is one on which many judicious Calvinists, in modern times, have thought it unnecessary, if not unwarrantable, to give any formal or explicit deliverance, while they have usually adhered to the ordinary representations of Scripture upon the subject, which are at least practically Sublapsarian. Sublapsarians all admit that God unchangeably foreordained the fall of Adam, as well as every other event that has come to pass; while they deny that this doctrine can be proved necessarily to involve the conclusion, that, to use the word of our Confession of Faith, “God is the author of sin,” or “that violence is offered to the will of the creatures,” or that “the liberty or contingency of second causes is taken away.” And Supralapsarians all admit that God's eternal purposes were formed in the exercise of all His perfections, and upon a full and certain knowledge of all things possible as well as actual,—that is, certainly future; and more especially that a respect to sin does come into consideration in predestination, or, as Turretine expresses it, in setting forth the true state of the question upon that point, “*in praedestinatione rationem peccati in considerationem venire, ut nemo damnetur nisi propter peccatum, et nemo*

salvetur nisi qui miser fuerit et perditus.” Even when this question used to be discussed among Calvinists, both parties, though occasionally betrayed into strong statements in the excitement of controversy, admitted that the difference involved nothing of material importance, and did not really affect the substance of any doctrine revealed in Scripture. The Supralapsarians have always been a small minority among Calvinistic divines, and have had to defend their views against the great body of their brethren. They have usually been men of high talent, with a great capacity and inclination for abstract speculation, and considerable confidence in their own powers. In these circumstances, it is quite in accordance with the well-known principles of human nature, that they should have been specially disposed to overrate the importance of their peculiar notions. And yet we find that they generally concurred with the Sublapsarians in representing the difference as one of no great moment. There never was a more able or more zealous Supralapsarian than Dr William Twisse, the prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly. No one has written in support of Supralapsarian views at greater length or with greater keenness, and yet he, to his honour, has made the following candid admission as to the great importance of the points in which the opposite parties agreed, and the small importance of the one point in which they differed:—

“It is true there is no cause of breach either of unity or amity between our divines upon this difference, as I showed in my digressions (*De Praedestinatione*, Digress. 1), seeing neither of them derogates either from the prerogative of God’s grace, or of His sovereignty over His creatures to give grace to whom He will, and to deny it to whom He will; and consequently to make whom He will vessels of mercy, and whom He will vessels of wrath; but equally they stand for the divine prerogative in each. And as for the ordering of God’s decrees of creation, permission of the fall of Adam, giving grace of faith and repentance unto some and denying it to others, and finally saving some and damning others, whereupon only arise the different opinions as touching the object of predestination and reprobation, it is merely *apex logicus*, a point of logic. And were it not a mere madness to make a breach of unity or charity in the church of God merely upon a point of logic?”

On this unnecessary and now obsolete subject of controversy, it has been alleged that Calvin and Beza took opposite sides,— that the former was a Sublapsarian, and the latter a Supralapsarian. There is no doubt that Beza, in defending the doctrine of predestination, was led to assert Supralapsarian views; though he was not, as has been sometimes alleged, the first who broached them, for they had

been held by some of the more orthodox schoolmen, as has been shown by Twisse and Davenant. But, while Beza's opinion is clear enough, it is not by any means certain on which side Calvin is to be ranked, and this question — viz. whether Calvin is to be regarded as a Sublapsarian or a Supralapsarian— has been made the subject of formal and elaborate controversy. The Sublapsarians have endeavoured to show that they are entitled to claim Calvin's authority in support of their views, while Supralapsarians and Arminians have generally denied this,—the former of these two classes, that they might claim his testimony in their own favour, and the latter, that they might excite odium against him, by giving prominence to all the strongest and harshest statements that ever dropped from him on the subject of predestination. A specimen of the way in which this question, as to what Calvin's views were, has been handled by Sublapsarians, will be found in Turretine.<sup>f</sup> The case of the Supralapsarians is elaborately pleaded by Twisse, in his "Vindicis Gratiae, potestatis, ac providentiae Dei" while the Arminian view is brought out by Curcellseus, in reply to Amyraldus, in his treatise "De jure Dei in creaturas innocentes."

All this, of course, implies that there is real ground for doubt and for difference of opinion as to what Calvin's sentiments upon this subject were; and the cause of this is, that the question was not discussed in his time,—that it does not seem to have been ever distinctly present to his thoughts as a point to be investigated,—and that, in consequence, he has not been led to give a formal and explicit deliverance regarding it. This is the cause of the difficulty of ascertaining what Calvin's opinion upon this point was; and if it be indeed true that this precise question he was never led formally and deliberately to consider and decide, it is scarcely worth while to spend time in examining the exact meaning of statements which bear upon it only indirectly and incidentally. At the same time, we are of opinion that the preponderance of evidence here is in favour of the Sublapsarians,—that is, we think that, on taking a fair and impartial view of Calvin's general character and principles, and of all that he has written connected with this matter, it appears more probable that, if the question had been directly and formally proposed to him, and he had been called upon to give an explicit deliverance regarding it, he would have decided in favour of Sublapsarian views. But as matters stand, we do not think that either party is entitled to claim him as an actual adherent. There is a remarkable passage in Calvin's "Tractatus de Eterna Dei Praedestinatione,"—which is published in Niemeyer's "Collectio Confessionum," under the title of "Consensus Genevensis,"—containing perhaps about as near an approximation as anything he has written to a deliverance upon this question. It cannot be reconciled with

the Supralapsarian view; while at the same time that view, or something very like it, is set aside rather as unwarrantable and presumptuous, than as positively erroneous. We think it worth while to quote this passage, not only because of its bearing upon the matter under consideration, but also because it furnishes a good illustration of the injustice often done to Calvin by men who have never read his writings, and a specimen of the abundant evidence that might be adduced of his genuine moderation, his thorough good sense, his mature wisdom, and of the profound reverence and caution with which he usually conducted his investigations into divine things. Having occasion to refer to the difference between the two topics of the bearing of God's foreordination and providence upon the fall of Adam on the one hand, and the bearing of foreordination and providence upon the election and reprobation, the salvation and final misery, of fallen men individually on the other,—and this virtually involves the point controverted between the Supralapsarians and the Sublapsarians,—he expresses himself in the following words:—“Ceterum quæstionem hanc (i.e. the bearing of divine foreordination and providence upon Adam's fall) non ideo tantum parcius attingere convenit, quod abstrusa est ac in penitiorē sanctuarii Dei adyto recondita, sed quia otiosa curiositas alenda non est, cujus illa nimis alta speculatio alumna est simul ac nutrix. Quamquam interim quæ Augustinus Libro de Genesi ad litteram undecimo disserit, quum ad Dei timorem et reverentiam omnia temperet, minime improbo. Altera autem pars (i.e. the bearing of divine foreordination and providence upon the fate and destiny of fallen men individually), e quod ex damnata Adæ sobole Deus quos visum est eligit, quos vult reprobare, sicuti ad fidem exercendam longe aptior est, ita majore fructu tractatur. In hac igitur doctrina, quæ humane nature et corruptionem et reatum in se continet, libentius insisto, sicufci non solum ad pietatem propius conducit sed magis mihi videtur theologica (i.e. more intimately connected with a full exposition of the scheme of Christian theology). Meminerimus tamen in ea quoque sobrie modesteque philosophandum, ne alterius progredi tentemus quam Dominus nos verbo suo deducit.” In this noble passage Calvin virtually puts aside Supralapsarian speculations, and insists only on that great doctrine of predestination, in the maintenance of which all Calvinists are agreed. Beza, then, in his explicit advocacy of Supralapsarianism, went beyond his master. We do not regard this among the services which he rendered to scriptural truth; especially as we are bound in candour to admit that there is some ground to believe that his high views upon this subject exerted a repelling influence upon the mind of Arminius, who studied under him for a time at Geneva.

We may add some historical notices of the subsequent discussions connected with this subject, especially as the references we have made to Dr Twisse will naturally suggest the inquiry, how this matter was dealt with by the Westminster Assembly. In addition to Beza, the most eminent men who defended Supralapsarian views in the sixteenth century were Whittaker and Perkins. These were the greatest divines in the Church of England during the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign,—men quite entitled to rank with Jewel and Hooker in point of ability and learning, and superior to them in knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, and in acquaintance with the system of doctrinal theology. But in the next generation the Sublapsarian view was advocated by Dr Robert Abbot, Bishop of Salisbury, brother of Archbishop Abbot, a very able divine and a thorough Calvinist. His opinion upon this point was adopted by Bishop Davenant, and the other English delegates to the Synod of Dort; and Supralapsarianism has not again been advocated by any very eminent theologian in England except Twisse. The eminent men who most elaborately and zealously defended Supralapsarianism in the seventeenth century were Gomarus, Twisse, and Voetins,—all of them perhaps more distinguished by their erudition, subtlety, and pugnacity, than by their comprehensive ability, judgment, and discretion; though they have all rendered very important services to theological literature. Gomar, who, when a young man, had visited England and studied theology under Whittaker at Cambridge, was the zealous opponent of the views which his colleague Arminius laboured, at first secretly, and afterwards more publicly, to introduce into the university of Leyden. He resigned his chair when Vorstius was chosen as his colleague upon the death of Arminius; and after officiating for a few years at Saumur, he was settled at Groningen, and laboured there as professor of theology and Hebrew during the remainder of his life. He was a member of the Synod of Dort as one of the Belgic professors, and there he openly and strenuously maintained his Supralapsarian views; and though he stood almost alone, he gave a great deal of annoyance to the Synod by his vehemence and pertinacity. There were five Belgic theological professors members of the Synod, and they formed one collegium. Three of them—Polyander, Thysius, and Walaëus—entirely concurred in their Judicia on all the five points on which the Synod gave a deliverance. The fourth—Sibrandus Lubbertus, who, from Dr Balcanquhall's Letters, appears to have exhibited a good deal of the temper and spirit of Gomar—gave in a separate Judicium of his own, but subscribed also that of his three colleagues. Gomar gave in a separate Judicium, differing from those of his colleagues and of the great body of the members of the Synod, in the one point of asserting the Supralapsarian theory as to the object of predestination.



But the great question is, whether the Synod of Dort gave any deliverance upon this point, and if so, what that deliverance was. The Synod of Dort, representing as it did almost all the Reformed churches, and containing a great proportion of theologians of the highest talents, learning, and character, is entitled to a larger measure of respect and deference than any other council recorded in the history of the church. That the great body of the members of the Synod were Sublapsarians is certain. This appears clearly from the *Judicia* of the different colleges, as they were called, of the divines who composed it. The collection of these *Judicia* forms the second part of the important work, entitled, “*Acta Synoch Nationalis Dordrechtii habitse*,” and constitutes the most interesting and valuable discussion that exists of all the leading points involved in the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians. These *Judicia* all take, more or less explicitly, Sublapsarian ground; except that of Gomar, and that of the divines of South Holland, who leaned to the Supralapsarian side, but thought that it was not necessary for the Synod to decide this question, as the difference was not very important in itself, and admitted of being reconciled by explanations. The Synod seems to have adopted this suggestion, and to have abstained from giving a formal or explicit deliverance upon the point in dispute, though in the general scope and substance of its canons it certainly takes Sublapsarian ground. It has been contended, however, that the Synod condemned Supralapsarian views; and this question gave rise to a very keen controversy, which was carried on for a long time by Gomar and Voet on the one side, and on the other by Maresius or Des Marets, who succeeded Gomar as professor of theology at Groningen. Voet, then a young man, was a member of the Synod, indeed one of the delegates from South Holland. He lived to a great age, surviving all the other members of the Synod, and having been for many years professor of theology at Utrecht. He became a man of prodigious learning, published many valuable works, and was well known beyond the bounds of theological literature by the controversies he carried on with Des Cartes. Gomar and Voet, who had subscribed the canons of the Synod, held their Supralapsarian views to the last; and while they did not deny that the great majority of the members of the Synod were Sublapsarians, they maintained that the Synod, in its public collective capacity, had done nothing to condemn the opposite theory, while Maresius and others asserted that it had. We are satisfied that on this point Gomar and Voet have the superiority in the argument, and have succeeded in proving that the Synod did not intend to frame, and did not frame, their canons so as to make it impossible for Supralapsarians honestly and intelligently to subscribe them,—that they did not intend to make, and did not make, any definite opinion upon this point a term of communion, or a ground of exclusion. The ground taken in

the canons of the Synod is indeed practically and substantially Sublapsarian; but the matter is not put in such a form as necessarily to exclude Supralapsarians, who, without straining, can assent to all that is in the canons as being true so far as it goes, though they do not regard it as containing a full statement of the whole truth upon the subject.

The course pursued by the Synod of Dort upon this question was just that followed by the Westminster Assembly in the Confession of Faith which they prepared; and the mode of dealing with this matter adopted by these two most authoritative representatives of Calvinistic theology was, we are persuaded, marked by great Christian wisdom. Dr Twisse, the prolocutor or president of the Westminster Assembly, died before they had done much, if anything, in the way of preparing their Confession. But there can be little doubt that his writings must have exerted a considerable influence upon the minds of many, in regard to a point which he had elaborated so zealously. Baillie tells us that they had some tough debates in the Assembly upon the subject of election, but that this matter was at length harmoniously adjusted. As the members were all decided Calvinists, these debates must have turned only upon such minute and unimportant points as those involved in the controversy between the Supralapsarians and the Sublapsarians about the object of the decree of predestination; and the adjustment was effected, as the result proves, by the omission in the Confession of any statement that might be fairly held to contain or to imply a denial of Supralapsarianism. There are two or three expressions in the canons of the Synod of Dort, which Supralapsarians may require to explain, if not to qualify. But there is nothing in the Westminster Confession to which they would object, while it is also true that there is nothing in it that sanctions their peculiar position; and while it is equally true of it as of the canons of Dort, that in developing the scheme of salvation, it adopts practically and substantially Sublapsarian ground. We have no doubt that, as in the case of the Synod of Dort, the great majority of the members of the Westminster Assembly were Sublapsarians in their own convictions; while, at the same time, they intended to leave this an open question, and framed their statements in such a way as to exclude neither party. And this, we have no doubt, was the course of true Christian wisdom; because, while, on the one hand, Supralapsarians can adduce in support of their theory processes of argumentation which do not perhaps easily admit of being directly answered, so that some men of speculative capacities and tendencies would shrink from meeting the leading Supralapsarian position with a direct negation; yet, on the other hand, it is plain that Scripture, in the ordinary current and complexion of its representations, assumes the fall of

man, starts as it were from that point, and is chiefly directed to the object of unfolding the provision made for remedying the effects of the fall, and the way in which this provision is brought into full practical operation.

There has been no discussion upon this subject of any great importance since the controversy which was carried on so long and so angrily between Voet and Des Marets, about the middle of the seventeenth century. The “Formula Consensus Helvetica,” adopted as a test of orthodoxy by the Swiss churches in 1675, the chief authors of which—Heidegger and Turretine—were decided Sublapsarians, contains a formal and explicit repudiation of Supralapsarianism, thus contrasting unfavourably in point of wisdom and good sense with the canons of the Synod of Dort and the Confession of the Westminster Assembly. This injudicious procedure was the more inexcusable, because those Calvinistic divines who would have been most likely to shrink from a formal repudiation of Supralapsarianism, would have been the most strenuous opponents of the loose views of the Saumur divines about the imputation of Adam’s sin to his posterity and the extent of Christ’s atonement, against which principally the “Formula Consensus” was directed. Some attention was called to this subject by a dissertation of Mosheim published in 1724, “De Auctoritate Concilii Dordraceni paci sacre noxia,” in which he adduced it as a serious charge against the Synod that they had not condemned Supralapsarian views. An elaborate answer to this dissertation was published in 1726 by Stephanus Vitus, professor in the German Reformed Church at Cassel, entitled, “Apologia pro Synodo Dordracena,” and containing a great deal of curious matter. The most important thing, however, in Vitus’s “Apologia” is a proof—the most full and elaborate with which we are acquainted—that Luther, of whom Mosheim professed to be a follower, held as high Calvinistic doctrine as the Supralapsarians; that his followers, in renouncing his Calvinism, had sunk very much to the level occupied by Erasmus in his controversy with their master; and that all the attempts which have been made by Lutheran writers to disprove these positions have utterly failed. The question that had been agitated about the object of the decree of predestination continued to be discussed in systems of theology, though rather as a matter connected with the history of the past, than as a living, subsisting, subject of controversy; and for more than a century and a half it may be regarded as having become practically obsolete.

II. The second topic to which we proposed to advert, is the doctrine of the imputation of Adam’s first sin to his posterity. It has been alleged that, while Beza’s views upon this subject were distinct and explicit, in full accordance with

the higher and stricter tenets which have been generally held by Calvinistic divines, Calvin's were much more vague and indefinite. It has been contended that Calvin's views upon this doctrine were in substance the same as those which were put forth by Plaeseus or La Place at Saumur, and condemned by the National Synod of the Reformed Church of France in 1644-45, and which have been generally regarded by Calvinistic divines as amounting to a virtual denial of imputation in the fair and legitimate sense of the word. Almost all professing Christians, Romanists and Arminians admit what may in some sense or other be called the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity,—that is, they all admit that mankind, the human race, suffer on account of Adam's sin, or are placed in a worse position, both with respect to character and circumstances, as the result or consequence of that, sin, and of the relation in which they stand to him who committed it. But there have been great differences of opinion among those who professed to believe in divine revelation, both with respect to the nature and amount of the deterioration that has taken place in men's moral character and spiritual capacities through the fall; and with respect to the nature of the relation subsisting between Adam and his posterity, with which this deterioration is admitted to be in some way connected. As we have at present to do only with differences among men who are substantially Calvinists, we may assume upon the first of these points—the nature and amount of the deterioration—the truth of the doctrine which is held by all Calvinists, and even by the more evangelical Arminians, *viz.* that all men bring with them into the world a thoroughly depraved moral nature,—a universal and pervading proneness or tendency to sin,—which certainly leads, in the case of every individual, to many actual violations of the divine law, which cannot be subdued or taken away by any human or created power, and which, but for some special extraordinary divine interposition, must issue in consigning men to everlasting destruction from God's presence. This is the great fundamental doctrine in that department of theological science which is now commonly called anthropology, or the investigation of what man is. This doctrine is just the assertion of a fact with respect to the moral character of human nature, or the moral qualities, capacities, and tendencies of men as they come into the world. Its truth or falsehood ought to be investigated as a matter of fact, by the examination of all the evidence, from any quarter, that legitimately bears upon it. This great doctrine or fact is clearly revealed to us in the sacred Scriptures, but it is not a matter of pure revelation. Something may be learned concerning it from an examination of man's constitution, and from a survey of the doings of men collectively and individually; and all that can be learned from these sources— from psychology and history, from observation and experience— fully accords with, and

decidedly confirms, the information given us upon the subject in Scripture. Jonathan Edwards' work on "Original Sin" is devoted to the investigation of this great doctrine or fact; and it certainly establishes its truth or reality, by evidence from Scripture, observation, and experience, which never has been, and never can be, successfully assailed.

Now this great doctrine as to what man is, or as to the actual moral character of human nature, is evidently, from the nature of the case, the fundamental and most important truth upon the whole subject to which it relates. It is plainly the most important thing that can be known in regard to the natural condition of man, the most important both theoretically and practically, in itself, in its relation to the general scheme of Christian doctrine, and in its bearing upon the duties which men are called upon to discharge. All the other questions which have been agitated with respect to the natural state and condition of man, may be said to be in some sense subordinate and inferior to this one. They respect chiefly the origin and cause, the explanation or rationale, of the great fact which this doctrine asserts; and therefore they cannot rise in point of intrinsic importance to the level of the question as to the reality of the fact itself. The matter of fact, when once established by its own appropriate evidence, must be admitted to be true, and must be dealt with and applied as a reality, even though we knew nothing, and had no means of knowing anything, about its origin or cause; and though we were unable to give any explanation or solution of difficulties that might be started upon the subject, viewed either in its relation to the moral government of God, or to the responsibility of man. Upon all these grounds it is of the last importance that men—especially those who are called upon to instruct others in the way of salvation—should be thoroughly established in the assured belief, that we all bring with us into the world a thoroughly depraved moral nature, which infallibly involves us in violations of the divine law, and subjects us to the divine wrath and curse; and familiar with the whole evidence by which the reality of this great fact can be established.

All Calvinists, many Arminians, and, indeed, we may say almost all of whatever name or denomination, who have given good evidence that they had honestly submitted their understandings to the authority of Scripture, and had cordially embraced the truth as it is in Jesus, have admitted the truth of this humbling and alarming doctrine with respect to the actual moral condition of mankind. There have been considerable differences, indeed, as to what was the most accurate way of stating and applying it. But among Calvinists at least—and with them only we have at present to do—the differences which have given rise to

controversy have turned, not upon the nature, import, and evidence of this great fact as to what man by nature is, but upon the explanations or theories which have been propounded as to its cause, ground, or origin; and especially as to the relation subsisting between the first sin of Adam, and the moral character and condition of his posterity. All who believe in the moral depravity of human nature as an actual feature of character, universally attaching to the race, admit, upon the authority of Scripture, that the origin of this is to be traced to Adam's sin, and to the connection subsisting between him and his posterity; and the leading controversies upon the subject may be said to resolve into these two questions: Have we any materials in Scripture that enable us to draw out this general idea, of some connection subsisting between the sin of Adam and the moral character of his posterity, into more distinct and definite positions? and if so, What are the precise positions to which the fair application of these materials points? All the discussions which have taken place among Calvinists about the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity may be ranked under these general heads. The doctrine which has been held upon this subject by the great body of Calvinistic divines is this, that in virtue of a federal headship or representative identity, established by God between Adam and all descending from him by ordinary generation, his first sin is imputed to them, or put down to their account; and they are regarded and treated by God as if they had all committed it in their own person, to the effect of their being subjected to its legal penal consequences,—so that, in this sense, they may be truly said to have sinned in him and fallen with him in his first transgression. Upon this theory, the direct and immediate imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity, or the holding them as involved in the guilt or reatus of that offence, is regarded as prior in the order of nature and causality to the transmission and universal prevalence among men of a depraved moral nature, and as being to some extent the cause or ground—the rationale or explanation—of the fearful fact that man is morally what he is,—a thoroughly ungodly and depraved being. The great body of Calvinistic theologians have believed that Scripture sufficiently warrants this definite doctrine about the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, or about the true character of the relation subsisting between him and them, and the bearing of the results of this relation upon their condition; and in this belief we are persuaded they are right. But there have been some men who have held Calvinistic views in regard to the actual depravity of human nature, and in regard to the other departments of Christian truth, who have not been able to find in Scripture a sufficient warrant for this doctrine, who have in consequence rejected it, and have contented themselves with very vague and indefinite views, or with no views at all, upon this branch of the subject. And these men have generally

contended that Calvin himself was of their mind upon this question, and differed from the great body of those who, following Beza in this matter, have been generally classed under the name of Calvinists. It must be admitted that there is some plausible ground for this allegation, though we believe that it cannot be substantiated.

Before proceeding to consider how the case stands upon this point, it may be proper to explain somewhat the grounds usually taken by those Calvinists who have not concurred with the ordinary Calvinistic doctrine. In surveying the history of the discussions which have taken place upon this subject, we find even among the minority of Calvinists who have rejected the generally received doctrine of the direct and proper imputation of Adam's sin, as the cause or explanation, *pro tanto*, of the universal prevalence of a depraved moral nature among his posterity, three pretty well marked divisions:—1st, Some simply refuse to receive the ordinary Calvinistic doctrine, on the ground that they see no sufficient warrant for it in Scripture; abstain from all further discussion; and profess to receive the fact of universal moral depravity, as fully established by its appropriate evidence, without attempting anything in the way of accounting for it. 2d, There are others who, wishing to adhere to the common orthodox phraseology, profess to admit imputation, but evacuate it or explain it away, by distinguishing between an immediate or antecedent, and a mediate or consequent, imputation,—rejecting the former, which is what Calvinists in general contend for, and admitting only the latter, which is not imputation in any true and proper sense. 3d, There are some who admit the substance of the ordinary orthodox doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin, but who abstain or shrink from the use of the phraseology in which orthodox divines have been accustomed to express or embody it. There is no good ground for alleging that Calvin is to be ranked with either of the two first of these classes; but it may be contended, with some plausibility, that he might be ranked with the third. And, indeed, we are disposed to admit that this is not far from the truth, provided the admission be taken with these qualifications,—that there is no ground to believe that he denied or rejected any part of the doctrine which has been generally held by Calvinists on this subject; and that his not employing very fully the phraseology commonly used by later Calvinists when treating of this matter, is not to be ascribed (as it is in the case of some of those whose writings have suggested to us this third head in our classification) to his having considered this phraseology, and having disliked or disapproved of it, but simply to its having never been present to his mind. .

Beza brought out this doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity more fully and precisely than it had been before. He expounded and developed it more fully than any preceding theologian,—both as directly and in itself an element in the guilt or realm of the condition into which the human race fell through Adam's transgression, and as the cause, ground, or explanation of the actual moral depravity attaching to all men as they come into the world. These more precise and definite views had not occurred to Calvin, and do not seem to have ever been distinctly present to his thoughts. The course which the discussion of this whole subject took in his time, not only did not tend to lead his thoughts in that direction, but tended powerfully to lead them in what may be called an opposite one. This is the true and full explanation of the want of definiteness and precision which, it must be admitted, characterize many of Calvin's statements about the imputation of Adam's sin viewed as a distinct topic of discussion, as compared with the fulness and exactness with which it was brought out afterwards; while there is really no reason to doubt that he held the whole substance of the doctrine which has since been generally maintained by Calvinistic divines.

It may be worth while to give some account of the way in which this subject was usually discussed in Calvin's time; as this will not only furnish an explanation of the reason why he did not usually give so much prominence as might have been expected to the doctrine of imputation, and why he did not always treat it with great exactness and precision, but will also expose the inaccuracy of a notion which seems to prevail, that this doctrine of imputation is a mere Calvinistic peculiarity,—nay, even that it is the most extreme, objectionable, and mysterious dogma of ultra-Calvinism.

The doctrine of the fall of the whole human race in Adam was, from the beginning, a part of the creed of the universal church; and, from Augustine's time, this had been generally spoken of under the designation of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity. Most of the schoolmen continued to use this language, though in their hands the doctrine of Augustine was obscured and corrupted. The whole subject of original sin was discussed at length in the Council of Trent, in the year 1546; and, through the respect generally professed and entertained for Augustine, the deliverance of the Council regarding it was in the main true and sound so far as it went,—containing little of positive error,—though chargeable with vagueness, obscurity, and much imperfection. But the discussion brought out some of the errors which had been broached by the schoolmen, and still prevailed extensively in the Church of Rome. Albertus



Pighius, who was one of the leading opponents of Calvin, and against whom Calvin's two most important controversial treatises—the one on Free-will and the other on Predestination—were principally directed, and Ambrosius Catharinus, another eminent divine of that period, attended the Council of Trent, and took a prominent part in its discussions. In the debates on original sin, these two theologians zealously maintained the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity; and Catharinus delivered a long address, the substance of which is given by Father Paul in his History of the Council, and in which he laboured to establish this doctrine from the testimony of Scripture and the authority of Augustine. But then these men also maintained that the guilt of Adam's first sin imputed, constituted the whole of the sinfulness of the estate into which man fell, and they denied the transmission of an actually corrupt or depraved moral nature from Adam to his descendants; and as they also held a doctrine which had been generally adopted by Romish theologians, and has been formally sanctioned by the Council of Trent,—viz. that this imputation of Adam's sin was wholly done away in Christ, and that an actual deliverance from it, and all its consequences, is communicated to all men in baptism,—they thus practically reduced the sinfulness of man's natural condition to little or nothing, and deprived it of any great power to impress the minds of men. Father Paul tells us that the doctrine of Pighius and Catharinus was very well received by many of the bishops; but that, as the authority of most of the theologians was opposed to it, they did not venture to adopt and sanction it. The theologians, however, who opposed it, did not deny the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity; this was universally admitted; they maintained that this imputation did not constitute the whole of original sin, but that there was also, in conjunction and in connection with this, the transmission from Adam to his descendants of a deteriorated moral nature. And this view, which certainly could be just as conclusively established by testimonies both from the Bible and Augustine, prevailed in the Council. Cardinal Bellarmine, accordingly, says, that the doctrine of Pighius and Catharinus is partly true and partly false,—true, in so far as it admits the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity,—and false, in so far as it maintained that this imputation was the whole of original sin, and that there was no transmission of a corrupted nature; and then he proceeds to show that this negative portion of their doctrine was a heresy, as being opposed to the decrees of the Council of Trent.

This doctrine of Pighius and Catharinus, which prevailed widely in the Church of Home even after the deliverance of the Council, was dealt with by Calvin and the other Reformers very much in the same way as by Bellarmine. Since the

doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity was not denied by the Church of Rome, and was not rejected but sanctioned, though not defined and developed, by the Council of Trent; and since, on the contrary, some of those who were most zealous in maintaining it, employed it practically to soften and explain away the most important features of the sin and misery of men's natural condition,—Calvin was naturally led to give more prominence, in his expositions and discussions of this subject, to the transmission and the actual universal prevalence of a depraved moral nature than to the imputation of Adam's sin, which was not then a subject of controversy. This was the true cause or explanation why Calvin was led to make occasionally statements upon this subject, which have induced some men to allege that he did not hold the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, but believed the sinfulness of men's natural condition to consist only in the want of original righteousness, and in the possession of a depraved moral nature, certainly and invariably producing actual transgressions.

The truth as to Calvin's sentiments upon this subject is in substance this: that he has never, directly or by implication, denied the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity, and that he has, on a variety of occasions, plainly enough asserted it; though he has not, from the cause above stated, given it the prominence to which, if true, it is entitled, in a systematic exposition of the scheme of divine truth,—has not always introduced it where, perhaps, we might have expected it to be introduced, and has not stated it with so much fulness and precision—especially in the aspect of its being regarded as producing, and to some extent explaining, the universal prevalence of a depraved moral nature—as was done by later Calvinists after this whole matter was subjected to a fuller controversial discussion. There is, we think, sufficient evidence that this is really the true state of the case to be found in the extracts from Calvin, quoted and referred to by Turretine; and there would be no difficulty in producing other passages quite as explicit, and some perhaps still more so, from his two treatises on Free-will and Predestination. There is no reason, then, to fear that, in maintaining the higher and more precise views upon the subject of the imputation of Adam's sin, which have been held by the great majority of the ablest and most accurate theologians, we may expose ourselves to the risk of having the venerable authority of Calvin adduced against us.

The question as to what were Calvin's views upon the subject of the imputation of Adam's sin was first brought into prominence by Placseus, who broached sentiments upon this point differing from those which had been generally held

by Calvinistic divines, and claimed Calvin himself as an authority upon his side. As the discussion raised by Placseus forms the most important era in the history of this subject, and as his peculiar opinions have received some countenance in influential quarters in the present day, it may be proper to give some notice of it. Placseus or La Place, Amyraldus or Amyraut, and Cappellus or Cappel, were all settled in the year 1633 as theological professors in the Protestant University of Saumur. They were all men of great learning and ability, of great industry and activity, and though they did not renounce the fundamental principles of the Calvinistic system of theology, they exerted an extensive influence in diffusing loose and unsound opinions upon some important doctrinal questions, not only in France, but over the Reformed churches. Placseus, in a Disputation published in the "Theses Salmurienses,"—"De statu hominis lapsi ante gratiam,"—put forth some views on the imputation of Adam's sin, which were regarded by many as contradicting the doctrine which had been generally professed in the Reformed churches. Accordingly, the National Synod held at Charenton in December 1644 and January 1645, condemned his book, though without mentioning his name, and prohibited the publication of the doctrines it advocated. This decree of the Synod led to a good deal of controversial discussion. Garisolles, the moderator of the Synod, defended it, and answered Placseus's "Disputatio" in a work which we have never seen, but which is highly praised by Turretine. Andrew Rivet, perhaps the most eminent divine of the period, published a defence of the Synod, consisting chiefly of extracts from the Reformed confessions, and from all the most eminent divines, both of the Reformed and Lutheran churches. Most of these extracts were translated and published in the first series of the "Princeton Essays." They are a very valuable body of testimonies, but there are some of them which can scarcely be regarded as sufficiently precise and definite to contradict Placseus's position. Placseus defended himself in a very elaborate treatise, published in 1665, "De imputatione primi peccati Adami." In this work he laboured to show, that his opinion was not inconsistent with the generally received doctrine of the Reformed churches; for that they merely asserted the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, and that he had not denied this, but held it in a certain sense. In this work he developed fully the distinction, on which chiefly he based his defence, between immediate or antecedent, and mediate or consequent, imputation. He rejected the former and maintained the latter, and contended that Calvin and other eminent divines concurred in the substance of doctrine, though they had not expressed it in this particular definite form. His doctrine is in substance this, that the guilt or reatus of Adam's first sin is not imputed to his posterity directly and immediately, as a distinct step in the process,—a separate

and independent element in the sinfulness of the estate into which man fell,—having its own proper basis or warrant in the federal relation subsisting between Adam and his posterity, and affording, by its antecedence in the order of nature, a basis or explanation for the moral depravity which came upon men as a consequence, in the way of penal infliction through the withdrawal of divine grace. This is the doctrine which has been generally held by Calvinistic divines; , but this doctrine Placseus openly and earnestly repudiated. He contended that the imputation of Adam’s sin is simply a consequence or result of the moral depravity which is admitted to attach to men, in consequence somehow of their connection with Adam, but of the existence and transmission of which no explanation is given or attempted; and that all that is meant by the imputation of Adam’s sin is this, that God—contemplating men as actually and already, in virtue of their connection with Adam, subject to moral depravity, and involved thereby in actual transgressions of His law—resolves, upon this ground, to regard and treat them in the same way as Adam by his sin had deserved to be treated. God’s act in regarding and treating men in the way in which Adam deserved to be treated, is thus based upon the medium of the previous existence of moral depravity as already an actual feature of men’s condition, and is a consequence of its universal prevalence; instead of being viewed as an antecedent of this depravity in the order of nature, and the ground, and in some measure the explanation or rationale, of it. And hence the name of mediate and consequent, as distinguished from immediate and antecedent, imputation, by which this notion has since Placseus’s time been commonly designated.

Independently of the question, which of these doctrines has the sanction of Scripture?—though that of course is the only question of vital importance,—it is surely very manifest that it is a mere abuse of language to call this notion of Placseus by the name of imputation; that it is not imputation in any real honest meaning of the word; and that he never would have thought of calling this imputation, unless he had been tied up by ecclesiastical authority and his own voluntary engagements, to maintain that in some sense or other Adam’s first sin was imputed to his posterity. It is also very manifest that this doctrine does not give, or attempt or profess to give, any account of the origin, or any explanation of the cause, of the moral depravity of man, and the universality of actual transgression proceeding from it. Nay, it precludes any attempt to explain it, however partially, except this, that God in mere sovereignty established a constitution, in virtue of which it was provided, and did actually result, that all men should have transmitted to them the same depraved moral nature which Adam brought upon himself by his first sin. And . there certainly can be nothing

which more directly and immediately than this resolves at once the sin and misery of the human race into the purpose and the agency of God. Placseus, moreover, brings out very plainly in this work the true character and tendency of his peculiar doctrine, and its palpable inconsistency with the views which have been generally held by Calvinistic divines, by explicitly denying that God made any covenant with Adam, or that any federal relation subsisted between him and his posterity; and makes it manifest that his doctrine of imputation, falsely so called, at once results from and produces—at once flows from and leads to—an entire rejection of the principle of Adam's federal or representative headship.

This doctrine of Placseus was not adopted by almost any divines of eminence who really believed in inherent depravity as an actual feature of man's moral nature. It was explicitly condemned by the churches and divines of Switzerland in the "Formula Consensus." It has been made a question among the Presbyterians of the United States, though we do not remember that the point has been mooted in this country, whether the Westminster Confession condemns the view of Placseus; and the general opinion there seems to be, that there is nothing in the Confession so precise and definite as to make it unwarrantable for one who believes only in mediate and consequent imputation to subscribe it. The leading statement upon the subject is this—"They (our first parents) being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation." Now this statement, read in the light of the discussions which Placseus occasioned, is certainly vague and indefinite, and resembles much more closely the deliverances given on this subject in the Confession of the sixteenth century than that embodied in the Consensus of 1675. The Confession was completed about the end of 1646, not quite two years after the National Synod of Charenton. It is probable that the members of the Assembly were not yet much acquainted with the discussions which had been going on in France, and were in consequence not impressed with the necessity of being minute and precise in their deliverance upon this subject. It is a curious circumstance, that both in the Larger and the Shorter Catechisms, there are statements upon this point more full and explicit, and more distinctly exclusive of the views of Placseus. The Larger Catechism says, "The covenant being made with Adam, as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him, in that first transgression and both Catechisms, more distinctly than the Confession, represent the guilt of Adam's first sin as the first, and in some sense the leading, element in the sinfulness of man's natural condition. More

than a year elapsed between the completion of the Confession and that of the Catechisms; and we think it by no means unlikely—though we are not aware of any actual historical evidence bearing upon the point—that during this interval the members of the Assembly may have got fuller information concerning the bearing of the discussions going on in France, and that this may have led them to bring out somewhat more fully and explicitly in the Catechisms the views which, in common with the great body of Calvinistic divines, they undoubtedly entertained about the imputation of Adam’s sin. Every one who has read Placseus’s book will see, that he would, without hesitation, have subscribed the statement in the Confession, but that he would have had extreme difficulty in devising any plausible pretence for concurring in what has been quoted from the Larger Catechism.

In the seventeenth century this doctrine of Placseus received some countenance from Vitringa and Venema. It was adopted by Stapfer in his “Theologia Polemica,” who, however, when accused of error on this account, endeavoured to defend himself, by maintaining that both views of imputation were sound,—a position which, though in a certain sense it can be defended, was in the circumstances a mere evasion of the charge. From Stapfer it was adopted by Jonathan Edwards in his great work on Original Sin. Edwards’ views, however, upon this point do not seem to have been clear or consistent, as he sometimes makes statements which manifestly imply or assume the common Calvinistic doctrine. It is, indeed, plain enough that Edwards had never subjected this particular topic of imputation to a careful investigation, —his work on Original Sin being devoted to the object of establishing the doctrine or fact of man’s inherent native depravity, an object which he has thoroughly and conclusively accomplished. Dr Chalmers, in the first volume of his lectures upon the Epistle to the Romans, gives some indications that he had adopted this doctrine, though he does not bring it out with anything like fulness and explicitness. He had evidently, when he published that volume, not examined this subject with much care and attention, and was probably altogether unacquainted with the discussions which had previously taken place among theologians concerning it, —which, in all likelihood, was the case also with Edwards. It is most gratifying to notice that Dr Chalmers, upon a more careful and deliberate study of this subject, renounced the defective and erroneous view which he had imbibed from Edwards; and that in his great work, the “Institutes of Theology,” he, with the candour and magnanimity of a great mind, retracted his error, and supported the doctrine of the imputation of Adam’s sin as it has been generally held by Calvinistic divines. J This doctrine of mediate or consequent imputation—which

admits imputation only in this sense, that, on account of our inherent, moral depravity, as an actual feature of our condition, we are regarded and treated by God in the same way as Adam had deserved to be treated, in the same way as if we had committed Adam's sin—has also been maintained by one of the most powerful, brilliant, and valuable writers of the present day, Mr Henry Rogers, in a very interesting Essay on the "Genius and Writings of Jonathan Edwards," prefixed to an edition of his works published at London, in two volumes, in 1840. His views are brought out in the following passages:—

“We dislike the second term, ‘imputation of Adam’s sin,’ because the word imputation is apt to suggest the idea of an arbitrary transfer of the guilt and consequent punishment of one moral agent to another moral agent, whose moral condition is essentially different. But this is not what is meant by it. If we could suppose one of the descendants of Adam born without this depraved bias, and actually, when master of his own actions, persevering in unbroken obedience to the law of God, then the imputation of Adam’s guilt would be considered by Calvinists quite as absurd and as unjust as our opponents profess now to consider it. All that is meant by the ‘imputation of Adam’s sin,<sup>1</sup> is that, as in the original constitution of things, Adam and his posterity were linked together by an inseparable union, as the root of a tree and its branches; and as the moral state of the latter (as well as their state in every other respect) was affected by that of the former, so it was reasonable that Adam should be treated as the federal head of his race. They are so far one as to warrant similarity of treatment. In this hypothesis the moral state of his descendants is not the consequence of the imputation of Adam’s sin, but presupposed as the reason of such imputation, and as prior to it in the order of nature. They are treated as he is because they are presupposed to be, and are really, morally like him. Thus, the great, and we may say the sole difficulty, is to reconcile it with justice, that the destinies of our race should be linked in a chain of mutual dependence with those of our first father; that not only our physical condition (a fact universally admitted), but that our moral condition should take its complexion from his own; that as he was, we should be; that if he fell, and as a consequence became mortal, we should fall with him, and become mortal too. Such a constitution, however, of course, presupposes the state of Adam’s descendants to correspond with his own; and the imputation of Adam’s sin means nothing more than that they are treated as Adam was, simply because they are virtually in the same condition with him. According to this doctrine, therefore, the real difficulty is not to reconcile the imputation of sin and guilt where there is no sin and guilt at all (for that is not the case supposed), but to vindicate the reasonableness of a constitution by

which one being becomes depraved by his dependence on another who is so, or by which the moral condition of one being is remotely determined by the moral condition of another. Such is the doctrine when freed from all theological technicalities; and the more we consider it, the more we shall perceive that the sole difficulty is the one we have mentioned.

“Such is the explication of the doctrine of Original Sin, which, it will be seen, does not, as is so often represented, imply the arbitrary imputation of the guilt of one moral agent to another in no sense guilty; and then an equally arbitrary infliction of punishment. But, presupposing the moral state of Adam’s descendants to resemble his own, and to necessitate, therefore, the same treatment, it represents it as just to deal with us as in our great progenitor, as virtually one with him, as grafted on his stock, as bound up in his destinies.’

“It will be seen by the defence we have just made, that we should not choose to attempt to vindicate, by direct argument, that constitution by which the moral destinies of one being are, in fact, entrusted to the keeping of another.. This is one of the mysteries about which, in our present state, it is in vain to reason. The difficulty is to be met simply by appealing, in the first instance, to the facts which prove such a constitution, and then by showing that the very same difficulty presses on any hypothesis that can be adopted on this subject, and, indeed, may be objected to all the proceedings of God towards this lower universe—consequently can never be conclusive against the Calvinistic doctrine of Original Sin.”

Mr Rogers is rather stating his doctrine than expounding and defending it; and for this, as well as for other reasons, it would be out of place to enter here upon a full discussion of it. But there are some obvious reflections suggested by these extracts, which we may state, without enlarging upon them. It is a somewhat peculiar procedure on the part of Mr Rogers, virtually to give his definition or description of the imputation of Adam’s sin, as if it were the only true and sound one, and that which was generally adopted by Calvinistic divines. Mr Rogers adopts the mediate and consequent imputation of Placeseus,—a view which is neither accordant with the natural ordinary meaning of the word, nor with the doctrine that has been held by the generality of orthodox theologians. His whole statement is plainly fitted to convey the impression that this, and this alone, is, and should be, recognised as the true Calvinistic doctrine,—any other notion which the word imputation might suggest, and which may have been put forth in some quarters, being merely an unwarranted misrepresentation, repudiated by



the judicious friends of the doctrine itself. Now, this is certainly a very erroneous impression concerning the actual facts of the case; for it can scarcely be disputed, that the doctrine of immediate and antecedent imputation, which he brings in as if it were merely a misrepresentation of opponents, and which he himself misrepresents, especially by the application of the word “arbitrary,”—an epithet which Arminians are so much in the habit of brandishing against all the doctrines of Calvinism,—has been explicitly maintained by the great body of the ablest Calvinistic divines who have flourished since Placseus’s time.

The doctrine concerning the imputation of Adam’s sin is not to be settled, as Mr Rogers seems to assume, by laying down an arbitrary definition, warranted neither by the natural proper meaning of the words, nor by the prevailing *usus loquendi* among theologians. It can be determined only by an examination of Scripture, by ascertaining what it is that Scripture asserts or indicates concerning the actual relation subsisting between Adam and his descendants,—the real bearing of his first sin upon the moral condition of his posterity. Placseus, the great champion, if not the inventor, of Mr Rogers’s notion of imputation, undertook to show that there was nothing in Scripture to warrant any other idea of what might be called the imputation of Adam’s sin to his posterity, except this, “that because of the sin inherent in us from our origin, we are deserving of being treated in the same way as if we had committed that offence.” But most Calvinistic divines have maintained that this position, though true so far as it goes, does not embody the whole truth; that Scripture gives us somewhat fuller and more definite information upon the subject, and warrants us to believe that Adam was constituted the covenant-head, or federal representative, of his posterity,—God having resolved to make the trial or probation of Adam the trial or probation of the human race; that thus they sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression; and that thus the sin and misery of their natural condition assumes the character of a penal infliction, to which they are subjected because involved in the guilt of Adam’s first sin imputed to them, or put down to their account. Whether Scripture does warrant and require us to believe this, is a question on which there is room for a difference of opinion. If it does not, then we must fall back upon the mediate or consequent imputation of Placseus and Mr Rogers. But if we were satisfied that this is the true state of the case, we would scarcely be contented with “disliking,” as Mr Rogers confesses he does, “the term, imputation of Adam’s sin;” nor would we attempt to explain it away by an arbitrary and unwarranted definition: we would reject it altogether as improper and unsuitable, fitted only to convey an erroneous impression.

Mr Rogers has not entered into any examination of the scriptural grounds by which this question should be determined, and neither can we at present advert to them. — We can only assert that, for above two hundred years past, the generality of the most eminent Calvinistic divines have contended, that the doctrine of immediate and antecedent imputation is taught in the natural and obvious, meaning of the apostle's statements in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and is only confirmed by the most thorough, searching, critical investigation of their import; while it is also in full accordance with the whole history of God's dealings with the human race, and with the principles by which they have been regulated,—and especially with the great principle of covenant-headship and federal representation, so plainly exhibited in God's arrangements with respect to the recovery as well as the ruin of mankind. We have admitted that the great doctrine or fact of the transmission from Adam, and the actual prevalence among all his descendants, of a depraved moral nature, is of more intrinsic and fundamental importance, in itself and its consequences, viewed both theoretically and practically, than any particular tenet as to the cause, or ground, or rationale of this state of things can be. But this does not in the least affect our obligation to ascertain and to proclaim all that Scripture makes known to us on the subject. We admit, also, that the evidence of this great fact from Scripture, confirmed as it is by the testimony of observation and experience, is more varied, abundant, and conclusive than can be adduced in support of the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin, as it has been usually held by Calvinists. But the evidence for this doctrine is, we believe, sufficient and satisfactory; and if so, men are bound to receive it. It certainly cannot be legitimately set aside by anything but a disproof of the scriptural evidence on which it is professedly based; and this, we are persuaded, has not been and cannot be produced.

Mr Rogers represents it as a great advantage of his virtual denial of imputation, by resolving it into what is only mediate and consequent upon the existence of depravity as an actual feature of human nature, that it leaves only one difficulty unsolved,—viz. “to vindicate the reasonableness of a constitution by which one being becomes depraved by his dependence on another;” and he plainly insinuates that any other doctrine upon the subject must be attended with additional and more formidable difficulties.

The substance of the only answer he attempts to this difficulty is, that the matter of fact as to man's natural condition is conclusively established by its appropriate evidence, and must therefore be received as true, and, of course,

consistent with God's attributes and moral government, however great may be the difficulties attaching to it. This answer we admit to be quite sufficient and satisfactory; but we contend that the doctrine of imputation, in the only true and fair sense of the word,—the doctrine of immediate and antecedent imputation,—does not introduce any additional difficulty into the investigation of this subject, and upon the whole rather tends to diminish or alleviate the admitted difficulty, than to strengthen or aggravate it. It is a principle of the greatest value and importance in the consideration of the difficulties attaching to speculations on religious subjects, and especially in dealing with the objections commonly directed against Calvinism, that the difficulties or objections really apply, not to particular doctrines or representations, but to actual facts or results, which are admitted, or can be proved, to exist or to take place under God's moral government. This principle applies equally to the views generally held amongst us with respect to the fall of mankind in Adam, and their salvation through Christ. The great, the only difficulty, in the one case is, that all men come into the world with morally depraved, natures, which certainly and invariably involve them in actual violations of the divine law, and thus subject them to punishment; and in the other case, that of the whole human race thus involved in sin and misery, some only are saved from this condition and the rest perish, while this difference in the result cannot be fully explained by anything in men themselves, or by anything they have done or can do, but must be referred ultimately to the good pleasure of God. These are actual facts or results which can be conclusively proved, and must therefore be admitted to be true. It is with the fall alone we have at present to do; and here the great, the only real difficulty is, the universality of depravity, with its certain and invariable consequences. This we undertake to prove to be an actual matter of fact'. If its truth be denied, we must stop, and before proceeding further we must establish it, for it is the great fundamental position with respect to the moral condition of mankind. But it is admitted by all Calvinists, and we have to do at present only with differences subsisting among them,—differences which we are persuaded do not and cannot seriously affect, either in the way of alleviation or aggravation, the difficulties attaching to the admitted fact.

Some Calvinists—agreeing in this with those more evangelical Arminians who admit the great fact of the universal native depravity of mankind—contend that, beyond establishing the reality of the fact, Scripture gives us no further information on the subject, except this, that this depravity was transmitted by Adam to all his posterity, and that it is in some way or other to be traced to the relation subsisting between him and his descendants. They stop here, because

they think that Scripture goes no further, and because they have a vague notion—which Mr Rogers appears to sanction—that to go any further would involve them in new and additional difficulties; though there really can be no greater difficulty than what stands out palpably on the face of the fact itself. They usually allege, that Scripture makes known to us no other relation as subsisting between Adam and the human race, except that they are all his natural descendants; while in connection with this they admit, that God had established a constitution or arrangement, in virtue of which all Adam's descendants were in point of fact to have the same moral character into which he fell by his first sin. This constitution or arrangement of God, in virtue of which Adam transmitted to all his descendants the same depravity of moral nature which he brought upon himself, is of course admitted by all who, upon the authority of revelation, believe in the depravity of the human race. But it manifestly does not furnish, or appear or profess to furnish, any explanation or solution of the one great difficulty; which consists essentially in this, that God appears to be represented as the author or cause of the sin and misery of mankind. The admission of this divine constitution is really nothing more in substance than an assertion of the matter of fact, as a matter of fact; and then tracing the fearful result, directly and immediately, to a purpose and appointment of God. The view held by a certain section of Calvinists, from Placeseus to Mr Rogers,—denying the imputation of Adam's sin in any fair and legitimate sense of the expression, and reducing it to a mere name or nonentity,—implies that Scripture makes known to us no other relation, no other kind of unity or identity, as subsisting between Adam and the human race, except that of progenitor and posterity—the unity or identity of a father with his descendants; and .this is simply asserting, in another form, the mere fact of the actual transmission of a depraved nature, as the result of a constitution or arrangement which God has established. This view of the matter leaves the difficulty just where it found it. It interposes nothing whatever between the result and the exercise of the divine sovereignty; it does nothing whatever towards explaining or vindicating that divine constitution or arrangement under which the result has taken place. At the same time, it is to be remembered that it is universally admitted that this relation of progenitor and posterity, this species of oneness or identity, does subsist between Adam and his descendants,—that it is in no way inconsistent with the more strict and definite views of imputation which have been held by the generality of Calvinists,—and that in so far as it can be made available or useful in the exposition of this subject, this advantage belongs equally to those who believe, and to those who deny, the generally received doctrine of imputation; while those who deny it have nothing else whatever to adduce in explanation or defence of their position.

If Scripture gives us no further information upon this subject, then we must stop here, and—in dealing with the objections of opponents—take our stand upon the position, that the fact of the fall and the depravity of the human race has been conclusively proved, and must therefore be received as true. This ground is common to all who admit depravity, and it is sufficient to dispose of the difficulty. But Calvinists in general have contended, that Scripture does give us some additional information upon this subject; and that this additional information—while certainly not furnishing a solution of the difficulty, which all admit to be insoluble—introduces no additional difficulty, and not only does not aggravate the difficulty admitted to exist, but rather tends to alleviate it. The peculiarity of the doctrine of imputation,—immediate and antecedent imputation,—as held by the generality of Calvinists, consists in this, that it brings in another relation besides that of mere natural descent as subsisting between Adam and his posterity—another species of oneness or identity between them, *viz.* that of covenant-headship or federal representation. Their doctrine is, that God made a covenant with Adam, and that in this covenant Adam represented his posterity, the covenant being made not only for him but for them,—including them as well as him in its provisions. The proper result of this was, that, while there was no actual transfer to them of the moral culpability or blameworthiness of his sin, they became, in consequence of his failure to fulfil his covenant engagements, in,—or incurred reatus, or guilt in the sense of legal answerableness,—to this effect, that God, on the ground of the covenant, regarded and treated them as if they themselves had been guilty of the sin whereby the covenant was broken, and that in this way they became legally involved in all the natural and penal consequences which Adam brought upon himself by his first sin. Now this doctrine—viewing it merely as a hypothesis, and independently of the actual support it receives from Scripture—neither introduces any new difficulty into the investigation, nor aggravates the difficulty which all admit to exist. It does not in any respect make more sinful or miserable the actual condition of the human race as a reality or matter of fact, and it does not ascribe anything to God which appears more liable to objection or more incapable of explanation, by bringing His agency more closely into contact with the actual result of the sin and misery of mankind. On the contrary, it rather tends to alleviate the difficulty, and to throw some light upon this mysterious transaction, by bringing it somewhat into the line of the analogy of transactions which we can comprehend and estimate, and illustrating its accordance with great general principles, which are exhibited, not only, in God's ordinary providence, but specially and emphatically in the scheme of salvation by a Redeemer.

The great difficulty of course is to explain how, consistently with God's attributes and man's responsibility, the human race could come to be placed in a condition of sin and misery, without any apparent adequate ground in justice for their being so treated. And we think it by no means unlikely, that to a man reflecting upon this state of things as an ascertained reality,—even while he knew nothing of the information given as concerning it in Scripture,—the idea might occur, that the best and most satisfactory way of getting to anything like an explanation of it would be, if it could be shown to be of the nature of a penal infliction upon the human race—an evil that had come upon them as a punishment of actual sin committed. There is no great difficulty in believing, that the moral depravity of Adam's own nature was a penal infliction upon him, through the withdrawal of the Divine Spirit— a punishment to which he was justly subjected on account of his first sin; and we cannot but feel, that if this idea of legal responsibility could in any way be introduced, and could in any measure be applied to the human race as a whole in connection with Adam, it would tend somewhat to alleviate or lighten the difficulty attaching to this mysterious and incomprehensible subject. Now, this is precisely what Scripture, according to the views of the defenders of the ordinary Calvinistic doctrine of imputation, does in the matter; this is the very service it renders, by leading us to believe, that God resolved to make the trial or probation of Adam the trial or probation of the human race,—that the covenant which He made with Adam comprehended all his posterity,—and that it laid a foundation for a legal or federal oneness or identity between him and them. The doctrine that Adam was the federal head or representative of his posterity in the covenant, lays a foundation for the imputation—the immediate and antecedent imputation—to them of the guilt or reatus of his first sin; and this imputation furnishes a ground for dealing with them as if they had committed that sin themselves, and thus involving them in the penal results which Adam brought upon himself by his own sin. There are thus interposed several steps between the actual moral character and condition of mankind and the mere sovereign purpose and agency of God; and these steps interposed, while they do not solve the difficulty, do not introduce into it any additional darkness or perplexity. On the contrary, being in accordance with analogies furnished by God's ordinary providence and by human jurisprudence, as well as by the arrangements of the scheme of redemption, they tend somewhat to relieve and satisfy the mind in the contemplation of this great mystery.

There are many persons—and Mr Rogers is evidently one of them—who have a strong prejudice against this doctrine of the imputation of the guilt or reatus of

Adam's first sin to his posterity, as if it brought in some new and additional difficulties into the investigation of this subject,—as if it were the most mysterious and incomprehensible dogma of ultra-Calvinism, one which all moderate and reasonable Calvinists must repudiate. But if the considerations we have hinted at were duly weighed, this unfounded prejudice might possibly be removed; and it might be expected, that all men who admit the total depravity of human nature as an actual feature of man's condition, of which they can give us no account or explanation whatever, would be more likely to yield to the weight of the evidence—quite sufficient, we think, though not overwhelming—which Scripture furnishes in proof of the doctrine, that “the covenant being made with Adam, as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, fell with him in his first transgression.”

Among the three different classes or sections into which we divided those divines who, while admitting the universal depravity of the human race, declined to admit the orthodox doctrine of imputation, one consisted of those who rejected the ordinary orthodox phraseology, yet so far deferred to the authority of Scripture as to receive, though in a confused and inconsistent way, some part of the doctrine which they professed to reject. This has appeared most prominently and palpably among the New England Congregationalists and some of the New School Presbyterians in the United States; though there have been frequent indications of it among men who were fond of deviating from the old beaten paths, and aspired to be thought reasonable, moderate, and liberal. This is a curious and important feature of the controversy, and furnishes some interesting materials in confirmation of the old orthodox faith. An admirable specimen of what can be done in this department will be found in a crushing exposure, by Dr Hodge, of Princeton, of the inconsistency and confusion exhibited by Professor Moses Stuart, of Andover, in his commentary upon the Epistle to the Romans. We have dwelt so long upon these two subjects, that we must be very brief upon the remaining two; and, indeed, must confine ourselves to a mere statement as to what Calvin's sentiments upon these two topics really were, without digressing into the more general history of the controversies concerning them.

III. It has been contended, very frequently, and very confidently, that Calvin did not sanction the views which have been generally held by Calvinistic divines, in regard to the extent of the atonement,—that he did not believe in the doctrine of particular redemption, that is, that Christ did not die for all men, but only for the

elect, for those who are actually saved,—but that, on the contrary, he asserted a universal, unlimited, or indefinite atonement. Amyraut, in defending his doctrine of universal atonement in combination with Calvinistic views upon other points, appealed confidently to the authority of Calvin; and, indeed, he wrote a treatise entitled, “*Eschantillon de la Doctrine de Calvin touchant la Praedestination*,” chiefly for the purpose of showing that Calvin supported his views about the extent of the atonement, and was in all respects a very moderate Calvinist. Daillee, in his “*Apologia pro duabus Synodis*,” which is a very elaborate defence, in reply to Spanheim, of Amyraut’s views about universal grace and universal atonement, fills above forty pages with extracts from Calvin as testimonies in his favour. Indeed, the whole of the last portion of this work of Daillee, consisting of nearly five hundred pages, is occupied with extracts, produced as testimonies in favour of universal grace and universal atonement, from almost every eminent writer, from Clemens Romanus down to the middle of the seventeenth century; and we doubt if the whole history of theological controversy furnishes a stronger case of the adduction of irrelevant and inconclusive materials. It was chiefly the survey of this vast collection of testimonies that suggested to us the observations which we have laid before our readers in our discussion of the views of Melancthon.

It is certain that Beza held the doctrine of particular redemption, or of a limited atonement, as it has since been held by most Calvinists, and brought it out fully in his controversies with the Lutherans on the subject of predestination; though he was not, as has sometimes been asserted, the first who maintained it. It has been confidently alleged that Calvin did not concur in this view, but held the opposite doctrine of universal redemption and unlimited atonement. Now it is true that we do not find in Calvin’s writings explicit statements as to any limitation in the object of the atonement, or in the number of those for whom Christ died; and no Calvinist, not even Dr Twisse, the great champion of high Supralapsarianism, has ever denied that there is a sense in which it may be affirmed that Christ died for all men. But we think it is likewise true, that no sufficient evidence has been produced that Calvin believed in a universal or unlimited atonement. Of all the passages in Calvin’s writings, bearing more or less directly upon this subject, which we remember to have read or have seen produced on either side, there is only one which, with anything like confidence, can be regarded as formally and explicitly denying an unlimited atonement; and notwithstanding all the pains that have been taken to bring out the views of Calvin upon this question, we do not recollect to have seen it adverted to except by a single Popish writer. It occurs in his treatise “*De vera participatione Christi*



in coena,” in reply to Heshusius, a violent Lutheran defender of the corporal presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The passage is this —u Scire velim quomodo Christi carnem edant impii pro quibus non est crucifixa, et quomodo sanguinem bibant qui expiandis eorum peccatis non est effusus.” This is a very explicit denial of the universality of the atonement. But it stands alone—so far as we know—in Calvin’s writings, and for this reason we do not found much upon it; though at the same time we must observe, that it is not easy to understand how, if Calvin really believed in a universal atonement for the human race, such a statement could ever have dropped from him. We admit, however, that he has not usually given any distinct indication that he believed in any limitation as to the objects of the atonement; and that, upon a survey of all that has been produced from his writings, there is fair ground for a difference of opinion as to what his doctrine upon this point really was. The truth is, that no satisfactory evidence has been or can be derived from his writings, that the precise question upon the extent of the atonement which has been mooted in more modern times, in the only sense in which it can become a question among men who concur in holding the doctrine of unconditional personal election to everlasting life, ever exercised Calvin’s mind, or was made by him the subject of any formal or explicit deliverance. The topic was not then formally discussed as a distinct subject of controversy; and Calvin does not seem to have been ever led, in discussing cognate questions, to take up this one and to give a deliverance regarding it. We believe that no sufficient evidence has been brought forward that Calvin held that Christ died for all men, or for the whole world, in any such sense as to warrant Calvinistic universalists—that is, men who, though holding Calvinistic doctrines upon other points, yet believe in a universal or unlimited atonement—in asserting that he sanctioned their peculiar principles.

It is true that Calvin has intimated more than once his conviction, that the position laid down by some of the schoolmen, *viz.* that Christ died “sufficienter pro omnibus, efficaciter pro electis,” is sound and orthodox in some sense. But then he has never, so far as we remember or have seen proved, explained precisely in what sense he held it, and there is a sense in which the advocates of particular redemption can consistently admit and adopt it. It is true also, that Calvin has often declared, that the offers and invitations of the gospel are addressed by God, and should be addressed by us, indiscriminately to all men, without distinction or exception; and that the principal and proximate cause why men to whom the gospel is preached finally perish, is their own sin and unbelief in putting away from them the word of life. But these are principles which the advocates of particular redemption believe to be true, and to be vitally important;

and which they never hesitate to apply and to act upon. It is quite fair to attempt to deduce an argument in favour of the doctrine of a universal atonement from the alleged impossibility of reconciling the doctrine of an atonement, limited as to its objects or destination in God's purpose or intention, with the universal or unlimited offers and invitations of the gospel, or with the ascription of men's final condemnation to their own sin and unbelief. But as the generality of the advocates of a limited atonement deny that the inconsistency of these two things, or the impossibility of reconciling them, can be proved, and profess to hold both, it is quite unwarrantable to infer, in regard to any particular individual, that because he held the one, he must be presumed to have rejected the other. And there is certainly nothing in Calvin's general character and principles, or in anything he has written, which affords ground for the conclusion, that the alleged impossibility of reconciling these two things would, had he been led to investigate the matter formally, have perplexed him much, or have tempted him to embrace the doctrine of universal atonement, which is certainly somewhat alien, to say the least, in its general spirit and complexion, to the leading features of his theological system. And this consideration is entitled to the more weight for this reason, that this difficulty is not greater than some others with which he did grapple, and which he disposed of in a different and more scriptural way,—or rather, is just the very same difficulty, put in a different form, and placed in a somewhat different position.

There is not, then, we are persuaded, satisfactory evidence that Calvin held the doctrine of a universal, unlimited, or indefinite atonement. And, moreover, we consider ourselves warranted in asserting, that there is sufficient evidence that he did not hold this doctrine; though on the grounds formerly explained, and with the one exception already adverted to, it is not evidence which bears directly and immediately upon this precise point. The evidence of this position is derived chiefly from the two following considerations:— .

1st, Calvin consistently, unhesitatingly, and explicitly denied the doctrine of God's universal grace and love to all men,—that is, omnibus et singulis, to each and every man,—as implying in some sense a desire or purpose or intention to save them all; and with this universal grace or love to all men the doctrine of a universal or unlimited atonement, in the nature of the case, and in the convictions and admissions of all its supporters, stands inseparably connected. That Calvin denied the doctrine of God's universal grace or love to all men, as implying some desire or intention of saving them all, and some provision directed to that object, is too evident to any one who has read his writings, to

admit of doubt or to require proof. We are not aware that the doctrine of a universal atonement ever has been maintained, even by men who were in other respects Calvinistic, except in conjunction and in connection with an assertion of God's universal grace or love to all men. And it is manifestly impossible that it should be otherwise. If Christ died for all men,—pro omnibus et singulis,—this must have been in some sense an expression or indication of a desire or intention on the part of God, and of a provision made by Him, directed to the object of saving them all, though frustrated in its effect, by their refusal to embrace the provision made for and offered to them. A universal atonement, or the death of Christ for all men,—that is, for each and every man,—necessarily implies this, and would be an anomaly in the divine government without it. No doubt it may be said that the doctrine of a universal atonement necessitates, in logical consistency, a denial of the Calvinistic doctrine of election, as much as it necessitates an admission of God's universal grace or love to all men; and we believe this to be true. But still, when we find that, in point of fact, none has ever held the doctrine of universal atonement without holding also the doctrine of universal grace,—while it is certain that some men of distinguished ability and learning, such as Amyraut and Daille, Davenant and Baxter, have held both these doctrines of universal atonement and universal grace, and at the same time have held the Calvinistic doctrine of election,—we are surely called upon in fairness and modesty to admit, that the logical connection cannot be quite so direct and certain in the one case as in the other. And then this conclusion warrants us in maintaining, that the fact of Calvin so explicitly denying the doctrine of God's universal grace or love to all men, affords a more direct and certain ground for the inference, that he did not hold the doctrine of universal atonement, than could be legitimately deduced from the mere fact, that he held the doctrine of unconditional personal election to everlasting life. The invalidity of the inferential process in the one case is not sufficient to establish its invalidity in the other; and therefore our argument holds good.

2d, The other consideration to which we referred, as affording some positive evidence, though not direct and explicit, that Calvin did not hold the doctrine of a universal atonement, is this,—that he has interpreted some of the principal texts on which the advocates of that doctrine rest it, in such a way as to deprive them of all capacity of serving the purpose to which its supporters commonly apply them. If this position can be established, it will furnish something more than a presumption, and will almost amount to a proof, that he did not hold the doctrine in question. As this point is curious and interesting, we may adduce an instance or two in support of our allegation. In commenting upon 1 Tim. in. 4,

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,” Calvin says: “Apostolus simpliciter intelligit nullum munch vel populum vel ordinem a salute excluch, quia omnibus sine exceptione evangelium proponi Deus velit. Est autem evangelii prsedicatio vivifica, merito itaque colligit Deum omnes pariter salutis participatione dignare. At de hominum generibus, non singulis personis, sermo est; nihil enim aliud in-tendit quam principes et extraneos populos in hoc numero inclu-dere.” Again, in commenting upon 1 John in. 2, “And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world,” he says: “Qui hanc absurditatem (universal salvation) volebant effugere, dixerunt sufficientur pro toto mundo passum esse Christum, sed pro electis tantum efficaciter. Yulgo hsec solutio in scholis obtinuit. Ego quanquam verum esse illud dictum fateor, nego tamen prsesenti loce quadrare. Neque enim aliud fuit consilium Joannis quam toti ecclesie commune facere hoc bonum. Ergo sub omnibus reprobos non comprehendit, sed eos designat qui simul credituri erant, et qui per varias munch plagas dispersi erant.” He gives the very same explanation of these two passages in his treatise on “Predestination.” Now this is in substance just the interpretation commonly given of these and similar texts by the advocates of the doctrine of particular redemption; and it seems scarcely possible that it should have been adopted by one who did not hold that doctrine, or who believed in the truth of the opposite one.

Let it be observed, that our object is not to show that we are warranted in adducing the authority of the great name of Calvin as a positive testimony in favour of the doctrine of particular redemption,—of a limited atonement,—as it has been generally held by Calvinistic divines; but rather to show that there is no adequate ground for adducing him, as has been done so frequently and so confidently, on the other side. To adduce Calvin as maintaining the doctrine of particular redemption, could scarcely, upon a full and impartial survey of the whole circumstances of the case, be regarded as warrantable. It is evident that he had never been led to examine this precise question, in the form which it afterwards assumed in controversial discussion, and to give an explicit deliverance upon it. He seems to have attached little or no importance to any definite doctrine about the extent of the atonement. In his “Antidote” to the earlier sessions of the Council of Trent, he passes by without comment or animadversion the fourth chapter of the sixth session, although it contains an explicit declaration that Christ died for .all men; and he does this not tacitly, as if per incuriam, but with the explicit statement, “tertium et quartum caput non attingo,”—as if he found nothing there to object to. He was in no way sensitive

or cautious about using language, concerning the universality of the offers and invitations, or—in the phraseology which then generally prevailed— the promises of the gospel, and concerning the provisions and arrangements of the scheme of redemption, which might have the appearance of being inconsistent with any limitation in the objects or destination of the atonement. And it is chiefly because the great body of those who have been called after his name— even those of them who have held the doctrine of a definite or limited atonement —have followed his example in this respect, believing it to have the full sanction of Scripture, that Daillee and others have got up such a mass of testimonies from their writings, in which they seem to give some countenance to the tenet of universal redemption, even at the expense of consistency. But this is no reason why Calvinists should hesitate to follow the course, which Scripture so plainly sanctions and requires, of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to all men indiscriminately without any distinction or exception, setting forth, without hesitation or qualification, the fulness and freeness of the gospel offers and invitations,—of inviting, encouraging, and requiring every descendant of Adam with whom they come into contact, to come to Christ and lay hold of Him, with the assurance that those who come to Him He will in no wise reject. The doctrine of particular redemption, or of an atonement limited, not as to its sufficiency, but as to its object, purpose, or destination, does not, either in reality or in appearance, throw any greater obstacle in the way of preaching the gospel to every creature, than the doctrines which all Calvinists hold, of the absolute unconditional election of some men to eternal life, and of the indispensable necessity and determining influence of the special agency of the Holy Spirit in producing faith and conversion. The difficulty of this whole subject lies in a department which belongs to God's province, and not to ours. He has imposed upon us the duty of making Christ known to our fellow-men, not only as able, but as willing, and ready, to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him; and this duty we are bound by the most solemn obligations to discharge, without let or hindrance, without doubt or hesitation; assured that God, while exercising His own sovereignty in dealing with His creatures, will, in His own time and way, fully vindicate the consistency and the honour of all that He has done Himself, and of all that He has required us to do in His name.

IV. The only other topic to which we referred,—as one in regard to which it has been made matter of discussion what Calvin's views were, and whether he did not come short of the accuracy and precision exhibited by Beza, and the generality of later Calvinists,—is the doctrine of justification. Some Arminians have gone so far as to allege, that Calvin held their fundamental distinguishing

principle upon this subject,—that, viz., of the imputation of faith as a substitute for, or in the room and stead of, a perfect personal righteousness, as the ground of a sinner’s forgiveness; in distinction from, and in opposition to, the doctrine of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness through the instrumentality of faith. But no evidence has been produced from his writings in support of this allegation, sufficient to entitle it to examination. It has also, however, been alleged, and with much greater plausibility, that he held justification to consist solely in pardon or remission of sin, without including in it, as the generality of Calvinists have done, the distinct additional idea of the acceptance of men as righteous; and that, as a natural consequence, he did not admit the distinction—which has also been held by most of his followers—between the passive righteousness of Christ, or His vicarious sufferings, as more immediately the ground of our pardon, and His active righteousness, or perfect obedience to the law, as more immediately the ground of our acceptance and title to heaven. With respect to the first of these points,—viz. his making justification to consist solely in pardon or remission,—it is undeniable that he has repeatedly made statements in which this is asserted in terminis. But the meaning and bearing of these statements have been somewhat misconceived, from not attending to the leading object which he had in view in making them, and to the import of the tenet against which he was arguing. His chief object in laying down this position, was to deny and exclude the Popish doctrine of justification, which makes it comprehend not only remission, but also regeneration. And the sum and substance of what he meant to inculcate, in laying down the position that justification consisted only in remission, was just this, that it did not comprehend, as the Papists maintained, a change of character, but merely a change of state in relation to God and to His law. That he did not mean to deny, and that he really believed, that justification included acceptance as a distinct element from forgiveness,—separable from it in thought, though always united with it in fact,—and that he based the one as well as the other solely upon the righteousness of Christ imputed through faith, can be clearly established from his writings. Indeed, this may be said to be put beyond all doubt by the following very explicit commentary upon the apostle’s statement, that 66 Christ is made unto us righteousness,” or justification: “quo intelligit (apostolus) nos ejus nomine acceptos esse Deo, quia morte sua peccata nostra expiaverit, et ejus obedientia nobis in justitiam imputetur. Nam quum fidei justitia in peccatorum remissione et gratuita acceptione consistat, utrumque per Christum consequimur.” This statement is far too precise and explicit to admit of being explained away, and it is quite conclusive as to what were Calvin’s views upon the point now under consideration.

It may be worth while to advert to another expression which Calvin sometimes used when treating of this subject,—an expression which confirms the accuracy of the account we have given of his sentiments, but which in itself is not strictly correct, as was indeed brought out in the course of the subsequent controversies. Calvin repeatedly speaks of justification as consisting in the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness. There can be no reasonable doubt that, when he used this form of expression, he meant by the imputation of Christ's righteousness just acceptance, or positive admission into the enjoyment of God's favour,—the bestowal of a right or title to eternal life, as distinguished from and going beyond mere forgiveness. In any other sense, and, indeed, in the strict and proper meaning of the expression, the statement is inaccurate. The imputation of Christ's righteousness, correctly understood, is to be regarded as, in the order of nature, preceding both remission and acceptance, and as being the ground or basis, or the meritorious or impulsive cause of these two results—that to which God has a respect when in any instance He pardons and accepts a sinner.

As to the distinction between the passive and the active righteousness of Christ,—the first regarded as more immediately the ground of our pardon, and the second of our acceptance,—this does not appear to be formally brought out in the writings of Calvin. It is to be traced rather to the more minute and subtle speculations to which the doctrine of justification was afterwards subjected; and though the distinction is quite in accordance with the analogy of faith, and may be of use in aiding the formation of distinct and definite conceptions, it is not of any great practical importance, and need not be much pressed or insisted on, if men heartily and intelligently ascribe their forgiveness and acceptance wholly to what Christ has done and suffered in their room and stead. ' There is no ground in anything Calvin has written for asserting, that he would have denied or rejected this distinction, if it had been presented to him. But it was perhaps more in accordance with the cautious and reverential spirit in which he usually conducted his investigations into divine things, to abstain from any minute and definite statements regarding it. Much prominence came to be given to these distinctions between forgiveness and acceptance, and between Christ's passive and active righteousness, in the Lutheran Church; and it is interesting to notice, that down till about the middle of last century,— when everything like sound doctrine and true religion were swept away by the prevalence of rationalism,— not only these distinctions, but the whole of the scriptural doctrine on the subject of justification, were strenuously maintained by the Lutheran theologians. Very few Calvinistic divines have rejected the distinction between forgiveness and

acceptance, though many have been disposed to pass over or omit the distinction between Christ's passive and active righteousness. The most eminent Calvinistic divines, who have maintained that justification consists only in remission of sins, —thus denying or ignoring the generally received distinction between forgiveness and acceptance, and rejecting the imputation of Christ's active righteousness,—were Piscator and Wendelinus, who both belonged to the German Reformed Church, the former of whom flourished near the beginning, and the latter about the middle of the seventeenth century. The general reasonings on which these men based their peculiar views are of no force, except upon the assumption of principles which would overturn altogether the Scripture doctrines of substitution and imputation. The question resolves into this— Whether we have sufficient evidence in Scripture for these distinctions? And in the discussion of this question it has, we think, been shown that the scriptural evidence is sufficient; and that those who deny this, demand an amount of evidence, both in point of quantity and of directness and explicitness, which is unreasonable.

But many eminent divines have been of opinion that the controversies which have been carried on upon this subject, have led some of the defenders of the truth to press these distinctions— especially that between Christ's passive and active righteousness— beyond what Scripture warrants, and in a way that is scarcely in keeping with the general scope and spirit of its statements. There is no trace of this excess, however, in the admirably cautious and accurate declarations upon this subject in the Westminster Confession; where, while pardon and acceptance are expressly distinguished as separate elements in the justification of a sinner, they are both ascribed, equally and alike, to the obedience and death of Christ, without any specification of the distinct places or functions which His passive and active righteousness hold in the matter.

“Those whom God effectually calleth He also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them as their righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith, which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.”

This statement contains a beautifully precise and exact repudiation of Popish and



Arminian errors, and assertion of the opposite truths, upon the subject of justification; but it wisely abstains from giving any deliverance, directly or by implication, upon those more minute points which are less clearly indicated in Scripture, and have been made subjects of controversial discussion among Calvinists. The same wisdom and caution are exhibited in dealing with this topic in the corresponding portions of the catechisms. In the Larger Catechism, pardon and acceptance are both based, equally and alike, upon “the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ;” and in the Shorter Catechism, while they are still distinguished from each other, they are both declared to be based upon “the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us and received by faith alone.” The danger of yielding to any excess, or undue minuteness, of exposition upon this subject, and at the same time the necessity and importance of maintaining the whole truth regarding it, as sanctioned by Scripture, are very clearly and judiciously enforced by Turretine, with his usual masterly ability.

The general subject which we have been surveying might suggest some reflections fitted to be useful in the study of theology and of theological literature, bearing especially upon the two topics—of the use and application of testimonies from eminent writers as authorities upon controverted questions, and the value and importance of definite and precise statements in the exposition of the doctrines of Christian theology.

In almost all theological controversies, much space has been occupied by the discussion of extracts from books and documents, adduced as authorities in support of the opinions maintained; and there is certainly no department of theological literature in which so much ability and learning, so much time and strength, have been uselessly wasted, or in which so much of controversial unfairness has been exhibited. Controversialists in general have shown an intense and irresistible desire to prove, that their peculiar opinions were supported by the Fathers, or by the Reformers, or by the great divines of their own church; and have often exhibited a great want both of wisdom and of candour in the efforts they have made to effect this object. It is indeed very important to ascertain, as far as possible, the doctrinal views which have prevailed in every country where theology has been studied, and in each successive generation since the canon of Scripture was completed. And it is a gratifying feature in the condition of the church, that so much attention has been given in modern times—especially on the Continent—to the full and scientific treatment of the history of doctrines. The history of opinion can always be turned, by competent persons, to good account in the investigation of truth. It is

important also to ascertain fully the views held even by individuals, who have exerted an important influence on their own and subsequent ages,—epoch-making men as they have been called,—such as Origen, Augustine, Abelard, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Arminius, and Socinus. Some deference is due to the opinions of men who have brought distinguished gifts and graces to bear on the study of theology. But no deference that may be shown to the opinions of men, should ever be transmuted into submission to authority, properly so called; as if it ever could be of essential importance, or of determining influence, to ascertain what other men believed on matters which are revealed to us in God’s word. No document has ever been prepared by uninspired men, which did not exhibit some traces of human imperfection,—not indeed always in actual positive error, yet in something about it defective or exaggerated, disproportionate or unsuitable,—exhibited either in the document itself, or in its relation to the purpose it was intended to serve. There is no man who has written much upon important and difficult subjects, and has not fallen occasionally into error, confusion, obscurity, and inconsistency; and there is certainly no body of men that have ever been appealed to as authorities, in whose writings a larger measure of these qualities is to be found than in those of the Fathers of the Christian church. We have never read anything more wearisome and useless than the discussions which have been carried on between Romanists and Protestants, especially divines of the Church of England, concerning the opinions of the Fathers of the early ages. Never have ability and learning been more thoroughly wasted, than in those endless debates, in which so much pains have been taken to bring out the meaning of passages in the Fathers, which really have no meaning, or no meaning that can be ascertained,—which in many cases their authors, if they could be called up and examined, would be unable to explain intelligibly; and to harmonize the confusion and reconcile the inconsistencies which abound in their works. It was right and important indeed to show conclusively and once for all, that the Romanists are not warranted to appeal to the early church, in support of their leading peculiar opinions; and the conclusive evidence which has been produced in proof of this position, it may be necessary occasionally to refer to. But beyond this, elaborate discussions of the meaning of particular passages in the Fathers, should in general be now regarded as nothing better than learned lumber. Occasions indeed do sometimes occur in theological literature where something of this kind may be called for. And we think that there was a dignus vindice nodus, and that an important service was rendered to the cause of truth, when Dr Goode, the Dean of Ripon, undertook and endured the labor improbus of proving—as he has done unanswerably, in his “Divine Rule of Faith and Practice”—that the Tractarian appeal to the authority of the Fathers, and also of

the great Anglican divines, was characterized by the same incompetency and unfairness which have usually marked the conduct of Romish controversialists.

In adducing extracts from eminent writers in support of their opinions, controversialists usually overlook or forget the obvious consideration, that it is only the mature and deliberate conviction of a competent judge upon the precise point under consideration that should be held as entitled to any deference. When men have never, or scarcely ever, had present to their thoughts the precise question that may have afterwards become matter of dispute,—when they have never deliberately examined it, or given a formal and explicit deliverance regarding it,—it will usually follow', 1st, That it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain what they thought about it,—to collect this from incidental statements, or mere allusions, dropped when they were treating of other topics; and 2d, That their opinion about it, if it could be ascertained, would be of no weight or value. A large portion of the materials which have been collected by controversialists as testimonies in favour of their opinions from eminent writers, is at once swept away as useless and irrelevant, by the application of this principle. The truth of this principle is so obvious, that it has passed into a sort of proverb,—“auctoris aliud agentis parva est auctoritas.” And yet controversialists in general have continued habitually to disregard it, and to waste their time in trying to bring the authority of eminent writers to bear upon questions which they had never examined; and have not scrupled, in many cases, to have recourse to garbling and mutilation, in order either to silence testimonies or to make them speak more plainly. The opinion even of Calvin, upon a point which he had never carefully examined, and on which he has given no formal deliverance, is of no weight or value, and would scarcely be worth examining; were it not that so much has been written upon this subject, and that his views upon many points have been, and still are, so much misrepresented.

In dealing with authorities, then, it is necessary to ascertain whether the authors referred to and quoted have really formed and expressed an opinion upon the point in regard to which their testimony is adduced. It is necessary further to collect together, and to examine carefully and deliberately, the whole of what they have written upon the subject under consideration, that we may understand fully and accurately what their whole mind regarding it really was, instead of trying to educe it from a hasty glance at partial and incidental statements. And in order to conduct this process of estimating and applying testimonies in a satisfactory and successful way, it is also necessary that we be familiar with the whole import and bearing of the discussion on both sides, as it was present to the

mind of the author whose statements we are investigating. Without this knowledge, we shall be very apt to misapprehend the true meaning and significance of what he has said, and to make it the ground of unwarranted and erroneous inferences. We have seen how necessary it is, in order to understand and construe aright Calvin's statements about imputation and justification, to know in what way these subjects were discussed at the time among Romanists as well as among Protestants; and many other illustrations of the necessity of a thorough acquaintance with the whole question in all its aspects, and of the errors arising from the want of it, might easily be adduced from this department of theological controversy. To manage aright this matter of the adduction and application of testimonies or authorities, requires an extent of knowledge, a patience and caution in comparing and estimating materials, and an amount of candour and tact, which few controversialists possess, and in which many of them are deplorably deficient. This is not indeed a department of investigation which can be regarded as possessed of any great intrinsic importance, with a view to the establishment of truth. But it has always occupied, and it is likely to continue to occupy, a prominent place in theological literature; and it is therefore of some consequence that it should be conducted judiciously, accurately, and honourably.

Much more important than this subject of authorities and testimonies, is the other topic suggested by the survey in which we have been engaged, viz. the increasing fulness, exactness, and precision of deliverances on doctrinal matters, as the result of controversial discussion. The great lessons suggested by the investigation in which we have been engaged, and suggested indeed by the whole history of the discussion of all such questions, are, 1st, The obligation to improve the controversies which have sprung up in the church, for aiding in the formation of clear and accurate, precise and definite, opinions upon all topics of doctrinal theology, up to the full extent which Scripture, correctly interpreted and reasonably and judiciously applied, may be fairly held to sanction; 2d, The danger and mischief of laying down explicit deliverances, and indulging in elaborate controversies, about minuter matters which are not revealed to us, and which Scripture really furnishes no materials for determining; and 3d, The necessity of great caution and much wisdom in introducing into symbolical books, and thereby imposing as articles of faith or terms of communion, even true positions of a minute and definite description, which may possess no great intrinsic importance as connected with the development of the scheme of salvation, or which may derive their importance from temporary or local discussions. These, of course, are just truisms admitted by every one. Everything

depends upon the right application of them to particular cases and topics; and this requires thorough and comprehensive knowledge, great soundness and discrimination of intellect, and much careful and deliberate investigation,—qualities which are very rare, and which especially are very seldom found in combination with each other.

In regard to each of these three positions, there are temptations and dangers on both sides,—great risks both of defect and of excess; and one chief means fitted, with the divine blessing, to guard against error in these matters, both on the right hand and on the left, is a comprehensive survey of the history of past discussions, and a sincere and impartial determination to turn it to the best account, with a view to the ascertaining of truth and the determining of the church's duty. It is an imperative obligation, attaching to every man, according to his means and opportunities, to acquire as accurate and complete a knowledge of the contents of divine revelation as he can. And next to the diligent and prayerful study of the word of God itself, in the unwearied and impartial application of all legitimate apparatus and auxiliaries, a comprehensive and discriminating investigation of past discussions, conducted by competent parties, affords the best means of discharging this duty and securing this result. Wherever men of ability, learning, and integrity, have brought their minds to bear upon the investigation of divine truth,—and especially when, by the collision of men of this stamp, the sifting analytic process of controversial discussions has been brought to bear upon the subjects examined,—materials are provided, which, by men who have not themselves been involved in the controversies, may be turned to the best account, in forming an accurate estimate, first, of the truth, and then, secondly and separately, of the importance, of the points involved. Men are bound to improve to the uttermost all their opportunities of acquiring the most clear, accurate, and exact knowledge of all the truths revealed in the sacred Scriptures; and some men, in seeking to discharge this duty, have been honoured by the Head of the church to contribute largely to diffuse among their fellow-men more correct, definite, and comprehensive views of Christian doctrine than had prevailed before, and to show that these views were indeed sanctioned by the word of God.

The men who have been most highly honoured in this important department of work, were Augustine in the fifth century,— the Reformers of the sixteenth century, and especially Calvin, the greatest of them all,—and lastly, the great Calvinistic systematic divines of the seventeenth century. The works of this last class of writers—such men as Francis Turretine, John Henry Heidegger, Herman

Witsius, and Peter Van Mastricht—are based wholly upon the theology of the Reformation; but they carry it out to its completion, and may be said to form the crown and the cope-stone of theological science, viewed as an accurate, comprehensive, and systematic exposition and defence of the doctrines revealed in the word of God. We believe that these men have given an exposition of the doctrines which are made known to us in the sacred Scriptures, and which all men are bound to understand and believe, because God has revealed them, such as in point of clearness and fulness, accuracy and comprehensiveness, was never before equalled, and has never since been surpassed. In the writings of these men, and of others of the same class and period, we find that almost every discussion raised for the last century and a half about the substance of theology—that is, about the doctrines actually taught in Scripture concerning all matters of universal and permanent importance, concerning God and man, Christ and the way of salvation, the church and the sacraments—is dealt with and disposed of,—is practically exhausted and conclusively determined. But it does not by any means follow from this, that the precise and definite statements, on doctrinal subjects, which the writings of these men present—although true in themselves and warranted by Scripture, as in general we believe them to be—should be embodied in symbolical books, and be thereby made terms of communion with a view to ordination to the ministry, and grounds of separation among churches. The duty of a church in settling her symbols, or arranging her terms of communion, is to be regulated by different principles from those which determine the duty of individuals, who are simply bound to acquire and to profess as much of accurate and distinct knowledge of truth as they can attain to, on all matters, whether important or not. When a church is arranging her terms of communion, other considerations, in addition to that of the mere truth of the statements, must be brought to bear upon the question, of what it is right, necessary, and expedient to do, or of what amount of unity in matters of opinion ought to be required. The principles applicable to this branch of the church's duty have never been subjected to a thorough discussion by competent parties, though they are very important in their bearings; and the right application of them is attended with great difficulty. Calvin would probably have made a difficulty about adopting precise and definite deliverances on some points, concerning the truth of which the great Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth century had no hesitation. But it will probably be admitted that he was qualified for the office of a minister in a Calvinistic church, even in this advanced nineteenth century.

The great general objects to be aimed at in this matter, though the application is,

of course, the difficulty, are embodied in the famous maxim, which Witsius adopted as his favourite motto—*u In necessariis unitas, in non necessariis libertas, in omnibus caritas.*”

# Calvinism and Arminianism

It has often been alleged that Calvinists are very pugnacious,— ever ready to fight in defence of their peculiar opinions. But a survey of the theological literature of this country for the last half century gives no countenance to this impression. Much more has been published in defence of Arminianism than of Calvinism. Calvinists have scarcely shown the zeal and activity that might have been reasonably expected of them, either in repelling attacks that were made upon them, or in improving advantages that were placed within their reach. In the early part of the century, indeed, the “Refutation of Calvinism,” by Bishop Tomline, was thoroughly refuted by Scott, the commentator, in his “Remarks” upon it, and by Dr Edward Williams, in his “Defence of Modern Calvinism.” But since that time, Copleston, Whately, Stanley Faber, and Richard Watson—men of deservedly high reputation—have all written against Calvinism, and some of them very elaborately, while no answer to any of them has been produced by its defenders. Whately and Richard Watson—the first from his sagacity and candour, exercised both upon matters of abstract reasoning and of philological investigation, and the second from the general soundness of his views upon original sin and regeneration, so different from the Pelagianism of the school of Whitby and Tomline—have made concessions, and thereby have afforded advantages, to Calvinists, of which they have hitherto failed, so far as we have noticed, to make any public use. The concessions of Watson are nothing but what every one who holds scriptural views of the moral state of human nature, and of the work of the Holy Spirit in changing it, must make; and such accordingly as have been made by all the more evangelical and anti-Pelagian Arminians from Arminius downwards. But his attack upon Calvinism—forming the concluding portion of the second part of his “Theological Institutes,” and published also in a small volume separately, as well as in the collected edition of



his works—is, both from its great ability and from the large amount of scriptural anti-Pelagian truth which it embodies, deserving of special attention. It has been thirty years before the world, and it has not, so far as we know, been answered.

Dr Whately, Archbishop of Dublin, in his *Essay upon Election*,—the third in the volume entitled “*Essays on some of the Difficulties in the Writings of the Apostle Paul*,”—has made some important concessions to Calvinists, both in regard to matters of abstract reasoning and philological exposition, which are eminently creditable to his sagacity and candour, but which they do not seem as yet to have turned to much account. There is really more of interest, and, in a sense, of something like novelty, in these concessions of Dr Whately, than in almost anything that has been produced upon the subject of this great controversy in the present day. There is indeed nothing like novelty in the statements themselves to which we now refer. They express views which have been always laid down and insisted on by the defenders of Calvinism. The importance and the novelty are to be found only in the circumstance of their being brought forward by one who is not a Calvinist. Dr Whately, in the essay referred to, has admitted, in substance, that the arguments commonly adduced against the Calvinistic doctrine of election, derived from the moral attributes of God, apply as much to actual results occurring under God’s providential government,—in other words, apply equally to the facts of the introduction and permanent existence of moral evil; and that the term election, as used in Scripture, relates, in most instances, to “an arbitrary, irrespective, unconditional decree.” These are positions which have been always asserted, and have been often conclusively proved, by Calvinists; but they have not usually been admitted by their opponents. And it may seem, at first sight, difficult to understand how any one could admit them, and yet continue to reject the doctrines of Calvinism.

We once had occasion to refer to these positions of Dr Whately; and, regarding him as an Arminian, we ventured to apply that designation to him, and to represent these positions as the concessions of an opponent. Dr Whately, it seems, does not believe or admit that he is an Arminian, and took offence at being so designated. In the last edition of the volume above referred to, he adverts to this matter in the following terms:—

“So widely spread are these two schemes of interpretation, that I have known a reviewer, very recently, allude to a certain author as ‘an Arminian,’ though he had written and published his dissent from the Arminian theory, and his reasons

for it. The reviewer, on having this blunder pointed out, apologized by saying that he had merely concluded him to be an Arminian, because he was not Calvinist, and he had supposed that every one must be either the one or the other! It is remarkable that, by a converse error, the very same author had been, some years before, denounced as Calvinistic, on the ground that he was not Arminian.” Dr Whately has acted from misinformation or misapprehension in saying that the reviewer to whom he refers apologized for the blunder of representing him as an Arminian. The reviewer has never seen that there was any blunder in the matter, and is prepared to assert and to prove, that, according to the ordinary acknowledged rules applicable to such questions, Dr Whately may be fairly called an Arminian, whether he perceives and admits that he is so or not; and that it is absurd to pretend, as he does, to be neither a Calvinist nor an Arminian.

There is no doubt a sense in which on this, as well as on most of the leading questions in Christian theology, there is a threefold course open to men. They may adopt Socinian as well as Arminian or Calvinistic views on the subject of election, just as on other great doctrines of the Christian system; but Socinianism upon this point is not much brought forward now-a-days, and was therefore scarcely worth adverting to in an incidental and popular allusion to existing differences. Arminians and Socinians oppose, with equal strenuousness, and upon substantially the same grounds, the whole doctrines of Calvinists upon this subject. They agree with each other in all the main conclusions they hold in regard to foreordination and election; so that all parties may really be ranked under the two heads of Calvinists and antiCalvinists. The main difference here between the Arminians and the Socinians is, that the former admit, while the latter deny, the divine foreknowledge of future events. This is not a difference bearing directly upon what is actually maintained under the head of predestination; though it enters into, and has been largely discussed in connection with, the arguments in support of the one and the other side of that question. Indeed, some of the bolder and more candid of the old Socinians acknowledge, that they denied the doctrine of divine foreknowledge, chiefly because they were unable to see how, if this were admitted, they could refuse to concede the Calvinistic doctrine of foreordination; while, at the same time, some of the bolder and more candid of the old Arminians have made it manifest, that they would gladly have rejected the doctrine of the divine foreknowledge, if they could have devised any plausible evasion of the scriptural evidence in support of it. The admission or denial of the divine foreknowledge—though in itself a difference of very great importance—thus affects rather the mode of conducting

the argument, so far as foreordination is concerned, than the actual positions maintained by the opposite parties; though it has often been brought into some of the more popular but less accurate forms of stating the point in dispute. Arminians and Socinians concur in denying all the leading positions held by Calvinists on the subject of the divine decrees or purposes,—the foreordination of all events,—and the absolute election of some men to eternal life; and, practically, the great question is,—Is the Calvinistic affirmation or the antiCalvinistic negation of these things true? This being so, it is not strictly correct to say, that the only antagonistic alternative to the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination is the Arminian one; because the fundamental Calvinistic position is denied equally by Arminians and Socinians; and the real question in dispute may be, and should be, stated in such a way as to omit any reference to the point of difference between the Arminians and the Socinians,—viz. the divine foreknowledge,—and to apply equally and alike to both sections of antiCalvinists.

But while on this ground it must be admitted, that the antagonistic position to the Calvinistic doctrine is somewhat wider and more comprehensive than the Arminian one, as commonly stated by Arminians themselves; yet the Socinian denial of the divine foreknowledge is now so little brought under our notice, that there was really no call to take it into account in an incidental reference to the subject;—and there is no material inaccuracy in Calvinism and Arminianism being spoken of as the only really antagonistic positions.

It is not upon the ground which has now been adverted to, that Dr Whately objects to being called an Arminian, and tries to throw ridicule upon the idea that a man must be either an Arminian or a Calvinist. He is not a Socinian on this point; for he admits the divine foreknowledge of all events. He denies that he is an Arminian,—he denies that he is a Calvinist; and he denies that a man, though holding the divine foreknowledge of all events, and therefore not a Socinian, must be either a Calvinist or an Arminian on the subject of foreordination. He thus plainly gives us to understand that he holds a doctrine on this subject which is materially and substantially different both from Calvinism and Arminianism, —though he has not suggested any name by which to designate it. Now we take the liberty of dissenting from all this,; and we do not hesitate to affirm that Dr Whately is an Arminian: and further, that every man who has formed an intelligent and definite opinion upon this important controversy, and who repudiates the Socinian denial of the divine foreknowledge, must be either an Arminian or a Calvinist,—or rather must be an Arminian, if he refuses to admit

the truth of Calvinism.

It may seem somewhat ungracious to refuse Dr Whately's own statement about his views, and to continue to maintain that he is an Arminian, when he himself repudiates the name. Most certainly nothing -ungracious is intended; the somewhat uncourteous form of the statement is the result of what was purely accidental; and there are some important considerations, bearing upon the interests of truth, which seem to render it expedient that the ground taken should be maintained. The allegation that the Archbishop is an Arminian was introduced in the most incidental way, and evidently under the influence of a feeling that this was a position of notorious and undeniable certainty,—a position which no one could dispute, and of which no one would complain. We are neither convinced nor frightened by the somewhat angry allusion made to this matter in the note above quoted from him; and we think it may be fitted to throw light upon an important subject, not well understood, if we attempt to establish the truth of the allegation. We have, of course, no doubt of the integrity and sincerity of Dr Whately in abjuring the name of an Arminian. We differ from him in opinion as to what is or is not Arminianism, and as to what are the grounds and circumstances which warrant the application of this name; and these are matters on which a difference of opinion may be expressed without any want of personal respect being indicated. We think we can prove that Dr Whately's views upon the subject of election are—notwithstanding his important concessions to Calvinism, above referred to—so accordant in substance with those which have been generally known in the history of the church as Arminian, and so different from those indicated by any other recognised ecclesiastical designation, that it is perfectly warrantable to describe them as Arminianism.

We would scarcely have thought of taking the trouble of attempting to prove this, had we not been persuaded that defective and erroneous views on these matters are very prevalent, especially among the clergy of the Church of England; and that there is not a little in the present aspect of theological literature, fitted to show the importance of trying to diffuse accurate and definite views of the true status quaestionis in regard to the topics involved in our controversy with the Arminians.

Dr Whately is not the only eminent writer of the present day who has advocated Arminianism, without being aware of this, and even while repudiating it. The late Mr Stanley Faber—who has rendered important services in several departments of ecclesiastical literature, and who was greatly superior to Dr

Whately in theological erudition, though much inferior to him in sagacity and penetration of intellect—published an elaborate work “On the Primitive Doctrine of Election,” the second edition of which appeared in 1842. In this work he expounds three different theories on the subject of Election—viz. Calvinism, Arminianism, and what he calls Nationalism, or the system advocated by Locke and Dr John Taylor. He labours to prove that all these three theories are erroneous,—opposed equally to the testimony of Scripture, primitive antiquity, and the symbolical books of the Church of England. He then brings forward a fourth theory, different from all these—one which is neither Calvinism, nor Arminianism, nor Nationalism. This he calls Ecclesiastical Individualism,—meaning thereby an election of individuals to the privileges of the visible church—to the enjoyment of the means of grace. This fourth theory—as distinguished from and opposed to the other three—he labours to establish as true, by an application of the three standards just mentioned. While Calvinism, Arminianism, and Nationalism, are all unfounded and erroneous, Arminianism is, in Faber’s judgment, the farthest removed from the truth; or, as he expresses it, —“Of the three systems, Arminianism has the most widely departed from aboriginal Christian antiquity” (including Scripture and the early fathers), “for, in truth, it has altogether forsaken it.” Now, we are firmly persuaded, and think we can prove, that both the Nationalism which he rejects, and the Individualism which he upholds, are just in substance the very Arminianism which he denounces and abjures; that his Arminianism, Nationalism, and Ecclesiastical Individualism, are really just one and the same system or doctrine, exhibited under slightly different aspects, and constituting the one only really antagonistic theory to Calvinism. Faber, we think, has utterly failed to distinguish between the essentials and the accidentals of the different systems which he has investigated. He has not penetrated beneath the surface. He has been entirely carried away by slight and superficial differences, while he has wholly failed to perceive intrinsic and substantial resemblances. The consequence is, that his “Primitive Doctrine of Election”— though containing much interesting matter, which admits of being usefully applied—is practically a mass of confusion; and can produce only error and misapprehension in the minds of those who are unacquainted with some of the more thorough and searching expositions of these important and difficult subjects.

If there be any truth in these statements,—if there be any fair ground for believing that Whately and Faber, the former most favourably representing the ability, and the latter the erudition of the Episcopal Church of this country, are really Arminians, though they are not aware of it,—if these men are truly in

substance teaching Arminianism, while they sincerely denounce and abjure it,—there must be some great misapprehension or confusion prevalent, which distorts and perverts men's views upon these subjects; and if any such state of things exist, it must be important, with a view to the interests of truth, that it should be pointed out and exposed.

The statements of Whately and Faber—to which we have referred—seem to be received as true, without any doubt or misgiving, in the great ecclesiastical denomination to which these authors belong; and we are not by any means confident that the generality of Scotch Calvinists now-a-days have sufficient knowledge of doctrinal theology to be able to detect the fallacy. The discussion of this subject extends greatly beyond what is personal to individuals, as affecting the accuracy of their statements. It really involves the whole question of the right settlement of the true status quaestionis in the great controversy about predestination. The settlement of the status quaestionis is always a point of fundamental importance in great doctrinal controversies. It is especially important in this one, where—unless the state of the question is clearly settled and carefully and constantly attended to—men are very apt to fight at random, to be dealing blows in the dark, and running some risk of wounding their friends. A right estimate of the accuracy of the statements of Whately and Faber, condemning and repudiating Arminianism, must be based upon an investigation of these two questions—1st, What is the real essential point of difference between Calvinists and Arminians on the subject of election? and 2d, Is there any real, definite, and important subject of controversial discussion involved in the exposition of election, and not disposed of by the determination of the fundamental question controverted between Calvinists and Arminians? It is only by settling and applying the first of these questions, that we can satisfactorily determine whether Whately and Faber, and men holding such opinions, may be justly designated as Arminians; and if, by a further application of the results of the same inquiry, we can settle the second of these two questions in the negative, we thus establish the wider and more important conclusion, that men who intelligently investigate the subject of election, and form anything like a clear and definite opinion regarding it, must be substantially either Calvinists or Arminians, whether they perceive and admit this or not.

The consideration of these points, however, has a wider bearing than has yet been indicated. It is fitted to bring out some defects of considerable importance in the way in which this great class of theological topics have been usually discussed by divines of the Church of England. Doctrinal and systematic

theology has not ordinarily been studied with much care by the clergy of that church; and the consequence of this has been, not only that crude, confused, and erroneous views upon doctrinal subjects abound in the writings of many of them, but also that the warrantableness and desirableness of vague and indefinite views upon these matters have found in them open and avowed defenders. The clergy of the Church of England at the period of the Reformation were generally, like most of the other Reformers, Calvinists, and continued to be so during the whole reign of Queen Elizabeth and the greater part of that of James VI. Since about the earlier part of the reign of Charles I., the great majority of them have ceased to be Calvinists, though many of these have refused, like Dr Whately, to be called Arminians, and some—though not Calvinists—have even declined to be called antiCalvinists. These changes in the actual opinions of the clergy of the Church of England have taken place, while their symbolical books have continued unaltered upon doctrinal questions. Since the great body of the clergy have thus been at one time Calvinistic, and at another Arminian; and since probably at all times, at least for two centuries and a half, there have been both Calvinists and Arminians among them, this has tended in many ways to produce great laxity and confusion of doctrinal views, and has not only tended to produce this laxity and confusion in point of fact, but to lead men to justify its prevalence as a sound and wholesome condition of things. Calvinists and Arminians had equally to show that their views were accordant with the Thirty-nine Articles; and this almost unavoidably led, not only to a straining and tampering with the language of the Articles, but even with the full expression of their own personal convictions. Some have contended that the Articles admitted only of a Calvinistic, others only of an Arminian sense; while others have thought it more accordant with the facts of the case, and with the honour of their church, to maintain that they do not decide in favour of either doctrine, but may be honestly adopted by both parties. The position that the Articles are neither Calvinistic nor Arminian, distinctively, does not differ very materially from the one that they are both. Some have preferred to put it in this latter form; and this again has just tended the more to deepen the confusion which has been introduced into the discussion.

We may give a specimen or two of what is a common mode of speaking among the divines of the Church of England upon this subject. Bishop Tomline concludes his “Refutation of Calvinism” in these words:—“Our church is not Lutheran, it is not Calvinistic, it is not Arminian; it is scriptural, it is built upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone.” Dr Magee, the late Archbishop of Dublin,—whom we regard as a far superior man to

Tomline,—puts the point under consideration in this way, in one of his charges:

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“If any proof were wanting that our Articles are, as they profess to be, of a comprehensive character, it would be found in this, that, of the contending parties into which our church is unhappily divided, each claims them as its own. By those who hold the creed of Arminius, they are pronounced to be Arminian; and by those who hold the creed of Calvin, they are pronounced to be Calvinistic. The natural inference of the impartial reasoner would be, that they are neither, whilst they contain within them what may be traced to some of the leading principles of doth. And this is the truth. They are not enslaved to the dogmas of any party in religion. They are not Arminian. They are not Calvinistic. They are scriptural. They are Christian. In a note on this passage, he asserts “that the doctrines of the Church of England are not the doctrines of Calvinism, and that the informed and intelligent clergy of that church are not the followers of Arminius.” This has been a favourite mode of statement with very many Episcopalian divines, whom we believe to have been substantially Arminians, perhaps without their being aware of it. Some Episcopalians—whose doctrinal views were sounder—have, as we have hinted, been disposed rather to take the ground, that, without contradicting either Scripture or the English Articles, men might be both Calvinists and Arminians, or partly the one and partly the other. Statements to this effect, or something like it, have been produced from “Cecil’s Remains” and from “Simeon’s Memoir;” and they have been employed by Professor Park of Andover, to countenance his ingenious attempt to involve important doctrinal differences in inextricable confusion, by distinguishing between the theology of intellect and the theology of feeling.

There is, indeed, a distinction to be made between men’s own personal convictions and their views as to the meaning and import of a symbolical document of public authority. It is quite possible to produce a deliverance upon the subject of election, which is neither Calvinistic nor Arminian,—that is, which is so general, vague, and indefinite, as to contain no decision of any of the points really controverted between the opposite parties. A church may think such an indefinite and indecisive statement the most suitable for a symbolical book,—may deliberately intend to include both parties within her pale,—and may so regulate her deliverances as not to make a definite opinion on the one side or the other a term of communion, or what is virtually the same thing, a ground of separation. Very many of the clergy of the Church of England contend that this is realized in the Thirty-nine Articles. And it is quite possible that they may hold



this to be an actual feature of these Articles, and approve of it as a right state of things for a church to exhibit in her symbols; while yet they themselves, in their own personal convictions, may have decided the question in favour of the one side or the other. Tomline and Magee were Arminians as much as Whately and Faber, while maintaining that the Articles are neither Arminian nor Calvinistic; and they might have taken this view of the Articles although they themselves had been Calvinists. But although the Episcopalian clergy may consistently maintain that the Articles are neither Calvinistic nor Arminian,—even while they themselves, in their own personal convictions, may have decidedly adopted the one view or the other,—yet there can be no doubt that the peculiar character of the Articles, and the kind of discussion which this has suggested or required, has tended largely to keep many Episcopalian divines in a state of great uncertainty and confusion in regard to this whole class of subjects. There being some plausible grounds for believing that subscription to the Articles did not require them to have their minds made up on the one side or on the other, very many have not thought themselves called upon to give the time and research necessary for forming a judgment on these difficult and arduous topics; and have preferred to exercise their talents rather in the way of trying to show that it was not only unnecessary, but very difficult, and highly inexpedient and dangerous, to be forming a decided opinion, and to be giving an explicit deliverance, upon such matters. The title of the “Bampton Lectures” for 1855, by the Rev. John E. Bode, — and they form a very respectable work,—is this, “The Absence of Precision in the Formularies of the Church of England scriptural and suitable to a state of Probation.” And this “absence of precision,” which they regard as attaching to the public formularies, they too often extend to their own private personal convictions. This influence of the one upon the other has, no doubt, operated powerfully on the general state of thought and sentiment in the Church of England. But it ought not to have done so. There may be very good grounds why precise deliverances upon some doctrinal controversies should not be embodied in symbolical books; while yet it may be the duty of ministers to have formed for themselves a decided opinion regarding them. The reasons that satisfy many of the warrantableness and expediency of the “absence of precision in the public formularies,” do not necessarily sanction the same quality as attaching to men’s own personal convictions; though we fear that some notion of this sort is very prevalent among the clergy of the Church of England. Many have preserved and cherished the “absence of precision” in their own personal convictions; and in defending the propriety and expediency of this, they have introduced a vast deal of vagueness and confusion into the whole discussion.

This course has been adopted, and this tendency has been exhibited, chiefly by Arminians; and Arminianism certainly has got the benefit of it. Indeed, ignorance and confusion upon this subject always tend to the benefit of Arminianism. Truth is promoted by a thorough knowledge and a careful study of the subject in hand, and by the clear and definite conceptions which are the results of intelligence and investigation; while any shortcoming or deficiency in these respects tends to promote the prevalence of error. This holds true generally of all the ordinary subjects of speculative inquiry. It holds true pre-eminently of the leading points involved in the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians. There are vague, general, and indefinite positions about the divine purposes and plans, and about the divine providence and agency, in which both Calvinists and Arminians concur. Calvinism may be said to involve, and to be based upon, a conversion of these vague and indefinite positions into precise and definite doctrines. These doctrines the Arminians refuse to admit,—alleging that no sufficient evidence can be produced in support of them, and that formidable objections can be adduced against them. They refuse to advance to the more profound and definite positions, which may be said to constitute the distinctive features of Calvinism; and they insist that men should be satisfied with those more superficial and indefinite views in which they and their opponents agree. We are not professing to give this as the formal status quaestionis in the controversy. But this is an account of the difference which is correct, so far as it goes; and it illustrates our present position, that imperfect and confused views upon these subjects tend to injure truth and to advance error,—to damage Calvinism and to favour Arminianism; and this, too, even when men's views may be so pervaded by ignorance and confusion, that they do not themselves perceive this tendency, or do not really mean to advance the object to which it leads.

It is one of the leading features or results of this vagueness and confusion of thought upon these subjects, that there has commonly been a great tendency to multiply and exaggerate the differences of opinion which have been expressed regarding them; as if to convey the impression that there was a considerable variety of views, out of which men were very much at liberty to make a choice as they might be disposed. As Arminianism is at the bottom of all this confusion, and as it is promoted chiefly for Arminian objects, it has been common for divines of the Church of England to magnify differences subsisting among Calvinists, and to represent each modification of sentiment that may have been brought out, as constituting a distinct and different doctrine. This process tends to increase the general mass of confusion attaching to the whole subject, and to

excite a special prejudice against Calvinism, as if its supporters were divided among themselves on points of fundamental importance, and had not any uniform and well-settled position to occupy. We may refer to some historical illustrations of this feature of the controversy.

The first person of any consequence who openly taught Arminianism in the Church of England (not then known by that name) was Peter Baro, a Frenchman, who had held the office of Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge for about twenty years. It was his teaching Arminianism, in opposition to the general doctrine of the Reformers, that occasioned the preparation of the famous Lambeth Articles in 1595,—a transaction, the history of which affords conclusive evidence of the general prevalence of Calvinism in the Church of England till the end. of the sixteenth century. In 1596 he had to resign his office in the university because of his doctrinal views; and on that occasion he prepared a short exposition of his case, under the designation of “*Summa Trium de Prædestinatione Sententiarum*,”—the three doctrines being, 1st, Supralapsarian Calvinism; 2d, Sublapsarian Calvinism; and 3d, his own Arminianism, which he describes as the doctrine held by the Fathers who preceded Augustine, and by Melancthon and a few other Protestant divines; just as if the first and second differed from each other as much as they both differed from the third.

Arminius himself made large use of the same unfair mode of representation. In his *Arnica Collatio* with Junius, his predecessor in the chair of theology at Leyden, he brings forward three leading doctrines upon the subject of predestination as prevailing among Protestants, and attempts to refute them in order to make way for his own. The three doctrines are—Supralapsarianism, which he ascribes, unwarrantably, to Calvin; Sublapsarianism, which he ascribes to Augustine; and a theory intermediate between them,—a sort of modification of Supralapsarianism,—which he ascribes to Thomas Aquinas. In his famous “*Declaratio Sententise*,” published in 1608, the year before his death, he brings forward again the same three opinions as contrasting with his own, though without associating them historically with the names of individuals. He puts first and most prominently the highest Supralapsarianism, and dwells upon it at the greatest length. He admits, indeed, at last, that there is not any very material difference among these three doctrines,—all held by Calvinists. But he has taken care, in the first place, to have the controversial advantage of having conveyed the impression, that there is great diversity of sentiment among his opponents; and of having held up first and most prominently, in his account of their opinions, the highest Supralapsarianism,—the view against which it is easy to

excite the strongest prejudice, while it has really been professed by comparatively few Calvinists. It is worth while to mention, as a curious specimen of elaborate controversial unfairness, that of the whole space occupied by the declaration of his judgment concerning predestination, Arminius devotes four-fifths to an exposure of high Supralapsarianism, leaving only the last fifth for the statement of the other two forms of Calvinism, and of his own anti-Calvinistic doctrine.

But we mean to confine ourselves for the present to our own country. The first elaborate Arminian work produced in England, after Laud's patronage had done something to encourage opposition to Calvinism, and after Bishop Montague had fairly broken the ice, was "An Appeal to the Gospel for the true doctrine of Divine predestination, concorded with the orthodox doctrine of God's free grace and man's free will, by John Plaifere, B.D." He held a living in the Church of England for a period very nearly corresponding to the reign of James VI. in that country, and is not to be confounded with Thomas Playfere, a Calvinist, who succeeded to the Margaret divinity professorship in Cambridge, when Baro lost it in consequence of his Arminianism. John Plaifere begins his "Appeal" with a full and elaborate statement of five different doctrines upon the subject of predestination. The first, of course, is Supralapsarian Calvinism; the second is Sublapsarian Calvinism; the third is a sort of intermediate system between Calvinism and Arminianism, propounded by Bishop Overall, and very similar to what was afterwards called Baxterianism; the fourth he represents as the doctrine held by Melancthon, by the Lutherans, and the Arminians; and the fifth and last is the opinion of Arminius himself, of the Jesuit defenders of *scientia media*, and, as he alleges, of all the Fathers before Augustine. The first four he regards as erroneous, though in different degrees, while he admits that in all of them there are "some parts and pieces of truth, but obscure and mingled with defects." The fifth he adopts as his own, and defends it as true; though he has failed to point out any intelligible difference between this and the fourth. The substantial identity indeed of the fourth and fifth opinions is so obvious, that it is admitted, and the representation given is attempted to be accounted for, in the Preface to the republication of this work, in a "Collection of tracts concerning predestination and providence," at Cambridge in 1719.

The example set by Plaifere, in this the earliest formal and elaborate defence of Arminianism in the Church of England, has been largely followed down to the present day, especially in the point of multiplying and magnifying differences, in order to excite a prejudice against Calvinism, and to shelter Arminianism in the

confusion and obscurity. Bishop Burnet, in his Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, has manifested a good deal of candour and fairness. He was an Arminian, or, as he himself expresses it in his preface,—“I follow the doctrine of the Greek Church, from which St Austin departed and formed a new system.” But he has distinctly admitted, in expounding the 17th Article, that “it is not to be denied that the Article seems to be framed according to St Austin’s doctrine that “it is very probable that those who penned it meant that the decree was absolute;” and that “the Calvinists have less occasion for scruple” in subscribing than the Arminians, “since the Article does seem more plainly to favour them.” But what alone we have at present to do with is, that he follows the common Arminian course, by giving a distinct and separate head to Supralapsarianism. According to Burnet, there are four leading opinions on the subject of God’s decrees or purposes, viz.:—1st, Supralapsarianism; 2d, Sublapsarianism; 3d, “That of those who are called Remonstrants, Arminians, or Universalists;” and 4th, “That of the Socinians, who deny the certain prescience of future contingencies.”

Without further multiplying proofs of this, we come down to the present day. We have already stated Faber’s classification of the leading doctrines upon this subject under the four heads of Calvinism, Arminianism, Nationalism, and Ecclesiastical Individualism,—the first three being, in his judgment, false, and Arminianism the worst,—while we maintain that three of them, including the fourth, which he defends as true, are just Arminianism, and nothing else.

There is a book which seems to be in great repute in England in the present day, which also illustrates the point we are now explaining. It is, “An Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, historical and doctrinal,” by E. Harold Browne, B.D., Norrisian Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. The third edition of it was published in 1856, and a fourth has already appeared, though it is a bulky octavo of about 900 pages. We have done little more than dip into it; but we are satisfied that it is a highly respectable and useful book, embodying a large amount of information, and exhibiting a fair and candid spirit, though certainly not free from errors and inaccuracies. The Norrisian Professor begins his exposition of the 17th Article by an enumeration and brief statement of the leading theories which have been held upon the subject of predestination. According to this author, they are no fewer than six, viz. 1. Calvinism; 2. Arminianism; 3. Nationalism; 4. Ecclesiastical Election. Thus far he has fully followed Faber,—ecclesiastical election being just the election of individuals to outward privileges,—the elect being just virtually the baptized, and the election

the visible church. The fifth theory he mentions is a somewhat unintelligible piece of complication, to which no designation is given; and the sixth is Baxterianism. This seems to be now, as indeed it has always been in substance, a favourite mode of representing the matter among the divines of the Church of England. Professor Browne's own opinions are not very explicitly brought out. He seems to think that the Articles were expressed intentionally in such indefinite and general phraseology as to take in the adherents of several of the different theories. His own views seem to be very much the same as Faber's, while, at the same time, he concedes that there are some scriptural statements which do not easily admit of any other sense than a Calvinistic one.

Mozley's "Treatise on the Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination," is one of a different class, and of a higher order, both in point of ability and general orthodoxy; while at the same time it affords another specimen of that predilection for the "absence of precision" on doctrinal questions, which has so generally characterized the clergy of the Church of England. It is a work of very superior learning and ability, and is really a valuable contribution to our theological literature. This treatise is substantially ( an exposition and defence of the Augustinian or Calvinistic view of predestination; while at the same time the author seems determined, for some reason or other, to stop short of committing himself to a full and open assertion of the doctrine which he seems to believe. He appears to be always on the point of coming out with an explicit and unqualified assertion of Calvinism, when he finds some excuse for stopping short, and leaving the subject still involved to some extent in obscurity and confusion. It would almost seem as if Mr Mozley had some secret and inexplicable reason for refusing to come out with an explicit profession of the Calvinism to which all his convictions tend to lead him; and the excuses or pretences he assigns for stopping short on the verge of a full and open proclamation of this system, are of a very peculiar and unreasonable kind. We refer to this very superior and remarkable book as another specimen, though in a somewhat peculiar form, of the tendency of Church of England divines to exhibit and to defend "the absence of precision," in discussing the points controverted between the Calvinists and the Arminians; and thereby to involve the statement and exposition of this important subject in obscurity and confusion,—qualities which always tend powerfully to promote the prevalence of Arminian error.

We have brought forward these historical notices to illustrate the magnitude and the prevalence of what we believe to involve a serious injury to doctrinal truth;

and to show the importance of attempting to settle, as precisely and definitely as possible, the true state of the question—the real meaning and import of the main points controverted on the subject of predestination. This is important, not so much in reference to the topic which has more immediately suggested to us this investigation of it,—viz. determining the accuracy of the application of certain historical designations,—but chiefly in reference to the far higher object of forming accurate and definite conceptions on the whole subject, in so far as we have materials for doing so. We believe that it can be proved, that men who admit the divine foreknowledge of all events, and who have formed a distinct and definite opinion on the subject of predestination, must be either Calvinistic or Arminian, whether they perceive and admit this or not; and that Whately and Faber may be fairly designated as Arminians, notwithstanding their honest repudiation of the name, inasmuch as they accord with the views commonly known as Arminian in every point of real importance, and differ from them only, if at all, on topics that are really insignificant. The determination of these questions must, from the nature of the case, depend upon the true status quaestionis between the contending parties; and there is no great difficulty in settling this,—although it is true that men, notwithstanding its paramount importance, often allow their minds to remain in a condition of great uncertainty and confusion regarding it.

In proceeding to consider this subject, we would begin with observing, that it tends to introduce obscurity and confusion into the whole matter, that men in surveying it are apt, especially in modern times, to confine their attention too much to election,—that is, to the decrees or purposes and agency of God with reference to the eternal destinies of men, without taking in predestination or foreordination in general,—that is, the decrees or purposes and agency of God with reference to the whole government of the world and all the actions of His creatures. The fundamental principle of Calvinism, as stated in the “Westminster Confession,” is, “that God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.” If this great doctrine be true, and be validly established by its appropriate evidence, it includes and comprehends,—it carries with it and disposes of,—all questions about the purposes of God with respect to the eternal destinies of the human race. If it be true that God hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, He must have predetermined the whole history and the ultimate fate of all His intelligent creatures. If it be true that God hath eternally and unchangeably ordained whatsoever cometh to pass, it must also be true,—as being comprehended in this position,—that, as the “Confession” goes on to say, “By

the decree of God for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.” It serves some useful and important purposes bearing upon the apprehension and establishment of sound doctrine, to have regard to the import and evidence of the fundamental and comprehensive doctrine of predestination, or of God’s decrees in general; instead of confining our attention to the more limited topics usually understood to be indicated by the words election and reprobation. The decrees of God are usually understood as describing in general the purposes or resolutions which He has formed, and in accordance with which He regulates His own procedure, or does whatever He does in the government of the world. That God has, and must have, formed purposes or resolutions for the regulation of His own procedure in creating and governing the world, must be admitted by all who regard Him as possessed of intelligence and wisdom; and therefore the disputes which have been raised upon this subject appear to respect, not so much the existence of the divine decrees, but rather the foundation on which they rest, the properties which attach to them, and the objects which they embrace. The main questions which have been usually discussed among divines concerning the divine decrees in general, or predestination in its widest sense, have been these,—1. Are the divine decrees or purposes in regard to all the events which constitute the history of the world conditional or not? and 2. Are they unchangeable or not? Calvinists hold that God’s decrees or purposes in regard to everything that was to come to pass are unconditional and unchangeable, while Arminians or antiCalvinists deny this, and maintain that they are conditional and changeable. But while this is the form which the general question has commonly assumed in the hands of theologians, the real point in dispute comes practically to this: Has God really formed decrees or purposes, in any proper sense, with respect to the whole government of the world? It seems plain—so at least Calvinists believe—that it is unwarrantable to ascribe to a Being of infinite perfection and absolute supremacy any purposes or resolutions for regulating the administration of the universe, that should be left dependent for their taking effect, or being fully realized, upon the volitions of creatures; and liable to be changed according to the nature and results of these volitions. And this brings us back again to the simple but infinitely important and comprehensive question, Has God eternally and unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass? There is no difficulty in understanding the meaning of this question. The foreordination of every event implies, that God from eternity had resolved that it should come to pass, and had made certain provision for this result. And the real subject of controversy is just this, Has God foreordained, in this the only proper sense of the word, whatsoever comes to pass? All Calvinists say that He has; and



all antiCalvinists say that He has not. Arminians and Socinians equally deny this divine foreordination of all events; while Socinians also deny, but Arminians admit, that God foreknew or foresaw them all. The divine foreordination of all events must either be affirmed or denied,—all who affirm it are Calvinists, and all who deny it are antiCalvinists; and if, while denying foreordination, they admit foreknowledge, then they may be fairly and justly described as Arminians, because this is the designation by which, for nearly two centuries and a half, the actual doctrinal position they occupy upon this fundamental and all-comprehensive subject has been commonly indicated.

Whately and Faber deny the divine foreordination, while they admit the divine foreknowledge, of all events; and therefore, according to the acknowledged rules and the ordinary practice by which this matter is regulated, they may, without any transgression of accuracy, or justice, or courtesy, be designated as Arminians.

But it was not this great doctrine of the foreordination of all events which Whately and Faber discussed, or seem to have had in their view. It comprehends indeed and disposes of the subject they discussed; and it is an act of ignorance or inconsideration, tending to involve the whole matter in confusion, that they did not take it into account. If they had been familiar with the whole subject in this its highest and widest aspect, and if they had seen that the settlement of the question of foreordination, as commonly discussed, disposes of the question of election, they would scarcely have ventured to deny that they were Arminians. But we must see what was their position in regard to the subject which they had under consideration, *viz.* election, or the doctrine of the purposes and procedure of God in regard to the ultimate destinies of the human race. What is Calvinism, and what is Arminianism, on this subject? The Calvinistic doctrine is this, that God from eternity chose or elected some men, certain definite individuals of the human race, to everlasting life,—that He determined certainly and infallibly to bring these persons to salvation by a Redeemer, —that in making this selection of some men, and in resolving to save them, He was not influenced by anything existing in them, or foreseen in them, by which they were distinguished from other men, or by any reason known to or comprehensible by us, but only by His own sovereign good pleasure, by the counsel of His own will,—and that this eternal decree or purpose He certainly and infallibly executes in time in regard to each and every one included under it. This is the Calvinistic doctrine of election; every Calvinist believes this, and every one who believes this is a Calvinist. The meaning of this doctrine, solemn and mysterious as it is, is easily understood;

and men are Calvinists or antiCalvinists according as they affirm or deny it. The grand question is,—Is this election—such a choice of men to eternal life, on the ground of the good pleasure of God—a reality, established by scriptural authority, or is it not? From the nature of the case it is manifest, that everything of real importance hinges upon the reality of such an election as has now been described; and that the controversy, so far as it involves anything vital or fundamental, is exhausted, whenever it is settled,—that is, practically, whenever a man has conclusively made up his mind, either that such an election is or is not revealed in Scripture. All men who are not Calvinists deny the reality of any such election on the part of God; and if, while denying this, they admit that God foresaw from eternity the whole of the actual history of each individual of the human race, then they are Arminians,—and nothing but ignorance will lead them to object to this designation.

The fundamental principles of the Arminian doctrine upon the subject of election—the leading features of the theory which has been always historically associated with that name—may be accurately exhibited in the two following positions, 1st, That God made no decree—formed no purpose—bearing immediately and infallibly upon the final salvation of men, except this general one, that He would save or admit to heaven all men who should in fact believe in Jesus Christ and persevere till death in faith and holiness, and that He would condemn and consign to punishment all who should continue impenitent and unbelieving. And 2d, That if there be any act of God, bearing upon the ultimate salvation of particular men considered individually, which may be called in any sense an election, or decree, or purpose, it can only be founded on, and must be determined by, a foresight of their actual faith and perseverance.

The first of these is the true proper antiCalvinistic position, held equally and alike by Arminians and Socinians; and constituting manifestly the main substance of what must be held by every intelligent man who has not embraced Calvinism. It implies that God did not make an election of particular persons to eternal life, and resolve to bestow upon them faith, holiness, and perseverance, in order to secure the end of this election; but that He merely made choice of certain qualities or features of character, and resolved to treat them according to their proper nature, in whatever individuals they might turn out at last to be found. Having formed this general purpose to save those who might believe and persevere, and to condemn and punish those who might be impenitent and unbelieving, God virtually left it to men themselves to comply or not with the terms or conditions He had prescribed;—having no purpose to exercise, and, of

course, not in fact exercising, any determining influence upon the result in any case, whatever amount of assistance or co-operation He may render in bringing it about. This must be in substance the ground taken by every one intelligently acquainted with the subject, who is not a Calvinist. We could easily prove that this ground was taken by Arminius and his followers, and really formed the main feature of the discussion about the time of the Synod of Dort. The Synod of Dort, in their deliverance upon the controversy raised by Arminians and his followers in opposition to the Calvinism of the Reformers, not only gave an exposition of the positive scriptural truth upon each of the five points, but also subjoined to these a rejection of the errors (*rejectio errorum*) which had been broached by Arminians; and upon the first of the Articles, that on predestination, the very first of the Arminian errors which the Synod rejected and condemned was this, that “the will of God concerning the saving of those who shall believe and persevere in faith and the obedience of faith, is the whole and entire decree of election unto salvation, and that there is nothing else whatever concerning this decree revealed in the word of God”. Arminianism was fundamentally and essentially a rejection of the Calvinism taught by the great body of those whom God raised up and qualified as the instruments of the Reformation. Its leading positions thus came to be a denial of the scriptural warrant for such a decree of election as Calvinists usually advocate, and an assertion that the whole of what is said in Scripture about a decree of election bearing immediately upon the final salvation of men, is exhausted by the doctrine,—which, of course, all admit to be true,—viz. that God has determined to save all who shall believe in Jesus Christ and persevere to the end in faith and holiness, and to consign to punishment all who continue impenitent and unbelieving.

The second position above laid down, states accurately the true place and standing of the subject of the foreknowledge or foresight of faith and perseverance, about which so much is said in the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians. We believe that it is chiefly from want of clear and accurate conceptions of the true logical position and relations of this matter of foreknowledge or foresight, that so many men are Arminians without being aware of it; or rather that so many honestly but ignorantly repudiate Arminianism while they really hold it. The fallacy which leads many astray, upon this point is the notion, that the doctrine that the divine decree of election, or the divine purpose to save certain men, is based or founded only upon the foreknowledge that these men will in fact believe and persevere, is an essential, necessary part of the Arminian system of theology; and affords a precise test for determining, both negatively and positively, whether or not men are Arminians.

This, though a very common notion, and one not unnaturally suggested by some of the aspects which this controversy has assumed, is erroneous. This matter of foreknowledge does not intrinsically and logically occupy so prominent and important a place in the controversy—or at least in that branch of it which concerns the settlement of the state of the question—as is often imagined. Its real place in this department of the controversy is collateral and subordinate; and the practical result of a correct view of its position is, that while the founding of election upon foreknowledge proves that a man is an Arminian, the rejection of this idea is no proof that he is not. The fundamental position of Arminius and his followers was in direct opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine of the absolute election of some men to everlasting life, based only upon the sovereign good pleasure of God. They held that this doctrine is opposed to the testimony of Scripture, and to right views of the divine character and government. But Arminians, while denying that God absolutely chooses some men to life in the exercise of His sovereign good pleasure, admit that He does infallibly foresee everything that comes to pass,—that thus the history and fate of each individual of the human race were from eternity present to His mind, and of course became in some sense the objects of His actings and purposes;—and that, on this ground and in this sense, He might be said to have resolved from eternity to save each individual who is saved. The notion of an election to life originating in and founded upon the foresight of men’s character and conduct, is thus no necessary or fundamental part of the actual position which the Arminians occupy. It is merely a certain mode of expression into which they can, without inconsistency, throw their leading doctrine; and the use of which involves something of an accommodation or approximation to the language of Scripture, and of their Calvinistic opponents. Arminians virtually say to their opponents,—“We wholly deny your doctrine of election to life on the ground of God’s sovereign good pleasure foreordaining and securing this result; and the only sense in which we could, consistently with this denial, admit of anything like an election of individuals to life, is God’s foreseeing and recognising this result as a thing determined in each case by men’s actual character. An election to life in this sense and upon this ground is undoubtedly a reality, a process which actually takes place; and we are quite ready to admit it, especially as it seems to accord with and to explain those scriptural statements about election on which you base your doctrine. In short, if you will insist upon something that may be called an election, at least in a loose and improper sense, we have no objection to allow an election founded on foresight, but we can concede nothing else of that sort.” This is the true state of matters, and it brings out clearly the subordinate and collateral place held by the subject of foreknowledge in the investigation of the

state of the question.

Some Arminians are willing so far to accommodate themselves to the scriptural and Calvinistic usage of language, as to admit that, in the sense now explained, God had from eternity His own . fixed and unchangeable purposes in regard to the admission of men individually into heaven; while others think it more manly and candid to avoid the use of such language, when their fundamental principle requires them so thoroughly to explain it away. All that is implied in the election of any individual to eternal life, in the only sense in which any one not a Calvinist can admit it, is, that God foresees that that individual will in fact believe and persevere; and that on this ground—this being “the cause or condition moving him thereto”—He decrees or purposes to admit that man to heaven, and to give him everlasting life. The result is thus determined by the man himself,—God’s decree (falsely so called) with respect to his salvation being nothing but a mere recognition of him as one who, without His efficacious determining interposition, would certainly, in point of fact, comply with the conditions announced to him. A decree or purpose based solely upon the foreknowledge or foresight of the faith and perseverance of individuals, is of course practically the same thing as the entire want or non-existence of any decree or purpose in regard to them. It determines nothing concerning them, it bestows nothing upon them, it secures nothing to them. It is a mere word or name, the use of which only tends to involve the subject in obscurity and confusion. Whereas, upon Calvinistic principles, God’s electing decree in choosing some men to life is the effectual source or determining cause of the faith and holiness which are ultimately wrought in them, and of the eternal happiness to which they at last attain. God elects certain men to life, not because He foresees that they will repent and believe and persevere in faith and holiness, but for reasons no doubt fully accordant with His wisdom and justice, though wholly unknown to us, and certainly not based upon anything foreseen in them as distinguished from other men; and then further decrees to give to these men, in due time, everything necessary in order to their being admitted to the enjoyment of eternal life, in accordance with the provisions of the scheme which His wisdom has devised for saving sinners.

But we are in danger of travelling beyond the consideration of the state of the question, and trenching upon the proper argument of the case. Our object at present is simply to show, that although the idea of the foresight of men’s faith and perseverance is commonly brought into the ordinary popular mode of stating the difference between Calvinists and Arminians, yet it does not really touch the

substance of the point controverted, so as to be, out and out, a discriminating test of men's true doctrinal position.

It is rather a certain mode of speaking, by which Arminians endeavour to evade a difficulty, and to approximate to scriptural language without admitting scriptural truth. When men say, as many Arminians do, that the divine decree of election is based upon the foresight of faith and perseverance, they are virtually saying that there is no decree of election, in any proper sense of the word; or, what is practically the same thing, that the whole and entire decree of election is God's eternal purpose to save all who shall, in point of fact, believe and persevere. Foreknowledge thus does not really affect the proper status quaestionis,—the real substance of what is maintained on either side, or made matter of actual controversy; though it does enter fundamentally into the argument or proof,—the Arminian admission of divine foreknowledge affording to the Calvinists an argument in favour of foreordination which has never been successfully answered.

It is on such grounds as these that we contend that, while the basing of election upon foreknowledge is a proof that men may be justly described as Arminians, the declining or refusing to embrace this idea is no proof that they may not be justly so designated. We believe that erroneous and defective conceptions, on this point, are one main cause why men are not aware that they are Arminians, and unwarrantably repudiate the designation. There are various reasons that lead men, who are really Arminians, to reject this idea of an election founded on foresight. Some think it more manly and straightforward to declare openly that there is no such thing as an election to eternal life, instead of grasping at what has the appearance of being an election, but is not. Others rather wish to leave divine foreknowledge altogether in the background, and to say as little about it as they can, either in the statement or in the argument of the question. Many, while admitting foreknowledge and denying foreordination, see the difficulties and inconveniences of attempting to connect them in this way. The attempt to found an election on foreknowledge brings out, in a peculiarly palpable light, the fundamental objection of Calvinists against the system of their opponents,—viz. that it leaves everything bearing upon the character and eternal condition of all the individuals of our race undetermined, and indeed uninfluenced, by their Creator and Governor, and virtually beyond His control; and degrades Him to the condition of a mere spectator, who only sees what is going on among His creatures, or foresees what is to take place, without himself determining it, or exerting any real efficiency in the production of it,—and who must be guided by

what He thus sees or foresees in all His dealings with. them. All this, indeed, can be proved to be involved necessarily in the denial of Calvinism; but it comes out very plainly and palpably when Arminianism is put in the form of maintaining an election founded on foresight, and on this account many Arminians shrink from that mode of representation. For these reasons, many who zealously maintain what is really the essential characteristic feature of Arminianism, dislike and avoid the basing of election upon foresight; and as this mode of putting the matter is popularly regarded as the distinctive mark of Arminianism, those who avoid and reject it are very apt, when their acquaintance with these subjects is imperfect and superficial, to regard themselves as warranted in repudiating the designation of Arminians.

Faber has made it quite manifest that it was chiefly by some confusion upon this point that he was induced to abjure Arminianism, while he really believed it; and we suspect that this has operated as an element, though perhaps not the principal one, in producing the same result in the case of Archbishop Whately. Faber has developed his views upon these points much more fully than Whately, and it may tend to throw light upon the matter under consideration, if we advert to his mode of representing it. Faber entitles his work, "An Historical Inquiry into the Ideality and Causation of Scriptural Election." By the ideality of election, he means the investigation of the question as to what it is to which men are said to be elected or chosen; and by the causation of election he means the investigation of the question as to what is the cause, or ground, or reason of God's act in so electing or choosing them. It is plain enough, from the nature of the case, that there can be only two distinct questions of fundamental importance in regard to the idea of election,—viz. 1st, Did God choose men only to what is external and temporal? or 2d, Did He also choose them to what is internal and everlasting? In other words, Did God choose men only to external privileges and opportunities, not determining by any act of His, but leaving it to be determined by themselves, in the exercise of their own free will, whether or not they shall improve these means of grace, and consequently whether or not they shall be saved? or, Did He choose them also to faith, and holiness, and heaven, to grace and glory, resolving absolutely to save those whom He had chosen, and to give them everything needful to prepare them for salvation, in accordance with the provisions of the scheme which He had devised and proclaimed? The cause of election must, in like manner, be resolved either into something in men, existing or foreseen, or into something in God himself; and if everything in men themselves be excluded from any causal influence upon God's act in election, this is evidently the same thing as tracing election to God's sovereign good pleasure—to the counsel of

His own will.

It is by the application of these two pairs of differences that Faber discriminates his four different doctrines on election, *viz.* Calvinism, Arminianism, Nationalism, and Ecclesiastical Individualism,—taking some assistance also from another distinction of much inferior importance,—*viz.* that between an election of nations or masses of men collectively, and an election of individuals. Calvinism he represents as teaching, that the idea of election is God's choosing absolutely some men individually to eternal life, and that the cause of election is not anything in these men themselves, but only the sovereign good pleasure of God. As Calvinists, we have no objection to make to this representation. Faber rejects the Calvinistic idea of election, but approves of our view of its cause. Arminians, according to him, agree with the Calvinists in representing the idea of election to be a choosing of men individually to eternal life, but differ from them in representing the cause of this election to be the foreknowledge of men's character and conduct, or their faith and perseverance foreseen. And here we see the fallacy which involves the views of Faber, and many others, upon this whole matter in confusion, and which we have already in substance exposed. It is only a great ignorance of the whole bearing and relations of the notion of basing election upon foresight, that could lead any man to assert, as Faber does, that Arminians agree with Calvinists in maintaining that the idea of election is that God chooses some men to eternal life. Beyond all question, the fundamental principle of Arminianism is just a denial of the Calvinistic doctrine, that God really, in the proper sense of the word, chooses some men to eternal life—a denial that such an election is sanctioned by Scripture; while the idea of representing foreknowledge as the ground of election, is merely a collateral subordinate notion, having something of the character of an afterthought, and forming no part of the real substance or essential features of the actual position maintained. Arminians deny out-and-out that Scripture reveals any real election by God of some men to eternal life; while they often add to this denial a statement to this effect, that if there be anything in Scripture which seems to indicate an election of some men to eternal life,—anything resembling or approximating to the Calvinistic idea of election,—it can be only an election based upon a foresight of men's character, which is manifestly, as intelligent and candid Arminians admit, no election at all. But, after the explanations formerly given, we need not dwell longer upon this point. Arminians then are, according to Faber, unsound, both in regard to the idea of election, in which, it seems > they agree with Calvinists; and in regard to the cause of it, in which they differ from them.



Let us attend now to what he says about the two other schemes, which are different from both of these. The third is what he calls Nationalism,—a doctrine taught by John Locke, Dr John Taylor of Norwich, and Dr Sumner, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, in his book on Apostolical Preaching. It is this, that the election spoken of in Scripture is merely a choice made by God of nations or masses of men to form His visible church, and to enjoy the outward means of grace; and that the cause of this election is the sovereign good pleasure of God, who gives to different ages and countries the enjoyment of the means of grace, and withholds them, according to the counsel of His own will. Here Faber thinks the causation right; it being resolved, as in the case of Calvinism, into the good pleasure of God. He thinks the ideality partly right and partly wrong: right in so far as it represents election as being only a choice to outward privileges and means of grace, and not, as Calvinists and Arminians concur in holding, a choice to salvation and eternal life; and wrong, in so far as it implies that election has for-its object, not individuals, but nations or communities. The fourth theory which he expounds, and which he labours to prove to be altogether, both in ideality and causation, accordant with the sacred Scriptures, with primitive antiquity, and with the symbolical books of the Church of England, he calls by the name of Ecclesiastical Individualism. In point of causation, it agrees with Calvinism and Nationalism, in resolving the cause of election into the good pleasure of God. In regard to ideality, it agrees with Nationalism in the fundamental point of representing election as a choice of men only to the communion of the visible church and to the enjoyment of the means of grace, and not to anything implying or securing salvation; while it differs from it only in the insignificant point of making the objects of election individuals instead of nations.

It thus appears why it is that Faber represents Arminianism as the most erroneous of the three erroneous doctrines. Arminianism is erroneous both in point of ideality and of causation: whereas Calvinism and Nationalism are both right in point of causation, and Nationalism is only partially and slightly wrong in point of ideality. It must also be very plain, we think, from the explanation which has been given, that Faber—while condemning and abjuring Arminianism, with, we have no doubt, perfect sincerity—is himself an Arminian, and nothing else. The fundamental principle of Calvinists is, that God has absolutely chosen some men to salvation, resolving to give them eternal life, and of course infallibly executing this purpose. The fundamental principle of Arminians, and of all who are not Calvinists, is and must be, that God has made no such decree,—formed no such purpose; that He has not chosen any men to

eternal life, or to anything which implies or secures it, but only to that which is in itself external and temporary, though, if rightly improved, it avails to men's salvation,—viz. the communion of the visible church and the enjoyment of the means of grace. Faber repudiates the fundamental principles of Calvinism; he strenuously contends for the fundamental principle of Arminianism; and therefore he may be justly called an Arminian.

The subject may also be illustrated in this way. Election is frequently spoken of in Scripture, and ascribed to God. Men are bound to understand the Scriptures, and they should investigate and ascertain what is there meant by election. Calvinists admit that election and cognate words are used in Scripture in a variety of senses. They admit that God, in fact, chooses nations and chooses men individually to the enjoyment of the means of grace; and that this choice of nations and individuals to external privileges is described in Scripture by the name of election, and is ascribed to the good pleasure of God. Thus far all parties are agreed. The distinctive principle of Calvinism is, that, while election is used in Scripture in these senses,—to describe these processes,—it is also used in a higher and more important sense, to describe a process in which God, out of His own good pleasure, chooses some men to eternal life, and to the certain improvement as well as the outward enjoyment of the means of grace; and by which, therefore, He secures their salvation. God determines the outward privileges enjoyed by nations and individuals,—it is admitted that whatever He does in time He resolved from eternity to do,—and therefore He may be said to have chosen from eternity nations and individuals to the outward privileges which they come in time to enjoy. Nationalism and Ecclesiastical Individualism are thus both true so far as they go. No Calvinist denies either the one or the other. They both describe realities,—processes which actually take place under God's moral government,—which He resolved from eternity to carry through, and which are sometimes indicated in Scripture by election and cognate words. This is certainly true. The question is, Is it the whole truth? Is there, or is there not, another and higher sense in which the word election is used in Scripture, as descriptive of an act of God bearing directly and conclusively upon the salvation of men? Calvinists maintain that there is; Arminians and all other anti-Calvinists maintain that there is not; and this is indeed the one essential point of difference between them. Nationalism and Ecclesiastical Individualism,—or the choice of nations and individuals to the means of grace,—though true so far as they go, viewed as descriptive of actual realities, are yet, when represented as embodying the whole truth, or as exhausting the senses in which election is used in Scripture, just a denial of the fundamental principle of

Calvinism, and an assertion of the fundamental principle of Arminianism; and therefore both Nationalists and Individualists are equally and alike, at least when they admit foreknowledge, Arminians, and nothing else.

In the exposition of the scriptural meaning of election, the ground taken by Calvinists is this, that whatever other acts of God, bearing in any way upon the salvation of men, are or may be described by this name, there is an election spoken of in Scripture, of which the three following positions can be established:—1st, That it is not founded upon anything in men (foreseen or existing) as the cause or reason why they are chosen, but only on God's own sovereign good pleasure. 2d, That it is a choosing of individuals, and not merely of nations, or masses of men collectively. And 3d, That it is directed immediately not to anything merely external and temporary, but to character and final destiny; that it is a choosing of men to eternal salvation, and does certainly and infallibly issue in that result in the case of all -who are included in it. Calvinists believe that there is an election spoken of in Scripture, of which these three positions can be established; and it is the maintenance of all this that makes them Calvinists. But the question with which at present we are chiefly concerned is,—What is the Arminian mode of dealing with these three positions? and what mode of dealing with them entitles us to call men Arminians?

With regard to the first of these positions, the more candid and intelligent Arminians admit, that there is an election spoken of in Scripture .which is founded not on anything in men, but only on the good pleasure of God. Some Arminians have denied this, notwithstanding the clearest scriptural evidence. But these have not been the most reputable and formidable advocates of Arminianism. There is nothing in their Arminianism that should prevent them from admitting this; and it is only the misapprehension and confusion which we have already exposed about the bearing and relations of the idea of foreknowledge or foresight, that could lead any one to suppose that this admission involved them in inconsistency, or afforded any presumption that they were not Arminians. Arminians, indeed, must repudiate—in order to preserve anything like consistency—an election to eternal life, founded only on the good pleasure of God, and not on anything in men themselves. If there were any such election as this, it could be founded only upon a foresight of faith, holiness, and perseverance. But rejecting any proper election to eternal life, there is nothing to prevent them from admitting an election of men to what is external and temporary, founded only on the good pleasure of God. Whately and Faber both admit what is sometimes called arbitrary or irrespective election; but as it is only

an election to outward privileges,—which men may improve or not as they choose,—the admission does not afford even a presumption that they are not Arminians, although they seem to think it does.

The second position—viz. that there is an election spoken of in Scripture, the object of which is not nations or masses of men collectively, but men individually—does not of itself determine anything of much importance. Calvinists admit that there is an election of nations spoken of in Scripture; and many Arminians admit that there is also brought before us in the Bible an election of individuals as distinguished from masses. If the only election spoken of in Scripture be an election of masses or communities,— and this, of course, is the distinctive tenet of those who are called Nationalists,—it follows that the election could be only to what was external and temporary, that is, to outward privileges. And it is this plainly which has commended the notion to a certain class of Arminians. Finding it conceded that there are instances in Scripture in which the election spoken of is applied to nations, they have bethought themselves of employing this notion for the purpose of shutting out Calvinism altogether, by showing that there is no other election—no election of individuals—spoken of in Scripture; and consequently that "scriptural «election is only to outward privileges. Nationalism, then, so far from being a different doctrine from Arminianism, is merely a form or aspect in which Arminianism may be embodied, with something like a show of an argument in support of it. The maintenance of Nationalism proves that men are Arminians; while the denial of it—in other words, the admission that Scripture speaks also of an election of individuals—is no proof that they are not.

The truth is, that the hinge of the whole question turns upon the third position above stated as maintained by Calvinists in regard to the meaning of election,— viz. that Scripture does tell us of an absolute and unchangeable election of some men to eternal life, an election which infallibly secures to these men grace and glory. The only conclusive proof that a man is not an Arminian, is the proof that he holds this fundamental principle of Calvinism. If men do not admit this great distinctive principle of Calvinism, they must maintain that the election spoken of in Scripture is only an election to what is external and temporary,—that is, to privileges or opportunities which men may improve or not as they please. It is impossible to examine an Arminian commentary upon the scriptural statements concerning election, without seeing that the one grand object aimed at is just to establish, that there are none of them which prove a real election to grace and glory, and that they may be all explained so as to imply nothing more than an

election to outward privileges. All the leading Arminian divines have taken—and from the nature of the case could not avoid taking—this ground, in dealing with the scriptural argument on the subject of election; and every one who takes this ground is thereby conclusively proved to be an Arminian. They» may concede to Calvinists the first two of the positions we have laid down in regard to the scriptural meaning of election,—that is, they may admit that there is an election spoken of in Scripture which is founded only on the sovereign good pleasure of God, and which has respect to men individually, and not merely to nations or masses. They are quite consistent in their Arminianism, and have quite a sufficient basis on which to rest it, so long as they deny the third position, and maintain the converse of it; and by occupying this ground they prove themselves to be Arminians. This is precisely the case with Faber and Whately. They both deny that Scripture gives any sanction to a real electioli of some men to faith and holiness, to grace and glory; and therefore they are not Calvinists. They both maintain that the only election spoken of in Scripture is an election to outward privileges and opportunities, which men may improve or not, according to their Own good pleasure; and therefore (since at the same time they admit foreknowledge) they may be most warrantably held to be Arminians.

From the explanation which has been given, it must, we think, be very evident, that Nationalism and Individualism as explained by Faber, instead of being, as he represents the matter, two distinct doctrines on the subject of election, different both from Calvinism and Arminianism, are just two devices for evading the scriptural evidence in support of the former, and for assisting to furnish a scriptural argument in favour of the latter. There is very little real intrinsic difference between these two Arminian devices for answering the Calvinistic argument and evading the testimony of Scripture; for, on the one hand, an election of nations must be an election only to outward privileges; and, on the other hand, outward privileges are usually—in the ordinary course of God's moral administration—bestowed rather upon nations or communities than upon individuals. Some Arminians prefer the one and some the other of these two modes of disposing of the Scripture testimony in favour of Calvinism; while others again think it best to employ both methods, according to the exigencies of the occasion. The two together form the great staple of the scriptural argument of the whole body of Arminian divines; and it has been no uncommon practice among men to employ the one or the other mode of evasion, according as one or the other seemed to afford the more plausible materials for turning aside the argument in favour of the Calvinistic doctrine of election, derived from the particular passage which they happened to be examining at the time. Dr Whately

takes the ground, directly and at once, that the election ascribed to God in Scripture is not an election to faith and salvation, but only to outward privileges or means of grace, which men may improve or not as they choose; while Dr Sumner, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, takes the other ground, and maintains that scriptural election is a choice not of individuals but of nations; and thus, of course, comes round to the same inevitable Arminian position, by a slightly different and somewhat more circuitous process.

We are almost ashamed to have dwelt so long, and with such reiteration, upon these matters. But when we find it gravely put forth by such a writer as Faber, that Calvinism, Arminianism, Nationalism, and Ecclesiastical Individualism, indicate four different theories upon the subject of election,—Arminianism being at once more erroneous in itself, and yet nearer to Calvinism, than either of the other two; when we find the same views of the general import of these alleged theories brought out by one at present holding the office of a professor of divinity in the University of Cambridge, in a work which seems to be in great repute, having gone through four editions in the course of the last seven or eight years; and when we reflect upon the various indications presented, that these views of Faber and Professor Browne pass current as undoubted truths among many of the clergy of the Church of England, we cannot but believe that ignorance, misapprehension, and confusion are widely prevalent upon these subjects, and that there is an imperative call to attempt to dispel this thick darkness, while at the same time we cannot but feel that it may probably not be easy to effect this. We have surely said enough to prove—1st, That there are just two really distinct theories upon this subject which, with substantial historical accuracy, may be called Calvinism and Arminianism,—that the great point which forms the proper subject of controversy between Calvinists and Arminians is the existence or the non-existence, the affirmation or the negation, of a real decree, or an absolute purpose of God, formed from eternity, originating in His sovereign good pleasure, choosing some men to eternal life, and effectually securing that these men shall have grace and glory; 2d, That it is a thorough fallacy to represent Arminianism—as is done by Faber and Professor Browne—as countenancing any proper decree or purpose of God really bearing upon the salvation of men,—a fallacy arising from the want of a right perception of the true bearing and relations of the idea of foreknowledge or foresight, as it has been brought into the discussion of this subject; and 3d, That Nationalism and Individualism, instead of being theories differing from Arminianism, are just forms or aspects of it,—or rather, perhaps, attempts at arguments in support of it. All who believe that Scripture establishes the existence of such an election as is

described in the first of these positions, are Calvinists; and all who deny this, provided they at the same time admit the divine foreknowledge, are Arminians. When tried by this,—the only really sound and searching test,—Faber and Whately are undoubtedly Arminians; and there is no violation of historical accuracy or of substantial justice in applying to them that designation notwithstanding that they through misapprehension disclaim it.

Dr Whately, in his latest work, “The Scripture Doctrine concerning the Sacraments,” has a remark which bears upon this matter, and may require to be adverted to. He says there, “It is utterly improper that any should be called either by themselves or by others ‘Calvinists,’ who dissent from any part of what Calvin himself insists upon as a necessary portion of his theory;” and upon this principle he would probably contend that it is “utterly improper to call him an Arminian/’ since he dissents from (i some part of what Arminius insists upon as a necessary portion of his theory.” Personally we have no objection to the principle of the rule indicated by Dr Whately. We could not, even if so disposed, escape from the imputation of being Calvinists, by alleging that we dissent from any part of what Calvin insisted upon as a necessary portion of his theory, though we do dissent from some of his opinions. But in regard to the application of Dr Whately’s remark to his own case, we venture to affirm, 1st, That the rule which he lays down about the application of such designations is unnecessarily and unwarrantably stringent; and 2d, That even conceding the soundness of this stringent rule, we are perfectly warranted in calling him an Arminian.

1st, The rule is unduly stringent. This matter must be settled—for there is no other standard applicable to the point—by considering the practice of the generality of divines of different denominations. Now, there can be no doubt that it is a common and usual thing for divines to apply such designations as those under consideration in a wider and more indefinite way than Dr Whately’s rule would sanction. Calvinism, Arminianism, and similar names, are generally employed to indicate, not so much the actual views held by Calvin, Arminius, and others, but rather the general system of doctrine which these men did much to bring out and to commend, even though it may have been considerably modified in some of its features by the discussion to which it has been subsequently subjected. Controversy conducted by competent persons usually leads—though it may be after an interval, and even after the removal of the original combatants—to clear up and modify men’s views upon both sides; and yet, for the sake of convenience, the same compendious designations may still be retained. The general practice of divines sanctions this use of these names,

though it is manifest that they must often be employed in a somewhat vague and ambiguous way,—there being no precise or definite standard to which reference can be made, in order to determine their proper meaning and import. This unavoidable vagueness and uncertainty in the use and application of those words, leaves much room for carping and quibbling when men are disposed to evade or escape from a difficulty. But even with this drawback, there is much convenience in the use of such designations; the general usage of theologians sanctions it; and it is trifling to make an outcry about any matter of this sort, unless in a case of gross and deliberate unfairness, Calvin and Arminius must not be held responsible for any opinions which they have not themselves expressed. Still there is no great difficulty in distinguishing between their personal opinions and the leading features of the systems of theology to which their names have been attached, as these seem to be logically related to each other, and as they have been commonly set forth by the most eminent divines of either denomination. Arminius never positively and decidedly renounced the Calvinistic doctrine of the certain perseverance of believers; but no one has ever had any hesitation about calling the denial of this doctrine Arminianism, upon these grounds—1st, That logically it forms a natural, necessary part of the Arminian system of theology, although Arminius himself did not perceive this, and did not insist upon it as a necessary portion of his theory; and 2d, That historically, the doctrine of perseverance has been denied by the great body of those divines who, ever since Arminius's time, have been called after his name. It is true, on the one hand, that men of sense do not suppose that these designations—even when applied in a way which, general usage warrants — afford of themselves anything like a proof either of the truth or the falsehood of the doctrines to which they are attached; and it is also true on the other, that men of sense will not raise an outcry about the application of one of these designations to themselves, if their views agree in the main with the general system of doctrine to which this designation has been usually applied. We would not object to be called Calvinists, though we differed much more widely from Calvin's own views than we do, nay, even though we dissented from some point which "Calvin himself insisted upon as a necessary portion of his theory," so long as we held the fundamental distinguishing principles of that scheme of theology with which his name is usually associated.

But 2d Though Dr Whately's rule is unduly stringent, still its fair application does not prove the unwarrantableness of calling him an Arminian. Not only does he hold, all the fundamental distinguishing principles of the system of theology which has been generally known in the history of the Church under the name of



Arminianism, as expounded by the generality of the most eminent divines who have accepted that, name for themselves, but he does not dissent from any part of what Arminius himself insisted upon as a necessary portion of his theory; nay, he does not dissent from Arminius, or from the general body of Arminian divines, in any doctrine of real importance. Arminius was very unwilling to bring out, honestly and explicitly, his peculiar opinions. It was only in 1608, the year before his death, that he was induced to come out with a profession of his doctrines; and even then his conduct was not very manly and straightforward. We have four different statements, more or less explicit, prepared by him in that year, of his sentiments upon predestination. They are to be found in his works.

We are unable to perceive any material difference between the views of Arminius—as there stated—and those of Dr Whately; and we are confident that no such difference can be established. Dr Whately, in asserting that he is neither a Calvinist nor an Arminian, must be understood as intending to affirm that he differs in some points of real importance, not so much from the opinions of Calvin and Arminius, as from the leading views on the subject of election that have commonly been held by Calvinistic and Arminian divines. He probably also intended, in making this statement, to convey the idea that his views lay somewhere between the one system and the other; or, in other words, that he neither went so far in one direction as the Calvinists, nor so far in the opposite direction as the Arminians. If this was his intention—as it seems to have been—the fact would only show how imperfect is his knowledge of these matters. For it is evident that in so far as anything like a material difference from Arminius could be pointed out, it is to be found principally in this direction, that Arminius retained more of the doctrines generally held by Calvinists than Dr Whately has done. But whatever there be in this, it is certain that he holds the whole substance of what has been well known in the history of the Protestant church for the last two centuries as Arminianism, as opposed to Calvinism, and differing somewhat from Socinianism, on this subject; and that therefore we are fully warranted, by the ordinary, reasonable, and convenient practice of theologians, to call him an Arminian. We must be careful, indeed, to ascribe to him no opinions which he has not professed or acknowledged. But he has no right to demand that, because he has a dislike to the designation Arminian, we must have recourse to circumlocution in indicating his theological position, when he is utterly unable to prove that calling him an Arminian involves inaccuracy or injustice, or implies any deviation from the mode of dealing with such topics which is sanctioned by the ordinary practice of theologians.

Faber having written a book upon the subject of election, and having there

brought out his views fully and elaborately, has made it manifest what were the grounds that led him to believe that he was not an Arminian; and we have had no difficulty in pointing out the source of the fallacy in his case. Whately has referred to this matter only incidentally, and has not gone into any formal or elaborate exposition of the different theories which have been held regarding it. In this way, while he has afforded us abundant ground for believing that he is an Arminian, and for calling him by that name, he has not told us explicitly or in detail what are the grounds on which he considers himself warranted to repudiate the designation. Our views upon this point must therefore be inferential, and to some extent conjectural. We think there are some indications, in his statements upon the subject of election, showing that he was to some extent misled by the same fallacy about the relation between election and foreknowledge which we have exposed in the case of Faber.' They both concur in rejecting the Arminian interpretation of Rom. viii. 29, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son;" and of 1 Pet. i. 2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God;"—denying, as Calvinists do, that these passages afford a warrant for basing election upon foresight. And there are other indications—though none, so far as we remember, of a very explicit kind—that Whately concurred with Faber in rejecting altogether the idea of basing election upon foresight; and in imagining that, in rejecting this idea, he was abjuring the fundamental, distinctive principle of Arminianism. We have said enough, we think, to show that any such notion can originate only in a very defective and superficial knowledge of the intrinsic merits of this great controversy.

We have had occasion to refer to some points on which Dr Whately has expressed opinions different from those held by the generality of Arminians. These we have always regarded as eminently creditable to him, especially as we could not but view them as the concessions of an opponent. It is probably on these-differences that he founds his warrant and right to deny that he is an Arminian. We think it proper to advert to these points of difference, not merely for the purpose of showing that they afford no ground for his abjuring the designation, but for the more important object of bringing out the valuable concessions thus made to Calvinism by one whom we must still take the liberty of calling an Arminian.

The first point of this nature which we would notice we have already adverted to. It is one which only partially comes under the present head, as the same concession has been made by many Arminians. It is this, that Dr Whately distinctly admits that the word election, as used in Scripture, "relates, in most

instances, to an arbitrary, irrespective, unconditional decree;" and shows that those who endeavour to answer the Calvinistic argument founded upon the Scripture passages where election and its cognates occur, by denying this, are incapable of maintaining the position they have assumed. There are some Arminians who are so afraid of admitting anything that might be called "arbitrary, irrespective, or unconditional" in God's purposes or procedure in regard to men, that they labour, in spite of the strongest opposing evidence, to exclude everything of this nature from every passage in Scripture where the words occur. But Dr Whately, and many of the more sagacious and candid Arminians, admit that this mode of dealing with the matter is unnecessary and unwarrantable. They could not indeed believe in any arbitrary, irrespective, unconditional decree of God bearing directly upon men's salvation, and exerting a determining influence upon the result.

And, as we have fully explained, the fundamental, distinctive principle of all antiCalvinists—Arminians included—is just to deny that any such decree was or could be formed. But there is nothing in point of consistency to make it impossible for Arminians to admit an arbitrary, irrespective, and unconditional election, provided it be an election not to faith and salvation, to holiness and heaven, to grace and glory, but only to what is external and temporary, to outward privileges or means of grace; it being still dependent on men's free will to improve or not their opportunities, and thus to attain or not to eternal life. Any such thing as an election to salvation could, upon antiCalvinistic principles, be based only upon a foresight of what men individually would actually be and do; and in fairness and reason this could not properly be called an election. But an election to outward privileges or means of grace might be based upon the sovereign good pleasure of God, as it exerts no efficacious determining influence upon men's eternal destiny. Dr Whately denies the existence of any real election of some men by God to eternal, life, and admits only an election to the means of grace. This is a conclusive proof that he is an Arminian; and the proof is not in the least affected by his admission, that this election of some, whether nations or individuals, to outward privileges, is "arbitrary, irrespective, and unconditional,"—in other words, is founded on the sovereign good pleasure of God, and not on anything existing or foreseen in men themselves.

Some of the other concessions which Dr Whately has made to Calvinists are points in which he has few or none of the Arminians to countenance him, and they are therefore all the more creditable to his sagacity and candour; while at the same time we may say of them, in general, that they cannot be of any avail

in proving that he may not be warrantably called an Arminian, inasmuch as they do not affect the state of the question, or the real meaning and import of the actual positions held on either side and controverted between the two parties, but only the force and value of some of the arguments employed in conducting the contest.

The second—and in some respects the most important—of these concessions is the admission that the arguments commonly adduced against Calvinism, derived from the moral attributes and government of God, are unsatisfactory and invalid; and that the grand difficulty of this whole subject applies to every system, inasmuch as it attaches to the facts—admitted by all—of the introduction and permanent continuance of moral evil. His views upon these subjects are brought out not only in his “Essay on Election,” but also in what he has said in connection with the Discourse of his predecessor, Archbishop King, on Predestination, which he has republished, with Notes and an Appendix, in the later editions of his “Bampton Lectures.” He has fully adopted, as had been previously done by his friend Bishop Copleston, in his “Inquiry into the Doctrines of Necessity and Predestination,” the leading principle, expounded in King’s famous Discourse. The principle is in substance this (we are not called upon to go into any details upon the point), that we know too little about God and the divine attributes and perfections, to warrant us in drawing conclusions from them as to the divine procedure; that the divine attributes, while infinitely superior in degree, are:—though called by the same names—not the same in kind as those which we ourselves possess; that our knowledge of them is almost wholly, if not altogether, analogical; and that, therefore, we are not entitled to draw inferences or conclusions about the divine procedure from the divine power and knowledge, or from the divine justice and holiness, as we would from the same qualities in men. There is as much truth in this general principle, as to lay a good ground for condemning much presumptuous and ill-founded speculation, which has been brought to bear upon the discussion of this subject. But the principle is surely carried too far, when it is laid down so absolutely that our knowledge of God’s attributes is wholly analogical, and does not warrant any inferences as to the mode of the divine procedure. The incomprehensibility of Jehovah—the infinite distance between a finite and an infinite being—should ever be fully recognised and acted on. But Scripture and right reason seem plainly enough to warrant the legitimacy and propriety of some inferences or conclusions as to God’s procedure, derived from the contemplation of His attributes. King developed the leading principle of his Discourse for antiCalvinistic purposes; and Copleston brought it forward—to use a favourite

phrase in the present day—in the same dogmatic interest. Their object was to wrest, by means of it, from the hands of Calvinists, the formidable arguments usually adduced against Arminianism, derived from God's power, knowledge, and wisdom, which are often spoken of as His natural attributes. Dr Whately, with superior sagacity and candour, sees and admits that this principle, if true and sound, is equally available for wresting from the hands of Arminians the arguments they have been accustomed to adduce against Calvinism, derived from what are often called God's moral attributes—His holiness, justice, and goodness. The great staple of the argument against Calvinism has always been, that the procedure which it ascribes to God is inconsistent with the holiness, justice, and goodness which all attribute to Him. If the argument derived from this source must be thrown aside as unwarrantable and invalid,—and Whately concedes this as necessarily involved in the fair application of King's principle,—Arminians are stripped of by far the most plausible things they have to adduce. They may still, indeed, consistently retain their leading position upon other grounds. They may still deny the fundamental principle of Calvinism, though deprived of what has been always felt to be the most formidable argument against it; and this is, indeed, just the position occupied by Dr Whately. He still holds that there are good and sufficient grounds for rejecting the Calvinistic doctrine, though he declines to make any use of the common argument against it, derived from God's moral attributes. The abandonment of this argument as unsatisfactory, does not produce any change in the actual doctrines he maintains. The position he occupies may be, and in point of fact is, the very same as that of those who continue to believe in the validity of the old favourite antiCalvinistic argument; and as the abandonment of this argument does not make him less antiCalvinistic, so neither can it afford any evidence that he is not an Arminian. We must therefore continue to regard Dr Whately's abandonment of King's principle of the common argument from God's moral attributes, as the concession of an opponent, due to the force of truth; while we are not called upon to attach the same weight to his continued adherence to the ordinary Arminian ground of the invalidity of the argument in favour of Calvinism, derived from God's natural attributes. Calvinists do not, in general, admit the soundness of King's principle. They think they can establish the invalidity of the Arminian argument from the divine perfections upon other and more specific grounds; and thus they profess to be able to show, that they are warranted in accepting the concession of Dr Whately, as to the utterly precarious and uncertain character of the argument against Calvinism, from its alleged inconsistency with God's moral attributes; without at the same time needing to renounce the argument in favour of Calvinism and against Arminianism, derived

from the consideration of His natural attributes.

The substance of this important concession is also presented by Dr Whately, in a more definite and specific form. He virtually admits that the arguments which have been commonly adduced against Calvinism on account of its alleged inconsistency with God's moral attributes, really apply to and tell against actual facts, —undoubted realities occurring under God's moral government,— that they thus prove too much, and therefore prove nothing; in short, that the real difficulty is not anything peculiar to Calvinism, but just the introduction and the permanence of moral evil,—an awful reality, which every system must equally deal with and in some way dispose of. It is admitted, that whatever God does in time He resolved from eternity to do; and if so, no peculiar or additional difficulty attaches to His eternal decree or purpose, as distinguished from that attaching to its execution in time, or to what God actually does in determining men's character and destiny. Whatever takes place in time God resolved from eternity to produce or to permit; and the fact of its occurrence proves that there was nothing in His character to prevent Him from producing or permitting it; and, of course, nothing to preclude His having resolved from eternity to produce or permit it. By following out these obvious considerations, Calvinists have proved that the great difficulty in this whole subject is just the permanent existence of moral evil under God's administration; and as this is admitted on both sides to be an actual reality, the difficulty suggested by the contemplation of God's moral attributes is thus proved to be one which Calvinists and Arminians are equally bound, but at the same time equally unable, to solve. All this has been proved to demonstration by Calvinists, times without number; and it manifestly removes out of the way by far the most formidable and plausible objections by which their system has ever been assailed. Anti-Calvinists have never been able to devise a plausible answer to this line of argument, so subversive of their favourite and most effective allegations. But not one of them has ever, so far as we remember, conceded its truth and soundness so fully and frankly as Dr Whately has done. This concession is so important in itself, and so honourable to him, that we must present it in his own words: —

“Before I dismiss the consideration of this subject, I would suggest one caution relative to a class of objections frequently urged against the Calvinistic scheme —those drawn from the conclusions of what is called Natural religion, respecting the moral attributes of the Deity; which, it is contended, rendered the reprobation of a large portion of mankind an absolute impossibility. That such objections do reduce the predestinarian to a great strait, is undeniable; and not

seldom are they urged with exulting scorn, with bitter invective, and almost with anathema. But we should be very cautious how we employ such weapons as may recoil upon ourselves. Arguments of this description have often been adduced, such as, I fear, will crush beneath the ruins of the hostile structure the blind assailant who seeks to overthrow it. It is a frightful, but an undeniable truth, that multitudes, even in Christian countries, are born and brought up under such circumstances as afford them no probable, even no possible, chance of obtaining a knowledge of religious truths, or a habit of moral conduct, but are even trained from infancy in superstitious error and gross depravity. Why this should be permitted, neither Calvinist nor Arminian can explain; nay, why the Almighty does not cause to die in the cradle every infant whose future wickedness and misery, if suffered to grow up, He foresees, is what no system of religion, natural or revealed, will enable us satisfactorily to account for.

“In truth, these are merely branches of the one great difficulty, the existence of evil, which may almost be called the only difficulty in theology. It assumes indeed various shapes: it is by many hardly recognised as a difficulty, and not a few have professed and believed themselves to have solved it; but it still meets them, though in some new and disguised form, at every turn, like a resistless stream, which, when one channel is dammed up, immediately forces its way through another. And as the difficulty is one not peculiar to any one hypothesis, but bears equally on all alike, whether of revealed or of natural religion, it is better in point of prudence as well as of fairness that the consequences of it should not be pressed as an objection against any.”

“I cannot dismiss the subject without a few practical remarks relative to the difficulty in question (the origin of evil).

“First, let it be remembered, that it is not peculiar to any one theological system; let not therefore the Calvinist or the Arminian urge it as an objection against their respective adversaries, much less an objection clothed in offensive language, which will be found to recoil on their own religious tenets, as soon as it shall be perceived that both parties are alike unable to explain the difficulty. Let them not, to destroy an opponent’s system, rashly kindle a fire which will soon extend to the no less combustible structure of their own.

“Secondly, let it not be supposed that this difficulty is any objection to revealed religion. Revelation leaves us, in fact, as to this question, just where it found us. Reason tells us that evil exists, and shows us in some measure how to avoid it.

Revelation tells us more of the nature and extent of the evil, and gives us better instructions for escaping it; but why any evil at all should exist, is a question it does not profess to clear up; and it were to be wished that its incautious advocates would abstain from representing it as making this pretension, which is, in fact, wantonly to provoke such objections as they have no power to answer.”<sup>f</sup> These views are, of course, familiar to intelligent Calvinists, as furnishing what they regard as a satisfactory answer to the most plausible objections of their opponents; their soundness is now for the first time fully conceded by a very able Arminian; and this concession, so honourable to him, may be expected to put an end to the coarse and offensive declamation in which Arminians have commonly indulged on this branch of the argument, and which has usually formed a very large share of their whole stock in trade as polemics.

The only other concession made by Dr Whately to Calvinism which we mean to notice is one connected with its alleged practical application. It has always been a favourite allegation of Arminians, that the Calvinistic doctrine of election tends to lead men to be careless about the improvement of the means of grace and the discharge of practical obligations, on the ground—as they represent the matter—that the result in each case is already provided for and secured irrespective of these things. The answer to this allegation is, in substance, that it is not only consistent with, but that it constitutes an essential part of, the Calvinistic doctrine, that God has foreordained the means as well as the end, and has thus established a certain and invariable connection *de facto* between them. This doctrine of the foreordination of the means as well as of the end, not only leaves unimpaired, to second causes, the operation of their own proper nature, constitution, and laws, but preserves and secures them in the possession of all these. It thus, when viewed as a whole, establishes most firmly the actual, invariable connection between the means and the end; and in its legitimate application, is at least as well fitted as any other doctrine can be, to keep alive in the minds of men a deep sense of the reality and certainty of this connection. All this Calvinists have conclusively proved, times without number; but Arminians have never been willing to concede it, since it completely disposes of a favourite objection, which, upon a partial and superficial view of the matter, appears very formidable. But Dr Whately admits the validity of the Calvinistic answer to the Arminian objection—that is, he admits that the Calvinistic doctrine of election, when the whole doctrine is taken into account and fully and fairly applied, does not tend to exert an injurious influence upon the improvement of the means of grace and the discharge of practical obligations; while, at the same time, he tries to make a point against Calvinism, by labouring to show, that by the same



process by which Calvinists prove their doctrine to be harmless or innocent, it can be proved to be entirely useless, and to admit of no practical application whatever.

“It has indeed been frequently objected to the Calvinistic doctrines, that they lead, if consistently acted upon, to a sinful, or to a careless, or to an inactive life; and the inference deduced from this alleged tendency has been, that they are not true. But this is a totally distinct line of argument, both in premises and conclusion, from that now adverted to; and I mention it, not for the purpose either of maintaining or impugning it, but merely of pointing out the distinction. Whatever may be, in fact, the practical ill tendency of the Calvinistic scheme, it is undeniable that many pious and active Christians, who have adopted it, have denied any such tendency,—have attributed the mischievous consequences drawn, not to their doctrines rightly understood, but to the perversion and abuse of them; and have so explained them to their own satisfaction, as to be compatible and consistent with active virtue. Now if, instead of objecting to, we admit, the explanations of this system, which the soundest and most approved of its advocates have given, we shall find that, when understood as they would have it, it can lead to no practical result

whatever. Some Christians, according to them, are eternally enrolled in the book of life, and infallibly ordained to salvation, -while others are reprobate and absolutely excluded; but as the preacher (they add) has no means of knowing, in the first instance at least, which persons belong to which class, and since those who are thus ordained are to be saved through the means God has appointed, the offers and promises and threatenings of the gospel are to be addressed to all alike, as if no such distinction existed. The preacher, in short, is to act in all respects as if the system were not true.

“Each individual Christian again, according to them, though he is to believe that he either is or is not absolutely destined to eternal salvation, yet is also to believe that if his salvation is decreed, his holiness of life is also decreed; he is to judge of his own state by ‘the fruits of the Spirit’ which he brings forth: to live in sin, or to relax his virtuous exertions, would be an indication of his not being really (though he may flatter himself he is) one of the elect. And it may be admitted, that one who does practically adopt and conform to this explanation of the doctrine will not be led into any evil by it, since his conduct will not be in any respect influenced by it. When thus explained, it is reduced to a purely speculative dogma, barren of all practical results.”

There is here no abandonment of his antiCalvinistic position, —nothing that should lead either himself or others to believe that he is not an Arminian,—but there is a very explicit abandonment of a favourite and plausible Arminian objection against Calvinism; and this important concession by such an opponent is one of which Calvinists are well entitled to take advantage. We cannot enter upon any exposition of the practical application of the Calvinistic doctrine of election, for .the purpose of answering Dr Whately's allegation,—that, by the very same process of explanation by which Calvinism escapes from the positive objection of having an injurious or dangerous tendency, it is proved to have no practical application whatever, but to be a mere useless barren speculation. We think we could prove that this notion is a confusion and a fallacy; and that it can be without much difficulty traced to this cause, that he has not here made the same full and candid estimate, as on some other branches of the argument, of the whole of what Calvinists are accustomed to advance in explaining the practical application of their doctrine, but confines his observation to some of the features of the subject, and these not the most important and peculiar. We think we could prove that it is this alone which gives plausibility to his attempt to show that the Calvinistic doctrine of election, when explained by its more intelligent advocates in such a way as to escape from the imputation of having an injurious tendency, is deprived of all practical effect or utility whatever, and that we should act in all respects as if the doctrine were not true.

In these various ways, and in one or two other points of less importance, Dr Whately has made valuable concessions to Calvinism. In doing so he has been guilty of no inconsistency, and we insinuate no such charge against him; for his deviations from the course pursued by other antiCalvinists affect, not the meaning and import of any of the main positions actually held, but only the validity of some of the arguments commonly adduced in the course of the discussion. He no doubt believes that he can still produce sufficient and satisfactory evidence against the Calvinistic doctrine of election, though he has felt himself constrained to abandon as unfounded the objections commonly adduced against it from its alleged inconsistency with the divine character and government, and from its supposed injurious practical tendency. We regard these concessions as eminently creditable both to his head and to his heart, to his ability and his courage, to his sagacity and his candour. We value them very highly as contributions—though not so intended—to the establishment of what we reckon important scriptural truth. They have undoubtedly the advantage of being the concessions of an opponent; for Dr Whately admits that he is opposed to Calvinism, though he seems anxious to impress the conviction that he is

equally opposed to Arminianism. We so highly admire the ability and candour Dr Whately has shown in the discussion of these topics, and we are so grateful for the valuable concessions he has made to what we reckon truth, that we would most willingly abstain from saying anything that was disagreeable to him, except in so far as a regard to the interests of truth might require this. But we cannot retract the assertion that he is an Arminian. Were the matter, indeed, now to begin again de novo, we might avoid the use of this expression, knowing, as we now do, that he dislikes it, and feeling that we could express otherwise, by a little circumlocution, all that we meant to convey by it. But having been led to use the expression in all simplicity, without imagining that it could be objected to or complained of,—and feeling confident that we can defend the perfect warrantableness of its application to Dr Whately,—it would be an injury to truth to retract it, or to refuse, when called upon, to defend it. In one aspect, indeed, it is a matter of no importance whether Dr Whately, or any man, may or may not be warrantably called an Arminian; for the application of such terms, even when fully warranted by ordinary usage, settles nothing about the truth or soundness of doctrines. But when a question as to the application of the name comes up in such a form, and is attended with such circumstances as virtually to involve the whole question of what is Arminianism, and wherein does it differ from Calvinism, or what is the true status quaestionis in the great controversy between Calvinists and Arminians on the subject of Election, then the importance of the matter is manifest. Dr Whately's unexpected denial that he is an Arminian, plainly raised the questions, What is Arminianism, and in what respect does it differ from Calvinism? and whether there be any distinct and definite position that can be taken upon the subject of election differing materially from both? The works of Faber and Professor Browne seemed to us to indicate the existence of a great amount of misapprehension and confusion as prevalent upon these questions among the clergy of the Church of England, and suggested to us the desirableness of taking advantage of Dr Whately's groundless repudiation of the charge of being an Arminian, for giving some such explanation of the state of the question as we have attempted. Faber has brought out fully and distinctly the sources and the grounds of the misapprehension under which he, and no doubt many others, have been led to abjure Arminianism while really believing it; and Dr Whately is just as clearly and certainly an Arminian as Faber was; but he has not brought out formally and in detail the grounds on which he considers himself entitled to deny that he is so. We have, in consequence, not ventured upon any explicit allegations as to the origin and the cause of the strange fallacy under which he labours in repudiating Arminianism as well as Calvinism; but we have examined all the leading points in which —so far as we remembered—he has

deviated from the common course of sentiment and expression among Arminian writers; and we have shown, we think, that these deviations—while highly honourable to him, and very valuable concessions to us—imply no 'disbelief or denial of the fundamental distinctive principles of Arminianism, and, indeed, do not affect the true state of the question between the contending parties, but only the soundness and validity of some of the arguments adduced on the opposite sides respectively.

There is one other feature of Dr Whately's mode of dealing with this subject to which we must refer, though we scarcely know what to make of it. It is brought out in the following passages:—

“It is on these principles, viz., that the first point of inquiry at least ought to be, What doctrines are revealed in God's word? and that we ought to expect that the doctrines so revealed should be, not matters of speculative curiosity, but of practical importance—such as ‘belong to us that we may do them;’—it is in conformity, I say, with these principles, that I have waived the question as to the truth or falsity of the Calvinistic doctrine of election, inquiring only whether it is revealed.”

“I am far from thinking harshly of predestinarians, or of deciding that their peculiar doctrines are altogether untrue; though to me they do not appear, at least, to be either practical or revealed truths. I do not call on them to renounce their opinions as heretical, but merely to abstain from imposing on others as a necessary part of the Christian faith a doctrine which cannot be clearly deduced from Scripture, and which there is this additional reason for supposing not to be revealed in Scripture, that it cannot be shown to have any practical tendency.”

“I wish it, then, to be distinctly understood (1) that I do not impute to any one opinions which he disclaims, nor am discussing any question as to what is inwardly believed by each, but only as to what is, whether directly or obliquely, taught; and (2) that I purposely abstain, throughout, from entering on the question as to what is absolutely true, inquiring only what is or is not to be received and taught as a portion of revealed gospel truth. For no metaphysical dogma, however sound and capable of philosophical proof, ought to be taught as a portion of revealed truth, if it shall appear that the passages of Scripture that are supposed to declare it, relate in reality to a different matter. 11 would wish it to be remembered,’ says Archbishop Sumner, ‘that I do not desire to argue against predestination as believed in the closet, but as taught in the pulpit.’

And the same general idea is repeated, without the addition of anything else to explain it, in his last work, on the 11 Doctrine of the Sacraments.”

It is not easy to understand what Dr Whately meant by such statements as these. They surely indicate something very like confusion, vacillation, and inconsistency. It would almost seem from them as if he had something like a latent sense that Calvinism, though not taught in Scripture, could yet be defended upon such grounds—in the way of general reasoning of a philosophical or metaphysical kind—as scarcely admitted of an answer; so that he shrank from any formal deliverance on the question of its actual truth or falsehood. We do not wonder much at something like this state of mind being produced, especially in one who discerned so clearly, and who proclaimed so manfully, the weakness of some of the leading antiCalvinistic arguments based upon topics of an abstract or metaphysical kind. We believe that the arguments in favour of Calvinism, derived from reason or general considerations, are just as triumphant—viewed as a mere appeal to the understanding—as the arguments from Scripture; and we do not wonder that there should occasionally be men who, while rejecting Calvinism, should have felt greater difficulty in disposing of the metaphysical than of the scriptural proof. This seems to be the case with Dr Whately. He appears to have something of the feeling, that on the field of general abstract discussion he would not like to face a Calvinist; and that this department of the argument he would rather leave in abeyance than fairly grapple with. But, as we have said, we do not know well what to make either of the meaning or the consistency of some of his statements upon this subject. We must in fairness judge of his theological position, chiefly from the views he has expressed as to the meaning and import of the teaching of Scripture; and here, certainly, his position is not negative or ambiguous. He teaches explicitly and unequivocally, that the Calvinistic doctrine of election is not taught in Scripture; and he teaches further, that the only election which Scripture sanctions, is an election to outward privileges or means of grace, and not to faith, holiness, and heaven. This should settle the whole question with all who believe in the authority of Scripture; and the position here maintained is not only antiCalvinistic, but may, when accompanied with an admission of the divine foreknowledge of all events, be warrantably and fairly designated as Arminian.

We are unwilling to quit this subject without some reference, however brief, to the objections by which the Calvinistic doctrine of election has been commonly assailed. The leading practical lessons suggested by a survey of the controversy, for guiding men in the study of it, are such as these:—1st, That we should labour

to form a clear, distinct, and accurate apprehension of the real nature of the leading point in dispute,—of the true import and bearing of the only alternatives that can well be maintained with regard to it. 2nd, That we should familiarize our minds with definite conceptions of the meaning and the evidence of the principal arguments by which the truth upon the subject may be established, and the error refuted. 3d, That we should take some pains to understand the general principles at least applicable to the solution, or rather the disposal (for they cannot be solved), of the difficulties by which the doctrine we have embraced as true may be assailed. And 4th, That we should then seek to make a wise and judicious application of the doctrine professed, according to its true nature, tendency, and bearing, and its relation to other truths; without allowing ourselves to be dragged into endless and unprofitable speculations in regard to its deeper mysteries or more intricate perplexities, or to be harassed by perpetual doubt and difficulty. A thorough and successful study of the subject implies the following out of all these lessons, and this conducts us over a wide and arduous field. It is on the first only of these four points we have touched,—one on which a great deal of ignorance and confusion seem to prevail. Of the others, the most important is that which enjoins a careful study of the direct and positive evidence that bears upon the determination of the main question on which the controversy turns. The strength of 'Calvinism lies in the mass of direct, positive, and, as we believe, unanswerable proof that can be produced from Scripture and reason, confirmed by much that is suggested by experience and the history of the human race, to establish its fundamental principles of the foreordination of whatsoever comes to pass, and the real and effectual election of some men to eternal life. The strength of Arminianism lies, not in the direct and positive evidence that can be produced to disprove Calvinistic foreordination and election, or to establish anti-Calvinistic non-foreordination and non-election, but mainly in the proof, that God is not the author of sin, and that man is responsible for his own character and destiny; and in the inference, that since Calvinism is inconsistent with these great and admitted truths, it must be false. This view of the state of the case shows the importance of being familiar with the direct and positive evidence by which Calvinism can be established, that we may rest on this as an impregnable foundation. But it shows also the importance of being familiar with the way and manner of disposing of the plausible and formidable difficulties on which mainly the Arminians found their case. These difficulties—that is, the alleged inconsistency of Calvinism with the truths, that God is not the author of sin, and that man is responsible for his conduct and fate—he upon the very surface of the subject, and must at once present themselves even to the most ordinary minds; while at the same time they are so plausible, that they are well fitted to startle

and to impress men, especially if they have not previously reflected much upon the subject. We do not intend to adduce the direct and positive evidence in support of the Calvinistic doctrine; but a few brief hints may help a little to show, that the difficulties attaching to it are, though not admitting of a full solution, yet by no means so formidable as at first sight they appear to be; and at any rate furnish no sufficient ground in right reason for rejecting the body of direct, positive, unanswerable proof by which the fundamental principles of Calvinism can be established. The following are some of the most obvious yet most important considerations bearing upon this matter, that ought to be remembered and applied, and especially that ought to be viewed in combination with each other, as parts of one argument upon this topic.

1st, When the same objections were advanced against the same doctrines as taught by the Apostle Paul, he manifested no very great solicitude about giving them a direct or formal answer; but contented himself with resolving the whole difficulty into God's sovereignty and man's ignorance, dependence, and incapacity. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" He knew that the doctrines were true, because he had received them by inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and we know that they are true, because he and other inspired men have declared them unto us. This should satisfy us, and repress any great anxiety about disposing of objections based upon grounds, the investigation of which runs up into matters, the full comprehension of which lies beyond the reach of our natural faculties, and of which we can know nothing except from the revelation which God has given us.

2d, It is utterly inconsistent with right views of our condition and capacities, and with the principles usually acted upon in regard to other departments of Christian theology,—as, for instance, the doctrine of the Trinity,—to assume, as these objections do, that we are entitled to make our actual perception of, or our capacity of perceiving, the consistency of two doctrines with each other, the test or standard of their truth. We do not pretend to be able to solve all the difficulties connected with the alleged inconsistency between the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism, and the truths that God is not the author of sin, and that man is responsible for his character and conduct, so as to make their consistency with each other plain and palpable to our own minds or the minds of others; but we cannot admit that this affords any sufficient reason why we should reject one or other of the doctrines, provided each separately can be established upon competent and satisfactory evidence.

3d, The difficulties in question do not apply to the Calvinistic system alone, but bear as really, though not perhaps at first view as palpably, upon every system of religion which admits the moral government of God, the prevalence of moral evil among His intelligent creatures, and their future eternal punishment. Indeed, it is easy to show that the leading difficulties connected with every scheme of doctrine virtually run up into one great difficulty, which attaches, and attaches equally, to them all, viz. the explanation of the existence and prevalence of moral evil; or, what is practically the same question in another form, the exposition of the way and manner in which God and men concur (for none but atheists can deny that in some way or other they do concur) in forming men's character and in determining men's fate. This subject involves difficulties which we cannot, in our present condition, fully solve, and which we must just resolve into the good pleasure of God. They are difficulties from which no scheme of doctrine can escape, and which every scheme is equally bound, and at the same time equally incompetent, to explain. Men may shift the position of the one grand difficulty, and may imagine that they have succeeded at least in evading it, or putting it in abeyance or obscurity; but with all their shifts and all their expedients, it continues as real and as formidable as ever. Unless men renounce altogether, theoretically or practically, the moral government of God, the prevalence of moral evil, and its eternal punishment, they must, in their explanations and speculations, come at length to the sovereignty of God, and prostrate their understandings and their hearts before it, saying with our Saviour, "Even so, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight;" or with the great apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."



# Calvinism and the Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity

In his “Discussions,” Sir William Hamilton makes a theological demonstration, of a somewhat imposing kind. It is contained in the following passage:—

“Averments to a similar effect might be adduced from the writings of Calvin, and certainly nothing can be conceived more contrary to the doctrine of that great divine than what has latterly been promulgated as Calvinism (and, in so far as I know, without reclamation) in our Calvinistic Church of Scotland. For it has been here promulgated, as the dogma of this church (though in the face of its Confession as in the face of the Bible), by pious and distinguished theologians, that man has no will, agency, moral personality of his own, God being the only real agent in every apparent act of His creatures; in short (though quite the opposite was intended), that the theological scheme of the absolute decrees implies fatalism, pantheism, the negation of a moral governor, as of a moral world. For the premises, arbitrarily assumed, are atheistic; the conclusion, illogically drawn, is Christian. Against such a view of Calvin’s doctrine and of Scottish orthodoxy, I for one must humbly though solemnly protest, as (to speak mildly) not only false in philosophy, but heretical, ignorant, suicidal in theology.”<sup>f</sup> This strange passage was intended as a deadly assault upon Dr Chalmers, and upon the views which he had promulgated upon the subject of philosophical necessity. The doctrine here so vehemently denounced cannot, from the nature of the case, be any other than that commonly called the doctrine of philosophical necessity; and though many will regard what is here said as very unjust and unfair, if viewed as applied to that subject, there is manifestly no other to which these statements can have any appearance of applying. When it is

settled that the doctrine which Sir William here denounces is that of philosophical necessity,—and that, of course, the pious and distinguished theologians who are here held up to scorn are Dr Chalmers, and all who, professing like him to receive the Westminster Confession, have concurred with him in maintaining the doctrine of necessity as taught by Jonathan Edwards,—men will be able to understand something more of the import and object of the passage.

We do not of course intend to plunge into the mare magnum of the general subject of philosophical necessity as connected with “absolute decrees,” “fatalism,” “pantheism,” “negation of a moral governor,” etc., on which Sir William here declaims. The general subject brought before us by these statements is the most perplexing and mysterious that has ever occupied the mind of man. No one acquainted with the discussions which have taken place regarding it, can fail to have reached these two conclusions:—1st, That everything of any worth or value that can be said upon the subject, has been said in substance a thousand times; and 2d, That after all that has been said, there are difficulties and mysteries connected with it which never have been fully solved, and which manifestly never will be fully solved, at least until men get either more enlarged mental faculties, or a fuller revelation from God. The practical result of the adoption of these conclusions, which must have forced themselves upon all who have intelligently surveyed this subject, is to render men rather averse to unnecessary discussions regarding it,—to make them less anxious about answering objections and clearing away difficulties, and more willing to rest upon those fundamental principles which constitute the direct and proper evidence of what seems to be the truth upon the point. This state of mind and feeling—the reasonable result of a deliberate survey of the discussions which have taken place upon the matter—is sanctioned also by the example of the Apostle Paul, who, when the same objections were brought against his doctrines as have in all ages been brought against Calvinism, resolved the whole matter into the inscrutable sovereignty of God and the ignorance and helplessness of man, instead of directly and formally grappling with the objection. Sir William Hamilton’s own views upon the subject are of a kind fitted to discourage, if not to preclude, discussion; especially discussion conducted in the way of bringing the opposite doctrines face to face, and trying to make an estimate of the comparative force of the objections against them. His views are briefly indicated in the following passages:—

“The philosophy, therefore, which I profess, annihilates the theoretical problem,

—How is the scheme of liberty or the scheme of necessity to be rendered comprehensible?—by showing that both schemes are equally inconceivable; but it establishes liberty practically as a fact, by showing that it is either itself an immediate datum, or is involved in an immediate datum, of consciousness.” , “How the will can possibly be free, must remain to us, under the present limitation of our faculties, wholly incomprehensible. We are unable to conceive an absolute commencement; we cannot therefore conceive a free volition. A determination by motives cannot, to our understanding, escape from necessitation.”

u How therefore, I repeat, moral liberty is possible in man or God, we are utterly unable speculatively to understand. But practically, the fact, that we are free, is given to us in the consciousness of an uncompromising law of duty, in the consciousness of our moral accountability.”

“Liberty is thus shown to be inconceivable, but not more than its contradictory necessity; yet though inconceivable, liberty is shown also not to be impossible. The credibility of consciousness, to our moral responsibility, as an incomprehensible fact, is thus established.”

“This hypothesis alone accounts for the remarkable phenomenon which the question touching the liberty of the will—touching the necessity of human actions—has in all ages and in all relations exhibited. This phenomenon is the exact equilibrium in which the controversy has continued; and it has been waged in metaphysics, in morals, in theology, from the origin of speculation to the present hour, with unabated zeal, but always with undecided success.”

It appears from these statements that Sir William, by his own admission, has thrown no new light upon this subject; and that he claims credit for scarcely anything more than bringing out clearly, by an application of the doctrine of the conditioned, that there are, and must ever be, insoluble difficulties attaching to it. Our present purpose does not lead us to advert to the grounds on which Sir William based his conclusion, or to the accuracy of the language in which his views are expressed. It is enough, in the meantime, that we direct attention to the fact that he proclaims the existence of insoluble difficulties as attaching to this subject; and that he admits that he has made, and can make, no positive contribution to the explication of it. In substance, he leaves us on this whole subject of liberty and necessity very much in the position indicated in the remarkable and often quoted passage of Locke: “I cannot have a clearer

perception of anything than that I am free, yet I cannot make freedom in man consistent with omnipotence and omniscience in God, though I am as fully persuaded of both as of any truth I most firmly assent to; and therefore I have long since given off the consideration of that question, resolving all into the short conclusion, that if it be possible for God to make a free agent, then man is free, though I see not the way of it.”

We have no material objection to offer to the substance of the statements quoted above from Locke and Sir William Hamilton; but it may be worth while to notice how it is that they concur in this view as there brought out, although the one was a Necessitarian and the other was a Libertarian. Locke, though a Pelagian in theology, was a Necessitarian in philosophy,—that is, he held that doctrine of philosophical necessity, or that view of the laws which regulate men’s mental processes and determine their volitions, against which Sir William declaims in the passage on which we are commenting. Sir William, on the contrary, makes here a sort of profession of Calvinism. He stands forth as the champion of Calvinistic orthodoxy, against the errors of its ignorant and injudicious friends; and he gives something like evidence both of intelligence and integrity in dealing with this subject, by laying down the important position, that “the great articles of divine foreknowledge and predestination are both embarrassed by the self-same difficulties!” But notwithstanding this, he was in philosophy a Libertarian; for, though he sometimes talks as if he thought it impracticable to decide between the opposite opinions, he at other times expresses a decided preference for the Libertarian view; and in the passage under consideration he denounces, in no measured terms, the doctrine which is the contradictory correlative of it. The liberty or freedom for which Locke contended, was nothing more than actual moral responsibility for our actions; which he did not admit to be precluded, either by the doctrine of God’s omniscience and omnipotence, or by the doctrine of philosophical necessity, though he was unable to explain how it could be reconciled with these doctrines. Sir William, on the other hand, was not tied up by any of his opinions to so limited a view of what liberty or freedom is, and would no doubt say that, by the liberty which he claimed for man, he meant not merely actual moral responsibility, which all admit, but also that anti-necessitarian view of the laws that regulate man’s mental operations, which has been supposed by many to be necessary as a basis for responsibility. But though he would say this, if necessary, and could do so consistently, it clearly appears, from a careful examination of the statements we have quoted from him, that he, like Locke, practically identifies liberty with actual moral responsibility, and virtually

admits, that the only thing which is really established by the testimony of consciousness, and which is to be maintained at all hazards, is our moral accountability, or the obligation “of an uncompromising law of duty.” Most necessitarians—including, of course, all the theologians whom Sir William denounces—assert man’s moral responsibility as fully and readily as their opponents; and if it be merely the fact of moral accountability which man’s consciousness establishes, as Sir William virtually admits, then the whole matter still resolves itself into the old and very perplexing question, as to what kinds or degrees of liberty are necessary to moral responsibility, and what kinds and degrees of necessity are inconsistent with it. Necessitarians, in general, have no hesitation in admitting the truth of Sir William’s statement, that it is the testimony of our consciousness, “that we are, though we know not how, the true and responsible authors of our actions, not merely the worthless links in an adamant series of effects and causes.” Necessitarians admit this, and undertake to prove that there is nothing in the doctrine of philosophical necessity which can be shown to preclude either the actual reality or the conscious sense of this, as a feature in man’s condition. Sir William virtually admits that it is only our actual moral responsibility to which the direct testimony of consciousness applies; and he has not entered anywhere, so far as we remember, into a deliberate and formal investigation of the nature and grounds of the liberty which is necessary to moral agency. By the denunciations, indeed, on which we are animadverting, and which, as we have explained, must be intended to apply to the doctrine of philosophical necessity as taught by Edwards and Chalmers, Sir William has identified himself with the Libertarian view; and has thus, whether he so intended it or not, virtually declared in favour of what has been commonly called the liberty of indifference, and the self-determining power of the will; for whatever he might say about the inconceivableness both of liberty and necessity, he would not, we presume, have denied that the one was the contradictory of the other, and that therefore the one was a reality, and the other was not.

But though Sir William has denounced the doctrine of philosophical necessity, and has thereby, by plain implication, asserted a liberty of indifference and the self-determining power of the will, he has not entered into anything like argument against necessity, or in favour of liberty, beyond simply referring to the testimony of consciousness, in proof that we are responsible for our actions. This mode of dealing with it is unworthy of a philosopher, and wholly undeserving of notice as a call to enter upon a discussion of the general subject. It has been here promulgated,” he assures us, “as the dogma of this church our

Calvinistic Church of Scotland'), by pious and distinguished theologians, that man has no will, agency, moral personality of his own, God being the only real agent in every apparent act of His creatures." Persons unacquainted with what has been going on in Scotland for the last generation, would be disposed to ask, with amazement, who are the pious and distinguished theologians who have put forth such offensive statements as Sir William ascribes to them? Those who are cognizant of the state of matters amongst us, are well aware that no theologians have ever promulgated this "dogma while they must know also that the only persons whom Sir William could have had in his eye, were Dr Chalmers and those who concurred with him in advocating the doctrine of philosophical necessity. These men certainly never intended to teach this; and they have made no statements bearing the slightest resemblance to those here put into their mouths. But Sir William, it seems, was of opinion that the doctrine of philosophical necessity implied all this, or led to it by logical sequence; and upon this ground he thought himself warranted in proclaiming to the world, without furnishing to us any means of knowing the true ground of his assertion, that pious and distinguished theologians in the Church of Scotland have promulgated the doctrine, "that man has no will, agency, moral personality of his own, God being the only real agent in every apparent act of His creatures." After this we are not in the least surprised that he goes on to tell us, that these men taught that "the theological scheme of the absolute decrees implies fatalism, pantheism, the negation of a moral governor as of a moral world." He admits, indeed, that "quite the opposite was intended;" but still he thinks himself entitled to charge them with teaching fatalism and pantheism; and intimates, further, in the immediately following sentence, that they can escape from atheism only by gross logical inconsistency.

In adverting to this charge of fatalism, pantheism, atheism, etc., we do not need to take into account what Sir William has here introduced into his statement about "the scheme of the absolute decrees." Sir William plainly did not intend to bring these charges against the scheme of the absolute decrees, simply as such, by whomsoever held; for, indeed, he professes to be writing here as a Calvinist, a champion of Calvinism, and of course an advocate of "the scheme of absolute decrees." And then, again, in so far as Dr Chalmers and other theologians may have assumed that the scheme of the absolute decrees necessarily implied or drew with it the doctrine of philosophical necessity, this is just the point where we venture to think that their views are untenable, as we shall afterwards more fully explain. Sir William evidently intended, by the phraseology he has employed, to tell us that those of whom he was speaking regarded the scheme of

the absolute decrees as implying the doctrine of philosophical necessity; and that, in his judgment, this doctrine of necessity, as held by them, implied fatalism, pantheism, atheism, *etc.* We cannot deny that Sir William had good grounds for ascribing to them the belief, that the doctrines of the absolute decrees and of philosophical necessity are necessarily connected with each other; and we cannot defend the accuracy of this belief. But we do not need to take any of these topics into account in judging of Sir William's statement now under consideration. That statement is in substance this,—that some pious and distinguished theologians of the Church of Scotland have recently been teaching that man has no will, agency, moral personality of his own, God being the only real agent in every apparent act of His creatures, and that this is fatalism, pantheism, atheism; while the only ground he could have adduced for these heavy charges, if he had been called upon to establish them, was, that Dr Chalmers and some others had taught the doctrine of philosophical necessity as a part of their Calvinism, and that, in his judgment this doctrine necessarily implied all the fearful things which he had laid to their charge. The practice of adducing such charges upon such grounds, and in such circumstances, is repudiated and denounced by every fair controversialist.

It is always a very unworthy procedure to describe a doctrine to which we are opposed, merely by consequences which we think deducible from it, but which its supporters disclaim, and then to attempt to run it down by attaching to it offensive nicknames. But there are some things which make it peculiarly unwarrantable to employ this process in regard to such a doctrine as that of philosophical necessity. Not only is it true that the doctrine has been maintained and defended by a large proportion of the ablest and best men that ever lived,—by many of the highest names in philosophy as well as in theology; but, from the nature of the case also, viewed both in its intellectual and in its moral aspects, there are considerations which aggravate the unreasonableness of attempting to dispose of it in such a way. The subject is one of great difficulty and intricacy; and this should have been felt to be a reason against attempting to scout it from the field of fair discussion by a dashing misrepresentation and a far-fetched inference. The question virtually resolves, as we have seen, into the investigation of the nature and grounds of the liberty and necessity that are consistent with, or indispensable to, moral agency; and nothing but utter incapacity or gross carelessness can prevent men from, seeing that this is a subject of extreme difficulty, and one which no man, whatever be his standing or his pretensions, is entitled to treat in an offhand and reckless way. It is impossible for any man to reflect deliberately upon the ideas of liberty and

necessity | as applied, on the one hand, to the volitions of the divine mind i and of other pure and holy beings, as for instance the glorified saints in heaven,— and as applied, on the other hand, to classes of men who have been subjected to most unfavourable moral influences, and have now sunk into deep moral degradation, but are still admitted to be responsible,—without seeing that there are profound mysteries connected with this matter which cannot be settled, as many seem to suppose, merely by laying it down that liberty is liberty, and that necessity is necessity, and that the one absolutely and universally excludes the other.

Liberty and necessity, manifestly, may be both predicated of the divine will, and of the will also of some classes of responsible creatures. If this be so, then we must have distinctions in the senses in which these words are applied,—precise specifications of the different senses in which they may be affirmed or denied respectively of differently constituted and of differently circumstanced beings, all possessed of the capacity of moral agency. It is plain that liberty in some sense is not necessary to moral agency, and that necessity in some sense does not preclude it; and if so, there must be some difficult and intricate points to be examined and disposed of before the question between liberty and necessity can be determined, if it is to be decided by an application of the only standard to which Sir William refers, viz. their bearing respectively upon the point of responsibility. We do not profess to discuss this subject,—we merely wish to point out the unreasonableness of the way in which Sir William deals with it; and to explain why it is that there is nothing in what he has said about it, that calls for or requires any investigation of the general subject on the part of those whose views he has condemned.

There has always been a strong tendency, especially among the Libertarians, to attempt settling this controversy by dwelling upon inferences and practical consequences, supposed to flow from the opposite doctrines, instead of carefully examining the proper evidence directly applicable to the question of their truth and falsehood. The question involved in this controversy is properly one of fact, and belongs to the province of psychology. It is a right and a safe rule for beings of our limited mental powers, and of our very inadequate capacity of tracing consequences, that we should make up our minds chiefly from an examination of the proper intrinsic evidence directly applicable to the subject under consideration, instead of attaching much weight to alleged inferences or consequences. The reasonableness of this general principle of procedure is peculiarly manifest when the consequence mainly founded upon is, that a



particular doctrine overturns man's moral responsibility, and when this allegation is controverted by men of unquestionable ability and good character. When a body of men of this description assert, and undertake to prove, that the allegation that a doctrine held by them overturns man's moral responsibility, and leads to fatalism and atheism, is unfounded; when they proclaim their belief in the existence and moral government of God, and their consciousness and recognition "of an uncompromising law of duty," and can appeal, in proof of the sincerity of this profession, to the general tenor of their own character and conduct; when they can further appeal to classes and communities who have received this doctrine, and yet have equalled any other sections of men in obedience to the divine will and in the discharge of moral duty;—when such a state of things as this is presented, the allegation of an atheistic and immoral tendency becomes a practical absurdity, which should be left to those who are incapable of arguing the question upon its own proper merits, and which, even when brought forward by those who are capable of higher things, is scarcely worthy of notice. Calvinists, or Necessitarians, against whose views this objection has been commonly adduced, have perhaps wasted too much time and strength in elaborating a formal and direct answer to it. They might, we are disposed to think, have done more to establish them, by giving greater attention to the investigation of the materials by which the proper truth or falsehood of the contending theories—apart from their alleged tendencies and consequences—might be determined. Locke spoke like a true philosopher when, in the context of the passage formerly quoted, he said, "If you will argue for or against liberty from consequences, I will not undertake to answer you." Sir William, on the contrary, has descended to a mode of representation which should really have been left to those who are unable to reason, and are capable only of lavishing abuse.

Another curious peculiarity in Sir William's mode of dealing with this subject is, that his misrepresentation about moral responsibility, fatalism, atheism, etc., is directed only against the doctrine of philosophical necessity; while he gives us distinctly to understand, by the plainest implication, that no such objections can be substantiated against the doctrines of Calvinism. He is here professing to be a Calvinist, and to be defending genuine Calvinism against the misrepresentations of Dr Chalmers and others, who, while professing to believe in Calvinism, do not understand it so well as he,—who indeed corrupt the Calvinistic system by teaching the doctrine of philosophical necessity as a part of it. Sir William's heavy charges against these men are, of course, based not upon the Calvinism which he professes to hold in common with them, but upon the philosophical

necessity which they taught as a part of their Calvinism, but in which he differs from them. In other words, he professes to believe, as every Calvinist does, that God hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and he sees nothing in this doctrine that tends to overthrow moral responsibility and to bring in fatalism; while these alarming consequences attach to the doctrine of philosophical necessity,—a doctrine which, as held by those whom he was denouncing, could be nothing else than an effectual provision made by God for bringing about the results which, in His “absolute decrees,” He had predetermined to bring to pass.

Upon the ground of considerations derived from these various sources,—viz. the general character and standing of this subject of liberty and necessity viewed historically as a topic of controversial discussion, the special views of Sir William Hamilton regarding it, and the very peculiar character of that passage of his which is more immediately under our consideration,—we do not consider ourselves called upon, and we do not intend, to enter upon the more general aspects of the great subject which is here brought under our notice. We do not intend to deal with Sir William’s two principal positions,—viz. 1. That the doctrine of philosophical necessity is “in the face of the Bible. That it overturns men’s moral responsibility, and leads to fatalism and atheism. Sir William has not given us any evidence or argument in support of these two positions. He has said nothing here upon the subject but what might just as well have been said by the most ignorant person that ever railed against Calvinism. We deny both these positions, though we do not mean to assert their contradictories. We do not believe that there is anything in the Bible that either proves or dis-, proves the doctrine of philosophical necessity. We have never seen any satisfactory evidence that it tends to immorality and atheism.

There is, however, another statement made by Sir William in the passage on which we are animadverting, which—though relating to a point of inferior intrinsic importance—is perhaps more likely to be believed by ordinary readers, and thereby to do mischief, while at the same time it involves a great personal injustice,— viz. that this doctrine is contrary to the teaching of Calvin,—is a corruption of pure Calvinism,—and more specifically, is “in the face of the Confession of Faith” of “our Calvinistic Church of Scotland.” This was probably intended by Sir William to be the real gravamen of the charge against Dr Chalmers, that he had taught a doctrine opposed to the symbolical books which he had subscribed. This is a serious charge, and a favourite one with Sir William. He repeated it somewhat more calmly, though still not without plain indications of unphilosophical vehemence, in a note to the sixth volume of the collected

edition of Professor Dugald Stewart's works. This note, which is as follows, was published in 1855:—

“The Scottish Church asserts, with equal emphasis, the doctrine of the absolute decrees of God and the doctrine of the moral liberty of man. The theory of Jonathan Edwards touching the bondage of the will is, on the Calvinistic standard of the Westminster Confession, not only heterodox but heretical; and yet we have seen the scheme of absolute necessity urged by imposing authority, and even apparently received with general acquiescence, as that exclusively conformable to the recognised tenets of our ecclesiastical establishment.”

It is the more needful to advert to this charge, because the leading idea on which it is based has been countenanced also by Professor Stewart, in a passage published for the first time by Sir William himself in 1854 in his edition of the “Dissertation on the Progress of Philosophy,” forming the first volume of the collected works. Stewart's statement upon the subject, which is written with the calmness of a philosopher, and conveys no personal attack, is inserted by Sir William as a passage “restored” from the author's manuscript in the note ‘M.M’ and is as follows:—

“In the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland (the articles of which are strictly Calvinistic), the freedom of the human will is asserted as strongly as the doctrine of the eternal decrees of God. ‘God (it is said, chap. iii.) from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass. Yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.’ And still more explicitly in chap. ix.: ‘God hath indued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to do good or evil.’”

Stewart here plainly sanctions the general idea on which Sir William's charge against Edwards and Chalmers is founded, and quotes those portions of the Confession which he regards as establishing his position. Such a charge, brought forward in such circumstances, and resting upon grounds which may appear not altogether destitute of plausibility to ill-informed persons, demands consideration; and this brings us back to what we really intended to have been the main subject of this discussion. We believe the charge to be utterly groundless; while at the same time we do not altogether approve of the aspects in

which Edwards and Chalmers have represented this matter. Our views upon this point may be embodied in two plain propositions, and we do not mean to attempt more at present than briefly indicating the grounds on which we think they may be established, 1st, There is nothing in the Calvinistic system of theology, or in the Westminster Confession of Faith, which precludes men from holding the doctrine of philosophical necessity. 2d, There is nothing in the Calvinistic system of theology, or in the Westminster Confession, which requires men to hold the doctrine of philosophical necessity. By establishing the first of these positions, we vindicate Edwards, Chalmers, and other pious and distinguished theologians, from the charge which Sir William has adduced against them of corrupting Calvinism, and contradicting the Westminster Confession. By establishing the second, we vindicate Calvinism from the servitude which the views of Edwards and Chalmers seem to impose upon it, of being obliged to undertake the defence of a doctrine which, whether true or false, belongs, after all, to the department of philosophy rather than of theology, and ought to be left to be disposed of upon its own proper philosophical grounds.

First, then, we say that there is nothing in the Calvinistic system of theology, or in the Westminster Confession, which precludes men from holding the doctrine of philosophical necessity. We have hitherto spoken of this doctrine chiefly incidentally, assuming that its general nature and import are well known; but it may be proper now to state more formally what is meant by it. The advocates of this doctrine maintain that there is an invariable and necessary connection between men's motives and their volitions,—between objects of desire and pursuit as seen and apprehended by them, and all their acts of volition or choice; or that our volitions and choices are invariably determined by the last practical judgment of the understanding. Libertarians admit that men's volitions or choices are, ordinarily and in general, determined by motives as seen and apprehended by the mind; but deny that there is a law regulating our mental processes, by which this determination of volitions by motives is rendered invariable, and necessary. On the contrary, they maintain, in opposition to this, and as the only alternative, that the will has a liberty of indifference, whereby, irrespective or in disregard of any motives that may be presented to it, it may remain in equilibrium; that it may determine or put forth a volition or choice, either in accordance with or in opposition to the motives presented to it, and that it can do this in the exercise of an inherent self-determining power of its own. The invariable and necessary influence of motives in determining volitions, and a liberty of indifference, combined with a self-determining power in the will itself, are thus the opposite positions of the contending parties on this question.

The dispute manifestly turns wholly upon a question as to what is the law which regulates those mental processes that result in, or constitute, volitions or choices; and this is properly and primarily a question in philosophy, the materials for determining which must be sought in an appeal to consciousness, and in an application of the data which consciousness furnishes. This statement of the real nature of the point in dispute is surely fitted to suggest at once the improbability of the necessitarian view telling so powerfully upon great theological questions, and leading to such fearful consequences as Sir William Hamilton alleges.

We have to show that men who have embraced the Calvinistic system of theology, and subscribed the Westminster Confession, are not thereby precluded from maintaining this view of the law which regulates our volitions, commonly and justly described as the doctrine of philosophical necessity. It may be proper, in the first place, to advert to the authority of Augustine and Calvin, unquestionably the two highest names in theology. Professor Stewart, in the passage which immediately precedes that quoted above, and which is to be found in the former edition of the Dissertation, as prefixed to the "Encyclopaedia Britannica," says that "Augustine has asserted the liberty of the will in terms as explicit as those in which he has announced the theological dogmas with which it is most difficult to reconcile it,—nay, he has gone so far as to acknowledge the essential importance of this belief as a motive to virtuous conduct and then he gives a quotation from Augustine in support of this statement. Sir William has asserted that "nothing can be conceived more contrary to the doctrine of that great divine (Calvin), than what has latterly been promulgated as Calvinism in our Calvinistic Church of Scotland,"— meaning, as is manifest, the doctrine of philosophical necessity. He has given no quotations or references in support of this position, though he would have had no difficulty in producing extracts which, to those who had never read Calvin, would have appeared to establish it. But the true views of Augustine and Calvin upon this subject are not to be learnt from a few isolated passages. They can be correctly understood only upon a deliberate and comprehensive survey of their whole position. If it be true, as Stewart alleges, that Augustine has expressly asserted the liberty of the will, it is at least as true that he has often explicitly denied it. He asserts it in some senses and denies it in others; and he has not always taken due care to explain fully the sense in which he was employing the phrase for the time, and to adhere to this sense throughout. And accordingly, in the great controversy between the Jansenists and the Jesuits as to what Augustine's theological doctrines were, there is no point in regard to which the Jesuits have been able to make out nearly so plausible a case as in support of Stewart's position, that Augustine asserted

the liberty of the will. On this, however, as on every other point, the Jansenists gained the victory, though not quite so decisively as upon the other departments of the controversy. It has been proved that Augustine held, and held as great scriptural doctrines, that man before the fall had liberty or freedom of will,—in this sense, that he was able to will and to do good as well as to will and to do evil; that he entirely lost this liberty of will by the fall; that fallen man in his unrenewed state has not liberty of will, or has it only in this sense, that he is still fully responsible for what he does as being a free moral agent, acting voluntarily or spontaneously; and that when men's wills have been renewed by God's grace, and they are restored again to liberty of will,—in this sense, that they are now again able to will and to do good as well as evil,—it is still true that God requires of them what they are not able to perform. It can be proved that Augustine held all these views in regard to the liberty of the will; while it cannot be proved that he has given any deliverance whatever upon the only point involved in the controversy about philosophical necessity. All this, which can be proved in regard to Augustine, is equally true of Calvin; the main difference between the two cases being this, that Calvin has more fully and carefully than Augustine, explained the different senses in which the will might be said to be free and not free,—that he has adhered more closely in treating of this subject to precise and definite phraseology, carefully explained and consistently applied, —and that he has never spoken of freewill without affording, to careful readers, abundant materials for understanding in what sense he employed it, and especially for satisfying themselves that he did not hold liberty in any sense inconsistent with necessity, as understood in the present controversy.

In Calvin's most important and masterly treatise, "De Servitute et Liberatione Humani Arbitrii," he has fully brought out his views upon this subject, and has furnished ample materials for establishing all we have said concerning him. A considerable portion of this treatise is occupied with an elaborate investigation as to what were Augustine's views upon this point, and a conclusive proof, in opposition to his Popish antagonist Pighius, that Augustine, with occasional looseness and inaccuracy of expression, held the same views in substance which he and his fellow-re-formers had promulgated. We may briefly advert to one or two points, indicating plainly enough the leading features of the views of Augustine and Calvin upon this matter. There is one very striking and pithy saying of Augustine's, in speaking of the fall, which Calvin repeatedly quotes with approbation, viz., "Homo libero arbitrio male usus et se perdidit et ipsum,"—man, by making a bad use of his freewill, lost both himself and it,—a statement which throws a flood of light upon the whole system of doctrine which

these great men taught upon this subject. Another statement of Augustine's, which Calvin repeatedly quotes with approbation, and which was applied by them both to renewed and unrenewed men, is, "Jubet Deus quae non possumus ut noverimus quid ab ipso petere debeamus,"—God requires of us what we cannot perform, in order that we may know what we ought to ask from Him. We give only one other brief extract from the treatise above referred to. "I have always declared that I have no wish to fight about the name (of freewill), if it were once settled that liberty ought to be referred not to the power or capacity of choosing equally good or evil, but to spontaneous motion and consent. And what else mean the words of Augustine? He says, 'The will is free, but only to evil. Why? because it is moved by delight and its proper appetite.' He adds afterwards, ( But this will which is free for evil, because it is delighted with evil, is not free for good, because it has not been emancipated.' To which Calvin subjoins, i All this is so accordant with my doctrine, that you might suppose it had been written for the defence of it.' Luther and his followers, who had at first made some very absolute and exaggerated statements in the way of denying freewill altogether, came afterwards to attach much importance to a distinction between man's freedom in things external, civil, and moral, and his freedom in things properly spiritual; and they embodied this distinction in the Confession of Augsburg. Calvin admitted the truth and reality of this distinction, though he did not regard it as of much importance in a theological point of view. But while admitting that man has a power or freedom in things outward and merely moral which he has not in things spiritual, he has given no indication that he thought that even, in regard to the former class of subjects, man has a liberty of indifference, or his will a self-determining power. In the second chapter of the second book of the Institutes, he has given a very striking and eloquent description of what man can effect by the exercise of his powers as brought to bear upon outward and natural things, and upon arts, literature, and philosophy, as compared with the blindness and uselessness of the unaided understanding in religious matters. But neither here has he said anything which implies that he denied the doctrine of philosophical necessity, or ascribed to the will of man any liberty or capacity inconsistent with it."

In short, neither Augustine nor Calvin entertained or discussed the psychological question as to what the laws are which regulate men's mental processes, and determine their volitions. The liberty and necessity of which they treated, and which in different sentences they affirmed and denied, referred to something very different from, and much more important than, this. From their denials of liberty and freewill, we would not be warranted in asserting that they held the

doctrine of philosophical necessity; and neither, on the other hand, is any one entitled to infer, from their assertions of liberty and freewill, that they denied that doctrine. And this, indeed, is really the substance of what is true and can be established, not only of Augustine and Calvin, who have been honoured more than any other uninspired men to bring out correctly the scheme of divine truth, but of Calvinistic divines in general, and among the rest, of the authors of the Westminster Confession.

Professor Stewart evidently knew very little about this matter in its theological aspects. But he writes modestly and cautiously. The only statement he makes about Augustine is literally true, though it is not the whole truth, and is certainly, in the sense in which alone it can be established, quite irrelevant to the object he had in view. That “nothing can be conceived more contrary to the doctrine of” Calvin than the doctrine of philosophical necessity, as taught by Edwards and Chalmers,—and this is what Sir William Hamilton must have intended to assert,—is a position for which no evidence has been or can be produced; and it is scarcely possible that he could be ignorant that he had no materials whatever for establishing it.

We proceed now' to the more important and pressing part of the case, that which professes to deal with the teaching of the Westminster Confession. Upon this point Stewart asserts, in almost the very same terms which he had employed in speaking of Augustine, that “in the Confession the freedom of the human will is asserted as strongly as the doctrine of the eternal decrees of God;” and quotes two passages, the one from the third, and the other from the ninth chapter, in support of this position. He evidently meant to assert that the Confession, though teaching strict Calvinism on the subject of foreordination, taught also the Libertarian view on the subject of the will, as opposed to the doctrine of philosophical necessity. But both his general statement and his proofs derived from the Confession, manifestly labour under all the difficulties and drawbacks connected with the ambiguity of the phrase, “the freedom of the human will,” which is the subject of his proposition. The “freedom of the will” may be understood in a variety of senses, and on both sides of the controversy would be either affirmed or denied, according as it might be explained. It is plain enough from the context in what sense Stewart understood it, and meant it to be understood; but still the vagueness and ambiguity of the expression in itself gives the appearance of greater weight to his proofs than they possess. Sir William has not defined what the doctrine is against which he declaimed so vehemently in his “Discussions;” but it is quite plain that what he had in view



was, and could be nothing else than, the doctrine of philosophical necessity as held by Dr Chalmers; and this he pronounced to be “in the face of the Confession as in the face of the Bible.” In his more recent note in the sixth volume of Stewart, he brings it out somewhat more definitely as “the theory of Jonathan Edwards touching the bondage of the will;” and this he pronounces to be, “on the Calvinistic standard of the Westminster Confession, not only heterodox, but heretical.” It looks like an unfair attempt to excite prejudice, that in the next clause, in which he repeats his attack upon Dr Chalmers, he should speak of it as “the scheme of absolute necessity, urged by imposing authority.” But not to dwell upon this,—especially as it is notorious that Dr Chalmers’ views upon this subject were avowedly identical with those of Edwards,—we are fully warranted in laying it down, that Sir William has asserted, that the doctrine of philosophical necessity, as taught by Edwards and Chalmers, is “in the face of the Confession,”—66 is, on the Calvinistic standard of the Westminster Confession, not only heterodox, but heretical.” This is a definite statement. It involves a serious charge. Is it true?

There is surely a considerable antecedent improbability that the views of Edwards and Chalmers should be opposed in an important point to the Confession, and that Sir William Hamilton should have been the first and only person to discover and proclaim this. Dr Chalmers had repeatedly professed his public adherence to the Confession as the confession of his faith. He, of course, believed that he believed it, and that his teaching was in full accordance with its statements. The ministers of the church to which he belonged—who had all themselves subscribed the Confession—found nothing in his teaching opposed to it. The question was once put formally and explicitly by Dr Erskine to Edwards, whether he could subscribe the Westminster Confession, and he in reply declared his readiness to do so. But still it is not impossible that these men may have been wholly wrong in this matter, and that Sir William may have been right. In publicly adducing so serious a charge, he ought in fairness to have distinctly specified the grounds on which it rested. He has not done so. But the passages quoted by Stewart are manifestly those on which the charge must rest; although something might also be made of a passage in the fifth chapter upon Providence, and of the statements which assert or imply, that our first parents were left to the freedom of their own will, and enjoyed before the fall a liberty of will which we do not possess.

The first passage is taken from the third chapter; it is as follows:—“God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and

unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.”

Every one must see, and no Calvinist has ever disputed, that if it be indeed true that God has unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, this certainly implies that liberty, in some sense, as predicated even of men’s volitions and actions, is . excluded; and that necessity, in some sense, is established. This being tacitly conceded as undeniable, the latter part of the above section of the Confession is directed to the general object of disclaiming or shutting out certain extreme views as to the inferences which some might deduce from this great doctrine of universal foreordination. All that is here expressly asserted is, that the three things here specified do not follow from foreordination. But we admit that the passage may be held in fairness to imply that the things here specified not only do not follow from predestination, but are in themselves bad, or false, or impossible. The latter part then of the passage may be paraphrased thus:— “It may be thought that this doctrine of foreordination makes God the author of sin; but however plausible this allegation may be, we do not admit its truth: we deny that God is the author of sin, and we deny that it is a just inference from foreordination that He is so. It may further be alleged plausibly, that by this universal and unchangeable foreordination, violence is offered to the will of the creatures, and that the liberty or contingency of second causes is taken away; but we deny that violence is or should be offered to the will of the creatures, or that the liberty or contingency of second causes is taken away by foreordination or by anything else; and, on the contrary, we hold that the liberty or contingency of second causes is rather established by it.” Now there is here no mention of, or reference to, the doctrine of philosophical necessity. The only doctrine mentioned here is that of foreordination; and in addition to stating it and asserting its truth, the substance of what is said about it is, that while it may suggest plausible, it furnishes no solid, grounds for the inference, either that God is the author of sin, or that violence is offered to the will of the creatures. The only way therefore in which this section of the Confession can bear upon the proof that the doctrine of philosophical necessity is heretical is this,— this proves that it is wrong that violence be offered to the will of the creatures; the doctrine of philosophical necessity offers violence, etc., and therefore it is here condemned. But the Confession furnishes no materials that bear, or even seem to bear, upon the proof of the minor proposition about the nature, tendencies, and result of the doctrine of philosophical necessity. This proposition is not more self-evident—nay, it is

not even more plausible—than the one that by foreordination violence is offered to the will of the creatures. It is not to be assumed as true. It must be proved by distinct and independent materials, for nothing of this sort is to be found in the Confession. Edwards and Chalmers have no hesitation in applying to their doctrine of necessity what the Confession applies to foreordination—viz. that thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures. And there is certainly nothing in the Confession that can be pleaded either to the effect of precluding them from taking this ground, or of throwing any difficulty in the way of their maintaining it. Indeed, the only correct sense of what is meant by “offering violence to the will of the creatures” is not, compelling them to will in a certain way, for that is impossible and inconsistent with the nature of will as will, but compelling them to do what their will abhors. We will present the view generally taken upon this point by Calvinists in the words of John Knox, in his masterly treatise on predestination, which having been republished in the fifth volume of Mr Laing’s admirable edition of his collected works, will soon, we hope, become better known amongst us than it has hitherto been. “I affirm that God worketh all in all things according to the purpose of the same His good will, and yet that He useth no violence, neither in compelling His creatures, neither constraining their wills by any external force, neither yet taking their wills from them, but in all wisdom and justice using them as He knoweth most expedient for the manifestation of His glory; without any violence, I say, done to their wills, for violence is done to the will of a creature when it willeth one thing, and yet by force, by tyranny, or by a greater power, in is compelled to do the things which it would not.”

This is the proper meaning of the words, this is the recognised sense of the statement, among Calvinistic writers; and therefore the portion of the Confession founded on by Stewart, not only contains nothing in the least adverse to the doctrine of philosophical necessity, but nothing that has even the appearance of being so. For even the opponents of this doctrine will scarcely allege, that it implies that violence is offered to the will of the creatures, in the sense in which that has now been explained. In order to warrant such an allegation, it would be requisite that there should be a denial of the liberty of spontaneity, or the power of doing freely and spontaneously what we will or choose to do. And not only have all the supporters of philosophical necessity uniformly ascribed to men a liberty of spontaneity; but the opponents of that doctrine have admitted that this liberty of spontaneity is perfectly consistent with it, while they hold it to be insufficient as the basis of moral responsibility.

Mr Stewart seems to indicate, by his italics, that he regarded the clause on which we have been commenting, about “violence offered to the will of the creatures,” as embodying the strength of his case. But if he had been familiar with the way in which these topics have been discussed among theologians, he would probably have been of opinion that the third point referred to, viz. “the liberty or contingency of second causes,” furnished an argument quite as plausible, especially when viewed in connection with the fuller statement upon the same subject, contained in the fifth chapter on Providence, sec. 2: “Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass, immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, He ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, necessarily, freely, or contingently.” The third chapter states the substance of what Scripture teaches concerning God’s decrees,—that is, His purposes or determinations formed from eternity as to all that was to come to pass in time. This fifth chapter gives the substance of Scripture teaching as to God’s providence,—that is, as to all that He does in time for carrying into effect the purposes which He had formed from eternity. God having foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, provision is made for securing all the results so ordained and determined. And all who hold the Calvinistic doctrine on the subject of foreordination must, in consistency, also receive the common Calvinistic doctrine on the subject of providence, or the government which-God is ever exercising over all His creatures and. all their actions; Against the doctrine of foreordination, men are very prone to adduce the objections,—that it makes God the author of sin, that it offers violence to the will of the creatures, and that it takes away the liberty or contingency of second causes. These objections seem to apply with equal plausibility to the doctrine of providence as to that of predestination; and Calvinists deal with these objections, in both cases, in the same way, by admitting that these consequences would be fatal to Calvinistic doctrines if it could be conclusively proved that they were necessary consequences, and by asserting and undertaking to prove that these consequences do not necessarily follow from.their doctrines, or at least that this cannot be established. We have nothing to do at present with the allegation that the Calvinistic doctrines of predestination and providence make God the author of sin. We have already explained the meaning and bearing of the allegation about violence being offered to the will of the creatures; and proved that it is utterly inadequate for the purpose for which Stewart adduced it,—that it has no bearing whatever upon the question whether Edwards’ doctrine of philosophical necessity is or is not opposed to the Confession. In regard to the third point, we have nothing to do directly with the contingency, but only with the liberty, of second causes. What is said about this, and how does it bear, if at all, upon the

question under consideration? God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and He has made provision for securing that everything which He had before ordained should be actually brought about. This might appear, and has indeed been alleged, to involve or require the establishment of an absolute, universal, and indiscriminate necessity or fatalism, as comprehending and controlling, equally and alike, all agents and events. But Calvinists deny that this follows from their doctrines. These doctrines no doubt imply that, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God the first cause, all things do come to pass immutably and infallibly, and thus they certainly establish necessity and exclude liberty in some sense; yet they do not take away the liberty of second causes, and they leave it open to God to cause all things to come about according to the nature of these second causes, necessarily, freely, or contingently. In other words, Calvinists maintain that God, in executing His decrees in providence, brings about different classes of events in a way that is in full accordance with, their own distinct, proper natures,—bringing to pass necessary things necessarily, free things freely, and contingent things contingently. This of course implies that there are under God's government free agents, who are dealt with in all respects as free agents, according to their proper nature, and the actual qualities and capacities they possess. As free agents they act freely; and although, if the doctrine of the foreordination of all things be true, there is a necessity in some sense attaching to all their actions, this does not preclude their having also a liberty attaching to them, in accordance with their general character and standing, as being free, in contradiction from necessary, agents. Among these free agents—in whom the liberty of second causes is maintained and preserved, notwithstanding the control which God exercises over all their actions in order to execute His decrees—are of course men, rational and responsible beings. God has made them rational and responsible, and He has endowed them with at least such freedom or liberty as is necessary to responsibility. He ever deals with them in accordance with the qualities and capacities which He has bestowed upon them. He does not deal with them as He does with the material creation or with the irrational animals. Although ever infallibly executing His decrees, He leaves them in the full possession of the rationality, responsibility, and liberty which He has bestowed upon them.

No one acquainted with the ground taken in discussions upon this subject by the Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth century, can have any doubt that this is the meaning of the statement under consideration, and that this was all that these words were intended to express; and if so, then it is manifest that they just throw us back upon the question, to be decided upon its own proper grounds, as to the

nature, species, and foundations of the liberty which men actually possess, while they afford us no materials whatever, direct or indirect, for determining the question, whether or not this liberty is to be held as precluding the doctrine of philosophical necessity. Edwards and Chalmers of course held that men are free agents,—that they are in some sense possessed of a freewill, which neither the predestination nor the providence of God annihilates or supersedes; and if so, they could have no difficulty in subscribing these portions of the Confession.

But perhaps the portion of the Confession which has most the appearance of something like hostility to the doctrine of philosophical necessity, is that which Stewart quotes from the beginning of the ninth chapter, which treats of “freewill.” The statement is this: “God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil.” ' This is plainly intended as a general description of the human will, or rather of some leading features of it, applicable to the will at all times, and amid all the changes which in some respects it has undergone. There is, it is here asserted, a certain natural liberty with which God has endued the will of man, and which it ever retains, and must retain, as essential to its proper nature. But it must be observed that this is not a full definition or description of the will as a power or faculty of man, such as might be expected in a philosophical treatise giving an account of the human mind. The Confession professes to give a summary of what is taught in Scripture, and no one has ever imagined that Scripture contains materials for enabling us to give a full description of the will as a faculty of man, and to determine, directly and at once, between the two opposite theories of liberty and necessity. The Scripture affords materials for determining questions about the will only in some of its theological bearings. And accordingly it must be noticed that the Confession does not here speak generally of its being determined, but only of its being determined to good or evil. These words, “to good or evil,” are a constituent part of the only affirmation here put forth. It is not a statement about the grounds and causes of the ordinary determinations of the will, or of volitions in general, but about determinations to good or evil,—that is, about volitions which involve a choosing between good and evil, or a preference of the one of these to the other. The general object of the whole chapter was to unfold the different aspects which man has presented in his fourfold state, as to freedom or liberty of will in choosing between good and evil. To the freedom or bondage of man’s will, with reference to choosing between good and evil, as possessed and exhibited in four different conditions, the four following sections of the chapter are devoted; and the first section was evidently intended to be introductory to the exposition of

this general topic in its different stages. So that, viewed in its connection with what it introduces, it may be fairly regarded as amounting, in substance, to a statement to this effect,—that though man at different stages of his history—unfallen, fallen, renewed, glorified—has had his will determined to good and also determined to evil, this result is not to be ascribed in either case to force, or to any absolute necessity of nature, as that would be inconsistent with the natural liberty with which God has endowed the will. This was the aspect in which, principally,—we might almost say. exclusively,—both the Reformers of the sixteenth, and the great Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth, century contemplated the subject of freewill; and it is in this sense alone, we are convinced, that the compilers of the Westminster Confession intended to expound it.

But though we are satisfied of the sufficiency of the grounds on which this limitation of the import of the statement can be defended,—a limitation which of itself deprives it of all legitimate bearing upon the question of philosophical necessity,—we do not concede that our argument is dependent upon the establishment of this. Even if the statement be held to apply to the determinations of the will in general, instead of being limited to determinations which make a choice either of good or evil,—according to the moral character of the prevailing tendency of man's nature for the time,—still the language here employed is quite sufficient to remove from the minds of necessitarians all hesitation about accepting it. No necessitarian has any hesitation about repudiating force, or an absolute necessity of nature, as regulating the determinations of the will; and though libertarians may allege that the doctrine of philosophical necessity implies that the will is determined by force or by an absolute necessity of nature, yet they cannot establish this; while necessitarians openly and explicitly deny it, and cannot be convicted of any error or inconsistency in doing so. Nothing stands out more palpably on the face of the whole discussions which have taken place upon this subject, than these two facts: 1st, That Calvinistic necessitarians have always admitted that determination by force—or as they usually called it, by constraint, or coercion, or compulsion—is inconsistent with free agency and moral responsibility; and 2d, That they have always contended, that there is nothing about the necessitarian view that gives any countenance to the idea that the will is determined by force. They have always contended that liberty or freedom—as opposed to all force or coercion—is indispensable, and must ever be maintained on all sides. Indeed, the controversy between libertarians and necessitarians has often been made to turn upon this precise question, whether a liberty of

spontaneity, as opposed to all force or coercion, all constraint brought to bear from without,—a liberty this which all necessitarians hold and which libertarians generally admit that they can hold consistently,—be or be not sufficient for moral responsibility. Calvin says “If liberty is opposed to coercion (or force), I confess and constantly assert that the will is free, and I reckon him a heretic who thinks otherwise. If it is called free in this sense, because it is not forced or violently drawn by an external movement, but is led on sua sponte, I have no objection to this. But because men in general, when they hear this epithet applied to the will of man, understand it in a very different sense, for this reason I dislike it.” Edwards himself says, speaking of the Stoics, whose Fate had been objected to him as identical with his necessity: <e Whatever their doctrine was, if any of them held such a fate as is repugnant to any liberty consisting in our doing as we please” (the liberty of spontaneity as opposed to all force or coercion from any external cause), 661 utterly deny such a fate. If they held any such fate as is not consistent with the common and universal notions that mankind have of liberty, activity, moral agency, virtue and vice, I disclaim any such thing, and think I have demonstrated that the scheme I maintain is no such scheme.” Turretine lays down six different senses in which liberty and necessity may be affirmed or denied respectively of man or his will; and—what is a curious, and with reference to our present argument an important, coincidence— he selects from the six the two species of necessity specified and repudiated in the Confession,—viz. that arising from force, and that arising from necessity of nature, or physical necessity,—and admits that these are contrary to the nature of the will and to moral responsibility, and are therefore to be rejected; while at the same time he strenuously advocates other kinds of necessity, and among the rest, that based upon the last judgment of the practical intellect, which is just the same thing as the doctrine of philosophical necessity as taught by Edwards and Chalmers.

This fact is really conclusive upon the question we are now considering, a question which just amounts in substance to this,—

Does a denial of the determination of the will by force or by an absolute necessity of nature—understood in accordance with the views and language of the Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth century— involve or imply a denial of the doctrine of philosophical necessity? That the repudiation of determination by force does not imply this, has already been proved, and is, indeed, perfectly manifest. There is more doubt as to what is meant by necessity of nature, and as to what this might suggest about the point in dispute. A “necessity of nature,”



and still more an “absolute necessity of nature,”—the phrase used in the Confession,—seems to describe something much more intrinsic and fundamental, bearing more upon the essential qualities or constituent elements of will as -will, —as a power or faculty essentially distinguishing those who have it from those who have it not,—than anything involved in the controversy about philosophical necessity, which merely respects one of the laws that regulate the determination of the volitions. And accordingly, on investigating the *usus loquendi* upon this point of the Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth century,—which must be the standard for the interpretation of the Westminster Confession,—we find that by necessity of nature, as applied to this matter of the will, they meant a necessity arising from, or connected with, those essential qualities of the will, in virtue of which it becomes one of the main things that distinguish men from mere material objects, and from the irrational animals. It is the nature of the will of man, that it implies the possession and exercise of a rational, deliberate, unconstrained, spontaneous choice. Without this, will would be no will; and without will, in this sense, man would not be a responsible being, and would sink to the level of mere matter, or of the beasts that perish. Calvin distinctly admitted that “a liberty or freedom from necessity, in the sense of coercion or compulsion, did so inhere in man by nature that it could not in any way be taken away from him.” This point of the natural liberty with which God has endowed the will of man, is thus explained by Turretine, with his usual masterly ability:—

“Cum ergo ratio formalis libertatis non posita sit in indifferentia, non potest alibi quæri, quam in libertate rationali; per quam homo facit quod libet *vrsevio* rationis iudicio: Ut hic necessario duo coniungenda veniant ad eam constituendam. 1. τὸ προαιρετικὸν, ut quod fit, non fiat cæcè impetu, et bruto quodam instinctu sed ἐχ προαίρεσεως, et *vrsevio* rationis lumine, et intellectus practici iudicio. 2. τὸ ἐχούσιον, ut quod fit sponte et libenter fiat et sine coactione.

“Hanc autem esse rationem formalem liberi arbitrii, ex eo non obscure colligitur, quod omni, soli, et semper conveniat. Ita ut nullum sit agens liberum, vel creatum, vel increatum, in quo duo isti characteres non deprehendantur: nec ad tempus tantum, sed semper, ut posita libertas ista rationali ponatur libertas, et sublata tollatur. Unde sequitur adjunctum esse inseparabile agentis rationalis, quod illud in quovis statu comitatur, ut non possit esse rationale, quin eo ipso sit liberum, nec spoliari queat libertate, quin privetur etiam ratione. Quod evincit etiam liberum arbitrium absolute spectatum et in genere Entis nunquam ab homine tolli posse in quocunque versetur statu.”

And then with regard to the different kinds of liberty and necessity that are or are not consistent with these views of the nature of the will, he selects, as we have mentioned, just the two specified in the Confession, as excluded absolutely and universally by right views of the essential qualities of the will,—viz. force and necessity of nature, or physical necessity. Force, or coercion, or compulsion, by an external power or pressure, needs no explanation; and the other—the necessity of nature, or physical necessity, in conjunction with force, just as it is put in the Confession.—Turretine explains in this way:—

“Ut duo sunt prsecipui characteres Liberi Arbitrii, in quibus ejus ratio formalis consistit, 1. ἡ προαίρεσις, ut quod fit, prsevio rationis judicio fiat, 2. τὸ ἔχούσιον, ut quod fit, sponte et sine coactione fiat: prior ad intellectum, posterior ad voluntatem pertinet: Duse etiam necessitatis species cum ea pugnant. Prima est necessitas physica et bruta, Altera necessitas coactionis; ilia προαίρεσιν tollit, ista vero ἔχούσιον. Nam quae fiunt ex necessitate physica ab agentibus naturalibus, ad unum natura et sine ratione determinatis, non possunt censi fieri libere, id est prsevio rationis lumine; et quae fiunt per vim et coacte, non possunt dici sponte fieri. Et de his nulla inter Nos et Adversarios est controversia. Hoc tantum obiter monendum Bellarminumf et alios ex Pontificiis Nostros calumniari, dum illis imponunt, quod sentiant libertatem a coactione sufficere ad constitutionem liberi arbitrii; Quia prseter illam requirunt etiam immunitatem a necessitate physica; Et si quando dicunt hominem a coactione, non a necessitate liberum esse; necessitatis voce non intelligunt earn quas dicitur physica, de qua nulla erat controversia, et quas satis per se excluditur, turn conditione subjecti, quod est rationale, turn ex actibus judicanth et volench, qui cum ea sunt ἀσύστατοι; sed necessitatem dependentise, servitutis, et rationalem.

“Sed si duas istse necessitatis species, a nobis commemoratse, cum libero arbitrio pugnant; non eadem est ratio aliarum, quae cum eo subsistere possunt, et quibus non tam destruitur, quam conservatur et perficitur, quod sigillatim quoad quatuor necessitatis species ante notatas ostench potest.”

And one of these four species of necessity, which are not inconsistent with the natural liberty of the will, or with moral agency, is that which forms the subject of our present discussion; in explaining which Turretine says that the nature of the will is such, “ut non possit non sequi ultimn intellectus practici judicium.” He says further, in explanation of the same views:—

“Unde Tertio sequitur, Cum Providentia non concurrat cum voluntate humana,

vel per coactionem, cogendo voluntatem invitam, vel determinando physice, ut rem brutam et csecam absque ullo iudicio, sed rationaliter, flectendo voluntatem modo ipsi convenienti, ut seipsam determinet, ut causa proxima actionum suarum proprio rationis iudicio, et spontanea voluntatis electione, earn libertati nostrse nullam vim inferre, sed illam potius amice fovere. Quia duse istse tantum sunt necessitatis species, quse libertatem perimunt, et cum ea sunt ασύστατοι, necessitas naturalis, et coactionis; Cseterse, quse oriuntur, vel a decreto Dei, et cause primse motione, vel ab objecto et iudicio ultimo intellectus practici, tantum abest ut libertatem evertant, uteam magis tueantur, quia flectunt voluntatem, non cogunt, et faciunt ex nolente volentem. Quis-quis enim facit sponte quod vult ex rationis iudicio et pleno voluntatis consensu, id non potest non libere facere, etiamsi necessario faciat, undecunque fluat ilia necessitas, sive ab ipsa rei existentia, quia quicquid est, quando est, necessario est, sive ab objecto mentem et voluntatem efficaciter movente [which is just philosophical necessity] sive a causa prima decernente et concurrente [that is, divine predestination and providence].”

We have had the less hesitation about laying before our readers these quotations from Turretine, because, in plain terms, they settle conclusively the question which we have undertaken to discuss; in other words, they establish beyond dispute the position, that the repudiation in the Confession of the determination of the will by an absolute necessity of nature, does not, any more than the repudiation of determination by force, preclude the maintenance of the doctrine of philosophical necessity. Libertarians may still assert that they regard the doctrine of philosophical necessity as implying a determination of the will by force or by a necessity of nature; but they have no right to thrust their inferences or constructions upon their opponents, or to make these inferences the standard, of what their opponents are to answer for. The allegation that the doctrine of philosophical necessity is in the face of the Confession, especially when it is adduced as a personal charge, must be proved by him who makes it. It can be proved only by producing from the Confession statements which, according to the ordinary recognised meaning of the words, or the known intention of the authors of the document, import a denial or rejection of the doctrine in question. The quotations we have produced from Turretine prove, that, tried by the views and the language of the Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth century,— the proper standard applicable to this matter,—the first section of the ninth chapter of the Confession contains nothing inconsistent with the doctrine of philosophical necessity. The statement there made was meant to be introductory to a description of the changes which man has experienced, or is to experience,

in regard to freewill in his fourfold state; and it was just intended to embody in substance a declaration to the effect, that whatever changes had occurred, or might occur, in the history of man in this respect, the essential features of his will or power of volition had continued unchanged; that nothing had ever taken place, either of an external or internal kind, which interfered with his deliberate and spontaneous choice, or with his moral responsibility; that though, as is afterwards explained, man's will in one condition or period of his history had been determined to good, and in another condition or period to evil, this determination to good or evil did not arise from force, or from an absolute necessity of nature; for that, if the determination to good or evil had originated in either of these causes, this would have been inconsistent with the nature of will as will, or with its essential feature as the characteristic of a rational and responsible being,—viz. a deliberate and spontaneous power of choice. The determination of man's will to good or evil by the application of external force, or by any necessity arising from the natural structure and inherent capacity of the power of volition, are expressly shut out. There is no appearance of the exclusion going beyond this; and if so, the doctrine of philosophical necessity is untouched.

We could produce, if it were necessary, evidence from other authors that this was the sense in which the expressions under consideration were generally employed by the Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth century. We shall give only two brief extracts from Dr Owen, one of the very few names in theology entitled to stand side by side with Turretine,—extracts in which it will be observed that he uses the words “outward coercion” and “inward natural necessity,” in the same sense in which the almost identical expressions are used in the Confession; and plainly intimates that it is quite sufficient, in order to moral responsibility, to exclude these two species of necessity, and to retain the deliberation and spontaneity which are inconsistent with them. They are taken from his “Display of Arminianism; being a discovery of the old Pelagian idol Freewill, with the new goddess Contingency.”

“Yet here observe that we do not absolutely oppose freewill, as if it were nomen inane, a mere figment, when there is no such thing in the world; but only in that sense the Pelagians and Arminians do assert it. About words we will not contend. We grant man, in the substance of all his actions, as much power, liberty, and freedom as a mere created nature is capable of. We grant him to be free in his choice, from all outward coercion or inward natural necessity, to work according to election and deliberation, spontaneously embracing what seemeth

good to him. Now, call this power freewill or what you please, so you make it not supreme, independent, and boundless, we are not at all troubled.” And again: “We grant as large a freedom and dominion to our wills, over their own acts, as a creature subject to the supreme rule of God’s providence is capable of. Endued we are .with such a liberty of will as is free from all outward compulsion and inward necessity, having an elective faculty of applying itself unto that which seems good unto it, in which it is a free choice, notwithstanding it is subservient to the decree of God.”

The greatest and best-known names among the Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth century thus furnish us with satisfactory evidence, that the leading principle laid down in the Westminster Confession concerning the natural liberty of the will does not exclude, and was not intended to exclude, the doctrine of philosophical necessity; and of course affords no evidence whatever that Jonathan Edwards’ theory touching the bondage of the will is heretical.

The only thing else in the Confession that can be supposed to have any bearing upon the position taken up by Mr Stewart and Sir William Hamilton, is the statement that our first parents were left to the liberty of their own will, and that in the exercise of this liberty they sinned and fell.

In the section immediately following that on which we have been commenting, and intended to describe how this matter stood in regard to the first period of man’s history—the first department of his fourfold estate—it is put in this way: “Man in his state of innocency had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God, but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.” This is a very important feature of the theology of the Reformers and of the Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth century, and it has been too much overlooked, as we shall afterwards explain, by Edwards and Chalmers; but it has no bearing whatever upon the subject of philosophical necessity. The comprehensive doctrine, that man before the fall had freedom or liberty of will in the exercise of which he sinned, that by his fall into a state of sin he lost this freedom, and that men now in their natural state have it not, but are through regeneration to regain it, was during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reckoned a leading feature of Calvinism. But for nearly a century past it has, chiefly through the influence of the writings of Edwards, been too much thrown into the background, although a chapter in the Westminster Confession has been devoted to the exposition of it. This doctrine, of course, implies that there is a freedom or liberty of will which man may have notwithstanding God’s decrees

foreordaining whatsoever comes to pass, notwithstanding His providence exercised in regulating and controlling all events, and notwithstanding any general laws which may have been impressed upon men's constitution for regulating their mental processes, and especially for determining their volitions. Calvinists have always held that all these things—viz. the foreordination and providence of God, the general structure and framework of man's mental constitution, and the general laws that determine his volitions— were unaffected by the fall; that they stood in the same relation to the first sin of Adam as to any sins subsequently committed by him or his posterity; and that they stood in the same relation to what was good in our first parents as to what is good in regenerate men upon earth. All these things being the same both before and after the fall, it follows that the liberty of will which they ascribed to man unfallen, and which they denied to man after he fell, as well as the necessity or bondage or servitude which they ascribed to the will of men as they now come into the world, must be wholly different in their nature and source from liberty and necessity, in any of the senses in which they are usually made subjects of discussion among philosophers. And there is no difficulty in ascertaining what this difference is. It stands out palpably on the face of their system of theology. The liberty of will which they ascribed to man unfallen, was the effect of the tendency of his moral nature to what was good in virtue of his original righteousness, so that he could perfectly do God's will; while at the same time he possessed that capacity mutably, so that he might fall. The > necessity or servitude or bondage which they ascribed to the will of fallen man, consisted in the loss of the liberty above described, and in the actual prevailing tendency of his moral nature to evil because of the depravity which had overspread it, so that he' could no longer will good, but could only will evil. The liberty which they thus ascribed to man in his original condition they regarded as entirely lost by the fall, and as having now no existence in men in their natural condition, or until restored, in some measure, by divine agency in regeneration.

Liberty and necessity, in this sense and application, are entirely different, in their whole nature and grounds, from liberty and necessity in the sense in which the position of Stewart and Hamilton has respect to them. The old Calvinistic divines—including the authors of the Westminster Confession—all held, that the foreordination and providence of God precluded liberty and established necessity in some sense, but in a sense quite different from that in which they are regarded as dependent upon righteousness or depravity of nature. Many Calvinists have regarded the foreordination and providence of God as establishing, or at least countenancing, the doctrine of philosophical necessity,

and as of? course shutting out liberty of indifference, or the self-determining power of the will. But no intelligent Calvinist ever existed who thought that there was anything in the doctrines of Calvinism, individually or collectively, which threw any difficulty or obstacle in the way of men embracing and maintaining the doctrine of philosophical necessity.

For this reason we have not thought it necessary to dwell upon any alleged inconsistency between the general principles of Calvinism and the doctrine of philosophical necessity. Mr Stewart does not allege any such inconsistency. Sir William himself rather insinuates than asserts it. The passages adduced from the Confession by Mr Stewart to prove his position, that the freedom of the human will (meaning thereby the libertarian as opposed to the necessitarian view of this matter) is asserted there, are not those which contain anything distinctively Calvinistic, but are statements which merely bear directly upon freedom or liberty in some sense or other. Of Sir William's bolder and more explicit assertions, that the doctrine of philosophical necessity "is in the face of the Confession as in the face of the Bible," and that "the theory of Jonathan Edwards touching the bondage of the will is, on the Calvinistic standard of the Westminster Confession, not only heterodox but heretical," he has not attempted to produce any evidence. We regret this; for we are very confident that no learning and ingenuity could have invested with plausibility a position so untenable. It is quite plain that the only passages in the Confession which have any appearance of affording countenance to his assertions, are just those which are referred to by Mr Stewart. We have adduced and considered all the passages in the Confession which could by possibility give any appearance of countenance to Sir William's charge of heresy against Edwards; and we have shown that when these passages are interpreted according to the proper meaning of the words, and according to the recognised opinions and the established *usus loquendi* of the Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth century, every trace of the evidence which certain expressions in them might seem to furnish in support of the charge disappears, and that the accusation stands out in its true character as utterly groundless.

Sir William, by alleging that Edwards' doctrine, when tried by the standard of the Confession, was not only heterodox but heretical, became bound to do a great deal more than merely produce a proof that there is a statement in the Confession which, when carefully examined and strictly interpreted, is inconsistent with it. This, if he could have produced it, would have been enough to entitle him to pronounce the doctrine heterodox or erroneous. But the way in

which he “signalizes” the distinction between heterodox and heretical, shows that he was quite conscious that he ought to do more than this. According to the received meaning of the word heretical as distinguished from heterodox, he was not entitled to apply this epithet to Edwards’ doctrine, unless he was prepared to show that it ran counter to a statement occupying a place of prominence and of importance, and to establish this by evidence of commanding clearness and cogency. Heresy, as distinguished from mere heterodoxy, implies a palpable and decided difference in degree both with respect to the magnitude and prominence of the error, and the cogency of the evidence by which its erroneous character can be established.

Even if the doctrine of philosophical necessity could be proved to be erroneous, it could not, if tried by a Calvinistic standard, be regarded as an error of such serious magnitude as to warrant the designation of a heresy. No Calvinist believing in the divine foreordination of all events can possibly think the doctrine of philosophical necessity a great and serious error, or regard it as heretical. He may possibly believe the doctrine to be erroneous—to be destitute of sufficient proof. But if he be really an intelligent Calvinist, he must see that all the leading objections against it tell equally against the Calvinistic doctrines which he holds, and that it harmonizes well with his whole system of theology.

What is true of a Calvinist is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of a Calvinistic creed. There may be nothing in the Confession to furnish direct evidence in support of the doctrine of philosophical necessity—we do not believe that there is; there may even be statements in the Confession that are inconsistent with it and exclude it—we have proved that none such have been or can be produced; but the allegation of heresy as implying, in all fairness, palpable and clearly proved opposition to the Confession in a point of vital importance, is perfectly preposterous.

There is nothing, then, in the Westminster Confession that need occasion difficulty to any necessitarian acquainted with the way in which these subjects were discussed by the Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth century. If convinced of the truth of the doctrine of philosophical necessity,—whether upon the ground of the evidence directly and properly applicable to it as a psychological question, or on the ground of its appearing to be logically deducible from the theological doctrines of God’s foreordination and providence,—there is nothing in this conviction that need prevent him from assenting to the Westminster Confession, for assuredly there is nothing in that



document which either is or was intended to be inconsistent with it. Mr Stewart's statement that the freedom of the human will is asserted in the Confession is true in one sense, though not in that in which he meant it. Sir William's assertion that Edwards' doctrine about the will is, when tried by the standard of the Confession, heretical, is not only destitute of all solid foundation, but is disproved by every fair and reasonable consideration bearing upon the settlement of the point in dispute.

We must now advert briefly to the second position we laid down, —yiz. that there is nothing in the Calvinistic system of theology or in the Westminster Confession which requires men to hold the doctrine of philosophical necessity; or in other words, that a man may conscientiously assent to the Westminster Confession although he should reject that doctrine. Edwards and Chalmers seem to have regarded the doctrine of necessity as an indispensable part of their Calvinism. They have not, indeed, formally laid down this position and attempted to prove it. They have rather assumed it as if it were self-evident, and usually write as if it were a matter of course, that men holding the Calvinistic doctrines of predestination and providence must also hold their doctrine of necessity. Dr Chalmers, speaking of the philosophical doctrine of necessity and the theological doctrine of predestination, says: "It is one and the same doctrine in different aspects and with different relations; in the one view with relation to nature, and in the other view with relation to God." And again: "Let the doctrine of philosophical necessity, or, theologically speaking, the doctrine of predestination, be as firmly established as it may," *etc.*

We are not prepared to concur in this identification of the philosophical doctrine of necessity with the theological doctrine of predestination. We regard it as unwarrantable and injurious. We are not satisfied that the doctrine of necessity can be deduced, in the way of logical consequence, from the doctrine of predestination. The doctrine of necessity, held in combination with the doctrine of the providence of God as the creator, the upholder, and governor of the world, affords a proof of the doctrine of predestination; for if such a system as necessity implies has been established by God, and is constantly superintended and controlled by Him, this must have been done for securing the accomplishment of His purposes; and He must be actually executing His decrees, or carrying into effect His determinations, in those volitions which are the certain or necessary results of the constitution of nature, in its relation to the laws of man's thinking, feeling, and acting. But while the doctrine of necessity, if established, clearly and directly confirms the doctrine of predestination, it is not so clear that the

doctrine of predestination affords ground for inferring or deducing the doctrine of necessity. Predestination implies that the end or result is certain, and that adequate provision has been made for bringing it about. But it does not indicate anything as to what must be the nature of this provision in regard to the different classes of events which are taking place under God's government, including the volitions of rational and responsible beings. Were we in the condition of being able to prove that God could not have foreseen and foreordained the volitions of rational and responsible beings, and made effectual provision for accomplishing His purposes in this most important department of His government, without having established the system of necessity,—without having settled in accordance with that doctrine the internal laws which regulate men's volitions,—this would prove that predestination established necessity, so that every predestinarian was bound in consistency to be a necessitarian. But we have not materials to warrant us in maintaining that God could not have certainly accomplished all His purposes in and by the volitions of responsible beings, unless He had established the scheme of necessity. And if so, there is a hiatus in every process by which we attempt to establish a logical transition from predestination to necessity, which cannot be filled up. Predestination and necessity manifestly harmonize with and fit into each other. Sir William's insinuation that necessity is a corruption of pure Calvinism is preposterous. Every intelligent Calvinist must be disposed to regard the doctrine of necessity with favour, as having a large amount of antecedent probability attaching to it. He must see that there is no serious objection to the doctrine of necessity that does not equally apply to predestination; and that the doctrine of necessity, if established, gives some confirmation to the doctrine of predestination, and throws some light upon the means by which God executes His decrees or accomplishes His purposes, so far as the volitions of responsible beings are concerned. All this is true and very evident. A predestinarian can scarcely avoid, perhaps, having a leaning to the doctrine of necessity; but unless he can find some argument or process of reasoning which warrants him in asserting that God could not have made effectual provision for accomplishing His purposes in this department except by means of the state of matters which necessity implies, he cannot pass directly, in the way of inference, from the one doctrine to the other.

From the nature of the case, the truth of the doctrine of necessity is properly and primarily a question in philosophy. It respects directly only the laws which regulate men's mental processes and determine their volitions. In order to settle it, we must look within ourselves, and survey our own mental operations. The materials that legitimately bear upon the decision of it must be all derived from

consciousness, though, of course, they may branch out into argumentations based upon the data which consciousness furnishes, and may thus pertain to the department of metaphysics as well as psychology. The Bible does not tell us anything about the causes or principles that ordinarily regulate or determine men's general exercise of their natural power of volition. It affords us no materials for ascertaining whether the laws that determine our volitions presuppose the libertarian or the necessitarian theory. It leaves all such questions to be determined by an investigation of the evidence naturally and appropriately applicable to them,—that is, by an examination of man himself, of his mental constitution and ordinary mental processes. And not only does the Bible not determine any such psychological and metaphysical questions directly, but it does not teach any doctrines which, indirectly or by consequence, require or necessitate us to take a particular side in any of those questions which have been controverted among philosophers upon philosophical grounds. If philosophers should profess to deduce, from a survey of men's mental constitution, conclusions which contradict any doctrine revealed in Scripture, this should be attended to and answered; and no great difficulty has ever been experienced in dealing with allegations of this sort. If they should profess to find, on a survey of men's mental constitution, grounds for adopting certain views concerning the liberty or bondage of the will, which would preclude or shut out the scriptural doctrines, that God has foreseen and foreordained whatsoever comes to pass,—or that He is ever exercising a most wise, holy, and powerful providence over all His creatures, and all their actions,—or that fallen man—man as he is—hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation,—it would be needful and not difficult to expose the unsoundness of these views, or the falsehood of the inferences deduced from them. But unless men profess to have established something inconsistent with these theological doctrines, we do not know that there is any particular theory concerning the will or the laws that regulate its operations, deduced upon philosophical grounds from an examination of men's mental constitution and processes, which can be proved to be inconsistent with any statement in the word of God, or with any of the doctrines taught there, and which must therefore, on scriptural and theological grounds, be rejected.

Calvinists in general, when they have been led to attend to this particular subject, have adopted necessitarian views, as harmonizing most fully and obviously with their theological convictions. But this has not been universally the case. Some Calvinists have rejected the doctrine of philosophical necessity, and much larger numbers have declined to give any decisive or explicit deliverance concerning it.

Some Calvinists have held that the theological doctrines of predestination and providence lead, by necessary logical sequence, to the doctrine of philosophical necessity. But it cannot be proved that either the certainty or immutability of the event, or the agency of God in providence in regulating and controlling men's volitions, necessarily requires or implies this necessity, or would be certainly precluded by a liberty of indifference, or the self-determining power of the will.

- No doubt the doctrine of necessity affords some assistance in forming a conception as to how it is that God accomplishes His purposes and controls our volitions without interfering with the essential qualities of the will or with our moral responsibility; while the self-determining power of the will seems to involve this matter in serious difficulties. But it is, we think, unwarranted and presumptuous to assert, that even a self-determining power in the will would place it beyond the sphere of the divine control, —would prevent Him in whom we live, move, and have our being, who is everywhere and at all times present in the exercise of all His perfections, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of the children of men, from superintending and directing all its movements according to the counsel of His own will. And unless this unwarranted and presumptuous position be taken up, it seems impossible to prove that there is anything in the Calvinistic system which makes it indispensable for its supporters, in point of logical consistency, to adopt the doctrine of philosophical necessity. Until this position be established, it is still open to Calvinists as to others, to examine the question as between liberty and necessity upon its own proper psychological and metaphysical grounds; and to adopt the one side or the other, according as they may think that the evidence for the one or the other, derived from an investigation into man's mental constitution, preponderates.

We have not ourselves, in the course of this discussion, indicated any opinion upon the precise point involved in the controversy between the libertarians and the necessitarians; and we really cannot say that we have formed a very decided opinion in favour of either side. Upon the whole, we regard the evidence in favour of the doctrine of philosophical necessity as preponderating. In order to dispose of this doctrine satisfactorily, it seems necessary that the argument of Edwards in favour of it, and against the self-determining power of the will, should be answered. We have never seen this done, and we scarcely think that it can be done. We have read lately the ablest and most elaborate answer that has been given to Edwards, *viz.* "Tappan's Treatise on the Will." But we have not been convinced by it that Edwards has failed in establishing his leading position; on the contrary, Tappan's failure has rather confirmed us in the conviction that Edwards cannot be answered. But the only point with which we have to do at

present is this, that we do not hold ourselves tied up to take either the one side or the other, by anything contained in the sacred Scriptures, in the Calvinistic system of theology, or in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Sir James Mackintosh, in an article upon Stewart's "Preliminary Dissertation," asserted the identity of the subjects of necessity and predestination,—agreeing in the main with the views indicated by Edwards and Chalmers, but going so far as to say explicitly, that "it is not possible, to make any argumentative defence of Calvinism which is not founded on the principles of necessity." He became convinced, however, of the unsoundness of this view of the closeness of the connection between the theological and the philosophical doctrine, and retracted it in a note subjoined to his own Preliminary Dissertation. He says there,<sup>f</sup> that "more careful reflection had corrected a confusion common to him with most writers upon these subjects." But he now goes into the other extreme; and besides, introduces some additional confusion, which it may be proper to correct. He now brings in, in connection with this matter, the distinction between Sublapsarian and Supralapsarian views; and asserts that "Sublapsarian predestination is evidently irreconcilable with the doctrine of necessity," but that "the Supralapsarian scheme may be built upon necessitarian principles." Although Mackintosh had not, in all probability, turned over so many theological books as Hamilton, he was well acquainted with theological subjects. But the statement which we have quoted from him is certainly inaccurate. The reason he assigns why Sublapsarian predestination is irreconcilable with necessity is, that the Sublapsarians admit that men had freewill before the fall, which he thinks Supralapsarians cannot do. The inaccuracy of this notion must be evident from the explanation given in the former part of this article, as to the real nature, import, and grounds of the freedom of will which man had before the fall, and which he lost by sin. The freewill which has been represented as possessed by man before the fall and as lost by sin, has no connection whatever with the discussion about philosophical necessity, and may be, and has been held equally by Sublapsarian and Supralapsarian Calvinists.

It is much to be regretted that Stewart, Mackintosh, and Hamilton should have all concurred in putting forth erroneous representations upon this subject. The errors of such men it is an imperative duty to point out and to correct. But it is still more imperative to point out the oversights or errors of men who are much higher authorities upon theological matters, such as Edwards and Chalmers. We have already explained the grounds on which we hold the assumption by these great men of the identity, or the necessary connection, of the theological doctrine

of predestination and of the philosophical doctrine of necessity, to be unwarranted. We have indicated, though very briefly and imperfectly, the considerations by which we think it can be shown, that the Calvinistic doctrines of predestination and providence, as taught in Scripture, do not either include, or necessarily lead to, the doctrine of necessity; and may be fully expounded and applied by men who refuse to admit, or who even positively reject, that doctrine. The doctrine of necessity, when once established, leads by strict logical sequence to predestination, unless men take refuge in atheism. But it does not seem to follow e converso, that the doctrine of predestination leads necessarily to the doctrine of necessity; as men may hold that God could certainly execute His decrees and infallibly accomplish His purposes in and by the volitions of men, even though He had not impressed upon their mental constitution the law of necessity, as that by which its processes are regulated and its volitions determined.

We would now advert very briefly to the injurious tendency and consequences of this assumed identity or necessary connection of the two doctrines—the theological and philosophical. It tends to throw into the background the true scriptural, theological doctrine of necessity,—the doctrine of the servitude or bondage of the will of fallen man—man as he is—to sin, because of the depravity which has overspread his moral nature. Not that Edwards or Chalmers have denied or rejected this doctrine. This would certainly have been heresy; for the doctrine is very prominently and explicitly asserted in the Westminster Confession. It is, indeed, plainly involved in what they were accustomed to teach concerning the entire corruption and depravity of human nature; and they would have had no hesitation in admitting this, and in professing their belief in the doctrine as a portion of God's revealed truth. Still, it is palpable that the doctrine of the bondage of the will of man to sin, because of depravity, has no prominence whatever in their writings when they treat of the doctrine of philosophical necessity. This we regard as an evil; and we have no doubt that it is to be ascribed to the fact of their minds being engrossed, when they contemplated man's natural condition, by the idea of a necessity of a different kind, but of far inferior importance in itself, and resting upon lower and more uncertain grounds.

The practice of distinguishing, in the exposition of this subject, between the freedom of man's will in his unfallen and in his fallen condition, and indeed of viewing it distinctively with reference to the different stages or periods of his fourfold state,—as unfallen, fallen, regenerate, or glorified,—has prevailed in the

church in almost all ages. These views were fully brought out and applied by Augustine. They had a place in the speculations of the schoolmen, as may be seen in Peter Lombard's Four Books of Sentences, and in the commentaries upon it. They were embraced and promulgated by the whole body of the Reformers, both Lutheran and Calvinistic. They have a prominent place in the writings of the great systematic divines of the seventeenth century. They have a prominent place in the Westminster Confession,—the ninth chapter, entitled "Of freewill," being entirely devoted to the statement of them. And what is in some respects peculiarly interesting, the doctrine of the loss of man's freewill by the fall, and of the servitude of the will of fallen man to sin because of depravity, was held by Baius, Jansenius, and Quesnel, and their followers,—the best men and the best theologians the Church of Rome has ever produced;—and in them was condemned by papal bulls,—a fact which confirms our conviction, that this is one of the great cardinal doctrines of Scripture, which may be said to have the support of the concurrent testimony of the universal church of Christ—of the great body of those whom Christ has enlightened and sanctified. This servitude or bondage of the will of man to sin because of depravity, was the only necessity which the great body of the most competent judges in all ages have regarded as being taught in Scripture as a portion of God's revealed truth, or as being necessary for the full exposition of the other cognate doctrines of Christian theology. This necessity now attaching to the human will they regarded as a property of man, viewed not simply as a creature, but as a fallen creature,—not as springing from his mere relation to God as the foreordainer of all things and the actual ruler and governor of the world, nor from the mere operation of laws which God has impressed upon the general structure and framework of man's 'mental constitution,— but from a cause distinct from all these, that is, from the depravity, or prevailing aversion from God and tendency to evil, superinduced upon man's character by the fall. If this be indeed the scriptural view of the bondage of man's will, it ought surely to be openly proclaimed, and pressed prominently upon our attention, instead of being overlooked or thrown into the background, in favour of another kind of necessity, as it certainly is in the writings of Edwards and Chalmers on that subject. They would no doubt have admitted the doctrine and defended it, if it had been pressed upon their attention; but in point of fact they have scarcely ever adverted to it. It seems to have been in their minds absorbed or thrown into the background, and kept out of view, by the more general subject of liberty and necessity in the form in which it has been commonly discussed by philosophers, and in which it is held to apply to man at all times, and irrespectively of his history and position as fallen and sinful. In Edwards' great work on the "Freedom of the Will," there is no reference to this

distinction between the liberty of the will in man unfallen and in man fallen, or to the bondage of the will of fallen man to sin because of depravity. It contains only an elaborate proof of the doctrine of philosophical necessity, as opposed to a self-determining power of the will and a liberty of indifference, with an answer to the objections commonly adduced against it. This we cannot but regard as a serious defect; while at the same time it is important to observe, that his proof of the compatibility of the philosophical doctrine of necessity with responsibility and moral agency, is at least equally applicable to the defence of the scriptural and theological doctrine of man's inability because of depravity to will anything spiritually good; and especially the great principle which he has so conclusively established, viz. "that the essence of the virtue and vice of dispositions of heart and acts of the will, lies not in their cause but in their nature." The influence of the writings of Edwards has, tended greatly to throw this important scriptural doctrine of the bondage of the will of man to sin because of depravity into the background; and Dr Chalmers having in this respect walked very much in his footsteps, has thrown the influence of his wonderful powers and great name into the same scale. Edwards and Chalmers have not gone in face of the Confession, or afforded any plausible ground for stamping upon them the brand of heresy. But they have certainly, in their engrossment with this philosophical doctrine of necessity, about which the Confession of Faith says nothing, left out of view an important theological doctrine, to which the Confession gives prominence, and which certainly ought to have a distinct and definite place assigned to it in the exposition of the scheme of Christian theology.

Not only, however, has the theological doctrine of the servitude of the will of man to sin, or the inability of man in his natural condition to will anything spiritually good because of depravity, been thrown into the background by the undue exaltation of a merely philosophical topic; but the impression has been produced, that the maintenance of some of the leading and peculiar doctrines of Christianity is most intimately connected with, or rather dependent upon, the establishment of certain philosophical theories; and this impression is neither true nor safe.

Edwards and Chalmers seem always to assume that the theological doctrine of predestination and the philosophical doctrine of necessity are identical, or at least are so connected that they must stand or fall together; and the impression thus produced is fitted to lead men to regard the proof or evidence of the one doctrine as bound up with, or dependent upon, the proof or evidence of the other.



And we cannot but deprecate this result, as fitted to elevate the doctrine of necessity to a place and influence to which, however fully it may be established as true by its own appropriate evidence, it has not, and cannot have, a rightful claim; and as fitted also to lay upon the scriptural doctrine of predestination a burden or servitude to which it cannot be legitimately subjected. The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination has a sufficiently strong foundation in direct evidence, both from reason and Scripture, to maintain itself in opposition to all inferential objections to it,— and there are really no others,—and to bear up along with it every position, theological or philosophical, that can be really proved to be involved in or deducible from it. But still, as it is a doctrine which usually calls forth strong prejudices, and is assailed by plausible objections, it is right that we should beware of attempting to burden it with any weight which it is not bound to carry; or representing it as obliged to stand or fall with a doctrine so much inferior to it, at once in intrinsic importance, and in the kind and degree of evidence on which it rests.

It has never been alleged that there is anything in the Westminster Confession, apart from its statement of the great doctrines of Calvinism, which seems to require men to hold the doctrine of philosophical necessity; so that this point does not require any separate treatment.

Before quitting this subject, we would like to give some little explanation of the remaining portion of the ninth chapter of the Westminster Confession on freewill. The chapter, as a whole, is a very remarkable and impressive—we might almost call it eloquent—statement of the scriptural truths bearing upon this subject, through all the leading stages in the eventful history of man, or of the human race. We have already considered the first section, setting forth the general doctrine of the natural liberty of the will, which it must always retain, and which it could not lose without ceasing to be will, viewed as an essential quality of a rational and responsible being; and excluding the determination of it to good or evil by force or by any absolute necessity of nature. Although the will has a natural liberty which prevents it from being determined to good or evil by such causes or influences as would manifestly exclude deliberate choice and spontaneous agency, yet it has, in point of fact, at different periods or in different conditions, been determined both to good and to evil. To each of the four great eras in this matter, or the different aspects in man's fourfold state, one of the four remaining sections in this chapter is devoted. To the first of these, or section 2d,— describing man's freedom of will in his state of innocency,—we have already adverted, and we need not now dwell upon it. The 3d section—

describing the condition of men as to freewill in their natural fallen state—is in some respects the most important, as bringing out a leading and most influential feature in the character of all men as they come into the world; and it is most intimately connected with the subject we have been discussing, inasmuch as it describes the only necessity which the Scripture represents as attaching to man by nature, and the only necessity therefore which can be held as needful to be taken into account in expounding the general scheme of Christian doctrine. It is this:—“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 thereunto.” The fundamental proposition here is, that man hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; and the remainder of the statement is intended partly to indicate the leading ground on which this doctrine rests, *viz.* that a natural man is altogether averse from spiritual good and dead in sin,—and partly to bring out the great practical conclusion which results from it, *viz.* that he is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto. The fundamental doctrine is, that man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to anything spiritually good; and, of course, is in entire bondage or servitude to sin, that is, to his own natural sinful dispositions or tendencies. The question is,—Is this really the view which the word of God gives us of man’s natural condition and capacities in regard to spiritual objects and results? and this question is to be decided by a careful investigation and application of all the scriptural statements and principles bearing upon the subject. Does the Scripture teach us that man, in his natural condition, and antecedently to his becoming the subject of the gracious operations of God’s Spirit, cannot really will anything spiritually good? and, more especially; that he is unable to will to turn from sin unto God, or to prepare himself for so turning? It seems plain enough that this doctrine is involved in, or clearly and certainly deducible from, that of the complete and entire corruption or depravity of human nature. The doctrine of original sin or of native depravity, in the sense in which it is held by orthodox divines, implies that man, in his natural condition, has no tendency or inclination towards what is spiritually good,—that all his tendencies or inclinations are towards what is evil,—and that he does and can do nothing which is really pleasing and acceptable to God. If he is wholly averse from all good and wholly inclined to all evil, it would seem that he cannot will anything good; because the will or power of volition must be determined and characterized by the general tendency or disposition of the moral nature of the being who possesses and exercises it. God can and must always will what is good, because His moral

nature is essentially and unchangeably holy. Man in his unfallen state could always will what is good, or as the Confession says, had freedom and power to will and to do what was acceptable to God, because he was possessed of a pure and holy moral nature, endowed with original righteousness. And upon the same ground, because man now has a wholly depraved or corrupted nature, without any original righteousness, he has no ability of will to anything spiritually good.

This doctrine of the utter bondage of the will of men to sin because of depravity, or of the inability of men in their natural fallen condition to will or to do anything spiritually good, is not entirely dependent for its scriptural evidence upon its being involved in, or necessarily deducible from, the doctrine of the entire and total, and not merely partial or comparative, corruption of man's moral nature by the fall. For there are scriptural statements about men's natural state which bear directly and immediately upon the more limited topic of their inability to will what is spiritually good. Still the connection between the two doctrines is such as to remind us of the vast importance of being thoroughly decided in our convictions as to what Scripture teaches concerning the natural state of man as a fallen and sinful creature, and thoroughly familiar with the scriptural materials by which our convictions may be established and defended. It was a service of inestimable value which Edwards rendered to sound Christian theology, when, in his work upon e( "Original Sin," he so conclusively and unanswerably established from Scripture, reason, and experience, the great doctrine—u that all mankind are under the influence of a prevailing effectual tendency in their nature to that sin and wickedness which implies their utter and eternal ruin." The conclusive demonstration of this "great Christian doctrine," or the unanswerable establishment of this great fact as an actual feature in the condition of all men as they come into this world, entitles Edwards' work upon "Original Sin," notwithstanding some measure of obscurity and confusion on the subject of imputation, to be regarded as one of the most valuable, permanent, possessions of the Christian church.

The next stage in the history of the human race with respect to freewill, viewed as being virtually the history of a man,—of one man,—at different periods (and this is the light in which the matter is really represented to us in Scripture), is thus described in the Confession: "When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by His grace enables him freely to will and to, do that which is spiritually good. Yet so as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil." Here

again there is freedom of will ascribed to man in his regenerate state,— that is, an ability to will good as well as to will evil. In the regeneration of his nature the reigning power of depravity is subdued, and all the effects which it produced are more or less fully taken away. One of the principal of these effects was the utter bondage or servitude of the will to sin, because of the ungodly and depraved tendency of the whole moral nature to what was displeasing and offensive to God. This ungodly and depraved tendency is now, in conversion, to a large extent removed, and an opposite tendency is implanted. Thus the will is set free or emancipated from the bondage under which it was held. It is no longer subjected to a necessity—arising from the general character and tendency of man’s moral nature—to will only what is evil, but is now able also freely to will what is good; and it does freely will what is good, though, from the remaining corruption and depravity of man’s nature, it still wills also what is evil. It is not emancipated from the influence of God’s decrees foreordaining whatever comes to pass. It is not placed beyond the control of His providence, whereby in the execution of His decrees He ever rules and governs all His creatures and all their actions. It is not set free from the operation of those general laws which God has impressed upon man’s mental constitution, for directing the exercise of his faculties and regulating his mental processes. But it is set free from the dominion of depravity; and thereby it is exempted from the necessity of willing only what is evil, and made equally able freely to will what is good. It has recovered to a large extent the only liberty it ever lost; and it is determined and characterized now—as it had been in all the previous stages of man’s history, both before and after his fall—by his general moral character and tendencies;—free to good, when man had the image of God and original righteousness, but yet mutable so that it could will evil,— in bondage, when man was the slave of sin, so that it .could will only evil and not good,—emancipated, when man was regenerated, so that it could freely will good as well as evil, though still bearing many traces of the former bondage and of its injurious effects, —and finally, to adopt again the language of the Confession in closing the admirable chapter on this subject, “to be made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory.” The extract from Sir William Hamilton, on which chiefly we have been commenting, occurs in connection with a discussion embodying some important and valuable truth,—truth which admits of an obvious application to the exposition and defence of Christian, and especially of Calvinistic, doctrines. He declares his satisfaction in being able to show~, that his doctrine of “the conditioned” harmonizes with the general spirit of divine revelation, by inculcating humility in our speculations in the investigation of truth because of the imperfection and limitation of our faculties,—by showing the

unwarrantableness and absurdity of making our capacity of distinctly conceiving and fully comprehending doctrines, the measure or standard of their absolute truth, or of their consistency with each other; and the perfect reasonableness of believing, upon sufficient grounds, things which in some respects are beyond our grasp, and cannot be fully taken in or comprehended by the exercise of our faculties when brought directly to bear upon them. Now all this is very important truth in connection with the exposition and defence of the great doctrines of revelation, and especially of the profound and mysterious doctrines of Calvinism. Sir William has not here put forth anything which is not in substance to be found in the writings of theologians, and which, indeed, has not been brought forward more or less fully, and established more or less conclusively, by every intelligent defender of Calvinism. But it is not very common to find matter of this sort in the writings of philosophers; and Sir William, by giving it his sanction, has done a real service to the cause of truth and orthodoxy. He could not, however, let this topic pass without indulging himself in some characteristic statements, to which it may be proper briefly to advert. In his usual spirit he labours to convey the impression, that these views about the limitation of our faculties, and the bearing of this upon the discussion of mysterious doctrines, have not in general been understood and applied aright by theologians. He seems half inclined to insinuate, that these principles were little known till he promulgated them. But this was rather too absurd; and accordingly he feels constrained to make the following concession: —“It must, however, be admitted, that confessions of the total inability of man to conceive the union of what he should believe united, are to be found, and they are found not perhaps less frequently, and certainly in more explicit terms, among Catholic than among Protestant theologians.” It is certainly quite true, as is here asserted, that such statements “are to be found”—and indeed they constitute a perfectly familiar commonplace—among orthodox theologians. The alleged greater explicitness of Catholics than Protestants in stating these principles, is a mere *gratis dictum*, which has no foundation in the realities of the case. This statement seems to have been hazarded for the mere purpose of ushering in a quotation from Cardinal Cajetan, which, though about the best thing ever written upon the subject, Sir William felt confident was wholly unknown to theologians now-a-days. He described the quotation as “the conclusion of what, though wholly overlooked, appears to me as the ablest and truest criticism of the many fruitless, if not futile, attempts at conciliating the ways of God to the understanding of man, in the great articles of divine foreknowledge and predestination (which are both embarrassed by the self-same difficulties) and human freewill.” Sir William describes the passage as “wholly overlooked,” notwithstanding its superlative

merits. Now it so happens that we remember two instances—and there are in all probability more—in which this very quotation from Cajetan had been produced and commended by eminent writers,—one of them being no other than Bayle, who so often furnishes passages to “persons of ordinary information.” Gisbertus Voetius, one of the best known names in the theology of the seventeenth century,—a man who was at least as thoroughly versant in the literature of theology as Sir William was in that of philosophy, and who knew as much of the literature of philosophy as Sir William did of that of theology,—has quoted with approbation a part of this passage from Cajetan, in a “*Dissertatio Epistolica de Terminis Vitis*,” originally published in 1634, and republished at Utrecht in 1669, in the Appendix to the fifth volume of his “*Selectse Disputationes*.” The passage in Bayle is to be found in the second part of his “*Response aux Questions d’un Provincial*,”! where the extract from Cajetan is given as quoted with approbation by an eminent Dominican theologian, Alvarez, in a “*Traité de Auxiliis Divine Gratiae*.” Sir William, then, was mistaken in representing this passage in Cajetan as “wholly overlooked.” We do not suppose, indeed, that it was suggested to him by Voet or Bayle, for we rather suspect, especially as the passage after all contains nothing very extraordinary, that it was produced and paraded in the honest belief that no one knew anything about it but himself.

It may be worth while to mention, that the discussion in connection with which this passage is introduced by Bayle, is very similar to that in which Sir William brings it in. Bayle was doing on that occasion just what Sir William did in the immediately following part of his Appendix,—viz. collecting what he calls “testimonies to the limitation of our knowledge from the limitation of our faculties.” Bayle had often spoken very much to the same effect as Sir William has done, about the reasonableness and obligation of believing when we cannot know and fully comprehend. But this, coming from Bayle, was suspected of being intended to undermine the foundations of a rational faith; and to amount in substance very much to the same thing as Hume’s well-known sneer about our holy religion being founded not on reason but on faith. Bayle defended himself against these charges in the second and third of the “*Eclaircissements*,” subjoined to his Dictionary; and more formally and elaborately in the second part of his *e(* *Response aux Questions d’un Provincial*.” He was contending then against M. Jacquelot, who was a minister of the French Protestant Church, and, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, settled as minister of the French Church in Berlin. Jacquelot wrote a series of three works against Bayle; and though he was a man of real ability, he certainly gave his skilful adversary some advantage over him, by taking ground which in the present day we would describe as too

rationalistic. Several other eminent men took part in the controversy, especially La Placette, who, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, became minister of the French Protestant Church at Copenhagen. Different grounds were taken by the different combatants in opposing Bayle; and then some interesting discussions arose among themselves, as to the best ground to be taken in dealing with the great sceptic. The controversy thus, viewed as a whole, became extremely curious and interesting. We cannot dwell upon it; and can only remark, that Bayle had no difficulty in producing from many eminent men, both theologians and philosophers, quotations which certainly seemed very much the same in substance with his own statements, however different they might be in spirit and object; and that these quotations are in some instances identical with, and in general very similar to, those which Sir William has collected as “testimonies to the limitation of our knowledge from the limitation of our faculties.”

# Calvinism and Its Practical Application

One of the leading forms which, in the present day, aversion to divine truth exhibits, is a dislike to precise and definite statements upon the great subjects brought before us in the sacred Scriptures. This dislike to precision and definiteness in doctrinal statements sometimes assumes the form of reverence for the Bible, as if it arose from an absolute deference to the authority of the divine word, and an unwillingness to mix up the reasonings and deductions of men with the direct declarations of God. We believe that it arises much more frequently, and to a much greater extent, from a dislike to the controlling influence of Scripture,—from a desire to escape, as far as possible without denying its authority, from the trammels of its regulating power as an infallible rule of faith and duty. It is abundantly evident, from the statements of Scripture as well as from the experience of every age and country, that men in their natural condition, unrenewed by divine grace, have a strong aversion to right views of the divine character and of the way of salvation, or to the great system of doctrines revealed to us in the Bible; and are anxious to escape from any apparent obligation to believe them. The most obvious and effectual way of accomplishing this, is to deny the divine origin and authority of the sacred Scriptures,—their title and their fitness to be a rule of faith or standard of doctrine. And when men, from whatever cause, do not see their way to do this plainly and openly, they often attempt it, or something like it, in an indirect and insidious way, by distorting and perverting the statements of Scripture, by evading their fair meaning and application, or by devising pretences for declining to turn them to full account as a revelation of God's will to men, or to derive from them the whole amount of information about divine and eternal things which they seem fitted and intended to convey.



It has been the generally received doctrine of orthodox divines, and it is in entire accordance with reason and common sense, that we are bound to receive as true, on God's authority, not only what is "expressly set down in Scripture," but also what, "by good and necessary consequence, may be deduced from Scripture;" and heretics, in every age and of every class, have, even when they made a profession of receiving what is expressly set down in Scripture, shown the greatest aversion to what are sometimes called Scripture consequences,—that is, inferences or deductions from scriptural statements, beyond what is expressly contained in the mere words of Scripture, as they stand in the page of the sacred record. Some interesting discussion on the subject of the warrantableness, the validity, and the binding obligation of Scripture consequences took place in the early part of last century among the English Presbyterians, when some of them had been led to embrace Arian views. With the dishonesty which the history of the church proves to have been so generally a marked characteristic of heretics and men of progress, those of them who had really, in their convictions, abandoned the generally received doctrine of the Trinity, professed at first to object only to the unscriptural terms in which the doctrine was usually embodied; declaimed about freedom of thought and ecclesiastical tyranny; and denounced all Scripture consequences as unwarrantable and precarious, while they were, of course, quite willing to subscribe to the ipsissima verba of Scripture. But the progress of the discussion soon showed that these were hypocritical pretences; and that the men who employed them had deliberately adopted opinions in regard to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which have been generally repudiated by the church of Christ, and which could no more be brought out fully and distinctly as opposed to what they reckoned error, in the mere words of Scripture, than the sounder views which they rejected.

Upon the occasion to which we have referred, the repudiation of Scripture consequences, and the opposition to precise and definite views on doctrinal subjects, were directed chiefly against the doctrine of the Trinity. In the present day these views and tendencies are directed chiefly against the doctrine of a real vicarious atonement for the sins of men, and against the peculiar doctrines of the Calvinistic system of theology. Not that the true scriptural doctrine of the Trinity is more relished by men of rationalistic and sceptical tendencies, than it was in former times. It is not so. But men of this stamp seem generally, now-a-days, to be disposed to favour the attempt to evade or explain away this great doctrine, by adopting a kind of Platonic Sabellianism; and employing this as a sort of warrant for using not only the ipsissima verba of Scripture, but even a great deal of the language which has been commonly approved of by orthodox divines, as

embodying the substance of what Scripture teaches upon this subject. The doctrine of the atonement stands in this somewhat peculiar predicament among the great fundamental articles of revealed truth, that it was never subjected to a thorough, searching, controversial discussion till the time of Socinus. The consequence of this is, that, though there is satisfactory evidence that it was held in substance by the universal church ever since the apostolic age, there is a considerable amount of vagueness and indefiniteness, and a considerable deficiency of precise and accurate statement upon it, in the symbols of the ancient church and in the writings of the Fathers; and that even in the confessions of the Reformed churches,—there being no controversy on this topic with the Church of Rome,—it is not brought out so fully and precisely as most of the other fundamental doctrines of the Christian system. These facts have tended somewhat to encourage the practice, so common in the present day, of explaining away the true doctrine of the atonement, by concealing it in vague and indefinite language, under the pretence of repudiating Scripture consequences and adhering to the ipsissima verba of revelation. The leading presumption, so far as mere human authority is concerned, in opposition to these latitudinarian tendencies, is this,—that they virtually resolve into a defence of Socinianism; and that Socinus and his followers have been always regarded, both by the Church of Home and by the great body of the Protestant churches, as deniers and opposers of the great fundamental principles of the scheme of revealed truth, and as unworthy of the designation of Christians.

The doctrines of Calvinism are, as might be expected, dealt with, in this rationalistic and sceptical age, very much in the same way as the doctrines of the Trinity and the atonement. It is, indeed, only in the Calvinistic system of theology, that the doctrines of the proper divinity and vicarious atonement of Christ, and of the agency of the Holy Spirit, are fully developed in their practical application. Arminians admit the doctrines of the divinity and atonement of Christ, and ‘the agency of the Spirit, into their system of theology. But they do not fully apply them in some of their most important practical bearings and consequences. And, more especially, the general principles of their system preclude them from admitting the certain and infallible efficacy of these great provisions in securing the results which they were intended to accomplish. If the eternal and only-begotten Son of God assumed human nature into personal union with the divine; if He suffered and died as the surety and substitute of sinners, that He might satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God; and if, as one leading result of His mediation, He has brought into operation the agency of the third Person of the Godhead in order to complete the work of saving sinners,—it

seems a certain and unavoidable inference, that such stupendous arrangements as these must embody a provision for certainly effecting the whole result contemplated, whether that result was the salvation of all, or only of a portion, of the fallen race of man. Now, the Arminian system of theology not only does not exhibit any provision adequate to secure this result, but plainly precludes it; inasmuch as it is quite possible, for anything which that system contains, that the whole human race might perish—that no sinner might be saved. Arminianism thus tends to depreciate and disparage both the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit, in their bearing upon the great object they were intended to accomplish, the salvation of sinful men. It is only the Calvinistic views of the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, that are free from the great fundamental objection to which we have referred, of making no adequate provision for securing the result intended.

The Calvinistic doctrines in regard to the work of Christ and the agency of the Spirit are thus in beautiful harmony with the other departments of that system of theology,—with those doctrines which are commonly regarded as the special peculiarities of Calvinism. It is, we are persuaded, in some measure, because of the vague and indefinite position in which the other departments of the Arminian system require its adherents to leave the subjects of the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit, viewed in their relation to the practical result contemplated,, that they have been able to retain a profession of the divinity and atonement of Christ and of the agency of the Spirit, notwithstanding the rationalism on which the Arminian system of theology is really based. The tendency of Arminianism is to throw the w'ork of the Son and of the Spirit in the salvation of sinners into the background, and to lead to vagueness and indefiniteness in the statement of the truth concerning them; while in regard to those great doctrines which Calvinists and Arminians hold in common, in opposition to the Socinians, as well as in regard to the peculiar doctrines of their own system, Calvinists hold clear, precise, and definite opinions. This, in right reason, ought to be held to be a presumption of their truth; although with many, especially in the present day, it is held to furnish a plausible argument against them. Calvinism unfolds most fully and explicitly the whole system of doctrine revealed in the sacred Scriptures. It brings out most prominently and explicitly the sovereign agency of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the salvation of sinners; while it most thoroughly humbles and abases men, as the worthless and helpless recipients of the divine mercy and bounty.

Calvinism thus comes into full and direct collision with all the strongest

tendencies and prepossessions of ungodly and unrenewed men, and has, of course, been assailed with every species of objection. It cannot, indeed, with any great plausibility, be alleged, that it is founded only on Scripture consequences,—that is, inferences or deductions from scriptural statements. For Calvinists undertake to produce from Scripture, statements which directly and explicitly assert all their leading peculiar doctrines; and if the Calvinistic interpretation of these statements be just and well founded, it is plain that their fundamental principles are directly and explicitly sanctioned by the word of God. The case is very different with their opponents. Arminians, of course, undertake to show that the statements founded on by Calvinists are erroneously interpreted by them; and that, when rightly understood, they furnish no adequate support to Calvinism. But they scarcely allege that there are any scriptural statements which directly and explicitly either assert Arminianism, or contradict Calvinistic doctrines. The defence of Arminianism, and the opposition to Calvinism, are based chiefly upon inferences or deductions from Scripture statements; and statements, too, it is important to remark, which do not bear directly and immediately upon the precise points controverted. The scriptural argument for Arminianism and against Calvinism consists chiefly in a proof that God is holy, and just, and good; that He is not the author of sin, and is not a respecter of persons; that men are responsible for all their actions, and are justly chargeable with guilt and liable to punishment, when they refuse to obey God's law and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and then, in the inference or deduction, that the undeniable truth of these views of God and man. excludes Calvinism, and establishes Arminianism. This is really the substance of the scriptural argument for Arminianism and against Calvinism; while it is scarcely alleged by Arminians that there are any scriptural statements which directly and immediately disprove or exclude the doctrines of Calvinism. On the other hand, it is contended by Calvinists that their views are not only directly and explicitly asserted in many scriptural statements, but are also sanctioned by inferences or deductions from scriptural views of the attributes and moral government of God, and of the natural condition and capacities of man.

But though on these grounds, and by these processes, an impregnable argument can be built up in favour of Calvinism, yet it has many formidable difficulties to contend with. The views which it unfolds of the attributes and moral government of God, of the natural condition and capacities of man, and of the way of salvation as regulated and determined by these views of what God is and of what man is, are utterly opposed to all the natural notions and tendencies of ignorant and irreligious men; and the very clearness, definiteness, and precision with

which all these views are brought out and applied, are felt by many, especially in the present day, as strengthening and aggravating all the objections against them. The leading objections against Calvinism, though based principally upon inferences or deductions from admitted truths, are so obvious as to occur at once to every one, whenever the subject is presented to him; and they are possessed of very considerable plausibility. They are just in substance those which the Apostle Paul plainly gives us to understand would certainly, and as a matter of course, be directed against the doctrine which he taught. The apostle had laid down and established the great principle, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,"—"He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth." He then assumes that, as a matter of course, this principle would be objected to,—that men's natural notions would rise up in rebellion against it. "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?"—which is just, in plain terms, alleging that the apostle's doctrine made God the author of sin, and destroyed man's responsibility. And the apostle, in dealing in the following verses with this objection, makes no attempt to explain away the doctrine which he had laid down, or to back out of it; he does not withdraw or qualify the outspoken Calvinism which he had so plainly enunciated, and substitute for it the smooth and plausible Arminianism, which would at once have completely removed all appearance of ground for the objection. On the contrary, he, without qualification or hesitation, adheres to the doctrine he had stated; and disposes of the objection just as Calvinists—following his example—have always done, by resolving the whole matter into the unsearchable perfections and the sovereign supremacy of God, and the natural ignorance, helplessness, and worthlessness of man.

The whole substance of what has been, or can be, plausibly alleged against Calvinism, is contained in the objection which the apostle expected to be adduced against the doctrine he taught; and the whole substance of what is necessary for defending Calvinism, is contained in, or suggested by, the way in which he disposed of the objection. But the subject has given rise in every age to a great deal of ingenious and elaborate speculation; and this speculation has been frequently of a very unwarranted, presumptuous, and even offensive description,—the presumption and offensiveness being principally, though we admit not exclusively, exhibited on the side of the Arminians. We do not intend to enter upon a general discussion of the great leading objections which have been adduced against the Calvinistic system of theology, and of the way and manner in which these objections should be dealt with and disposed of. We have already

indicated briefly the leading considerations which should be brought to bear upon this subject, and which, when expounded and applied, are quite sufficient to dispose of all the plausible—and, at first sight, apparently formidable—objections that are commonly adduced against Calvinism; and thus to show that the whole of the strong, positive evidence in support of it—founded both on direct and express statements of Scripture, bearing immediately upon the points controverted, and also on clear and satisfactory inferences or deductions from the great general principles unfolded there, concerning God and man, the work of the Son and the Spirit, and the way of salvation—stands untouched and unimpaired, and ought to command the assent and consent of our understandings and our hearts. We mean to confine ourselves, in a great measure, to a consideration of some misapprehensions which have been put forth in the present day in regard to the practical application of Calvinism; and to an attempt to show that these misapprehensions arise from partial, defective, and erroneous conceptions on this whole subject.

There is only one topic connected with the more speculative aspects of the question, on which we wish to make some observations, *viz.* the connection between election and reprobation,—as it is often called,—and the use which the Arminians commonly attempt to make in controversial discussion of the latter of these doctrines. We had occasion formerly to censure the course of procedure usually adopted by the Arminians in this matter. But we think it deserving of somewhat further discussion, as this will afford us an opportunity of exposing a very unfair, but very plausible, controversial artifice, which we fear has done much injury to what we believe to be the cause of God and truth.

It is the common practice of theologians—though there are some diversities in this respect—to employ the word predestination as comprehending the whole of God’s decrees or purposes, His resolutions or determinations, with respect to the ultimate destiny, the eternal condition, of mankind; and to regard election and reprobation as two divisions of the subject, falling under the general head of predestination, and exhausting it. Election comprehends the decrees or purposes of God in regard to those of the human race who are ultimately saved; while reprobation is commonly used as a general designation of His decrees or purposes in regard to those men who finally perish. It is admitted by Arminians as well as Calvinists that God decreed or resolved from eternity to do whatever He does or effects in time; and conversely, that whatever He does in time, He from eternity decreed or resolved to do. This is not, on the part of the Arminians, anything tantamount to an admission of the great fundamental principle of

Calvinism,—viz. that “God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass;” for they hold that many things come to pass,—such as the actions of free and morally responsible beings,—of which God is not the author or cause. These things, Arminians allege, God does not do or effect; and consequently He did not from eternity resolve to do or effect them. But whatever God really does or effects in time,—whatever comes to pass by His agency, so that He is to be regarded as the author or efficient cause of it,—they admit that He must be regarded as having from eternity decreed or resolved to do or effect. It is important to remember that intelligent Arminians concede this general principle; for it is very common among the lower class of Arminian writers to talk as if there was some special and peculiar difficulty in the eternity of the divine decrees or purposes, beyond and in addition to what is involved in the execution of them in time. But this is a mere fallacy, intended to make an impression upon the minds of unreflecting men. It cannot be disputed, that whatever God does or effects in time, He from eternity decreed or resolved to do or effect; and there is plainly no greater or additional difficulty, no deeper or more inexplicable mystery, attaching to the eternal purpose to do a thing—to effect a result,—than to the actual doing or effecting of it in time. If God does or effects anything in time,—such as the production of faith and repentance in the heart of a moral and responsible being,—there can be no greater difficulty, so far as concerns either the character of God or the capacities of men, in His having resolved from eternity to effect this result. Whatever God really does in time, He not only may, but He must, from eternity have resolved or determined to do.

Arminians do not deny this general principle; but they are commonly disposed to throw it into the background, or at least to abstain from giving it prominence; partly in order to leave room for appealing to men’s feelings, as if there was something specially harsh and repulsive in the eternity of the decree as distinguished from the execution of it in time,—and partly to keep out of sight the compound or duplicate evidence which Calvinists can produce from Scripture in support of their leading doctrines, by the legitimate application of this principle of the certain and necessary identity of the purpose and the execution of it. Whatever indications are given us in Scripture, as to what God decreed or purposed in regard either to those who are saved or those who perish, go equally to establish what it is that He does in time in regard to these two classes respectively; and whatever information is given us as to what He does in time with reference to the salvation of men individually, equally indicates what we must regard Him as having from eternity determined to do. And thus the

scriptural evidence bearing upon both of these topics goes equally, and with combined force, to establish one great general conclusion, which is just the fundamental principle of the Calvinistic system of theology. But this by the way, —for we are not at present attempting a general discussion of predestination. We have adverted to this topic chiefly for the purpose of reminding our readers, that the words election and reprobation may be used, correctly enough, as general designations, either of what God purposed from eternity to do, or of what He does in time, in relation to the saved and the lost respectively; and that, so far as our present object is concerned, it is not necessary to have respect to this distinction between the eternal purpose and the execution of it.

Election, then, may be regarded as descriptive generally of what God purposed from eternity and does in time, in regard to the salvation of those who are saved; and reprobation as descriptive of what He purposed and does in regard to the fate of those who ultimately perish. And as those who are saved and those who perish comprehend all the individuals of the human race, it is evident, from the nature of the case, that election and reprobation must stand in a very close and intimate mutual relation; so that, if we have full and accurate conceptions of the one, we must thereby necessarily also know something of the other. Election, taken in this wide and general sense, is evidently a subject of much greater practical importance than reprobation; and, accordingly, there is much fuller and more direct information given us about it in Scripture. There is a great deal told us there about God's purposes and procedure with respect to those who are saved; and there is very little, comparatively, told us about God's purposes and procedure with respect to those who perish. We have, indeed, full information supplied to us, as to what it is that men must do to be saved,—as to what is required of them that they may escape God's wrath and curse due to them for their sins; and we are assured that those to whom this information is communicated, and who fail to improve it for their own salvation, are themselves responsible for the fearful result. This information is of the last importance, and it is fully furnished to us in Scripture. But beyond this there is little told us in regard to those who perish,—very little, especially, in regard to any purposes or actings of God bearing upon their ultimate destiny as individuals. We have much information given us in Scripture about God's purposes and actings in regard to those who are saved. We are told plainly of His eternal choice or selection of them for salvation, out of the human race all equally sunk in guilt and depravity; of His absolute, unconditional determination to save these persons so chosen or selected, in accordance with the provisions of a great scheme, which secures the glory of the divine character, the honour of the



divine law, and the interests of personal holiness; and of the execution of this decree—the accomplishment of this purpose—by giving to these persons, or effecting in them, faith and regeneration, with all their appropriate results, by watching over them with special care after these great changes have been effected, by upholding and preserving them in the exercise of faith and in the practice of holiness, and by preparing them fully for the inheritance of the saints in light. By the application of these principles, we are able to give a full account of the great leading features and events in the history of every soul that is saved, from the eternal sovereign purpose of God to save that soul till its final admission to glory.

Calvinists contend that all these principles are set forth very directly and explicitly in the statements of Scripture; and in this state of things, common sense and common fairness plainly dictate, that the first thing to be done is to investigate and ascertain whether or not Scripture sanctions them; and if the result of the inquiry be a conviction that it does, to receive them as true and certain, along with all that is involved in, or results from them. Arminians, of course, deny that Scripture sanctions these principles, and endeavour to show the insufficiency of the grounds on which scriptural support is claimed for them. But they often prefer to conduct the discussion in a different way. They are usually anxious to give priority and prominence to the subject of reprobation; and having refuted, as they think, the Calvinistic doctrine upon this subject, they then draw the inference or deduction, that since election and reprobation are correlatives, and necessarily imply each other, the disproof of reprobation involves a disproof of election. Their reasons for adopting this line of policy in conducting the discussion are abundantly obvious, and somewhat tempting, but very far from being satisfactory or creditable. The Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation admits more easily of being distorted and perverted by misrepresentation than the doctrine of election; and of this facility many Arminians have not scrupled to avail themselves. The awful and mysterious subject of reprobation can likewise be easily presented in lights which make it appear harsh and repulsive to men's natural feelings; and this is one main reason why Arminians are so fond of dwelling upon it, and labouring to give it great prominence in the discussion of this whole matter. The injustice and unfairness of this mode of dealing with the question is established by the consideration already adverted to,—viz. that there is much fuller and more explicit information given us in Scripture on the subject of election than of reprobation. If this be so, then it is plainly the dictate of common sense and common fairness, that we should investigate the evidence of the doctrine of election before we proceed to consider that of reprobation; and

that we should not allow the conclusions we may have reached, upon satisfactory evidence, with respect to the subject that is more clearly revealed, to be disturbed by difficulties with respect to a subject which God has left shrouded in somewhat greater mystery.

Calvinists not only admit, but contend, that both as to their import and meaning, and as to their proof or evidence, the doctrines of election and reprobation are closely connected with each other; and that inferences or deductions with respect to the one may be legitimately and conclusively derived from the other. In the nature of the case, God's purposes and procedure in regard to those who are saved must affect or regulate His purposes and procedure in regard to those who perish; and the knowledge of the one must throw some light upon the other. Calvinists have always maintained that the whole of what they believe and teach upon the subject of reprobation may be deduced, by undeniable logical inference, from the doctrine which they hold to be clearly taught in Scripture on the subject of election; and that it is also confirmed by the more vague and imperfect information given us in Scripture, bearing directly upon the subject of the fate of those who perish. No intelligent Calvinist has ever disputed the position, that election necessarily implies and leads to a corresponding reprobation. No Calvinists, indeed, have ever disputed this; except some of the weaker brethren among the evangelical churchmen in England, who have professed to believe in Calvinistic election as plainly set forth in their 17th Article, but who have declined to admit the doctrine of reprobation in any sense. We can sympathize with the feeling which leads men to shrink from giving prominence to this awful and mysterious subject, and even with the feeling which led to the omission of any formal deliverance regarding it, both in the Articles of the Church of England and in the original Scotch Confession of 1560, though both prepared by Calvinists. But there is no reason why men, in their investigation of divine truth, should not ascertain and state, and when necessary maintain and defend, the whole of what is contained in, or may be deduced from, Scripture on this as on other subjects.

Arminians, for controversial purposes, have frequently given great and undue prominence to this subject of reprobation; and some Calvinists, provoked by this unfair and discreditable procedure, have been occasionally tempted to follow their opponents into a minuteness and rashness of speculation that was painful and unbecoming. But Calvinists in general, while not shrinking from the discussion of this subject, have never shown any desire to enlarge upon it, beyond what was rendered necessary by the importunity of their opponents; and

have usually conducted the discussion under the influence of a sense of the imperative obligation to keep strictly within the limits of what is revealed, and to carry on the whole investigation under a deep feeling of reverence and holy awe. Very different have been the spirit and conduct of many Arminians in dealing with this mysterious subject. They often shrink from meeting fairly and manfully the great mass of direct and positive evidence which can be produced from Scripture in support of the Calvinistic doctrine of election. They prefer to assail it indirectly by an attack upon the doctrine of reprobation; and they adopt this course because, as we have said, there is much less information given us in Scripture about reprobation than election, and because it is easier to distort and misrepresent the Calvinistic doctrine upon the one subject than the other, and to excite a prejudice against it. No man of ordinary candour will deny, that a great deal of evidence, which is at least very plausible, has been produced from statements contained in Scripture, in support of the Calvinistic doctrine of election. And if this be so, Calvinists are entitled to insist, that men who profess to be seeking the truth, and not merely contending for victory, shall, in the first place, deal with this direct and positive evidence, and dispose of it, by either admitting or disproving its validity; and shall not, in the first instance, have recourse to any indirect, inferential, and circuitous process for deciding the point at issue. But this mode of procedure, though plainly demanded by sound logic and an honest love of truth, is one which Arminians rather dislike and avoid; and hence the anxiety they have often shown to give priority and prominence to the subject of reprobation, and to attempt to settle the whole question about predestination by inferences deduced from it.

When the Remonstrants or Arminians were cited before the Synod of Dort, they insisted that, under the first article, which treated of predestination in general, the discussion should begin with an investigation of the doctrine of reprobation; and when the Synod, upon the obvious grounds of sound logic, common sense, and ordinary fairness, to which we have referred,—and which are fully set forth in the Judgments of the different Colleges of the Foreign Divines, embodied in the Acts of the Synod, —refused to concede this demand, the Arminians loudly complained of this as an act of great hardship and injustice. The excuse they gave for making this demand was this: that the difficulties which they had been led to entertain in regard to the truth of the system of doctrine generally received in the Reformed churches, were chiefly connected with the subject of reprobation; and that if this point could be cleared up to their satisfaction, there might be some hope of the two parties coming to an agreement. But this, besides being a mere pretence, was, upon the grounds which we have already adduced,

plainly untenable upon any right basis of argument. It is conclusively answered by the fair application of the considerations,—that there is much fuller and clearer information given us in Scripture about election than about reprobation; that Calvinists really hold nothing on the subject of reprobation but what is virtually contained in, and necessarily deducible from, what is plainly taught in Scripture on the subject of election; and that the scriptural evidence for the doctrine of reprobation is, mainly and principally, though not exclusively, to be found in the scriptural proof of the doctrine of election,—that is, in the fair and legitimate application of the views revealed to us as to what God has purposed and does with respect to those who are saved, to the investigation of the question as to what He has purposed and does, or rather has not purposed and does not do, with respect to those who perish.

This unreasonable, unfair, and discreditable mode of procedure, adopted by Episcopius and his associates at the Synod of Dort, has been often since exhibited by Arminian controversialists, at least practically and in substance; though perhaps it has not been so explicitly stated, and so openly defended, as upon that occasion. We may refer to two or three instances of this.

The first work that appeared in England containing a formal and elaborate attack upon the Calvinistic system of theology, was published anonymously in 1633. Its author was Samuel Hoard, rector of Moreton, and its title was, “God’s Love to Mankind manifested by disproving His Absolute Decree for their Damnation.” And in accordance with this title, the work just consists of an attack upon the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation, grossly distorted and misrepresented; without an attempt to answer the great mass of direct and positive proof, which Calvinists have produced from Scripture, in support of their doctrine of election. This work of Hoard’s had the honour of being formally answered by three great theologians,—Davenant, Twisse, and Amyraut,—the diversity of whose views upon some points, while they agreed in the main, gave, perhaps, to the discussion as a whole, additional interest and value. Davenant’s answer to Hoard was published in 1641, and is entitled, “Animadversions written by the Right Rev. Father in God, John, Lord Bishop of Salisbury, upon a Treatise entitled, ‘God’s Love to Mankind.’” Amyraut’s answer to Hoard was also published in 1641, and is entitled, “*Doctrinae J. Calvini de Absoluto Reprobationis Deere to Defensio.*” Hoard’s work had been translated into Latin, and published at Amsterdam, under the auspices of Grotius. Amyraut, who had incurred the suspicion of orthodox divines, by advocating—in his treatise on predestination, published in 1634—the doctrine of universal redemption, seized

this opportunity of showing that he zealously maintained the fundamental principles of the Calvinistic system of theology, by preparing and publishing a reply to this work, in defence of the doctrine of Calvin. Twisse's reply to Hoard,, though written before any of the other answers, and, indeed, principally before the publication of Hoard's work, which had been sent to him in manuscript, was not published till some years after its author's death. It is entitled, "The Riches of God's Love unto the Vessels of Mercy consistent with His Absolute Hatred or Reprobation of the Vessels of Wrath." It was published in 1653, and was licensed and recommended by Dr Owen, at that time ViceChancellor of Oxford. The first sentence of Owen's prefatory recommendation of Twisse's work is admirably pertinent to our purpose, and, indeed, brings out the only point with which we have at present to do in connection with this matter. It is this:—

£'Of all those weighty parcels of gospel truth which the Arminians have chosen to oppose, there is not any about which they so much delight to try and exercise the strength of fleshly reasonings, as that of God's eternal decree of reprobation; partly, because the Scripture doth not so abound in the delivery of this doctrine, as of some others lying in a more immediate subserviency to the obedience and consolation of the saints (though it be sufficiently revealed in them to the quieting of their spirits who have learned to captivate their understandings to the obedience of faith),—and partly, because they apprehend the truth thereof to be more exposed to the riotous oppositions of men's tumultuating, carnal affections, whose help and assistance they by all means court and solicit in their contests against it."

These three replies to Hoard rank among the most important and valuable works in this department of controversial theology. But at present we have to do with them only in this respect, that they all fully expose the erroneous and distorted account which Hoard gives of what it is that Calvinists really hold upon the subject of reprobation, and bring out the absurdity and unfairness of giving so much prominence to this topic in discussing the general question of predestination,—instead of beginning with the much more important subject of election, about which we have much fuller information given us in Scripture; and then, when the doctrine of Scripture upon the subject of election has been investigated and ascertained, proceeding to apply this, in connection with the fewer and obscurer intimations given us directly concerning reprobation, in determining what we ought to believe regarding it. We may give two or three extracts on these points from Davenant, whom—notwithstanding his somewhat unsound views as to the extent of the atonement—we consider one of the

greatest divines the Church of England has ever produced. He thus points out the unfairness of the title, and of the general scope and object, of Hoard's work, while admitting—as, of course, every intelligent theologian must do—that the election of some men necessarily implies a corresponding reprobation of the rest; and indicating, at the same time, the true use and application that should be made of the fact, that the 17th Article of the Church of England, though explicitly asserting the Calvinistic doctrine of election, makes no direct mention of reprobation.

“. . . Obliquely to oppose the eternal, free, and absolute decree of predestination or election, under colour of disapproving an absolute decree for any man's damnation, befitteth not any divine who acknowledgeth the truth of that doctrine which the Scriptures have delivered, St Augustine cleared, and the Church of England established in the 17th Article. But if the author of this treatise had no other aim than the overthrowing of such an eternal decree of predestination and preterition, as is fondly supposed will save men whether they repent or not repent, believe or not believe, persevere or not persevere; and such an absolute decree of reprobation as will damn men, though they should repent and believe, or will hinder any man from repenting or believing, or will cause and work any man's impenitency or infidelity; we both wish, and shall endeavour together with him, to root such erroneous fancies out of all Christian minds.”

“The title of the book justly rejecteth an absolute decree for the damnation of any particular person: for such a decree was never enacted in God's eternal counsel, nor ever published in His revealed word. But for absolute reprobation,—if by this word be understood only that preterition, nonelection, or negative decree of predestination, which is contradictorily opposed to the decree of election,—the one is as absolute as the other, and neither dependeth upon the foreseen difference of men's actions, but upon the absolute will of God. For if God from eternity absolutely elected some unto the infallible attainment of grace and glory, we cannot but grant that those who are not comprised within this absolute decree are as absolutely passed by, as the other are chosen. The decree of damnation, therefore, must not be confounded with the decree of negative predestination, which (according to the phrase of the school rather than of the Scripture) is usually termed reprobation. By which term of reprobation some understand only the denial of election or predestination. And because the negation is to be measured by the affirmation, unless we be agreed what is meant when we say, Peter was predestinated before the foundations of the world were laid, we can never rightly judge what is meant when, on the contrary, we avouch,

Judas was reprobated before the foundations of the world were laid. Some others, under the name of reprobation, involve not only the negative decree of preparing such effectual grace as would bring them most certainly unto glory, but an affirmative decree also for the punishing of men eternally in hell-fire.

“So far forth as this author seemeth to oppose the absolute decree of predestination, and the absolute decree of negative reprobation or nonelection, reducing them to the contrary foreseen conditions of good or bad acts in men, he crosseth the received doctrine of the Church of England. But if he intend only to prove that the adjudication of men unto eternal life or eternal death, and the temporal introduction of men into the kingdom of heaven, or casting of men into the torments of hell, are always accompanied with the divine prescience or intuition of contrary acts or qualities in those which are to be saved or condemned, we hold it and acknowledge it a most certain truth. Yet we must here add, that predestination and preterition are eternal acts immanent in God the Creator, whereas salvation and damnation are temporal effects terminated unto the creature: and therefore the latter may be suspended upon many conditions, though the former be in God never so absolute.

“The treatise ensuing would have had much more perspicuity if the author had briefly and plainly set down what he understandeth by this word predestination or election, and whether he conceive it to be an absolute or a conditional decree. If conditional, he should have showed us with whom God conditioned, upon what terms, and where the conditions stand upon record. If he grant absolute predestination, his plea for conditionate preterition will be to little purpose, with those who understand that the absolute election of such a certain number doth in eodem signo rationis as absolutely imply a certain number of men not elected.

“The wisdom of our Church of England in the 17th Article layeth down the doctrine of predestination, and doth not so much as in one word meddle with the point of reprobation; leaving men to conceive that the one is the bare negation or denial of that special favour and benefit which is freely intended and mercifully bestowed in the other. Would to God the children of this church had imitated the wisdom of their mother, and had not taken a quite contrary course, baulking the doctrine of predestination, and breaking in abruptly upon the doctrine of reprobation.

“I know not whether I should think him more defective who, in disputing about

reprobation, runneth out into impertinent vagaries, or him that under-taketh the handling of this question without premising and opening the true nature of predestination.

“And no man need fear but (with all that are judicious, religious, and loving their own salvation) that manner of handling this controversy will be best accepted, which so reduceth man’s sin and damnation to himself, as withal it forgetteth not to reduce his justification, sanctification, glorification, not to any foreseen goodness springing out of man’s free-will, but to the free mercy of God, according to His eternal purpose effectually working in men those gifts and acts of grace which are the means to bring them unto glory.”

“If striving to be close he a probable argument of a bad cause, those who are afraid to deal with the more lightsome part of this controversy which concerneth election and predestination, and thrust themselves, without borrowing any light from this, into the other (which, taken by itself, is much more dark and obscure), are the men who strive to wrap themselves and others in an obscure and ‘dark cloud. Our Church of England was more willing and desirous to set down expressly the doctrine of absolute predestination, I mean of predestination causing faith and perseverance, than it was of absolute negative reprobation, I mean of such reprobation as implieth in God a will of permitting some men’s final impiety and impenitency, and of justly ordaining them unto punishment for the same: and yet the latter doth plainly follow upon the truth of the former. It was wisdom, and not Jewish or Turkish fear, which made our church so clear in the article for absolute predestination, and yet so reserved in the other; easily perceiving that predestination of some men cannot be affirmed, but non-predestination or preterition or negative reprobation (call it as you please) of some others must needs therewith be understood.

“Though truth be best uncovered, yet all truths are not of the same nature, nor alike profitable to be debated upon: yet for the truth of absolute reprobation, so far forth as it is connected and conjoined with absolute predestination, when the main intent of the Remonstrants is by opposing of the former to overthrow the latter, it importeth those who have subscribed to the 17th Article not to suffer it to be obliquely undermined.”

“The opinion here aimed at is the doctrine of absolute reprobation, concerning which all disputes are frivolous, if it be not first agreed upon what is understood by these two words, absolute reprobation.



“For the understanding whereof, observe first, what our church conceiveth under the term of predestination. If a decree of God first beholding and foreseeing certain particular persons as believing and constantly persevering unto the end in faith and godliness, and thereupon electing them unto eternal happiness, then we will grant that the Remonstrants (whom this author followeth) embrace the doctrine of the Church of England. But if, in our 17th Article, God in His eternal predestination beholdeth all men as lying in massa corrupta, and decreeth out of this generality of mankind, being all in a like damnable condition, to elect some by His secret counsel, to deliver them from the curse and damnation by a special calling according to His eternal purpose, and by working in them faith and perseverance; then it is plain that the Remonstrants and this author have left the doctrine of the Church of England in the point of predestination, and therefore may well be suspected also in the point of reprobation, which must have its true measure taken from that other.

“Secondly, take notice, what the word absolute importeth when it is applied unto the eternal and immanent acts or decrees of the divine predestination. Not (as the Remonstrants continually mistake it) a peremptory decree of saving persons elected, whether they believe or not believe, nor yet a decree of forcing or necessitating predestinate persons unto the acts of believing, repenting, persevering, or walking in the way which leadeth unto everlasting life; but a gracious and absolute decree of bestowing as well faith, repentance, and perseverance, as eternal life, upon all those to whom, in His everlasting purpose, He vouchsafed the special benefit of predestination. And that God can and doth according to His eternal purpose infallibly work faith and perseverance in the elect, without any coercion or necessitation of man’s will, is agreed upon by all catholic divines, and was never opposed but by Pelagius. And this absolute intending of eternal life to persons elected, and absolute intending of giving unto such the special grace of a perseverant faith, is that absolute predestination which our mother the church hath commended unto us, and which we must defend against the error of the semi-Pelagians and Remonstrants, who strive to bring in a predestination or election wherein God seeth faith and perseverance in certain men going before predestination, and doth not prepare it for them in eternity by His special act of predestination, nor bestow it upon them in due time, as a consequent effect of His eternal predestination.

“Thirdly, it is to be observed, that our church, in not speaking one word of reprobation in the Article, would have us to be more sparing in discussing this point than that other of election; quite contrary to the humour of the

Remonstrants, who hang back when they are called to dispute upon predestination, but will by no authority be beat off from rushing at the first dash upon the point of reprobation.

“But further, from hence we may well collect, that our church, which by predestination understandeth a special benefit out of God’s mercy and absolute freedom, absolutely prepared from all eternity, and in time bestowed infallibly upon the elect, would have us conceive no further of the silenced decree of reprobation, than the not preparing of such effectual grace, the not decreeing of such persons unto the infallible attainment of glory, the decreeing to permit them through their own default deservedly and infallibly to procure their own misery. All this is no more than God himself hath avouched of himself, ‘miserebor cui voluero, et clemens ero in quem mihi placuerit.’ And that which the apostle attributeth unto God.

“Fourthly, this non-predestinatio, nonelectio, prseteritio or negatwa reprobatio (for by all these names divines speak of it), doth as absolutely leave some out of the number of the predestinate, as predestination doth include others within the same number. And the number of both, formally and materially, is so certain, that the diminution or augmentation of either is, by the general consent of orthodox divines, condemned for an erroneous opinion: though the semi-Pelagians spurned against this truth. If, under the name of absolute predestination, any conceive a violent decree of God thrusting men into a state of grace and glory, and under the name of absolute reprobation, a violent decree of God thrusting men into sin and misery, let who will confute them: for their opinion is erroneous concerning the one, and blasphemous concerning the other. But under colour of opposing such imaginary decrees, to bring in a conditionate predestination, to exclude this negative reprobation, to settle them both upon provision of human acts, is opposite to the doctrine of St Augustine, approved anciently by the catholic church, and till this new-fangled age, generally and commonly allowed and embraced both by the Romanists and by the Protestants.” Arminians, in more modern times, have not been slow to follow the example set them by their predecessors, in the mode of dealing with this subject. Whitby, in his Discourse on the Five Points,—which, though not a work of any great ability, was for a century, and until superseded by Tomline’s “Refutation of Calvinism,” the great oracle and text-book of the anti-evangelical Arminians of the Church of England,—devotes the two first chapters to the subject of reprobation. But perhaps the folly and unfairness of the Arminian mode of dealing with this subject, may be regarded as having reached its acme in John Wesley’s treatise,

entitled, "Predestination calmly considered," which was published about the middle of last century, and is contained in the tenth volume of the collected edition of his works. Wesley, in this treatise, begins with proving—what no intelligent Calvinist disputes—that the election of some men to everlasting life, necessarily implies what may be called a reprobation of the rest; or, as he expresses it, that "unconditional election cannot appear without the cloven foot of reprobation." And having established this, he straightway commences an elaborate and violent attack upon reprobation, which he describes as "that millstone which hangs about the neck of your whole hypothesis,"! without attempting to grapple with the direct positive scriptural evidence, by which the doctrine of unconditional election has been established. Dr Gill, in an excellent reply to this treatise, entitled, "The Doctrine of Predestination stated/' truly describes it in this way:—"Though he calls his pamphlet 'Predestination calmly considered,' yet it only considers one part of it, reprobation; and that not in a way of argument but harangue, not taking notice of our argument from Scripture or reason, only making some cavilling exceptions to it." Wesley, indeed, is so engrossed and excited by reprobation, that he calls out, in a sort of frenzy, "Find out any election which does not imply reprobation, and I will gladly agree to it. But reprobation I can never agree to, while I believe the Scripture to be of God." This mode of contemplating and dealing with the subject is manifestly inconsistent with sound reason and an honest love of truth. The first duty incumbent upon Wesley, and upon all men, in this matter, was just to "find out" what Scripture taught upon the subject of election, to receive its teaching upon that point with implicit submission, and to follow out the doctrine thus ascertained to all its legitimate consequences. He tells us, indeed, that he could not find the Calvinistic doctrine of election in Scripture; but he has not explained to us how he managed to dispose of the direct positive evidence usually adduced from Scripture in support of it. And we venture to think that if he had examined Scripture with due impartiality, without allowing himself to be scared by the bugbear of what he calls "the cloven foot of reprobation," he would have found, as Calvinists have done, this election to be taught there,—viz., that God from eternity, out of the good pleasure of His own will, elected some men, absolutely and unconditionally, to everlasting life; and that, in the execution of this purpose, He invariably and infallibly bestows upon these men that faith, regeneration, and perseverance, which He alone can bestow, and without which they cannot be saved. We admit that this election necessarily implies a corresponding reprobation; but we really believe nothing more upon the subject of reprobation than what the election plainly taught in Scripture necessarily implies,—viz. this, that God passes by the rest of men, the nonelect, and leaves

them in their natural state of guilt and depravity, withholding from them, or de facto not conferring upon them, that special grace, which, as He of course well knows, is necessary to the production of faith and regeneration; and doing this, as well as ultimately punishing them for their sin, in accordance with a decree or purpose which He had formed from eternity. We find in Scripture an election which necessarily implies this reprobation; and therefore we believe both upon the testimony of God. We do not consider ourselves at liberty to agree to “any election,” as Wesley says, but what we find taught in Scripture; and we regard ourselves as bound to agree to this election because taught there, even though it necessarily involves all that we believe on the subject of reprobation.

But we have said enough, we think, to show the unreasonableness and unfairness of the course frequently pursued by the Arminians, in labouring to excite a prejudice against the doctrine of election, by giving priority and prominence to the discussion of reprobation; and to enforce the obligation of the duty plainly imposed by logic, common sense, and candour, to deal in the first place, deliberately and impartially, with the mass of direct and positive scriptural evidence which Calvinists adduce in support of their doctrine of election,—without being prepossessed or prejudiced by any inferences or deductions that may be drawn from it, whether warrantably or the reverse, or by any collateral and extraneous considerations. Without pretending to discuss this subject, we would like, before leaving it, to make a few explanatory remarks, in the way of guarding against misapprehensions and misrepresentations of the doctrine generally held by Calvinists regarding it.

O O The sum and substance of what Calvinists believe upon the subject is this, that God decreed or purposed from eternity to do what He actually does in time, in regard to those who perish as well as in regard to those who are saved; and that this is in substance withholding from them, or abstaining from communicating to them, those gracious and insuperable influences of His Spirit, by which alone faith and regeneration can be produced, leaving them in their natural state of sin and misery, and then at last inflicting upon them the punishment which by their sin they have deserved. In stating and discussing the question about reprobation, Calvinistic divines are careful, as may be seen in the extracts quoted above from Davenant, to distinguish between two different acts, decreed or resolved on by God from eternity and executed by Him in time; the one negative and the other positive,—the one sovereign and the other judicial,—and both frequently comprehended under the general name of reprobation. The first of these, the negative or sovereign,—which is commonly called

nonelection, preterition, or passing by,—is simply resolving to leave (and in consequence leaving) some men, those not chosen to everlasting life, in their natural state of sin and misery,—to withhold from them, or to abstain from conferring upon them, those supernatural gracious influences which are necessary to enable any man to repent and believe; so that the result is, that they continue in their sin, with the guilt of all their transgressions upon their head. The second act—the positive or judicial—is more properly that which is called in the Westminster Confession of Faith, “foreordaining to everlasting death,” and “ordaining” those who have been passed by “to dishonour and wrrath for their sin.” God ordains no men to wrath or punishment except on account of their sin; and makes no decree, forms no purpose, to subject any to punishment, but what has reference to, and is founded on, their sin, as a thing certain and contemplated. But the first or negative act of nonelection—preterition, or passing by—may be said to be absolute, since it is not founded on sin, and perseverance in it, as foreseen. Sin foreseen cannot be the proper ground or cause why some men are elected and others are passed by, for all men are sinners, and were foreseen as such. It cannot be alleged that those who were not elected, and who are passed by in the communication of special supernatural grace, have always been greater sinners than those who have been chosen and brought to eternal life. And with respect to the idea which might naturally suggest itself,—viz. that final impenitence, or unbelief foreseen might be the ground or cause, not only of the positive or judicial act of foreordination to punishment and misery, but also of the negative act of preterition,—this Calvinists hold to be inconsistent with the scriptural statements which so plainly ascribe the production of faith and regeneration, and of perseverance in faith and holiness, wherever they are produced, solely to the good pleasure of God and the efficacious operation of His Spirit, viewed in connection with the undoubted truth that He could, if He had chosen, have as easily produced the same results in others; and inconsistent likewise with the intimations plainly given us in Scripture, that there is something in God’s purposes and procedure, even in regard to those who perish, which can be resolved only into His own good pleasure, into the most wise and holy counsel of His will.

The leading objections against the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation are founded upon misapprehensions and misrepresentations of its real import and bearings. The objections usually adduced against it are chiefly these; that it implies, 1st, That God created many men in order that He might at last consign them to everlasting misery; and 2d, That His decree of reprobation, or His eternal purpose concerning those who perish, is the proper cause or source of the

sin and unbelief, on account of which they are ultimately condemned to destruction. Now Calvinists do not teach these doctrines, but repudiate and abjure them. They maintain that these doctrines cannot be shown to be fairly involved in anything which they do teach upon this subject. The answer to both these objections is mainly based upon the views we hold with respect to the original state and condition of man at his creation, and the sin and misery into which he afterwards fell. God made man upright, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness,—fitted and designed to glorify and enjoy his Maker; and this brings out the only true and proper end for which man was created. Calvinists have always not only admitted but contended, that there are important differences between the relation in which the divine foresight of the unbelief and impenitence of those who perish stands to the decree of reprobation, and that in which the foresight of the faith and perseverance of those who are saved stands to the decree of election; and between the way and manner in which these two decrees operate in the production of the means by which they are executed, means which may be said to consist substantially in the character and actions of their respective objects. We cannot dwell upon these differences. It is sufficient to say, that while Calvinists maintain that the decree of election is the cause or source of faith, holiness, and perseverance, in all in whom they are produced; they hold that the preterition of some men—that is, the first or negative act in the decree of reprobation, based upon God's good pleasure, the counsel of His will—puts nothing in men, causes or effects no change in them, but simply leaves them as it found them, in the state of guilt and depravity to which they had fallen; while they admit that the second or positive part of the decree of reprobation, the foreordination to wrath and misery, as distinguished from preterition, is founded upon the foresight of men's continuance in sin. God, in the purpose and act of preterition, took from them nothing which they had, withheld from them nothing to which they had a claim, exerted upon them no influence to constrain them to continue in sin, or to prevent them from repenting and believing; and in further appointing them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, He was not resolving to inflict upon them anything but what He foresaw that they would then have fully merited.

The considerations which have now been hinted at are amply sufficient, when expounded and applied, as they have been by Calvinistic divines, to answer the objections of the Arminians,— that is, the special objections which they usually adduce against the doctrine of reprobation, as distinguished from the more general objections commonly directed against the Calvinistic system of theology as a whole; and to expose the injustice and unfairness of the misrepresentations

which they often give of our sentiments, that they may give greater plausibility to their objections.

We have stated that we do not mean to enter into the consideration of any of the great leading objections against Calvinism, based upon its alleged inconsistency with the moral attributes of God and the responsibility of man; or of the more abstract theoretical speculations which have been brought to bear upon the investigation of this subject. We propose to consider only some of the misapprehensions that have been put forth, and some of the difficulties that have been started, in regard to its practical application.

There is one general form of misrepresentation which Arminians often employ in dealing with the doctrines of Calvinism. It is exhibited in the practice of taking a part of our doctrine, disjoined from the rest, representing it as the whole of what we teach upon the point; and then showing, that thus viewed it is liable to serious objections and leads to injurious consequences. It is by a process of this sort that they give plausibility to their very common and favourite allegation, that the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination discourages or renders unnecessary the use of means, the employment of efforts for the attainment of ends, which we may be under an obligation to aim at, or influenced, by a desire to effect,—that it tends to discourage or preclude the steady pursuit of holiness, the conscientious discharge of duty, and the diligent improvement of the means of grace. Now this common allegation is possessed of plausibility, only if it be assumed as the doctrine of Calvinists, that God has foreordained the end without having also foreordained the means; and when their true and real doctrine upon the subject is brought out in all its extent and completeness, the plausibility of the objection entirely disappears.

The doctrine of the Westminster Confession upon this point is this,—that by God's decree ordaining from eternity whatsoever cometh to pass, the liberty or contingency of second causes is not taken away but rather established; and that "although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet by the same providence He ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently;"—that is, necessary things—things necessary from the nature or constitution which He has conferred on them, or the laws which He has prescribed to them—He ordereth to fall out, or take place, necessarily, or in accordance with their constitution and laws; and in like manner, He ordereth free things, as men's actions, to fall out or take place freely,

and contingent things contingently, according to their respective natures and proper regulating principles. The Confession also teaches, with more special reference to men's eternal destinies, "that as God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto." { And these means, of course, comprehend their faith, conversion, sanctification, and perseverance,—means indispensably necessary in every instance to the attainment of the end. Now, this doctrine of the foreordination of the means as well as the end—a foreordination which not only leaves unimpaired to second causes the operation of their own proper nature, constitution, and laws, but preserves and secures them in the possession and exercise of all these—is not only quite consistent with the Calvinistic scheme of doctrine, but forms a necessary and indispensable part of it. No doctrine does or can establish so firmly as this the actual invariable connection between the means and the end; and no doctrine is fitted to preserve in the minds of men so deep a sense of the reality and certainty of this connection. No Calvinist who understands the doctrine he professes to believe, and who takes it in and applies it in all its extent, can be in any danger of neglecting the use of means, which he knows to be fitting, in their own nature or by God's appointment, as means, for the attainment of an end which he desires to have accomplished; because he must see, that to act in this way is practically to deny a part of the truth which he professes to hold,—that is, to deny that God has foreordained the means as well as the end, and has thus established a certain and invariable connection between them. Calvinists are in danger of being tempted to act upon this principle, only when they cherish defective and erroneous views of the doctrines which they profess to believe; and in like manner it is only from the same defective and erroneous views of the true nature and the full import and bearing of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, that Arminians are led to charge it with a tendency to lead men to neglect or disregard the use of appropriate or prescribed means, in order to the attainment of ends.

All this is quite clear and certain, and it is perfectly conclusive as an answer to the objection we are considering. But how do the Arminians deal with this answer to their objection? They commonly just shut their eyes to the answer, or disregard or evade it, and continue to repeat the objection, as if it had not been, and could not be, answered. A very remarkable and honourable exception to this common policy of Arminians in dealing with this matter, has occurred in the present day in the case of Archbishop Whately. He has admitted that the word election, as used in Scripture, relates in most instances "to an arbitrary, irrespective, unconditional decree;" and he has also admitted that the arguments



commonly directed against Calvinism, from its alleged inconsistency with the moral attributes of God, ought to be set aside as invalid; inasmuch as, in reality and substance, they are directed against facts or results, which undoubtedly occur under God's moral government, and must therefore be equally dealt with and disposed of by all parties. He has made a concession equally important to us, and equally honourable to him, upon the point which we are at present considering. He has distinctly admitted that the common allegation of the Arminians—that the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination overturns the necessity of means and efforts, and thereby tends to lead to a sinful, or to a careless and inactive, life—is unfounded; and is, indeed, disproved by the application which all intelligent Calvinists make of this essential part of their general doctrine—viz. that God has foreordained the means as well as the end, and has thereby established and secured a certain and invariable connection between them. He has, indeed, coupled this admission with the allegation that, by the very same process of argument and exposition by which, as he concedes, Calvinism can be vindicated from the charge of having an immoral or injurious tendency, by discouraging the conscientious discharge of duty and the diligent improvement of means, it can be shown that it admits of no practical application whatever, but is a mere barren, useless speculation. This allegation we propose now to consider, and we hope to be able to show that it is founded upon misconception and fallacy. But before doing so, it may be proper to give a specimen or two of the way in which the topic we have been considering is dealt with by Arminians who have less sagacity and candour than Dr Whately. We shall take our specimens from men who have sounder and more evangelical views of some of the fundamental principles of Christian theology than he has, and from whom, therefore, better things might have been expected,—John Wesley, the founder of the Methodists; and Richard Watson, perhaps the ablest and most accomplished theologian that important and useful body has yet produced.

Wesley, . certainly, was not a great theologian, and in that character is not entitled to much deference. His treatise on “Original Sin,” in reply to Dr John Taylor, is perhaps his best theological work,—and it is a respectable specimen of doctrinal exposition and discussion. Most of his other theological productions are characterized by inadequate information, and by hasty, superficial thinking; and these qualities were most conspicuously manifested when he was dealing with the doctrines of Calvinism. His leading objections to Calvinism he was accustomed to put, compendiously and popularly, in this form—e The sum of all this is this: One in twenty, suppose, of mankind are elected; nineteen in

twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can.”

The first part of this statement about the comparative number of the elect and the reprobate, the saved and the lost, though not very closely related to the subject at present under consideration, may be adverted to in passing, as suggesting a topic which Arminians often adduce in order to excite a prejudice against Calvinism, though it is really altogether irrelevant. A dogmatic assertion as to the comparative numbers of those of the human race who are saved, and of those who perish in the ultimate result of things, certainly forms no part of Calvinism. There is nothing to prevent Calvinists, as such, from believing that, as the result of Christ’s mediation, a great majority of the descendants of Adam shall be saved; nothing that should require them to deny salvation to any to whom Arminians could consistently concede it. The actual result of salvation in the case of a portion of the human race, and of destruction in the case of the rest, is the same in both systems, though they differ in the exposition of the principles according to which the result is regulated and brought about. In surveying the past history of the world, or in looking around on those who now occupy the earth, with the view of forming a sort of estimate of the fate that has overtaken, or that yet awaits, the generations of their fellow-men, Calvinists introduce no other principle, and apply no other standard, than just the will of God plainly revealed in His word as to what those things are which accompany salvation; and consequently, if in doing so, they should form a different estimate as to the comparative result from what Arminians would admit, this could not arise from anything peculiar to them as holding Calvinistic doctrines, but only from their having formed and applied a higher standard of the personal character, that is, of the holiness and morality, which are necessary to prepare men for admission to heaven, than the Arminians are willing to countenance. And yet it is very common to represent Calvinistic doctrines as leading, or tending to lead, those who hold them, to consign to everlasting misery a large portion of the human race whom the Arminians would admit to the enjoyment of heaven.

Neither is there anything in Calvinism necessarily requiring or implying a more unfavourable view than Arminianism exhibits, of the ultimate destiny of those of the human race who die in infancy, without having given any palpable manifestation of 'moral character. Calvinists believe that no one of the descendants of Adam is saved, unless he has been chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, redeemed with Christ’s precious blood, and regenerated by the almighty agency of the Holy Spirit. And while all Calvinists

hold that many infants, baptized and unbaptized, are saved in this way, there is nothing in their Calvinism to prevent them from believing, that all who die in infancy may have been elected, and may be saved through Christ. They are not, indeed, so bold and dogmatic as their opponents, in pronouncing what is or what is not consistent with the divine character in this matter. They are more fully alive to the fair influence of the consideration, that this subject is, from its very nature, an inscrutable mystery, and that very little light is thrown upon it by any information given us in Scripture. Upon these grounds, Calvinists have thought it right to abstain from dogmatic deliverances upon this subject; but many of them have been of opinion that there are indications in Scripture, though not very clear or explicit, which favour the idea, that all dying in infancy are elected and saved, and there is nothing in their Calvinism to prevent them from believing this.

But this topic is only incidental to the statement of Wesley, which we proposed to consider. The main point of it is, that he asserts that the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination necessarily implies a that the elect shall be saved, do what they will, and the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can." Toplady published an excellent exposure of this offensive misrepresentation, based, of course, upon the principle which we have been explaining, that the means have been ordained as well as the end. Wesley attempted to defend himself in a small tract called "The Consequence Proved," contained in his collected works. In this tract he undertakes to show that the sentence we quoted from him in introducing this topic "is a fair state of the case, this consequence does naturally and necessarily follow from the doctrine of absolute predestination." His defence of himself just consists of a proof, which of course was very easy, that the Calvinistic doctrine implies, that the end in both cases was foreordained, and therefore infallibly certain,—of an assertion, that from this principle "the whole consequence follows clear as the noonday sun,"f—and of an attempt to excite odium against the doctrine of reprobation, by alleging that it necessarily produced or implied a putting forth of God's agency in the actual production of depravity and unbelief in those who perish. He does not venture to look even at the principle, that the means are foreordained as well as the end, or attempt to show the inconclusiveness of this principle as an answer to his allegation. He simply repeats his allegation with increased audacity, and asserts that the "consequence follows clear as the noonday sun." It is true that, in regard to the elect, the end is in each case foreordained, and of course their salvation is infallibly secured. But it is also true that this is only a part of our doctrine,—that we hold also that the means are foreordained and secured as well as the end,—and that these means,

as God has plainly declared, and as all men, Calvinists as well as others, admit and believe, are faith in Christ, repentance unto life, holiness, and perseverance. God has just as fully and certainly provided for securing these means, as for securing the ultimate end of salvation, in regard to every one of the elect; and has made provision for all this in a way fully accordant with the nature of the subject,—viz. man as he is, with all his capacities and incapacities as they are. To suppose that any elect person should, in fact, continue till the end of his life, in a state of ungodliness and unbelief, is to suppose an impossibility. Our opponents have no right to make this supposition, because our doctrine, when fully apprehended and fairly applied, not only does not admit of it, but positively and infallibly precludes it,—that is, demonstrates and establishes its impossibility. It is true that all who are elected to eternal life shall certainly be saved. But it is also true, and it is equally a part of our doctrine, that all who are elected to eternal life shall certainly repent and believe, and shall certainly enter on, and persevere in, a course of new obedience. We can thus hold, and in entire consistency with all our peculiar principles, that no man shall be saved unless he repent and believe, and unless he persevere to the end in faith and holiness. And in this way it is manifest that—notwithstanding the truth of the doctrine, that all the elect shall infallibly be saved, and in perfect consistency with it—all the obligations incumbent upon men to believe and to persevere in faith and holiness,—of whatever kind these obligations may be, and from whatever source they may arise,—and the consequent obligations to use all the means which, according to God’s revealed arrangements, may contribute to the production of these intermediate results, continue, to say the least, wholly unimpaired.

The same principles apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the case of the reprobate, though here, as we have explained, the subject is involved in deeper and more inscrutable mystery, and the information given us in Scripture is much less full and explicit; considerations which have generally led Calvinists to treat of it with brevity, caution, and reverence, while they have too often tempted Arminians to enlarge upon it presumptuously and offensively. We have already explained that Calvinists repudiate the representation which Wesley here gives of their doctrine of reprobation, as implying that God’s agency is the proper cause or source of the depravity and unbelief, on account of which the reprobate are finally consigned to misery. They deny that they hold this, and that anything they do hold can be proved necessarily to involve this consequence. Calvinists believe that men in their natural state of guilt and depravity are not able, by their own strength, to repent and believe; and that God bestows only on the elect, and not on the reprobate, that special supernatural grace which is necessary, in every

instance, to the production of faith, holiness, and perseverance. They admit that they cannot give a full and adequate explanation of the consistency of these doctrines, with men's undoubted and admitted, responsibility for their character and destiny. The doctrines of men's inability in their natural condition to repent and believe, and of the nonbestowal upon all men of the supernatural grace which is necessary to enable them to do so, are just statements of matters of fact as to what man is, and as to what God does, and can be fully proved to be true and real both from Scripture and observation; and it is not a sufficient reason for rejecting these doctrines or facts, which can be satisfactorily established by their appropriate evidence, that we cannot fully explain how they are to be reconciled with the doctrine or fact of man's responsibility. All that is logically incumbent upon us in these circumstances is just to prove, that the alleged inconsistency cannot be clearly and conclusively established; and this Calvinists undertake to do. And this being assumed, all that is further necessary in order to answer the Arminian objection,—as directed even against this most profound and mysterious department of the subject,—is to show, as can be easily done upon the principles already explained, that while men are responsible for not repenting and believing, there is nothing in our Calvinistic principles which precludes us from maintaining that every man who repents and believes shall certainly be saved.

So far then from Wesley's assertion, that the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination necessarily implies that "the elect shall be saved, do what they will, and the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can," giving "a fair state of the case," it is evident that we can maintain, in full consistency with all our peculiar principles, that no man shall be saved unless he repent and believe, and persevere to the end in faith and holiness; and that every man who does so shall certainly be admitted to the enjoyment of eternal life.

The other instance we have to adduce, of an evasion of the fair application of the doctrine, that the means are foreordained as well as the end, is connected, not with predestination, as bearing upon the eternal destinies of man, hurt with the wider subject of the foreordination of all events,—of "whatsoever cometh to pass —and it is taken from Richard Watson, the great theologian of the Wesleyan Methodists. It occurs in a review, contained in the seventh volume of the collected edition of his works, of a volume of sermons by Dr Chalmers, published originally under the title "Sermons preached in St John's Church, Glasgow." This volume of sermons contains a masterly discourse upon Acts xxvii. 31, "Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, Except these abide in the

ship, ye cannot be saved;" and Mr Watson's review is chiefly occupied with an attempt to answer it. Dr Chalmers' discourse is virtually an exposition and defence of the Calvinistic doctrine, that God hath unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. It is based upon the assumption that the ultimate result in this matter, *viz.* the preservation of the whole ship's company, had been absolutely predicted and promised by God to the apostle, and, of course, was infallibly and infrustrably certain; and it is mainly occupied with an exposition of the grounds which bring out the consistency of the absolute certainty of the result with the conditionality, contingency, or uncertainty which may seem to be implied in the apostle's statement, that this result could not be effected, unless another event, dependent apparently upon the free agency of responsible beings, *viz.* the continuance of the crew in the ship, had previously taken place. The apparent inconsistency of the absoluteness and unconditionality of the final result—decreed, predicted, promised—with the seeming contingency or uncertainty of the intermediate step—the continuance of the crew in the ship—is explained, of course, by the application of the principle, that God had foreordained the means as well as the end; had foreordained, and made provision for certainly effecting or bringing about, the continuance of the crew in the ship, as well as the ultimate preservation of all who were on board. There was then no strict and proper conditionality—no real and ultimate contingency or uncertainty—attaching to this intermediate event. It was, equally with the ultimate result, comprehended in God's plan or purpose; and equally certain provision, adapted to the nature of the case and the position and relations of all the parties concerned, had been made for securing that it should come to pass. The hypothetical or conditional statement of the apostle does not necessarily imply more than this, that an indissoluble connection had been established, and did really subsist, between the two events, the one as a means and the other as an end. If this connection really subsisted in God's purpose and plan, then the apostle's hypothetical statement was true; while it did not imply or assume real or actual uncertainty as attaching to either event, and was indeed fitted and intended, in accordance with the natural and appropriate operation of second causes, to contribute to bring about the result which God had resolved should come to pass. The whole history then of this matter, and all the different statements put on record regarding it, are fully explained by the doctrine, that the means are foreordained as well as the end; while in their turn they confirm and illustrate that doctrine, and confirm and illustrate also the principle formerly explained, which may be regarded as an expansion and application of that doctrine,—*viz.* that "although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet by the

same providence He ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.”

The apostle’s hypothetical or conditional statement here is to be explained and defended in the very same way as such statements as these,—“Except ye repent, ye shall perish;” “Whosoever believeth shall be saved.” These statements are virtually hypothetical or conditional in their form; they assert an invariable connection between the means and the end, and the existence of this connection is sufficient to show that they are true and warrantable. The statements being thus true and warrantable in themselves, are fitted to lead men who desire the end to adopt the means without which it cannot be attained; while they are not in the least inconsistent with the doctrine—resting upon its own proper scriptural grounds—that God alone can produce faith and repentance, and that He certainly and infallibly bestows them on all whom He hath chosen to salvation.

This is the substance of the common Calvinistic argument; and it is brought out by Dr Chalmers in this sermon in a very powerful and impressive way. How is it met by Mr Watson? He first of all tries to throw doubt upon the import and bearing of God’s declaration to the apostle, of His purpose or resolution to save the lives of all who were in the ship. He says, “The declaration was not that of a purpose, in the sense of a decree, at all, but of a promise.” But this is really nothing better than a quibble. God had said to the apostle, “There shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship.” This was both a purpose and a promise,—it was the one just as much as the other; and it might also be regarded as a prediction, for a prediction is just a revelation of a purpose which God has formed in regard to a thing yet future. The words plainly import a declaration of an absolute and unconditional purpose of God,—an explicit prediction and promise of a definite event as certainly future, as infallibly and inevitably to take place. And this is so clear and certain, that it must be taken as a fixed principle in the interpretation of the whole narrative. Nothing must be admitted which contradicts this; and everything must, if possible, be so explained as to accord with it. Mr Watson ventures to say, that the history shows that the apostle did not understand this as an absolute purpose on God’s part; for, “if he had, there was no motive to induce him to oppose the going away of the mariners in the boat.” This is a melancholy specimen of what able and upright men are sometimes tempted to do by the exigencies of controversy. That the apostle believed, upon God’s authority, that it was His absolute, irrevocable, and infrustrable purpose, that there was to be no loss of life, is made as clear and certain as words can make anything. He had also been told, upon the same

infallible authority, that it was a part of God's plan that the crew were to continue in the ship; not as if this were a condition on which the ultimate result was really and properly suspended, but as an intermediate step, through means of which that result was to be brought about. He knew that this mean had been foreordained as well as that end; and that thus a necessary connection had been established de facto between them. This is all that is necessarily implied in this hypothetical statement, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved;" and he was guided to put the matter in this form, because this was the provision best fitted in itself, and was also foreordained in God's purpose, for bringing about this intermediate event as a mean, and thereby effecting the end. Mr Watson holds that the continuance of the crew in the ship was a condition on which the result of the preservation of the lives of all was, strictly and properly speaking, suspended; and infers from this that there was no absolute purpose to save them. That there was an absolute purpose to save them, is, to say the least, much more clear and certain than that there was any condition, strictly and properly so called, upon which the accomplishment of the result was suspended. And, independently of this, his argument is a mere quibble on the meaning of the word condition. He just asserts, over and over again, that an absolute purpose is an unconditional purpose assumes that a condition is something on which the result purposed or contemplated is really suspended; and then infers that, wherever there is a condition attached, there can be no absolute purpose. This is his whole argument; and it is really nothing better than a quibble, combined with a resolute determination to refuse to look at the explanations and arguments which Calvinists have brought forward in expounding and defending their views upon this subject.

Calvinists admit that the terms "absolute" and "conditional," as applied to the divine decrees, are contradictory, or exclusive the one of the other; and that absolute and unconditional, in this application of them, are synonymous. But they deny that there are any divine decrees or purposes, or any predictions or promises, which can, in strict propriety of speech, be called conditional; while they admit that there are senses in which the word "condition" may be loosely and improperly applied to them. There are few words, indeed, which admit of, and have been employed in, a greater variety of senses and applications, than the word "condition." So much is this the case, that Dr Owen, in treating of the subject of the alleged conditions of justification, lays it down, as a sort of canon or axiom, "We cannot obtain a determinate sense of this word condition, but from a particular declaration of what is intended by it wherever it is used." Accordingly, the exposition of the ambiguity of this word "condition," with an



exact specification of the different senses in which it may be and has been employed,—in relation to the divine purposes, predictions, and promises,—forms one of the best known and most important commonplaces in this controversy, and has been fully and largely handled by all the leading Calvinistic divines. But all this Mr Watson resolutely ignores. He just assumes that a condition is a condition, as if it had only one meaning or signification; and as the apostle's statement plainly implies, that in some sense or other the continuance of the crew in the ship might be called a condition of the result of saving the lives of all, and as Calvinists admit this, he infers that, as an absolute and a conditional purpose are contradictories, God could not have formed and declared an absolute purpose in the matter; and that, of course, notwithstanding anything which He had either foreordained or foreseen, the crew might have succeeded in their purpose of leaving the ship, and thus have frustrated the purpose, and prevented the result, which the apostle, speaking in God's name, had absolutely and unconditionally predicted. Calvinists do not deny that there is a loose and improper sense in which the continuance of the crew in the ship might be called a condition of the saving of the lives of all on board; inasmuch as it was God's purpose or plan that the one event should precede, and be a mean of bringing about, the other, —an indissoluble connection being thus established and secured between them. But they deny that the one was a condition of the other, in the strict and proper sense of that word. To represent it as a condition, strictly and properly so called, implies not merely that the ultimate result was suspended upon it,—for this, in a sense, might be said to be true, in virtue of the connection de facto established between them as means and end,—but also, that God could not make, or at least had not made, any certain and effectual provision for bringing it about; so that the first event, and of course the second also, was left in a position of absolute contingency or uncertainty, dependent for its coming into existence upon causes or influences over which God could not, or at least did not, exert any effectual control. It is only when the word a condition" is taken in this, its strict and proper sense, that an absolute and a conditional purpose are contradictories; and in this sense Calvinists deny that a conditional purpose was ever formed in the divine mind, or was ever embodied in a divine prediction or promise. There are no conditions, properly so called, attaching to the divine purposes, predictions, and promises. God has, absolutely and unconditionally, foreordained certain ends or ultimate results; and He has, with equal absoluteness and unconditionality, foreordained the means—that is, the intermediate steps or stages—by which they are to be brought about. And the conditional or hypothetical form in which predictions and promises are often put in Scripture, simply implies the existence of a de facto connection, or

interdependence of events, as means and end; and is intended to operate upon men's minds in the way of bringing about the accomplishment of ends, by leading to the use and improvement of the natural, ordinary, and appropriate means.

Mr Watson refers to the great principle by which we answer the Arminian objection about the practical application of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination,—viz. that God. has foreordained, the means as well as the end.; but he does so merely for the purpose of throwing it aside as irrelevant and fallacious. He does not venture to look it fairly in the face, or to realize its true import and bearing. He does not even attempt to point out either its fallacy or its irrelevancy. He disposes of it just by repeating his favourite axiom,—which is really the sum and substance of all that he has been able to produce upon this important department of the argument,—“It follows, if the predestination be absolute, that there are no conditions at all,” —a position which we can admit to be true as it stands, but the ambiguity and futility of which, in its bearing upon this branch of the controversy, we think we have sufficiently established.

The discussions in which we have been engaged may serve to illustrate the unfairness often practised by Arminians in basing their objections upon defective and erroneous notions of the real doctrines of Calvinism; and may be useful, also, in reminding Calvinists of the importance, with a view at once to the defence of truth against opponents, and the personal application of it in their own case, of seeking to form full and comprehensive views of the whole system of Christian doctrine, and of its different parts in all their bearings and relations.

The misrepresentations and evasions which we have pointed out in Wesley and Watson, are fair specimens of what is to be found in the generality of Arminian writers, in treating of this subject; and it is surely not wonderful that the penetration and sagacity of Archbishop Whately—though himself an Arminian—should have enabled him to perceive, and that his candour and courage should have led him to proclaim, the folly and futility of all this. He has, as we have explained, distinctly and fully admitted that the doctrine that God has foreordained the means as well as the end, and has thereby established a certain and indissoluble connection between them, as expounded and applied by Calvinistic divines, furnishes a conclusive answer to the common allegation, that Calvinism is injurious in its moral bearing and tendency, by leading men to neglect the discharge of duties and the use and improvement of means. The Calvinistic argument, indeed, upon this point, is so clear and conclusive, that the

wonder is not that Whately should have admitted it to be satisfactory, but that Wesley, Watson, and Arminians in general should have denied it. The admission, however, is not the less honourable to Whately's sagacity and candour; because, so far as we remember, he was the first Arminian who fully and openly made this important concession. If we could have believed that Whately's example, on this point, would have been followed by Arminians, and that they would have admitted, as he has done, that the common allegation about the injurious moral bearing of Calvinism is answered or neutralized by a fair application of the whole of what Calvinists teach upon this subject, we would scarcely have taken the trouble to expose the statements of Wesley and Watson. But the whole history of theological controversy prevents us from cherishing this expectation, and constrains us to fear that the generality of Arminian writers will continue to reiterate the old objection, and to disregard or evade the conclusive answer which has been so often given to it.

Whately, as we have stated, while admitting that Calvinism can be successfully vindicated from the charge of having an injurious moral tendency, maintains that, by the same process by which this allegation is refuted, it can be proved that our doctrine has no practical bearing or effect whatever, but is a perfectly useless, barren speculation. His views upon this point are brought out in this way: "It may be admitted that one who does practically adopt and conform to this explanation of the doctrine, will not be led into any evil by it, since his conduct will not be in any respect influenced by it. When thus explained, it is reduced to a purely speculative dogma, barren of all practical results." "It is not contended that the doctrines in question have a hurtful influence on human conduct, and consequently are untrue, but that they have, according to the soundest exposition of them, no influence on our conduct whatever, and consequently (revelation not being designed to impart mere speculative knowledge) that they are not to be taught as revealed truths." "The doctrine is, if rightly viewed, of a purely speculative character, not belonging to us' practically, and which ought not, at least, in any way to influence our conduct." "Taking the system, then, as expounded by its soundest advocates, it is impossible to show any one point in which a person is called upon either to act or to feel in any respect differently in consequence of his adopting it." "The preacher, in short, is to act in all respects as if the system were not true." The general principle here laid down, of judging whether a doctrine be revealed or not by an application of the test whether it be merely speculative, or have a practical bearing upon conduct, is a very unsound and dangerous one. Even though we were to concede the truth of his abstract position, that revelation is

not designed to impart mere speculative knowledge,”—a position which is obscure and ambiguous, and the truth of which, consequently, is at least very doubtful,—we would still dispute the soundness and validity of the application he makes of it as a test. If we have a revelation from God, surely the right and reasonable course is, that we should do our utmost to ascertain correctly the whole of what it teaches upon every subject which it brings before us; assured that, whatever it reveals, it is incumbent upon us to believe and proclaim, and, in some way or other, useful or beneficial for us to know. And if there be fair ground for believing that, in some sense or other, “revelation is not designed to impart to us mere speculative knowledge,” then we should draw from this the inference, that the doctrine which we have ascertained to be revealed is not merely speculative, but has—more or less directly, and more or less obviously—some practical bearing or tendency. The soundness of this general inference is not in the least invalidated by the difficulty we may feel, in particular instances, in pointing out any very direct or obvious practical application of which a doctrine admits. Revelation was undoubtedly intended to convey to us what may be called speculative or theoretical knowledge; and though it may be admitted that the general and ultimate bearing and tendency of the whole system of revealed doctrine is to tell practically upon character and conduct, it does not follow that every particular doctrine must have a direct, and still less an obvious, practical application. Some doctrines may have been revealed to us chiefly, or even solely, for the purpose of completing the general system of doctrine which God intended to teach us, and of aiding us in forming more clear and enlarged conceptions of other doctrines of more fundamental importance, without having by themselves any direct and immediate practical bearing.

Such doctrines might with some plausibility be ranked under the head of what Whately calls “mere speculative knowledge and yet there is plainly no ground for regarding this as a proof, or even a presumption, that they have not been revealed,—if there be adequate ground, on a careful examination of the statements of Scripture, for believing that they are taught or indicated there. To set up our notions or impressions upon the question, whether a particular doctrine, alleged to be revealed in Scripture, is purely speculative or has a practical influence upon conduct, as furnishing anything like a test of the sufficiency of its scriptural evidence, is nothing better than presumptuous rationalism, and is fitted to undermine the supreme authority and the right application of Scripture as the infallible standard of truth. Dr Whately, to do him justice, has exhibited a good deal of obscurity and confusion in treating of this point. He says: “I have waived the question as to the truth or falsity of the

Calvinistic doctrine of election, inquiring only whether it be revealed;” and then he goes on to assert, that “one of the reasons for deciding that question in the negative” is, that “the doctrine is, if rightly viewed, of a purely speculative character;” and again, “I purposely abstain throughout from entering on the question as to what is absolutely true, inquiring only what is or is not to be received and taught as a portion of revealed gospel truth.” Now we may surely assume that whatever is really taught in Scripture is to be received as “revealed gospel truth;” and if so, then this forced and arbitrary distinction between the absolute truth of the Calvinistic doctrine, and its claim as a revealed truth, entirely disappears. The whole question resolves into this, What saith the Scripture 1 and this question must be determined upon its own proper grounds. If the Scripture sanctions the Calvinistic doctrine of election, then this establishes both its absolute truth and its position and claims as a revealed truth. If the Scripture does not sanction it, then it is not to be received either as true or as revealed; for Calvinists, while maintaining that the fundamental principles of their system derive support and confirmation from the doctrines of natural theology, have never imagined that their doctrine of election, with all that it necessarily implies, could be conclusively proved to be true, except from the testimony of revelation. It would almost seem (for this is really the only supposition which can give anything like clearness or consistency to his statement) that he had a sort of vague notion— a kind of lurking suspicion—that the Calvinistic doctrine of election, though not revealed in Scripture, might or could be established by evidence derived from some other source, might be true though not revealed. But this is a position which probably he will not venture openly to assume; and, therefore, we must continue to adhere to the conviction, that his statements upon this subject are characterized by obscurity and confusion.

We have thought it proper to animadvert upon the fallacious and dangerous notions which seem to be involved in Dr Whately’s general views upon the subject of applying the practical influence of doctrines as a test, not of whether they are true, but of whether they are revealed. But we have no hesitation in denying his more specific position, that the Calvinistic doctrine of election, when so expounded as to stand clear of any injurious tendency, has no practical bearing or effect, but is a mere useless, barren speculation. All that has been or can be proved upon this point is simply this, that the practical application of the Calvinistic doctrine does not extend over so wide a sphere, and does not bear so directly upon certain topics, as has sometimes been alleged both by its supporters and its opponents.

The alleged practical tendencies and effects of Calvinism have always, entered very largely into the discussion of this whole controversy. Objections to the truth of Calvinism on the ground of its practical moral tendency, very obviously suggest themselves to men's minds, and carry with them a considerable measure of plausibility; and men professing to believe Calvinistic doctrines have occasionally spoken and acted in such a way as to afford some countenance to these objections of opponents. Considering the obviousness and the plausibility of these objections, and the prominent place they have usually occupied in the writings of Arminians, it is of great importance that we have it now conceded by so able an opponent as Whately, that they are utterly baseless. In discussing this subject of the practical tendency of their system, Calvinists have acted chiefly upon the defensive. They have usually contented themselves, in a great measure, with repelling these objections, and proving that they are destitute of all solid foundation; and having accomplished this, they have then fallen back again upon the direct and positive scriptural proof of their doctrine as establishing at once its truth, its importance, and its practical usefulness. The two principal rules by which we ought to be guided in discussing this branch of the subject, both with a view to the defence of our doctrine against opponents, and also to the discharge of the duty of making ourselves a right and profitable application of it, are these:—1st, That the whole of the doctrine, and all that it necessarily involves, be fairly and fully taken into account, and a due application made of every part of it; and especially that it never be forgotten that God's decrees and purposes, in reference to the eternal destinies of men, comprehend or include the means as well as the end, and thus provide for and secure an invariable connection in fact between the means and the end—a connection which is not, and cannot be, in any instance dissolved; and 2d, That we fully and freely admit, and apply at the same time, all other doctrines and principles which are established by satisfactory scriptural evidence, even though we may not be able fully to explain how they can be shown to be consistent with the peculiar doctrines of our system. A careful attention to these two rules will enable us easily and conclusively to repel the objections of our opponents; and at the same time will effectually preserve us from falling into any serious error, in our own personal practical application of the doctrines we profess to believe.

This is quite sufficient for all merely controversial purposes. But it is due to Dr Whately, who has shown so much candour and fairness in admitting the insufficiency of several arguments generally employed by the Arminians, to advert somewhat more particularly to his allegation, that the Calvinistic doctrine of election, though admitted to be, when rightly and fully explained, harmless

and unobjectionable, is shown by the same process to be a mere barren, useless speculation, having no practical influence whatever; or, as he puts it, that “it is impossible to show any one point in which a person is called upon either to act or to feel in any respect differently in consequence of his adopting it.” Calvinists do not profess to found much upon the practical application which may be made of their doctrine of election, as affording a positive argument in support of it. They are usually satisfied with proving from Scripture that it is true; that it is revealed there as an object of faith; and that, with respect to its practical application, it can be shown to be liable to no serious or solid objection. They admit that it is not fitted or intended to exert so comprehensive and so direct an influence upon character and conduct, as the great fundamental doctrines revealed in Scripture concerning the guilt and depravity of men in their natural state, the person and work of the Redeemer, and the agency of the Holy Spirit; and therefore should not hold so prominent a place as these in the ordinary course of public instruction. But they deny that it is a barren, useless speculation. They maintain that it has an appropriate practical influence, in its own proper place and sphere; and that this influence, in its own department, and whenever it comes legitimately into operation, is most wholesome and beneficial. There are, as all intelligent Calvinists admit, important departments of the duties imposed upon us by Scripture,—important steps which men must take in order to the salvation of their souls,—on which the Calvinistic doctrine of election has no direct practical bearing. It is upon a perversion or exaggeration of this fact, admitted by us, that the whole plausibility of Whately’s allegation rests; and it will be a sufficient answer to the substance of his statements upon this subject, and may at the same time serve other useful purposes, if—while indicating how far and in what sense his allegation is true—we briefly point out some legitimate practical applications of this doctrine, which are peculiar to it, and which cannot be derived from any other source. In doing so, we shall restrict our attention, as Whately does, to the subject of predestination in its bearing upon the eternal destinies of men, without including the more comprehensive subject of the foreordination of whatsoever comes to pass; and shall of course now assume that the Calvinistic doctrine is true, and is held intelligently by those who profess to believe it. We hope to be able to show that Whately’s error upon this point is traceable principally to this, that he has not here made the same full and candid estimate, as in some other branches of the argument, of the whole of what Calvinists usually adduce in explaining the practical application of their doctrine, and confines his observation to some of the features of the subject, and these not the most important and peculiar.

The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination casts important light upon the character and moral government of God, a knowledge of which may be said to be the foundation of all religion. God makes himself known to us by all that He does, and by all that He permits to take place; and if it be true that He has from eternity formed certain decrees and purposes with regard to the everlasting destinies of men, and is executing these decrees or purposes in time, and if He has made known to us that He has done and is doing so, this must, from the nature of the case, afford important materials for knowing Him, and for understanding the principles that regulate His dealings with His creatures. Whatever He does or has purposed to do, must be in entire accordance with all the attributes and perfections of His nature, and is thus fitted to afford us materials for forming right apprehensions of their true bearing and results. We must form no conceptions of the supposed holiness, justice, or goodness of God, or of the way and manner in which these attributes would lead Him to act, inconsistent with what He has done or purposed to do. On the contrary, we must employ all that we know concerning His procedure to regulate our views of His attributes and character. It is very common for men, especially those who reject the doctrines of Calvinism, to frame to themselves certain conceptions of the divine attributes, and then to deduce from them certain notions as to what God must do or cannot do. But this mode of reasoning is unphilosophical and dangerous, unsuited to our powers and capacities, which manifestly require of us that we should adopt an opposite course of procedure, and form our conceptions of the divine attributes from what we know of the divine purposes and actions; and at least admit nothing into our conceptions of God's character, inconsistent with what we know that He has done or has purposed. The doctrine of predestination is to be regarded as serving a purpose, in this respect, analogous to that of the fall of the angels,—an event which has occurred under God's moral government, and is fitted to throw important light upon His character. The fact revealed to us, that some angels fell from their first estate, and that all who fell were left to perish irremediably, without any provision having been made for restoring them, or any opportunity of repentance having been allowed to them, refutes some of the conceptions which men are apt to form in regard to the divine character; and it should be remembered and applied in the way of leading us to form juster conceptions upon this subject than generally obtain among us. The fact that, from the race of man,—all of them equally fallen and involved in guilt and depravity,—God of His good pleasure has predestinated some men to everlasting life, and passed by the rest and left them to perish in their sins, suggests nothing concerning the divine character inconsistent with what is indicated by the history of the fallen angels; but while, in so far as concerns



those men who perish, it confirms all the views of God which the history of the fallen angels suggests, and which we are usually most unwilling to receive, it supplies, in the purpose to save some men with an everlasting salvation, a new and most impressive manifestation of the divine character and moral government, which could not, so far as we can see, have been furnished in any other way. It is important then that we should realize what the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, as a general truth revealed in Scripture, represents God as having purposed from eternity, both in regard to those who are saved and those who perish; and that we should apply this, as a great reality, in forming our conceptions of God's character and moral government, that thus we may know Him as fully as He has made himself known to us; and may be enabled to glorify Him, by cherishing and expressing emotions, corresponding in every respect to all the perfections which He possesses, and to all the principles which actually regulate His dealings with His creatures.

Dr Whately might probably call this 66 mere speculative knowledge." But this would be an abuse of language; for it is certain that all the knowledge which God has been pleased to communicate to us concerning himself, concerning the perfections of His nature and the principles of His moral government, is both fitted and intended to exert a practical influence upon the feelings and conduct of men.

But while it is thus plain that the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination—contemplated simply as a truth about God revealed in Scripture—is fitted to exert a general practical influence upon men's views and feelings, we have further to inquire, whether there be any direct personal application which men can legitimately make of it, in its bearing upon themselves singly and individually. And upon this question, the substance of what we believe to be true is this,—1st, That men cannot legitimately make any direct personal application of this doctrine to themselves individually, unless and until they have good reason to believe that they themselves individually have been elected to eternal life,—that is, of course (for there is no other way of ascertaining this), good reason to believe that they have been enabled to receive and submit to Christ as their Saviour, and have been born again of His word and Spirit; and 2d, That when men have come to believe, upon good grounds, that they have been elected, the personal practical application of the doctrine is most obvious and most wholesome.

Men cannot make any direct personal application of the doctrine of

predestination to themselves individually, so long as they continue in their natural state of guilt and estrangement from God, and while they have not yet embraced the offers and invitations of the gospel and entered the service of Christ; and therefore, with reference to all the duties and obligations attaching to this condition of things, the doctrine is not to be taken into account, or to exert any direct practical influence. We admit, nay, we contend, that this doctrine has no immediate practical bearing upon the process of setting before sinners, and urging upon them, the commands and invitations addressed to them in connection with the scheme of salvation, or on the right regulation of their conduct in dealing with these commands and invitations. This arises manifestly from the very nature of the case. Preachers of the gospel are not only warranted but bound to address the offers and invitations of God's word to men indiscriminately, without distinction and exception; and having God's sanction and command for this, they should do it without hesitation and without restriction. God does this, in order that He may thereby execute the purpose which He formed from eternity concerning the everlasting destinies of men; and that He may do so in accordance with the principles of man's moral constitution, and with all his capacities and responsibilities; and ministers are bound to do this in God's name, just because He requires it at their hands. Those who have not yet submitted to, or complied with, the commands and invitations of the gospel, cannot, in their present state,—though they may know, and profess to believe, the general doctrine of predestination as a part of God's revealed truth,—know anything whatever bearing in any way upon the question, whether they themselves individually have been elected or not; and therefore they have no right to take any opinion or impression upon this point into account, in dealing with the commands and invitations which are addressed to them. As they can know nothing about it, they should in the meantime leave it out of view, and give it no practical weight or effect whatever. The general doctrine of predestination—the truth that God has chosen some men to everlasting life, and has resolved to pass by the rest and to leave them to perish in their sins—is taught in Scripture; and therefore all who have access to the Bible ought to believe it. But men are to apply and to act upon only what they do know; and as, at the time when they are in the condition of considering how they should deal with the commands and invitations of the gospel, addressed to them and pressed upon them, they cannot know whether they themselves have been elected or not, they are not at liberty to take either an affirmative or a negative opinion upon this point into account, and to act upon it as a reality—as a thing known. The general truth, that God has elected some and passed by others,—which is the whole of the doctrine of predestination as taught in Scripture,—does not furnish

any materials whatever for practically influencing their conduct in their present circumstances, or with reference to the point which they have at present under consideration, and with which they are bound to deal; and therefore their duty, in right reason, is just to abstain from applying it to the particular matter on hand, and to proceed at once to obey the command and to accept of the invitation addressed to them. Any other course of procedure, in the circumstances is manifestly irrational, as resting upon no actual ground of knowledge; and as the doctrine of predestination taught in Scripture does not rationally produce, or tend to produce, a hesitation or a refusal to accept of the offers and invitations of the gospel, so it is in no way legitimately responsible for this result in any instance in which it may have been exhibited.

All this is abundantly evident; and though denied by most Arminians, who would fain represent the doctrine of predestination as throwing rational and legitimate obstacles in the way of men receiving and submitting to the gospel, it is admitted by Dr Whately, who makes it an objection to our doctrine, that “the preacher” (and, of course, also the hearer) “is to act in all respects as if the system were not true.” This is not a correct representation of the state of the case. The preacher is bound to state the whole truth of God, as it is revealed in His word; and to urge upon every man to apply every truth according to its true nature and real import, viewed in connection with his actual circumstances. The doctrine of predestination, as we have seen, casts much light upon the character and moral government of God; and it must always be a matter of great practical importance, that men have full and correct views and impressions upon these points. Whenever they have learned this doctrine, they are bound to apply it, according to its true nature and all that it fairly involves. But at the time when they have not yet embraced the offers and invitations of the gospel, and are only considering how they should deal with them, they have not yet any materials whatever for applying it, in the way of bearing upon the question, whether they have been elected or not; and therefore, so far as that point is concerned, they are to act, not as Dr Whately says, as if the system or general doctrine of predestination were not true, but merely (for this is evidently the true state of the case) as if it did not then, at that time, afford any materials for determining one particular question concerning themselves individually; and thus did not afford any materials for deciding upon the one point of how they should deal with the commands and invitations addressed to them. Thus far, and to this extent, it is true that neither preacher nor hearer can make a direct, personal, individual application of the doctrine; but this is very far from warranting Whately’s assertion, that the doctrine does not admit of any personal practical application

whatever.

For men may come at length to know upon sound and rational grounds that they have been elected to everlasting life; and it is then, and then only, that the practical personal application of the doctrine to men individually is brought out. Arminians are accustomed to represent the matter as if the belief of the general scriptural doctrine, that God has elected some men to life and passed by the rest, must necessarily include in it the means of knowing directly and immediately what men individually have been elected, and what have been passed by; and they often insinuate, moreover, that all who profess to believe in the doctrine of election, imagine, upon the mere ground of the truth of this doctrine, and without any intermediate process, that they themselves have been elected. God might have revealed to us this general doctrine, and required us to apply it in the way of regulating our general conceptions of His character and moral government, and yet might have afforded us no materials for deciding certainly at any time, whether we individually had been elected or not. And in connection with this point, it is most important to remember that He has not provided any materials from which any man upon earth can ever, without a special revelation, be warranted in drawing the conclusion that he himself, or that any one of his fellow-men, has not been elected; and that consequently no man is ever warranted to act upon this conviction as certainly true of himself. Arminians are fond of representing the doctrine of predestination as fitted to throw men into despair, by making them believe that they are foreordained to everlasting death. But while the doctrine implies that this is true of some men, in the sense which has been explained, it does not contain in itself, or when viewed in connection with any materials which are within our reach, any ground to warrant any man to come to this conclusion with respect to himself. And, therefore, despair is not in any case the proper legitimate result of the application of this doctrine, but must arise, wherever it exists, from the perversion or abuse of it, or of some other principle connected with it. Men may, indeed, have abundant ground for the conclusion that their present condition is one of guilt and depravity; and that, consequently, if they were to die now, they would inevitably be consigned to misery. But there is evidently nothing in this that affords any legitimate ground for the conclusion that God has from eternity passed them by and resolved to withhold from them His grace. This was once the condition of all men; and many have been rescued from it who had gone to a fearful excess of depravity. If men, indeed, did or could know that they had been guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, or of the sin unto death, they might then legitimately draw the inference, that their eternal doom was fixed and could not be changed. But while

we know the general truth that such sins may be committed, there are no materials provided in Scripture, by the application of which any man is warranted in coming to the certain and positive conclusion that he has committed them. And, in like manner, while we know that God has resolved to leave some men to perish in their sin, we have no materials provided by which any man is warranted, while he is upon earth, in coming to the conclusion that he belongs to this number; and consequently there is no legitimate ground in the doctrine of predestination, or in any other doctrine taught in Scripture, why any man should despair,—should renounce all hope of salvation,—should act as if his condemnation were unchangeably determined, and on this account should refuse to comply with the offers and invitations of the gospel.

But although no man while upon earth can have any good ground for despairing of salvation,—as if he had full warrant for the conclusion that he has not been elected,—men may have good ground for believing that they have been from eternity elected to everlasting life; and of course are called upon to apply this conviction according to its true nature and bearings. This important point is thus admirably stated in the Westminster Confession:— “The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending to the will of God revealed in His word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God; and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the gospel.” No man has any ground to conclude that he has been elected, merely because Scripture teaches the general doctrine, that God has chosen some men to everlasting life. Other materials must be furnished and applied, before any man is warranted to cherish this conviction. Some change must be effected in him, which is a necessary or invariable accompaniment or consequence of eternal election, and which may thus test and establish its reality in reference to him. It is a part of our doctrine, that every man who has been elected to life from eternity is in time effectually called, or has faith and regeneration produced in him by the operation of God’s Spirit. No man has or can have any sufficient ground for believing that he has been elected, unless and until he has been enabled to believe in Christ Jesus, and has been born again of the word of God through the belief of the truth; and wherever these changes have been effected, this must have been done in the execution of God’s eternal purpose; and thus, taken in connection with the Scripture doctrines of election and perseverance, they afford satisfactory grounds for the conclusion, that every one in whom they have been wrought has been from eternity elected to life, and

shall certainly be saved. It is only from the certainty of their effectual vocation that men can be assured of their eternal election. But all who have been effectually called, and who are assured of this by a right application of the scriptural materials bearing upon the point, are bound, in the application of the doctrine of election, to believe that they have been elected, and to apply this conclusion according to its true nature and bearings.

The materials by which men may attain to certainty as to their effectual vocation are to be found partly in Scripture, and partly in themselves; and by a right use of these materials, men may, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, attain to a firm and well-grounded conviction upon this point; and thus arrive at decided conclusions, both with respect to God's eternal purposes in regard to them, and with respect to their own everlasting destiny. If they have fallen into error in the application of these materials, if they have been persuaded of the certainty of their effectual vocation without good grounds,—that is, if they believe that they have been effectually called when they have not,—then, of course, all their ulterior conclusions about the certainty of their election and of their perseverance fall to the ground; they too must be equally erroneous, and therefore can exert only an injurious influence. But the doctrine of election is not responsible for this error, or for any of the injurious consequences that may have resulted from it. The error was solely their own, arising either from ignorance of what Scripture teaches upon the subject of effectual calling, or from ignorance of themselves,—or from both. Such cases afford no specimen of the right and legitimate application, or the natural and appropriate tendency, of the doctrine of election, or of any doctrine that is connected with it. The full and legitimate application of this doctrine is exhibited only in the case of those who have been effectually called,—who are persuaded of this upon solid and satisfactory grounds,—and who, from this fact, viewed in connection with the general doctrine of election taught in Scripture, have drawn the inference or conclusion, that they have been elected to everlasting life, and that they shall certainly persevere in faith and holiness unto the end, and be eternally saved.

And what is the natural and appropriate result of this state of mind,—of these views and convictions about our present condition and future prospects, and the whole procedure of God in connection with them? The legitimate result of this state of mind, and consequently the right application of the doctrine, as soon as it comes to admit of a direct practical bearing on the case of men individually, is not to encourage them in carelessness or indifference about the regulation of their conduct, about the discharge of their duty, as if the result were secured do

what they might,—that is, as if God had not established an invariable connection between the means and the end, or had not left all the moral obligations under which men he at least unimpaired. Dr Whately admits that our doctrine is not liable to any charge of injurious tendency on this ground. But it is surely manifest that it is fitted to exert, directly and positively, an important practical influence. When men who have been effectually called, infer from their effectual vocation, established by its appropriate evidence, that they have been elected and shall certainly be saved; and when they realize and apply aright all the views which are thus presented of their condition, obligations, and prospects,—of all that God has done and will yet do with regard to them; the result must be, that the doctrine of election, or the special aspect in which that doctrine presents and impresses all the considerations, retrospective and prospective, which ought to influence and affect the mind, will afford, as the Confession says, “matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God;” inasmuch as it brings out, in a light, clearer, more palpable, and more impressive than could be derived from any other source, how entirely God is the author of our salvation and of all that leads to it,—of all that we have and all that we hope for,—how gloriously His perfections have been manifested in all that He has done for us,—and how supremely we should feel ourselves constrained to show forth His praises, and to yield ourselves unto Him. It must afford, also, “matter of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all who sincerely obey the gospel,”—most effectually bringing down every high thought and every imagination that exalteth itself, filling with peace and joy in believing amid every difficulty and danger, and keeping alive at all times a sense of the most profound and powerful obligation to aim supremely and unceasingly at the great object to which God’s electing purpose was directed,—on account of which, in the execution of that purpose, Christ gave himself for us, and sent forth His Spirit into our hearts,—viz. that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, that we should be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and be enabled to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, that we should be made meet for the everlasting enjoyment of His glorious presence.

When, then, men are assured of their eternal election, as an inference or deduction from the certainty of their effectual vocation, this suggests and inculcates views of God and of themselves —of what He has purposed and done for them, and of the relation in which they stand to Him—of their past history, present condition, and future prospects—which cannot be derived, at least in the same measure and degree, or of so definite and effective a character, from any other form or aspect in which these subjects can be presented; views fitted to

cherish in the heart all those feelings, desires, and motives that constitute or produce true piety and genuine godliness, and thus to assimilate men's character and conduct on earth to the life of heaven.

In a note subjoined to his "Essay on Election," Dr Whately makes an ingenious attempt to get some countenance to his notion, that the Calvinistic doctrine of election has no practical effect or bearing, from the 17th Article of the Church of England; while at the same time he tries to undermine the testimony in favour of Calvinism, which has been derived from that Article; and it may tend to throw further light upon the subject we have been considering, if we briefly examine his statements upon this point. He begins with quoting from one of his previous works some observations upon the principles which have often regulated the composition, and should therefore regulate the interpretation, of public ecclesiastical documents or symbolical books. He dwells especially upon the idea that these documents have been often the results of a compromise among men who differed somewhat from each other in their opinions, and illustrates the bearing of this consideration upon the right mode of explaining and applying them. His general views upon this subject are very sound and judicious, and may be most usefully applied in the explanation of many important ecclesiastical documents; but we think he utterly fails in the attempt he makes to apply them to the 17th Article of his own church. We quote the whole of his statement upon this point, and we request our readers to give it their special attention:—

"Our 17th Article is a striking exemplification of what has been said; for it contains modifications and limitations in one part of what is laid down in another, such as go near to neutralize the one by the other.

"It begins by stating the doctrine of predestination in a form which certainly may be, and we know often has been, understood in the Calvinistic sense; and then it proceeds to point out the danger of dwelling on that doctrine, if so understood, before curious and carnal persons, of whom one may presume there will usually be some in any congregation or mixed company, so that such a doctrine is seldom if ever to be publicly set forth. Next, it cautions us against taking the divine promises otherwise than as they are generally (generaliter) set forth in Scripture; that is, as made to classes of men,—those of such and such a description, and not to individuals. We are not, in short, to pronounce this or that man one of the elect (in the Calvinistic sense), except so far as we may judge from the kind of character he manifests. And lastly, we are warned, in our own conduct, not to vindicate any act as conformable to God's will, on the ground



that whatever takes place must have been decreed by Him, but are to consider conformity to His will as consisting in obedience to His injunctions.

“If, then, some may say, this doctrine is (1) not to be publicly set forth, nor (2) applied in owe judgment of any individual, nor (3) applied in our own conduct, why need it have been at all mentioned?

“As for the comfort enjoyed from the ‘godly consideration’ of it by those who ‘feel within themselves the working of God’s Holy Spirit,’ etc., it would be most unreasonable to suppose that this cannot be equally enjoyed by those who do not hold predestinarian views, but who not the less fully trust in and love their Redeemer, and ‘keep His saying.’

“But the Article is manifestly the result of a compromise between conflicting views; one party insisting on the insertion of certain statements, which the other consented to admit only on condition of the insertion of certain limitations and cautions, to guard against the dangers that might attend the reception of the doctrine in a sense of which the former passage is capable.”

The views set forth in this passage may be considered in two different aspects:—1st, In their bearing generally upon the Calvinism of the Articles; and 2d, In their bearing upon Whately’s special allegation, that the Calvinistic doctrine does not admit of any practical application.

On the first of these topics,. Whately seems to intend to insinuate that the 17th Article, as it stands, was the result of a compromise between men holding different and opposite views on the subjects controverted between Calvinists and Arminians; some statements being put in to please or satisfy the one party, and some to please or satisfy the other. It is on the ground of some notion of this sort that many have contended that the theology of the Church of England is neither Calvinism nor Arminianism; while others have embodied the same general idea in a somewhat different form, by maintaining that it is both the one and the other. But there is nothing whatever to support the idea of any such compromise, either in the actual statements of the Article itself, or in the historical facts as to the theological sentiments of its authors, and the circumstances in which it was composed. It must now be regarded as a conclusively established historical fact, —a fact about which there is scarcely room for an honest difference of opinion, —that the framers of the English Articles were Calvinists, and of course intended to teach Calvinism; or at least could not have intended to teach

anything at all inconsistent with it. And there is certainly nothing in the Article itself to contradict or discountenance this conclusion, to which the whole history of the matter so plainly points. There is not one statement contained in the Article to which any reasonable and intelligent Calvinist ever has objected, or ever could have thought of objecting. How honest and intelligent men who are not Calvinists can satisfy or pacify their consciences in subscribing it, is a mystery which we never have been able to solve. But with this we are not at present concerned. It is certain that there is nothing in the 17th Article—not a thought or idea—but what is found in other confessions undeniably Calvinistic, and in the writings of Calvin himself, and of all the ablest and most eminent Calvinistic divines. The framers of the English Articles were no doubt moderate Calvinists, who were not disposed to give countenance to the more extreme and minute expositions of the subject in which some Calvinists have indulged; and who were anxious to guard against the practical abuses into which some unintelligent and injudicious persons have fallen in the application of the doctrine, and to which we admit the doctrine is obviously liable in the hands of such persons. But there is really not a shadow of ground for Whately's assertion, that "the Article is manifestly the result of a compromise between conflicting views;" and the conclusive proof of this is, that there is nothing in it which would not naturally and at once suggest itself as a matter of course to any intelligent Calvinist, who wished to give a temperate and careful statement of his opinions. His statements about "modifications and limitations," "limitations and cautions," which one party insisted upon in order to neutralize something else; and about this party consenting to admit the leading and general position, which it is admitted has a very Calvinistic aspect, "only on the condition of the insertion" of these limitations and cautions to modify it, are a pure fiction, utterly unsupported by anything either in the history of the Article or in the Article itself. No man could have made such statements who was intelligently acquainted with the writings of Calvinistic divines, which make it manifest that such cautions and limitations constitute a natural and familiar commonplace in the exposition of their system of theology. Not only are the limitations and cautions in the Article perfectly consistent with Calvinism, but some of them are of such a nature as could only have been suggested and required by a previous statement of Calvinistic doctrine; and thus afford a positive proof, that its leading general statement is, and was intended to be, a declaration of the fundamental principle of Calvinism.

It is but fair, however, to remark, that Dr Whately has not here stated, precisely and explicitly, what were the "conflicting views" which he considers to have

been compromised in the Article by modifying and neutralizing limitations; and that thus it may be open to him to allege, in his own defence, that he did not mean to deny the Calvinism of the Article, or to assert that there is anything in it opposed to the views generally held by Calvinistic divines; and that the “conflicting views,” which he says were compromised, referred only to minor points, in which Calvinists might differ among themselves. If this should be pleaded in his defence, then we have to say that he ought to have made his meaning and object more clear and definite than he has done; and that the natural and obvious bearing of his statements, viewed in connection with the common mode of discussing this topic among a large class of Episcopalian divines, decidedly favours the idea, that, by “conflicting views,” he just meant the opposite opinions of Calvinists and Arminians. If his statement about “conflicting views” referred to points of inferior importance, in which Calvinists might differ from each other, it is at once trifling and irrelevant; and if it referred to the differences between Calvinists and Arminians, it is conclusively disproved, at once by all that is known concerning the history and the authors of the Article, and by the fact that there is nothing in it but what is maintained explicitly and unhesitatingly by the great body of Calvinistic theologians.

But we have to do at present chiefly with the attempt made by Whately to get, from the 17th Article, support for his allegation, that the Calvinistic doctrine of election does not admit of any practical application. The Article consists of three divisions. The first, and most important, is a general statement of the doctrine which Whately says “may be, and we know often has been, understood in the Calvinistic sense and which all Calvinists regard as a clear and accurate description of the whole process by which sinners are saved, in full accordance with the distinctive features of their system of theology. The second division sets forth the practical application of this Calvinistic doctrine under two heads,—the first declaring the “sweet and pleasant” use that may be made of it “by godly persons,” “as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God;” and the second warning against an abuse to which it may be perverted by “curious and carnal persons lacking (in the Latin *destituti*) the spirit of Christ,” who, if they “have continually before their eyes the sentence of God’s predestination,” may be led thereby into despair and profligacy. The third and last division consists of two positions, which do not, indeed, quite so clearly and certainly suggest or imply the Calvinistic doctrine, as do the use and abuse under the second division, but which are at least perfectly consistent with it. They may, indeed, be called “limitations and cautions;” since, in exact

accordance with the principles we have already explained, they limit the sphere of the practical application of the doctrine, and caution against applying it to matters on which it has no proper or legitimate bearing. These two limitations or cautions are,— first, “we must receive God’s promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Scripture;”<sup>5</sup> and second, “in our doings, that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared to us in the word of God.” .

It will be observed that Whately, in the quotation we have given from him, postpones the consideration of the first head under the second division, about the use or application that is and should be made of this doctrine by godly persons; proceeds at once to the abuse of the doctrine condemned in the second head of the second division, and to the two limitations or cautions set forth in the third; and having endeavoured to extort from these three topics some support for his main allegation, he then returns to the explicit declaration of the Article about the right use or practical application of the doctrine, and tries to dispose of it. The whole process is very curious, as a specimen of careful and elaborate sophistry, though it is certainly not very successful.

The way in which he turns to account the statement in the Article, about the abuse that may be made of the doctrine by carnal and ungodly persons, is this: Upon the assumption that there will usually be some such persons in any congregation, he bases the inference that “such a doctrine is seldom if ever to be publicly set forth;” and from the application which he afterwards makes of this inference, in his summing up of the argument, it is plain that he wishes it to be received as suggested by, or involved in, the statement in the Article itself, as if it were intended to be taught there at least by implication. Now, it is surely manifest that there is nothing in the Article which affords any appearance of ground for this inference. The liability of a doctrine to be abused by a certain class of persons is certainly not a sufficient reason why it should be “seldom if ever publicly set forth,” but only a reason why, when it is set forth, the right use and application of it should be carefully pointed out, and the abuse or perversion of it carefully guarded against. To ascribe to the compilers of this Article a notion of so peculiar a kind, as that a doctrine which they had set forth as a great scriptural truth should seldom if ever be publicly taught, when they had not said this, or anything like it, and to do this upon a ground so palpably inadequate, is a kind of procedure which is wholly unwarrantable.

He then proceeds to the two limitations or cautions set forth in the third and last

division of the Article; and to the account which, in the first instance, he gives of their import and bearing, we have nothing to object. It is true, as he alleges, that the first of them implies that “we are not to pronounce this or that man one of the elect (in the Calvinistic sense), except so far as we may judge from the kind of character he manifests;” and that the second implies, that we are, “in our own conduct, not to vindicate any act as conformable to God’s will, on the ground that whatever takes place must have been decreed by Him, but to consider conformity to His will as consisting in obedience to His injunctions.” These positions are true in themselves; they are plainly implied in the concluding division of the Article; and they certainly limit materially the sphere of the practical application of the doctrine; but we think it manifest, from the explanations which have already been submitted, that they are altogether irrelevant to Whately’s leading allegation, that the doctrine admits of no practical application whatever.

He then goes on to give the summing up of the preceding argument in this way: 66 If, then, some may say” (he evidently wishes it to be believed that men may say all this truly and justly), “this doctrine is (1) not to be publicly set forth, nor (2) applied in our judgment of any individual, nor (3) applied in our own conduct, why need it have been at all mentioned?” The conclusion here indefinitely and modestly indicated in the shape of a question, is evidently intended as equivalent to an assertion of his favourite position, that the Calvinistic doctrine of election, even if admitted to be true, is a mere barren speculation, destitute of all practical influence. The question in which his conclusion is embodied is virtually addressed to the compilers of the Articles, and it plainly involves a serious charge against them for teaching this doctrine, when, in Whately’s estimation, there was no need to mention it. Their answer to this charge would undoubtedly have been, that there was need to mention it—1st, because it was a portion of God’s revealed truth; and 2d, because it had an important practical use or application in the case of godly persons, as they had fully set forth in the first head of the second division of the Article. But let us advert to the three points in which he has summed up his argument, and which he represents as all sanctioned by the statements of the Article on which he had been commenting. The first is, that “this doctrine is not to be publicly set forth.” This he had previously put in the modified form, that “it is seldom if ever to be publicly set forth;” but now, when he is summing up his argument, and endeavouring to found upon this consideration a presumption (for he could scarcely regard it as a proof) in support of his conclusion, he drops the qualification, and makes the assertion absolute,—cc the doctrine is not to be

publicly set forth.” We have already shown that there is no ground for this assertion in anything contained in the Article. The statement that the doctrine is liable to be abused by a certain class of persons, affords no ground whatever for the inference which Whately deduces from it, even in its qualified form. It furnishes good ground, indeed, for the declaration of the Westminster Confession, that the a doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care,” but for nothing more; and with this, we have no doubt, the compilers of the Thirty-nine Articles would have been perfectly satisfied, as embodying all that they meant to teach upon this point.

The second and third points—viz. that this doctrine is not to be applied, or does not admit of any practical application, either in our judgment of any individual, or in the regulation of our own conduct—are intended as a compendious statement of the two limitations or cautions in the concluding section of the Article. These two points he had previously explained more fully and definitely, and, as we have admitted, correctly. But we do not admit that there is the same fairness and correctness in the more indefinite and compendious statement of them which he now gives in his summing up. Our objection to his argument, founded upon these two points, was, that they merely limited the sphere of the practical application of the doctrine of election, but did not prove his allegation, that it had no practical application whatever. He seems to have had a sort of indistinct apprehension of this radical defect in his argument; and in his summing up he tries to conceal it, by putting these two points in the most indefinite and comprehensive form, so as to give them the appearance of covering the whole ground, and thus leaving no room whatever for the practical application of the doctrine. To say absolutely, and without any qualification or explanation, that the doctrine is not to be applied in our judgment of any individual or in our own conduct, is to assert rather more than we can admit to be true in itself, or sanctioned by the statements of the Article, and rather more than is implied in the more full and formal exposition of these statements which he himself had previously given. On these grounds, we cannot but regard Whately’s summing up of his argument upon this subject as exhibiting more of the sophist than of the logician.

After having done what he could to find some materials in the Article to give positive countenance to his allegation, he comes at last to consider what is there set forth about the use and application of the doctrine. This—both from its position in the Article, and its more direct and immediate bearing upon the point in dispute—ought in fairness to have been considered first. But Whately

evidently thought it expedient to accumulate something like evidence in support of his position, before he ventured to face the statement which so explicitly and conclusively disproves it. The way in which he attempts to dispose of the statement is this, —“As for the comfort enjoyed from the ‘godly consideration’ of it by those who ‘feel within themselves the workings of God’s Holy Spirit,’ etc., it would be most unreasonable to suppose that this cannot be equally enjoyed by those who do not hold predestinarian views, but who not the less fully trust in and love their Redeemer, and keep His saying.” Now, upon this we have to remark, 1st, That the Article does most expressly ascribe a specific use—a definite practical application—to the godly consideration of this doctrine by truly religious persons; and 2d, That there is nothing unreasonable in ascribing to it this use and application. The Article expressly asserts, that “the godly consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons;” and the ascription of this result to the “consideration” of this doctrine, is of itself a flat and explicit contradiction to Whately’s position, which no sophistry or shuffling, and no accumulation of probabilities or presumptions, can evade or dispose of. The Article further specifies the process by which the consideration of this doctrine produces this result of “unspeakable comfort to godly persons;”—viz. “as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love to God.” To allege that the Article, in ascribing to this doctrine the production of unspeakable comfort, by confirming men’s faith of their eternal salvation, and increasing their love to God, did not intend to state anything peculiar to this doctrine, but merely described what might be derived equally or as fully from the consideration of other doctrines, is plainly to charge the Article with containing downright nonsense or unmeaning verbiage. And here we may remark by the way, that the manifest and exact accordance between the view given in the 17th Article of the Church of England, concerning the right use and application of the doctrine of “predestination and our election in Christ,” with the representation given of the same subject in the Westminster Confession, which we have already explained and illustrated, furnishes a proof of the identity of the system of doctrine taught in these two symbols.

As to the alleged unreasonableness of ascribing any such use or application specifically to the Calvinistic doctrine of election, we have, we think, sufficiently refuted this in our general observations upon this subject. And, indeed, it is surely self-evident, that this doctrine, when intelligently and rationally applied by persons who have good grounds for believing that they

have been elected to eternal life, must produce practical results upon their views and feelings,—results operating beneficially upon their character and conduct,—which cannot be derived equally, if at all, from any other source. We admit, indeed, that the practical results derived from the application of this doctrine are confined within a narrow sphere, and do not bear directly upon the enjoyment of the great essential blessings of the gospel, or upon the production of the fundamental elements of Christian character. They do not bear directly upon justification and regeneration,—the essential blessings on which universally, and in every instance, the salvation of sinners depends. They are connected more immediately with what may be called the secondary or subordinate blessings of the gospel,—“assurance of God’s love, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” But these form no unimportant part of the gospel provision. They materially affect not only the “comfort of godly persons,” but their growth in grace; and they operate powerfully in aiding their increase in holiness, and in securing their perseverance therein unto the end. Every sinner who has been justified and regenerated shall assuredly be saved. And we have no doubt that many men have been made meet for heaven, and admitted to the enjoyment of it, who never, so long as they continued upon earth, understood or believed the Calvinistic doctrine of election. The specific practical personal application of the doctrine, by men individually in their own case, requires, indeed, as its necessary antecedents and conditions, not only that they have in fact been enabled to repent and believe in Christ, —that they have entered upon the way which leadeth to heaven, by embracing Christ as He is freely offered to them in the gospel, —but also, that they are assured, upon good and sufficient grounds, that this is their present condition. And we willingly concede that not a few have been by God’s grace brought into this condition, and at last admitted into the kingdom of glory, who never attained to a distinct “certainty of their effectual vocation,” and therefore could not be rationally “assured of their eternal election;” and who, of course, could make no direct personal application of the doctrine of election to their own case, or derive from it the special spiritual benefit which it is fitted to impart. But we are persuaded that all these persons lived somewhat beneath their privileges,—failed, to some extent, in walking worthily of their high and holy calling,—and came short, more or less, in fully adorning their Christian profession, by their ignorance or unbelief of the information which God has given us in His word, concerning His sovereign purpose of mercy in Christ Jesus in regard to all who are saved; an absolute and unchangeable purpose formed from eternity, and executed in time, by bestowing upon them all those things which accompany salvation, and prepare for the enjoyment of heaven.



We shall conclude with a few additional remarks suggested by the last section of the 17th of the Thirty-nine Articles. It is expressed in these words:—“Furthermore, we must receive God’s promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture; and, in our doings, that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.” We have already said enough to show that these two statements—while they certainly limit or restrict the legitimate sphere of the personal practical application of the Calvinistic doctrine of election, and caution against the abuses which have been made of it—contain nothing whatever in the least inconsistent with Calvinism; nothing but what is to be found in the writings of all Calvinistic divines. It is, indeed, a curious circumstance,—and it has been often referred to, in opposition to the attempts which have been made to deduce from this portion of the Article an argument against the Calvinism of its leading position,—that the second and most important part of this statement, which virtually includes or comprehends the first, is expressed in the very words of Calvin; while the first part of it is to be found, in its whole substance and spirit, in many parts of his writings. We concede to the Arminians that the word generally, here, is not to be taken in the sense of usually or ordinarily, but is intended to indicate the character of the promises as set forth in Scripture in a general, indefinite, unlimited, unrestricted way. There is nothing in this, however, which renders any service to their cause. The word promises is to be taken here, as it was used by the Reformers in general, in a wider sense than that in which it is commonly employed in more modern times. The Reformers generally used this word as comprehending all the offers and invitations of the gospel addressed to men in general,—to sinners as such,—freely offering to them all the blessings of salvation, and inviting them to come to God through Christ, that they may receive and enjoy these blessings. In modern times, the word promises is commonly taken in a more restricted sense, as descriptive of those scriptural statements which are addressed specially to believers,—to those who have already been united to Christ by faith,—and which assume, that this is their present position. But the word as used in the Article plainly comprehends, and, indeed, has special reference to, what we now commonly call the offers and invitations of the gospel, or those scriptural statements which tell the human race of the provision which God has made for saving them; and on this ground call upon them to turn from sin unto God, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to lay hold of the hope set before them. Now, the substance of what is taught in the Article is this, that these offers and invitations are set forth to us in Scripture in a general or universal form,—no restriction being made, no exception being put forth, no previous qualification being required as a condition of accepting them,

—and that we must deal with, or apply them, in this their general or unrestricted character, without bringing in, at this stage, either the general doctrine of predestination, or its possible, but wholly unknown, bearing upon individuals, in order to modify or limit the general scriptural representations, or the manner in which they ought to be dealt with. Here, neither the general doctrine of predestination, nor its imagined bearing upon individuals, has any proper place, or can exert any legitimate practical influence. The offers and invitations must be set forth as they stand, in all their unrestricted generality, and should be dealt with unhesitatingly, according to their natural and obvious meaning and import. This is all that is involved in the first part of the statement we are considering; and to all this Calvinists have no hesitation in assenting. They set forth the general offers and invitations of the gospel addressed to mankind at large, in order to lead them from darkness to light; they do all this as freely and fully, as cordially and earnestly, as any other class of theologians; and they think they can show that it cannot be proved that there is anything in all this inconsistent with the peculiar doctrines they hold.

We have said that the second part of this statement about the “will of God” virtually includes the first part about the “promises.” And the reason is this, that the promises—that is, the offers and invitations of the gospel—virtually comprehend or involve commands or injunctions, and of course impose duties and obligations. The offers and invitations of the gospel are intended to lead men to repent and believe, by setting before them motives and encouragements to persuade them to do so. But they at the same time include or imply a command, that those to whom they are addressed should receive them and deal with them according to their true nature and import. God has made this their imperative duty, by explicit injunctions contained in His word. “To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.” It is true, indeed, that the right mode of representing and applying the offers and invitations of the gospel is of such transcendent importance, from its direct and immediate bearing on the only process by which sinners individually are saved, that it was proper to state it distinctly by itself, and to give it the fullest prominence. But it is not the less true, that the substance of what ought to be said upon this topic is virtually comprehended in the wider statement, which the compilers of the Articles expressed in the words of Calvin,—viz. “that, in our doings, that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared to us in the word of God.” The general import of this position is, that our whole

conduct is to be regulated, in all matters bearing upon our relation to God and our eternal welfare, by the laws, injunctions, or commands which are imposed upon us in Scripture; and not by anything which we may or can know as to God's purposes or intentions with respect either to ourselves or others, or with respect to any events or results that may be anticipated. This is manifestly a sound principle; and no intelligent Calvinist has ever refused or hesitated to assent to it, and to act upon it. There have, indeed, been great disputes between the Calvinists and the Arminians in regard to the will of God—*voluntas Dei*; and the right exposition of this subject may be said to enter vitally and fundamentally into the controversy between them. But the disputes do not turn upon the point with which we have at present to do. Calvinists agree with Arminians in holding that the exclusive rule of our duty— of what we are bound to do—is that will of God which is plainly set forth in His word in the form of injunctions or commands. The language employed in the Article—"that will of God"—naturally suggests the idea that there is another will of God besides what is here described, or another sense in which the expression may be employed; and it is about this other will that a great deal of controversy has been carried on. We cannot enter on the consideration of this topic, though it is very important in itself, and though there are indications that it is very ill understood by some in the present day who call themselves Calvinists. We have room only for a few words, not upon the subject itself, but merely upon some of the terms commonly used in the discussion of it.

That will of God which we have expressly declared to us in His word," and which is universally admitted to be the exclusive rule of our duty, is called by Calvinistic divines by a variety of designations. They call it *voluntas praecepti*, *voluntas revelata*, *voluntas signi*, *voluntas εὐαρεστίας*. These are just four different designations for one and the same thing; presenting it in somewhat different aspects, but all of them equally intended to indicate that will of God which is set forth in His word by injunctions and commands, and constitutes the sole rule of our duty. But Calvinists have always contended that there is another will of God, indicated by events or results as they take place. They hold that all events are foreordained by God, and that, of course, all events, when they take place, indicate what God had resolved to bring about, or at least to permit; and may thus be regarded as being, in some sense, manifestations of His will. This will of God, by which He regulates events or results, is quite distinct from that will by which He imposes duties and obligations; and yet it must be admitted to be a reality,—to have an existence and an efficacy,—unless He is to be shut out, not only from foreseeing and foreordaining, but from determining and

regulating, the whole course of events which constitute the history of the world. This will of God, also, Calvinists usually designate by four different names, corresponding, but contrasted, with the four applied to the divine will in the former sense. They call it *voluntas decreti*, *voluntas arcana*, *voluntas beneplaciti*, *voluntas ευδοκίας*. These, too, are just four different designations of one and the same thing, —viz. that will of God by which He determines events or results. And about the divine will, in this sense, there has been a good deal of discussion, an acquaintance with which is indispensably necessary to an intelligent knowledge of this great controversy.

Arminians usually deny that events or results, simply as such, are to be regarded as furnishing a manifestation of the divine will; and appeal, in support of this view, to the conditional form in which predictions and promises about future events are frequently put in Scripture,—the conditions attached proving, as they allege, that God had formed no absolute purpose to bring about a certain result, and thus showing that the actual result, when it does occur, is not necessarily to be regarded as-being, in any sense, an indication of the divine will. The fundamental principle of Calvinism is, that God hath unchangeably foreordained whatsoever cometh to pass; and if this principle be true, then there can be no strict and proper conditionality attaching to any events or results, as if their actual occurrence were really suspended upon causes or influences which God had not resolved to regulate and control. Calvinists accordingly deny that there is any true and proper conditionality in the divine predictions and promises; the conditional or hypothetical form in which they are often set forth in Scripture, being intended merely to indicate a fixed connection established in God's purpose between means and end, and being designed, by indicating this connection, to exert a moral influence upon the minds of men, and thereby to contribute to bring about the result contemplated. Arminians object vehemently to the distinction which Calvinists make between the preceptive and revealed or declared will of God, and what they commonly call His decretive and secret will, —the will of His good pleasure,—as if this were to ascribe to God two opposite and contradictory wills. But there is really no opposition or contradiction between them. His preceptive will, which is revealed or declared, stands out, as all admit, on the face of Scripture, in the injunctions or commands which constitute the only rule of our duty. But His decretive will—*voluntas decreti*, or *beneplaciti*—must also be admitted as a reality, unless He is to be excluded from the determination and control of events. And when Calvinists call this will of decree or of good pleasure, by which He determines actual events or results, His secret will, as distinguished from His revealed or declared will, by which He

determines duties and imposes obligations, they just mean, that it is in every instance (except where God has issued a prediction or a promise) utterly unknown to us, until the event takes place, and, by its occurrence, reveals or declares to us what God had resolved to do, or at least to permit.

And there is surely nothing in all this but the statement of an undeniable matter of fact. Unless it be denied that the divine will has a determining influence in bringing about events or results, we must introduce some distinctions into the exposition of this matter; and there is no difficulty in showing that the Calvinistic distinction between the preceptive or revealed, and the decretive or secret, will of God, is much more accordant with Scripture, and liable to much less serious objections, than the distinction which Arminians set up in opposition to it, between an antecedent or conditional, and a consequent or absolute will,—made absolute, of course, only by the fulfilment of the conditions.

It has been stated of late, that the older Calvinistic writers maintained the conditional character of the prophetic announcements, in opposition to those who asserted their absolute and unchangeable fixedness; and that, by the distinction which they were accustomed to make between the secret and the revealed will of God, they meant a distinction between His real intention or decree, which is fixed and immutable, and His declared purpose, which may vary from time to time with the changeful conditions of man. We have never met with these views among the older Calvinistic writers; and we venture to assert that such statements as these indicate very great ignorance and misconception, as to the grounds usually taken by Calvinistic divines in expounding and defending the fundamental principles of their system of theology. But we cannot discuss this subject, though it is naturally suggested by the statement on which we have been commenting. We think we have said enough to show that the concluding portion of the 17th Article not only contains nothing which has any appearance of inconsistency with Calvinism, but even furnishes a presumption that it was indeed the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, and no other, which the leading portion of the Article was intended to set forth.

We have had repeated occasion, in dealing with such questions as these, to advert to the important and useful influence of controversial discussions, as exhibited in the history of the church, in throwing light upon the true meaning of Scripture, and the real import and evidence of the doctrines which are taught there. We have endeavoured to enforce the obligation, incumbent upon all men, to improve past controversies, for the purpose of aiding them in forming the

most accurate, precise, and definite conceptions upon every subject which the Bible brings under our notice; and we have referred to the great Calvinistic systematic divines of the seventeenth century, as the best specimens of the improvement that may and should be made of the fruits and results of polemical discussion, in bringing out a correct and exact exposition of all the doctrines taught in Scripture, in their mutual bearings and relations. But everything is liable to abuse and perversion. There are everywhere dangers, both on the right hand and the left, to which men are exposed, from the weakness and imperfection of their faculties, and the corrupting influences from without and from within, that often tell upon the formation of their opinions and impressions of things, tending to produce defect or excess, and frequently, even when there may not be much of positive error, leading to onesidedness of conception, in the direction either of narrowness or exaggeration. Though a man may be well versant in some departments of theological literature, we can scarcely regard him as entitled to the character of a theologian, unless he be familiar with the works of the great systematic divines of the seventeenth century, both Calvinistic and Arminian. But an addiction to the study of systematic theology, and to the perusal of systems, has, unless it be carefully regulated, its obvious and serious dangers, which ought to be diligently and assiduously guarded against. No one class of men are to be implicitly followed, as if they were in all respects models for our imitation, with reference to all the objects which we are called upon to aim at. No uninspired men, or body of men, have ever, in the formation and expression of their opinions, risen altogether, and in every respect, above the influences of their position and circumstances.

Controversial discussions have a strong and invariable tendency to lead those who have been engaged in them, to form an exaggerated impression of the magnitude of the topics about which they have exercised their faculties, and spent their time and strength, and for which they may have contended unto victory. And it is usually not until another generation has arisen that men are enabled to gather up fully the fruits of the contest, and to apply its results to the formation of a sound and judicious estimate, not only of the truth, but of the importance of the questions involved in it, and of the best and most effective way of defending the truth and exposing the error. No intelligent and judicious Calvinist will probably dispute, that the great controversy which Arminius raised in the beginning of the seventeenth century, produced the effect of bringing the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism into a position of something like undue prominence,— a greater prominence than they have in the Bible, or than they ought to have, ordinarily and permanently, in the thoughts of men, and in the

usual course of pulpit instruction. We have no doubt that the fair result of that great controversy was to establish conclusively the scriptural truth of all the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism. But it does not follow from this that the Calvinists, who so decidedly triumphed over their opponents on the field of argument, entirely escaped the ordinary influence of controversy, and succeeded in retaining as sound an estimate of the comparative importance, as of the actual truth, of the doctrines for which they had been led to contend. There can be no reasonable doubt that the peculiarities of Calvinism were raised for a time to a position of undue prominence, and that there are plain indications of this in some of the features of the theological literature of the seventeenth century. We cannot dwell upon this point; but we may refer, as an illustration of what we mean, to the marked difference, as to the prominence given to the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism, between the Institutions of Calvin himself and the theological systems of the great Calvinistic divines to whom we have referred. We have the highest sense of the value, for many important purposes, of these theological systems; but we cannot doubt that Calvin's Institutions is fitted to leave upon the mind a juster and sounder impression of the place which the doctrines of Calvinism hold in the Bible, and ought to hold permanently in the usual course of pulpit instruction, or in the ordinary preaching of the gospel.

We have made these observations, not certainly because we have an impression that there is a tendency among us generally, or in any influential quarters, to give undue prominence to the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism, but because it has been alleged of late that professed Calvinists do not now give so much prominence to their peculiar doctrines as was commonly assigned to them in former times, and that this affords evidence that Calvinism has been greatly modified, if not practically abandoned. Our object is just to indicate how the fact founded on, in so far as it is a reality, may be accounted for, in perfect consistency with what we believe to be true,—viz. that professed Calvinists are still thoroughly persuaded of the scriptural truth of the peculiarities of Calvinism, and are resolved to maintain and apply them, according to their true nature and importance, in their due proportions, and in their right relations to the whole scheme of divine truth.

We wish to remind our readers, in conclusion, that we have not professed or attempted to discuss the general subject of predestination, or to deal with its most important and fundamental departments. A full investigation of the whole subject would naturally divide itself into four branches,—viz. 1st, The settlement of the true status quaestionis, the real points in dispute between the contending

parties; 2d, The examination of the scriptural evidence, direct and indirect, explicit and inferential, in favour of Calvinism, and in opposition to Arminianism; 3d, The objections commonly adduced by Arminians against our real and admitted doctrines; and 4th, The practical application of Calvinism. With the second of these branches of the subject— which is the most important and fundamental—we have not attempted to deal at all; and to the third we have referred only in a very brief and incidental way, without professing to discuss it. Our observations have been almost wholly restricted to the first and fourth of these divisions, including a consideration of the objections commonly adduced against Calvinism, which are based upon misconceptions and misrepresentations of the true meaning and import, and of the practical application, of its doctrines.



# The Reformers and the Lessons From Their History

Having spoken at length of the character of the Reformers, we mean to make a few general observations that may be fitted to suggest some useful practical lessons from the subject. It might afford materials for some interesting reflections, to notice the variety of gifts which God conferred upon the different Reformers individually,—bestowing upon one what another wanted, or did not possess in the same degree; and thus providing, notwithstanding the infirmities of human nature, for their cordial cooperation, to a large extent, among themselves, in their different spheres, and also for enabling them to advance most fully, by their united labours and efforts, the success of the common cause. This would afford an interesting illustration of the abounding goodness and manifold wisdom of God; but we must confine ourselves to some of those circumstances which were common to the Reformers in general, viewed as a class or body of men; and we remark, 1st, That the Reformers in general were men eminently distinguished at once for the strength of their natural talents, and the extent of their acquired learning. That this was indeed the case, is too evident to admit of dispute, and has never been questioned even by their bitterest enemies. They were men possessed of such distinguished talents as would have raised them to eminence and influence in any department of study or occupation to which they might have turned their attention; and their writings and their labours abundantly establish this position. This was of course no merit of theirs, and affords no ground whatever why either they or others should boast. Its importance and value lie only in this, that it is a matter of fact that God selected, and qualified in other respects, for the work of restoring His truth and reforming His church, men whom He had gifted with very superior natural abilities. This

was the Lord's doing, —this was the course which He pursued on that memorable occasion, and which He has ordinarily pursued in most important epochs, connected with the maintenance of His truth and the advancement of His cause. We are to look upon it as just what the Lord in His wisdom was pleased to do,—as a thing effected, and of course intended, by Him in His actual administration of the affairs of the church and the world. We are to regard it in this light, as an undoubted reality, intended by Him, like all that He does, to make himself known, and to unfold and impress the principles of His moral government; and, viewing the fact in this aspect, to consider what are the lessons which it is fitted to teach. It should lead men, of course, to estimate aright mental power and vigour as a valuable gift of God, intended by Him to be used, and often, employed by Him, in fact, in the advancement of His cause. This, however, is not a lesson which it is very necessary to inculcate; for although occasionally fanatical exceptions do appear, the general and ordinary tendency of men is to overestimate mere intellectual power, irrespective of the purposes to which it is applied—the objects to which it is directed. Still it is right to remember that God, by selecting as instruments for the restoration of His truth and the reformation of His church, men whom He had gifted with very superior intellectual powers, has thereby borne testimony to their value and importance, —has indicated the responsibility connected with the possession of them, and the purpose to which they ought to be chiefly applied; while He has also, by the same fact, made it not only warrantable but incumbent upon all, to aim at the cultivation and improvement of the intellectual powers which He may have conferred, as a distinct and definite object, in subordination to His glory, and as a means of fitting Christians more fully for doing something for the advancement of His cause.

The fact that the Reformers were also, in general, men of extensive acquired learning, admits of a more direct and obvious practical application, as it reminds us of our obligation to improve to the uttermost our opportunities of acquiring useful knowledge, and encouraging us in the prosecution of this object by holding out the expectation, that the more knowledge we may be able to acquire, we may become the more useful in promoting His cause.

God having in His wisdom selected for the work of reformation men whom He had endowed, generally speaking, with very superior natural powers,—and whom He had united, or resolved in His own good time to unite, to Jesus Christ, by a true and living faith,—inspired them with a desire to acquire all the knowledge that might be useful in the prosecution of the work to which they

were destined; and so arranged, in His providence, the outward circumstances in which He placed them, that they had the means and opportunities of gratifying this desire. Thus He brought about the actual result, that they became, in point of fact, extensively learned in all matters connected with the work in which they were to be engaged; while we find, also, that He was graciously pleased to employ the learning which they had acquired, or rather which He had bestowed upon them, as instrumental, in its place, in contributing in some measure to the promotion of His cause. The success of that cause is to be ascribed wholly to His own agency—the operation of His Spirit upon the minds and hearts of men; but the full recognition of the agency of the Spirit as the only real author of the whole success, does not preclude the propriety of attending to and marking the instrumentality employed, as exhibited in the men who were the instruments of bringing about the results, and in the various gifts as well as graces bestowed upon them and manifested in their work; and it is a fact, and one that ought certainly to be noticed and improved, that God, in selecting and preparing the instruments whom He was to employ in introducing and extending the Reformation, took care that they should be men who, speaking of them generally, had become possessed of a share of knowledge and learning, connected with all theological subjects, greatly superior to that of the great body of those by whom they were surrounded. The circle of science, in every department, was greatly more limited than it is now, and the amount of attainable knowledge, by means of reading, greatly less. But the important consideration—that which involves a principle and teaches a lesson—is, that the Reformers were led to desire, and were furnished in providence with the means of acquiring, a very large amount of the then attainable knowledge which was fitted to increase their influence and to promote their success, in establishing truth and in organizing the church. Some of them held a very distinguished place among the scholars of the age in some departments of literature that were not exclusively professional. Calvin derived most important advantages, with reference to the special work to which he was afterwards called, and the talents and habits which it required, from his having been led in providence in early life to go through a course of study in law and jurisprudence in two of the most eminent French universities. Melancthon and Beza were acknowledged as ranking among the most eminent Greek scholars of the period; and brought at once that refinement of taste and elegance of style which an acquaintance with classical literature tends to produce, and at the same time great philological learning, to bear upon the interpretation of Scripture and the defence of divine truth. Almost all of them were well read in the works of the principal writers of Greece and Rome,—in the writings of the Fathers, and the history of the church,

—and in the scholastic philosophers and theologians of the middle ages; and this comprehended nearly all the knowledge that was then generally accessible. All this knowledge they were enabled to acquire; they employed it in the work to which they were called; and they found that the possession and application of it contributed to promote the success of their labours. The lesson which this fact is fitted to teach is, that we should estimate highly the value of learning, as a means of promoting the interests of truth and righteousness; and that we should feel it to be incumbent to acquire as much of knowledge and learning as opportunities will allow, especially of that knowledge and learning which bears most directly and immediately upon the various departments of labour in which we may be called upon to engage for the advancement of Christ's cause.

In tracing the history of the lives of the leading Reformers, we find that there is scarcely one of them who had not opportunities afforded them in providence, at some period or other, of devoting a considerable portion of time to diligent and careful study. We find they faithfully improved these opportunities,— that they were in consequence able ever thereafter to bring out of their treasure things new and old, and were thus fitted for wider and more extensive usefulness. In one aspect, indeed, the truest and highest test of the usefulness of men who have honestly devoted themselves to the immediate service of God, may be said to be the number of souls whom they have directly been the instruments of converting. God has not unfrequently bestowed in large measure this highest usefulness upon men who were but slenderly furnished either with intellectual superiority or acquired knowledge; and any man, however great his talents and acquirements, who has received many souls for his hire, may well be satisfied with his usefulness and the reward of it. But independently of the consideration, that in all probability God has never employed any man as an instrument of extensive good in His church whom He has not made the direct instrument of converting some from the error of their ways and thereby saving their souls, it must be observed that there is a test of usefulness which may be regarded as in some respects even higher than this,—when men are enabled to contribute to the wide diffusion of great scriptural principles or truths, the maintenance and success of a great scriptural cause, or the infusion of spiritual health and vigour into a dead or languid church. And in these high and diffusive departments of Christian usefulness, the Lord has usually been pleased to employ the services of men who had received from Him not only the gift of renewed hearts, but also superior intellectual powers, and of extensive and varied knowledge. So at least it certainly was at the era of the Reformation; and the fact that God then took care that those whom He meant chiefly to employ in this important work, did in

fact acquire extensive learning, which they employed in His service, should teach the obligation incumbent upon all, of improving to the uttermost the opportunities afforded in providence of acquiring all useful knowledge, and the sinfulness of neglecting them.

But, in the second place, the history of the Reformers is fitted to teach a lesson, by exhibiting a striking example of unwearied activity and industry. They were not mere students and authors, they were diligent and laborious workers. As students they acquired a large stock of learning; as writers they have transmitted to us a great mass of valuable authorship; while at the same time most of them had a great amount of ordinary practical work and business to attend to, and to discharge, in the different situations in which they were placed. Most of them were voluminous authors, and have left behind them productions, the mere transcription of which we, with our low standard of industry and labour, are apt to think might be work for a lifetime. The works of the different Reformers exhibit, of course, in different degrees, evidence of care and elaboration in point of thought and diction; but they have almost all bequeathed productions which must have occupied a great deal of time, and required a great deal of thought and pains. And they were none of them retired students, with leisure to devote their time unbroken to reading, reflection, and composition. They were all busily engaged in the discharge of important public duties, as professors and teachers, as pastors of congregations, and organizers of churches, and in the ordinary administration of ecclesiastical affairs. They had a great public cause in hand, in the defence and maintenance of which they were called upon to take a part; and this not only required of them the publication of works through the press, but must have entailed upon them a large amount of private correspondence and of personal dealing with men. They did not in general (Beza was an exception) attain to a great age, but they lived while they lived; and amid much to distract and harass them, they performed an amount of labour, physical and intellectual, the contemplation of which is usefully fitted to humble us under a sense of our imbecility, inactivity, and laziness, and to stir up to more strenuous and persevering exertion. Zwingli was cut off at the age of forty-seven; and yet, besides doing a great deal of work, not only as pastor and professor of theology in Zurich, but as the leading Reformer (of the German portion) of Switzerland, he has left us four folio volumes of well-digested, well-composed matter, upon all the great theological topics that then occupied the public mind. And what a life was Calvin's! Though he lived only fifty-four years, and struggled during a large portion of it with a very infirm state of bodily health, and with much severe disease, half his life was well-nigh spent before the Lord brought him to Geneva,

and called him to engage in the public service of His church. But how much was he enabled during the remainder of his life to do and to effect! Though engaged incessantly in the laborious duties of a pastor and professor of theology, he was called upon to give his counsel and advice, by personal applications and by written correspondence, upon almost every important question, speculative or practical, that affected the interests of the reformed cause throughout Europe; and yet he has left many folio volumes (in one edition nine, and in another twelve), full of profound and admirably-digested thinking upon the most important and difficult of all subjects,—exhibiting much patient consideration and great practical wisdom, clothed in pure and classical Latin; forming also (for some of them were written in French, and several, as the “Institutions,” both in Latin and French), in the estimation of eminent French critics, who had no liking to his theology or his ecclesiastical labours, an era in the improvement of the language of the country which had the honour to give him birth. We are too apt to think, in these degenerate times, that a reasonable and not very exalted measure of diligence and activity in some one particular department, whether of study or of practical labour, is all that can be fairly expected; but the example of the Reformers should show that it is possible, through God’s grace, to do much more; should teach a lesson of the value of time, and of the obligation to husband and improve it; and constrain all to labour, with unwearied zeal and diligence, expecting no rest here, but looking, as they did, to the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

The third and last lesson suggested by the history and conduct of the Reformers is, the necessity and importance of giving much time and attention to the study of the word of God. The Reformers were all led by God, at an early period in their history, to give careful attention to the study of the sacred Scriptures; and they were guided by His Spirit to form correct views of the great leading principles which are there unfolded. They were led to continue ever after to study them with care and diligence; and they persevered in applying them to comfort their hearts amid all their trials and difficulties, and to guide them in the regulation of their conduct. It is very evident, from surveying the history and the writings of the Reformers, that their strength and success— both as defenders of divine truth and maintainers of God’s cause, and also as men engaged, amid many difficulties, in the practical business of the church and the world, and in the administration of important affairs—arose very much from their familiar and intimate acquaintance with the word of God, the whole word of God. They were familiar with the meaning and application of its statements, and they were deeply imbued with its spirit. The word of God dwelt in them richly, in all

wisdom and spiritual understanding, and thus became “a light unto their feet, and a lamp unto their path.” It is an interesting fact, and is one proof and manifestation of their deep and careful study of the word of God, that many of the leading Reformers have left, amid their other voluminous productions and abundant labours, commentaries upon the whole, or a large portion of, the sacred Scriptures. We have eight or nine commentaries upon the whole, or large portions of, the Old and New Testaments,—the productions of as many of the most eminent and laborious of the Reformers; and this fact of itself, proves the large amount of thought and attention which they were accustomed to devote to the study of them, and the great familiarity which they had acquired with them. To write a commentary upon the Scriptures, which should really possess any value or utility, implies that they have been made the subject of much deep study and much careful meditation, as well as fervent prayer for divine direction. The commentaries of the Reformers upon the sacred Scriptures are, of course, possessed of different degrees of value and excellence, according to the different gifts and qualifications of the men, and the time and pains which they were able to bestow upon them,—and here, as in everything else connected with the exposition and application of the whole truth of God, Calvin towers far above them all; yet, as a whole, they fully vindicate what we have said of their talents, learning, and general character, and fully prove that they were eminently qualified for discerning and opening up the mind of God in His word, and that they devoted a large portion of time and attention to investigating the meaning of the sacred Scriptures, to forming clear and definite conceptions of the import of their statements, and to bringing them out for the instruction and improvement of others. There is reason to fear, that, since the period of the Reformation, the careful study of the word of God itself has not usually received the share of time and attention which its importance demands. There has always been, and there still is, too much time and attention, comparatively, given to the perusal and study of other books connected with theological subjects, and too little to the study of the inspired volume. We know in general but little of the word of God as it ought to be known, and we are very much disposed to remain in contented ignorance of what God has written for our instruction. We are dependent for all true knowledge of the word of God upon the agency of the Divine Spirit, but that Spirit we are but little concerned to implore. We are dependent also, for the attainment of this knowledge, upon our own personal study of the sacred Scriptures,— upon bringing all the powers of our minds to bear upon the investigation of their meaning, and giving to this study no inconsiderable portion of our time and attention. But we almost all continue to be chiefly occupied with other pursuits, and with the perusal of other books, while but a fraction of our

time is given to the study of the Bible; and this too often without much sense of the solemnity and responsibility of the occupation, and without even our ordinary powers of attention and application being brought into full and vigorous exercise. Now all this is, in the first place, a sin, because it is the neglect and violation of a plain and undoubted duty; and then it has a powerful tendency to diminish the vigour and check the progress of the divine life in the soul, and to enfeeble and paralyze all efforts, in commending with efficacy and success, divine truth to others. The Lord was pleased to lead the Reformers to a careful study of His word, and to guide them to correct views of its leading principles. He qualified them largely for opening up and expounding its statements to others; He led them to give much time and attention to this occupation, and made their labours in this department, orally and by writing, the great means of their usefulness and success; and we may be assured that it will be to a large extent through our capacity to open up and understand the whole mind of God, as revealed in His word,—a capacity to be acquired only by fervent prayer and by diligent and continued study of the inspired volume itself,—that we shall best grow in grace and in the power of Christian usefulness.