

SOME FOUNDATION TRUTHS

OF

THE REFORMED FAITH

BRIEF DOCTRINAL OUTLINES

BY

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THE following papers deal with only some of the great doctrines of the faith once delivered to the saints and, in dealing with these, we make no pretensions to do so exhaustively. They are designed for general readers who have acquaintance with these truths, although here and there points are discussed which belong to the province of the trained theologian. Throughout, reference is made in footnotes to authorities quoted, but it is not to be inferred that the writer is in sympathy with all the views set forth in the books quoted. For those who would care to study the doctrines dealt with at greater length, their attention may be directed to Dr. Charles Hodge's *SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY*, Dr. A.A. Hodge's *OUTLINES OF THEOLOGY*, Dr. E.W.B. Griffin Thomas's *THE PRINCIPLES OF THEOLOGY*, and Prof. Louis Berkhof's *REFORMED DOGMATICS*. May the Holy Spirit graciously bless this booklet to the reader.

Donald Beaton

Oban, 1938

Some Foundation Truths of the Reformed Faith.

THE Basis of THE SOVEREIGN GRACE UNION is by no means coextensive with the Christian faith, but the doctrines which it names are of such importance that no Christian who rejects any one of them can be said to hold that faith, “whole and inviolate.” In the following pages it is proposed to state simply and briefly, with special reference to current errors and heresies, the teaching of Holy Scripture on these great foundation truths of “the faith of God's elect.”

1. - The Absolute Sufficiency of Holy Scripture for all Matters of Faith and Practice.

Holy Scripture is the Word of God, that is to say, it has not been discovered by men, nor evolved from their inner consciousness, but God has graciously revealed it and embodied it in a Book. To this revelation “nothing at any time is to be added” (*Conf. i. 6*)¹, from it nothing must be subtracted. It is divine, and therefore immutable and all-sufficient, “the only rule of faith and obedience” (*Larger Catechism*, iii.).

Of old it was a common practice to poison the wells in time of war. Satan is busily engaged in poisoning the wells at the present day, and he has so far succeeded that the theological colleges and training seminaries for teachers are now largely staffed by unbelievers in the Word of God, while many pulpits are occupied by men who have imbibed infidel views

¹ Throughout these pages the abbreviation *Conf.* signifies *The Westminster Confession of Faith*

of the Bible. Much of the so-called religious literature published today is saturated with false teaching, a fact which gives importance to the work of such organizations as THE *SOVEREIGN GRACE UNION*.

It is a serious matter when those whose office it is to proclaim and defend the Word of God reject it in favour of the vain imaginations of men. Christ's endorsement of the ancient Scriptures is too emphatic to be lightly set aside, and it behoves all who reverence His authority to accept His teaching in regard to the Old Testament². What science taught forty years ago as to the constitution of matter is set aside to-day, and if our hope were built on this changing foundation, we should be of all men most miserable. The fact that his readers had obtained like precious faith with himself through the righteousness of God did not prevent the apostle Peter from putting them in remembrance of the things which they had received as the truth of heaven. Not only so, but he says he will not be negligent in reminding them of these things, though they knew them and were established in the present truth (2 Peter i. 12). The truth of the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible cannot be too insistently set before both old and young.³ It is part of the master policy of Satan to divert our attention to matters of comparative unimportance and to leave the great matters unattended and kept well in the background.

² Vide Canon Girdlestone, *Doctor Doctorum; The Teacher and the Book*; Dr. Adolph Saphire, *Christ and the Scripture* and H.C. Powell. *Principle of the Incarnation*.

³ 3 Decidedly the ablest and most scholarly book of modern times in defence of the verbal inspiration of Scripture is Professor Warfield, *Revelation and Inspiration*.

II. - The Triune Jehovah.

The mystery of the Incarnation is that there are two natures and one Person; the mystery of the Trinity is that there are three Persons and one nature. These are matters beyond our reason to comprehend, but as revealed verities it is our bounden duty to conserve them. The *Shorter Catechism*, in stating that there are three Persons in the Trinity - the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost - says that these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory, and thus presents to us an excellent statement of the Scripture doctrine on this great subject. The Unitarians, who deny the deity of the Son and Holy Ghost, wrongly claim the exclusive use of this term for their false doctrine of the Trinity. Trinitarians are the true *unitarians*, since they maintain the unity of the three Persons in the Godhead. It is impossible here to touch on the various heresies that have been held on the Person of Christ in connection with His Sonship, the unity of the two natures and His true deity, but it must be pointed out that we hold most firmly that Jesus Christ is the Son by eternal generation.⁴ This is a doctrine which should be proclaimed with no uncertain sound. The mysterious union existing between the human and the divine natures, so that the human is really human and the divine really divine, is a truth that is most firmly believed among us. There is no confusion nor mixture of the natures. We purposely avoid using the phraseology of theologians, as it is not for trained theologians that we are writing, but we take

⁴ Vide R. Treffry, *Doctrine of the Eternal Sonship*, J. Kidd, *A Dissertation on the Eternal Sonship*, and J. C. Philpot, *The True, Proper, and Eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

occasion to direct attention to one of the finest and most exact statements we have in any of the Reformed confessions or catechisms on the Person of Christ. This is the answer to the question in the *Shorter Catechism*: “Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?” The theologians of the Westminster Assembly answered it in these remarkable words: “The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God became man, and so was and continueth to be God and man in two distinct natures and one Person forever.” The various heresies held on the Person of the Lord Jesus are carefully guarded against in these well-chosen words. The truth of the deity of our Lord must be held at all costs and proclaimed. He is one with God the Father, equal in power and glory, or to use the phrase of the Athanasian period, co-eternal, co-equal and consubstantial with God. The professing Church must ever be jealous of the maintenance of this doctrine, and no lowering of the standard should ever be tolerated. In virtue of our Lord's equality with God in knowledge, His testimony to the books of the Old Testament is not only of supreme importance, but final in its authority and admits of no controversy.⁵

III. - The Fall of Man, whereby he has “wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation” (Conf. ix. 3).

⁵ For a masterly treatment of this Subject from the doctrinal standpoint see H. C. Powell, *The Principle of the Incarnation*, and from the exegetical E. H. Gifford's classic monograph. *The Incarnation: A Study of Philipians* ii. 5-11.

This is a doctrine against which the heart of the natural man rises in rebellion. It meets with tremendous opposition from graceless professors of religion, while Modernists spurn it as something not to be mentioned in the hearing of enlightened men. But this doctrine is no more to be set aside than others simply because of the opposition that it encounters. "To the law and to the testimony" we make our appeal, and there we find abundant evidence that the doctrine is clearly taught. By total depravity is meant an entire absence of desire to seek God's glory, to love holiness, to submit to His will. The heart of man proclaims in a thousand ways its total alienation from God; no un-renewed man ever seeks after God or desires that He should be his portion. The apostasy from God is total.

The Confessional statements on the subject are clear and unequivocal: "From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions" (vi. 4). "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 prepare himself thereunto" (ix. 3). These sections in the Confession teach as plainly as words can put it the Scriptural doctrine of the total depravity of man. What, then, is really meant by this doctrine? We cannot do better than quote Dr. Charles Hodge, who says: "This universal depravity of men is no slight evil. The whole human race, by their apostasy from God, are totally depraved. By total depravity is not meant that all men

are equally wicked, nor that any man is as thoroughly corrupt as it is possible for a man to be, nor that men are destitute of all moral virtues. The Scriptures recognise the fact, which experience abundantly confirms, that men, to a greater or less degree, are honest in their dealings, kind in their feelings and beneficent in their conduct. Even the heathen, the Apostle teaches us, do by nature the things of the law. They are more or less under the dominion of conscience which approves or disapproves their moral conduct. All this is perfectly consistent with the Scriptural doctrine of total depravity, which includes the entire absence of holiness; the want of due apprehensions of the divine perfections, and of our relation to God as our Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, Governor and Redeemer. There is common to all men a total alienation of the soul from God, so that no un-renewed man either understands or seeks after God; no such man ever makes God his portion, or God's glory the end of his being. The apostasy from God is total or complete. All men worship and serve the creature rather than, and more than, the Creator. They are all, therefore, declared in Scripture to be spiritually dead. They are destitute of any principle of spiritual life" (*System. Theol.*, ii. 233).

In asserting the doctrine of total depravity, the Reformed theologians did not deny that man is in possession of virtues (*justitia civilis*) in a limited sense. But they were careful to point out that such virtues terminated on the creature and not on the Creator, and that while they met with approval from men as acts between man and man, yet there was in them a fatal defect towards God. Fallen man certainly may

have a natural knowledge of God and of His works in creation and providence, and these and the light of nature leave him inexcusable, “yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of His will which is necessary unto salvation” (*Conf.* i. 1). “Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet, because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God” (xvi. 7). Actions which may be virtuous and laudable in men's eyes, may nevertheless be sinful in the sight of God. Furthermore, while man has a responsibility in keeping the Law and obeying the Gospel, his responsibility is not founded on or limited by his ability. The Reformed theologians made it quite clear that while man was utterly unable to do what was required of him, yet he was not relieved from his responsibility.

It may be useful at this stage to say something concerning three systems of error, essentially one, which under the names of “Pelagianism,” “Semi-Pelagianism” and “Arminianism,” have plagued the Christian Church through the centuries.

(i.) *Pelagianism*. - The issues involved in the Pelagian controversy are not to be set aside as merely of interest to theologians or ecclesiastical historians. They are of perennial

interest and assert themselves periodically in religious history. At bottom the controversy was concerned with the age-long controversy of free-will. Like most of the serious heresies which have disturbed the peace of the Church, Pelagianism cast its roots into the early centuries of the Christian era. Historically, however, the Pelagian controversy proper was fought out between 411 and 418. At the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) the positions maintained by Pelagius were condemned. At some time between 398 and 402, if not earlier, there arrived at Rome a British monk, known to history by his Latin name, Pelagius. He prepared a book of *Eulogiae*, or extracts from Scripture selected, as he thought, to emphasize the liberty of the will, and especially to counteract what he considered to be the enervating effects of Augustine's *Confessions*. Associated with him was Coelestius. Another of the ablest of the Pelagians was Julian of Eclanum, in Italy, who was the real theologian of Pelagianism. The great defender of the orthodox doctrine against this heresy was Augustine of Hippo.

The leading tenets of Pelagianism may be summarized as follows: (1) Everything that God creates is essentially good and cannot in its nature be convertible; consequently, human nature remains indestructibly good; so there can be no such thing as a sinful nature or original sin. (2) Man's free will is an absolute and indefectible freedom of choice unaffected by previous choices. Sin is choosing that which is contrary to what reason tells us is righteous. By virtue of this free will man is rendered independent of God. (3) The desires of the flesh are not as such evil; sin consists not in desire itself as

such, but in its excess which is due solely to the free choice of each individual will. (4) Every man by birth is in precisely the same condition morally as Adam was before he sinned, i.e., endowed with “natural holiness” (reason and free will). Hence there can be sinless men. (5) Adam sinned through free will; his descendants also sin through free will; neither in his case nor theirs is physical death a consequence of sin, but spiritual death is; this is in no sense inherited from Adam, but is acquired by each man through his own sins. (6) The idea of inherited sin and of inherited guilt is unthinkable. The only difference between children born now and that of Adam before the Fall is one not of nature but of environment: the former are born into a society in which evil customs and habits prevail. (7) By grace is meant either man's natural constitution (“the grace of creation”), by virtue of which some heathen have been perfect men, as good in every respect as perfect Jews or perfect Christians. Grace, of whatever kind is emphatically not an inward power enabling the will; it is rather something external, which the will may grasp if it chooses to. Law and Gospel are alike in operation, and men can enter the kingdom of heaven as well through the one as the other. (8) Grace is given according to men's merits; it would not be consistent with God's justice to give it to sinners.⁶

In reading this summary the reader will readily agree that the Church acted wisely in rejecting a system so antagonistic to the very essence of the Gospel of the grace of God. Yet, unfortunately, various phases of this ancient heresy are very

⁶ Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ix. 706, 707.

much alive in much of the religion and theological thinking of the present day. "In temper and spirit," it has been truly said, "it was undoubtedly in marked contrast with the instinctive religious attitude reflected in every writing of the New Testament and in the traditional piety of the Church." Its whole conception was more in keeping with certain aspects of the Greek philosophy than in accordance with the Gospel. The main difference between the orthodox doctrine and Pelagianism is found in the Pelagian view of human nature. Augustine asserted in opposition to the Pelagian doctrine that human nature was utterly corrupt; that the will was perverted and depraved at its very root, and incapable in its own strength of choosing and doing good. The Augustinian doctrine has behind it the teaching of Scripture and the experience of those taught by God's Spirit. Augustine traced all human goodness not to the creature but to the Creator, and whatever goodness possessed by any sinner came from the fountain of all grace, and the sinner had no merit in its possession.

(ii.) *Semi-Pelagianism*.-Another phase of this heresy is that advanced by John Cassian, formerly a deacon of Chrysostom, which is generally known under the designation Semi-Pelagianism. Cassian held Augustine in great respect. He believed in the doctrine of original sin and in the universal need of grace, but he held (1) that the first movement of faith by which man grasps grace and profits by it is the effort of man's *native capacity unaided*; (2) that grace is not irresistible; man can of his own free choice reject, just as he

can accept it, though, unless he accepts it, he remains powerless to be or do good; (3) that God offers His grace freely to all men, and genuinely and literally wills all men to be saved; that all men do not profit by grace is due solely to their own rejection of it; (4) that, consequently, God's predestination, of which Scripture certainly speaks, is grounded on His foreknowledge of those who would accept or reject His grace, not on any absolute selection of His sovereign choice. It will be seen from this summary that Cassian's position was practically that of modern Arminianism, or, in other words, that Arminianism is developed Semi-Pelagianism.

The main principles of Semi-Pelagianism have been thus set forth by Dr. A. A. Hodge: “(1) Man's nature has been so far weakened by the fall that it cannot act aright in spiritual matters without divine assistance. (2) This weakened moral state which infants inherit from their parents is the cause of sin, but not in itself sin in the sense of deserving the wrath of God. (3) Man must strive to do his whole duty, when God meets him with co-operative grace, and renders his efforts successful. (4) Man is not responsible for the sins he commits until after he has enjoyed and abused the influences of grace” (*Outlines of Theology*, p. 338).⁷

Socinianism accepted the Pelagian doctrines; while, in opposition to the Jansenists in the Church of Rome, the Jesuits adopted Semi-Pelagian doctrines. All the branches of

⁷ From this definition it "will be seen how closely certain modern teachings reproduce the leading principles of this oft-refuted heresy, which finds popular expression nowadays in such phrases as: "God helps those who help themselves," "God would help us if we would only give Him a chance."

the Protestant Churches which accept Arminianism are Semi-Pelagian in their doctrines of human nature, the will and grace. Man's state as represented under Pelagianism, Semi-Pelagianism, Augustinianism (or Calvinism), has been happily represented as follows: under Pelagianism man is sound; under Semi-Pelagianism he is sick; under Augustinianism he is dead.

(iii.) *Arminianism*. - Careful students of contemporary theological literature must be impressed by the extent to which it is permeated by the leaven of Arminianism. What that system failed to achieve in the arena of debate it has accomplished by peaceful penetration. It has saturated theological thinking to an extraordinary degree. The "revival" literature of to-day is full of it, as is also the religious press generally. Warnings from the pulpit and denunciation of the errors of Arminianism are not now heard as once they were. Even in pulpits where the truth is preached, it is to be feared that, in some cases, a faithful witness is not raised against Arminianism. The cause of this may be due in a measure to the fact that in defending the cause of truth new forms of error have to be exposed and assailed, with the result that the old enemy is left so far unmolested as if it were dead. Unfortunately, this is not so; Arminianism is very much alive in the pulpit, in the theological and religious press, and in the modern evangelistic meeting. It is true, no doubt, that there has been a notable revival of Calvinistic teaching on the continent, and an effort is being made to revive interest in it in this country,⁸ but there can be little doubt notwithstanding

⁸ Vide *The Evangelical Quarterly*, ix. 217-225, 256-270

that Arminianism still enjoys great favour with the religious public. When we bear in mind the horror with which our forefathers regarded Arminianism, the modern attitude to it indicates how far the professing Church has drifted from the position of the theologians of those days. The symbolic books of the Church of England - the XXXIX. Articles - and the symbolic books of the Church of Scotland - the *Confession of Faith* – are undoubtedly Calvinistic, but can it be said that all who sign these symbols are Calvinists at heart?

The theological system called Arminianism received its name from the Dutch theologian, Jakob Hermanss, the Latinised form of whose name was Arminius. He was born at Oudewater, about 18 miles from Rotterdam, in 1560, and died at Leyden in 1609. In 1588 he was appointed, preacher of the Reformed congregation at Amsterdam. While here his views underwent a change, and his expositions of Romans vii. and ix. and his utterances on election and reprobation gave offence. His colleague, Plancius, opposed his views, and disputes arose in the consistory which for a time were put a stop to by the burgomasters. Arminius was called to fill the professor's chair at Leyden, and in his lectures on predestination he stirred up considerable opposition, his chief opponent being Gomarus. The dispute spread among the students and the ministers. The followers of Arminius refused to be called Arminians, preferring the name Remonstrants, from their *Remonstrantiae*, drawn up in 1610 after Arminius's death (1609), which formed an exposition and justification of their views. They held that they should not be hampered by subscription to the symbolical books,

but that free investigation of the Bible should be allowed. Their Remonstrance was met by a Counter-Remonstrance. The controversy went on for years, causing considerable disturbance. When Prince Maurice countenanced the cause of the Counter-Remonstrants a change took place as to the State attitude to the controversy, and a national synod was called by the States-general at Dort (May 30, 1618).

The presentation of the case of the Arminians in Five Articles determined to a large extent the form in which the whole subject was afterwards discussed at the Synod of Dort under the Five Heads: (1) Predestination or election. (2) On the death of Christ, the nature and extent of His redemption. (3) On the cause of faith, that is, the power or agency by which it is produced. (4) The mode of conversion, or the agency by which it is effected, and the mode of its operation. (5) On perseverance. On these great doctrines the Synod of Dort gave decisions condemning the Arminian positions.⁹ It is mainly the doctrines of conditional predestination, man's ability to spiritual good and a universal atonement, which have made their way into the theological thinking of our time. No doubt some of these doctrines make a pleasing appeal to the natural man, but they are contrary to the clear statements of Scripture and the plain facts of experience.

Dr. W Cunningham seems to us to have happily hit off the real inwardness of the Arminian error when he says: "It is not very difficult to point out what may fairly enough be described as the fundamental characteristic principle of

⁹ Vide *The Articles of the Synod of Dort*, English translation published by The Sovereign Grace Union.

Arminianism - that which Arminianism either is, or has a strong and constant tendency to become; and this is, that it is a *scheme for dividing or partitioning the salvation of sinners between God and sinners themselves*, instead of ascribing it wholly, as the Bible does, to the sovereign grace of God, the perfect and all-sufficient work of Christ, and the efficacious and omnipotent operation of the Spirit....The encroachment they make upon the grace of God in the salvation of sinners varies, of course, according to the extent to which they carry out their views, especially in regard to men's natural depravity, and the nature and necessity of the work of the Spirit in regeneration and conversion; but Arminianism in any form can be shown to involve the ascription to men themselves, more directly or more remotely, of a place and influence in effecting their own salvation, which the Bible denies to them and ascribes to God" (*Historical Theology*, ii 377, 378)¹⁰ This is a serious indictment against Arminianism, for it virtually means that it robs God of His glory in the salvation of the sinner and denies that this salvation is all of grace from beginning to end.

Prof. R. Watts, of Belfast, used to tell his students that Arminianism fought none of the battles of the Reformation, and that when it appeared on the stage it was as the sower of discord and disunion that it made its presence felt. Arminianism, in a word, is a direct challenge to the sovereignty of God. This is the rock against which it is spending its strength, and on which it will ultimately be

¹⁰ Dr. Cunningham was a master theologian, and in the work quoted and in his *Reformers and Theologians of the Reformation* he has given an invaluable exposition of the Reformed Theology

broken to pieces. In this attack it has as its supports all those elements in our fallen nature which are at war with the divine sovereignty. Arminianism has never had a glimpse of the majesty of the divine truth that God, as sovereign Lord, has a right to do with His creatures what seems to Him good, and it has failed to grasp the utter ruin of man and the awful depths to which he has fallen. It denies to God the high place that is due to Him, and exalts man to a position which is not his due. If it has ever candidly faced the Saviour's words: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight," it has never been awed and subdued by them.

IV.-Unconditional Election.

"The Reformed Faith has held to the existence of an eternal, divine decree which, antecedently to any difference or desert in men themselves, separates the human race in two portions and ordains one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting death" (L. Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, p. 82). These words state the doctrine of Unconditional Election which is denied by Arminianism. It may be necessary, however, to point out here that the Westminster Divines purposely made a distinction between "*predestination* unto everlasting life" and "*foreordination* to everlasting death" (*Conf.* iii. 3). It is true the words are synonymous, but, as Dr. Cunningham has pointed out, "Calvinists, in general, have held that there is an important difference between the way and manner in which the decree of election bears or operates upon the condition and fate of

those who are saved and that in which the decree of reprobation, as it is often called, bears or operates upon the condition of those who perish; and the existence of this difference, though without any exact specification of its nature, the compilers of our Confession seem to have intended to indicate by restricting the word 'predestinate' to the elect, the saved; and using the word 'foreordained' in regard to the rest. The Confession does not make use of the word 'reprobation,' which is commonly employed by theologians upon this subject; and the reason of this undoubtedly was, that it is an expression very liable to be misunderstood and perverted, and this to excite a prejudice against the truth which Calvinistic theologians intend to convey by it" (*Hist. Theol.*, ii. 422). The doctrine is thus stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith: "Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ to everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto, and all to the praise of His glorious grace" (iii. 5).

The Scripture proof of the doctrine is abundant. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says: "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (I. 4, 5). Then

there is the famous passage in the Epistle to the Romans: "For whom He did foreknow,¹¹ He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (viii. 29, 30). "These five golden links," says Dr. B. B. Warfield, "are welded together in one unbreakable chain, so that all who are set upon in God's gracious distinguishing view are carried on by His grace, step by step, up to the great consummation of that glorification which realizes the promised conformity to the image of God's own Son. It is 'election,' you see, that does all this; for 'whom He foreknew, them He also glorified'" (*Election*, pamphlet, p. 10). The Scriptures further represent election as occurring in the past, irrespective of personal merit: "The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger" (Rom. ix. n, 12). The sovereignty of God's choice comes out again clearly in the Pauline statement that Christ died for His people while they were yet sinners (Rom. v. 8). It has been well said that Arminianism takes this choice out of

¹¹ The foreknowledge referred to here is not the foreknowledge of the Arminian. Calvin *in loco* thus defines it: "Not foreknowledge as bare prescience, but the adoption by which God had always, from eternity, distinguished His children from the reprobate." Dr. W. G. T. Shedd says: "In the New Testament usage it is employed in the sense of the Hebrew *yada* (know), to denote love and favour of some kind or other.... Accordingly, to foreknow in the Hebraistic use, is more than simple prescience, and something more, also, than simply to 'fix the eye upon' or to 'select.' It is the latter, but with the additional notion of a benignant and kindly feeling toward the object" (*Commentary on Romans*, *in loco*). "With a foreknowledge which, in this argument, can mean nothing short of fore-decision - no mere foreknowledge of what they would do, but rather of what He would do for them" (Bishop H. C. G. Moule, *Romans*).

the hands of God and places it in the hands of man (Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, p. 87).

The mystery of predestination should always be handled with care. The claims of divine sovereignty and the limitations of our knowledge should sober every reverent mind in approaching or dealing with this subject. Hence the words of the Westminster Divines deserve our attention when they say: “The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending 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” (iii. 8).

V. - Particular Redemption.

Dr. Cunningham has well said: “The Incarnation of the second Person of the Godhead, the assumption of human nature by One who from eternity possessed the divine nature, so that He was God and man in one Person is, as a subject of contemplation, well fitted to call forth the profoundest reverence, and to excite the strongest emotions; and if it was indeed a reality, it must have been intended to accomplish most important results. If Christ really was God and man in one Person, we may expect to find, in the object thus presented to our contemplation, much that is mysterious, much that we cannot fully comprehend; while we should also

be stirred up to examine with the utmost care everything that has been revealed to us regarding it, assured that it must possess no ordinary interest and importance” (*Historical Theology*, ii. 237). This is certainly the right frame of mind in which to approach the sublime subject of the doctrine of redemption. It should never be forgotten that there is a very intimate connection between the Person and the work of Christ. A low view of His Person will naturally lead to an inadequate view of His propitiatory work. Hence Socinianism, Arianism and Modernism have no glorious doctrine of redemption to present to sinners. It is a feature of the theology of the present day as recognized too widely in the high places of the professing Church that Christ is not given the high and honourable place as “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Hence His vicarious sacrifice is eliminated from the theological system of Modernism, which has no need of a divine sacrifice and ruthlessly rejects the very idea. Modernism is the modern expression of the ancient taunt of the chief priests, scribes and elders: “If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe Him” (Matt. xxvii. 42). Eliminate the cross and all it implies, and what Gospel is there to preach to perishing men, lost and ruined? Let Calvary be preached in all its glory of redeeming love, and then it is good news indeed to those who are ready to perish. No wonder the Apostle said: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. vi. 14).

The term “satisfaction” is used by the Reformers to designate the priestly work of Christ, and in many respects it is preferable to the word “atonement,” which occurs but once in the Authorized Version of the New Testament (Rom. v. 11), and then with the meaning of *at-one-ment* or *reconciliation* (vide margin), expressing the *effect* and not the *nature* of Christ's work. That work was so perfect that it gave full satisfaction to God's justice. “This perfection of the satisfaction of Christ” is not due, as Dr. Charles Hodge points out, “to His having suffered either in kind or in degree what the sinner would have been required to endure; but principally to the infinite dignity of His Person. He is not a mere man, but God and man in one Person. His obedience and sufferings were therefore the obedience and sufferings of a divine Person” (*System. Theol.*, iii. 483). This does not imply that the divine nature suffered as was maintained by some heretics (Patripassians) in the ancient Church, and as is held by many modern theologians who hold the doctrine of the *passibility* of God. It is wrong to say that the human nature was the sacrifice, for this would immediately make the sacrifice finite. The correct way of stating the doctrine is that He suffered in His human nature, but the suffering was of a person who was divine. Hence the Scriptures when they speak of His sufferings always speak of them as the sufferings of a person.

A truth which must be maintained at all costs is the vicarious nature of Christ's death. The Saviour stood, as the old divines put it, in the sinner's law place. Christ, the substitute, suffered in the room and stead of all His people. “The

attempt is sometimes made to illustrate vicarious suffering in grace,” says Dr. Shedd, “by what is denominated vicarious suffering in nature. But the analogy is defective. The two things are different in kind, not merely in degree. A mother's suffering for her child is not substitutionary, and has no reference to retributive justice. The following points of difference are evident: Vicariousness in nature: (1) Is not expiatory, that is, satisfactory of law. (2) Does not release another from obligation to suffer penalty. (3) Is sharing suffering with another. The mother suffers with the child. There are two sufferers. (4) Is helping another to bear suffering. The mother assists her child to endure. Vicariousness in grace: (1) Is expiatory; that is, satisfactory of law. (2) Releases another from the obligation to penal suffering. (3) Does not share suffering with another, but endures the whole of it. Christ does not suffer with the sinner, but 'treads the winepress alone.' (4) Does not assist the sinner to bear suffering, but suffers in his place” (*Dogmatic Theol.*, iii. 403, 4).

(i) *The Necessity of Redemption*. - Scripture plainly teaches that satisfaction was made and that pardon and salvation are held out to sinners and bestowed upon them on the ground of Christ's satisfaction. “Neither Scripture nor reason,” says Dr. Cunningham, “warrant the position that repentance is, in its own nature, an adequate reason or ground, ordinarily and in general, still less in all cases, for pardoning those “who have transgressed a law to which they were subject” (*Hist. Theol.*, ii. 252). The very Incarnation of the Son of God, His life of humiliation, His death on Calvary's cross, all proclaim

the necessity of satisfaction: "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." All this life of humiliation and suffering has elements in it so extraordinary that we are forced to say that it would never have taken place had it not been absolutely necessary. "We feel," says Dr. Cunningham, "and we cannot but feel, that there is no unwarranted presumption in saying, that if it had been possible that the salvation of guilty men could have been otherwise accomplished, the only-begotten Son of God would not have left the glory which He had with His Father from eternity, assumed human nature, and suffered and died on earth. This ground, were there nothing more revealed regarding it, would warrant us to make the general assertion that the Incarnation, suffering, and death of Christ were necessary to the salvation of sinners; that this result could not have been effected without them" (*ibid.* ii. 254). He is careful to point out, however, that this general consideration does not warrant us in asserting directly and immediately the necessity of redemption, but only the necessity of the suffering and death of Christ, whatever may have been the character attaching to them, or the effect resulting from them in connection with the salvation of sinners.¹²

¹² The question of the necessity of Christ's satisfaction was raised in the controversy with the Socinians and others who denied that a vicarious redemption was necessary. The assertion of the necessity of redemption, as well as the denial, must be based upon certain ideas of the attributes and moral government of God viewed in connection with the actual state and condition of man as a transgressor of His law, says Dr. William Cunningham. The necessity of redemption is based by Dr. J. Owen on the nature of divine justice. In his *Dissertation on Divine Justice* (Works x. 481) he maintains the absolute nature of divine justice in opposition to the view that its claims could be set aside by the mere volition of God. There were some among the Schoolmen (e.g., Hales and Bonaventura) and also such great divines as Dr. W Twisse, the prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, Samuel Rutherford, and others, who held that it was possible for God to have pardoned sin by a mere volition without satisfaction to His justice. Dr. Twisse held that redemption was only *hypothetically* necessary. The foregoing divines reached their conclusion by magnifying God's sovereignty and power at the expense of His justice.

Furthermore, there are some things which God cannot do because of His infinite perfection. If sin could not be pardoned without satisfaction, then it is because the infinite perfections of His nature stood in the way.

(1) God's law proclaims that the soul which sins shall die. Since God has said this, and as He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent (Num. xxiii. 19), His truth is pledged that this will not be meaningless. We cannot conceive of a way whereby this veracity will be maintained in all its integrity and unsullied purity except by an adequate satisfaction being rendered. While this is so, we are not warranted in asserting these things apart from revelation, but they give us strong grounds for asserting that since God did threaten death as the punishment of sin, nothing could prevent the carrying out of this threatening except an adequate satisfaction.

(2) The necessity of redemption is not only based upon God's veracity, but upon His justice. By this justice divines mean that perfection of His nature of which He cannot denude Himself, and which of necessity must regulate the free acts of His will. This justice cannot be set aside by an arbitrary decree. If sin is to be pardoned, then some provision is necessary, not only to conserve this veracity, but to vindicate His justice.

(3) In connection with this subject it is important that the fundamental idea of sin as a transgression of God's law should be kept before us. It is not merely debt, but it is breach of God's law. When God deals with it, it is not as a

creditor, who may remit the debt, but as a just law-giver who has given a holy law, prohibiting sin upon the pain of death, and who in the interests of holiness must vindicate the honour of His law when broken. The point touched on here is clearly brought out by an illustration of Dr. Charles Hodge. A man is in debt to the extent, say, of £100; a kind friend comes forward, advances the £100, and the claims of the creditor end. But in the case of a man who steals £100, the fact that a kind friend may offer the money by way of reparation does not end the matter. In this case law has been broken, and satisfaction must be rendered by the payment of a penalty. Stress, great stress has been laid upon the necessity of redemption, and the more this doctrine is considered, the more terrible does sin appear. Since there is no way of removing it but by the satisfaction made by our Lord Jesus Christ, how hopeless is the case of those who look to another way of salvation!

(ii.) *The Extent of Redemption*. - By this phrase it is not meant that the sufficiency of the vicarious death of Christ is not infinite; for the most orthodox Calvinistic theologians, though using the terms particular or limited,¹³ hold that doctrine with unswerving loyalty. Some of the Schoolmen, in an endeavor to set forth this great truth, were accustomed to say that Christ died sufficiently for all men, but efficiently or efficaciously for the elect (*sufficenter pro omnibus, efficaciter pro electis*). The phrase is ambiguous, though

¹³*Definite* is the more correct term, and it is used by the Princeton theologians and invariably by Dr. Cunningham and Dr. G. Smeaton. *Limited* is open to the objection that it tends to conflict with the sufficiency of the redemption if its common usage is not kept clearly in mind.

accepted by Calvin and other orthodox divines, as it may appear to ascribe an intention of Christ dying for all without exception. It fixes attention on the *intention* rather than on the *sufficiency*. After the controversies concerning the extent or design of redemption, Reformed theologians modified the formula, making it read: "Christ's death was *sufficient* for all, while *efficacious* for the elect." This statement sets forth the *infinite efficacy* of the vicarious sacrifice, while the statement of the Schoolmen would seem to indicate, as Dr. Cunningham points out, "that when He died, He *intended* that *all* should derive some saving and permanent benefit from His death" (*Hist. Theol.*, ii. 332). The question between those who hold the doctrine of a *definite* redemption, however, and those who hold by an *indefinite* redemption, is not the question of the sufficiency of the redemption, but its *design* or *intention*. "All that Christ did and suffered would have been necessary," says Dr. C. Hodge, "had only one human soul been the object of redemption; and nothing different and nothing more would have been required had every child of Adam been saved through His blood" (*System. Theol.*, ii. 545).

In maintaining the doctrine of particular redemption, it is not meant that humanity in general, including those who ultimately perish, does not derive some benefits and advantages from Christ's death. "They [i.e. Calvinists] believe," says Dr. Cunningham, "that important benefits have accrued to the whole human race from the death of Christ, and that in these benefits those who are finally impenitent and unbelieving partake. What they deny is, that Christ intended to procure, or did procure, for all men those

blessings which are the proper and peculiar fruits of His death, in its specific character as an atonement, that He procured or purchased redemption, that is, pardon and reconciliation, for all men. Many blessings flow to mankind at large from the death of Christ, collaterally and incidentally, in consequence of the relation in which men, viewed collectively, stand to each other. All these benefits were, of course, foreseen by God when He resolved to send His Son into the world; they were contemplated or designed by Him, as what men should receive and enjoy. They are to be regarded and received as bestowed by Him, and as thus unfolding His glory, indicating His character, and actually accomplishing His purposes; and they are to be viewed as coming to men through the channel of Christ's mediation, of His sufferings and death" (*Hist. Theol.*, ii. 333). This is the position taken up by Turretin, Witsius, C. Hodge and A. A. Lodge. While admitted by Calvinists of unimpeachable orthodoxy, yet it is not meant by them that Christ, in the true and proper Scriptural import, substituted Himself in the room and stead of all men without exception, or that He made satisfaction to God's justice for them, or that He purchased redemption for them. For all this is not true of any but those who are actually at length pardoned and saved.

The question at issue does not concern the nature of Christ's work. If His death was designed simply by exerting a moral influence on men, it must have been designed indiscriminately for all. But both parties in this controversy - Calvinists and Arminians - reject the moral theory of the atonement. According to this theory, all idea of expiation or

satisfaction to divine justice by vicarious punishment is rejected and the efficacy of Christ's work is attributed to the moral effect produced on the hearts of men by His character, teaching and acts. This view was first distinctly set forth by Abelard (A.D. 1142). It is the view held in more recent times by the Socinians and in still later times by Jowett (Master of Baliol), Maurice, Young, Bushnell, and Coleridge in his *Aids to Reflection*. The same objection applies to the governmental or Grotian theory of the atonement. According to this view, God's justice is not vindicatory, but is to be referred to a general governmental rectitude, based on a benevolent regard for the highest ultimate well-being of the subjects of His moral government. If this be so, then it follows that this work can have no special reference to one man more than another. "All that it can do for any it has done for all."

According to this theory, Christ's death has removed the obstacles out of the way of all and so rendered possible the salvation of each. This theory, advanced by Grotius, the great jurist, has never been embodied in the creed of any historical Church. The theory was held by President Edwards, junior, of Union College, Schenectady, New York State, and is styled the *Edwardean Theory of the Atonement*.¹⁴

What, then, is the real question involved in the matter at issue? It is this: "Did Christ die with the *design* of making satisfaction to divine justice on behalf of all men indiscriminately, or on behalf of His elect people given to Him

¹⁴ It is only right for the sake of the good name of President Edwards, of Princeton College, to point out that he held the orthodox doctrine of the atonement. The President Edwards referred to above, was a son. The elder Edwards never held the governmental theory of the atonement.

by the Father before the foundation of the world, to be redeemed by Him and to be His inheritance?" The answer Calvinists give is: "On behalf of His elect people." The real question is not a *limited* atonement implying the limitation of Christ's sacrifice in value, but an atonement that was limited to a certain class, or to use the words of the Westminster Divines: "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them, and revealing unto them, in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by His Word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation"¹⁵ (*Conf.*, viii. 8). "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only" *bid.*, iii. 6). The doctrine of the Reformed Church is, to put it in a few words, that the Lord Jesus Christ died with the design of actually saving His elect people; that is, as Dr. A. A. Hodge puts it, "for the purpose of actually saving those whom He does actually save" (*The Atonement*, p. 332).

(1) The Reformed theologians in their theology taught that it was the design of the redemptive work of Christ to carry into effect the purpose of election. As presented to us in the *Confession of Faith*, God is represented as having, out of His

¹⁵ Dr. Cunningham says concerning this statement: "Now this latter statement contains, and was intended to contain, the true *status quaestionis* in the controversy about the extent of the atonement" (*Historical Theology* ii. 329)

mere good pleasure, elected some to everlasting life and to all the means thereof, and having sent His Son to effect that purpose by His obedience unto death. (2) The love that prompted God to send His Son and the love that prompted His Son to die is set before us in Scripture as the highest conceivable love which made it certain that He will also, with His Son, freely give the objects of that love all things that His wisdom sees they need, and that the objects of that love were a people predestinated from all eternity. (3) That Christ died with the design of making the salvation of those for whom He died certain in pursuance of eternal covenant engagements,¹⁶ is also the teaching of Reformed theologians. (4) That the purchase of salvation is so connected with its application that it respects the same persons, the latter following upon the former. (5) The Lord Jesus obtained the gracious influences of the Holy Ghost and all the fruits of the Spirit for those for whom He died. Their doctrine was that Christ died for the purpose of actually saving those whom He does actually save; or, to put it in the words of the Confession: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only" (iii. 6). Around this question have raged those controversies that bear the names of (a) Arminianism, (b) Amyraldianism, (c) Baxterianism, (d) Double Reference, and (e) Dr. B. B. Warfield's Cosmic or Eschatological Universalism.

¹⁶ This subject is dealt with by Witsius in his *Economy of the Covenants* (ii. 9), at considerable length and also by Dr. Hugh Martin in his work, *The Atonement*, in which he treats the redemptive work of our Lord in relation to the covenant of grace. Dr. R. Watts, Belfast, recommended this as one of the most masterly works on the subject.

(a) The *Arminian* doctrine asserts that Christ died for all and every man alike - for Judas as well as for Peter. And in support of their position, Arminians appeal to certain passages in Scripture which they allege have a definitely universalistic application. According to the teaching of consistent Arminianism as to the design of Christ's death, it simply brought all men into a salvable state, but did not actually procure reconciliation for any, and, as Dr. G. Smeaton puts it, "under the guise of enlarging Christ's merits, it tended only to undermine and diminish them."

Arminianism did not scruple to maintain that the ransom might have been paid by Christ and yet not applied to any because of unbelief "A gulf was thus drawn," says Dr. Smeaton, "between the procuring of redemption and the application of it, as if these were not of equal extent and breadth. The application was thus suspended on man's free will, and humanity was thrown back on its own resources, or on such aid as all equally receive, to apply the redemption for themselves" (*Apostles' Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 537).

The Arminians also held that the end of Christ's death was to acquire a new right, on the ground of which God might make a new covenant with men. This is thorough going Neonomianism, as Dr. Cunningham has pointed out, the same in substance though not in form as that around which the Neonomian Controversy was waged in England in the XVIIth century, and which had its echoes in Scotland in the Marrow Controversy. The Arminians further denied that the Atonement carried with it the ground of its application. As the sinner's salvation is left so largely to his own free will, it

follows that thousands for whom Christ died, according to the Arminian view, may never be saved. In point of fact, Arminians admit that many are lost, i.e., many of those for whom, according to their doctrine, Christ died. (a) If this be so, then their doctrine of a universal redemption is what Dr. Warfield described as *inoperative* universalism. “Though in *intrinsic worth* it [Christ's satisfaction] could save the whole world; says Dr. Smeaton, “and a thousand worlds more, if there had been such worlds of human beings to be saved, yet the redemption work does not extend, in point of fact, beyond the circle of those who approve of it as a fit and proper method of salvation; or, in other words, who, by a faith which is the gift of God, are led to accept it as the ground of reconciliation with God. It is simply co-extensive, as to saving effects, with the number of true believers” (*Our Lord's Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 371). (b) Further, if some are lost for whom Christ died, then His redemptive work has failed for them or the Holy Spirit has failed in applying the benefits of His redemption. In either case their doctrine does dishonour to Christ and the Holy Spirit, and if not blasphemy, it is perilously near it.

It remains to be pointed out that there are Scriptural statements which cannot by any fair process of interpretation be reconciled with the Arminian doctrine, and in this connection, perhaps, there are no works attaining such excellence as Prof. G. Smeaton's *Our Lord's Doctrine of the Atonement* and *The Apostles' Doctrine of the Atonement*. Dr. Smeaton adopts the exegetical method and deals with the texts in the Gospels and Epistles bearing on the subject.

Our Lord speaks of those for whom He was to lay down His life as His sheep (John x. 15), a people given to Him by the Father who hear His voice and follow Him; it is for these that He laid down His life. Again, those whom He is to save are called His people (Matt. i. 21); and those for whom He laid down His life are called His friends John xv. 13, 14).

Concerning an oft-quoted and oft-misunderstood text, Dr. R. L. Dabney says: "There is, perhaps, no Scripture which gives so thorough and comprehensive an explanation of the design and results of Christ's sacrifice as John iii. 16-19" (*Systematic and Polemic Theology*, ii. 535). The satisfaction offered is definitely limited to those who believe in His name. The Bible teaches that the design of Christ's death is actually to save, and not simply to make salvation possible (Matt. xviii. 10; Rom. v. 10; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. i. 4; Eph. i. 7).

Passages in Scripture which speak of the possibility of those perishing for whom Christ died are hypothetical, and as Dr. A. A. Hodge says: "They truly indicate the nature and tendency of the action against which they warn us, and are the means which God uses under the administration of His Spirit to fulfil His purposes... In the case of Paul's shipwreck, it was certain that none should perish, and yet all would perish except they abode in the ship (Acts xxvii. 24 -31)" (*Outlines of Theology*, p. 421).

(b) *Amyraldianism or Hypothetical or Conditional*

Universalism. – This view was first promulgated by the theologians of Saumur. It had its origin in the teaching of John Cameron, Professor of Theology, at the above-named

college in France. Cameron declared that Christ died for no man simply, but on condition that we who are of the world should be delivered from the world and engrafted into Christ by true faith (Smeaton, *The Apostles' Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 540). The doctrine was shaped into a system by his distinguished pupil, Amyraud, whose Latin name, Amyraldus, was given to the doctrine. Amyraldus in his *Treatise on Predestination* (1634) systematised the teaching of his master. In this treatise Amyraldus says: "The sacrifice which Jesus Christ offered was equally for all, and the salvation which He received from His Father, in the sanctification of the spirit and the glorification of the body, was destined *equally for all*, provided the necessary disposition for receiving it were equal." This teaching met with strong opposition, especially from Rivetus and Spanheim¹⁷

Amyraldus expressed admiration for Calvin and maintained that the system which he advocated was but a logical outcome and historical development of ideas found in the *Institutes*. He had also the idea that this view of the extent of redemption would appeal to the Lutherans who, since the Synod of Dort, had become more opposed to the Reformed teaching on this doctrine. Amyraldus tried to show that there might be a general reference to all men in redemption, a doctrine which the Lutherans insisted on maintaining, while he also retained the Reformed doctrine of limited or definite

¹⁷ The great work, however, on this subject, is Frederick Spanheim's exertations on *Universal Grace*, 1646. Here every point is calmly and lucidly reviewed, with little of the acrimony of controversy (Smeaton. op. cit. p. 471).

redemption. The French National Synod of 1637 summoned Amyraldus and his friend, Paul Testard, pastor at Blois, before it. They stated: “That Jesus Christ died for all men sufficiently, but for the elect only effectually; and that consequentially His intention was to die for all men in respect of the sufficiency of His satisfaction, but for the elect only in respect of its quickening and saving virtue and efficacy” (Quick, *Synodicon*, ii. 354). After being cautioned, they were given the right hand of fellowship by the Moderator. Further complaints were made at the National Synod of 1644-5, when the following decision was come to: “This Assembly, being very well satisfied with his [Amyraldus'] explications and sense given of his doctrine agreeable to that of the Synod of Alençon [1637]; and judging it best to bury in the grave of oblivion all those reciprocal complaints brought in from all parties, hath, as formerly, dismissed the said Sieur Amyraud with honour to the exercise of his professorship, wherein he is exhorted to employ himself with courage and cheerfulness” (Quick, *op. cit.*, ii. 455). It would thus appear from these decisions that the French Protestant Church did not see anything seriously wrong in the Amyraldian teaching. That we are not doing them injustice the followings words from Principal Cunningham will show: “The Synod of 1637 manifested a considerable amount of unfaithfulness to God in connection with the doctrines, and the unfaithfulness did not fail to appear in the Synod of 1645, - the one only seventeen and the other twenty-five years after the solemn adoption by the National Synod of the canons of the Synod of Dort. The National Synods and purity of doctrine seem very

much to have gone down together, as it is remarkable that the one became more impure as the other grew rarer. In point of fact, so far had the Synods come short of faithful testimony to the truth of God, that the most elaborate book in defense of the universality of the atonement, in a Calvinistic point of view, by Daille, is literally entitled as an 'apology for the two Synods.' This impurity of doctrine must be viewed, I think, in connection with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes" (Speech in the General Assembly of the Free Church of 1859 on the occasion of the Tercentenary of the French Synod).

The Amyraldian system has been summarised by Dr. Charles Hodge under the following heads: "(a) The motive impelling God to redeem men was benevolence, or love to men in general. (b) From this motive He sent His Son to make the salvation of all men possible. (c) God in virtue of a *decretum universale hypotheticum* (a universal hypothetical decree), offers salvation to all men if they believe in Christ. (d) All men have a natural ability to repent and believe. (e) But as this natural ability was counteracted by a moral inability, God determined to give His efficacious grace to a certain number of the human race, and thus to secure their salvation" (*System. Theol.*, ii. 322). At present it is not necessary to expose the unscriptural-ness of this view, except to say that Dr. Smeaton has in a few sentences laid his finger on its weak spot. "The whole Amyraldist theory was without a foundation," he says, "and its absurdity was increased by the fact that these divines formed a new arrangement of the

divine decrees, making the atonement universal, and the election special” (op. cit., p. 470).

Amyraldianism was introduced into England by the works of Polhill and into Scotland by a posthumous work¹⁸ by the Rev. James Fraser, of Brea. It was prepared for the press by the Rev. Thomas Mair, minister of the Associate congregation at Orwell (Milnathort), and published in 1749. It produced a great commotion in the Associate Synod and in the Reformed Presbyterian Presbytery. Mr. Mair described Adam Gib's condemnation of Fraser and the book as “truly shocking.” Mair pleaded that he did not subscribe to Fraser's scheme of doctrine in its entirety. In April, 1737, he was deposed from the ministry (Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church*, i. 375). In 1753 the book caused a disruption in the Reformed Presbyterian Presbytery.¹⁹ What was the teaching in this book which caused so much disturbance? Dr. James Walker in his *Theology and Theologians of Scotland* summarises it as follows: “He [Fraser of Brea] asserts 'that Christ obeyed and died in the room of all as the head and representative of fallen man'; that 'men are all fundamentally justified in Him and through Him.' 'That Christ died for all.' But, then, are all men saved? No; God did not mean to save any but His chosen. What, then, was the effect of that one indivisible sacrifice for all which God's Son offered on the cross? Well, first of all, to lay a real foundation

¹⁸ Doubts have been expressed as to its authorship but it is generally accepted as the work of the Rev. James Fraser of Brea, and minister of Culross. Fraser belonged to the Frasers of Lovat and was held in high esteem by the evangelical party in the Scottish Church.

¹⁹ The story of this controversy will be found in M. Hutchison, *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland*, pp. 194-203.

for the Gospel offer. For every man satisfaction was rendered, and every man might appropriate it as something subjectively real. It comes to this, in short, Fraser plainly states it, that Christ dies for reprobates that they may come under a more tremendous doom; as, on the other hand, He dies for the elect that theirs may be an all-transcendent blessedness." We have been at pains to enter more minutely into these discussions than we otherwise would owing to the fact that we wish to clear our way to deal with the views held by Ussher, Davenant, Baxter, and the Marrowmen. Let not our readers go away with the idea that the subjects discussed in these controversies are trivial, and that, after all, the discussions are merely fine hair splitting by ecclesiastics with a penchant for controversy. It is scarcely correct to say that Amyraldiansim was taught by Baxter and Calamy, as we shall see later on, as is affirmed by the late Principal Lindsay. He is nearer the mark, however, when he says it is part of "much modern evangelical theology" (Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, i. 406).

(c.) *Baxterianism*. - Before dealing with Baxter's views of the extent of redemption, some reference must be made to the views held by Davenant and Ussher. Both were eminent divines. John Davenant was one of the five English deputies at the Synod of Dort. In his *Dissertation on the Death of Christ* he advances certain propositions, in the second of which he says: "The death of Christ is the universal cause of the salvation of mankind; and Christ Himself is acknowledged to have died for all men sufficiently, not by reason of the mere sufficiency or of the intrinsic value, according to which the

death of God is a price more than sufficient for redeeming a thousand worlds, but by reason of the evangelical covenant confirmed with the whole human race through the merit of this death, and of the divine ordination depending upon it.” In his third proposition he says: “The death or passion of Christ, as the universal cause of the salvation of mankind, hath, by the act of its oblation, so far rendered God the Father pacified and reconciled to the human race.”

Archbishop Ussher, who had a principal hand in drawing up the Irish Articles of 1615, and one of the great theologians of the 17th century, in answer²⁰ to the request of a friend, gave expression to his views concerning the extent of redemption. Ussher's views were practically those of Davenant. The Westminster Assembly included a number of members who were supporters of Davenant's opinions, among them Edmund Calamy,²¹ who avowed in one of the debates that he maintained in the same sense as the English divines at the Synod of Dort “that Christ by His death did pay a price for all; with absolute intention for the elect, with conditional intention for the reprobate in case they do believe; that all men should be *salvabiles non obstante lapsu Adami*... ; that Jesus did not only die sufficiently for all, but God did intend, in giving of Christ, and Christ in giving Himself did intend, to put all men in a state of salvation in case they do believe” (*Minutes of the Westminster Assembly*, p. 152). The subject caused considerable debate in the Assembly; Samuel Rutherford and George Gillespie took a prominent part in

²⁰ *The Judgement of the late Archbishop of Armagh, etc. on the extent of Christ's Death.*

²¹ Minister of St, Mary's Aldermanbury, London

opposing Calamy's view. Finally, it was agreed: "Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. *Neither are any other redeemed by Christ* effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only" (*Conf.* iii. 6).

Dr. Mitchell, in his Introduction to the *Minutes of the Westminster Assemblies* (p. lvi.), remarks: "Though at first sight it may not seem easy to reconcile the opinions of these divines with the language of the sixth section of this chapter [iii.] of the Confession, it would be rash for me to say it is impossible." This difficulty of Dr. Mitchell's probably arose from an interpretation put upon certain words in the section which has been dealt with by Dr. Cunningham. Does the word "redeemed" describe only the purchase or procurement (*impetration* is the word usually used by the theologians), or does it comprehend the application as well? In Dr. Cunningham's opinion, it seems quite clear that it is descriptive of the purchase of pardon and reconciliation because there is an enumeration of all the leading steps in the great process originating in God's eternal election of some men, and terminating in their complete salvation (*Hist. Theol.*, ii. 327). It has further been argued, Dr. Cunningham points out, that in the Confessional statement - "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only" - the latter words, "the elect only," apply to the preceding predicates

("redeemed," "called," "justified") collectively. If so, it is the statement of a mere truism, serving no purpose, and giving no deliverance upon anything. The Confessional doctrine, therefore, must be regarded "as teaching that it is not true of any but the elect only that they are redeemed by Christ, any more than it is true that any others are called, justified or saved" (ibid. ii. 328). It may be pointed out here that the word "redemption," as used in the Westminster period, referred to the procurement of salvation and did not include its application. It is in this sense that Baxter uses the word in the title of his book, *Universal Redemption of Mankind by the Lord Jesus Christ*.

Whatever efforts may have been made to give an interpretation to chapter iii., section 6, of the *Confession* favorable to the views held by the followers of Davenant and Ussher, there can be no doubt that the teaching of chapter viii., section 8, leaves no loophole for this teaching: "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption He doth certainly and effectually communicate the same." This statement, as Dr. Cunningham truly says, contains and was intended to contain the true *status quaestionis* in the controversy about the extent of the atonement (ibid. ii. 329). When the *Larger Catechism* was being drawn up, the *Minutes of the Westminster Assembly* (p. 369) indicate that the Davenant school of divines in the Assembly made another attempt to obtain sanction for their views. A Committee brought up for discussion the following questions and answers: "*Question* - Do all men equally partake of the benefits of Christ? *Answer* - Although from Christ some

common favours redound to all mankind, and some special privileges to the visible Church, yet none partake of the principal benefits of His mediation, but only such as are members of the Church invisible. Q. - What common favours redound from Christ to all mankind? A. - Besides much forbearance and many supplies for this life, which all mankind receive from Christ, the Lord of all, they by Him are made capable of having salvation tendered to them by the Gospel, and are under such dispensations of Providence and operations of the Spirit as lead to repentance.” The final form of the questions and answers on the above subject is set forth as follows in Questions and Answers 61 and 63 of the *Larger Catechism*: “Q. 61 - Are all they saved who hear the Gospel and live in the Church? A. - All that hear the Gospel and live in the visible Church are not saved; but they only who are true members of the Church invisible.” “Q. 63- What are the special privileges of the visible Church? A. - The visible Church hath the privilege of being under God's special care and government; of being protected and preserved in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies; and of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ to all the members of it in the ministry of the Gospel, testifying that whosoever believes in Him shall be saved, and excluding none that will come to Him.”

In his *Confession*, Baxter, while expressing admiration for the Westminster Divines and their work, will only accept chapter iii., section 6, and chapter viii., section 8, if the redemption referred to in these sections is “not of all redemption, and

particularly not of the mere bearing the punishment of man's sins, and satisfying God's justice; but of that special redemption proper to the elect, which was accompanied with an intention of actual application of the saving benefits in time. If I may not be allowed this interpretation, I must herein dissent.... I hope it was never the mind of that reverend Assembly to have shut out such men as Bishop Ussher, Davenant, Hall, Dr. Preston, Dr. Staughton, Mr. William Fenner, Dr. Ward, and many more excellent English divines as ever this Church enjoyed; who were all for general redemption." Baxter's position on the extent of redemption is thus stated by an admirer: "That the number of the finally saved, who will be at the right hand of Christ in the Last Day is foreknown, and therefore fixed, is indisputable; and that Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man, and for the sins not of the elect only, but also for the sins of the whole world, and that the call to accept His salvation is sincerely addressed to all men, are equally indisputable" (*Works of the Puritan Divines*: Baxter, p. liii.).

His controversy with Dr. Owen, the prince of the Puritan theologians, began in connection with the latter's great work, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Works, vol. x.). In his *Aphorisms on Justification*, Baxter took exception to, among other things, Owen's teaching on a definite redemption. Owen answered him in what may be termed an appendix to his *Death of Death* in his work, *Of the Death of Christ*. It is remarkable that while he joins issue with Owen for his doctrine of a definite redemption, he declares: "In the article of the extent of redemption, wherein I am most

suspected and accused, I do subscribe to the Synod of Dort, without any exception, limitation, or exposition of any word as doubtful and. obscure.” This, to say the least of it, seems strange. In an appendix (The Death of Christ, and of Justification) to his *Vindicia Evangelica*, Dr. Owen returns to Baxter's criticisms in his *Confession of Faith* (1655). Baxter's final reply was appended to a work which he published against Blacke, entitled, *Certain Disputations of Right to the Sacraments and the True Nature of Visible Christianity* (1656).²² While Baxter's views on the extent of the atonement are to be condemned, it is only fair to say, as Dr. Smeaton has pointed out (*The Apostles Doctrine of the Atonement*, p. 542), that he was not an Amyraldian.

(d) *The Double Reference Theory*. - In the early part of the 18th century the Church of Scotland was agitated by what was known as the Marrow Controversy. It arose through the publication of a Scottish edition of Edward Fisher's *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, in 1718. It contains such expressions as God the Father “hath made a deed of gift and grant to them all [i.e. sinners], that whosoever of them shall believe on His Son shall not perish, but have eternal life.” Another expression was: “Christ is dead for him [i.e. the sinner]; and if he will take and accept His righteousness, he shall have Him.” That these expressions are liable to be misunderstood is evident from the charges brought against the Marrowmen - Thomas Boston, Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, etc. - by their opponents and by the explanations offered by the Marrowmen as to what they understood them to mean. They

²² The controversy evoked a large number of books and pamphlets which are now forgotten.

were charged with holding a universal doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, and for this and other alleged errors they were condemned wrongly, we believe, by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. We cannot enter more fully in to the position taken up by the Marrowmen here²³ on the extent of redemption, except to say that they were thoroughly Calvinistic on this doctrine, and strongly opposed to the Arminian and Amyraldian heresies. In fact, what has been described by Dr. Smeaton as “perhaps the best refutation which is to be found in English of Amyraldism, or of the double satisfaction - the one effectual and the other ineffectual, is in the Rev. Adam Gib's *Display of the Secession Testimony*, ii. 131 -190 and 273 - 298.”²⁴ Adam Gib was a devoted follower of the Marrowmen and was one of the ablest defenders of their theology, and the Church to which he belonged was a strong supporter of the Marrow theology. While this was the position of the Secession Church at its beginning, as time went on the Marrow theology on the extent of the atonement drifted into what was known in the Scottish Secession Churches as the Double Reference Theory of the Atonement. This gave rise to the Atonement Controversy which was waged with considerable heat during a number of years.

We have already seen that Amyraldian views had been vented in the Secession and Reformed Presbyterian

²³ Vide paper in *Scottish Church History Society Records*, i. 127-131.

²⁴ Smeaton, *Our Lord's Doctrine of the Atonement*, 2nd ed., p. 472.

Churches.²⁵ The General Associate Synod (Anti-Burgher Secession Church) passed an “Act concerning Arminian Errors;” in which these views were condemned. The Rev. Thomas Mair, one of their ministers, objected to the Act, and after being repeatedly dealt with by the Synod, was deposed in 1757, as has already been stated. The whole subject will be found treated in the Rev. Adam Gib's *Display of the Secession Testimony* and in the Rev. Andrew Robertson's *History of the Atonement Controversy in the Secession Church*. This leads on now to what was known as the Double Reference Controversy. In 1845, at the United Secession Synod some reference was made to the views held by Professors Brown and Balmer. Both were theological professors in the United Secession Church. Brown stood by his colleague and stated his position thus when before the Synod: “In the sense of the great body of Calvinists that Christ died to remove obstacles in the way of human salvation by making perfect satisfaction for sin, I hold that He died for all men.” Bahner, in a preface to a reprint of Polhill's *on the Extent of the Death of Christ*²⁶ says: “Twelve years ago the supreme court of the United Secession Church passed an Act condemning the doctrine of a universal atonement and forbidding the use of the phrase. But how great the change effected within the last two years! The doctrine of a general reference to the death of Christ has been officially recognised, such a reference as necessarily implies a universal atonement.” This Double Reference view

²⁵ 25 In addition to reference already made to the controversy in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, vide Rev. W J. Couper's paper, ‘A Breach in the Reformed Presbytery’, 1753,” in *Scottish Church History Society Records*, i. 1-28.

²⁶ An Amyraldian work.

was one of the objections advanced by those in the Free Church who opposed union with the United Presbyterian Church.²⁷ The whole subject may be studied at greater length in Robertson's work, to which reference has already been made. It is necessary to point out, however, that the account there given in so far as it is an attempt to father on the Marrowmen the views of Brown and Balmer is misleading. It is probably owing to this that Dr. A. A. Hodge in his *Outlines of Theology* (new edition)²⁸ and also in a certain reference in his *Atonement*²⁹ makes the views of the Marrowmen and the United Secession professors similar. This is a mistake not confined to Dr. Hodge.

(e) *Cosmic or Eschatological Universalism*. Prof. Warfield states this view as follows: "When the Scriptures say that Christ came to save the world, that He does save the world, and that the world shall be saved by Him, they do not mean that there is no human being whom He did not come to save, whom He does not save, who is not saved by Him. They mean that He came to save and does save the human race; and that the human race is being led by God into a racial salvation; that in the age-long development of the race of men it will attain at last to a complete salvation, and our eyes will be greeted with the glorious spectacle of a saved world. Thus the human race attains the goal for which it was created, and sin does not snatch it out of God's hands, the primal purpose of God with and through Christ the race of

²⁷ This was the name given to the Church formed by the union of the United Secession and Relief Churches in 1847.

²⁸ p. 417.

²⁹ p. 352.

man, though fallen into sin, is recovered to God and fulfils its original destiny.”³⁰ Dr. Warfield sees in this a parallel of what takes place in the sanctification of the individual which is not completed in the day of effectual calling. This eschatological universalism, maintained to-day by Prof. L. Boettner, is very different from the universalism of Arminius, the hypothetical universalism of Amyrald, or the restorationism set forth by Professors Hastie and W P. Paterson in recent times. Dr. Warfield does not suggest that no souls are lost in the course of the long process through which the world advances to its salvation, or that all men are saved without exception. There are, however, difficulties created by this view which we cannot discuss here, and we prefer the older and, in our estimation, the more satisfactory explanations that have been usually given by Calvinistic theologians of the universalistic texts of Scripture.³¹

VI. - Effectual Calling.³²

³⁰ *Plan of Salvation*, p. 131-2.

³¹ Some of these texts, especially those which occur in the Pauline writings, can be explained on the ground that the catholicity of God's salvation is set over against the national particularistic ideas of the Jews. Others, again, on the ground that the universalistic expressions refer to different classes of men. While, another class may be explained as a polemic against the Gnostic dualist teaching which was disturbing the churches. The whole subject of these universalistic texts is dealt with by Dr. Owen in his *Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Works x. 316-421), and Prof. G. Vos in "The Scriptural Doctrine of the Love of God" (*Pres. and Reformed Review*, xiii. 1-37), R. S. Candlish, *The Atonement: Its Reality, Completeness and Extent* (pp. 47-85), A. A. Hodge, *Atonement* (pp. 385-395) and W Sykes, *Salt of the Covenant*, published by The Sovereign Grace Union (pp. 155-177).

³² "It was the high privilege of the Westminster Assembly to analyse the doctrine of effectual calling, to indicate and adjust its various elements, to exhibit in its Biblical comprehensiveness and preciousness more completely than had been done by their predecessors, either Continental or British" (Morris, *Theology of the Westminster Symbols*, p430).

“All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.... Elect infants, dying in infancy,³³ are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth. So also, are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word” (*Conf.*, x. 1 & 3). The Scriptures always speak of the Holy Ghost as the efficacious agent in effectual calling: “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit” (John iii. 5); “It is the Spirit that quickeneth” (John vi. 63). It is also very important, in view of the position taken up by some theologians and subsequently referred to in this paper, that we assert that the Spirit's customary instrument in all cases (save infants dying in infancy and idiots) is the Word.

The term *Regeneration*³⁴ is used by theologians in a two-fold sense. In the more comprehensive sense, it is used to describe the first stages in the work of conversion, or even

³³ The correct antithesis here is not “elect infants” and “non-elect infants”

³⁴ One of the most striking descriptions of regeneration to be found in the Reformed Confessions appears in the IIIrd Canon of Dort (Art. xi.-xii.).

more extensively the whole work of sanctification. In a narrower sense it is used to describe the instantaneous change from spiritual death to spiritual life. It is in the former sense that it is used by the Reformation and Puritan theologians. In its more restricted sense, it is used by such outstanding theologians as Hodge and Shedd. The distinction referred to above deserves our attention, as certain statements made by these latter divines have caused confusion in the minds of those who have come across them. Perhaps the best thing we can do is to give a statement from Shedd, in which the position of these divines on this point is clearly stated. "Regeneration," he says, "is not effected by *the use of means*, in the strict signification of the term 'means.' ... The appointed means of grace are the Word, the sacraments and prayer. None of these means is used in the instant of regeneration; first, because regeneration is instantaneous, and there is not time to use them; secondly, because regeneration is a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human spirit; It is the action of Spirit upon spirit, of a divine Person upon the human person, whereby spiritual life is imparted. Nothing, therefore, of the nature of means or instruments can come between the Holy Ghost and the soul that is to be made alive."³⁵ This statement we feel does not do justice to the teaching of Scripture nor to the *Confession of Faith* as far as the Word is concerned. (1) The following Scriptures seem to us to oppose it: "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth" James i. 18); "In whom ye also trusted after ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel

³⁵ Dogmatic Theol, ii. 506.

of your salvation” (Eph. i. 13); “Whereof ye heard before, in the Word of the truth of the Gospel, which is come unto you as it is in all the world” (Col. i. 5); and, “Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter i. 23). There is no escaping the fact that the “Word of truth,” “the Word of God,” is given a very important place here in connection with regeneration, and if our definition of regeneration does not leave a place for it, it is wiser to revise our definition. Dr. Shedd, we are aware, endeavors to explain away the bearing of “the Word” in these texts in connection with regeneration, but quite unsuccessfully in our opinion (Dogmatic Theol., ii. 509). Again, the Westminster Divines, though not devoting a chapter to the subject, make the following statement in chapter x., section 3: “Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and “where, and how He pleaseth. So also, are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.” These words, if we read them aright, seem to say quite plainly that the elect are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word, the two exceptions being: (1) elect infants dying in infancy, and (2) other elect persons incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word. No doubt the theologians whose views we have noticed above might say, and that rightly, that the Westminster Divines are referring to regeneration in its wider aspect. But whatever difference of views exist among conservative theologians on this point, they are all agreed

that the work of regeneration, or the new birth, is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not only superhuman but divine. The discourse delivered by the Lord Himself in the hearing of Nicodemus settles that point for ever for all those who accept the Master's teaching. The absolute necessity of being born again before a sinner can enter into the kingdom of God is stated in the simplest and most emphatic way. The Saviour's announcement, therefore, that this birth is wrought by the Holy Spirit shuts out all hope of getting into the kingdom of God by merely human means. In his great treatise on the Holy Spirit, Dr. Owen deals with the subject of regeneration and discusses it in Book iii., chapters i.-v., of this work, to which Dr. Smeaton pays the tribute: "It has long been regarded, and justly, as the most important work on the Spirit in any literature."³⁶

VII. - Justification by Imputing the Obedience and Satisfaction of Christ.

The doctrine of justification by faith is one of the great doctrines of the Christian faith, and should always be given a prominent place in teaching and in preaching. At the Reformation it was rescued from that mass of enslaving legalism that had been accumulating for centuries, and it shone forth as a bright star of hope to those who were enslaved by that legalism.³⁷ A view of this doctrine in the personal experience of the believer brings cheer and comfort. This comes out strikingly in the experience of the

³⁶ *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, p. 329.

³⁷ It is not meant by this statement that the doctrine was altogether forgotten, for Downham, Davenant, Ussher, O'Brien, Buchanan, etc., have produced abundant evidence to prove that it was maintained by faithful witnesses in every age of the Church from Apostolic times to Bernard.

Rev. James Clerk, of Thurso, one of the Haldane preachers, who became so depressed in mind that he gave up preaching. His friend, the Rev. John Cleghorn, of Wick, went to see him, and on remarking to the disconsolate man that “the salvation of the guilty is in harmony with the rights of justice,” he rose to a sitting posture in his bed and said with great feeling: “Blessed be God's name, sinners are not taken to heaven by stealth; the Court into which they are taken is in the face of open day in the full blaze of the light of eternal justice. There is no flaw in His work!” To Luther it was not merely a doctrine to be received by the understanding, but a blessed truth making its appeal to the heart. He judged a church by the place that it gave to this doctrine. It is well, therefore, that we should never forget that no amount of zeal on matters ecclesiastical will ever condone wrong or defective views of this doctrine. It is necessary that those who teach others should have sound and Scriptural views on this subject.

The modern mind is troubled over the question: “How can God be just and punish sinners forever?” But the pressing question on the consciences of those brought in guilty before God is: “How can God be just and justify the sinner?” In the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians we have the answer to this all-important question. The reply given in the *Shorter Catechism* to the question, “What is justification?” is singularly clear and complete: “Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.” The whole

burden of the Gospel preached by the Apostles was, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus iii. 5). The faith by which the sinner is justified, usually termed justifying faith, is thus described in the *Larger Catechism*: “Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the Gospel, but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and His righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation” (*Answer to Question 72*). God never justifies sin, but He justifies the sinner that believes in Christ by a way that is in accordance with all the claims of His inflexible justice. It is this way of salvation that is set before us by the Apostle in all its noble grandeur in the Epistle to the Romans. It is impossible to deal with the various points involved in the *Larger Catechism* answer in a short article; it would require a treatise to do anything like justice to it. Fortunately, we have excellent treatises in which this doctrine has been discussed, and we take the liberty of directing the attention of such of our readers who would desire further instruction in this important doctrine to some of these. There is Luther's classic commentary on Galatians,³⁸ which came from his very heart

³⁸ Bunyan said about it: "I prefer this book of Martin Luther's (except the Bible) before all the books that I have ever seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience."

as one that found deliverance from the death-bringing legalism under which He laboured. Then there are, among others, Dr. Owen's treatise on Justification and Bishop J. T. O'Brien's *Essays on Faith*. In the second volume of his *Historical Theology* Principal Cunningham deals with the subject in his masterly way. Dr. James Buchanan's Cunningham Lecture, *The Doctrine of Justification*, is also a very useful work, as he treats the subject historically and doctrinally.

VIII. - Final Preservation.³⁹

"They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved" (*Conf.*, xvii. 1). As in the doctrine of election, so in the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints it is well to keep in mind that they are in Christ Jesus. The doctrine does not stand alone, but forms an integral part of the Calvinistic system of theology. If God has chosen men unconditionally to eternal life, and if His Spirit effectively applies to them the benefits of redemption, the inevitable conclusion is that these persons shall be saved.⁴⁰ This perseverance is not dependent on the Christian's good works but on God's grace. They have the assurance of God's Word, "that He which hath begun a good

³⁹ The term used by the older divines is "The Final Perseverance of the Saints." The word "preservation" emphasizes the manner in which they persevere. Vide Jonathan Edwards, *Concerning Perseverance of Saints* (Works iii. 500) and Witsius, *Economy of the Covenants* (iii. 1 3). Witsius uses the term "conservation" to express, as his translator points out, the idea of the manner of this perseverance.

⁴⁰ Boettner, *Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, p. 182.

work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. i. 3-6). Their life is hid with Christ in God, and God dwells in light that is unapproachable so that no enemy will ever break through to touch it. Again, this life is eternal, the gift of God, and the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. There is sufficient power to keep them safe from their enemies, for they have received their Lord's own assurance: “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand” John x. 28, 29). The doctrine has been well stated by Dr. R. L. Dabney: “The sovereign and unmerited love is the cause of the believer's effectual calling (Jer. xxxiii. 3; Rom. viii. 30). Now as the cause is unchangeable, the effect is unchangeable. That effect is the constant communication of grace to the believer in whom God hath begun a good work. God was not induced to bestow His renewing grace in the first instance by anything which He saw, meritorious or attractive, in the repenting sinner; and therefore, the subsequent absence of everything good in him would be no new motive to God for withdrawing His grace. When He first bestowed that grace, He knew that the sinner on whom He bestowed it was totally depraved, and wholly, and only hateful in himself to the divine holiness; and therefore, no new instance of ingratitude or unfaithfulness, of which the sinner may become guilty after his conversion, can be any provocation to God, to change His mind, and wholly withdraw His sustaining grace. God knew all this ingratitude before. He will chastise it by temporarily

withdrawing His Holy Spirit or His providential mercies; but if He had not intended from the first to bear with it, and to forgive it in Christ, He would not have called the sinner by His grace at first. In a word the causes for which God determined to bestow His electing love on the sinner are wholly in God, and not at all in the believer; hence, nothing in the believer's heart or conduct can finally change that purpose of love (Isa. liv: 10; Rom. xi. 29). Compare carefully Romans v. 8-10, viii. 32, with the whole scope of Romans viii. 8-39. This illustrious passage is but an argument for our proposition: 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?'"⁴¹

In maintaining this doctrine, it is not suggested that God's people may not temporarily fall into sin and backslide, but in such cases they do not "totally or finally fall away from the state of grace." If *professing* Christians fall away finally and totally, it is proof that they were Christians only in name, and were never effectually called by the Spirit. It has been said that if this doctrine be true, why is it that there are so many warnings against apostasy in Scripture? To this question it has been answered that not only has God appointed the *end*, but also the *means*, and that the *means* must be used in the achievement of the end. It is not possible within the limits of this paper to deal at length with these passages, but attention may be called to one in particular which has been a source of difficulty to not a few. The passage in question is the well-known one in Hebrews vi. 4-6: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

⁴¹ *Systematic and Polemic Theology*, ii. 690.

and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.” In regard to this passage, it may be observed: (1) that it is purely hypothetical. The Apostle does not say *when they fall away*, but if they fall away. (2) It is a strong and impressive way of asserting the solemn truth, which the Hebrew Christians much needed, that in renouncing the salvation which they had accepted, there was absolutely no other salvation on which they could fall back. When one says that if God ceased to exist the creation would return to its original nothingness, he is not to be understood as asserting that God will cease to exist, but only asserting in a very emphatic way that the creation is absolutely dependent upon God.

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These pages may fitly conclude with some remarks concerning the *Doctrine of the Last Things* - the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, the General Resurrection and the Day of Judgment, which, according to Scripture and the Reformed theology, are all contemporaneous events. The eschatological teaching of the Westminster Divines is thus expressed in the *Confession of Faith*: “The bodies of men after death return to dust and see corruption, but their souls (which neither die nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the

face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies the Scripture acknowledgeth none. At the last day such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed; and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever” (chap. xxxii., secs. 1, 2). God hath appointed a day wherein He will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father. In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds, and receive according to what they have done, whether good or evil (ibid., xxxiii. 1).

The doctrine of the resurrection of the just and the wicked is clearly taught in Scripture. It should be kept in view, however, that while the Bible has much to say about the resurrection bodies of the elect (vide 1 Cor. xv.), it is silent concerning the bodies of the wicked. Both small and great are to be gathered before the Judge to give an account of the deeds done in the body. The advent of the Judge will be an unspeakably solemn event for the wicked, but for His people it will be an ineffably joyous event. For when He comes the second time it will be to receive all His saints, to be with Him forever. The three great events, the second advent, the general resurrection, and the judgment will be simultaneous.

That the day of judgment will take place is attested by the most stupendous miracle God wrought in time - the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead: "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31).

Unspeakably solemn though the transactions of that dread day will be, the Lord's people can look forward to His advent with unalloyed joy, for they will then enter on the full enjoyment of their inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, which fadeth not away. The Lord Himself tells us that His redeemed will be welcomed in the day of judgment with the gracious words: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv: 34). To the wicked it shall be said: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels....and these shall go away into everlasting (*aionion*) punishment, but the righteous into life eternal (*aionion*)" (Matt. xxv 41, 46). If the life is *eternal* or *everlasting*, and no one has ever questioned it, so is the punishment *eternal* or *everlasting*. All the attempts made by Christadelphians, Seventh Day Adventists, Millennial Dawnists, and all those who hold the doctrines of Annihilation, Conditional Immortality and Restoration-ism, have been faced with the impassable barrier of Matthew xxv. 46.⁴² We reject as a gross heresy the teaching of "Pastor"

⁴² The views of Christadelphians, Millennial Dawnists and Seventh Day Adventists are summarised and criticised by Irvine, *Heresies Exposed*. For a full discussion on Annihilation, Conditional Immortality, Restorationism and

Russell and Judge Rutherford regarding the finally impenitent. Scripture nowhere countenances the theory of the annihilation of the wicked. It is a doctrine that appeals to fallen man, and its advocates deceive multitudes by their plausible sophistries and appeal to the emotions.

The consummation of grace is glory, and fullness of glory awaits the Second Advent and the resurrection of the dead. With Dr. David Brown, "we affirm that the Redeemer's second appearance is the very pole-star of the Church" (*The Second Advent*, p.15). Opinions may differ as to the time and manner of His coming but the Apostle Paul declares that one effect produced by "the grace of God that bringeth salvation" is that men look for "that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." To quote Dr. Brown again: "Never do please Christ so much as when we 'refuse to be comforted,' even with His own consolations, save in the prospect of His personal return." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

the Larger Hope, vide S.D.F. Salmond, *Christian Doctrine of Immortality* pp. 595-629 and pp 630-662. The most satisfactory and ablest book known to us on Everlasting Punishment is Dr W.T. Shedd, *Doctrine of Endless Punishment*. In this work Dr. Shedd deals with the Scriptural teaching on Sheol and Hades. Another work dealing with other aspects of the doctrine of Everlasting Punishment is Dean Goulburn, *Endless Punishment*.

The principle systems of eschatological interpretation are the *historical* method of the church fathers and Reformers, according to which prophesy represents a continuous history of the Church and the world; *praeterism* which restricts the scope of the Apocalypse, except the closing chapters, to the fall of Judaism and pagan Rome, and *futurism* which regards all its prophesies, except those contained in the opening chapters, as still future. Ribera, a Jesuit of Salamanca, expounded a *futurist* schedule in 1585. Alcazar of Seville, another Jesuit, elaborated a *praeterist* scheme in 1615. In close association with the Society of Jesus, a religious congregation was founded in 1909 at Mazara del Vallo, Italy, with the principle object of "awaiting the return of Christ" The "watchers" chant a daily office dealing with the subject, and beat on a gold ring and on their forehead-bands, and breasts, the inscription; "Veni, Domine Jesu!" In 1920 Cardinal L. Billot, S.J., published a work on futurist lines entitled *La Parousie*.