

THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM
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Historically, this title is of little accuracy or worth; I use it to denote certain points of doctrine, because custom has made it familiar. Early in the seventeenth century the Presbyterian Church of Holland, whose doctrinal confession is the same in substance with ours, was much troubled by a species of new-school minority, headed by one of its preachers and professors, James Harmensen, in Latin, Arminius (hence, ever since, Arminians). Church and state have always been united in Holland; hence the civil government took up the quarrel. Professor Harmensen (Arminius) and his party were required to appear before the State's General (what we would call Federal Congress) and say what their objections were against the doctrines of their own church, which they had freely promised in their ordination vows to teach. Arminius handed in a writing in which he named five points of doctrine concerning which he and his friends either differed or doubted. These points were virtually: Original sin, unconditional predestination, invincible grace in conversion, particular redemption, and perseverance of saints. I may add, the result was: that the Federal legislature ordered the holding of a general council of all the Presbyterian churches then in the world, to discuss anew and settle these five doctrines. This was the famous Synod of Dort, or Dordrecht, where not only Holland ministers, but delegates from the French, German, Swiss, and British churches met in 1618. The Synod adopted the rule that every doctrine should be decided by the sole authority of the word of God, leaving out all human philosophies and opinions on both sides. The result was a short set of articles which were made a part thenceforward of the Confession of Faith of the Holland Presbyterian Church. They are clear, sound, and moderate, exactly the same in substance with those of our Westminster Confession, enacted twenty-seven years afterward.

I have always considered this paper handed in by Arminius as of little worth or importance. It is neither honest nor clear. On several points it seeks cunningly to insinuate doubts or to confuse the minds of opponents by using the language of pretended orthodoxy. But as the debate went on, the differences of the Arminians disclosed themselves as being, under a pretended new name nothing in the world but the old semi-pelagianism which had been plaguing the churches for a thousand years, the cousin-german of the Socinian or Unitarian creed. Virtually it denied that the fallen Adam had brought man's heart into an entire and decisive alienation from God; it asserted that his election of grace was not sovereign, but founded in his own foresight of the faith, repentance and perseverance of such as would choose to embrace the gospel. That grace in effectual calling is not efficacious and invincible, but resistible, so that all actual conversions are the joint result of this grace and the sinner's will working abreast. That

Christ died equally for the non-elect and the elect, providing an indefinite, universal atonement for all; and that true converts may, and sometimes do, fall away totally and finally from the state of grace and salvation; their perseverance therein depending not on efficacious grace, but on their own free will to continue in gospel duties.

Let any plain mind review these five changes and perversions of Bible truth, and he will see two facts: One, that the debate about them all will hinge mainly upon the first question, whether man's original sin is or is not a complete and decisive enmity to godliness; and the other, that this whole plan is a contrivance to gratify human pride and self-righteousness and to escape that great humbling fact everywhere so prominent in the real gospel, that man's ruin of himself by sin is utter, and the whole credit of his redemption from it is God's.

We Presbyterians care very little about the name Calvinism. We are not ashamed of it; but we are not bound to it. Some opponents seem to harbor the ridiculous notion that this set of doctrines was the new invention of the Frenchman John Calvin. They would represent us as in this thing followers of him instead of followers of the Bible. This is a stupid historical error. John Calvin no more invented these doctrines than he invented this world which God had created six thousand years before. We believe that he was a very gifted, learned, and, in the main, godly man, who still had his faults. He found substantially this system of doctrines just where we find them, in the faithful study of the Bible, where we see them taught by all the prophets, apostles, and the Messiah himself, from Genesis to Revelation.

Calvin also found the same doctrines handed down by the best, most learned, most godly, uninspired church fathers, as Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas, still running through the errors of popery. He wielded a wide influence over the Protestant churches; but the Westminster Assembly and the Presbyterian churches by no means adopted all Calvin's opinions. Like the Synod of Dort, we draw our doctrines, not from any mortal man or human philosophy, but from the Holy Ghost speaking in the Bible. Yet, we do find some inferior comfort in discovering these same doctrines of grace in the most learned and pious of all churches and ages; of the great fathers of Romanism, of Martin Luther, of Blaise Pascal, of the original Protestant churches, German, Swiss, French, Holland, English and Scotch, and far the largest part of the real scriptural churches of our own day. The object of this tractate is simply to enable all honest inquirers after truth to understand just what those doctrines really are which people style the peculiar "doctrines of Presbyterians," and thus to enable honest minds to answer all objections and perversions. I do not write because of any lack in our church of existing treatises well adapted to our purpose; nor because I think anyone can now add anything really new to the argument. But our pastors and missionaries think that some additional good may come from another short discussion suitable for unprofessional readers. To such I would earnestly recommend two little books, Dr. Mathews' on the Divine Purpose, and Dr. Nathan Rice's God Sovereign and Man Free. For those who wish to investigate these doctrines more extensively there are, in addition to their Bible, the standard works in the English language on doctrinal divinity, such as Calvin's Institutes (translated), Witsius on the Covenants, Dr. William Cunningham's, of Edinburgh, Hill's and Dicks' Theologies, and

in the United States those of Hedge, Dabney, and Shedd. All these can be purchased from or through our Assembly's Committee of Publication, No. 1001 Main street Richmond, Va., and sent by mail.

I. WHAT PRESBYTERIANS REALLY MEAN BY "ORIGINAL SIN," "TOTAL DEPRAVITY," AND "INABILITY OF THE WILL":

Confession of Faith, Chapter IX, Section iii. "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto."

By original sin we mean the evil quality which characterizes man's natural disposition and will. We call this sin of nature original, because each fallen man is born with it, and because it is the source or origin in each man of his actual transgressions.

By calling it total, we do not mean that men are from their youth as bad as they can be. Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, "deceiving and being deceived." (2 Tim. iii.13) Nor do we mean that they have no social virtues towards their fellowmen in which they are sincere. We do not assert with extremists that because they are natural men, therefore all their friendship, honesty, truth, sympathy, patriotism, domestic love, are pretenses or hypocrisies. What our Confession says is, "That they have wholly lost ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation." The worst retain some, and the better much, ability of will for sundry moral goods accompanying social life. Christ teaches this (Mark x. 21) when, beholding the social virtues of the rich young man who came kneeling unto him, "He loved him," Christ could never love mere hypocrisies. What we teach is, that by the fall man's moral nature has undergone an utter change to sin, irreparable by himself. In this sense it is complete, decisive, or total. The state is as truly sinful as their actual transgressions, because it is as truly free and spontaneous. This original sin shows itself in all natural men in a fixed and utter opposition of heart to some forms of duty, and especially and always to spiritual duties, owing to God, and in a fixed and absolutely decisive purpose of heart to continue in some sins (even while practicing some social duties), and especially to continue in their sins of unbelief, impenitence, self-will, and practical godlessness. In this the most moral are as inflexibly determined by nature as the most immoral. The better part may sincerely respect sundry rights and duties regarding their fellowmen, but in the resolve that self-will shall be their rule, whenever they please, as against God's sovereign holy will, these are as inexorable as the most wicked. I suppose that a refined and genteelly reared young lady presents the least sinful specimen of unregenerate human nature. Examine such a one. Before she would be guilty of theft, profane swearing, drunkenness, or impurity, she would die. In her opposition to these sins she is truly sincere. But there are some forms of self-will, especially in sins of omission as against God, in which she is just as determined as the most brutal drunkard is in his sensuality. She has, we will suppose, a Christian mother. She is determined to pursue certain fashionable conformities and dissipations. She has a light novel under her pillow which she intends to read on the Sabbath. Though she may still sometimes repeat like a parrot her nursery prayers, hers is spiritually a prayerless life.

Especially is her heart fully set in her not to forsake at this time her life of self-will and worldliness for Christ's service and her salvation. Tenderly and solemnly her Christian mother may ask her, "My daughter, do you not know that in these things you are wrong toward your heavenly Father" She is silent. She knows she is wrong. "My daughter, will you not therefore now relent, and choose for your Savior's sake, this very day, the life of faith and repentance, and especially begin tonight the life of regular, real, secret prayer. Will you?" Probably her answer is in a tone of cold and bitter pain. "Mother, don't press me, I would rather not promise." No; she will not! Her refusal may be civil in form, because she is well-bred; but her heart is as inflexibly set in her as the hardened steel not at this time to turn truly from her self-will to her God. In that particular her stubbornness is just the same as that of the most hardened sinners. Such is the best type of unregenerate humanity.

Now, the soul's duties towards God are the highest, dearest, and most urgent of all duties; so that willful disobedience herein is the most express, most guilty, and most hardening of all the sins that the soul commits. God's perfections and will are the most supreme and perfect standard of moral right and truth. Therefore, he who sets himself obstinately against God's right is putting himself in the most fatal and deadly opposition to moral goodness. God's grace is the one fountain of holiness for rational creatures; hence, he who separates himself from this God by this hostile self-will, shuts himself in to ultimate spiritual death. This rooted, godless, selfwill is the eating cancer of the soul. That soul may remain for a time like the body of a young person tainted with undeveloped cancer, apparently attractive and pretty. But the cancer is spreading the secret seeds of corruption through all the veins; it will break out at last in putrid ulcers, the blooming body will become a ghastly corpse. There is no human remedy. To drop the figure; when the sinful soul passes beyond the social restraints and natural affections of this life, and beyond hope, into the world of the lost, this fatal root, sin of willful godlessness will soon develop into all forms of malignity and wickedness; the soul will become finally and utterly dead to God and to good. This is what we mean by total depravity.

Once more, Presbyterians do not believe they lose their free-agency because of original See our Confession, Chapter IX., Section 1: "God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to good or evil." We fully admit that where an agent is not free he is not morally responsible. A just God will never punish him for actions in which he is merely an instrument, impelled by the compulsion of external force or fate. But what is free agency? There is no need to call in any abstruse metaphysics to the sufficient answer. Let every man's consciousness and common sense tell him: I know that I am free whenever what I choose to do is the results of my own preference.

I choose and act so as to please myself, then I am free. That is to say, our responsible volitions are the expression and the result of our own rational preference. When I am free and responsible it is because I choose and do the thing which I do, not compelled by some other agents, but in accordance with my own inward preference. We all know self-evidently that this is so. But is rational preference in us a mere haphazard state? Do our reasonable souls contain no original principles regulative of their preferences and

choices? Were this so, then would man's soul be indeed a miserable weathercock, wheeled about by every outward wind; not fit to be either free, rational or responsible. We all know that we have such first principles regulative of our preferences; and these are our own natural dispositions. They are inward, not external. They are spontaneous, not compelled, and so as free as our choices. They are our own, not somebody else's. They are ourselves. They are essential attributes in any being possessed of personality. Every rational person must have some kind of natural disposition. We can conceive of one person as naturally disposed this way, and of another that way. It is impossible for us to think a rational free agent not disposed any way at all. Try it. We have capital illustrations of what native disposition is in the corporeal propensities of animals. It is the nature of a colt to like grass and hay. It is the nature of a bouncing schoolboy to like hot sausage. You may tempt the colt with a bunch of nice hay, but not the boy; it is the hot sausage will fetch him when he is hungry; offer the hot sausage to the colt and he will reject it and shudder at it. Now both the colt and the boy are free in choosing what they like; free because their choices follow their own natural likings, i. e., their own animal dispositions.

But rational man has mental dispositions which are better than illustrations, actual cases of native principles regulating natural choices. Thus, when happiness or misery may be chosen simply for their own sakes, every man's natural disposition is towards happiness and against misery. Again, man naturally loves property; all are naturally disposed to gain and to keep their own rather than to lose it for nothing. Once more, every man is naturally disposed to enjoy the approbation and praise of his fellow-men; and their contempt and abuse are naturally painful to him. In all these cases men choose according as they prefer, and they prefer according to their natural dispositions, happiness rather than misery, gain rather than loss, applause rather than abuse. They are free in these choices as they are sure to choose in the given way. And they are as certain to choose agreeably to these original dispositions as rivers are to run downwards; equally certain and equally free, because the dispositions which certainly regulate their preferences are their own, not some one else's, and are spontaneous in them, not compelled.

Let us apply one of these cases. I make this appeal to a company of aspiring young ladies and gentlemen: "Come and engage with me of your free choice in this given course of labor; it will be long and arduous; but I can assure you of a certain result. I promise you that, by this laborious effort, you shall make yourselves the most despised and abused set of young people in the State." Will this succeed in inducing them? Can it succeed? No; it will not, and we justly say, it cannot. But are not these young persons free when they answer me, as they certainly will, "No, Teacher, we will not, and we cannot commit the folly of working hard solely to earn contempt, because contempt is in itself contrary and painful to our nature." This is precisely parallel to what Presbyterians mean by inability of will to all spiritual good. It is just as real and certain as inability of faculty. These young people have the fingers therewith to perform the proposed labor, let us say of writing, by which I invite them to toil for the earning of contempt. They have eyes and fingers wherewith to do penmanship, but they cannot freely choose my offer, because it contradicts that principle of their nature, love of applause, which infallibly regulates free human preference and choice. Here is an exact case of "inability of will." If, now, man's

fall has brought into his nature a similar native principle or disposition against godliness for its own sake, and in favor of self-will as against God, then a parallel case of inability of will presents itself. The former case explains the latter. The natural man's choice in preferring his self-will to God's authority is equally free, and equally certain. But this total lack of ability of will toward God does not suspend man's responsibility, because it is the result of his own free disposition, not from any compulsion from without. If a master would require his servant to do a bodily act for which he naturally had not the bodily faculty, as, for instance, the pulling up of a healthy oak tree with his hands, it would be unjust to punish the servant's failure. But this is wholly another case than the sinner's. For, if his natural disposition towards God were what it ought to be, he would not find himself deprived of the natural faculties by which God is known, loved, and served. The sinner's case is not one of extinction of faculties, but of their thorough willful perversion. It is just like the case of Joseph's wicked brethren, of whom Moses says (Gen. xxxvii. 4): "That they hated their brother Joseph, so that they could not speak peaceably unto him." They had tongues in their heads? Yes. They could speak in words whatever they chose, but hatred, the wicked voluntary principle, ensured that they would not, and could not, speak kindly to their innocent brother.

Now, then, all the argument turns upon the question of fact: is it so that since Adam's fall the natural disposition of all men is in this state of fixed, decisive enmity against God's will, and fixed, inexorable preference for their own self-will, as against God? Is it true that man is in this lamentable state, that while still capable of being rightly disposed toward sundry virtues and duties, terminating on his fellow creatures, his heart is inexorably indisposed and willfully opposed to those duties which he owes to his heavenly Father directly? That is the question! Its best and shortest proof would be the direct appeal to every man's conscience. I know that it was just so with me for seventeen years, until God's almighty hand took away the heart of stone and gave me a heart of flesh. Every converted man confesses the same of himself. Every unconverted man well knows that it is now true of himself, if he would allow his judgment and conscience to look honestly within. Unbeliever, you may at times desire even earnestly the impunity, the safety from hell, and the other selfish advantages of the Christian life; but did you ever prefer and desire that life for its own sake? Did you ever see the moment when you really wished God to subjugate all your self-will to his holy will? No! That is the very thing which the secret disposition of your soul utterly resents and rejects. The retention of that self-will is the very thing which you so obstinately prefer, that as long as you dare you mean to retain it and cherish it, even at the known risk of an unprepared death and a horrible perdition. But I will add other proofs of this awful fact, and especially the express testimony of the Holy Spirit.

There is the universal fact that all men sin more or less, and do it willfully. In the lives of most unrenewed men, sin reigns prevalently. The large majority are dishonest, unjust, selfish, cruel, as far as they dare to be, even to their fellow creatures, not to say utterly godless to their heavenly Father. The cases like that of the well-bred young lady, described above, are relatively few, fatally defective as they are. This dreadful reign of sin in this world continues in spite of great obstacles, such as God's judgments and threatenings, and laborious efforts to curb it in the way of governments, restrictive laws

and penalties, schools, family discipline, and churches. This sinning of human beings begins more or less as soon as the child's faculties are so developed as to qualify him for sinning intentionally. "The wicked go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." Now, a uniform result must proceed from a regular prior cause--there must be original sin in man's nature.

Even the great rationalistic philosopher, Immanuel Kant, believed and taught this doctrine. His argument is, that when men act in the aggregate and in national masses, they show out their real native dispositions, because in these concurrent actions they are not restrained by public opinion and by human laws restricting individual actions, and they do not feel immediate personal responsibility for what they do. The actions of men in the aggregate, therefore, shows what man's heart really is. Now, then, what are the morals of the nations towards each other and towards God? Simply those of foxes, wolves, tigers, and atheists. What national senate really and humbly tries to please and obey God in its treatment of neighbor nations? What nation trusts its safety simply to the justice of its neighbors? Look at the great standing armies and fleets! Though the nation may include many God-fearing and righteous persons, when is that nation ever seen to forego a profitable aggression upon the weak, simply because it is unjust before God? These questions are unanswerable.

In the third place, all natural men, the decent and genteel just as much as the vile, show this absolute opposition of heart to God's will, and preference for self-will in some sinful acts and by rejecting the gospel. This they do invariably, knowingly, willfully, and with utter obstinacy, until they are made willing in the day of God's power. They know with perfect clearness that the gospel requirements of faith, trust, repentance, endeavors after sincere obedience, God's righteous law, prayer, praise, and love to him, are reasonable and right. Outward objects or inducements are constantly presented to their souls, which are of infinite moment, and ought to be absolutely omnipotent over right hearts. These objects include the unspeakable love of God in Christ in giving his Son to die for his enemies, which ought to melt the heart to gratitude in an instant; the inexpressible advantages and blessings of an immortal heaven, secured by immediate faith, and the unutterable, infinite horrors of an everlasting hell, incurred by final unbelief, and risked to an awful degree, even by temporary hesitation. And these latter considerations appeal not only to moral conscience, but to that natural selfishness which remains in full force in unbelievers. Nor could doubts concerning these gospel truths, even if sincere and reasonably grounded to some extent, explain or excuse this neglect. For faith, and obedience, and the worship and the love of God, are self-evidently right and good for men, whether these awful gospel facts be true or not. He who believes is acting on the safe side in that he loses nothing, but gains something whichever way the event may go; whereas neglect of the gospel will have incurred an infinite mischief, with no possible gain should Christianity turn out to be true.

In such cases reasonable men always act, as they are morally bound to do, upon the safe side, under the guidance of even a slight probability. Why do not doubting men act thus on the safe side, even if it were a doubtful case (which it is not)? Because their dispositions are absolutely fixed and determined against godliness. Now, what result do

we see from the constant application of these immense persuasives to the hearts of natural men? They invariably put them off; sometimes at the cost of temporary uneasiness or agitation, but they infallibly put them off, preferring, as long as they dare, to gratify self-will at the known risk of plain duty and infinite blessedness. Usually they make this ghastly suicidal and wicked choice with complete coolness, quickness, and ease! They attempt to cover from their own consciences the folly and wickedness of their decision by the fact they can do it so coolly and unfeelingly. My common sense tells me that this very circumstance is the most awful and ghastly proof of the reality and power of original sin in them. If this had not blinded them, they would be horrified at the very coolness with which they can outrage themselves and their Savior. I see two men willfully murder each his enemy. One has given the fatal stab in great agitation, after agonizing hesitations, followed by pungent remorse. He is not yet an adept in murder. I see the other man drive his knife into the breast of his helpless victim promptly, coolly, calmly, jesting while he does it, and then cheerfully eat his food with his bloody knife. This is no longer a man, but a fiend.

But the great proof is the Scripture. The whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, asserts this original sin and decisive ungodliness of will of all fallen men. Gen. vi. 3: "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh (carnally minded)." Again, chap. vi. 5: "God saw that every imagination of the man's heart was only evil continually." After the terrors of the flood, God's verdict on the survivors was still the same. Chap. viii. 21: "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."

Job, probably the earliest sacred writer, asks, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." (Chap. xiv. 4.) David says: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. li. 5.) Prophet asks (Jer. xiii 23), "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." Jeremiah says, chap. xvii. 9: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." What does desperately mean? In the New Testament Christ says (John iii, 4 and 5), "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" and "Except ye be born again ye cannot see the kingdom of God." The Pharisees' hearts (decent moral men) are like unto whited sepulchers, which appear beautifully outwardly, but within are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Does Christ exaggerate, and slander decent people?

Peter tells us (Acts viii. 23) that the spurious believer is "in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Paul (Romans viii.7): "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, "neither indeed can be," (inability of will).(Ephesians ii.): "All men are by nature children of wrath . . . and dead in trespasses and sins." Are not these enough?

II. THE NATURE AND AGENCY OF THE MORAL REVOLUTION, NAMED EFFECTUAL CALLING OR REGENERATION.

This change must be more than an outer reformation of conduct, an inward revolution of first principles which regulate conduct. It must go deeper than a change of purpose as to sin and godliness; it must be a reversal of the original dispositions which hitherto prompted the soul to choose sin and reject godliness. Nothing less grounds a true conversion. As the gluttonous child maybe persuaded by the selfish fear of pain and death to forego the dainties he loves, and to swallow the nauseous drugs which his palate loathes so the ungodly man may be induced by his self-righteousness and selfish fear of hell to forbear the sins he still loves, and submit to the religious duties which his secret soul still detests. But, as the one practice is no real cure of the vice of gluttony in the child, so the other is no real conversion to godliness in the sinner. The child must not only forsake, but really dislike his unhealthy dainties; not only submit to swallow, but really love, the medicines naturally nauseous to him. Selfish fear can do the former; nothing but a physiological change of constitution can do the latter. The natural man must not only submit from selfish fear to the godliness which he detested, he must love it for its own sake, and hate the sins naturally sweet to him. No change can be permanent which does not go thus deep; nothing less is true conversion. God's call to the sinner is: "My son, give me thine heart." (Proverbs xxiii. 26.) God requireth truth in the inward parts and in the hidden parts: "Thou shalt make me to know wisdom." (Psalm li. 6.) "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart." (Deut. x. 16.) But hear especially Christ: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt." (Matt. xii. 33)

We call the inward revolution of principles regeneration; the change of life which immediately begins from the new principles conversion. Regeneration is a summary act, conversion a continuous process. Conversion begins in, and proceeds constantly out of, regeneration, as does the continuous growth of a plant out of the first sprouting or quickening of its dry seed. In conversion the renewed soul is an active agent: "God's people are willing in the day of his power." The converted man chooses and acts the new life of faith and obedience heartily and freely, as prompted by the Holy Ghost. In this sense, "He works out his own salvation" (Phil. ii. 12.). But manifestly in regeneration, in the initial revolution of disposition, the soul does not act, but is a thing acted on. In this first point there can be no cooperation of the man's will with the divine power. The agency is wholly God's, and not man's, even in part. The vital change must be affected by immediate direct divine power. God's touch here may be mysterious; but it must be real, for it is proved by the seen results. The work must be sovereign and supernatural. Sovereign in this sense, that there is no will concerned in its effectuation except God's, because the sinner's will goes against it as invariably, as freely, until it is renewed; supernatural, because there is nothing at all in sinful human nature to begin it, man's whole natural disposition being to prefer and remain in a godless state. As soon as this doctrine is stated, it really proves itself. In our second section we showed beyond dispute that man's natural disposition and will are enmity against God. Does enmity ever turn itself into love? Can nature act above nature? Can the stream raise itself to a higher level than its own source? Nothing can be plainer than this, that since the native disposition and will of man are wholly and decisively against godliness, there is no source within the man out of which the new godly will can come; into the converted man it has come; then it must have come from without, solely from the divine will.

But men cheat themselves with the notion that what they call free-will may choose to respond to valid outward inducements placed before it, so that gospel truth and rational free-will cooperating with it may originate the great change instead of sovereign, efficacious divine grace. Now, any plain mind, if it will think, can see that this is delusive. Is any kind of an object actual inducement to any sort of agent? No, indeed. Is fresh grass an inducement to a tiger? Is bloody flesh an inducement to a lamb to eat? Is a nauseous drug an inducement to a child's palate; or ripe sweet fruit? Useless loss an inducement to the merchant; or useful gain? Are contempt and reproach inducements to aspiring youth; or honor and fame? Manifestly some kinds of objects only are inducements to given sorts of agents; and the opposite objects are repellants. Such is the answer of common sense. Now, what has decided which class of objects shall attract, and which shall repel? Obviously it is the agents' own original, subjective dispositions which have determined this. It is the lamb's nature which has determined that the fresh grass, and not the bloody flesh, shall be the attraction to it. It is human nature in the soul which has determined that useful gain, and not useless loss, shall be inducement to the merchant. Now, then, to influence a man by inducement you must select an object which his own natural disposition has made attractive to him; by pressing the opposite objects on him you only repel him; and the presentation of the objects can never reverse the man's natural disposition, because this has determined in advance which objects will be attractions and which repellants. Effects cannot reverse the very causes on which they themselves depend. The complexion of the child cannot Re-determine the complexion of the father. Now, facts and Scripture teach us (see 2d. Section) that man's original disposition is as freely, as entirely, against God's will and godliness and in favor of self-will and sin. Therefore, godliness can never be of itself inducement, but only repulsion, to the unregenerate soul. Men cheat themselves; they think they are induced by the selfish advantages of an imaginary heaven, an imaginary selfish escape from hell. But this is not regeneration; it is but the sorrows of the world that worketh death, and the hope of the hypocrite that perisheth.

The different effects of the same preached gospel at the same time and place prove that regeneration is from sovereign grace: "Some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not." (Acts xviii. 24). This is because, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." (Acts xiii. 48). Often those remain unchanged whose social virtues, good habits, and amiability should seem to offer least obstruction to the gospel; while some old, profane, sensual, and hardened sinners become truly converted, whose wickedness and long confirmed habits of sinning must have presented the greatest obstruction to gospel truth. Like causes should produce like effects. Had outward gospel inducements been the real causes, these results of preaching would be impossible. The facts show that the gospel inducements were only instruments, and that in the real conversion the agency was almighty grace.

The erroneous theory of conversion is again powerfully refuted by those cases, often seen, in which gospel truth has remained powerless over certain men for ten, twenty, or fifty years, and at last has seemed to prevail for their genuine conversion. The gospel, urged by the tender lips of a mother, proved too weak to overcome the self-will of the

boy's heart. Fifty years afterwards that same gospel seemed to convert a hardened old man! There are two well-known laws of the human soul which show this to be impossible. One is, that facts and inducements often, but fruitlessly, presented to the soul, become weak and trite from vain repetition. The other is, that men's active appetences grow stronger continually by their own indulgence. Here, then, is the case: The gospel when presented to the sensitive boy must have had much more force than it could have to the old man after it had grown stale to him by fifty years of vain repetition. The old man's love of sin must have grown greatly stronger than the boy's by fifty years of constant indulgence. Now how comes it, that a given moral influence which was too weak to overcome the boy's sinfulness has overcome the old man's carnality when the influences had become so much weaker and the resistance to it so much stronger. This is impossible. It was the finger of God, and not the mere moral influence, which wrought the mighty change. Let us suppose that fifty years ago the reader had seen me visit his rural sanctuary, when the grand oaks which now shade it were but lithe saplings. He saw me make an effort to tear one of them with my hands from its seat; but it proved too strong for me. Fifty years after, he and I meet at the same sacred spot, and he sees me repeat my attempt upon the same tree, now grown to be a monarch of the grove. He will incline to laugh me to scorn: "He attempted that same tree fifty years ago, when he was in his youthful prime and it was but a sapling, but he could not move it. Does the old fool think to rend it from its seat now' when age has so diminished his muscle, and the sapling has grown to a mighty tree?" But let us suppose that the reader saw that giant of the grove come up in my aged hands. He would no longer laugh. He would stand awe-struck. He would conclude that this must be the hand of God, not of man. How vain is it to seek to break the force of this demonstration by saying that at last the moral influence of the gospel had received sufficient accession from attendant circumstances, from clearness and eloquence of presentation, to enable it to do its work? What later eloquence of the pulpit can rival that of the Christian mother presenting the cross in the tender accents of love. Again, the story of the cross, the attractions of heaven, ought to be immense, even when stated in the simplest words of childhood. How trivial and paltry are any additions which mere human rhetoric can make to what ought to be the infinite force of the naked truth.

But the surest proof is that of Scripture. This everywhere asserts that the sinner's regeneration is by sovereign, almighty grace. One class of texts presents those which describe the sinner's prior condition as one of "blindness," Eph. iv. 18; "of stony heartedness," Ezek. xxxvi. 26; "of impotency," Rom. v. 6; "of enmity," Rom. viii. 7; "of inability, John vi. 44, and Rom. vii. 18; "of deadness," Eph. ii. 1-5. Let no one exclaim that these are "figures of speech." Surely the Holy Spirit, when resorting to figures for the very purpose of giving a more forcible expression to truth, does not resort to a deceitful rhetoric! Surely he selects his figures because of the correct parallel between them and his truth! Now, then, the blind man cannot take part in the very operation which is to open his eyes. The hard stone cannot be a source of softness. The helpless paralytic cannot begin his own restoration. Enmity against God cannot choose love for him, The dead corpse of Lazarus could have no agency in recalling the vital spirit into itself. After Christ's almighty power restored it, the living man could respond to the Savior's command and rise and come forth.

The figures which describe the almighty change prove the same truth. It is described (Ps. cxix. 18) as an opening of the blind eyes to the law; as a new creation; (Ps. li. 10; Eph. ii. 5) as a new birth; (John iii. 3) as a quickening or resurrection (making alive); Eph. 1 18, and ii. 10). The man blind of cataract does not join the surgeon in couching his own eye; nor does the sunbeam begin and perform the surgical operation; that must take place in order for the light to enter and produce vision.

The timber is shaped by the carpenter; it does not shape itself, and does not become an implement until he gives it the desired shape. The infant does not procreate itself, but must be born of its parents in order to become a living agent.

The corpse does not restore life to itself; after life is restored it becomes a living agent. Express scriptures teach the same doctrine. In Jer. xxxi. 18, Ephraim is heard praying thus: "Turn thou to me and I shall be turned." In John 1.12, we are taught that believers are born "not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God." In John vi. 44, Christ assures us that "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." And in chap. xv. 16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit." In Eph. ii. 10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which Christ hath fore ordained that we should walk in them."

It is objected that this doctrine of almighty grace would destroy man's free-agency. This is not true. All men whom God does not regenerate retain their natural freedom unimpaired by anything which he does to them.

It is true that these use their freedom, as in variably, as voluntarily, by choosing their self-will and unregenerate state. But in doing this they choose in perfect accordance with their own preference, and this the only kind of free-agency known to men of common sense. The unregenerate choose just what they prefer, and therefore choose freely; but so long as not renewed by almighty grace, they always prefer to remain unregenerate, because it is fallen man's nature. The truly regenerate do not lose their free-agency by effectual calling, but regain a truer and higher freedom; for the almighty power which renews them does not force them into a new line of conduct contrary to their own preferences, but reverses the original disposition itself which regulates preference. Under this renewed disposition they now act just as freely as when they were voluntary sinners, but far more reasonably and happily. For they act the new and right preference, which almighty grace has put in place of the old one.

It is objected, again, that unless the agent has exercised his free-will in the very first choice or adoption of the new moral state, there could be no moral quality and no credit for the series of actions proceeding therefrom, because they would not be voluntary. This is expressly false. True, the new-born sinner can claim no merit for that sovereign change of will in which his conversion began, because it was not his own choosing, or doing, but God's; yet the cavil is untrue; the moral quality and merit of a series of actions does not

depend on the question, whether the agent put himself into the moral state whence they how, by a previous volition of his own starting from a moral indifference.

The only question is, whether his actions are sincere, and the free expressions of a right disposition, for: