

## CHAPTER II.

IT is necessary that some considerations be added to those already presented.

i. It must be observed that although the holy spontaneity of the will as renewed, and the sinful spontaneity of the will as belonging to the old nature still resident in the believer, are both fixed and determined, the former by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, the latter by the original free decision in favor of sin against holiness and the judicial consequences resulting from it, yet it does not follow that both of these spontaneous inclinations are always, at one and the same time, in full exercise. The manifestation of each varies in strength. At certain times, when the Spirit is poured out copiously upon the believer, and his experience of grace is correspondingly deepened and enlarged, or when the awful providence of God thrusts upon him the imminence of death, judgment and eternity, the renewed will is in a high degree of exercise. It becomes for the time, consciously to the believer, the ascendent and reigning power of the soul, and the will of the carnal nature is proportionately depressed, sluggish and dormant. Especially is this the case when it pleases God to impart the witness of the Holy Spirit in an unusual manner, so as to remove all shadow of doubt touching one's conversion and interest in Christ. The well of water within him gushes up and refreshes the soul, the wine of joy exhilarates it, and the hope of glory burns like

a brilliant lamp that projects its rays into the valley of death and into the eternal world. The God of hope fills the soul with all joy and peace in believing, and causes it to abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Assurance of salvation is full and unclouded. The temptations of the Devil are silenced, the blandishments of an ungodly world lose their power to charm, and the inward evils of the old nature sink beneath consciousness like lead in the mighty waters. We have no doubt that this exalted condition of experience is sometimes mistaken for entire sanctification. And there might be some room for the sweet illusion were it shadowed by no contingency of change. Alas! they who indulge the fond belief are the very persons who affirm the defectibility of the saints and the possibility of their totally and finally falling from grace and the hope of eternal life. How strangely do extremes meet! Entire sanctification with the possibility of future, entire corruption; the well-grounded assurance of salvation with a possible experience of damnation; the possible merging of a sincere hope in Christ into the darkness of eternal despair! According to this view, those who are justified and adopted, in consequence of the perfect obedience and infinite merit of Christ the Second Adam, may fall from a paradise gained for them by him; just as, had the first Adam stood and been confirmed in holiness and happiness, the children who would have been born of him in Eden, may, although represented by him, be conceived to have fallen from that garden of God into sin and hell!

On the other hand, when, through a careless attention to the means of grace and the prevalence of

temptation, the inclinations of the sinful will are in full exercise and vigorously assert themselves, those of the holy will are proportionately inoperative. At such seasons the evidences of conversion and sanctification are necessarily dimmed, if not entirely darkened, and it becomes doubtful whether there ever was any genuine experience of grace. Thus at one time Israel prevails and at another Amalek: the conflict proceeds with varying results, but the destiny of final triumph belongs to the will which is energized by grace. It introduces the strength of Christ into the contest. It is he who fights upon the arena of the believer's soul, he the conqueror of sin and the Devil, and therefore the principle of holiness must finally succeed. The seat of authority in the soul is held by the new nature. The old nature is ever in a state of mutiny, but, like the Pope, it has lost supremacy and will never recover it. The supremacy of the new nature, though bitterly disputed, will never be abdicated. It will be maintained by determining grace on earth, and illustrated by the crown of glory in heaven.

2. Somewhat behooves to be said concerning the question of the relation of the divine efficiency to the agency of the believer's renewed will. The question is a profoundly difficult one. We have always been disposed to think that, with the exception of the introduction of sin into the universe, the subject of efficacious grace is the most mysterious within the compass of theology. What little may now be ventured in regard to the relation of that grace to the will of the saint in Christ Jesus will be spoken, we trust, with due caution and humility. No difficulty

would exist, if it were a fact that the creature, as such, and consequently the renewed creature, possesses no real efficiency. But, without now re-opening the metaphysics of the question, it is sufficient to know that the Scriptures certainly ascribe efficiency to the will of the believer. We are enjoined to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, at the same time that it is added, For it is God which worketh in you to will and to do. The divine working in us does not exclude our working. It is obvious, moreover, that there are acts performed by the believer which cannot be referred immediately to God. It is not God who needs to believe in Christ in order to be saved, nor can he be said without equal absurdity and blasphemy to repent of sin. These are acts immediately performed by the believer himself. It is clear that there is a real, though relative and limited, efficiency which it is proper to attribute to the believer's will. Here, then, we have, in some sense, a co-efficiency of the divine and the human wills.

This, however, does not present the formidable difficulty with which we are coping. It does not lie in the coöperation of the two factors, even though one of them does much and the other little. It is not the efficiency of God *plus* the efficiency of the believer. The difficulty is in the fact that the efficiency of God *determines* the efficiency of the believer. But how that of the latter can be spontaneously free and yet determined, so as to operate necessarily—this is the perplexing problem. While, probably, it cannot be satisfactorily resolved in the present sphere of thought, something may be accomplished in the way of removing unnecessary elements from it.

The distinction, upon which so strong an emphasis has been placed in the preceding discussion, must be noted between the freedom of spontaneity and the freedom of deliberate election between conflicting alternatives. Were the latter of these sorts of freedom that between which and the efficacious and determining grace of God a reconciliation were sought, we confess that the task would be utterly hopeless. Indeed, it strikes us that it would be an attempt to reconcile contradictories. But let it be remembered that the will with which the question is concerned is not the will of the man, as a whole, but that of the believer which has been renewed by regeneration. The man has in him, as has been shown, two spontaneities, a holy and a sinful. As a man, therefore, he has the liberty of choosing between the opposing alternatives of holiness and sin. But he has not that liberty as a renewed man. The very question before us is, How can his fixed, holy spontaneity which, whenever it acts, must act holily, consist with the determining efficiency of God? The supposition is that in being spontaneous he is free, and the difficulty is to adjust freedom with the necessity of action induced by determining grace. The Scriptural position is not that the man is determined whether he acts in a holy or a sinful manner, but that man, as renewed, as a believer, is determined by grace when he acts in a holy manner. When he acts faith in Christ, or repentance, he is determined by grace to the act; but when, with his unrenewed will, the will of the old carnal nature within him, he acts sinfully, the Scriptures certainly do not teach that he is determined to that act by grace.

Having thus limited the scope of the difficulty by pointing out the kind of freedom which the problem requires us to harmonize with the determining efficiency of God, we take a step further. There are admitted cases in which the freedom of spontaneous holy action is consistent with determination. God himself—with reverence we say it—is possessed of a holy spontaneity of will. Whenever he acts, he acts freely: sometimes with the freedom of election between holy acts, either of which, if done, would be holy, but only one of which is chosen; as, for example, when he chose to save human sinners, he might have abstained from saving them and inflicted on them the doom of the fallen angels. In the choice actually made he was both free and holy. Had he chosen to abstain, he would have been equally free and holy. But in whatever act he does, he is necessarily holy: he is always determined to holiness. It is true that the determination is from his own nature. But the source from which a determining influence springs can make no difference with reference to the question whether spontaneous freedom is consistent with determination. The conclusion is, that if God himself is spontaneously free in his holiness and yet is determined to it, there can be no contradiction between the believer's spontaneous freedom in the choice of holiness and his determination by grace to that choice.

The instances of Christ in his obedience on earth, and of the glorified saints, need not now be dwelt upon, as enough has been previously said in regard to them, to show that spontaneous freedom of will in the choice of holiness is consistent with a necessity

determining that choice. But they are here adverted to in order to meet a similar difficulty in regard to the believer's will in his earthly condition. The difficulty is substantially the same in all these instances. To speculation it may still be a difficulty, but it is, in measure, relieved by the facts which the Scriptures reveal. We may not comprehend how the spontaneous freedom of the saint is adjusted to the determining grace of God, but there is no hardship in believing what the divine testimony delivers as a fact. We are sure that no contradiction is involved.

Finally, We do not deny that the renewed will of the believer possesses, not only the liberty of spontaneous action, but also, in some respects, that of free, deliberate election between opposing alternatives—the liberty of otherwise determining. It has been shown that although the will of the unregenerate sinner is determined by a general necessity to sin, he has freedom of election between the contrary alternatives of two particular sins, which cannot both be committed at the same time. He may choose to do either, but in either case he sins. His sinful spontaneity is a cause accounting for the sin he commits, but cannot be a special cause determining the selection of the particular sin committed. So likewise, allowance being made for his different circumstances, is it with the regenerate man. He is, as renewed, determined by a general necessity to be holy, but he has the freedom of deliberate election between the conflicting alternatives of two holy acts, both of which cannot be performed at the same time. His holy spontaneity will account for the holiness of the act done, but not for the election of that act rather

than the other. If, for example, one were desirous of attending public worship on the Sabbath, but should at the same time wish to nurse a sick member of his family, if he do either he would perform a holy act, but he has the liberty of deliberate election between them. The Necessitarian would say that in either case he acts from necessity, but even he would hardly maintain that in the particular choice he makes between acts equally holy he is determined by *grace*.

There is another respect in which it seems to us that the believer has the liberty of electing between opposing alternatives, and the fact largely grounds the urgent exhortations to him to be faithful in the discharge of duty and the censures passed upon him for its neglect. We allude to the believer's use or disuse of the Means of Grace. He may say, in extenuation of a cold and indifferent religious condition, that God must give him grace to determine him to more faith, love, hope and zeal, or he cannot exercise these graces. This is true; but he is reminded that it is his duty to pray for increase of grace. He may reply that he cannot pray, except God impart grace determining him to do that duty. Where, then, is the legitimacy of exhorting him to do what grace does not move him to do, or of blaming him for failing to do what without that grace he cannot do? This difficulty, we have little doubt, has pressed upon every sincere Christian, who holds the Calvinistic doctrine, and pressed upon him heavily in certain seasons of his experience. We do not now essay to treat the apparent anomaly in all its aspects and bearings; but venture to suggest that, at the root,

some explanation is to be found in the fact that, as to the use of prayer and the other means of grace, God oftentimes holds the believer responsible for the employment of his undetermined liberty of deliberate election between the conflicting alternatives of fidelity and negligence. Even the unconverted man, as we have attempted to show, has, in the natural sphere, a measure of this liberty in regard to means which God has placed in his power: liberty to examine or not the evidence in favor of the Christian religion, to read or not the Word of God, to attend or not upon divine ordinances, to hear or not the preaching of the gospel, and to call or not call upon God to help him in his desperate condition. If he neglect to use these means, the employment of which is not conditioned exclusively upon the determining efficiency of God, he will at last be justly held accountable for his own destruction. The same is, not wholly, but in part, true of the converted man in relation to the use or neglect of the means of grace. He is responsible, in this regard, because, to some extent, without the *determining* influence of the Spirit, and in the exercise of his elective freedom, he may address himself to a conscientious and faithful employment of the appointed means. They are not grace. That is a sovereign gift which God has placed in his own power. They are duties, the performance of which God has, measurably at least, put in the believer's power, and upon which he is pleased, ordinarily, to condition the augmented communication of grace and advancement in the "Way of Holiness."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Would that all God's people would imitate the example of those who advocate "Entire Sanctification," in praying, with

This view, it is suggested, may be discovered upon reflection to furnish a profound reason for some of the facts of Christian experience, which otherwise would be almost inexplicable. And as it is a point not often handled, and may not upon its naked presentation meet with general acceptance, it may be requisite to guard against its being misapprehended, and to exhibit reasons by which it is supported.

(1) We do not now speak of the renewed will of the believer considered separately and in contradistinction to the unrenewed will, but of the will, as a whole, of the believer; and of his renewed will as it is liable to be affected by the influence of his unrenewed.

(2) The distinction must here be held in view between the case of the unregenerate man, whose duty it is to perform holy acts while yet he is unable to discharge them, and that of the regenerate man, who is possessed of a new nature, and is consequently enabled to perform spiritual functions. In the first case, God must originate the spiritual principle, in order to the production of holy acts; in the second, that principle has been originated, and power has been imparted to produce holy acts. In the first, no ability exists to do what is holy without the determining grace of God; in the second, the question is, whether when ability to do what is holy is possessed, the actual doing of what is holy is always determined by the grace of God; more precisely, whether the believer's will is always determined by grace to do the duties incum-

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wrestling agony, for large spiritual blessings, without adopting their error that those blessings convey entire sanctification, involving the complete expulsion of inbred sin from the soul in this life! The result would be a glorious condition of the Church.

bent upon him, or whether it is sometimes left to its own undetermined election and activity in relation to specific acts in the performance of duty.

(3) It is admitted that the grace of God determines the believer's standing so that he cannot perish, and also that it often determines the believer's will to the discharge of specific duties, such as the use of the means of grace—prayer, the reading of the Word, attendance upon its preaching, and observance of the sacraments. Not only is this acknowledged but maintained. But the question is, When he fails to discharge these duties—and he sometimes does so fail—is he determined by God's efficiency, or is he left to the undetermined elections of his will?

(4) The distinction must not be overlooked between Sufficient grace and Determining grace—that is, grace which enables a believer to discharge all duty, and grace which efficiently and irresistibly impels a believer to its performance. The former, it is clear, every believer possesses; grace sufficient to enable him to do every duty, to resist every temptation and to endure every trial. "My grace," said the Lord Jesus to the apostle Paul when his servant appealed to him for deliverance from a great affliction, "my grace is sufficient for thee." But the question is, whether this sufficient grace is always determining; whether it irresistibly impels the believer to the performance of duty at all times, say the employment of the means of grace; or whether at times it does not exist in him simply as sufficient, and not determining, rendering him able to perform all his duties and responsible for their neglect, but not efficiently causing him to discharge them.

Let it be noticed, too, that a sufficient grace which enables a regenerate man to do holy acts is a vastly different thing from a sufficient grace which is claimed for the unregenerate man by Jesuits, Semi-Pelagians and Arminians. The difference between them is measured by the difference between life and death. It is one thing to say that a living man is enabled to perform living functions, and quite another to say that a dead man is enabled to discharge them. A believer may fail to do certain holy acts which he had the ability to do.<sup>1</sup> Although he did not do them, it was possible for him to do them. The unbeliever fails to do these acts through lack of ability to do them; it was not possible for him to do them. Dead in trespasses and sins as he is, what he needs is life. Enabling grace to him, must be regenerating grace. This the believer has. Sufficient grace, in the one case, is enabling grace; in the other, what is called sufficient grace is not enabling,—it is "a sufficient grace which sufficeth not."

(5) The ground here taken is, that God sometimes leaves believers to the free, undetermined elections of their renewed wills; elections to which they are competent in consequence of the possession of sufficient grace, but which may be counter-worked by the elections of their unrenewed wills.

First, In confirmation of this position the fact is appealed to, that in many instances those who present credible evidence of being true believers do not faithfully perform the duties resting upon them. This

<sup>1</sup> We do not here speak of the use of the Means of Grace, but of gracious, spiritual acts which directly spring from and express the life of holiness, such as acts of faith, love, hope, zeal, etc.

fact cannot be denied, and it has to be accounted for. If it be said that they are not genuine believers, a harsh judgment is adopted which would sweep from the pale of mercy the great majority of Christian professors; nay, almost all of them, for there are very few who do not daily confess their failure to discharge their duty. If it be admitted that they may be genuine believers, the question is given up. For it is conceded that true believers do not perform all the duties incumbent upon them—duties enforced by the divine Word, by their promises to God, by their vows of profession, by their pledges frequently repeated at the Lord's table and ratified by its affecting symbols. They cannot be determined by grace to do what they do not. Consequently, they are, to some extent, left to the undetermined exercise of their own renewed wills.

Secondly, The temporary backsliding into gross sin of true believers is in proof. The cases of Noah, Abraham, Lot, David, Peter, and a host of others in the progress of the Church's history, are cited as factual illustrations. Now, is it admitted that this is true of some genuine believers? It cannot be held that they are determined by grace to backslide; nor that they are prevented by determining grace from backsliding; nor that it hinders them from at once repenting of backsliding, for many do not so repent; nor that they are determined by it at once to repent, for many, in fact, do not. What remains but to conclude that these backsliding believers are, during the season of backsliding, left to the undetermined elections of their renewed wills? Either that, or it must be held that the very principle of grace has been

extinguished, which is contrary to the supposition with which this argument began—namely, that temporary backsliding into gross sin may be true of genuine believers. These backsliders had sufficient grace to keep them from backsliding, but not determining grace; else they would not have backslidden.

Thirdly, Prayer, legitimated by the Scriptures, for an increase of grace may be pleaded. Determining grace, from the necessity of the thing, is unsusceptible of degrees. It is either determining or undetermining. To speak of grace as being at one and the same time determining and not determining is to affirm a self-contradiction. The prayer for more grace—and what believer does not so pray?—is, in the last analysis, a prayer that sufficient grace may become determining. One who, through weakness, fails to discharge some known duty, in praying for more grace in order to the performance of that duty, prays that he may be determined by grace to its performance. One who fails to resist some besetting temptation may pray that the temptation be removed, but if God should please to permit its continuance, and he should pray for more grace in order to its resistance, he would really pray for grace determining him to its resistance. To take the ground that, in such instances, more sufficient grace is needed and sought, is to represent sufficient grace as insufficient, to say that grace is at one and the same time sufficient and not sufficient; which is a contradiction. To hold that there is grace intermediate between sufficient and determining is to hold that it is more than sufficient, yet less than determining, and it

would puzzle one to define or describe it. It must be conceded that there is no medium between sufficient and determining grace.

It may be contended, as a last resort, that there is grace which is less than sufficient grace, which precedes it and is designed to be developed into it; and that this view accounts for the legitimacy of prayer for an increase of grace. But, we reply, such an hypothesis supposes that the results of Christ's finished work are incomplete or imperfectly applied in the believer's experience, and that the regenerated and justified man is inadequately furnished for the discharge of holy duty. And then it would be hard to see how he would be justly responsible for failure in the performance of duty, since, *ex hypothesi*, he would not have sufficient ability. For, while the unregenerate man is justly responsible for the failure to meet his obligations, because when endowed with ability he wantonly sacrificed it, the same was not true of Adam in innocence, nor is it true of the regenerated and justified man. In both of these last-mentioned instances the principle must be regarded as obtaining, that ability is the condition of obligation. It certainly held good in Adam's case, and the believer in Christ is at least restored to Adam's condition, so far as the ability of his renewed nature is concerned. But ability which is not sufficient is really no ability. As ability, in the believer's case, is alone conferred by grace, it follows that grace which is less than sufficient implies ability which is less than sufficient; and so the believer, upon the hypothesis, is not able to discharge holy duties. The hypothesis is refuted by its logical consequences.

It may again be urged that grace to be sufficient to the believer must be determining. How, it may be asked, can that grace be sufficient which may consist with the believer's being sometimes left to the undetermined exercise of his holy will? We answer: In the first place, Adam had sufficient grace, but not determining; for if he had been determined by grace, he would never have fallen. This *fact* proves that sufficient grace is not necessarily determining. In the second place, while this is true, sufficient grace may change into determining. This is illustrated by the case of Paul—already adverted to—in his struggle “with the thorn in the flesh.” In a sense, he had sufficient grace before the assurance of his Lord: “My grace is sufficient for thee.” But he had yielded, through the weakness of his fleshly nature, to some discouragement. Against this temptation—for so he himself in the Epistle to the Galatians terms it—he needed a strength which would give him a complete victory; and he received the further assurance, explanatory of the former, that Christ's strength should be made perfect in his weakness. What was the force of that assurance, but that grace should pass from being simply sufficient, and become determining, and insure his triumphant resistance of the temptation?

The believer has to encounter the opposition of a triple alliance, the parties to which are the world, the flesh and the Devil. In his contest with this formidable league, his “weakness” is not the result of insufficient grace, but of his imperfect sanctification. His personality embraces—as has already been shown—a dual condition, the co-existence of the opposite



principles of sin and holiness. The volitions of his renewed and holy will are counteracted by those of his unrenewed and sinful will; and these evil volitions are mightily strengthened by the influence of Satan and of a worldly environment. This is the great source of his weakness; and he needs not only the force of a sufficient grace that *might* secure him the victory, but that of an efficient grace that *does* determine his triumph. When, therefore, he yields to the temptations enforced by this gigantic combination, it is because he has not been determined by grace to overcome them. God, in his sovereignty, has permitted him to be in a state in which he ought to have, through sufficient grace, elected to use the means of grace, especially prayer for more strength, that is, determining strength, but has rendered himself liable to chastisement for complying with the volitions of his unrenewed nature, and neglecting to use those means—a result which his consciousness attests that he might have avoided.

Fourthly, We submit in evidence the difference between believers in respect to growth in grace. The Scriptures prove it to be a fact that believers do grow in grace: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." We will not now inquire, whether this growth be in divine grace itself, or in the holy habits which, as they are the products of that grace, are denominated grace. No doubt, both are true. There can be no question that the latter is true. In regard to the former, let it be observed that while we have denied that determining grace is susceptible of degrees, for it is the consummate energy of grace, the same denial has not been

made of grace. On the contrary, it has been admitted that sufficient grace may change into determining, that is, that grace may pass from the condition of sufficient and become determining. The principle in both is the same. Generically considered they are both grace, but sufficient and determining grace are specifically different manifestations of grace. We cannot see, therefore, the impropriety of holding that believers grow in the possession of grace itself, in the sense of being more and more determined by grace. But that question aside, the fact is now signalized that there is a difference as to growth in grace between different believers. This is proved by a boundless induction of particular instances. The generalization cannot be refused.

Two individuals may, in early life, be converted at the same time, may possess about equal intellectual abilities, may have similar constitutional temperaments, may be characterized by nearly the same resolution of will, may have received the same or like family education, and may be environed by kindred circumstances and opportunities—in a word, start on their Christian course upon equal or at least similar conditions. The supposition cannot, except capriciously, be regarded as extravagant; for in so vast a number of individual cases such parallelisms must be allowed to occur. One of these persons develops into a consecrated saint in spirit and life; the other remains, in both respects, stunted and dwarfed. How is this immense disproportion with reference to growth in grace to be accounted for, upon the supposition that grace is always determining, and that there are no instances in which it pleases God, in some measure,

to leave his people to the undetermined elections and exercises of their renewed wills?

It may be urged, that the developed believer has been determined to normal growth in grace. That may be true. It has been conceded that God, to some extent, infuses determining grace into the souls of his people. It may, however, be true in part. To say, "No, the whole result is due to divine determination," is to beg the question, for the question is, whether even such a man may not, in dependence upon sufficient grace, have, to a certain extent, put forth the undetermined elections of his renewed will in the faithful employment of the Means of Grace, say, of prayer for determining grace. But let it be supposed that the growth in the case of this developed believer is wholly due to divine determination, What of the case of the undeveloped believer? If grace is invariably determining, never undetermining, how comes it to pass that the same effects have not been produced in this case as in the other? Does one and the same cause produce opposite results? Or is the divine determination sometimes undetermining? If it be replied that the same cause produces the same effect only when the conditions of its operation are the same, the answer is that the conditions, according to the supposition, are the same. And, further, is the determining grace of God fettered by conditions? Was it restrained from converting and sanctifying Saul of Tarsus, because the conditions furnished by his education were not only unfavorable, but hostile, to Christianity? Was its operation restricted to such cases as that of Timothy, whose training had supplied conditions favorable to the

gospel? Is it not obvious that determining grace might, if God so willed, make of every believer an entirely sanctified man, and, therefore, that, to the extent to which sanctification is partial, believers are undetermined by grace? It is only upon this supposition that the difference in the growth in grace of different believers can be satisfactorily explained.

Fifthly, We appeal to the difference in regard to the Final Rewards of believers, specially illustrated in the Parable of the Pounds as contradistinguished to the Parable of the Talents. It is not intended to consider the full scope of the Parable, nor to indicate all the points it embraces, but to emphasize the lesson it conveys of the difference in the degrees of final rewards, in proportion to the difference in the degrees of fidelity exhibited by Christ's servants in the present state. In the Parable of the Talents, the servants are differently gifted, their fidelity is equal, and their reward is the same. In that of the Pounds, the servants are similarly gifted, their fidelity is unequal, and their rewards are different. In the Parable of the Pounds, not only is a lesson imparted common with that of the Talents, namely, that fidelity will be gloriously rewarded, but the special lesson, that fidelity will be differently rewarded in proportion to the different degrees in which it has been manifested. Each of ten servants receives a pound. Each has a gift similar to, if not identical with, that of every other. All are started upon the same footing. It is unwarrantable to insist that the gift may be *relatively* different; that the pound was one thing to one man and another thing to another. It is enough to say in answer to that supposition, that when the Master de-

signed to teach a difference of gifts he made the teaching of that fact explicit in the Parable of the Talents.

When the time comes for the administration of rewards, the servant who from his one pound has gained ten is rewarded with rule over ten cities—ten for ten. When another reports that his pound has gained five pounds, he is made ruler over five cities—five for five. The lesson is patent. Fidelity is rewarded in proportion to its degree. The question then is, How is this difference in the degrees of fidelity to be accounted for? Every believer possesses sufficient grace. If every one had also the same amount of determining grace, every one would exhibit the same degree of fidelity, and would, consequently, receive the same reward. If the inference is irresistible, that all are not equally determined by grace, the conclusion is also inevitable that, to some extent, believers are left to the responsibility of exercising the undetermined elections of their renewed wills, in the employment of the Means of Grace. Unfaithfulness cannot be excused upon the plea of insufficient grace; and if the delinquent should urge that he was dependent upon determining grace in order to be faithful, the reply may be returned that determining grace may have been obtained by a faithful use of the Means of Grace. To that use of means he was competent through the motions of sufficient grace, and if he elected to comply with the counter motions of sin, he is held justly responsible for unfaithfulness. If grace equally, and always, determined believers to the use of the Means of Grace, it would be difficult if not impossible to see how *fatherly*

*justice*, in dispensing rewards in God's kingdom and family, could differently recompense believers viewed either as subjects of his kingdom or children of his house. The reward of all would be the same.

To the position in favor of which the foregoing argument has been presented, an objection has been offered, which we proceed to consider.

It is objected, that it ascribes merit to the believer. If, it may be said, certain elections of his will are undetermined by divine grace, they are determined by himself, and to that extent he is conceived as acting meritoriously. The objection is superficial.

(1) In the strict sense, merit can be affirmed of no creature.<sup>1</sup> By the very conditions of his being, he is absolutely bound to love and serve God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength. Could he do this, could he perfectly obey the divine law, he would be still "an unprofitable servant"—that is, an unmeritorious servant. He could, strictly speaking, deserve nothing at God's hands; for what has he, that he did not receive? He owed his very nature to God, with all its powers and endowments.

(2) The believer is not only indebted to God for his nature as created, but for his nature as newly created in Christ Jesus. His renewed nature, as the organ of obedience, is itself produced by grace. Whatever holy volition, therefore, it may form springs from grace. Merit, consequently, is excluded from all its operations.

(3) The objection seems to be grounded in the

<sup>1</sup> Especially is this seen to be true when Merit is used as synonymous with Supererogation—the desert of extra reward for extra performances.

supposition that if any of the believer's volitions are *undetermined* by grace, they are altogether *uninfluenced* by grace; that if not irresistibly caused by determining efficiency, they are caused by his natural will, apart from grace. But, in the first place, if they *were* caused by their mere natural wills, they could have no possible merit; for, as has been stated, no creature can merit anything at God's hand, and infinitely less can a sinful creature. In the second place, the distinction is lost sight of between sufficient and determining grace. The believer is saved by grace. Even his faith is due to grace. Every energy of his renewed nature is grounded in grace. The reason is plain. Not only is he indebted for his salvation to grace as a favorable disposition of God toward sinners, but to grace as a dynamic principle operating in his soul, a law of life qualifying every power, and every product of power, of his renewed being. This principle enables him to do every holy act, and to originate every holy volition. But while this is true, grace does not always determine him to do special holy acts, and to form special holy volitions. Natural life is the reason of every natural motion, but it does not determine the character, the form, of every particular motion. Without it a man could not walk or run, but it does not of itself determine him to walk or run. Now as a man could claim no merit for a living motion, although his will determined it, for the simple reason that the ability to move springs from a divinely bestowed life without which he could not move; no more could a believer arrogate to himself any merit for a spiritually living motion, although determined by his renewed will,

for the reason that his very ability to move spiritually is conferred alone by divine grace. For his salvation with all that it involves, for every saving influence exerted upon his soul, for every spiritual thought, emotion and act, he will forever ascribe the undivided praise to free and sovereign grace.

But while this is not only cheerfully confessed but strenuously maintained; while the believer intrinsically considered, that is, considered as he is in himself a sinner, is guilty, worthless and powerless to all spiritual good; still a just view of the teachings of the Scriptures reveals a sense, a relative and subordinate sense, in which he is, by the arrangement of a gracious, divine covenant, permitted to deserve reward. What is that sense? In the endeavor to answer that question, it will be necessary to consider the relations of man to God, in the several estates in which man has existed under moral government.

First, How was it with man in his estate of innocence? We have already seen that, from the nature of the case, had Adam been placed simply under the regiment of absolute, unmodified law, he could never have merited any reward of obedience. Much less could he have merited the reward of eternal, that is, confirmed, uncontingent, indefectible life. But, it pleased God to superadd to the requirements of naked law the form of a covenant, which seriously modified the essential principles of mere moral government, and man's relation to that government. His divine Maker and Ruler freely and graciously condescended to enter into a compact with Adam, in which he limited Adam's time of trial or probation, and promised to him justification as the reward of perfect, tempor-

ary obedience. Two things followed from this federal constitution: that God by this free act of condescension, this gracious compact, from which he might have abstained, placed himself—to speak reverently—under obligation to his own honor and faithfulness to bestow the reward upon Adam in case he fulfilled the stipulated condition; and that as God, although he gave sufficient grace, ample ability, to Adam to produce the required obedience, did not infuse into him determining grace efficiently causing him to render it, Adam was left to the undetermined elections of his will in developing the *principles* of holiness with which he was endowed into a *character* of holiness. Had he done this, for a specified time, he would in accordance with the stipulations of the covenant have been entitled, upon the principle of distributive justice, to the promised reward of justification—of the possession of God's inalienable favor. Such merit, in this relative, limited, subordinate sense, was possible to man in his estate of innocence. It would have been a merit not springing from nature as created, nor grounded originally in justice, but made possible by condescending grace.

Secondly, How is it with man in his fallen, unregenerate estate? This question needs no elaborate answer. Having, by his own fault, lapsed from the covenant relation to God, by which alone merit in any sense was rendered possible, man reverted to his concreated relation to absolute, unmodified law. As an innocent creature and subject, in that relation, he could have merited no reward. Of course, it became palpably impossible to him to merit reward as a transgressor of law. His only desert is that of punishment.

He is an heir of wrath. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

Thirdly, How is it with man in his regenerate estate? Here there is care needed, and the divine assistance is invoked in the exposition. Spirit of illumination, pour light upon the case! Had the first Adam stood in integrity during the time of probation allotted to him and his seed in him, he would have consciously merited, by his own subjective obedience, the reward of justification for himself and them. There is a sense in which they would, as his constituents, have merited the reward in him. They would have deserved it federally, legally, representatively; for what, before the law, is predicable of the representative, is predicable of the represented. If we are justified in pursuing an analogy based upon the representative principle, the same view must be taken of Christ, the second Adam, and his seed. In him their Representative they, considered legally and federally, merited the reward of justification, when he by his *conscious* obedience to the divine law, in accordance with covenant stipulations, merited that reward for himself and them. But this is said by the way, for we do not design to discuss in this relation, the question of *representative* meriting, but of *conscious* meriting. The question before us now is, whether there is any sense in which the regenerate and believing man, by his conscious obedience, merits (or deserves) anything at God's hand.

In the first place, it is perfectly evident that this question must be answered in the negative, so far as any conscious, subjective obedience on his part is

concerned, looking to the attainment of justification and consequent salvation. By covenant arrangement God the Father promised to the Son, as the Representative and Substitute of his elect people, the reward of justification for himself and them upon the condition of his fulfilment of the whole law, both in its precept and its penalty. This condition the Incarnate Son perfectly, in every jot and tittle, performed. Let this be granted, and it is transparently clear that his *substituted* obedience could not be their *conscious, subjective* obedience. The conscious obedience was entirely Christ's, not at all that of his people. Consequently, the whole merit, in this sense, belonged to him, not one whit of it to them. Considered not as in Christ, but as in themselves, they have no merit but that of damnation.<sup>1</sup>

In the second place, in the further consideration of the question before us, let us steadily bear in mind certain indispensable presuppositions. It must not for a moment be overlooked that the believer in absolutely no sense consciously merits salvation. Christ alone merited salvation for him; and having been merited by Christ, it is conferred as a pure gratuity upon the believer. It is a common quantity to all

<sup>1</sup> Up to this point, we have but developed suggestions which we remember to have heard from that great theologian and preacher, Dr. Thornwell. And in recalling them, we have been confirmed by the clearer recollection of an able brother in the ministry, the Rev. Dr. Edmunds, of Sumter, S. C., who was a pupil at College of Dr. Thornwell, and attended upon his stated ministrations. But here the recollection of his views upon this difficult subject stops. We venture to go on a step further, and inquire whether there be not, in accordance with the arrangements of the Covenant of Grace, a relative, limited and subordinate sense, in which merit may be predicated of believers.

believers—precisely the same to the most and the least developed saint. There are no degrees in it. Abraham and Manasseh, Paul and the penitent thief, were equally saved. There is, then, no question as to the believer's meriting salvation.

The important distinction must also be observed between Justification as perfect and Sanctification as imperfect. While the renewed will of the believer is confirmed, so that it cannot sin and involve his fall from a justified state, in which he immutably "stands," as Paul says in the fifth chapter of Romans, yet being in an imperfectly sanctified condition, bearing in him an unrenewed will ever tending to departure from holiness, the believer does sometimes neglect the performance of duty and fall into actual sin. This experimental fact cannot be denied.

Further, there must be held clearly in view the vital distinction between the Rectoral Justice and the Fatherly Justice of God, as related to men since the Fall; the one dealing with men under the unmodified government of law, and administering the measures of retribution to them contemplated as out of Christ, the other dealing with them under moral government modified by the Covenant of Grace, and administering the measures of discipline, rewards and chastisements, to them contemplated as in Christ. Rectoral justice is that in accordance with which unbelievers are condemned and will, if they continue unbelieving, be punished forever. Rectoral justice is also that in accordance with which Christ merited the reward of salvation for his people; but fatherly justice is that in accordance with which believers are rewarded or chastised, in proportion to their fidelity or

unfaithfulness in the discharge of their several duties. The one is retributive and, in regard to finally unbelieving men, penal; the other is purely disciplinary, and is exercised towards the house of God.

These things being kept distinctly in mind, attention is called to the express teaching of the Scriptures that believers are rewarded for their fidelity, and rewarded in proportion to its degree. The following passages are cited in proof: Rev. xxii. 12: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. xx. 12: "And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." 2 Cor v. 10: "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 1 Cor. iii. 8, 14, 15: "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. . . . If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Heb. x. 35: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." Ps. lxxxix. 13-16: "Oh that my people had hearkened unto thee, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries," etc. Ps. lxxxix. 30-33: "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions

with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." Isa. xlvi. 18: "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Lk. xix. 13-19: Parable of the Pounds. Matt. xx. 23: "But to sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." Other testimonies of like character might be adduced, but these are sufficient to establish the doctrine that believers are rewarded for their fidelity, as believers, as well as rebuked and chastised in this life, and assigned a lower place in glory, for the want of it.

Now, reward and merit are correlative. Suppose the one, you suppose the other. As guilt and punishment are relative to each other, so are well-doing and reward. As punishment pre-supposes the ill-desert consequent upon evil-doing, reward pre-supposes the desert resulting from good conduct. The believer's conduct in God's house may be evil, and then he deserves chastisement at the hands of fatherly justice; or it may be good, and then he is worthy of reward at the same hands. In the first case, he may, or through the mercy of his Father, and the intercession of his High Priest, he may not, experience chastisement; in the second, he will inevitably receive reward. The Covenant of Grace or Redemption has, so to speak, two faces. The one looks to Christ as a Federal Head and Representative, who in accordance with the principle of rectoral and retributive justice, which to him became penal, strictly merited for his

people as his constituents eternal life—salvation, heaven, glory. The other face looks to the constituents themselves. God, in Christ, enters condescendingly into a gracious compact with them, in which he provides that upon the unmeritorious condition of their believing in Christ, they shall consciously receive salvation and heavenly glory; and in which he further stipulates that they shall obtain *a degree* of heavenly glory corresponding with their fidelity on earth. The glory was purchased by the merit of Christ alone, the degree in which it will be conferred is suspended upon the faithfulness of believers. Every believer has sufficient grace to attain to the highest degree, and it will be his own fault if he fails to reach it. God, by his grace, Christ, by his meritorious righteousness, make it possible for the believer, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, to deserve a high degree of glory as the reward of his fidelity.

This is not the preposterous doctrine of the Arminian, that the unregenerate sinner may, by co-operation with what he calls sufficient grace, win justification and regeneration; for that is the order in which he places them. There can be, from the nature of the case, no sufficient grace to the sinner which has not conferred life upon him in regeneration. But when one has been regenerated, has believed in Christ, and has been justified and adopted, the Scriptures teach that he is endowed with sufficient grace for the discharge of every obligation, that he will be entitled to reward for its faithful employment, and that he will suffer loss for his failure to use it. Nor is this the equally preposterous doctrine of the Romanist, that the atoning merits of Christ purchase for sinners a

second probation, and secure for them sufficient grace, by the aid of which, one having been regenerated and initially justified in baptism may work out a conscious righteousness of his own on the ground of which he may merit complete justification before God. His doctrine subordinates the glorious righteousness of Christ to the sinner's works, makes the grace of the Holy Ghost a mere handmaid to the sinner's sovereign will, and suspends salvation upon the sinner's merit. It is the wretched legalism of the Pharisee.

In the last place, let it be observed in relation to this point, that the Scriptures, in declaring that the believer may, in a relative, restrained, subordinate sense, deserve the reward of fidelity, afford no room for self-glorification or boasting on his part. For this there are two conclusive reasons. The first is, that salvation, heaven, glory, have been purchased for his Church by the sole merit of Christ, making it *possible for all* its members to attain to a high degree of glory, though *some will not*. The exalted station in heaven, the high degree of glory, which may be awarded to the fidelity of some, will not be something added to the heaven and glory won by Christ. It will not be the glory purchased by Christ *plus* the glory earned by some believers. But the one glory merited by the Saviour for believers, so as to be attainable by all, will be susceptible of different degrees of manifestation—each and all of these degrees of manifestation being within the purchased glory, none added to it. The salvation from guilt and punishment purchased by Christ for his Church is susceptible of many different degrees of manifestation here on earth; so will



be hereafter the glory of that salvation. Unless, therefore, it could be shown that the believer may indulge in self-glorification and boasting in regard to the greater—the glory itself, much less may he concerning the lesser—the special manifestations of that glory.

The second reason is, that the whole obedience of the believer is due to grace. Let us suppose a concrete case. He is tempted to a sinful neglect of the means of grace. He may be determined by grace to resist the temptation, and do his duty. In that case, there is no question whether his obedience to duty is due to grace. Of course it is. If he yield to the temptation—and the supposition is often realized—it is manifest that he was not determined by grace to resist it. His unrenewed will has elected to commit the sin. Now, during the time that the temptation was pending and the sin not yet committed, might he not with his renewed will have elected to resist the solicitation, and to perform the contrary duty? If he could not, he was shut up to the unavoidable commission of the sin, and would not be liable to blame, and, consequently, not to chastisement. The supposition must be rejected. If he could, it is admitted that he had sufficient grace to have resisted the temptation, and to have done his duty, although the event proved that he had not determining grace. He was free to comply or resist—free to comply through his unrenewed will, free to resist through his renewed will. Had he freely elected the latter alternative, the election would have been due to grace; for it would have been made by a will renewed by regenerating grace, and strengthened by sufficient

grace. The conclusion, therefore, is that every act of holy obedience performed by the believer is due either to determining or to sufficient grace—the whole is due to grace. It follows that self-glorification and boasting on his part are utterly excluded.

The key to the whole difficulty is to be found in the co-existence of the opposite principles of holiness and sin, of grace and lust, in the believer on earth. Had he no sin, he would, like the glorified saints, be always determined to holiness. The presence of sin in him accounts for those free elections, which ground the possibility of rewards, to be conferred by the fatherly justice of God upon the members of his family, and differing according to the different measures of their fidelity.

The practical importance of the subject which has thus been, to some extent, expounded, cannot be overestimated. It justifies the urgent exhortations of the pulpit to a faithful use of the means of grace, powerfully stimulates believers to the discharge of their duties, and furnishes a solemn warning against their neglect. The believer who duly reflects upon it cannot rest in a careless negligence as to the employment of the means of grace, under the plea that he is waiting for the determinations of grace. While in that condition, he will not have to wait for the determinations of sin. But he will have to wait eternally for the highest rewards of fidelity.

It may be urged as a difficulty in the views which have been presented, that in those instances in which believers have been determined by grace to the performance of specific duties, no reward appears to be experienced; and that reward is confined to those

cases in which they have not been determined by grace, but have been left to the undetermined action of their renewed wills. We venture to say upon that subject, that in those cases in which believers have been determined by grace, a crown of glory will be conferred proportioned to the obedience rendered; and it may be that the highest degree of glory will be attained by those who have been most determined by grace. Sanctification will be crowned with glory, and the nearer the approach to perfect sanctification the brighter will be the glory bestowed. Grace will wear the crown of glory, and the more the grace the brighter the crown. Now, we do not deny that this glory may be of the nature of reward. But it may be doubted whether the glory experienced in such cases can, properly speaking, be denominated *reward*, a term which appears to be with peculiar appropriateness employed in cases in which fidelity was maintained when unfaithfulness was possible. But whether this be so or not, whether believers who were determined by grace will to the extent of that determination be, strictly speaking, rewarded or not, it is certain that they will enjoy a degree of glory answering to that perfect obedience to which they were graciously determined; and that those who in the strength of sufficient grace freely resolved to be faithful, when they might have been unfaithful, will receive a reward proportionate to their fidelity. This we take to be the teaching of God's Word.

## CHAPTER III.

As the subject of the confirmation of the will in holiness in man's Glorified Estate does not materially affect the question which has been chiefly discussed in these pages, and as there is well-nigh universal agreement with reference to it, only a few things need to be said in regard to it. We briefly indicate the elements which will enter into the will of the glorified saint, will render it complete, and so establish the security of his standing as to place him forever beyond the contingency of falling into sin.

1. The perfect removal of the principle of sin. The positive development of the principle of holiness to a perfect degree is not to be expected, since the standard contemplated, being the infinite holiness of God, will necessitate and invite an everlasting effort. The greater the degree of holiness attained, the greater will be the perception of the boundless degrees still to be compassed. But, negatively, the condition of the saint will be perfect: the principle of sin will be perfectly and forever extracted from his soul. There can then be no possible division of his will.
2. The complete destruction of the mutability of the will. It has been already evinced that the effect of a sinner's union to Christ as his Federal Head and Representative is to render his will, as belonging to his regenerate nature, immutable. Being justified and adopted, he must, in that relation, be confirmed in holiness. But sin still remaining in him, his will,