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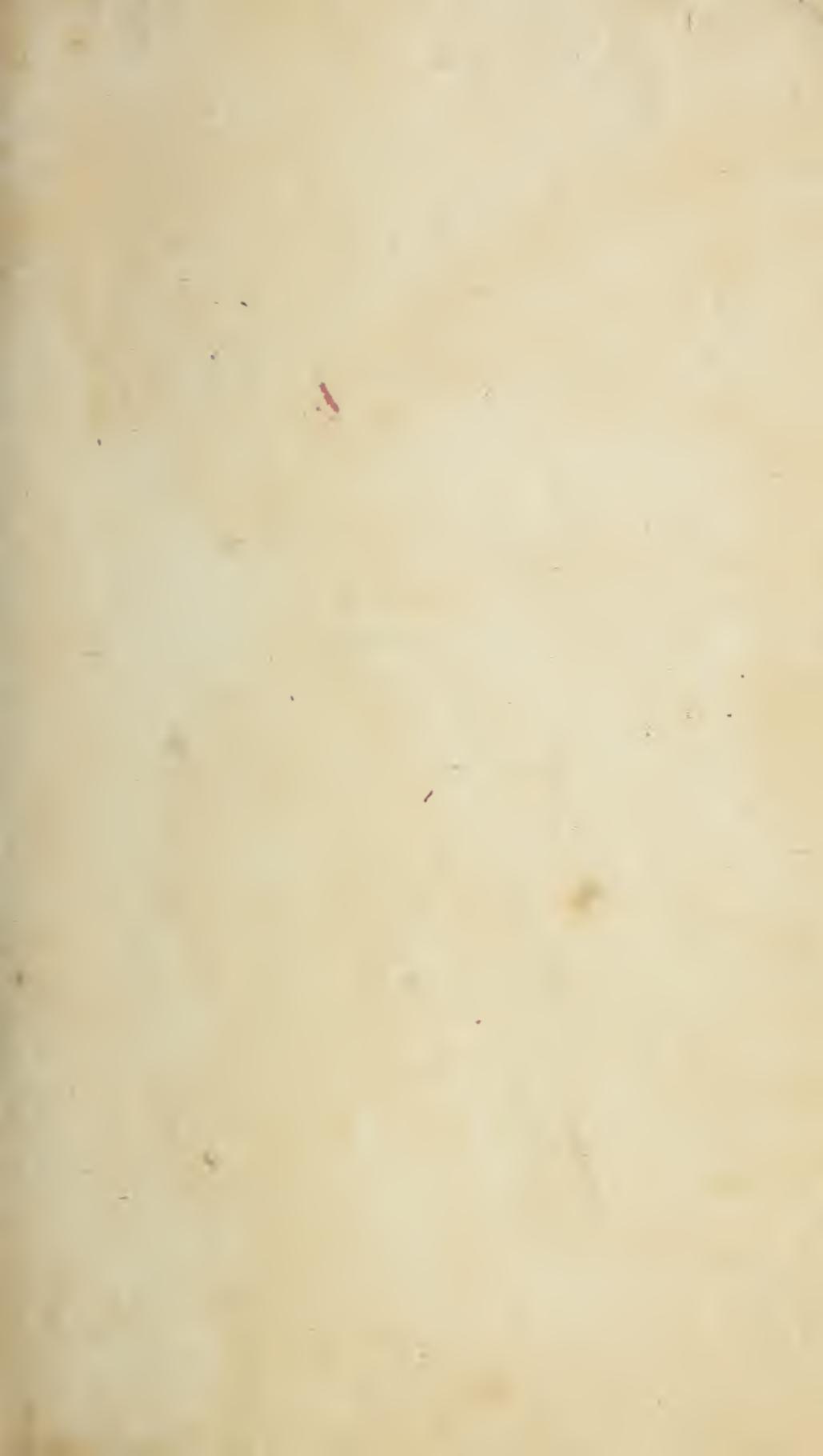
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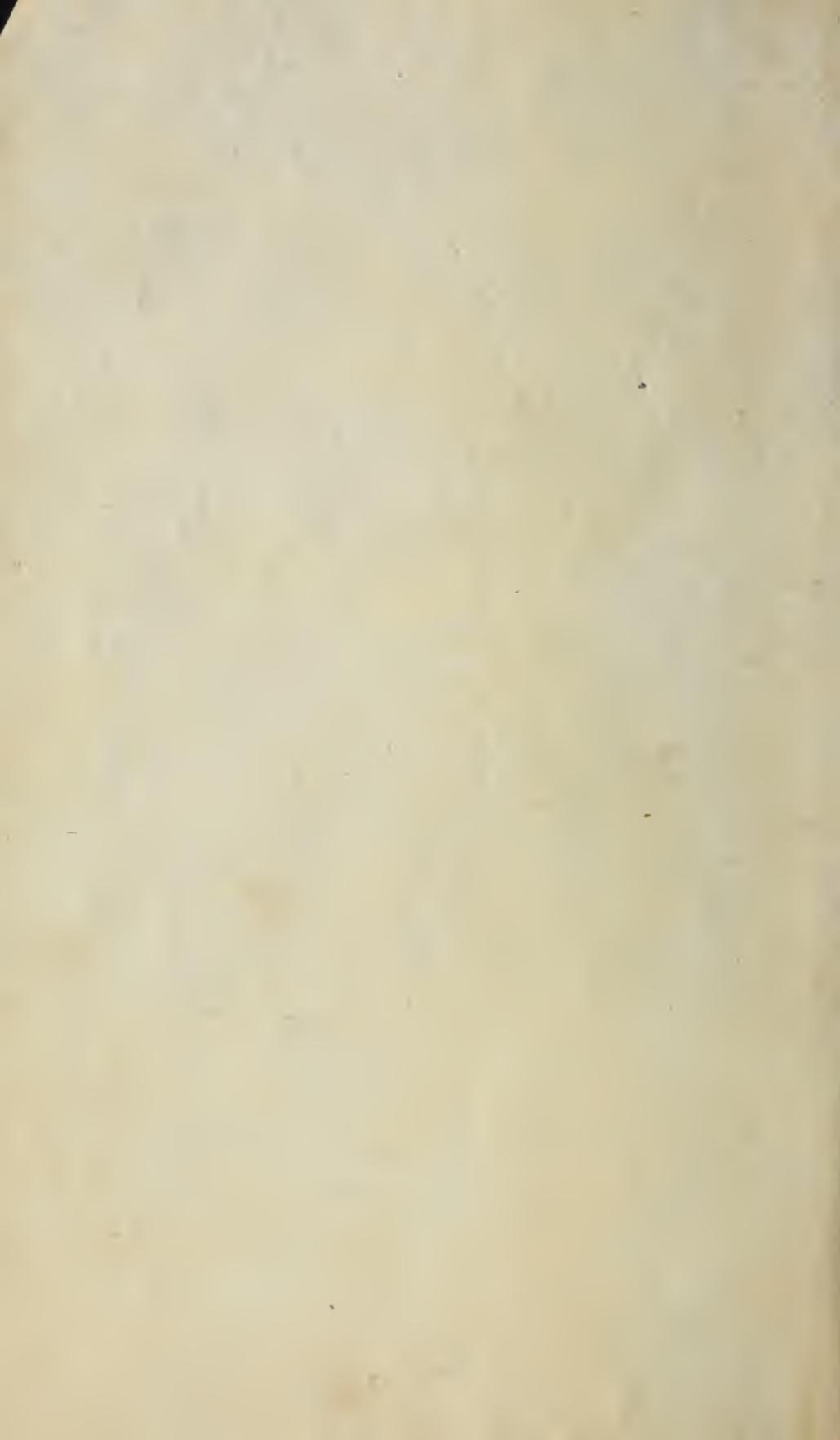
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A

LETTER

TO THE

REV. J. BUTLER,

CONTAINING A

REVIEW

OF HIS

“FRIENDLY LETTERS TO A LADY;”

TOGETHER WITH A

**GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE DOCTRINE OF
THE FREEWILL BAPTISTS.**

BY A FREEWILL BAPTIST.

Judge not, that ye be not judged. Mat. 7:1.
Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Eccl. 12:1.

LIMERICK:

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 The proceeds of this work will be devoted to the cause
of Missions.

TO THE READER.

CONTROVERSY on religion can hardly afford satisfaction to any one, especially to him who is a devout worshipper of the Most High. He rather looks upon the strife which too often exists between the different denominations with deep regret; sincerely desiring the approach of that day, when the *watchmen shall see eye to eye*.

Be assured, kind reader, that it is with the greatest reluctance that I obtrude myself upon your attention. Such a thought had not entered my mind. But, being sometime since presented with a copy of the Rev. Mr. Butler's "Friendly Letters to a Lady," I perused it with deep attention; and considered, with others, that it was an unwarrantable attack upon the doctrine advanced by the Free-Will Baptists. It has been rather difficult to determine, whether the author of that work intended to give a gross misrepresentation of their doctrine, or whether his remarks were made through ignorance of what they believe. Though it seems almost impossible, when reading his Letters, and taking into consideration the fact that he lives in a part of the country where there are hundreds of F. W. Baptists, yet I charitably hope that it was the latter. For my own benefit chiefly I wrote the following Letter. In doing this, I first carefully searched the Bible for correct information on each point of doctrine; and then consulted what learned authors came to hand. Want of time, and the great number of important subjects to be investigated, necessarily forced me to be as brief as possible on every

point. On finishing my Letter, I threw it aside. But some of my friends, being permitted to read it, earnestly solicited its publication. At length, with much hesitancy, have I submitted to their wishes.

In correcting this Review for the press, the writer has made it rather shorter than the original copy, so that the cost may be as small as possible. Perhaps some would rather have the work confined to fewer points, thus giving an opportunity for a more thorough investigation of *them*. But, considering the character of Mr. B's treatise, it was thought better to bestow some attention upon every point therein contained, than to dwell more largely on a part. In a Letter of this magnitude and cost, you will not look for that extensive information which more elaborate works afford. Yet it will give to those who are unacquainted with the F. W. B. some general information concerning their doctrine.

I have endeavored to come before you in as candid a manner as possible, studiously avoiding a spirit of hardness which the course of Mr. B. is calculated to excite, thinking it far better to suffer wrong than do wrong. You will find that I have not aimed at excellencies of style, but have rather laboured to be short and plainly understood. And now, relying on your candour, I submit this manuscript to the publisher.

THE AUTHOR.

A

LETTER

TO THE

REV. MR. J. BUTLER.

§ 1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Rev. Mr. Butler,

HAVING been favoured with a perusal of your "Friendly Letters to a Lady," you will permit me to express a few thoughts on the various subjects which they contain. I am far from wishing to create hostile feelings in any one towards you. Nor do I wish to carry on a controversy; yet as you have paved the way, you will not think that I am seeking a quarrel, if I address you. As it will be no injustice to you, I shall submit to the solicitations of others and let this Review appear before the public, and abide its decision.

Although many things conspire to divide my thoughts, so that I shall not be able to bestow that attention upon the numerous subjects treated of, or hinted at, in your work, that their great importance demands, yet I will attempt to make a few remarks upon those topics, hoping that some other hand will take them up, and present them to the public, in their true light.

If I know my own heart, the motive which influences me to write, is a desire to inform you what we believe and what we do not; as you seem to have laboured under a great mistake, concerning our real sentiment. I think that I am impelled by no unfriendly feeling towards you, or your denomination. I have had the pleasure of forming an agreeable acquaintance with many of the Baptist brethren who, I think, are truly virtuous. But I find that there is a want of information between the Baptist and Free-Will Baptist, by which the former would be able to state the specific difference between the two denominations. And if I can be an humble means of giving *some* account of the doctrine preached by the F. W. B. I shall not fail in my object.

Considering the number of subjects which are now before me to be investigated; and the limits to which I must necessarily be confined, it will become my duty to be as short on every point as possible, and clear my own mind. I shall, therefore, endeavour to be plain and brief in my statements; and labour to express my thoughts without censure, or concealment; but with that freedom which is the characteristic of true friendship. But while I am now commencing, I reflect that I am in the presence of God, the Judge of all the earth, of whom I need much assistance to enable me to write with meekness and gospel simplicity. It is a fact that nothing can be gained by harsh or opprobrious language, for that would be a source of strife rather than peace.

On perusing your Letters, I find that some of

the subjects of discussion, are very promiscuously introduced. I have, therefore, been in doubt what method to take; whether to commence at the beginning and animadvert on every page, as the sentiments are penned down by you, or to make an arrangement, collecting together the different topics, and letting all that is comprized in one general subject, occupy a separate section. Perhaps the latter method will be preferable, and I shall, therefore, choose it. It is very probable that some of your remarks cannot be reduced to any general class; if so, they can be taken up and considered at the close, if we choose. My primary design is to show you wherein the F. W. B. differ, in sentiment, from what you have expressed in your Letters; and the reason of this difference of opinion; and also to show you their true belief in general. Hence by making the proposed arrangement, I can occasionally introduce a section which shall contain a sketch of their belief, on some points, at which your work only hints; and thus give you a more perfect understanding of the doctrine which they advance.

§ 2. WHAT THINGS ARE ASSUMED, OR TAKEN FOR GRANTED, IN THE FOLLOWING COMMUNICATION.

It is highly important, that, at the commencement of any work, those things which are taken for granted, should be plainly stated and well understood. Had this method always been

observed, much controversy would have been avoided. In order that the ground which I take may be manifest at the outset, I would remark that there are three general points which I shall assume, relative to your Letters, and which I expect you will allow me to keep in quiet possession; viz.

1. That you primarily intended to hold the *F. W. B.* up to the public view, when you prepared your Letters to *E. N.*

2. That all those errors, against which you have warned *E. N.* are, in your opinion, embraced in the doctrine of "that people," (the *F. W. B.*)

3. That the doctrine of "that people," in your estimation, embraces none of those truths which you persuade *E. N.* to believe.

The reasons why I assume the first point are drawn, in part from your own statements, both written and oral; and in part from the nature of the case. You write to *E. N.* as follows. "You have formed acquaintance with a people, whose religious sentiments are very different from those which you professed to believe when you were with us." p. 6.—"You speak of the abundant goodness of God to your soul, since you have been with that people." *ibid.*—"But why should this confirm you that their sentiments are truth?" p. 7.

It is true you have not given us the *name* of "that people," but *E. N.* joined the *F. W. B.* therefore none can doubt that they are meant, when you say "that people."

From the nature of the case it is also evident that you designed to write against the denomination with which *E. N.* had united.

If this had not been so, would you have published your Letters? If E. N. was the only one concerned, would you not have written to her privately, giving her that advice which it became your duty, as her pastor, to give? But, instead of this, a course of letters is written, they are printed and scattered from one end of the country to the other. For what? To persuade E. N. not to go among "that people?" One copy was enough for that, if it were possible. It is abundantly manifest that you desired that her new brethren should share in the pity which you had for her.—Another circumstance makes it appear plain that the ground which I have taken is just. It is frequently the case, that when there is a reformation in a place containing both a Calvinistic and a F. W. Baptist church, your Letters are distributed to show the converts the errors which they would embrace, if they unite with the latter; and the truths which they would walk in, if they go with the former. I can produce facts to show that this statement is true. How well calculated is such proceeding to stop the work of God, bewilder the convert, and sow seeds of discord among the lambs of Christ! Finally, taking your general manner of writing under consideration, no unprejudiced mind can peruse your work without being thoroughly convinced, that you designed it to have a deleterious influence upon the cause of "that people," (the F. W. B.) Nor would any one suppose that you have the least fellowship with them as Christians; but, that you would raise your "warning voice" against them, saying to the convert, Go not

among them, for they are leading their hearers into "destructive errors!" Shun them as you would a deadly poison, for with them is death, eternal death!

2. *All those errors which you have warned E. N. against, are, in your opinion, embraced in the doctrine of the F. W. B.*

"Such, my dear sister," say you, "are the inconsistencies of the doctrine which you say you now fellowship." p. 51. See also the quotations before made. It appears that on p. 51, you summed up all the inconsistencies of "that people." Is not this the same as if you had said, "Here, my dear sister, I have, in the foregoing letters, shown you the errors of the F. W. B. They assuredly believe all these "soul destroying" heresies which I have pointed out; and, if you fellowship their doctrine, you must, of course, believe all these delusions?" You intimate that you had pointed out to E. N. the errors of the doctrine which she then fellowshiped. That being the case, what can be plainer than this, that you intended to insinuate into the public mind that those errors which you have pointed out, are embraced by the F. W. B.?

On p. 35, I find the following: "Or can you believe that men regenerate their own hearts; that they deliver themselves from the power of darkness; create themselves in Christ? that they while dead in trespasses and sins, and walking according to the course of this world, quicken themselves, or originate in their own hearts a principle of holy life? It appears to me scarcely possible, that you can believe this." Why

have you said, "It appears to me scarcely possible?" You might as well say, "Although it much surprises me, and I am reluctant to admit it, yet, my sister, it is a fact that you believe this; because it is one of the errors in that inconsistent, 'soul destroying' doctrine which you fellowship."

3. *The doctrine of "that people," in your opinion, embraces none of those truths, which you persuade E. N. to believe.*

You have laid down what you think to be the truths of the gospel; and labour to convince E. N. that she should return to them. If you believe that these truths are embraced in the doctrine of "that people," would you attempt to convince E. N. of their importance? Certainly not; for such would be an attempt to convince her of a prepossessed opinion. Then, from this consideration alone, it is evident that, in your opinion, all those truths which you urge upon E. N. are rejected by the F. W. B.

I will select the oral communication which you had with two only. One was a Methodist and the other a F. W. B. From this conversation it is evident that the points which I have assumed are correct, even if your work contained no internal evidence of it.

The Methodist, giving an account of the remarks which passed between you and him, says, "Being urged to give me the 'Bishop,' in particular, and the people generally, to whom he (Mr. Butler) referred, after repeated equivocation he gave me fully to understand that he did not intend the 'Methodists,' (in his Letters.)

As near as I can recollect, he gave me to understand that he referred to the 'F. W. B.' though I cannot recollect his words."

It seems that the reason of this conversation was, that it had been at that time supposed from some of your expressions, that you intended to bear against the Methodists. They were about to answer you; but what you said caused them, I suppose, to desist, leaving the F. W. B. at whom you pointed, to answer you if they should choose.

The F. W. B. gives the following account: "About the Commencement of Waterville College for 1830, I called on Mr. Butler, who was assembled with other gentlemen, in a meeting of the Faculty of that College, holden in the Chapel. He came to the door and sold me a copy of his Letters. He, not knowing my religious standing, and being asked by me who E. N. in his communication was, replied, "Her name is Eliza Neal, who formerly belonged to the Baptist church in Winthrop; but, on going to Madison, she united with the F. W. B." What, said I, are all the errors pointed out in this book, embraced by the F. W. B. as truth? and are all the truths herein pointed out and vindicated, rejected by them as false? He answered, "They will not explain it exactly so themselves, but it amounts to that. That is the case." Then, replied I, the F. W. B. are very different in this country, from those at the west. "What," said he, "do you *belong* to the F. W. B.?" I answered that I did. "Ah," said he, "I am *sorry, sorry*, that I sold you

the book. You wont like it, you wont like it. But I hope that it wont do you any harm." Before we parted, he requested me to look the work over, and call on him the next morning, and give him my opinion upon it. I did not call as he desired; and he called on me. I expressed some of my views upon what he had done. After a short interview, he desired me to write to him, giving my opinion upon the Letters. Since that I have conversed with some of his advocates upon this subject; and it has been stated to me by some, that "Mr. Butler had more of an eye to the Methodists than to the F. W. B." This is verbatim what passed between us, as near as I can recollect.—Why, pray, were you "sorry" that you had sold the book to the F. W. B.? If they are deluded and going to destruction, why not convince them of their error? If you scatter your books about in times of revival, to prevent the converts from becoming F. W. B. why not *sell* a copy without *sorrow* to one who, though among them, is inquiring after truth?

You say, in your advertisement, that "the following Letters were written in reply to a communication from Miss E. N." Did she write you, stating that she had found a people who held to what you call error, and rejected all that you call truth? No. She, like an honest Christian, before joining the F. W. B. wrote you, giving information of what she wished to do, desiring a dismissal, &c. She might state to you that she had found a people whose doctrine she fellowshipped, whom God owned

and blessed; but you did not get your information from her, I think, that the doctrine of "that people" contains the errors which you attach to it.—But how did you reply? You answered her by a private letter, which is not contained in the ten before us. Afterwards you wrote this course of letters; and, after printing it, sent her a copy. Does this look as though "they were written without a design for publication?" You *say* they were; but what do others *think*? Let that however be as it may; I have no disposition to dispute the word of a man of your dignity; yet, you must settle it with the public, your own conscience, and your God. It is the general impression that the points which I have above assumed are correct. Even some of your own brethren acknowledge this; and those who are acquainted with the F. W. B. do not altogether justify what you have done.

But the F. W. B. feel themselves injured. For you, in their opinion, have done your best to make the world believe them to be a deluded, erroneous sect, and almost a scourge to society. Those points of doctrine which are the very foundation of their hope, according to you, they deny; and embrace only a heterogeneous mass of error, urged on by a blind zeal and headlong fanaticism, which was infused into them by those who inhabit the shades of eternal darkness. Where, sir, was that charity which you profess to have in possession, when you wrote? Did you possess the feelings of Christ, when he said, *I have other sheep that are not of*

this fold? Alas! I fear that sectarianism had too much taken possession of your heart.

Though you have laboured to keep behind the curtain, yet your intention is manifest to all who read your work. But you must answer for your doing at the day of assize, when every work will be brought into judgment. If a wrong motive impelled you to action, God knows it, and will reward you accordingly. Christ says, "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." Mark 9:42. If you wished to write against the doctrine of "that people," why did you not take a consistent, decided stand? But instead of this, you have selected a young female who, you knew, was not able to give you a public answer, whether her doctrine be true or false. You have charged her with embracing inconsistencies to the neglect of the truth; although she is as clear of this as she ever was. Instead of setting before her the sincere milk of the word, you have tried to urge upon her some of your fatality, which is eminently calculated to bewilder the mind, instead of bringing peace to the soul. In so doing, have you not unduly injured her feelings? Had you selected, instead of this delicate female, one of your equals for a medium of communication, who would have answered you in return, showing you publicly the reason of his hope, it would have appeared more consistent in you. It is highly probable that, among the many who have left the C. B. and united with the F. W. B., if you could not find your *equal* in divinity, you might

have found a few, at least, who could have shown that the *doctrines* which they have left are repugnant to the word of God. There are many who once believed your *doctrines* in full, but now think them to be absurd; and are preaching a *free salvation*. You might have received an answer, perhaps, had you written to one of them.

§ 3. COVENANT OBLIGATIONS, &c.

Near the commencement of your first letter, I find the following: "It is of great moment, however, to you, and to the cause of God, that you should not renounce the truth, nor make light of any covenant engagements which are according to it." pp. 5 and 6.

Here is one of your intimations that E. N. had "made light of her covenant engagements." Why would you charge her with this? Had she treated your articles of faith with contempt? Did she write upon them, pretending to give a true account, yet charging them with points of doctrine which they do not contain? If so, you might justly complain. But she has done nothing of this. You have not shown a single instance where she has spoken disrespectfully of you, or your articles of faith. Then wherein has she made light of them? I see no act of hers in which you can charge her with such a crime, but this: She left your church which acknowledges articles of faith and covenant obligations written by men, and united

with "that people" who acknowledge none but the Bible. Did she, by doing this, treat your production with indignity? Had she not liberty to leave you, if she chose, and unite with another people, although she had taken these obligations upon her? Or do you consider them as binding as the laws of the Medes and Persians, or the creed which the Pope forces upon his devoted followers? But cannot a citizen here in America, where the motto of every man is, liberty of conscience, leave one society who believe in experimental religion, and unite with another who believe in the same, without being denounced, as you have E. N.? We acknowledge however that she, by her proceeding, in that she left you and joined another order of Christians, tacitly says that your covenant obligations and doctrines are inferior to theirs. It is probable that this is the *making light* to which you referred. Then, according to the ground which I have assumed, you would consider her new brethren guilty of the same. For they take the scriptures of truth as their only rule of faith and practice, while your church form articles of faith, expressing their belief, and all who would join you, must acknowledge these articles to be the truth, and agree to walk by them. There are various reasons why the F. W. B. reject books of discipline which are formed by uninspired men, and go to the Bible for a precedent in all cases. Some few of these I will now attempt to give.

1. Their rule of faith and practice was given by inspiration, consequently it must be the best system possible. The apostle says, "All scrip-

ture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. 3: 16. If it is given by inspiration of God, it must be perfect and immutable. But that which is formed by men, being formed by imperfect creatures, must necessarily be imperfect. The judgment and opinions of men are different as they are influenced by different prejudices and systems of education. This accounts for the reason, why creeds, formed by the various sects, contain such a disparity. Every society professes that its platform is a perfect standard and ultimate in all cases of difference. Hence, in dealing with members for heresy, or disorderly walk, such do not try and condemn the accused by the Bible; but, by their *articles of faith*. But as these different creeds do not agree among themselves, some, and perhaps all, must be wrong; for, if none were wrong, they would all agree; as things, agreeing with a third, must agree with one another. If, indeed, there is a society among the many, who perfectly agree with the Bible, why not take it as a criterion of faith and practice? Should they do this, they would not have that which has been adulterated by the world.—Man is changeable. He will write at one time what he would burn at another. At one period of his life, you may see him labouring both by the press, and in the pulpit, by private conferences and public communication, to establish a certain doctrine; at another time you may see that same man labouring to refute the arguments which he had before employed; and to establish a doctrine diametrically opposite to that which he before believed. Is such a short sighted

being as this to prescribe articles of faith for the church? Shall we look to him for rules of government, who will form that creed which he, on a change of opinion, would consider it a disgrace to advocate? No. Let us take that which is given by Him who is subject to no such change.

2. The practical rule of the F. W. B. is not only given by inspiration of God, but it "is profitable for doctrine." 2 Tim. 3:18. In articles of faith formed by any people as above remarked, is acknowledged the doctrine of that people whatever it may be. But the Bible contains the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles. Here is that which is able to make us wise unto salvation. As God is intimately acquainted with the exigencies of his people, he would naturally, from his own parental care, give to them that scripture information and doctrinal instruction which their need requires. Can you form anything equal to the doctrine of our Lord? If not, your articles of faith are inferior to those of the F. W. B.

3. Their articles of faith are not only profitable for doctrine, but "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. Hence they are not only enough for the *doctrine* of the church, but also for the *government* of it. If a church member be however a disorderly walker, this creed contains rules for dealing with him, after a correct manner. It also contains sufficient directions for all the walks of life. To be convinced of this, let us turn to

the Bible. This discipline shows how man should walk towards his Maker, Mark 12:30—towards his neighbour, verse 31—towards his enemies, Luke 6:27, 28—towards one another, John 15:12—towards the brotherhood, &c. 1 Pet. 2:17—Duty of Christians as to religious meetings, Heb. 10:25—The manner of dealing with private offenders, Matt. 18:15—18—if the offending party be an elder, 1 Tim. 5:19—Duty of husbands to their wives, Eph. 5:25, 28, 31—of wives to husbands, Eph. 5:22, 24, 33—of parents to children, Eph. 6:4—of children to parents, verses 1, 2—of masters to servants, verse 9—of servants to masters, verses 5—8—of man to his family, 1 Tim. 5:8—of man towards the dumb beast, Deut. 25:4, 1 Cor. 9:9—of subjects to governors and rulers, 1 Pet. 2:13, 14.—On the support of gospel labourers, Luke 10:7, 1 Cor. 9:7, 11, 13, 14. What better rules do any Christians want?

But some say we cannot keep order in a Church without a written discipline, in which particular rules are laid down for our members to walk by. Admit that this is true. Then the rules that such form are, in their opinion, more conducive to order than those given by God. If you chance to have a copy of any such productions, you ought to make it public, so that all can take that and pass the Bible as a book eclipsed by the invention of divines. But I doubt that you, or any one else, have such a work. Would there not be perfect order in society, if all walked according to the word of God? Would not unhappy divisions soon leave the abode of Christians, and true love prevail?

None can answer in the negative. If the Bible is a perfect discipline and confession of faith, what more do we want? Some however would say to a F. W. B., "Your churches are out of order, in many places, because you have no articles of faith. If you had these, you would prosper as well as we. Greater numbers would be added to you. But without something of this kind, your society will decrease, and your interest fail." I would say to such an one, You labour under a mistake. The F. W. B. would be no less troubled with ungodly walkers, if they had a thousand disciplines; nor would you have any more of them, if you acknowledged none but the Bible. This irregularity, if there be any, is not owing to the want of *rules*; but to a want of *walking according to* those which they have. What good would be derived from the best articles of faith, if the church members do not walk agreeably to them? Have those who form their own creed any more power to enforce it, than the F. W. B. have to enforce theirs? I think not. If we turn to matters of fact we must be convinced, that creeds of men are not so conducive to order in the church as the Bible. Take, for instance, the Church of England. Though numerous are the articles contained in their creed, yet what corruption infests that church! Wesley, though a firm friend of the established order, was sometimes attacked by mobs, *with drunken priests at their head*. What disorder and sin may be found among them now! Look also at the Church of Rome, with rules and canons almost without number. Do these make them holy?

Consult the records which contain their crimes and bloodshed; and you will answer, No.

You conveyed the idea in the quotation before made, that E. N. had forsaken the truth.

The question is, What do you mean by "truth?" Do you mean the doctrine of Decrees and particular Election? It is presumed you do; for you remark the following, pp. 61 and 62: "My sister, it is a matter of surprise and lamentation, that you should so freely say, 'I do not fellowship the doctrine of personal election.'" If this is what you understand by "truth," E. N. has not "renounced" it. I have recently had the pleasure of conversing with her. On proposing many doctrinal questions to her, which she answered with much decision, I found that she had never believed in Calvinism. She was converted with you, it is true, and joined your church; yet she, like other young converts, did not consider much about doctrine. She loved every one, and thought that Christ was willing to save the whole world, on condition of repentance towards God and faith in himself. You know, sir, that in times of revival, little or nothing is said about decrees and election; but when the reformation subsides, these doctrines are handed out by many, which too often causes the converts to decline into a lifeless, formal state. E. N. perhaps experienced something like this. At length, however, she found the F. W. B. to be of a belief similar to that of her own, notwithstanding she had been taught that they held to "dangerous errors." Accordingly she joined them, so that she might be where she could

hear her own views advanced. Thus, sir, she has not renounced the truth, if you think it to be the doctrine of decrees; for she never believed it.

Her views on the fundamental points of salvation, are the same as when with you. Then, of course, "cherishing a hope that she is a redeemed child of God," you must think that she is yet in the truth. But suppose she has erred a little, in your opinion, is not God, according to your doctrine, working in her effectually; and has he not saved her from final apostacy? Then why complain, if she is sure of glory at last? She, being one of the elect, cannot be lost. Why be in trouble, if she does take a trip among the F. W. B.? She is on her direct way to heaven.

You labour to convince E. N. from her own experience when with you, that your doctrine is true, and, consequently, that of the F. W. B. is false.

"You speak of the abundant goodness of God to your soul, since you have been with that people, and on this account, seem to think, that you have now found that "liberty wherewith Christ maketh his people free." But why should this confirm you that their sentiments are truth? Did you not experience the "goodness of God to your soul," in years past, when you were with those who believed what you now renounce—when you wept and sighed and prayed with them—when infinite mercy opened the prison door, struck off your fetters, and led you forth into the light of life—when your voice mingled with theirs in praise to Jesus, for his unmerited pity and love? Did you not experience the goodness of God when you were baptized in the name of the sacred Trinity, and joined yourself to them in church relation? And have you not experienced the presence of Jesus at his

table, when with them you commemorated his dying love? Or were all these interesting scenes, delusions? And if so, what better evidence have you, that your later joys are not delusions also?" pp. 6, 7.

According to the sentiment which she expressed to me, the following would be her answer.

“Those interesting scenes which I enjoyed when with you, were by no means delusions. My happiness however did not consist in a belief of election. My soul had been recently delivered from the thralldom of sin—my feet taken from a horrible pit, and placed on a rock. Then was I filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I at that time saw a fulness in Christ; nor did it appear to me that there was a mysterious fate which bound some in sin, and forced others to repent. It still affords me inexpressible delight to draw water from that pure fountain, which at first quenched my raging thirst. And, notwithstanding you have thus held me up to the world, which has caused my pillow to be drenched with tears, and my closet to resound with groans; yet, thank the Lord, you have not power to rob my soul of that hope which I have. Although you have thus treated me, it is my sincere prayer that the Lord will give me a spirit to forgive you, and grace to endure hardness as a good soldier. I hope soon to arrive where Jesus' soft hand will wipe all tears away. Then will the soul be unperplexed with the isms of sectarians; and the feet, unshakled with the snares of men, trip pleasantly along the paradise of God.”

§ 4. ON THE DOCTRINE OF DEPRAVITY.

We now come to a point, of which a correct understanding is highly important. If we have a wrong idea of this, our views of man after regeneration will be liable to be erroneous.

That we may see *your* belief on the point under consideration, we will quote your own remarks upon it.

“ I would first invite you to reflect on the disposition of the heart in man, prior to regeneration. The declaration of our Lord, John 5:42, will direct us: “ I know you, that you have not the love of God in you.” See also Rom. 8:7. “ The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” We shall readily admit that these passages are descriptive of the unregenerated heart. In this state of mind, man perceives no beauty in holiness, he derives no pleasure from spiritual things, but is opposed to holiness, and to the means of promoting it. That temper of heart, and course of life which God abhors, is the element in which he delights. Those affections of heart, and services which God, and all holy beings approve, he hates. This disposition in man is what we mean by *depravity*.

A little before the flood, the Most High declared that all flesh had corrupted their way before him, Gen. 6:5. “ And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” David, nearly fifteen hundred years after this, in giving a description of the unrenewed heart, affirmed, “ They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” And further, that the language of the heart is, “ No God.” Psalm 14. More than a thousand years after David recorded the above, St. Paul, directed by the same Spirit of inspiration, describes the disposition of unrenewed sinners, in the same language. Rom. 3:9—18. Among other declarations contained in this portion of scripture are the following: “ There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Hence it appears, that this description is not peculiar to any particular nation or generation of men, but is of universal application. The same apostle, in writing to his Ephesian brethren, reminded them, that before they

were renewed, they "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." This disposition of heart he termed, being "dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. 2:1, 2; and this is what we mean by *total depravity*." pp. 12—14.

In the above, sir, you have defined the terms *depravity* and *total depravity*. Though you have made two degrees of depravity, yet I must acknowledge that I do not see that distinction in the scriptures that you have quoted, which you seem to make. But, as it is not my object to harmonize phrases, I will now attempt to give you the belief of the F. W. B. on this subject. This may be done not from my single statement, but by quotations from some of their writings.

"For all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Buz. Mag. Vol. I. p. 3. "Now man being in honour, abode not; and the dreadful curse took place! He lost his life of union; he fell into a state of condemnation, and all his posterity in him and with him." Rand. Ser. pp. 5, 6. "Therefore, although little children are in a state of depravity, they are not in a state of condemnation." *ib.* p. 8. "We (the F. W. B.) believe in the total depravity of mankind, by the fall or disobedience of our first parents." Buz. Let. M. S. Vol. 5. No. 36. "Here Adam and all his posterity were involved in that thralldom from which no one but the Son of God could redeem them, or open a door of hope to them. . . . As far as man is involved in the transgression of the first Adam, in a passive state; so far is he restored passively in the second Adam. . . . We had not an existence

but in the loins of Adam when he sinned; therefore, we were passive in the transgression, and in all the depravities of human nature; so in that state we may receive, passively, the righteousness of the second Adam. This secures the happy state of all infants." White's Ser. p. 5. I will also quote the remarks of a Methodist on this point. "Although all moral depravity, derived or contracted, is damning in its nature, still, by virtue of the atonement, the destructive effects of derived depravity, are counteracted, and guilt is not imputed until by a voluntary rejection of the gospel remedy, man makes the depravity of his nature the object of his own choice. Hence, although abstractly considered, this depravity is destructive to the possessor, yet, through the grace of the gospel, all are born free from condemnation. So the apostle Paul—"As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men, unto justification of life." In accordance with these views also, the ground of condemnation, according to the scriptures, is not our native depravity; but the sinner is condemned, for *rejecting Christ*,—for *refusing to occupy upon the talents given*—for *rejecting light*—for *quenching the Spirit*—for *unbelief*. Here then is the difference on this point between the calvinists and us. They hold, that God, by his decree, plunged Adam and all his race, into the pit of sin, from which none of them had the means of escape; but by an omnipotent act of partial grace, he delivers a part, and the remainder are left unavoidably to perish. We,

on the contrary, believe that by Adam's unne-
cessitated sin, he and in him all his posterity
became obnoxious to the curse of the divine
law. As the first man sinned personally and
actively, he was personally condemned; but as
his posterity had no agency or personal exist-
ence, they could only have perished seminally
in him. By the promise of a Saviour, how-
ever, our federal head was restored to the pos-
sibility of obtaining salvation, through faith in
the Redeemer. And in this restoration, *all*
the seminal generations of men were included.
—Their possible and prospective existence, was
restored; and their personal and active exist-
ence secured. And with this also, the possi-
bility of salvation was secured to all. To such
as never come to a personally responsible age,
this salvation was secured unconditionally, by
Christ; to *all* those who arrived to the age of
accountability, salvation was made possible, on
equal and impartial conditions." Fisk's Ser.
on Elec. p. 27.

To look at this subject still farther, let us
first consider the state in which the human fam-
ily must have been, had God abandoned them
in the fall, yet with the possibility of propaga-
ting their kind; and secondly, the moral state
of the world, blessed as it is with the means of
recovering grace. I allow that it is a doubtful
question whether Adam would have had an off-
spring had not the promise of a Saviour been
given. But to show more plainly what man is
by transgression, and how he becomes an heir
of glory, let us make that supposition. Then
the question arises, What would have been the

state of the world, had God left man in his apostacy without the means of reconciliation to himself? All allow that our first parents were planted in the garden, under certain restrictions which were a sure test of their loyalty. The penalty of passing these restrictions was threefold. 1. *Death spiritual.* 2. *Death temporal;* and, 3. *Death eternal.*

This penalty, with all its concomitant evils, came into full force, by the first transgression.

1. *Death spiritual.* It was said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This actually took place, in that the transgressor lost his life of holiness and innocence, leaving him dead in trespasses and in sins. He fell, not from heaven, for he was not there, but from holiness, and his state of probation, into sin, corruption, and disgrace. The death above spoken of did not relate to the physical constitution of the soul, if it be proper so to speak. All the powers of mind yet remain. It can still judge, reason, recollect, abstract, &c. But this would be impossible, were it physically dead. Man would be irrational, and new powers of mind must be created and brought into action, on regeneration.

2. *Death temporal.* This is supported by the word of God. "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. 3: 19. "For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. 15: 21, 22. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5: 12. Though natural life did not be-

come extinct on the day of their rebellion; yet it is evident that man, by being excluded from the tree which could preserve the lives of all who partook of it, became a subject of infirmity, disorder, and death. The plain intimation is, that if man, even after his sin, could have had free access to the tree of life, he would have lived for ever. For said the Lord, "And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." Gen. 3: 22. That this should not be, the Lord drove him from the garden, and placed a guard over the tree of life. And, as if the malignity of the crime demanded a much sorer punishment than a peaceful death, the earth was pregnated with briars and thorns, which it should bring forth in abundance. That the woman might feel the rigour of that law which she had lent her hand in breaking, the sorrows of her conception were greatly multiplied. Thus both were subjected to drag out a short existence, miserable indeed when compared with that before the fall.

3. *Death eternal.* This part of the penalty, as an unavoidable consequence, must necessarily follow death spiritual. For the soul being dead in sin, if it were not made alive again by the divine agency, it must continue in this state. Spiritual death consisting in a departure of holiness from the soul, it could not be said to live, unless that divine principle again return. And as there is no medium but Christ by which this can be effected, it is conclusive that without him the sinner must suffer death eternal.

This threefold penalty was not only due to Adam as the active sinner, but to all in his loins,

who must, by birth, inhabit the state of the parent. To illustrate this, let us suppose that a man and wife are cast upon a desolate island, where they raise up children. All their progeny is in the same state with themselves. So with Adam. He being expelled from the presence of God, and subject to death, of course all that sprang from him must also be in the same state of expulsion, and subjection to death. We may also take the figure of a tree just before it puts forth its blossoms. Suppose that it is now blown down. It is manifest that all its fruit is blown down with it and in it. Should it put forth fruit or branches, they would spring from the same fallen tree. So in respect to the human family. From this it appears that the sin of Adam introduced depravity in the most extensive sense of that term. All ability to become good and happy was lost; and the heart abandoned to wickedness and corruption. According to the apostle, all were included under sin. And again, Adam beget a son in his own likeness—Could one of his offspring have come into existence without being included under the penalty of the broken law, he would have been free from condemnation; and, of course, an heir to glory. This would have superseded the necessity of the death of Christ, as to that individual. But, if the coming of Christ be superseded in one case, it is in all; and, of course, Christ died in vain. This cannot be, for, there is no other name given under heaven and among men whereby we can be saved.

2. Let us now consider the moral state of

the world blessed as it is with the Atonement made by Christ. If the state of man by sin became as we have stated, we might well suppose that the compassion of a God would be moved to provide a ransom for the hopeless victim. Indeed, God so loved the world that he did not come to inflict the awful penalty without bringing, at the same time, some token of his eternal goodness and tender mercy. It was then that he cheered their gloomy prospect, by the promise of the woman's seed—The question now arises, has Christ, the second Adam, restored the ruins of the first? In answering this question, it will be necessary to keep in mind the penalty of our first parent's sin, as above described.

1. Has Christ abrogated death temporal, with its connected evils?

The experience of almost six thousand years answer, He has not, in this world. Briers and thorns yet grow. Pain and sickness visit the abode of man. Death with its benumbing touch, steals upon all, from the infant, surrounded by the mother's fostering care, to the veteran who has arrived at four score years and ten. The virtuous, as well as the vicious, are all huddled to the grave together. "We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." "For it is appointed unto man once to die." But if we look into that world which is to come, we may see the effect of the death and resurrection of Christ on the part of the penalty now under consideration. Paul says, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:22. "And the dead

shall be raised incorruptible," verse 52. See also verse 25, 26. "For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." The apostle was evidently writing, in this chapter, respecting the resurrection of the dead in general. According to the word of God, the wicked will be raised as well as the righteous; and that too, with an ability to endure eternally the second death. "For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29. That there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. Acts 24:15. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. 15:21. According to the above, it is plain that by Christ all will be reanimated. If this be true, it is evident that through him the world receives to a great extent, what is lost by the federal head in respect to death temporal, though much is suffered from it, notwithstanding what Christ has done. To illustrate this, suppose a company of men had been captivated through the negligence or some error of their leader. If a prince should espouse their cause, and vanquish their conquerors, they would regain that liberty by the prince which they had lost by their leader, though they might suffer the mortification of captivity for a while. So death may reign over the world for a season, yet we shall in due time see our foes conquered by Him who has espoused our cause.

2. Has Christ restored what the world lost in Adam, as to spiritual and eternal death?

To return to the figure of the tree; if, having fallen with all its fruit in it, some one should again raise it, all the fruit would be raised at the same time. So, as the posterity of Adam fell with him passively in his loins, they were restored passively by Jesus Christ, while yet in the same loins. John says, speaking of Christ, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" John 1:29. This, no doubt, refers to the sin of the garden. But now this is taken away; and we come into the world in a justified state. Hence Ezekiel says, "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. All souls are mine; as the soul of the father so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth it shall die." Ezek. 18:2—4. Paul gives testimony to the point that we are freely justified from the offence of original sin. "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. 5:18, 19. Christ also says, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 19:14. If they are subjects of the kingdom of heaven,

they must be in a justified state. According to this doctrine, the eternal salvation of all those who die in infancy or idiocy, is unconditionally secured. Nor will he who grows up in sin and dies impenitent, be condemned for the sin of another, but for the deeds done in his own body. But perhaps some one may inquire, Are we not, when first coming to the knowledge of good and evil, more inclined to choose the latter, to the neglect of the former, than were our first parents? In answer, they yielded to the first temptation, and no child can do more than this, even if he is more predisposed to sin. It is but rational to admit, however, that, as the soul inhabits a frail, corrupt tenement, and as there is a law in the members, which wars against the law of the spirit, and being under the influence of corrupt example, man has far more inducements to sin now, than Adam had. It has become the natural course of the world to transgress the law of God. Without the restraints of grace man would take the road to ruin. Hence the sinner is called a *natural man*. But if the youth have a greater inclination to err, this is no sin to him, if he does not follow those propensities. Christ himself was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. None are condemned for being tempted, but for following temptation.

Pursuing this idea, it may also be asked, On what principle would one be saved, if he should resist evil and live a holy life from his youth? Would he be saved by works or grace? I would remark that no one does this. All take the natural course, they yield to the first temptation

of Satan to be led captives at his will. With this view, Christ says in general terms to the adult, *Ye must be born again*. But if such a case should occur, the individual would not be saved by works, but by the grace of God, on the same principle that idiots and infants are.

Though a Saviour was needed to restore what was lost in the common parent, yet he is absolutely necessary to wash away our actual sins. And when he comes to the sinner to perform this work, which is so indispensable to eternal salvation, he finds the object of his compassion in a sad condition. His heart has been opened to his very worst enemy, who has entered with all his deadly train, introducing such poisonous drugs as produce a strange stupor on the whole soul. Such is the insensibility occasioned by sin, that he, destitute of the operation of the spirit of God, cannot think a good thought, nor perform a holy act. Though he may be surrounded with those whose jaws are open to devour, he thinks them his best, dearest friends, and will not attempt to leave them. Though his house be on fire and the flames about bursting upon him, he is asleep, and perhaps dreaming of happiness; and cannot make one faint endeavour to escape. He is bruised and wounded from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet. And what is still more deplorable, he has become blind and cannot see afar off. If the most beautiful prospect is presented, it affords him no delight. Hence of himself he has no ability to choose what is strictly proper. This may be considered the

true state of the sinner, destitute of the influence of grace. Yet I would by no means advance the idea, that all sinners are equally sinful, although all are totally corrupt. As a familiar illustration of this idea, let us suppose that into a vessel of water a small quantity of some acid be poured, it would be diffused through the whole; and the water would become wholly, or totally acidified. If more acid be added, this would make the liquid more sour. Yet the acid in the one, is as extensively diffused as in the other. Hence this water is totally acidated in both cases; although the one contains more acid than the other. So with regard to the sinner. He that indulges in small sins, is totally corrupted by those indulgences. For his whole soul is given up to them; and if he perpetrate grosser crimes, it only adds to the stain and makes him a greater sinner. Perhaps it was something like this that you referred to, when you made your distinction between "depravity" and "total depravity."

Did not Jesus Christ call upon and arouse the sinner, he could not awake; but would sleep on, till Gabriel's shrill clarion should rouse his astonished soul, to behold the unutterable realities of eternity. He cannot repent and turn to God, for he has no means of repentance, until he is furnished with them by the grace of God. To illustrate this, suppose I require one of my pupils, who I know has neither pen, ink, nor paper, to write a sentence, which I will read to him. He cannot write. But if I place the means before him, he will then be able to obey my command. Just so with the sinner.

He, of himself, has no ability to perform the requirements of God. But Christ comes to him with the means of repentance and convicts him irresistibly. Showing him in a measure his danger, and offers to grant a pardon of all his sins. Now he has ability to repent, if he but improve the means that are afforded him.

If this be what you mean by "*total depravity*," the F. W. B. adhere to it as closely as you.

§ 5. ON REGENERATION.

According to the doctrine of the F. W. B. regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit alone upon the heart of the unregenerated, cleansing it from sin. He is washed in the laver of regeneration, or in that fountain which is open for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in, from sin and uncleanness. Comparing the man to the Temple, Christ enters in and drives out the buyers, and sellers, restoring it to its necessary purity. Comparing regeneration also to a natural birth, the man is born again, or is born of the water of life and of the spirit of God. The heaven-born principle enters into him, taking up its abode within him. This change is known by various titles, such as regeneration, conversion, a change of heart, &c. Many also say that a man who is truly virtuous, *has religion*. By this; they mean that his heart has been changed. This is the acceptance of the term; yet, we allow, that it is not

strictly correct. For, the meaning of the term, religion, is one's notion about God. But the *idea*, intended to be conveyed, is in perfect accordance with the word of inspiration, though an incorrect phrase be used to convey it.

I would inquire what destructive error you see in the above, against which you would raise your "warning voice?" Let your own words answer. "Regeneration is a *moral* change, or a change of the disposition of the heart towards God, his righteous law, and towards holiness in general. The subject of this change is a new creature, and with him, 'old things are past away, and, behold, all things are become new.' And those who have not become the subjects of it are dead in trespasses and sins, enemies to God, both in their minds, and by wicked works. Regeneration, or which is the same, a change of the moral principle in man, lays a foundation for holy exercises; such as love to God, [godly sorrow for sin,] humble submission to God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." pp. 23, 24.

Here we see your own idea in connection with that of the F. W. B. And can you condemn them without passing judgment at the same time against yourself? I cannot see the least shade of difference in opinion on this subject, except on that expression which I have inserted in brackets. This shall be attended to in a subsequent section and that difference pointed out.

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§ 8. REGENERATION, AN INSTANTANEOUS CHANGE.

I find that the following is your belief on the point now before us. "But as regeneration is a change of the disposition of the heart, or the commencement of holiness there, it is morally certain that it takes place instantaneously. The figures used in the Scriptures to denote this change, plainly show that this is the fact. It is termed, being "born again, created in Christ Jesus, having a new heart and a right spirit" given us. Now, a person must be born again, or not born again; created in Christ, or not created in him; he either has a new heart and a right spirit, or he has not; and there must be a definite point of time when this change takes place. But there is one passage of scripture, in particular, to which I would call your attention. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. 2:1. This figure is plain and decisive. Common sense teaches us that the resurrection of Lazarus was instantaneous, or in other words, that he was dead till he was alive. And as regeneration is here called a resurrection, it is represented to us as being instantaneous. Till the moment Lazarus was quickened, he was considered, by all the usages of society, and by both human and divine laws, as being dead; and from the moment in which he was quickened, he was considered by all these as a living man." pp. 27, 28. The F. W. B. perfectly agree with you in the above. They by no means advance the idea, as you have unjustly intimated, that

one, of himself, can commence this work, and carry it on progressively, till he experiences all that is necessary to eternal salvation. We will look at this, however, more extensively hereafter.

But with regard to this change, there is a great variety of feelings among the many who truly experience it. Some, cast down under a deep sense of sin against God, about sinking in despair, and viewing that the throne of mercy will be guiltless if they are cast off, see a gleam of light, at once, bursting through the clouds of darkness, and bringing with it a sudden hope. They behold a Saviour, willing to have compassion, standing with out-stretched arms to receive and pardon the guilty rebel. The sight is almost overcoming. Their souls are filled with glory; and they can scarcely refrain from breaking out in strong ejaculations of praise to God and the Lamb. These have no doubt that their change was instantaneous. But there is another class of penitents, who, feeling an equally clear sense of sin, and making quite as earnest supplications, for divine forgiveness as the other, yet linger in doubt for a long time. Though they may have lost that burden of sin and condemnation which they before felt—though they see a beauty in Christ, and have a love for his people, they reject the idea that they are really of the converted class. But the evidence growing clearer, and the light brighter, they are at length led to acknowledge the mercy of God in changing their hearts, though they are unable to state the precise time when this work was performed, as they became convinced

of it gradually. It might seem that this regeneration was progressive; but it is not according to the idea of the F. W. B. They think that the change was instantaneous, although the man was not at once convinced of it.

§ 7. REGENERATION, A WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

On this subject you remark that, "Regeneration is a great work, and is in scripture called a resurrection, a creation; and is an effect, of which there must be an adequate cause, and this cause is either human or divine. But it is time for me to observe, that regeneration is effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit. Whatever attainments the sinner may make, or changes he may pass through, he is destitute of love to God, till it is "shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit." Rom. 5:5. I shall now attempt to prove this proposition, by the declarations of Scripture. "According to his mercy *He* saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. 3:5. See also John 1:12, 13. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This gracious work He performs agreeably to his promise. Ezek. 36:26, 27. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give

you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." Eph. 2:8. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." This work, St. Paul again ascribes to God in the 10th verse. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." pp. 33, 40, 41.

I need only say that, in the above, you have given the doctrine of "that people."

§ 8. WHICH PRECEDES, REPENTANCE OR REGENERATION.

We now come to an examination of the expression enclosed in brackets, (§ 5.) and its connected doctrine. You there advance the idea, that regeneration lays the foundation for godly sorrow for sin. That is, one cannot have this sorrow, without he has been truly converted. Nor is this the only expression of yours, which conveys such an idea. "Here, my sister," say you, "let us pause and inquire, Can we believe that this repentance, and confession, and fervent prayer, and holy affection, and humble faith were the conditions of regeneration, or were they fruits and effects of it? Undoubtedly the latter." p. 37.

From the above we have your belief in full, without making any more quotations, that repentance is the fruit of regeneration, and consequently posterior to it. This appears to stand in the very threshold of the doctrine of Elec-

tion; and might properly be examined in connection with it. But as it is found in the former part of your work, you will allow me to investigate it now; and see if it will stand upon its own foundation; and if it is in accordance with the word of God. We allow, on both sides, that regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit alone; and will not be performed until God sees fit to effect it. Then, supposing repentance to be the fruit of this change, as the fruit cannot be borne before the tree exists, of course there can be no repentance, except where God has performed the antecedent work. It necessarily follows that no sinner can repent, for he cannot remove the barrier between him and repentance, or he cannot perform its antecedent work. And when God performs that, the man is not a sinner but a saint; consequently, none but saints can repent. You say, "Sinners will not repent, either in the present or future world, unless their hearts are renewed. It has been asked, Why then does God require them to repent? We reply, because it is their duty, and infinite righteousness cannot cease to require that which is morally right for man to do; and because it is a direction, which, if obeyed, would promote the creature's happiness, therefore infinite benevolence cannot cease to enforce it." p. 81. How can it be a sinner's duty to do that which he cannot, or from which he is debarred by a work that God must first do? Who makes this his duty? According to the sentiment expressed in the above quotation, it is God. Is not this a plain contradiction? You say, "it is a direction which, if obeyed, would

promote the creature's happiness;" that is, if a course should be taken which cannot be taken, it will "promote the creature's happiness." An admirable discovery this! But what kind of benevolence is that which requires one to follow an impossible course, because if it were possible and followed, it would bring happiness? Is such the benevolence of our Creator?

You, in one place, establish the point that it is the arrangement of God, for regeneration to precede repentance; and in another you say it is the sinner's duty to repent. That is, it is his duty to reverse the arrangement of God. Is not such doctrine the height of absurdity? God's rule of government is one thing, and man's rule of duty is something diametrically opposite. This is some of your "*truth.*"

But we will now apply your own rule to the point at issue, and see if your idea is correct according to that. "Now it is safe to affirm," say you, "that that doctrine is false, which cannot be reconciled with the Scriptures, and is contrary to the gracious experience of renewed souls." p. 49. Let us compare your doctrine with the word of God, and see if it can be reconciled to it. "At the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Acts 17:30. But all men every where are not regenerated persons, therefore, on your principle, God requires them to do what they are not able. Your doctrine then cannot be reconciled with this passage, therefore it is incorrect, on your own ground. Many others may be brought to which it is quite as repugnant as to this. For a few of

them, will you look to Matt. 3:1, 2; 4:17; Mark 1:4—15; 6:12; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:23; 3:19; 8:22; 11:18; 26:20. Repent and be converted, says the apostle. Were your doctrine true, he would have said, Be converted and repent, or wait till you are converted and then repent. But some of the above scriptures show, too plainly to be misunderstood, that repentance is the antecedent work. "John did preach the baptism of repentance *for* the remission of sins." "God also to the Gentiles granted repentance *to* life." You will see by turning to the original text, that the prepositions *to* and *for*, are both from the same word (*eis*.) Then if this repentance is *for* or *to* life, or *to* or *for* remission of sin, what can be clearer than this point for which the F. W. B. contend? According to the use of language, repentance is antecedent, or it would not be *to* or *for* life. Besides, to use your own words in part, "I feel safe in saying there is not a single passage in all the word of God, which informs us of an individual," whose regeneration preceded repentance. But if you still contend that you are right, will you stop and read the above scriptures, according to your doctrine. What a change it makes in the word of God!

It is admitted on both sides, as already stated, that the man who is regenerated, is a new creature; old things are passed away; and behold all things have become new. But repentance signifies a sorrow for sin, and a desire to be cleansed from it. The truly penitent cannot be persuaded that he is a new creature, whatever evidence others may have of him. He feels

that he is a poor, guilty, condemned sinner; and that if he dies as he is, he will be cast off on the left hand. He loathes himself, because he sees that he is covered with filth and corruption. What shows the individual this? All admit that it is the Spirit of God. What then is the character of this informer, according to your doctrine? It says to him who is already regenerated and sure of heaven, You must be changed, or you will be damned. You are filthy and corrupt; and must be cleansed, or eternally debarred from glory. Can you say that this is the character of the Holy Ghost? What heart would not be struck with terror at such a charge against the Almighty!

Your doctrine, in a great degree, supersedes repentance. Suppose that a man is confined in a dungeon, clothed in rags and covered with filth; but, on the account of the darkness of his cell, he does not discover his true state. Suppose that a light is carried in, while the prisoner is thus defiled, would he not look upon himself with disgust, and cry aloud for relief? But if one should go in and cleanse him, and array him in garments white and clean, ere yet the light is brought in; would he now see himself a filthy being, and loathe his rags of corruption? No. He is filled with delight, little knowing what his state once was.

While the sinner is fighting against God and shutting his eyes against the light of truth, he does not see his real character; though he might, if he would but improve the means which God affords him. If the first operation of the Holy Spirit is to cleanse the soul of sin and

pollution, ere it gives the sinner a view of his moral state, what would there be for him to abhor, loathe, and repent of? Not any thing; for he is freely justified; and all his sins are borne into the land of forgetfulness. Surely there can be no repentance now, as it has been superseded by regeneration. But let the sinner see his state as it is before regeneration; let his sins be set in array before him, their nature and consequence pointed out to him; let him have a view of his heart, filled, like a cage of unclean birds: he is now in a capacity to repent. We may rationally expect that he will be in earnest about the matter: and, that his great concern will be to obtain freedom from such a state, and become holy. When Christ enters with the heart consoling pardon, he gives it *beauty for ashes; and the garment of praise, for the spirit of heaviness*. He appears altogether lovely and the chief among ten thousand. The soul wonders at the mercy of God, that he should look with compassion on one so sinful, so polluted, and hell deserving. This is the course the Bible leads men, so that they can have the most humiliating view of themselves as sinners, and the most exalted views of God as a Saviour. This is the way the F. W. B. preach. They maintain the arrangement of God; repentance first, and then regeneration. But you reverse the order, and try to palm your doctrine off upon the world for "truth." But the standard is so perfect that such counterfeit "truth" can easily be detected, if it be brought to the test.

§ 9. CAN ONE, WHOSE HEART IS NOT CHANGED,
SEEK THE LORD ACCEPTABLY?

I observe, sir, that you frequently introduce into your work, the subject of *seeking the Lord*; but seem very careful to insert it in quotation; as though you would not be guilty of countenancing such a doctrine. Nor does it appear that you quote this from the Bible, when the objectionable manner in which you introduce it, is taken into consideration. Say you, "As the scriptures teach us that the heart, before it is regenerated, is destitute of love to God, and consequently, of all holy exercises; and as we know that unregenerated men may, in that state, be enlightened and convinced of much important truth, so we ought not to say of such persons, that they are "seeking religion," that they are "seeking the Lord," that they are "seeking salvation." It is the fear of wrath to come, and not a sense of the evil of sin which affects their minds. Unrenewed sinners do not hate sin; they lament that they have exposed themselves to condemnation, but not that they have displeased and dishonoured infinite holiness and goodness. Let such persons be persuaded that they shall escape the miseries of hell, and their anxiety is all over, and they are filled with great joy." pp. 17, 18. "What then must be the nature of their sorrows, and prayers, and their "seeking religion," as it is called by many? Before regeneration, the will is free in all its acts of disobedience, impenitence and unbelief; but it never acts freely in loving

God, hating sin, and believing in Jesus Christ." p. 23. "A man cannot loathe and abhor that which he loves, nor can he desire that which he hates; hence the necessity that his disposition should be changed. He will then desire what he before hated, and abhor that which he before loved. Nor will he make an effort to bring himself to love that which appears hateful to him." p. 39.

From these expressions of yours, it is manifest that you take the negative of the question now before us. Indeed; none can peruse your writings, without being convinced, that you look upon the affirmative as highly exceptionable. I suppose that this is one of those "destructive errors," into which "that people," as you would represent, lead their deluded hearers; and against which you would "raise your warning voice." But the F. W. B. take the affirmative, and feel not ashamed to be heard exhorting sinners to *seek the Lord*. You say that "a man cannot loathe and abhor that which he loves;" and, giving a description in general terms, of one before regeneration, that "that temper of heart, and course of life which God abhors, is the element in which he delights." Again, "nor can he desire that which he hates," and before regeneration "he is opposed to holiness and to the means of promoting it." We justly come to the conclusion then that the sinner, in your opinion, cannot seek the Lord; and that God must irresistibly change the heart, and then it will naturally choose different objects. It moreover follows that it is of no real use to call after him to seek the Lord; for all he can

do before regeneration is unholy. From this we should suppose that the sinner might just as properly go on cursing, swearing, lying, stealing and getting drunk, as to pray to God for salvation. For, if all his prayers and desires for holiness, are sinful, as sin is sin, he might as well sin one way as another; and in the perpetration of it, look for the grace of God. But such doctrine is repugnant to reason, and the word of inspiration. To be convinced that the Bible is at variance with it, let us turn to that, and examine for ourselves.

1. The Bible contains numerous exhortations to seek the Lord. "But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find *him*, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." Deut. 4:29. "But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them." 2 Chr. 15:4. "Nevertheless, there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thy heart to seek God." 2 Chron. 19:3. "Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart." Psa. 119:2. "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." Prov. 8:17. "For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live." Amos 5:4. "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right." Isa. 45:19. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake

his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." 55:6, 7. "And hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us." Acts 17:26, 27. See also 2 Chron. 15:23; 30:19; Ezra 8:22, 23; Psa. 69:32, 33; Isa. 45:22; 11:10; Amos 5:6, &c. &c.

2. The Bible furnishes accounts of individuals who sought the Lord with success. See the thief on the cross. "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke 23:42, 43. You cannot say that this man was already a Christian; for he was a thief and now suffering for his crime. He himself acknowledged the justice of his punishment, without giving the least intimation of a prior change of heart.

The publican may also be taken as an example of a sincere seeker. "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 18:13. On the case of this man I will quote the remarks of a learned author. "There is no proof, nor in my opinion any reason to believe, that this man (the publican) was regenerated. On the contrary, he declares himself, in his

prayer to God, to be a sinner. As this declaration was put into his mouth by our Saviour; it must, I think, be considered not only as a sincere declaration, but a correct one; expressing with exactness the precise truth. He was, also, a convinced sinner; as is evident from his own words, and from the whole tenour of the parable. Yet *he was justified rather than the Pharisee*. The *Pharisee* came before God with a false account of himself; with a lofty spirit of self-righteousness; and with an unwarrantable contempt for other men; particularly for the publican. The *Publican* came with a strong and full conviction of his sin, and his supreme need of deliverance. With these views, confessing himself to be a sinner merely, he earnestly besought God to have mercy on him. His sense of his character was perfectly just; and his prayer, being the result of his feelings, was of course sincere. Thus far I consider him as justified, and no farther. If he was regenerated in consequence of his prayer, and justified in the Evangelical sense; the parable becomes completely decisive to my purpose; and furnishes all the encouragement to convinced sinners to pray, which can be asked." Dwight's Theol. Vol. 2, pp. 449, 450.

From the above testimony of the word of God, it is clear, that the practice of exhorting sinners to seek the Lord, is of no modern origin. And if men, divinely inspired, set the example, why will you raise your "warning voice against" other Christians if they follow it? Indeed I have heard your Baptist brethren exhort sinners to seek the Lord; and give them as much en-

couragement, as I ever did a F. W. B. Yes, they have said, in my hearing, to the unconverted, "You may come just as you are; and God will have mercy—you need not wait another moment—do not procrastinate—delays are eminently dangerous—you can repent and turn to God now." I had too much charity to suppose these persons such hypocrites, that they believed none could repent, or seek the Lord, until God first come and irresistibly change their hearts.

In times of revival you invite mourners to come forward for prayers, saying nothing about your election; for that would be poor doctrine indeed for such an occasion. "But all may come in welcome—none need stay away." Perhaps, however, some of your hearers who believe your creed, will begin to say, "My heart is hard, it is unchanged and an enemy to God—all my desires are now only selfish—I feel great concern for myself; but, as I am a sinner, this arises from a selfish motive—it will do no good for me to pray; for the prayer of the wicked is an abomination in the sight of God." Does even a Calvinist say all this is true? Were he consistent with your doctrine he would. But he does not. He encourages the pensive mourner to pray, attend meetings, &c., and not indulge desponding thoughts, as he has the firm assurance that God will come for his relief, if he only give up all into his hands. And because the F. W. B. do so much as that, you have proscribed them as holding to dangerous heresies, and caution the world not to be entangled with their fatal errors.

If your doctrine be true, no man can, with any propriety, pray for regeneration. The sinner cannot pray for it, because his prayers are sinful and abominable. The saint cannot pray for it, with propriety, because he is already regenerated, and cannot possibly either need, or receive it. Thus the greatest blessing ever given to man, and that on which all other blessings depend, cannot be prayed for by him who receives it; and stands, therefore, on ground totally diverse from that on which all other blessings rest; viz. on such a ground, that a man can never ask it for himself.

The F. W. B. as before shown, by no means advance the idea that the sinner can of himself seek after God, though you intimate that they do. But this is far from being the case. If once the Spirit of God has taken its entire departure from an individual, that individual cannot seek for good, as he could have no inclination for such things. But, when the light of the gospel shines upon a man, and the Spirit of God strives with him, he then has ability to desire a new heart. I have laboured to show that he, of himself, can neither think a good thought, nor perform a good act; but all these are the effects of a higher power. All we have that is even *virtuously inclined*, is derived from that source. Then where is the foundation for the charge, that "that people" hold to saving themselves by works? If one is saved it is all of grace, free, impartial and unmerited grace; and if he is lost it is not because he *could* not be saved, but because he *would* not.

§ 10. WHAT IS THE NECESSARY CHARACTER OF PRAYER IN ORDER TO A DIVINE BLESSING?

In speaking of the unregenerated, you ask, "What then must be the nature of their sorrows, and prayers, and their 'seeking religion,' as it is called by many?" p. 23. It seems, as heretofore remarked, that you consider all the exercises of one before regeneration as unholy; and, consequently, highly offensive to Deity. But do you suppose that God looks at the moral excellency, or holiness of those petitions which are put up to him, and answers them in consideration of that excellency? I think you cannot. For the most devout saint that lives could not say that God hears him on account of the holiness of his prayers. Were this the only ground of audience, I should think that some modern Calvinists would not receive an answer to any of their supplications. For it is said by some that they commit sin enough in every prayer to damn their souls. Would it not be well for such to leave off praying, if their prayers are so heinous?

If you however answer this question in the affirmative, you must admit that God himself has commanded men to do that, in doing which they must experience his high displeasure. For he requires all men to pray to him, repent, &c. As all men are not holy persons, he of course would be displeased, if that part which is not holy should make the attempt to obey his commands. But we find no such contradictions in the word of God. On the contrary, there is

indubitable evidence that the unrenewed have prayed acceptably to their Creator. Among those, may be found a Saul of Tarsus, who was convicted by the power of God; and the astonished jailor, whose only solicitation was to know what he should do to be saved.

As it is not indispensable that prayer proceed from a heart already holy in order to be heard, the great question is, What kind of a heart must it proceed from? I answer, From a heart which is truly penitent. God does not bestow the gift of regeneration upon the bold blasphemer who lives regardless of all that is good. If the sinner cannot be brought to true contrition of heart, the holy principle will not be given him. It seems to be the grand object of God, so to conduct men, before regeneration, that they may abhor themselves and give all the glory to him.

The sinner comes to true penitence by being convicted of his lost condition without Christ. Though he was before thoughtless, and urging on to the brink of destruction, yet, by the Spirit of truth, he has been brought to a consideration of what he is by sin, and what he must be by grace in order to be saved.

“ Here he first finds himself at a total loss concerning what he shall do. Here he first discovers his own ignorance of this great subject. Before, he was *rich, and had need of nothing*; had eyes, which *saw* clearly *all wisdom*; understood all that he needed to know, or do; and wanted no instruction nor information from others. Now he first finds himself to be, and to have been *poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and in want of all things*. Now, instead of deciding on questions of the greatest moment and difficulty, in Theology, and deciding roundly without examination, or knowledge, he is desirous of being instructed in small

and plain things; and instead of feeling his former contempt for those who are skilled in them, he becomes humble, docile, desirous of being taught, and disposed to regard with sincere respect such as are able to teach him.

At the same time, he especially betakes himself to the source of all instruction in things of this nature: *the word of God*. This book he searches with all anxiety of mind, to find information, and hope. The threatenings and alarms, which before hindered him from reading the Scriptures, now engage him to read them. His own danger and guilt he now labours thoroughly to learn, and is impatient to know the worst of his case. Whatever he finds there recorded, he readily admits, however painful, and employs himself no more either in doubting, or finding fault. To the former he has bidden adieu: the latter he knows to be fruitless. However guilty the Bible exhibits him, he is prepared to consider himself as being at least equally guilty. However dangerous it declares his case to be, he is prepared to acknowledge the danger.

In this distress, it will be easily supposed, he also searches *for the means of deliverance*. For these he labours with the deepest concern. Hence he reads, examines, and ponders, with an interest, new and peculiar; with fear and trembling; with critical attention to every sentiment, declaration, and word; with an earnest disposition to find relief and consolation in any and every passage, where it can be found. The Bible is now no longer the neglected, forgotten, despised book, which it formerly was; but his chief resort; *the man of his counsel; the rule of his conduct*. To him it has now become, for the first time, the word of God, and the means of eternal life.

All the difficulties, which heretofore prevented him from being present in *the house of God*, have now vanished. The disagreeable weather, the personal indisposition, the plainness of the preacher, the inelegance of the sermon, and the imperfection of the psalmody, keep him at home no more. In this solemn place he listens to all that is uttered; and watches all that is done. The *preacher's words become as goads, piercing to the di-*

riding asunder of the soul and the spirit, of the joints and marrow.

At his former listlessness he is now amazed; as well as at that, which he still beholds in others around him. *The Sabbath*, no longer a dull, wearisome day, of which the hours dragged heavily, and during which he could hardly find any tolerable means of passing the time, now becomes a season of activity and industry, unceasing and intense; a season, waited for with anxiety, and welcomed with hope and joy. The sanctuary, no longer regarded as a place of mere confinement, as the scene of tedious, dull, unmeaning rites, where grave people were believed to assemble for scarcely any other purpose, except to keep gay ones in order, has now become *the house of the living God, and the gate of heaven*; the place where he expects to find, if he finds at all, an escape from death, and the way to eternal life.

In the mean time, *he cries mightily unto God* for deliverance from sin and ruin. *Prayer*, long, perhaps from the beginning of his life, unused, unknown, and unthought of, or, if thought of at all, and attempted, always a burden, now becomes his most natural conduct. He sees, and feels, that God alone can deliver him; and therefore irresistibly looks to him for deliverance; oftentimes, indeed, with fear even to pray, from the strong sense which he entertains of his absolute unworthiness; and his unfitness to perform this first, most natural, most reasonable, of all religious services. Sensible how impure an appearance he must make before that God, *in whose sight the heavens are unclean, and whose angels are charged with folly*, he feels unwilling, like *the Publican*, even to lift up his eyes towards heaven; but *smiting his breast*, cries out with importunate anguish, *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

But he cannot be prevented from praying. His cries for mercy, and those at times involuntary and ejaculatory, are forced from him by the sense of his guilt, and his fears of perdition. They often break out in his walks, in the course of his daily employments, and in his occasional journeyings: they spring from his meditations; they ascend from his pillow. The question, *whether a sinner shall be directed to pray*, has become

nugatory to him; and has been decided, not by metaphysical disquisition, but by the controlling anguish of his heart." Dwight, Vol. 2, pp. 438—440.

A man, in the state of mind above described, prays,

1. With *sincerity*. Hypocrisy he now greatly abhors. He feels that God sees all his pollution; and hesitates not to make the most honest confession of his sins, frankly condemning himself as unworthy of divine attention.

2. He prays with *humility*. Though once he would almost defy his Maker, and thought the earth too mean for his abode, now he says to corruption, Thou art my mother, and to the worm, Thou art my brother. He has lost that high disdain which he before felt, esteeming others better, and far more worthy of respect than himself.

3. He prays with perfect *resignation*. Feeling that his sins merit an eternal banishment from happiness, he freely acknowledges that it would be just in God to cast him off. He resolves to throw himself on the mercy of his Maker, determining to perish at his feet, if pardon is withheld. Having found that he cannot save himself, he gives all up to God, desiring for a heart to be submissive to his will.

4. He prays with a fixed resolution to *reform*. His former life he abhors, as sinful. He looks upon sin with reluctance as the procuring cause of all misery, and as odious in itself. Though he has not, as yet, any true evangelical love for holiness, yet he esteems it as desirable in itself, and necessary, as that only can constitute in him that character which God designed him

to possess. Perhaps there is no time in life when he feels more fear of sin than now. It is that deadly poison which he has been rolling as a sweet morsel under his tongue. But he now most earnestly wishes to be free from it.

With these feelings, he prays to God for mercy, and obtains a pardon of his sins. In this state, his prayer is neither unholy, nor does it come from a holy heart. Yet it is such as God hears and answers.

But a very important question arises, Why is God more disposed to bestow the blessing of regeneration upon one of this class, than upon a thoughtless sinner? This is a reasonable question, and I will answer it in the words of the author before quoted.

“When God bestows the new disposition on the sinner, in the state above described, rather than in his ordinary state, he does this, I apprehend, not because the sinner has merited *this* blessing, or *any other*, at his hand; but because he has now become possessed of such a character, and such views, as render the communication of it fit and proper in itself. *God never extends mercy to sinners, because of their desert, or worth, but because they need his mercy.* When he sent his Son into the world, to save the apostate race of Adam, it was not because these apostates had merited, but because they needed, such kindness at his hands. It was a mere act of grace; or free, sovereign love. The communication of it was not a reward, conferred on worth; for they plainly had none; but a free gift to mere necessity and distress. *Christ came, to seek and to save that which was lost; and to call, not righteous beings, but sinners to repentance.* The Father, in the parable, did not admit *the Prodigal* into his family and favour, on account of any services which he had rendered; for he had rendered none; but on account of the misery and ruin of his Son, pleading strongly with his

own compassion. Such I conceive to be the case of every convinced sinner, when he is made the subject of the renewing grace of God.

But there is a plain reason, why such sinners are made the objects of divine mercy, when they have arrived at a complete view of their guilt, danger, and dependence on God for sanctification and deliverance, rather than while they were at ease in sin, and self-justified in their rebellion. In the latter situation, they were utterly unprepared either to feel, or understand, the nature and extent of the divine goodness in bestowing these blessings; and of course to be thankful, obedient, humble, and universally virtuous, to that degree, which is necessary to their effectual preparation for heaven, and which seems incapable of being accomplished in any other manner, than this, which I have described. A deliverance is both understood, and felt, in proportion to the greatness of the sense, which the person delivered has had, of his danger. A new moral character is welcomed, in proportion to the feelings which have been experienced in the debasement, and disadvantages, of the character previously existing. Universally, every benefit is realized, in proportion to the sense of our own necessity. Thus by the sense of his guilt, danger, and need of salvation, experienced under the conviction of his sins the sinner is prepared with the utmost advantage to receive his sanctification, justification, and final deliverance from eternal ruin. *This is what I call the fitness of the sinner for the reception of these benefits; a fitness, which seems indispensable; appearing, plainly, to render it proper, that God should give these blessings to a convinced sinner; when it would be wholly improper to give them to the same sinner, while unconvinced and insensible. Benefits are wisely conferred on those who are fitted thoroughly to understand, feel, and acknowledge them; and unwisely on those who are not; whose views are obscure, whose feelings are blunt, and whose acknowledgements, if made at all, are wrung from them by the hard hand of necessity. In the former case, the benefits may be said to be laid out well; in the latter, to little or no purpose.* Dwight's Th. pp. 446, 447.

Another question also arises. How can it be, according to the constitution of the human mind, that a sinner, being corrupt and consequently an enemy to God, by wicked works, while this hostile disposition is untaken away by regeneration, can come to that state of penitence and submission as above described, and successfully ask for a pardon?

Were the whole soul of man, until regeneration, under the entire control of the carnal mind without the possibility of being influenced, in the least, by any other principle, no one, before conversion, would call upon God for mercy; for he would stand it out to the very last, until an Almighty power struck him down. But I think you will admit that this is not the case with man. He yet has the use of his judgment and reason. When God by the gospel presents to him the real character of sin, he can, in a measure see it and feel it. The eyes of his understanding may be enlightened, so that he may see the reasonableness of holiness and love to God, though not feel their excellency. He can be duly apprized of the consequence of sin; and the necessity of becoming a new creature. Now it is evident to all that with every necessary source of information, as there is before the sinner, a man has power of mind to judge contrary to his carnal appetite, or fleshly lusts. Being convinced of the fitness of the thing chosen, he has power to select that which certain principles in his mind would fain reject. To illustrate this idea; for a sick man a physician prescribes a medicine, which, though loathsome to the taste, will, if taken, effect a

sure remedy. This patient would have a natural inclination not to take it; but his reason and judgment preponderate, and he submits to what he thinks best. So with regard to other things, the mind can determine to choose those things which, upon the light of evidence, is judged to be for the greatest good.

§ 11. DOES GOD REQUIRE MAN TO PERFORM ANY
CONDITION, IN ORDER TO REGENERATION
AND SALVATION?

Although it is plain that the Bible requires man to perform certain conditions in order to salvation, yet you have thrown into your writings, as often as possible, some animadversions upon this point of doctrine, frequently branding it as downright heresy; and eminently calculated to destroy the souls of men.

“How absurd and delusive, then,” say you, “it is, to tell unrenewed men, that there are certain conditions, which, if they will perform, their hearts will be regenerated. p. 29. You will permit me here to ask (and O, that the question might be duly examined by all God’s dear children who have been misguided) what condition of salvation did you perform, acceptable to God, while your carnal mind, though awakened, was enmity against him? Did you renew your own heart, or even begin the work? If the doctrine be false, which we as a church believe, you ought to answer in the affirmative; and, as you now believe it is false, this will be your answer. What unholy exercise, then, do they put forth, with which he is pleased, and receives as a condition of their regeneration? p. 34. I would tenderly but seriously ask, how much, or what did you do,

in changing your own heart; or what condition of regeneration did you perform, while your mind was alienated from God? p. 35. I feel safe in saying, there is not a single passage in all the word of God, which informs us of even an individual, who changed his own heart, or performed the condition of regeneration, in consequence of which he was renewed by the Holy Spirit. p. 41. Do we find it any where written in the Scriptures, even of an individual, that he regenerated his own heart, or that he effected any part of this change, or that he performed certain conditions, in consequence of which, the Lord renewed his heart? If so, in what generation did he live, and what was his name? We read of many who repented, and turned to the Lord. This, however, is not regeneration, nor is it in Scripture called the condition of it; but when it is sorrow exercised "after a godly sort," it is the fruit of regeneration, and subsequent to it. p. 44. We nowhere read in the Scriptures, that men are enabled by divine grace to renew their hearts, or even to perform a condition of regeneration. If we have repented and believed in Christ, this we have been enabled to do by the Divine Spirit; but faith and repentance are not conditions of regeneration; they are the fruits or effects of it, which are, therefore, subsequent to it. p. 45. But here I must be permitted to ask, What work has God designed to do, provided the unholy, impenitent sinner performs another certain work? Does he regenerate the heart upon this condition? Where is the Scripture evidence of it? Does he pardon on this condition? Does he adopt the soul into his family upon this condition? No, it is all a delusion, and eminently calculated to dishonour God, foster the pride of man, and destroy the immortal soul." p. 56.

Many quotations of the like import I might make from your Letters, but enough have been already made to show, that you would answer the question decidedly in the negative. The reason why you take that side is obvious. If you once admit that God has offered to effect

the washing of regeneration, and thus fit man for salvation, on certain conditions, which all can perform, and which if any do perform they will be saved; you admit that which at once destroys your doctrine of personal and eternal election. Hence, in order to support that system, you labour to convince your hearers and readers, that God bestows these blessings in an irresistible and sovereign manner to whom he will; leaving it impossible for others to be saved; and all this without any reference to any of the acts of the creature. On this supposition, God would be as likely to change the heart of one who is openly opposed to religion, as one who is penitent and under the most humble contrition. That man who indulges in his nightly debauch, giving loose reins to every corrupt propensity, to the entire neglect of all the appointed means of grace, would be as fair a candidate for justification, as he who forsakes sin by turning to God, and earnestly prays for life. But such notions are neither agreeable to the fitness of things, nor the word of God. For this reason the F. W. B. take the affirmative. I do not say that they take the affirmative of all that you have expressed above. We are now only concerned with the term, *condition*. You may charge them with the idea that they can begin the work of regeneration, and carry it on themselves; but I have, in a former section, shown that this is false.

You would fain understand, that those who believe in the performance of certain conditions, suppose that this performance is a part of regeneration itself. "What did you do," say

you, "in changing your own heart; or what condition of regeneration did you perform?" Whether you received that idea ignorantly or designedly, it is not founded in truth; as far, at least, as the F. W. B. are concerned. A condition of regeneration and regeneration itself are two very distinct principles. The former, through grace, can be performed by man; while the latter requires nothing short of an Almighty power.

With regard to the question at issue, let us take the Bible for our rule, and abide its decision. But it is necessary to define the term *condition* before we enter into an inquiry on the subject; so that we may understand each other's meaning. Condition means "terms of agreement"—"Condition respects any point that is admitted as a ground of obligation or engagement." "The reason," say the puritan divines, "why we use the word *condition*, is because it best suits with man's relation to God in his present dealings with us, as his subjects on trial for eternity. Christ as a priest has merited all; but as a priestly king he dispenseth all: he enjoins the conditions in order to the benefits, and makes the benefits motives to our compliance with the conditions. He treats with men as his subjects, whom he will now *rule*, and after *judge*. Now what word is so proper to express the duties or *enjoined means* of benefit, as the word conditions? The word condition is of the same nature as terms of the gospel." The above is the meaning attached to it in our communication. The definition of agreement is "*covenant, concord, bargain.*" Then *terms of agreement* is

equivalent to *terms of a covenant*. But a covenant, or agreement, cannot be conditional only when one of the terms is not made infallible. For, if all of the terms were so made, it would not be a conditional agreement. If I should agree with a man, that I would give him so much, if he will bring me such an article, this would be a conditional agreement; for, it is not certain that the man will bring the article. The supposition is, that the uncertainty is all on the part of him, with whom I made the agreement and not with me, the money being ready for him at the appointed time. But he can make no claim on me, unless he fulfil his term of the agreement. Or, to take a simile that is analogous to the salvation of the sinner by the unmerited grace of God, let us suppose that a rich man, seeing a family in great need, and liable to perish with hunger, should inform them that, if they will go to his house, he will feed them richly, clothe them comfortably, and bestow upon them every thing that they need. Is it not evident that this would be a conditional promise? If the family should go they would live, but if not they would perish. But, if the man should take the family irresistibly and feed them, whether they will or not, then we allow that there is no condition. Should this be done, the agency of the persons would be entirely out of the question; and they would be the same as machines. Let us again suppose, that a town belonging to a certain province, should revolt and declare itself independent; and that the governor should send ambassadors, to persuade them to submit, as loyal subjects. This not

being sufficient, he sends his army to subdue them. The town is sieged, and reduced to great extremity. Nothing but death is expected. But the general through pity sends forth a proclamation to the inhabitants that whosoever will ground his arms, forsake his leaders, and submit to the laws of the province, shall be spared alive. Here the promise is conditional. And is it not similar to the case of the sinner? Is not life promised to him on condition that he repent and turn from the evil of his way? Is he not promised a feast of fat things, wine on the lees well refined, if he will come and partake of it? God of his own free, unmerited grace, has given the promise, that whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. With this promise, if any man call upon the name of the Lord, he has the obligation of God, that he shall be saved. Nothing that man can do will lay him under this obligation; but it is mercy which prompted him to offer terms of pardon in the gospel. The sinner has no good works, for which he can claim the favour of God; but can only plead wretchedness, sin and shame. To be convinced that God requires man to perform certain conditions, we only need make a careful examination of the Bible. And if we are not wilfully settled in our belief, that will show us that this doctrine is true. The first requirement of God was on condition. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt

surely die." Gen. 2:16, 17. Almost the last call in the word of God contains a condition. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. 3:20. Between these two passages conditions are interspersed more or less frequently. In addition to those which have been quoted in the former sections, which would also go to prove this point, I will select a few others. "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." 2 Kings 5:10. Common sense teaches that this was on condition: for if he washed he would be healed. This is however a case of corporeal cleansing, yet it may be considered a fair type of regeneration. Referring, no doubt, to this type, the prophet says, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." Zech. 13:1. Our Saviour says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5. We know that those who were washed among the Jews, in the laver which was for cleansing, acted freely and voluntarily. They were active. And are not men the same in the great work of regeneration? I do not mean to ask if man cannot do a part of the work of regeneration. Isaiah says, "Wash you, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil." Isa. 1:16. Jeremiah also utters the same sentiment, "O Jerusalem,

wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved." Jer. 4:14. Here the prophet sets the sinner at work that he may become purified. If you charge the F. W. B. with heresy because they tell sinners that God requires them to do something, are not these prophets, and indeed almost all of the scripture writers, as deep in the heresy as they? "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Isa. 45:22. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Mat. 7:7. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Mat. 11:28. "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Mat. 19:21. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa. 55:3.

Is there not something for the creature to do in these passages in order to obtain forgiveness of sin; and, consequently, a condition implied? If you can do away *them*, and show that they contain no condition, there are a few scores of others which can be thrown in your way.

But you ask, "Who ever performed a condition in consequence of which he was saved or regenerated?" I would answer, many on the day of pentecost. "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The jailor is another example. "And brought them out, and

said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Acts 16:30, 31. "And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us." Mat. 9:27. Multitudes of others might be mentioned, who performed a condition of salvation; that is, who went to God and begged for a pardon of sin, forsook the way of the ungodly, abandoned the service of satan, and submitted to the mild government of Heaven. Indeed, sir, I need not have gone to the Bible to prove the affirmative of this question; for, your own words prove it clearly. When you were labouring to clear away certain objections which you readily saw would be raised against your favourite doctrine, you left fatality and came over upon the same ground that the F. W. B. take. You say that "The gospel should be preached, and other means of salvation used with impenitent sinners, because God works by means, and because he has appointed the use of means as the instrument in his own hand. The use of means is as distinctly included in the purpose of God, concerning man's salvation, as is their salvation itself." pp. 72, 73. "Here, then, are means of salvation which God has appointed, and his purpose concerning the sinner's salvation, cannot be accomplished, except his purpose concerning the means is accomplished also." pp. 73, 74. Here, sir, you have expressed in plain terms, the doctrine which, in other places, you laboured to do away. You say that "God's purpose concerning the sinner's salvation can-

not be accomplished, except his purpose concerning the means is accomplished also." What can be more expressive of a condition? This is all the condition that the F. W. B. hold to. The means which God has appointed, they think should be used. And they, with good reason, believe, that if they be used, they will be attended with success; though they are far from placing confidence in any human performance as meritorious. With so much evidence in favour of this doctrine, part of which is from your own writing, are you still disposed to declaim against it? But if you believe that there are no conditions to be performed, why so much exertions for the promotion of religion? If you have discovered that there is nothing to be done on the part of the creature, why do you not call home your missionaries, disband your missionary societies, stop your Sabbath schools, drop your charitable institutions, and, in fact, why do you not leave your desks, and shut your meeting-houses? Why have you borrowed from Methodists and F. W. B. some of their destructive errors, viz. protracted meetings—asking mourners to come forward for prayers—exhorting sinners to seek the Lord? It seems that you are not very consistent to raise a hue and cry about certain practices among others, and then copy these very practices yourself. But I am happy to see you willing to follow the example of so many good and faithful men; even if you pretend to think some of them exceptionable.

§ 12. THE MERIT OF THE WORKS OF MAN.

It has been before shown from scripture, that the creature is required to do something, in order to obtain life. Though it seems, from your remarks, that whenever you find an idea of this kind, you cry out, dreadful heresy! Yet, pray sir, do not start too much until you see the conclusion of the whole matter. That which God requires the creature to do you call *means*. It is quite immaterial what the term is which expresses the idea, for whether we use the word *means*, *works* or *condition*, it amounts to nearly the same thing. We mean just as you have said, "that the purpose of God concerning the sinner's salvation cannot be accomplished, except his purpose concerning the means is accomplished also." Then it follows that if God has purposed that the creature perform a certain condition in order to a reception of holiness; if that condition, or work or means be not accomplished, the individual will not receive that which the Divine Being designed should follow that accomplishment. If this be true, the creature has power to hinder the work of God, on the present mode of government. And we find that this is according to scripture. "And he could there do no mighty works, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them." Here I say nothing about the absolute power of God; but, according to his present manner of government, Christ could not, in that case, do many mighty works. If their unbelief was an obstruction to his work, reasoning from analo-

gy, unbelief would hinder it in other cases. But if the creature perform those conditions which his Maker requires him to perform, he may reasonably look for the consequence, which is life and peace. But, you will doubtless say, that the F. W. B. admit all that you charge them with. I would say that this is by no means the true state of the case. They neither admit your charge, nor do they hold that the works of the creature are, in the least, meritorious, or that they are on any principle exerted in effecting the change of the heart. Works are entirely distinct from the efficient cause of regeneration. All the use of means is, that they are calculated to bring the creature into that place which God requires, before he bestows the blessing of sanctification.

That the sinner's acts are not meritorious, and yet necessary, I will shew by a figure. I, meeting two beggars in the street, say to them, if you will go to my room, I will bestow upon you a dollar to each. One goes and receives the gift, but the other stays away and receives nothing. By coming, as I required, he laid me under no obligation to give the money, nor did his act merit it. God has said, "Look unto me and be saved all ye ends of the earth." Those who do look are saved, while those who do not, continue in death. Nor do they, by looking save themselves; it is God alone who does this. Again, works are not only destitute of saving merit; but they are perfectly ineffectual as to producing the necessary change on the heart. The warnings of the Bible, the exhortations of preaching, the prayers and repentance of the

penitent, the advice and sympathy of Christian friends, are all insufficient to renovate the soul. To show you our idea on this, more plainly, we will look at the case of the brazen serpent. It was prepared by the appointment of God, and erected in the midst of the camp of Israel, with the proclamation, that, "whoso looketh upon the brazen serpent shall be healed of the poison of the flying serpent." The promise was verified; those who looked, were made whole. It can, with no propriety, be supposed that any would have experienced a healing effect, without performing this condition. But looking, or the act of the creature did not stay the poison. This was the effect of a divine interposition, and a manifest miracle. If any one, however, suppose that the act of looking, in this case, healed the poison, I would say then, that if they had looked to a tree, or the sun, the same consequence would have followed, for that would have been looking. Again, the case of taking common food will illustrate the idea that I would convey. In order to be supported by food, a man must use the means that nature has provided; that is eating. But it is not this eating which satisfies the appetite, or allays the hunger. Were it so, if he should even go through the motion of eating it would satisfy a man. It is evident that this cannot be. Now God says, "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and will sup with him and he with me." Here, God requires the creatures to open the door, or, in other words, to give the consent of his mind, and he will enter in, with the heavenly train.

But, as I have represented, all that man can do, is neither meritorious, nor effectual in producing a change of heart. But say you, "I must be permitted to ask, What work has God designed to do, provided the unholy, impenitent sinner performs another certain work? Does he regenerate the heart upon this condition? No, it is all a delusion, and eminently calculated to dishonour God, foster the pride of man, and destroy the immortal soul." p. 50.

If all this is a delusion, then God is the author of it: for it has been shown that it is contained in his written word.—I cannot see how this doctrine is calculated to "foster the pride of man." If a nobleman, seeing a child in the most wretched condition, should offer him a lodging in his spacious mansion, if he would but come to it, promising him also riches and honour, who would dream that this boy would be proud of his act of going to this majestic abode? Or suppose a house is infested with some deadly insects which the inmates had no power to destroy or subdue. A man comes to the door and knocks, proffering his services not only to clear away the deadly vermin, but also to cleanse and garnish the house. They unbolt the door and let the benefactor in. Would this family once think of being proud of the act of unbolting the door, when they are enjoying the satisfaction of a cleansed abode?

Wherein is this doctrine calculated to "destroy the immortal soul?" If, as you suppose, a definite number were elected from eternity, of course it would not destroy any of them, for

they are safe, let them believe what they may, or do what they please. Those who are not of the elected number, cannot be saved, even if they know nothing about this doctrine. Consequently, it is not a belief of it that will destroy them, if they are destroyed. Then, on your own ground, if this doctrine is a delusion, what harm can it do?

Again say you, "We may now consider the question, Does God do more towards the salvation of one sinner, than of another? A large number of zealous, active Christian professors affirm in the most positive manner, that he does not. This affirmation attributes the difference found in the saint, from the sinner, to creature agency." p. 43. "Here I would ask seriously, Do you deliberately believe, that you have made the difference which you humbly hope now exists in the state of your heart, from that of those who are slaves to sin, in this world, and those who are under its dominion in the world of spirits?" pp. 44, 45. Here you represent that a large number of zealous professors affirm that God effects the same in all, and that whatever difference is found between the saint and sinner, is to be attributed to human agency. This, however, is similar to your general charges against "that people," and their doctrine. But whether you mean to take the F. W. B. alone, or lump them with the Methodists, and thus raise your "warning voice" against both together, you have the unhappiness to have either wilfully, or ignorantly, given a wrong representation of them. But I would be charitable, hoping that the following point in their belief,

is that from which you have formed the opinion of them, which you have expressed; for I would by no means accuse you of a wanton misstatement. They believe that God, in the gift of his Son, made a general atonement for the whole world; that it is no more for one than for another. You yourself agree with them in this idea. "No doubt the same divine influence, which we hope renewed our hearts, would have been sufficient to renew theirs." p. 45. You cannot, at this day, believe that Christ died only for the elect. Then there would be no difference of opinion on this point. But another part of the charge yet remains. "This affirmation attributes the difference found in the saint, from the sinner, to creature agency." On this point I would remark that, in the application of this atonement, in washing away the sins of the penitent, God does abundantly more for some than he does for others. This is not denied by the F. W. B. or M. It is manifest to all that if God has cleansed the heart of this man, and not of that one, he has wrought more for the former, than for the latter. Still it is evident that there is a fulness in Christ for all; and that God is ready to do as much for one as another, if they only *will*. Says the word of God to certain obstinate, hardened sinners, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." But in those who do come unto Christ, a great difference is wrought, not, as before shown in various points of light, by human agency, but by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. To show the view of the F. W. B. on this point, we will again take the case of two miserable beggars. A

king beholds them in their wretched condition; and, moved with pity, sends to them a chariot, offering to carry them home, make them lords to eat at his table and sleep on his own bed, as long as they live. One requisition, however, this good man makes, and that is, they must forsake those courses which reduced them to beggary, leave the society of their former comrades, wear a different dress, and live on a different fare throughout. To this, one consents, and is transported to the abodes of honour and plenty; and is loaded with riches and the highest glory. But the other chooses to remain as he is; and starves in extreme misery. Who has made the difference between those two men, they themselves, or their benefactor? You make the doctrine of "that people" to be, that the exalted beggar made the difference. This is not so. It is manifest that it was the king who made this difference, and that he did more for one than for the other. But why was this? Because the other would not receive the offered bounty, but chose to be as he was. So it is with the sinner.

§ 13. ON NATURAL CONSCIENCE.

Some remarks of yours lead to a few reflections on the term, *Natural Conscience*. "You appear," say you, "to have mistaken the decisions and remonstrances of natural conscience, for the grace of God. This is an error, which I believe, has ensnared many of the dear people

of God. Does not our experience teach us, that the hearts, and consciences of unrenewed men are at variance. Previous to that change which has laid a foundation for our hope of salvation, did we not often feel our hearts inclined to gratifications, which we knew were displeasing to God, and forbidden in his word. Conscience seldom fails to reprove such iniquity." pp. 15, 16. Natural conscience is allowed to be that observation which the mind, unaided by that light which comes from God, takes of its own actions and thoughts. It seems to be a monitor with which man is constituted, whose office is to communicate knowledge to the mind, lay certain restraints upon his conduct in life; and to regulate his general character. That internal constitution which is called conscience, may be considered the eye of the mind, through which in some respects it is illuminated. Were a man destitute of this principle, he would not be a rational, moral being; but would look with indifference upon all things around him. On the other hand, it is a principle in mental philosophy that there can be no idea in the mind; and, consequently no act of conscience, except ideas be originated by, or communicated through the medium of the senses, or arise from a supernatural agency. This susceptibility then cannot bring itself into action; but depends upon being connected with other principles, for its action. It may now be questioned whether conscience, when brought into action by the presence of any external object, or by any internal emotion, has power of itself to judge between right and wrong, merit and demerit, vir-

tue and vice. Suppose that a man is found alone on an island, where he was left in infancy, and has grown up without seeing any animal, or without the interposition of any supernatural agency. Suppose that two men should go to him, one a virtuous, the other a vicious man. The wild man meets them; and hears one praying to God, and the other cursing and swearing; would he feel any approbation for the former and a disapprobation for the latter? or would he look on both with indifference? The probable answer is, that he would look, indifferently, on both. But this man had a natural conscience. Yet being perfectly unacquainted with the rule which marks the distinction between right and wrong, he of course had no ability to determine the agreement or disagreement of the act, with that rule by which it should be regulated.

Again, as conscience, abstractly taken, has no power to determine whether any thing or action be virtuous or not; but for this power, depends upon an acquaintance with the rule of that thing or action, should it take a wrong rule to try actions by, it would necessarily give a wrong feeling; hence various persons would be liable to have various feelings about the same act. Then, in different countries, at different ages, and under different systems of education, the restrictions of natural conscience would be very different. The Lacedemonians at a certain age justified theft. Of course a youth brought up at that time, in that place, would not feel any disapprobation to that practice. In another country, where theft is held criminal, one would disapprove of stealing. A Jew

and Mahometan feel conscientiously scrupulous of eating pork; while a Christian can, with self-justification, eat that kind of meat. But a Mahometan hesitates not to rob and steal; while a Christian feels that a thief and a robber is worthy of punishment. This different feeling of the mind arises from different systems of education.

From these observations it is manifest that natural conscience cannot, of itself, discover whether an action be right or wrong, but in order to that, the mind must first be presented with the act, or object; secondly, it must be furnished with that rule by which the act or object should be regulated; and if it perceives a want of agreement between the rule and act, it, from an internal sense, pronounces the act erroneous. Again, conscience may be so far influenced by circumstances, that it would, at one time, pronounce an act virtuous, which, at another, it would judge to be vicious. The depravity of the heart, unconnected with the means of grace, is admitted to be such, that it can have no virtuous emotion. A man would feel no condemnation, though he might sin with a high hand. But even in this state, he has a natural conscience. Then, conscience, without the means of grace, cannot reprove the heart of sin against God; for it neither has the rule to try moral actions by, nor any light to discern the rule, even were it given. Suppose then we see a man, of whom we have no evidence, that he has been regenerated, greatly concerned about himself as a sinner, mourning on account of his sad condition, frequently engaging with heart-felt

sincerity, in prayer to God for a forgiveness of sin; what shall we say is the cause of those feelings and desires, natural conscience, or the grace of God? You think that many of the dear people of God have been ensnared with a mistake of the decisions and remonstrances of natural conscience, for the grace of God. That is, they have supposed those restrictions to be the decisions of the grace of God, which were, in reality, only the remonstrances of conscience. It is presumed that you believe, as many other Calvinists do, that the Spirit of God does not reprove the sinner before it changes the heart, and thus lays the foundation for repentance. It is said by some, that it is folly to say, that the Spirit of God strives with the sinner. If this be your opinion, then you would think that one was under a mistake, if he supposed that it was the agency of the grace of God that caused the anxiety in the case above supposed. As we have seen that, from the constitution of the mind, conscience, of itself, cannot produce this anxiety, is it not reasonable to suppose that it is awakened by that divine light and Spirit of God, which shines through conscience into the heart, and thus reproves it of sin? The scriptures teach us that God calls after, and that the Holy Ghost reproves the world. Then it is no mistake to say, when we see a man in the state of mind above supposed, that he is awakened by the grace of God. But, say you, "Now with respect to those in heaven, must it not be evident, that when God began in their hearts the work of grace, he designed to perform exactly what he has accomplished, namely, their com-

plete salvation? If this be denied, I would ask, did he design to do more than he has done, and if so, what was it, and why did he not effect his design? But if he designed less, what circumstance induced him to do more than he designed?" p. 54. The idea seems to be conveyed that when God begins a work he designs to carry it on, and nothing can hinder him; so that, if his Spirit commences striving with man, it will inevitably effect the work of regeneration. On this principle the conclusion would be that all the exercises we have witnessed in the minds of those whom God has not renewed, arises from the remonstrances of conscience.

But is it not a fact that the world is more or less influenced, or reprovèd by the Spirit of God? Our Creator says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh." Gen. 6:3. Here God says, My Spirit shall not always strive with man. Does not his Spirit *sometimes* strive with man? If that be not the case, where is the propriety of using the qualifying term *always*? "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men." Prov. 3:4. "Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Rom. 10:18. "Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone." Hosea 4:17. If conscience was all that reprovèd idolatrous Ephraim, why did God say let him alone? Again, our Saviour says, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprovè the world of

sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:7—8. One was to come whose express office was to reprove the world. The term (*cosmos*) world is applied to the inhabitants of the earth in general; and, expressly to the wicked. Christ informed his disciples, that he had chosen them out of the world. He also intimated that if his kingdom were of this world, his subjects would fight for him. That is, if he had come to establish an earthly kingdom, he would find adherents among them who were not virtuous, to fight for him. The Holy Ghost was promised, who should reprove the world of sin, because they believed not on him. Then sinners were appointed as objects of reproof by the Spirit of God. Having seen that the Holy Ghost was appointed to that great office, we may next inquire whether he has filled it. When we reflect upon the character of God, we can but acknowledge that he will accomplish every thing which he has promised to do. No one can charge the Almighty with neglect, or inattention to his creatures. The declaration of scripture is, that not one jot or tittle of God's word can fail. Then, if we know what he has promised, we may look, with the surest confidence, for its accomplishment. John says, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9. Is not the world then illuminated by this light? "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Tit. 2:11. But if natural conscience alone reproves the sinner for his iniquity, there is then, something in nature, which reproves the heart of spiritual things. This cannot be;

for we know nothing of God, but by his Spirit and revelation.

If the remonstrances of natural conscience be all that the sinner feels, then that, on your hypothesis, is sufficient to enable one to turn to God; for you say that sinners have all natural ability to perform every divine requirement. This however is not the manner of coming to God, as laid down in the Bible.

You say, "Why then are some contending that all men have a light within, which, if followed, will lead them to heaven? and others, that all men have a measure of grace given them, which, if improved, will terminate in their salvation? Now, my sister, I solemnly assure you, that I consider such doctrine contrary to the word of God, and infinitely dangerous to the souls of men. I must therefore raise my warning voice against it." p. 31. It is not contended that man has a connatural light dwelling in the heart; but it is evident that a divine light, which is exterior to the heart, shines into it, in order that it may see what God requires; and the odious nature of sin. This you cannot deny; as Christ lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The shining of this light, only, enables the world to see what they need, and the way they must go to find their needs supplied. Christ spake of certain sinners who had closed their eyes against the light, lest their deeds be reprov'd. If this light did not shine upon those sinners, how could they close their eyes against it?

§ 14. ON THE DIVINE PURPOSE.

You, in your seventh letter, have laboured to explain to E. N. your views of the *purpose of God*. By quoting your own words, we see your sentiments on this point.

“ Now, I think it must be admitted that God does not effect this work accidentally, because, in all his work, he acts with infinite intelligence, and therefore with design. St. Paul affirms, that “ God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” In this passage, the apostle represents the divine will or choice, as directing in all the operations of the divine power; and at the commencement of his work, the nature, and consequences of all his operations are perfectly before him. When, therefore, God regenerates the heart, he designs to do no more nor less than what he effects, namely, he designs to regenerate the heart. He also carries on the work of grace, sanctifying and preparing the soul for a state of glory above, all which he does intentionally, or according to the counsel of his own will. . . . Divine inspiration teaches us, that “ he is in one mind, and none can turn him, and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.” Or will any say, that when he began the work, he had no design respecting it, how, or what he would do. But this is denying him the attribute of intelligence; and besides, we have seen from the Scriptures, that he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. . . . If, in preparing those for heaven, whom the Lord has already received into that state, he wrought in them, and for them, after the counsel of his own will; if, when he began the work, he intended to carry it on; if he thus designed to save, I would seriously ask, when did he conceive that design? When did the thought first enter the Divine Mind? When did he decide upon the subject, and become fixed in a purpose to do it? Was it as soon as they were regenerated? Then he was undetermined about doing the work, till he had effected an important part of it. Or was it at

the time of their birth? But what authority have we for fixing upon that date? Was it at the time he made man? Who can answer in the affirmative? Was it when he originated the plan of the universe, and purposed in himself to form angels and men; when he devised the mysterious method of man's salvation? And when was that? When did Jehovah first think of the work of creation, and become fixed in his purpose to do it? When did he first resolve, and become determined to give his Son a sacrifice for our sins? From the predictions and promises of divine revelation, we may feel assured that many more of our fallen race will be saved from the power and guilt of sin; and we are assured also that it will be the work of God, and that he will call them by his grace, according to his purpose. Now, unless we believe that new purposes arise, from time to time, in the Divine Mind, we must believe, that at this time he has a purpose to save all those whom he will hereafter gather in. The knowledge of God is a divine perfection, concerning which Christians, in general, are agreed. In the Scriptures it is declared, that "known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world. Neither is there any creature which is not manifest in his sight; for all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. He is a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The knowledge of God is intuitive; he has not been instructed by any of his creatures, or by any of the events of his government. It cannot be said that he, at any period, received knowledge; this would be to say there was a period when his knowledge was imperfect, and that it may yet be imperfect. Now, if God knows all things, as the Scriptures and reason abundantly declare, then there can be no addition to his knowledge. A period will never arrive when God will know any more than he now does. Can we extend our thoughts back on the eternity of God, and fix them upon a period when he did not know all events and things which he now does, or ever will know? With great solemnity we must answer, No.

When all the events to be accomplished in this world are finished, there will be in glory a great multitude of

redeemed sinners, which no man can number. But God will then know their number, and out of what nations and families they were gathered, and at what age he renewed their hearts, and by what means they were enlightened and convinced of sin; also at what age they died, and the very moment of time at which they entered the heavenly state. But if there can be no addition to the knowledge of God, then he now knows how many there will be, and out of what nations and families he will gather them, and at what age he will renew their hearts, and by what means he will enlighten and convince them of sin. He now knows at what age they will die, and what moment of time they will enter the heavenly state. Now, can we fix our thoughts upon any period we call past, at which God did not know all these things? With respect to all his perfections, it is a sublime and glorious fact, that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Nothing which is uncertain can be known." pp. 53—56.

I am far from wishing to be found fighting against the truth of the gospel; but it is the privilege of every one to examine carefully the doctrines which are advanced by men; and see if they accord with the word of God. If so, they should be followed; but, if not, rejected. If I comprehend the sentiment of the above quotation, you would be understood that, what God desireth, that he doeth; and, that he doeth this according to his own will, or *as* he desireth; that all which he ever has, or ever will do, was determined upon before the world was, even in eternity; that he is unchangeable, so that he never can do any thing which he did not determine; that he in eternity, without reference to any act of the creature, determined, fixed and decreed, that a definite number should infallibly reign in heaven; that he would commence the work of grace in them and carry it on to per-

fection; and that he will do no more, that is, he will save no more than that number which he has already determined to save; although, if he had pleased to determine it, he could just as well change the heart of every sinner; and thus fit all for glory. This sentiment I gather from your writing. More than this; the world and all things natural are made just according to this eternal purpose; and as God has the end in view when he begins a work, every thing must be subservient to the end for which it was designed. Then the saint is brought into being for the end to which he was destined.

You not only take the purpose of God as the foundation of election; but you bring forward his foreknowledge to establish the same point. You remark that, "he knows who will be saved, and when he shall renew their hearts; it is therefore certain who will be saved, and also when they will be regenerated." Again, "The foundation of this certainty cannot be discovered in man; - - - - for it existed infinite ages before man was made." Then it was not repentance, &c. of the sinner that caused God to know these things. The question arises, What was it? You answer:

"Some have said it was certain they would be saved, because it was certain that they would repent and believe the gospel. But the question returns, What rendered it certain that they would repent, or even that the means of repentance would be used with them? As before the creation of the heavens and the earth, God knew he should create them, that event was certain. What was the foundation of the certainty that God's infinite wisdom and power would be employed in that work, but his determination to perform it? If he had

been determined not to do it, it would have been certain that the work would not be done; and if he had been indifferent, it would have been uncertain whether the work would be done or not done; for it all depended upon him. As before the foundation of the world, God knew that his only begotten and dearly beloved Son would, in time, become incarnate, and suffer and die for our sins, that event was certain. But what rendered that event certain? Was it not the purpose of God that, in the fulness of time, he would send forth his Son? Surely it was; for the whole of this wonderful plan depended exclusively upon him. As before the foundation of the world, God knew how many and who would be saved, when and where they would pass their probationary state, and also at what period of their lives he should renew their hearts, and at what moment of time they would enter his kingdom above, all these things must have been certain. But what could have rendered it certain, infinite ages before they existed that God's power and wisdom and goodness would be employed in effecting this wonderful event, but his own determination? This, my dear sister, is what we understand by the doctrine of Election, and to us it is a matter of lamentation, that so many professors of religion reject it with contempt. And it is a consideration still more affecting, that any of the beloved children of God should become so bewildered in darkness, and deceived, as to say, "I do not fellowship the doctrine of personal election." pp. 66—68.

Here we see in plain terms, that the salvation of the saint is foreknown, because it is certain; and it is certain, because God has purposed to perform it. Also God foreknew that there would be a world, a race of men and a Saviour, because he determined that they should be. This, however, is not all of the doctrine. We wish to see the whole, before we can judge of its propriety, or impropriety.

There is a class of beings who are left, according to your system, in a hopeless state,

for whom salvation is in no way possible; for God determined to save a definite number, of which they make no part, and whom of course God did not determine to save. Now concerning this class, God had a design in making them. What was this design? "Divine inspiration," say you, "teaches us, that he is in one mind, and none can turn him, and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. Or will any say, that when he began the work, he had no design respecting it, how, or what he would do? But this is denying him the attribute of intelligence; and besides, we have seen from the Scriptures, that he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." pp. 54,55. Did God design to save this part? Then, according to your principle, as he doeth all things according to the counsel of his own will, he will save them. But he has decreed to save a definite number, of which they are no part; consequently he has not decreed to save them. Therefore he did not design them for glory. Then is not their damnation unavoidable? Again, God foreknows whatever comes to pass. But he cannot foreknow what is uncertain. He foreknows who will be damned; then their damnation is unavoidable, on this mode of reasoning. The damnation of the reprobate being certain, we wish next to know what has rendered that certain. Was this made certain infinite ages before the world was, because it was certain that they would sin? This you will not admit. We see in a quotation made above, that the decree of God made all of the events, there mentioned, certain. But that is only a

particular conclusion. To draw a general conclusion, as we must, to see the whole doctrine, God foreknows whatever comes to pass. In order for God to know whatever comes to pass, all these events must be certain. No contingency of any event, can make that event certain, as this certainty existed in eternity, but it originated from the purpose of God. Then God has purposed, or foreordained whatever comes to pass. If you deny the truth of either of these propositions you deny your own doctrine, for each one is a general conclusion of your own premises. Then we have an honest avowal of true Calvinism. Piscator says, "God foreknows nothing but what he has decreed, and his decree precedes his knowledge." Calvin also, "God, therefore, knows all things that will come to pass, because he has decreed they shall come to pass"—"Every action and motion of every creature, is governed by the hidden counsel of God, so that nothing can come to pass but was foreordained by him." The sentiment of the Assembly's Catechism is nearly the same; "God did from all eternity, unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass." Buck defines predestination to be, "The decree of God, whereby he hath for his own glory, foreordained whatever comes to pass." To be convinced beyond a doubt that the above is your true sentiment, we only need look to your own words. "Though God worketh all things, both in the natural and moral world, after the counsel of his own will." p. 78. But you say to E. N. "This doctrine, I suspect, has been greatly misrepresented to you."

Have I, in the above, given a misrepresentation of it? Judge ye. You cannot with a clear conscience charge me with a misstatement. If God worketh *all* things, both in the natural and moral world, according to the counsel of his own will, it is God that brings all things to pass, even every good act and every sin, the salvation of every one of the elect and the damnation of all the reprobate; and this by his arbitrary decree. It is all according to his will. The above doctrine, the F. W. B. for many reasons, do not believe. You will permit me to give in a brief manner some of those reasons.

1. It makes all preaching vain. It is needless to the elect, for their salvation is made certain; and they, whether with or without preaching, will be saved. The end of preaching 'to save souls' is void as to them. And what use is preaching to the reprobate? for they cannot be saved. They, whether with or without preaching, must be damned. Therefore, as to them, preaching is of no use. Or do you think, with Calvinists before you, that God gives the sinner light, to make him blinder; calls upon him, to make him deafer; and uses the means of grace with him, to enhance his damnation to all eternity? You, however, have endeavoured to answer this objection; yet I cannot see that the difficulty is obviated in the least. You say, "The gospel should be preached, and other means of salvation used with impenitent sinners, because God works by means, and because he has appointed the use of means as the instrument in his own hand." But, according to your

doctrine, means cannot be effectual except upon those whom God has, from eternity, decreed to save; consequently, as he has not decreed the salvation of the reprobate, the use of means cannot afford the least possible benefit to them. And of what use will means be to those whose salvation was secured in eternity?

2. It puts a plea into the mouth of the sinner, to live in sin. They can say, I have nothing to do in order to regeneration, and eternal salvation. I am already, by the immutable decree of Jehovah, assigned to heaven or hell; and let me do what I may, I cannot alter this decree; therefore, if I indulge in sin, it can make my condition no more deplorable. If I am to be converted, God will irresistibly change my heart, when it is his will that I live in sin no longer. Should I attempt to repent now, it would be offensive to my Maker.—I allow that you have anticipated such an objection, and attempted to clear it out of the way. But, instead of doing this, you have taken that to illustrate your doctrine, which, if admitted on general principles, would entirely overthrow your system. Indeed, you make use of the very simile that Arminians do, to illustrate a conditional salvation. “Why, then,” say you, “does not the husbandman say, It is useless for me to obey the command of God, and till the ground, and sow the seed, or use any other means? It is certain with God, whether I shall reap the fruits of my labour or not; and if I am to have a crop, I shall have it, whether I use the means or not; and if I am not to have a crop, I shall not, let me do what I will. Why should not the student say, If I

am to be a scholar, I shall be, and if I am not to be, I shall not be, therefore I will not weary myself with study, nor be any more concerned with my books? This is precisely the language of the objection before us. If I am to be saved, I shall be, whether I try to obtain salvation or not; and if I am to perish, I shall perish, however earnestly I may try to be saved. Why should we condemn this false and delusive reasoning in the husbandman and in the scholar, but approve of it in the impenitent sinner?" pp. 74, 75. Here you take a conditional order of nature, to prove what you call unconditional. What analogy is there? None at all. According to the present arrangement, if the husbandman ploughs his ground and sows his seed, in the spring, he will, with the blessing of Heaven, receive a crop; but if not, he will reap none. If the scholar study, he will be learned; but if not, he will remain in ignorance. In those doctrines that have been examined, you have carefully fixed immutably one point, that is, the infallible salvation of a definite number. The same doctrine establishes another point equally as unalterable; that is, the eternal damnation of a definite number; all this without reference to the acts of the creature. The immutability of these two points exists in the divine mind, and not in man. Then, this fully believed, there is no motive to action, except, according to Calvin, the hidden, secret will of God, which impels the creature on, in all his movements. Now if it be infallibly certain that the farmer will have a crop, and the scholar will be learned, the former may fold up his hands and take

his case; and the latter lay aside his books and cease to trim the midnight lamp; therefore this simile does not elucidate your doctrine. But let us introduce one that will. Suppose there are two farms upon which two men move. They are informed that one of the farms will produce, without any attention, an abundant crop of corn; but that the other, with the best cultivation, will produce none at all. Yet neither knows whether he is on the productive farm or not. What inducement will there be for either to plant corn? One may say, "If my farm is the productive one, I shall have a crop without any of my exertion; but if it is not, all my labour will be thrown away." Just so with the sinner. If he chance to be of the reprobate, all the efforts he may make for heaven, will avail him nothing, but rather make his damnation greater: if he is of the elect, he will reap an eternal harvest.

3. It also furnishes a plea for self-justification. Says the culprit, my act was made certain in eternity, consequently I could do nothing differently. Had God decreed differently, I might have been an honest man, or even a Christian. How frequently is the preacher of the gospel met with such self-justification! And if he is a Calvinist, what can he do more than turn away in silence?

4. This doctrine weakens the zeal and paralyzes the efforts of devotion, benevolence and good works. What else has introduced such monotonous formality into the church, such a round of lifeless, dead performances; and cast around it an apathy so chilling to the feelings

of true piety? Turn to matters of fact, and see how many have preached all their days and seen none converted; but would rather lull the people to sleep with their doctrine of decrees. Instead of warning the people to flee the wrath to come, informing them, at the same time, how they may come to God who will abundantly pardon, this doctrine influences the watchman to settle down at ease, saying, as a Calvinist said in my hearing, "If there is to be a revival in this place, there will be one." Having no reason to be in earnest for sinners, if a man, who feels the *woe is me if I preach not the gospel*, should, with tears, invite sinners to be reconciled to God; if he should hold forth, that salvation is possible through the gospel for all, this doctrine of yours sometimes impels its adherents to "raise their warning voice against" him, denouncing him as deluded and filled with heresy.

5. This doctrine often leads men into despair. It is no uncommon occurrence to see persons, who, having laboured under serious impressions of mind for a time, but not gaining a satisfactory evidence of an acceptance with their Creator, resign all hopes of heaven, supposing themselves to be of the reprobate; and consequently, their damnation sealed. Such individuals think that it is wicked for them to pray; and that, if they attend public worship and read the Bible, it will only add to that cup of sorrow, which they suppose God from eternity destined them to drink, among the flames of unutterable torment.

6. It destroys the free agency, and, consequently, the accountability of man. It has been

acknowledged by many that it destroys *free will*, hence they hesitated not to call the doctrine of *free will*, "a cursed doctrine, one of the prominent features of the beast"—"the offspring of the wicked one." Then you are not the first who have raised their "warning voice against" this doctrine. But Calvinists at this day attempt to reconcile free will with their system. Even you yourself have anticipated the objection which we are now considering; and attempted to remove it. "Again I would ask," say you, "What effect does the purpose of God have upon your mind, while you know nothing about that purpose? And when it is revealed, it will not destroy free agency, but will become a motive to action, either good or bad, according to the disposition of the heart. To act in view of motives, or, which is the same thing, to act according to our own choice, is to enjoy the highest degree of free agency of which we can conceive. The purpose of God is a decision of the Divine Mind, which exists in himself, and can have no possible effect upon the free agency of man." p. 71. Here you ask, "What effect does the purpose of God have on your mind, while you know nothing about it?" What difference does it make whether we know the purpose of God or not? If it be a fact that the mind is directed by some foreign principle, will our ignorance of the circumstance, make it, that the volition is our own? You say, "Before regeneration the will never acts freely in loving God, hating sin, and believing on Jesus Christ." p. 23. Here you admit that there is no freedom of the will in the sinner to turn from

sin; but that it turns only as it is impelled by a resistless force. This is not general, we admit. But, according to your doctrine, God has secured the means and end of every event. What makes every creature take that course which leads to the end which is fixed by the decree of heaven? Calvin answers, "Every action and motion of every creature, is governed by the hidden counsel of God." Is not the will, then, in all its operations governed and controlled by some fixed and unalterable arrangement? Is it not the height of nonsense to talk of free agency under such a constitution, when the very spring to all the intellectual movements, is a hidden invincible power? Under this arrangement, it is true man can act as he will; but it is the hand of God that impels the volition. Hence he *wills* as he is directed, he chooses as he must choose. He can neither *act* nor *will* different, for he acts under an irresistible decree. Who can be held accountable for such a volition as this? But, say you, "We know, also, that we are free agents, because we are conscious that we do act freely." This would be a good argument for the F. W. B. to prove that the will is free; but on your ground, it only shows that God has deceived us. For he knows that we cannot will or act otherwise, yet he makes us *feel* that we can. This, then, only makes your doctrine still more objectionable, as it charges the Almighty with deception. Make what shift you can, it is true that your doctrine destroys the free agency of man, and consequently his responsibility.

7. In close connection with the above objec-

tions, this doctrine destroys the idea of a future judgment. If man is not responsible for his acts, with what propriety can he be brought into judgment *to give an account for the deeds done in the body?* If we are assigned to a particular event, and created for that event, the necessity of a day of accounts to assign to every one as our deeds require, is entirely superseded. But if you say the propriety of a general assize be not superseded, and man is justly rewarded and punished according to the deeds done in the body, your doctrine is at once destroyed.

8. Your doctrine makes the Bible contradict itself. If you construe any passages to prove it, you at once set them at variance with the whole tenour of the New Testament.

9. Another objection to your doctrine is, it destroys the end of punishment. It is admitted that the design of punishment is to prevent sin. But, if every act be made certain in eternity, how can the punishment of any number of crimes, tend to check others from those acts which God determined, and to which his own counsel impels them?

10. It necessarily limits the atonement. It was formerly asserted that Christ died for the elect only. That is the sentiment of many at this day; yet the Calvinistic clergy generally in New-England have acknowledged that Christ died to redeem all, and strive to reconcile this idea with the doctrine of particular election and reprobation. But let us ask, What was the use of that part of the atonement, which was prepared for the reprobate? Did God make it to aggravate their unavoidable damnation; and

sink them still lower in that gulf to which his arbitrary decree has doomed them? But a Calvinist answers, "This general atonement was made that it might be possible that all be saved." Admit it. If it be possible that the reprobate be saved, then it may be that they will be saved; therefore the idea of election and reprobation is not true. But if the atonement has rendered it possible for none but the elect to be saved, it was made only for the elect. How absurd then to talk about redeeming love to all; and say that there is salvation for those who are decreed not to see life.

11. Your doctrine of arbitrary decrees makes God the author of sin. Some frankly own this, while others deny it in word, though they acknowledge it in principle. Look at the words of Calvin; "I will not scruple to own that the will of God lays a necessity on all things; and that every thing he wills necessarily comes to pass." Dr. Twiss and others bear testimony to the same doctrine; "God procures adultery, cursings and lyings"—"God is the author of that act which is evil"—"God, by his working on the hearts of the wicked, binds them and stirs them to do evil." But you may say, modern Calvinists do not believe all this, therefore they should not be charged with it. But you are justly charged with the logical consequences of your doctrine, the foundation of which is "God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." If God, by his decree, makes sin a necessary part of his plan, you must acknowledge him to be the procuring cause, and, consequently, the direct author of it.

12. It makes God partial and a respecter of persons. For it represents him as determining to save some and damn others, without reference to their character, all being in the same state. If you deny this you admit that the decree was made in view of their character, which is to give up your doctrine altogether. You, however, attempt to obviate this, by representing all as in sin and having no claim on their Creator for mercy. This does not answer the objection in the least. The question arises, How came man in this state? A Calvinist answers, He was brought there by the sin of the first parent. But how came he to sin? Calvin says, "Adam sinned because God so ordained." And you yourself say, "Though God worketh all things both in the natural and moral world, after the counsel of his own will." Was not the sin of Adam one of all things? Then God wrought it according to his own will. This all must believe, who think that God foreordains whatsoever comes to pass. Taking all the links together, God decreed to create a race of men, and that they should all become sinners; and it was done. He then decreed that a part of these whom his other decree had made children of wrath, should be cleansed and saved; and the others be left to perish. Now we are told that there is no partiality, because all were children of wrath, and deserved to be damned. What a miserable evasion this! God wishing to damn a part of mankind, and save the rest, to avoid the charge of partiality, plunges all into sin and ruin, declaring all children of wrath; and then, through the plenitude of his

mercy, plucks a part as brands from the burning, leaving the rest in remediless woe! Who could charge the Almighty with such government as this!

13. This doctrine destroys the free grace and mercy of God altogether. To the reprobate no grace is intended. Even their *being*, subject as it is to eternal banishment, is a curse. The temporal blessings which they enjoy, the means of grace with which they are only tantalized, are intended to increase the unavoidable pains and torments which they must endure. "God," says Calvin, "calls to the reprobate, that they may be more deaf; kindles a light, that they may be more blind; brings his doctrine to them, that they may be more ignorant; and applies the remedy to them that they may not be healed." What is this but an honest expression of your doctrine? Will any one pretend that, according to this system, there is any grace for the reprobate?

But let us look and see if there is any mercy in the salvation of the elect. You have represented that God, without any thing in the creature to move him, in a sovereign manner, elected a part of man to life. But if there was nothing in the creature to move him to pass the decree of salvation, how can it be called pity or mercy?

14. This doctrine of decrees attributes great insincerity to our adorable Saviour. He gives sinners a free invitation to come to him. To say then, that he did not intend to save all sinners, is to represent him as a deceiver of those whom he will not save. If he calls those who

cannot come without he gives the ability, and from whom he withholds it; but, rather holds before them food, only to aggravate their hunger; and shows them pleasures, only to enhance their misery; what can be greater imposition? But this is not the character of Him whose lips speak no deceit, consequently that doctrine which represents him as such must be false.

15. It is the foundation of Universalism. The adherents to this doctrine believe, as well as you, that God decreed whatsoever comes to pass. The premises of the two doctrines are nearly or quite the same. Then they reason thus: "Whatever God decrees is according to his will, and therefore right. God will not punish his creatures for doing right. Whatever God decrees is unavoidable, and God will not punish any of his creatures for what is unavoidable. But every action and motion of every creature is governed by the hidden counsel of God. Therefore, God will not punish any of his creatures for any of their acts." None can point out any fallacy in this reasoning. Then, if predestination be true, universalism is necessarily true.

16. This doctrine is closely allied to infidelity. When one has embraced the idea that all things are produced and directed by the decree of God, he needs take but one step more to believe in a philosophical necessity. Indeed, how many, seeing the absurdity both of the calvinian and universalian conclusions, have leaped all bounds and become infidels? It is manifest that universalism is true calvinism refined; and infidelity is universalism refined. Then, to get

the doctrine of infidelity, we need only refine calvinism twice.

17. It mars the moral attributes of God. "If he," to use the words of another, "holds men responsible for what is unavoidable—if he makes laws and then impels men to break them, and finally punishes them for their transgressions—if he mourns over the evils of the world, and expostulates with sinners, saying, 'How can I give thee up—my heart is melted within me, my repentings are kindled together'—'O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how oft would I have gathered you, and ye would not'—and still he himself 'impels the will of men,' to all this wickedness—if, I say, God does all this, where is his veracity? Where is his mercy? Where is his justice? What more could be said of the most merciless tyrant? What, of the most ar-rant hypocrite? What, of Satan himself? What does this doctrine make of our heavenly Father? I shudder to follow it out, into its legitimate bearings. It seems to me, a belief of it is enough to drive one to infidelity, to madness, and to death. If the supporters of this system *must* adhere to it, I rejoice that they can close their eyes against its logical consequences—otherwise it would make them wretched in the extreme, or drive them into other dangerous theoretical and practical errors."

These, sir, are some of the objections that the F. W. B. bring against your system, and are reasons for not believing it. Others I might exhibit, but the above are sufficient for the present.

In support of your sentiment above, you used

the words of the apostle, "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." From certain inferences which I have drawn, you may be led to suppose that the F. W. B. do not believe that text. Be assured they do, though not in the same light with you. The word *all* evidently must be limited in its extent. It cannot comprehend every thing, both in the moral and natural world; for there are works of wicked men and of devils. None can with propriety admit that God works these. Then he does not work *all* things. But every thing, that he does work, is wrought according to the counsel of his own will. God made the heavens and the earth, their appendages, conveniences, and inhabitants; he made man upright and an heir of happiness. But when man sinned and needed a Saviour, he gave a hope of the woman's seed. By him the gospel is sent into the world, promising to save those who repent of sin; and that those who do not, shall be damned. And seeing such was the blindness of the sinner, that he, of himself, could not repent and turn from sin, God sends to him his Spirit, to arouse his stupid feelings and lead him to the fold of Christ. He calls his children home to inherit the kingdom which he had prepared for them from the foundation of the world, while he casts off the finally impenitent into everlasting punishment. All this he does according to the decision of his own mind. But to say that God worketh every act of every creature, is to charge the Majesty of heaven with all the crimes and enormities of the world, as we see your doctrine does.

You ask, "What have we to fear from the purposes of God?" p. 83. The elect have nothing to fear or lose; but the poor reprobate have every thing to fear. The door of mercy forever shut against them, those wretched beings can only wait for the frown of that God who made them as they are, and who irresistibly took others from the gulf of sin. They only have to wait his nod which shall hurl them down to the lowest caverns of hell, where they, wrapt in liquid sheets of fire, must lie, under the scalding fury of his wrath, which his own decree doomed them to suffer, to all eternity; and that without reference to their acts!

§ 15. AN EXAMINATION OF SOME PASSAGES,
QUOTED TO PROVE PERSONAL, ETERNAL,
AND UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION.

To prove the doctrine of election, you have brought forward a few passages of scripture, which now demand our attention, viz: Eph. 1:3—5. Acts 13:48, and 2 Tim. 1:9. "From these passages of Scripture," say you, "it is evident, that election is personal, unconditional, and eternal"—"That men are ordained, or appointed to eternal life before they believed." p. 61. Whatever these passages prove, it is evident that they do not prove what you say.

The first that is placed before us is Eph. 1:3—5. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places

in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will." It will be necessary to consider, in the first place, the object of the apostle, in writing to the Ephesians. Ephesus was a city of Iona, in *Asia Minor*, and once the metropolis of that part of the world. The ancient city was situated at the mouth of the river *Cayster*, on the shore of the *Ægean* Sea about 50 miles south of Smyrna. This city was destroyed and a new city of the same name built by Lysimachus. To this new city, Paul went in the year 53 and preached. From the history of the Acts it seems that he found them a very dissolute people; and extremely addicted to magic; *walking*, as the apostle says, chapter 2:2, *according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience*. Their city was the very throne of idolatry. Here the worship of idols was celebrated in greater splendour than in any other part of the world. The temple, of Diana who is said to have fallen from Jupiter, Acts 19:35, was built between the city and harbour, at the expense of all Asia. Notwithstanding the habits of the Ephesians was such, yet Paul was successful in preaching; so that he in a short time gathered a church, which was remarkable both for quality and numbers. As the members of this church had been great idolaters; and had held certain mysteries; and the pompous show of the worship of Diana, in great venera-

tion, it is supposed that the Judaizing teachers attempted to take the advantage of this, and lead them to obey the law of Moses, by magnifying the splendour of their temple, its riches, their wealth as a nation, together with many specious arguments drawn from other sources. While Paul was at Rome, it appears that he was informed by some one, perhaps Tychichus, of the insidious arts of the teachers of the Jews, to influence the brethren to unite the gospel with the law of Moses. That the apostle had been informed, appears evident from chapter 1: 15. Though he was filled with joy when he heard of the love and stability of his Ephesian brethren, yet he well knew the art and vigilance of their enemies; and that, if it were possible, they would entice them from the faith. Hence he considered it necessary to write them, that they might remain established in the faith, and not waver. He gave them a sublime view of the Christian doctrine and worship, and especially a mystery that the gospel unfolded, which was not, like the heathen mysticisms, to be kept from the world, but recorded for the edification of both Jew and Gentile. The subject matter of this mystery was that the *Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.* This mystery had been hid from the world, but was now, by the spirit, revealed to the apostles and prophets. This was eminently calculated to correct the idea entertained by the Jews, that they were the only chosen of God, and that the Gentiles were for ever debarred from all spiritual privileges. They were informed that

God had purposed *to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, the Jewish state, and which are on the earth,* meaning the Gentiles. This refers, not only to the formation of the Jews and Gentiles into one true church; but the bringing of them both into the heavenly country, as appears from verses 11—13.

This being premised, we may now turn to the words before us, Eph. 1:3—5

Blessed be the God, &c.] Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, not confining all the blessings of the word of life to the Jews, has also blessed the Gentiles with the gospel and every means of grace, by which we may turn to God, and do works meet for repentance; and that we may be built up in the most holy faith, not through the law of Moses, but through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

According as he hath chosen us in him, &c.] As he hath decreed from the beginning of the world; and kept in view since before the commencement of the *religious system of the Jews,* (which the phrase sometimes means,) to make us, Gentiles, heirs of the heavenly promise, and introduce us, as well as the Jews, into the Christian church, and to all the privileges of the gospel, that we may be holy here, and thus fitted for an eternal inheritance among the sanctified.

This choice or election, being of the Ephesians in general, could not be an election of particular individuals to eternal life; but an election which God, before the foundation of the world, made of holy persons of all nations,

to be his children, and heirs of eternal glory; that his kingdom should be composed of all that should believe and become regenerated. It may be considered an election such as is described by Moses, Deut. 7:6. *The Lord thy God hath chosen (elected) thee to be a special people unto himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth.*

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, &c.] God's predetermination, or fixed purpose, is to bestow on the Gentiles the privilege and blessing of adoption of sons, by Jesus Christ; which adoption had before been granted to the Jews; and without circumcision, or any other Mosaic rite, to admit the Gentiles to all the privileges of his people.

The next passage that you introduce is, Acts 13:48, *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.]* You say, "This passage teaches that men are ordained, or appointed to eternal life before they believed." If we turn to the chapter under consideration, we shall find that Paul went to Antioch in Pisidia, and entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. After the reading of the scriptures, the rulers went unto Paul and his companions, requesting them to speak, if they had any exhortation for the people. Paul arose and commenced his exhortation by saying, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience." Mark the address, "Ye that fear God." At the close of the remarks of Paul, no doubt, and the Jews going out, the Gentiles besought that those words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. "Now when the congregation was broken up, many of

the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who speaking to them, persuaded them *to continue in the grace of God.*" On the next Sabbath, the greater part of the city met at the place of worship. The Jews were enraged when they saw this. Paul and his companion waxed bold, and declared to the people that they should turn from the Jews, and go to the Gentiles, because the Jews counted themselves unworthy of eternal life. The Gentiles glorified God, and as many as were *ordained to eternal life believed.*

On investigating this subject, two general questions arise to be settled.

1. Who were those that believed, at the preaching of Paul? and,
2. What did they believe, or in what did their belief consist?

These two questions embrace the whole subject now at issue.

1. Who were those that believed?

The answer to this question is, "*As many as were ordained to eternal life.*" Here two other questions call for an answer. 1. What was the character, at that time, of those who were ordained to eternal life? 2. In what did that ordination consist?

1. What the character of those who were ordained to eternal life?

We remarked, in Paul's address, the expression, *Ye that fear God.* This shows that there were persons in his audience, who feared God. But what is it to fear God, in an evangelical sense? "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened,

and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Mal. 3:16, 17. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." Prov. 8:13. From this description of the fear of the Lord, we see that those who possess it are not sinners, but saints, or holy men. If we turn to the 43d verse, we shall also find a key to the information required. *Who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.* These persons, evidently, must have been *in the grace of God*, or they could not *continue* in it. Paul says, Rom. 6:14, "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Then, while we are under the grace of God, and are led by the Spirit of God, we do not sin. For says John, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God." Again Paul says, Rom. 8:17, "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." With this information upon the subject, if we turn to Paul's hearers, we find that some of them, though Gentiles, were sons of God already. That is, they were men of genuine piety, who, like Simeon, were waiting for the consolation of Israel. The same was true in respect to other Gentiles. Look at Cornelius for example. His prayers and alms ascended up to God as a memorial of him, and of course,

he was ordained to eternal life. The same may be said of the Eunuch. He was reading in the prophets concerning Christ, though he knew it not; but Philip explained to him the meaning of that scripture which he read. On hearing this, he requested baptism at once. Philip did not require him to repent, and be converted, which he would have done had he been a sinner, but baptized him as he was. So with regard to some of those to whom Paul preached. Their hearts had been purified by the Spirit of God, and thus made fit subjects for the kingdom of heaven.

2. In what did that ordination consist?

Did it consist in the choice of the Divine Mind which he made in eternity, that a definite number should be saved to the exclusion of all others? The text does not say that they were *foreordained* to eternal life, but simply *ordained*. On the principle of your explanation of the text, if one should ask, why the others did not believe the preaching of Paul, the answer must be, Because God had not *foreordained* them to eternal life. If you turn to the original, you will find that the word translated *ordained*, is *tetagmeroi*, from the root *tasso*, or *tatto*. This word is defined by Greek lexicographers, *to arrange, to set in array; to plan; to establish; to appoint, to determine*. This is found in the passive voice. Then it means that they were arranged in mind, or set in order *for*, or determined *upon*, eternal life. But how became they thus determined upon the means of grace? By the operation of the Spirit of God on their hearts, inducing them to give up their attention to the

calls of the gospel. They were appointed to eternal life. By what means? *Through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.* When were they appointed? At the time when they became disposed to the things of virtue; consequently it could not be in eternity, for they did not then exist.

2. What did *as many as were ordained to eternal life* believe? Was not their belief the same as that of the Eunuch, when Philip preached to him, that Jesus was the Son of God? But, did this belief consist in a change of heart? By no means. It consisted in a conviction which they received, that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah.

3. The third and last text which you quote to prove your doctrine, is that of 2 Tim. 1:9. "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

It will be well to determine to what the *which* relates, in this sentence; whether to grace alone, or to grace and purpose together. If you look yourself, you will be satisfied, that it refers to grace alone, as it, together with the term "was given," is translated from a participle in the singular number. Had it referred both to prothesin (purpose) and charin (grace or gift,) it must have been in the plural. This grace is now made manifest through the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The apostle evidently means by grace, in this place, that divine favour which God manifested to the

world, in preparing a Saviour for the sin of Adam's race.

Macknight paraphrases this text in the following manner. "Who hath resolved to save us, and for that purpose hath called us into his kingdom with a holy calling, whose object is to make us holy; and hath thus called us, not on account of our works as meriting it, but in accomplishment of his own purpose and gift, which was given us through Christ Jesus, in the covenant made with mankind at the fall, long before the times of the Mosaic dispensation."

Purpose in this text, no doubt, refers to the determination of our Creator, to send his Son into the world to bestow the gift of salvation upon all who would accept; to give the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, the privilege of coming into the church of Christ. But you say, "From these passages of Scripture, it is evident, that election is personal, unconditional, and eternal, as it must be, since the subjects of it were chosen in the Divine Mind before the world began, or before the foundation of the world." p. 61. I think that you will be under the necessity of figuring once more, before you make these texts prove your system.

Before I close this section, another passage demands attention. Say you, "St. Peter informs us, that the murderers of the Son of God did whatsoever his counsel determined before to be done; and yet they acted as freely as though God had not determined those things. And they were as criminal, for the same apostle charges them with the guilt of murder." pp. 71, 72. If the hand and counsel of God deter-

mined, that what was done to Christ should be done, of course he determined that the actors in that tragical scene should do as they did. This is another proof that you believe God foreordains whatsoever comes to pass. But, before we admit your construction, let us look at the text, and see if you have explained it correctly. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Acts 4:27, 28.

The first question to be solved is, what is *for to do* governed by? Admit that the sentiment requires it to be governed by *were gathered*. If then these wicked men were doing what God determined they should do, it must be admitted that it was the will of God for them to do as they did. Jesus says, "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Mark 3:35. Then those who rose up against Christ must be accepted with him; and of course under no condemnation. But if God determined that these wicked acts should be done, reasoning from analogy, we must admit that he has decreed, that all other sinners do as they do. If so, their acts must be according to his will, and they accepted with him. The conclusion would be, that universal salvation is true. But that is not true, consequently we have not given a right construction of the text. If you only insert in parenthesis *both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered*

ered together, or, which is the same thing, let *for to do* be governed by *was anointed*, as the sense evidently requires, and some learned authors say should be, the sentiment is plain and consistent. Then the sentiment would be, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, *for to do* whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles were gathered together." Christ was engaged for the salvation of the world which God had before determined; but these wicked men, instead of doing what God had decreed they should, arose to obstruct his designs.

But perhaps you say, "Truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined; but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! Luke 22:22. From this it appears God determined that the Son of man should go as he did." It does not say as *God determined*, but simply *was determined*. Determined by whom? If you look at the connection, you will be convinced, that it was not God, but the Jews, together with Judas, who determined this. By looking at the first part of the chapter, from which the text is quoted, you will find that a short time prior, Satan had entered into Judas, and he had agreed to deliver up his Master to the rulers. Is it not plain that they determined to put Christ out of the way, if it were possible? As he knew all things, he was acquainted with this league; and as he was resolved to give himself up, to be treated as they should choose, he said, The Son of man goeth as it is determined. Having finished his ministry, and being about to of-

fer himself a sacrifice for sin, he submitted to die on the cross. You cannot suppose that the wounds which were inflicted upon him, produced his death; or, that he would have still lived, had they not crucified him. Christ expressly declares, "No man taketh my life from me." May we not justly suppose that he would have given up his life at that time, even if wicked men had not conspired against him? Many things, in that scene, make it appear plain, that he died independent of any wounds that were inflicted upon him. Nor is there any circumstance which conveys the idea, that those who attempted to murder him, and who were justly chargeable with his murder, were decreed, and urged on to these nefarious deeds by the Almighty.

§ 16. ON FALLING FROM GRACE.

I find the following to be your sentiment on this point. "Now it is believed, by some, that many of them will be overcome and finally perish. This I do not, I cannot believe, and I will lay before you some of my reasons. If I believed that salvation depended upon the efforts of the creature, I should not only expect that some, but that all would perish. If the moral condition of all men is alike by nature, and "God does no more for one than for another," we have reason to fear that not only some, but all will perish. What is there to secure the salvation of any? No doubt that many have

fallen away and lost their religion, and it is to be feared that the last state of such is worse than the first. But it should be observed, that the religion which they lost, was that which they 'got' by their own seeking and resolutions. They began the work themselves, and it was carried on without any more divine assistance than those have who never begin it; and it is to be expected that such, in time of temptation, will fall away. But the question before us is, whether any, whose hearts the Lord has regenerated, will fall away and perish. It is a simple but important question, On what does the safety of the saint depend? upon the Lord Jehovah, or upon themselves? If upon themselves, no doubt many, if not all, will finally perish; but if upon the Lord Jehovah, I see not why they may not be safe." pp. 85, 86.

We see from this quotation that you hold it to be impossible for a believer to fall away and be finally lost. But the F. W. B. differ greatly from you on this point. They think that it is possible, and that there is a danger that the true child of God be again entangled in the yoke of bondage. It is not for us to say, at this time, whether many or few do fall away. But if the point be established that the thing is possible, and has once happened, it will be manifest that you have given a wrong construction upon the doctrine. It is not, however, supposed that this falling away, if any there be, is owing to a defect in the power, or goodness of God; but the failure is all on the part of the creature. The name of the Lord is a strong tower, whereinto the righteous run and are safe. He

that enters and continues in that, will find it sufficient to protect him from his foes. No weapon formed against him can prosper. But if he voluntarily leave his place of refuge, yield to the temptation of his enemies, and run into sin, his soul will be in danger of eternal condemnation. All those who are in the above named tower, may be considered as saints, or children of God. And when one enters in, he assumes this character; but when he goes out, he becomes a sinner. The former are subjects of God, the latter of the world. Those within, can be in no danger of what falls upon those without; and those without can realize none of the safety of those within. From this it is manifest that the one cannot be saved, while the other cannot be lost. That the righteous are safe, is provable from the texts you have brought to prove final perseverance. But they do not prove that a man, who is righteous, cannot run into sin, or leave the fold of Christ and subject themselves to the wrath of God. As that is possible, the apostles exhorted primitive Christians to hold fast unto the end. And, as the sinner cannot experience the privileges of the saint, it is needful that he be changed, from the former to the latter, by regeneration. But you say that a saint cannot fall away. I would ask, Why? Is it because the heart is cleansed of sin, so that the will cannot choose any thing but what is holy? It is admitted that the heart of the saint has been purified by the blood of Christ, and made clean; and, that it naturally chooses spiritual things. But it must also be admitted, that the mind is controlled by no in-

resistible power which confines it in one particular course. If it is, the individual ceases to be a moral agent.

But one will ask, How can a man who is holy, be enticed away into unholiness, as he loathes sin? I would ask, How did Adam, who was made in the image of God, sin? It is evident that he had power to do this, though his heart was pure; and so have the children of God now. If any forbidden object be presented to the saint; by looking upon it, and not turning off his eyes from beholding vanity, a lust may be generated in the mind to receive it, and know its real worth. And the more he looks at the object, the stronger his lust grows, until he settles into a resolve to throw off his former restraints, and yield to the temptation. But if, instead of looking exclusively to that which would lead astray, the mind listens to the remonstrances of that holy, in-born principle, and follows its dictates, he remains in safety. The temptation itself is no sin to the one tempted; but, if he harbours a lust for the forbidden thing, that is sin. Hence, a saint may be tempted to steal, and still be free from condemnation in the sight of God; but if he, in his mind, give place to a desire for this crime, he is culpable. From these remarks, it is evident that virtue is not an irresistible barrier to sin, if there be any temptations to sin offered to the mind. If it be possible for lust to be generated in the heart of a saint through the influence of temptation, we may inquire if sources of temptation are furnished. Paul said, "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is pres-

ent with me." Rom. 7:21. Beside this law in the members, there is an alluring world, together with a tempting devil, which presents to the child of God temptations on every hand. If so, then there is a danger that some will yield to temptation and be led away, except this be rendered impossible by the control of some invincible, hidden power, which binds the will to choose certain objects to the certain neglect of all others. If it be true that this power is exerted in all who are truly regenerated, there is no danger of final apostacy. And, further, if there is a danger of final apostacy, this resistless power is not exerted. But to show you that the F. W. B. take the correct side of the question, I will attempt to show

1. That there is a danger of final apostacy; and

2. Bring facts to prove that individuals have apostatized.

1. I am to show that there is a danger of final apostacy.

This may be done by looking at the word of God. "And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." Isaiah 1:28. Ezekiel also says, "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby." Ezek. 33:18. Does not the instruction of these texts make it plain that final apostacy is possible? Observe, sir, that neither of these passages contain a supposition, but both are given in positive terms. Would any one think that those prophets, inspired as they were with the

wisdom of God, would express such a sentiment, if they knew that one could not fall from grace? The instruction of our Saviour is full to the point. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." John 15:6. Here Christ compares himself to a vine; and his disciples to branches in him. You cannot say that these were mere professors; for if a man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and, behold, all things are become new. If you still say there is no danger of apostacy, then Christ's instruction in this place, as well as in many others, is vain. This cannot be. Every word which came from his lips was big with meaning. Christ again says, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." Mat. 12:43—45. The unclean spirit had gone out of the man. Is not a man when his heart is cleansed of these evil principles which have infested it, a regenerated man? Was not Mary Magdalene converted when Jesus cast out those seven devils? So every one who is cleansed by our Saviour, is truly clean and fit for heaven. When the evil spirits returned to the man, whence they had gone out,

they found their former abode swept and garnished. They entered in, and the last state of that man was worse than the first. How eminently descriptive is this of the state of many a backslider! We are not at a loss to find those which once gave satisfactory evidence that they were truly regenerated, who for a while maintained a life of godliness, and were patterns of piety; but have relapsed into sin and become more wicked than before.—We may also turn to the writings of some of the apostles, and see that they understood that there was a danger of falling away. Paul says, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised: For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” Heb. 10:23, 26, 29. Shall we say, as your doctrine evidently does, that a man of such dignity as Paul possessed, would use a mere play of words, or wield his pen to describe events that could not happen; and thus excite alarm when there is no occasion for it? He speaks in verse 29, as though some had counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith they had been sanctified, an unholy thing. If they had been sanctified by this blood, they could not be mere professors, but children of God. Then he would exhort others to hold fast their confi-

pence, lest, by apostatizing, as some had, the punishment due to such would fall on them. The same writer says again, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Heb. 6:4—6. You will observe the phrase, *If they shall fall away*. The *if* is not in the original text. Hence Macknight translates it; *And yet have fallen away*. Peter says, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." 2 Pet. 1:9, 10. Here Peter exhorted his brethren to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure. Does not this show that election is not eternal and unconditional? for if it were, how could the diligence of the elect make it sure? Paul says to the Colossians, "And you hath he reconciled, In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprovable, in his sight; If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard." Col. 1:22, 23. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Mat. 24:13. From the above, it is not only made evident to

an unprejudiced mind, that apostacy is possible, but that final salvation is on condition that we endure to the end.

Much more of a similar import could easily be brought; but if you are not convinced by these, you would not be, though a thousand more were added. Indeed you admit, that there is a natural possibility of falling from grace, but try to obviate the difficulty, by saying, "A natural possibility by no means proves that the event ever did or ever will take place." p. 89. You bring one instance to make your assertion plain. "Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews, 'If I should say that I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you.' Now it is true that Jesus had natural power to deny that he knew the Father, and thereby become a liar, from which it appears there was a natural possibility of his doing it. But are we from this form of expression, to believe that there was danger that Christ would become a liar, and so fail in the great work of redemption? Surely not. What, then, would it prove, if exactly this form of expression were used, in Scripture, in relation to the saints falling away? Surely it would prove nothing more than it does in the above case, which is nothing at all." pp. 89,90. Here you say, "Christ had natural power to deny that he knew the Father." I think this idea admits of being questioned, except you take Unitarian ground, and say that he was no more than a mere man. The word of God says, "It is impossible for God to lie." Then if it be impossible for God to lie, it may be questioned whether there be a natural pos-

sibility that Christ could lie. But let that be as it may; or even admit that Christ had ability to lie; yet he had no reference, in this text, to his ability or inability to deny his Father. His attention, as well as that of his hearers, was upon another subject. It was the object of Christ to establish in the most positive manner, that he was the Son of God, and knew his Father. Hence he says, that it would be false should he say that he knew him not, thereby asserting in the most positive terms, that he did know him. Or if we admit that he referred either to the possibility or impossibility of a falsehood, it must be admitted that it was to the latter. Hence this has no reference to the subject before us. If you had quoted the sayings of Paul to his affrighted companions, when wrecked, there would have been some analogy in the two cases. He said, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Was there not a possibility, nay, even a probability, that these sailors would plunge into the bosom of the deep? Would Paul have given this caution, if there had been no danger? Would it not have been useless? Or you might have taken what this apostle said at another time. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." If it were impossible for him to get away, why must he labour lest he get away? Had the apostle, while travelling on the solid land, said I must use my utmost endeavour to prevent falling into the earth, would not his hearers justly thought him insane? Would not

this have been a sure token of madness? If your doctrine be true, much of the Bible contains as manifest tokens of insanity. From Genesis to Revelations, there are frequent and earnest exhortations to continue, to hold out to the end, to endure, not to turn aside, not to run astray. Then we could as well strike out of the Bible much of its present contents.

On p. 87, you intimate that there is not a passage of Scripture which gives the information that any true believer ever fell away and perished. Admitting this to be the case, would that prove that the thing never happened? It is a very important event for one to die in full hope of a glorious immortality; and it would be naturally supposed, that when one died in that state, some notice would be taken of it. But even if we had no historical evidence that any ever did leave the world after this manner, it would not be supposed, that this circumstance made it certain that it never happened; especially, when we take into consideration the promises and encouragements of the gospel. You may think, at first thought, that you can prove, by direct historical testimony, that many have died under the expectation of a better world. But how many will you find? You have the historical evidence which you call for, that Stephen, Lazarus, and the thief on the cross, left the world in hope; but where is another. I do not take into account the writings of the Revelator, as direct historical proof is what we want. If we have not this testimony, that all Christians in the days of the apostles and saints in those of the prophets died in hope,

will you say they did not die in this state of mind? I think you would not. Then your argument proves nothing more. But we are by no means in want of historical proof of the apostasy of believers. This brings us

2. To produce facts to prove that individuals have fallen from grace.

1. The first case that I will introduce is that of Saul, the son of Kish. We find that this man was selected to govern the people of God. He received another heart, and was found among the prophets. He for a while obeyed the commands of God; but at length he neglected the injunctions of the Almighty and it is said, 1 Sam. 16:14, "But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul." See also 1 Sam. 28:16. "Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee and is become thine enemy?" If we follow the sequel of Saul's history, we find that he put an end to his own life, by falling upon his sword. 1 Sam. 31:4. Hence you must suppose that he, though once led by the Spirit of God, and of course a son of God, fell away, and died a wicked man.

2. Judas Iscariot is evidently another who fell from grace. On p. 88, you have anticipated this case, and endeavoured to make it appear that Judas never was regenerated. But, I think you have utterly failed in your point. We will however turn to the history of this man and examine it again. The first that we hear of him, he was chosen with the twelve to be one of Christ's apostles; Mark 3:14, 19—to be with Christ, and to go and preach the gospel. To

them was given power to cast out unclean spirits and heal all kinds of diseases. Mat. 10:1—5. This, you will observe, was in the first of our Lord's ministry. The next that we have of the biography of Judas, was what transpired six days before the passover. He complained of the affusion of the ointment upon his Master, pretending that it should have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor; not, however, because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief; and, as he had been chosen the common treasurer of the little band, he had an opportunity of purloining a part of the money that was committed to his care. Mat. 26:6—10. Mark 14:3—6. John 12:1—6. Immediately Satan entered into Judas to sell his Master, which he engaged with the chief priests to do, for only thirty pieces of silver. Mat. 26:14. Mark 14:10. Luke 22:3—6. After this, we find him at the table with the eleven, receiving a sop from his Lord. Mat. 26:20. Mark 14:18. Luke 22:14. The supper being ended, Satan urged him on to put into execution that diabolical and heaven-daring deed which he had determined in his own heart to perform. He accordingly followed the devil, to whom he had given up his whole soul; and betrayed the Saviour of the world into the hands of his cruel murderers. Mat. 26:47. Mark 14:13. Luke 22:47. John 13:27. 18:3. When this perfidious wretch saw that Christ did not defend his own person, he repented, carried the money back, and went and hanged himself. Mat. 27:3—5. After looking at this history of Judas, what shall we think of his character? Shall we

say that he was a bad man at the first? Then Christ chose a devil to cast out devils, a sinner to preach to sinners, a thief to reform thieves, and one of Satan's prominent subjects to help establish the church of God, which consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. This looks too improbable to be admitted, did not the support of a favourite creed depend upon its admission. What Christ says to the twelve, throws much light upon the subject. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luke 22:28—30. Here we find that Christ had appointed a kingdom for them and an exalted state of glory. But says Christ again, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled." John 17:12. By this we see that Judas was one that God the Father gave to Christ the Son; but he was lost. Indeed, we have as much to prove that Judas was once a good man, as we have to prove that the others were. But you object to this, and say that Christ said he was a devil. This we admit. He surely was a devil at that time, for Satan had entered into him. But if he was a bad man, and a devil from the first, how could Satan enter into him, being already in him? Could Satan enter into Satan, or into a place where he already dwelt? Again, he was called

a thief; but it is not said that he was a thief from the first. Circumstances make it appear much to the contrary. Christ of course was acquainted with the character of his apostles; and does it seem at all probable, that one, who was known to be a thief, would be chosen a treasurer for the company? Such an idea can hardly be admitted; but rather, that he was at first a confidential man, but afterwards, through the deceitfulness of riches, which has ruined thousands, he gave up to temptation, run into sin, went on in his mad course, till he sold his Master whom he once loved sincerely. But say you, "While his character stood the fairest that it ever did, he was known to be a thief, and destitute of compassion for the poor, which very strongly marks the character of an unregenerated man." p. 88. This you cannot prove, from the Bible, for it gives no intimation that Judas at the first was not a good man.

3. I will only mention a few facts recorded in the epistles, where individuals have apostatized. Paul says, "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan." 1 Tim. 1:19, 20. Here were two in particular, who made shipwreck of their faith. Peter also says, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was

washed, to her wallowing in the mire." 2 Pet. 2:21,22. Here the apostle gives an account of certain individuals who, having been cleansed, turned to their former corruption.

I might also introduce many of the children of Israel who fell into sin and died a hopeless death. But enough has been brought to convince every one, who is open to conviction, that the F. W. B. have taken correct ground as to this point.

You, however, have quoted certain scriptures, which you think prove the impossibility of falling from grace. Suppose that your construction upon these scriptures be the most obvious and natural; yet, if we find six passages which cannot be construed to prove your doctrine, but directly the reverse, to three which you can find that with your construction favour it, which shall we believe, these six plain declarations, or your construction upon the three? It seems that an unprejudiced mind would be guided by the six. But we do not wish to go on this principle. It is allowed that the scriptures which you have quoted, are expressive of the complete safety of the righteous, while they remain in Christ. None can pluck them out of his hands; but as remarked before, if they give up to the temptations of sin and revolt from Christ, they are no longer safe; but the wrath of God abideth upon them.

Say you, "When inquiring into the safety of believers, we shall obtain much assistance by considering their justification. By what, then, are believers justified? They are justified either by grace, or by works, or by grace

and works together. The Scriptures, abundantly, and with great plainness, declare, that by the deeds of the law, or by works, no one shall be justified in the sight of God. If believers are justified partly by works and partly by grace, we would ask, What proportion of works is absolutely necessary? What is the least amount, which when incorporated with the grace of God, will justify the soul? Must there be two thirds, or will one half, or one quarter be sufficient? But where is there any Scripture for such a method of justification? The subject matter of the believers' justification is, the righteousness and atonement of Jesus Christ." pp. 90,91. In reply to what you here ask, I would bring a metaphor. There is a vessel which is about to sail from America to England. A family, having a desire to go to E. embark on board this vessel. One of the family, by not obeying the regulations of the captain, and becoming very inattentive, falls overboard, and is drowned; while the others follow the orders of the commander, and arrive safe at their destined port. I would inquire, upon what did the safety of the survivors depend; upon their own efforts, or upon the vessel? Upon the vessel. The answer to your question then, is plain, that the safety of believers depends entirely on Jesus Christ, the great Ark of safety. But if one becomes careless and inattentive to duty, and listens to some delusive song, at the same time neglecting to watch and pray, he is in danger of falling away, and becoming engulfed in the dark sea of final perdition. But you may still say, that in this simile, the individual's safety depends on

his own endeavours. Admit that this is the case. Then his own exertions save him from sinking. But suppose the ship sinks, will his exertions save him now? If they saved him before, they will now. But no, he sinks with the vessel. All that he can do will be unavailing. So with regard to the Christian; yet he must watch and pray lest he fall after the similitude of others.

You again say, "How does it dishonour the work of the Holy Spirit, and the merits of Christ, to talk of the Spirit's relinquishing the work of grace in the soul, and of God's condemning to eternal death those whom he had pardoned and justified wholly on account of the merits of his dear Son." p. 92. We will turn to the simile above used. Would any one think that the ship would be more dangerous to sail in, because one had lost his life through his own neglect? Certainly not. Nor is it a dishonour to God to say that "of all thou gavest me have I lost none, but the son of perdition." In that vessel, which bears safely to the destined port those who abide therein, we need not fear to risk our all; but embark under the full expectation that, if we obey our Captain, we shall outride the tempestuous storms that fall on the ocean of time, and anchor safely in the haven of eternal repose.

But say you, "When he justified them freely by his grace, it was in full view of all their iniquities, past, present, and to come." p. 92. Is not this another horn of ancient Calvinism? Does not this doctrine coincide with the following, which is quoted from an ancient writer?

“ From the time thy transgressions were laid upon Christ, thou ceasest to be a transgressor to the last hour of thy life; so that now thou art not an idolater, thou art not a thief, &c. thou art not a sinful person, whatsoever sin thou committest.—God does no longer stand offended nor displeased, though a believer, after he is a believer, do sin often:—that the Lord has no more to lay to the charge of an elect person, yet in the height of iniquity, and in the excess of riot, and committing all the abominations that can be committed. There is no time but such a person is a child of God.”

In describing the effect of your doctrine upon the hearts of those who believe it, you give us to understand that it does not encourage negligence in them; “but,” say you, “they are encouraged to fight the good fight of faith, by an assurance of victory; to endure the storms and temptations of life, by an assurance of safely entering the haven of eternal rest.” pp. 95, 96. The F. W. B. believe as firmly as you, that if those, who have been truly converted, fight the good fight of faith, they will be sure conquerors through the worthy name of Him who first loved us. Hence says the apostle, *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing it is God that worketh in you.* Christ also, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.* John also, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* If the child of God do these things, he may look for success; but if not, he has no

reason to expect to enter the gates of paradise. All that the Christian does, however, is not to merit salvation; but it is in obedience to the commands of God, and is the fruit of true faith. From this it appears that you take F. W. B. ground to prove that your doctrine does not encourage negligence in those who believe it. But take your own, and what does it do? Say to a man—Christ, in view of all the sins that you may commit, forgave you; and hence if you sin you are no sinner, for you have been freely justified by Christ; and he lays nothing to the charge of God's elect—would he not be encouraged to yield to temptation and cease to bear the cross? And if he feels an inclination to sin, he could say, I am sure of heaven, for I have been regenerated; and I can do this, and yet be in the way to rest. But you acknowledge that your doctrine encourages negligence in those who have been striving to save themselves by their own efforts, p. 94. Let us take this for the criterion, and look over those who believe your doctrine; and what is the conclusion? When we see so many cold, lifeless professors, dead, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, lulling themselves to sleep, what shall we think of them? You answer, They never were regenerated. Then how few of those who believe in your doctrine have been regenerated! Exhort them to duty, and they will reply, I have no doubt of my regeneration; consequently I am safe, let me do as I may.

§ 17. GENERAL ANIMADVERSIONS.

Having now gone through with a short review of those remarks which could be reduced to general classes; you will permit me to give your Letters another cursory examination; and take up some of those expressions and subjects which have been passed in silence.

On p. 10 you request E. N. to go to her place of retirement; and pray to be led into the way of truth and "for a heart to believe and rejoice in the doctrine of the Bible." This is a course that should be taken by all professors. When about to enter upon any concern we should think that, *Thou God seest me.* And it becomes us to pray to be led into the way of truth and peace. But as it is supposed that Calvinism is what you mean by truth, and the doctrine of the Bible, you have exhorted E. N. to a wrong practice, if you would lead her into that. Many, by prayer, have been led out of it; but where is one who, by devotion, was led into it? It is generally the case that when converts first come out, they are free in their sentiments; but after a while they get low in religion and then it is sometimes the case that you hear but little from them except the fruit of the seeds of Geneva.

On p. 11 you sign yourself, "Affectionate Pastor." When coming to this; and reflecting that you were writing to a lamb that once belonged to your flock, but had left, it occurred to me, that you did not feed her with the sincere milk of the word, for that will make

lambs contented; but if they have no meat but the doctrine of decrees, how can they be flourishing in the court yards of our God. It is an unpleasant sight to see so many in such a sickly, languid state for the want of that bread which cometh down from heaven. It is to be hoped that the time is ushering in when the church will be fed less with the drugs of man and more with that spiritual manna which gives life and health.

P. 18, say you, "Unlimited danger is done to the souls of men, in times of revival of religion, by having no distinction made between the exercises of the renewed and unrenewed heart." I would ask to what "souls" you refer. You do not mean that the souls of the elect can be injured; for God will begin a work in them, at some time, which he will carry on, "thus securing them from final apostacy." Can you mean the souls of the reprobate? They are unrenewed and God has decreed, in effect, not to renew them; thus they are in as bad a state, as they can be; how then can their souls be injured, even if they are taught to believe, that they are of the elect? On your hypothesis it seems to be folly to say that the want of a certain distinction is an "unlimited danger to the souls of men;" as all are irrevocably doomed to a certain state, which they must unavoidably inhabit.

But who are they that do not make a distinction, in times of revival, between the exercises of the renewed, and unrenewed heart? Do you say, they are the F. W. B. That is not correct. They make a great distinction,

in such cases. As there is a marked difference between the state of those who are renewed and those who are unrenewed, they labour to suit their instruction to their hearers, as they need. Those who have been delivered from the burthen of sin and condemnation, and feel the spirit of adoption so that they can say, *Abba Father*, the F. W. B. consider to be converts, and instruct them accordingly. But those who still feel, that their iniquity is set in array before them, and can claim none of the promises, but whose whole soul is bent on obtaining a pardon, they consider as convicted and repenting sinners. Perhaps they would encourage these to *seek the Lord*, though you hold it up as a delusive practice. But the following it would appear from your writing, is your manner of proceeding. To those whom you think unrenewed you give no encouragement to pray, even if they are serious and mourning on the account of sin; but labour to inform them that they are sinners and in an awful state, where they must wait until the irresistible power of God comes and changes the heart? but when you are convinced, that one is changed, then you begin to encourage him to hope in God, to seek the Lord, pray for a new heart, &c. This makes me think of a man who, seeing another in a river, near drowning, ran to the bank and stood screaming; You are in the river! You will drown! without once extending any means to save the poor man who was struggling for life. But it happened that he got out of the river. When the one on the shore, almost exhausted with describing to the

other, his hopeless case, saw this, he ran and began to scramble about to get the man out of the water. Say you, "My soul trembles for those who thus teach, and for those who are instructed in this way of delusion." Why does your soul "tremble for those who thus teach," or for those who are instructed in the way of delusion? On your hypothesis, all this was fore-ordained and cannot be different. Moreover whatever delusion may be practiced, it cannot effect the certainty that one must be saved and the other damned. Do you tremble at the accomplishment of what God has decreed?

On p. 22, you also remark, "It is to be seriously feared that many, after passing through these changes, which touch nothing but the passions, imagine that they have 'got religion.' The *changes* referred to in this place are, the excitement of the passions. I would ask if you suppose that the F. W. B. are more likely to mistake a move of the passions only, for a change of heart, than others are? Could we not find a few, even in your denomination, who have been deceived? Most certainly, if your sentiment on final apostacy is true; for many could be found, of whom we can have no evidence that they are now the children of God. You cannot, in reality, think that the doctrine of the F. W. B. is more disposed to make one rest on a false hope, than yours; for they, as well as you, believe in experimental religion, and lay down certain signs by which the convict may determine the true state of his mind. If, on questioning a man, he says that he has obtained, in his own mind, those evidences which

both B. and F. W. B. produce, as signs of regeneration, and his daily walk and conversation correspond with what he pretends, it is admitted that he has passed from death to life. However, much care should be used, in examining the state of the mind, and great caution, lest we encourage a person to rest on a false hope, and thus cease from that course which an unregenerated man should pursue. I said evidences which both B. and F. W. B. produce; for both produce nearly the same. It is evident that a man who intends to deceive, will sometimes succeed, with you or others; so that you cannot, in justice, charge the F. W. B. with encouraging deception, more than yourself.

Pp. 33,34. "Some preachers tell their hearers, that they can effect this change, without any more divine assistance than every man receives; and further, that if ever the work is done, they must begin it." What preachers tell their hearers such a story as this? Those of the F. W. B. would be your answer, for you say that the above sentiment is one of the errors of the doctrine which E. N. fellowships. Hence, you give the world to understand, that those who preach this sentiment are F. W. B. preachers. I must say that, as far as they are concerned, this assertion has not the least foundation in *truth*. They do not tell their hearers that *they* must begin this work; and, that *they* can effect this change. Their doctrine, on this point, has been already shown in a former section.

P. 34. "What condition of salvation did you

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perform, acceptably to God, while your carnal mind, though awakened, was enmity against him?" It appears, by this and what is written on pp. 12, 20, 29, that you understand the *carnal mind* to be the heart of the sinner, before it is changed. Then the carnal mind can, not only be awakened, as you intimate, but it can be changed and become a spiritual mind. But Paul says, "*It (the carnal mind) is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" If that cannot be subject to the law of God, it does not mean the heart; for that, you allow, can become subject to the law of God. But the carnal mind seems to be that spirit of enmity which dwells in the hearts of the unconverted. It is that sensual, devilish principle, which prompts men to sin. It is impossible for that to be changed; for hatred cannot be turned into love, nor enmity into friendship. Nor can this spirit be so modified and subdued, that it can remain in the heart with true love. No; it must either be destroyed or driven from the heart. If this idea be correct, is it not folly to say that the carnal mind can be awakened?

Pp. 36,37. You give the experience of one who, you admit, has true repentance; and who, after prayer and sincere supplication to God, is changed. "I was sensible that I deserved no favour from the hand of my offended, dishonoured Maker. Sin against a being so holy, righteous and good, appeared 'exceedingly sinful,' and I felt to abhor myself. After trying various expedients, I found all my efforts to obtain relief were insufficient. I believed that Jesus came into the world to save sinners, that

he was able and willing to save, but I knew not where to find him; and besides, my guilt appeared so great, that I expected nothing but condemnation. Then I cried to the Lord, and with tears and anguish, I poured out my soul at the throne of grace. And O! that memorable hour! Then did I resign myself into the hands of God; and a sweet sense of affection and delight, in view of his character, and in view of the Lord Jesus, seemed to fill my whole heart. Then was given to me the first intimation of pardon and life. Then did the dark, threatening cloud of despair separate, and disclose to my view, a precious Saviour, who, with open arms, received my perishing soul. It appeared to me then, and it has often since, that if the whole world should come to him, he would cast none of them out." This, sir, is just such an experience as the F. W. B. tell. They do not say any more about *doing*, than you have, in this experience. It seems, that, while relating this, you got almost out of your shackles, and almost became a free man. I hope you will make no more complaint if "*that people*" require such experiences. They hold, as before shown, that they are saved by grace alone. It is all grace from the foundation to the top stone. By grace the attention of the sinner is called up and the heart changed. By grace we are saved from sin here, and obtain an everlasting salvation hereafter. But you say that this convert *did* something; and that something, we think, is what God requires; viz. that the sinner cease to fight against his Maker, give his heart to God, fall passively at the feet

of Jesus, begging for a pardon of his sins, and an acceptance with the Beloved. This is all he can do. This he cannot do without the assistance of grace. And when he has done all he can, if God does not change his heart, down to ruin he must go.

Pp. 50,51. "Why not say, as a public speaker once said, in my hearing, that 'God does not pour out his Spirit any more at one time than at another?' This man was opposing the sovereign displays of divine grace, and labouring to show, that what are called Reformations, result entirely from the resolutions, determinations, and other efforts of the people. He then told his hearers, that whatever remained to be done towards their salvation, they must do, for God had done his part, having done all that was necessary, and would do no more. This gentleman was of no less distinction than a Bishop in the denomination which he represented. He was, undoubtedly, consistent in these declarations, with other parts of his religious system—Such, my dear sister, are the inconsistencies of the doctrine which you say you now fellowship." You say this man was a Bishop. I suppose you know that the F. W. B. have no office of that kind. Then, why would you charge the errors of that Bishop to their doctrine? Do you think, that, because he preached as he did, the F. W. B. believe as he preached? This is new logic indeed. If a Frenchman, on entering England, should pass a house of blacks, and infer from this, that all the inhabitants of America are black, his inference would be the same as yours. You

heard a man who was not a F. W. B. preach. Because that man (no matter who he was) held forth certain errors, you give the world to understand that the *F. W. B.* adhere to them. I am sure that I can see no connection between your premises and conclusion. And I am unable to reconcile it on any other ground, than that on which you reconcile some of your *doctrines*. That is, to call it a mystery and let it go. But you know, sir, that we are naturally very inquisitive; and wish to look as far into mysteries as we can. Hence the question is asked, on reading your book, Who is that Bishop? It must be a Methodist, according to Mr. Butler's own statements, is the answer at once. If this Bishop was a Methodist, did you not misunderstand him? It appears that you think you did not; for you say, "He was undoubtedly consistent in these declarations, with other parts of his religious system." But in reference to this, let all the works of the M. which I have perused, together with all the preachers and private members of that denomination with whom I have had acquaintance, answer, "If Mr. B. intends to charge the Methodists with the errors said to be advanced by that Bishop, together with the errors printed in his *Friendly Letters*, his charges are wholly wanting for truth." As it is thought by many, that you intended to bear against the M. as well as F. W. B. you might easily free yourself from blame, as it regards them, by giving the name of that Bishop. For if there is no erroneous idea conveyed respecting his sentiments, he must have been a Roman Catholic,

or something of the kind. But if you still refuse to give his name, you must expect that many will retain their present unfavourable impression, as to the purity of your intention.

P. 51. "The doctrines you have renounced, relate to subjects of infinite importance." You are aware, sir, that when the subject of doctrine relates to the institutions of men, or devils, the phrase is in the plural number, *doctrines*; but when it relates to an institution of Christ and the apostles, the term is *doctrine*, in the singular number. I observe that when you speak of the system of decrees and election, you say *doctrines*; and when you refer to that religious system to which E. N. has attached herself, you use the term *doctrine*. Then, from your own use of words, we should infer that she had left the *doctrines* of men, and embraced the *doctrine* of Christ and his apostles.

P. 19. Speaking of the unregenerated, you say, "They have all the *natural* ability which is necessary to perform every divine requirement." If I understand your meaning, we receive from nature, unassisted by the grace of God, an ability to obey all his commandments. Or, without any agency of Jesus Christ, we of ourselves have power to obey all the injunctions of Heaven. Let us trace this idea to some of its conclusions.—God commands all men every where to repent. Then all men every where have an ability of themselves to repent. But says Christ, "Without me ye can do nothing"—God says, "Be ye holy for I am holy." Then we have power of ourselves to become holy. Indeed we can keep all the commands of God, have a

right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city; all this without the atonement made by Christ. On what principle, then, should we be saved? By grace? No, for we had no divine assistance. Then would it be on any other ground than that of works? By no means, for it is all of ourselves. But I little thought of finding among your *doctrines*, one, that we can save ourselves by our own efforts. You have held up such an idea as monstrously absurd, a soul destroying doctrine, &c. Would it not be well for you to cast the beam out of your own eye before you attempt to inspect the faults of others?

P. 97. "That you may be enlightened, and enabled to retrace your misguided steps, and return to the fellowship of this church, in the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel, is, my dear sister, the prayer of your affectionate pastor." Here we also see that, in your opinion, E. N. has taken a course of error. She has left you and gone among the F. W. B. Hence she must be wrong, as you think. No wonder that you thus think, having so erroneous an idea of "that people." From what I have quoted of your Letters, together with much which is passed in silence, your idea of us is something as follows, viz: that we believe, that we of ourselves can, at any time we please, become serious, think on religious things, forsake our former habits, go to meetings and ask for prayers, get our passions wrought up to a high degree, read the Bible and other religious books, and thus effect in ourselves a change of heart; that we can continue in a course of ab-

stinence from sin, working our hearts gradually into a love for devotion, pious company, &c. &c. and thus fit ourselves, by our own exertions, for heaven. I have no doubt that this is your opinion concerning us. For this reason, you start, when you hear a F. W. B. state that it is all of grace that we are saved; and would say to such an one, You are not in unison with the F. W. B. if you believe in being saved by grace; for they hold to saving themselves by works. But it seems that when you are closely interrogated upon this subject, your only subterfuge is to say, I dont know so particularly about the F. W. B. It appears abundantly clear from your proceeding, that this statement is true; for had you been acquainted with this doctrine, you would not have attempted to insinuate into the public mind that they reject almost every thing that is true, and adhere to nothing but a collection of errors. But will your ignorance of their true belief exonerate you from blame? By no means; for it is obligatory upon a writer to know the truth of all facts which he makes public.

§ 18. CONCLUSION.

I have not expressed an opinion upon your Letters, sir, on the examination of a few pages only, as some did who recommended them to the public; but have gone through with a careful perusal and reperusal of your work. As to your design in publishing, I think I have given

an expression of public opinion; viz. that you designed them against the F. W. B. and that you also "had an eye to the Methodists." In respect to the F. W. B. I have attempted to show, that they believe that man, of himself considered, is morally disordered; that without the influence of the Spirit of God preventing and furthering the creature, none can think a good thought or perform a good act; that they take the word of God as their only rule of faith and practice; that they believe that regeneration is indispensable to salvation; that it is the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart; that creature agency cannot be employed in it; that it is an instantaneous change; that it is preceded by repentance; that all the creature can do has no effect in saving him; that God has not foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; that election to life is not unconditional; that final apostacy is possible; yet, that none need be lost, as salvation is free for all, so that all may repent, turn to God, continue unto the end, and thus, through the grace of God, receive the gift of eternal life.

Having shown you in short what we believe on those points which your work contains, I will now give a brief outline of our sentiment on the remaining points of the Christian doctrine. According to our understanding of our articles of faith, there is only one living and true God, (Deut. 6:4, Isa. 44:8,) the Creator of the universe, (Isa. 40:28,) a Being who is holy, (John 17:11,) eternal, (Isa. 40:28,) infinite in wisdom, (Ps. 147:5, 139:1—12, Acts 15:18, Rom. 11:33, 16:27, Col. 2:3,) power,

(Gen. 17:1, Job 42:2, Mat. 19:26,) justice, (Deut. 32:4, Ex. 37:7,) goodness and truth, (Ex. 34:6, Ps. 145:9,) invisible, (1 Tim. 1:17,) unchangeable, (Mal. 3:6,) omnipresent, (Acts 17:27,) omniscient, (1 Kings 8:30, Jer. 17:10, 1 Sam. 2:3, 1 Chron. 8:9,) the preserver of the universe, (Job 7:20, Ps. 36:6, 145:20,) the supreme Governor of the universe, (Ps. 47:7, 10:16, 1 Tim. 6:15,) the only object of religious worship, (Mat. 4:10, Ex. 34:14, Luke 23:46,) whom it is the duty of man to love supremely; (Mark 12:30;)

That Jesus Christ, the Son of God, (Mat. 14:33, 26:63,64, Mark 1:1, 3:11, 15:39, Luke 1:35, 22:70,) is Immanuel, or God with us; (Mat. 1:23;) Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the ending, the Almighty; (Rev. 1:8,11;) the Word, which was God and made flesh, (John 1:1,14,) or, took upon him flesh, (Heb. 2:16,) or God manifest in the flesh; (1 Tim. 3:16;) thus setting an example for us to follow; the Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace; (Isa. 9:6;) by whom and for whom all things were created, and are preserved; (Col. 1:16,17, Heb. 1:10, 12;) one with the Father, (John 10:30,) omnipresent, (Mat. 18:20, 28:20,) immutable, (13:8,) the Lord of all, (Acts 10:36,) Lord of lords and King of Kings, (Rev. 17:14,) who is to be worshipped the same as the Father, (Heb. 1:6, John 5:23,) who, in his offices, is a Prophet. (Luke 1:76, John 7:40, 4:19, 9:17,) Priest, (Heb. 7:17, 9:11,12,) King, (Luke 19:38, 23:3,) Judge of the world at last, (Acts 10:42, 2

Tim. 4:1, 1 Pet. 4:5, Acts 17:30,) the Saviour of the world; (Luke 2:11, John 4:42, Acts 5:31, 13:23, 1 Tim. 1:1;)

That the Holy Ghost is that Comforter which has come into the world to reprove it of sin, &c. (John 14:16,26, 15:26, 16:7—11,) who is said to approve, (Acts 15:28,) to be vexed, (Isa. 63:10,) to be resisted, (Acts 7:51,) to strive, (Gen. 6:3,) to hear and speak, (John 16:13,) to direct, (Acts 8:29,) to forbid, (Acts 16:6,) to guide, (Acts 16:13,) to inhabit as a temple, (1 Cor. 3:16,) to search and know, (1 Cor. 2:10,11,) to discover what he thus knows, (John 16:14,15,) to give life, (1 Pet. 3:18,) to be the object of attempted deception, (Acts 5:3,) eternal, (Heb. 9:14,) omniscient, (1 Cor. 2:10,) by which the heart is renewed, (Tit. 3:5,) sanctified, (1 Cor. 6:11,) and who helps us to persevere; (2 Tim. 1:14;)

That it is the duty of believers, and those only, to be baptized in water by immersion; (Mat. 3:13—16, Mark 16:16, Luke 3:21, John 4:1, Acts 2:38,41, 8:12, 9:18, 10:47, 18:8, 22:16;)

That it is the duty of Christians to commemorate the death of Christ; (Luke 22:19;)

That there will be a general judgment, (Ps. 1:5, 9:7,8, 96:13, Eccl. 11:9, 12:14, Mat. 12:16, 13:49, 25:41—46, Acts 17:31, 24:25, Rom. 2:5—11, 14:10,12, 1 Cor. 4:5, 2 Cor. 5:10, 2 Tim. 4:1, Heb. 9:27, 2 Pet. 3:7, Jude 6,14, 15, Rev. 20:12,13, 22:12,) when the righteous will be received into everlasting happiness, (Ps. 16:11, 73:24, Dan. 12:2,3, Mat. 13:43, 19:29, Luke 18:29, 2 Cor. 5:1,8, 2 Tim. 4:8,

1 Pet. 1:4, 5:4, Rev. 2:10,26—28, 3:12,21, 7:9—17, 21:4,) and the wicked shall be doomed to endless misery, (Prov. 1:26—31, Isa. 50:11, 66:24, Mat. 3:10,12, 10:23,33, 12:31,32, 13:24—42,47—50, Mark 3:29, 8:38, 16:16, Luke 19:27, John 3:21—24, Rom. 2:5—9, 2 Cor. 5:10, Phil. 3:19, 2 Thess. 1:6—10, Mat. 25:41,46.)

From the objections which are raised against your doctrine of election, you may have formed the opinion that we deny that point of doctrine *en toto*. But we do not. We believe in election as well as you; but not after the same manner that you do. By searching the Bible, we find that the term *elect* is variously applied. It means the same as *chosen*.

1. The term *elect* or *chosen*, is applied to many individuals, who were elected to fill certain high stations, either in church or state. Amongst this class are Abraham, (Neh. 9:7,) Jacob, (Ps. 105:6,) Moses, (Ps. 106:26,) Aaron, (Ps. 105:26,) Saul of Tarsus, (Acts 9:15,) Saul the son of Kish, (1 Sam. 10:24,) Solomon, (1 Chron. 29:1,) the tribe of Levi, (Deut. 18:5,) the twelve apostles of Christ, (John 6:70, 13:18, 15:16,19.) Of these individuals it could not strictly be said, that they were chosen from eternity to eternal life. Your doctrine would deny such an idea, for some of them came to their end in sin. Abraham and Jacob were chosen as the progenitors of a people whom God favoured with his law and the birth of Christ; Moses was elected to lead Israel from Egypt to Canaan; Aaron, to be his coadjutor; Saul of Tarsus; to preach the gospel to the

Gentiles; Saul, the son of Kish, to be a king over Israel; Solomon also, to be king; the tribe of Levi, to be priest; and the apostles, to be with Christ while on earth; and go and preach the gospel of his kingdom. Those who filled the stations to which they were called, and kept the commands of God, are among the justified; but if any of them, as some did, run into sin, their election would not save them from eternal perdition.

2. This term is applied to the nation of the Jews, (1 Kings 3:8, 1 Chron. 16:13, Isa. 44:1,) to Jerusalem, (Ezek. 3:2, 1 Kings 11:13, 2 Chron. 6:6,) to Christ, who was chosen to save the world, (Luke 23:35, 1 Pet. 2:4,6, Rom. 8:33.)

3. It is applied to the Gentiles, meaning the choice of God to admit them to certain gospel privileges, which had been confined to the Jews. (Eph. 1:4,5.)

4. It is applied to the true church, or the children of God. (Mat. 20:16, 22:14, Mark 13:20, 1 Pet. 2:9, Rev. 17:14, James 2:5, Mat. 24:31, Mark 13:27, Luke 18:7, Rom. 8:33, Col. 3:12, 2 Tim. 2:10, Tit. 1:1, 1 Pet. 1:2.) These are elected, or chosen through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; (2 Thess. 2:13;) consequently, are not actually chosen, until they are regenerated. Nor are these sure of heaven, although the elect of God, unless they persevere unto the end.

Before closing, shall we briefly look at a few passages in the 9th chapter of Romans? By examining the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of this epistle, we find that the apostle was set-

ting forth, and vindicating the calling of the Gentiles to the privileges of the gospel, to the exclusion of the Jews, as a nation. Such a doctrine was in direct opposition to the notions of the Jews; for they considered themselves the elect of God, and his own people. Of course the preaching of Paul would greatly exasperate them; and cause them to think him their enemy. Hence he assured them that, so great was his regard for his nation, he would willingly suffer any privation, or degradation, if it would benefit them. He began at the sixth verse, to show that it was consistent with the divine promise, to call the Gentiles to the gospel, as well as the Jews. *Not as though the word of God has taken none effect.* The Jews would say, God has not fulfilled his promise to us, if he admit the Gentiles to an equal privilege; for he said, *I will establish my covenant between me and thee, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee.* To such an objection, Paul answers, *They are not all Israel which are of Israel.* The promise was not to the seed after the flesh, but to the spiritual seed, or seed of the promise. Paul continues, *(For the children being not yet born, neither having done either good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)* *It was said unto her, (Rebecca,) the elder shall serve the younger.* The word *children* is not in the original. *Nations*, according to the context and what is said in Genesis, is the correct word to be supplied. In this text, the scope of the apostle's argument seems to be the following,

—If God chose Jacob to be the progenitor of the people whom he had intended to favour with certain distinctions, and excluded Esau, without any reference to the deserts of either, as neither had done good or evil, has he not the same right to choose the Gentiles to the privileges of the gospel, on the same ground? And, if he rejected Esau from this high privilege, who had done no evil, may he not justly reject the Jews from his covenant relation at this time? This election of Israel as a nation, was not merited by any work done by them, but it was the purpose of him who chooses certain nations to be the depositories of his special blessings. It is said, *the elder shall serve the younger*. This could not be affirmed of Jacob and Esau in person; for Esau never served Jacob, but the contrary. This, however, was true of the two nations; for the descendants of Esau did serve those of Jacob. (2 Sam. 8:14.)

As it is written, Jacob have I loved; but Esau have I hated. By a want of attention, some have thought that this assertion was made by God, before the children were born, but it was not. Malachi, the last of the prophets, said this after the nation of Edom had become intolerably wicked. God might justly hate them as he does all wicked men, in a certain sense. Or, if this refers to J. and E. in person, it could only be taken in a comparative sense. It does not mean that God abhorred the one, while he loved the other; but, only that he esteemed the one in a less degree. Indeed I find nothing said of Jacob and Esau that intimates to me, that this election of the one, to the neglect

of the other, was an unconditional election to eternal life, and an unconditional reprobation to eternal death. On the contrary, have we not as good reason to suppose that Esau is in heaven, as that Jacob is? I will not assert, that Esau is happy; but what have we to contradict such an assertion?

So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. Isaac willed the national distinction to be on Esau, and Esau ran to get venison that he might regularly receive it; but both were disappointed, God showing mercy to Jacob, or conferring it on him.

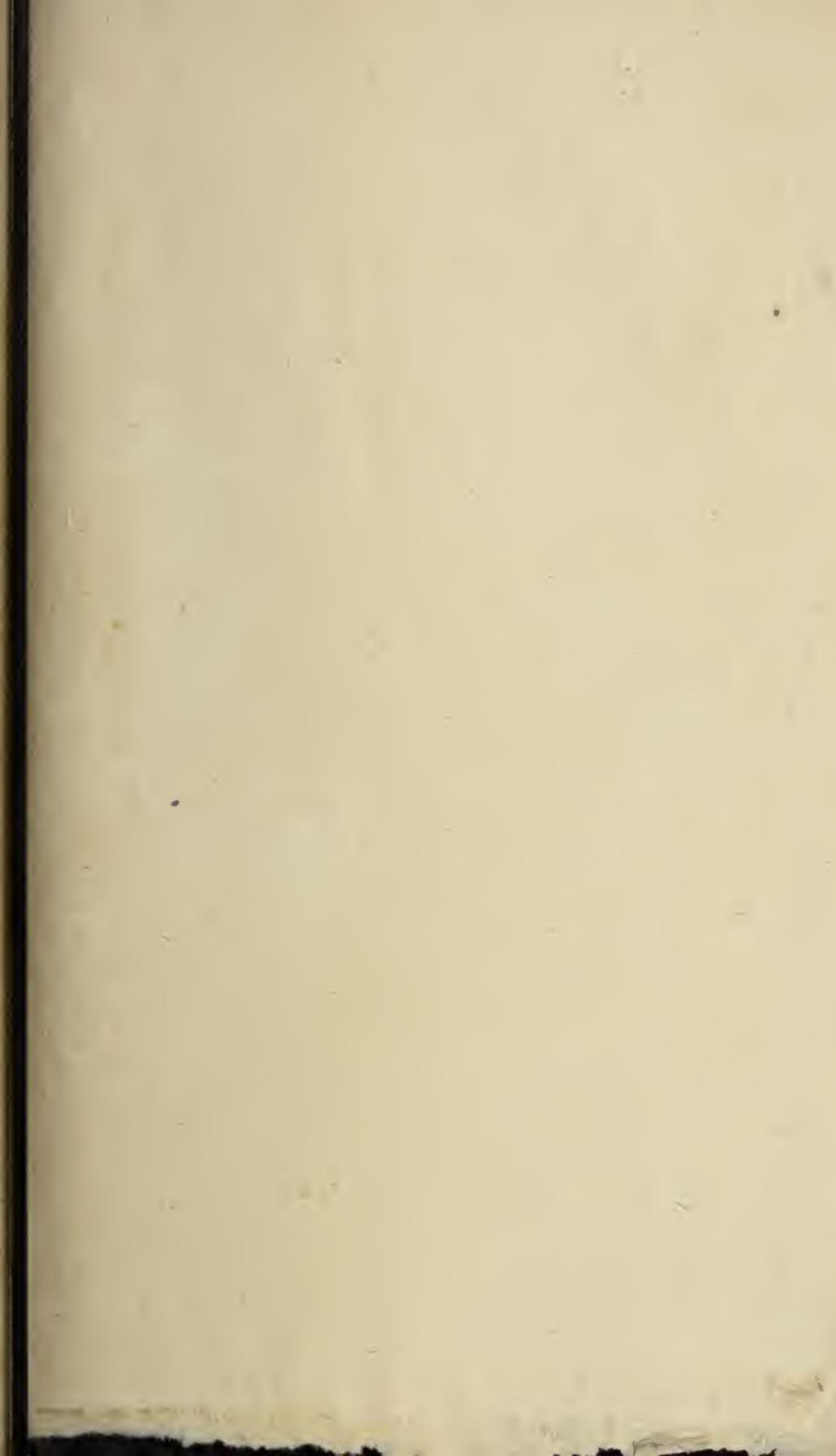
To CONCLUDE.—I must now close this communication, which has taxed your attention perhaps too long, longer than it would have done, but for the infinite importance of many subjects of which it has treated. If on a careful perusal you find any remarks that appear to savour a wrong spirit, be assured, sir, that it was not with design. I have not wished to stir up strife; but the good of the cause has been my aim. And it has been my sincere prayer, to be so directed, that if I can do no good to Zion, I may not do any harm.

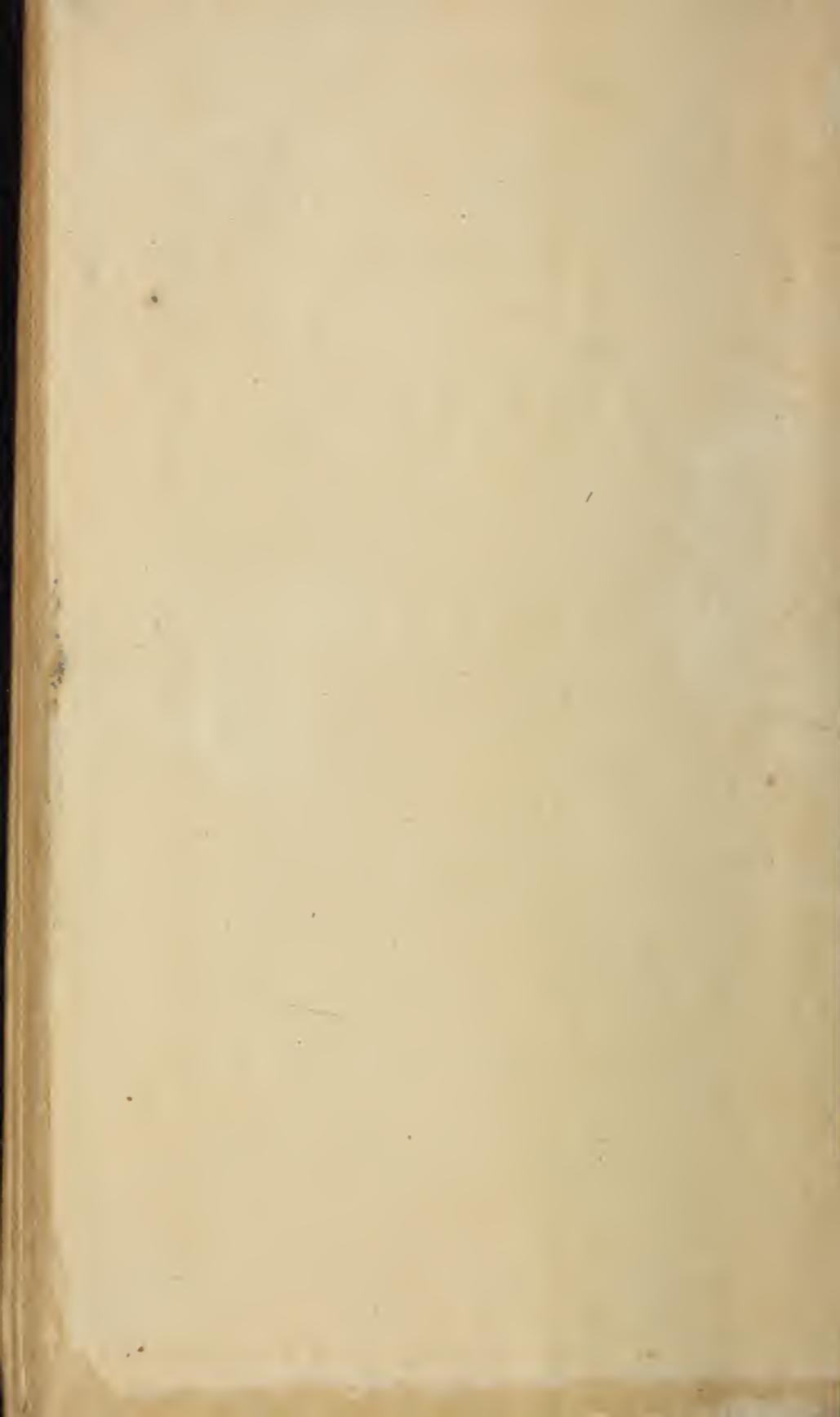
Finally, may the grace of God lead us into all truth, and hasten the happy day when the watchmen shall see eye to eye. May that Spirit which dwelt in the bush keep us from a spirit of hardness while in this world, and fit us to inhabit the paradise of God forever, is the earnest desire of your humble and sincere well wisher.

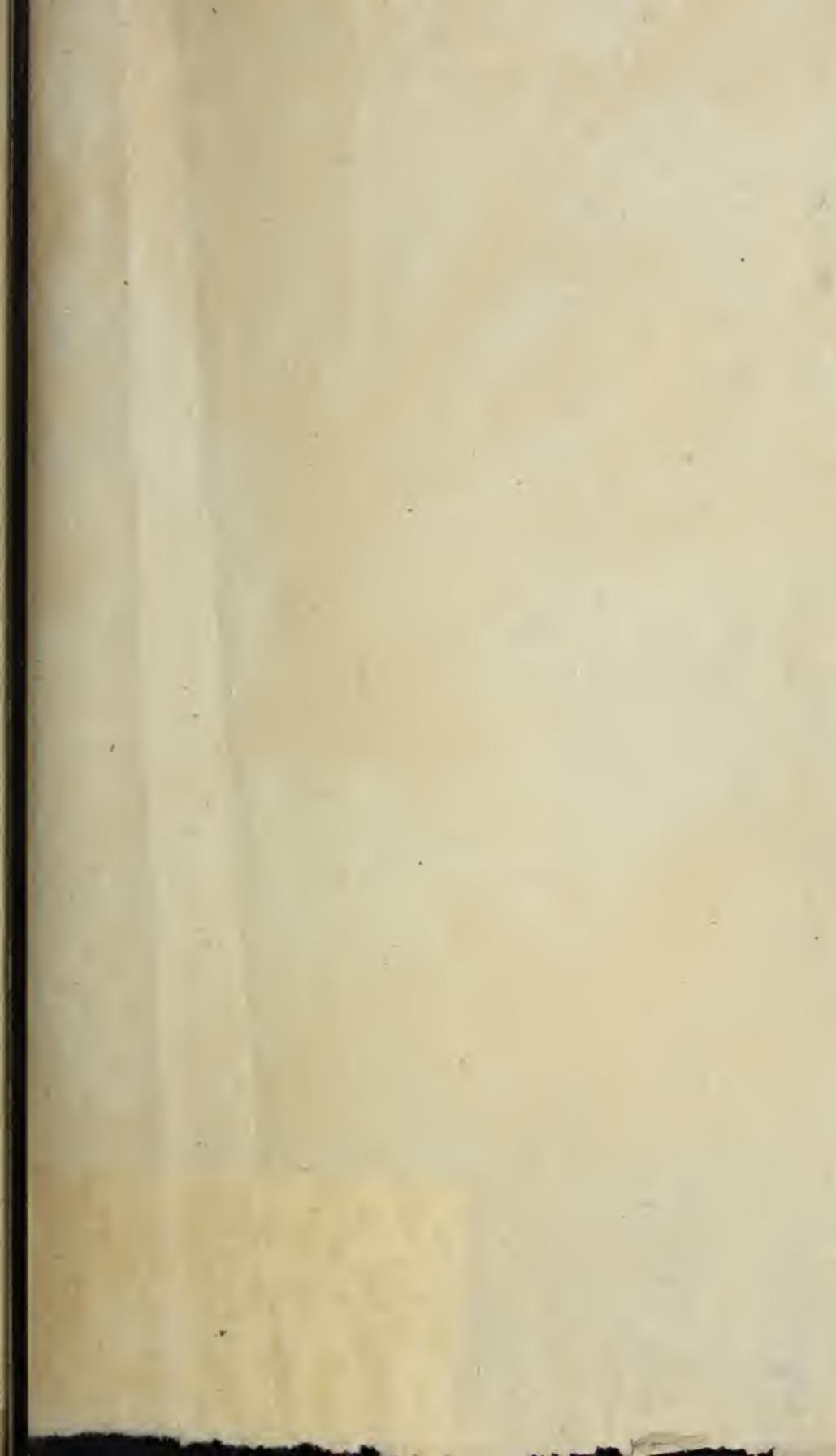
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