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Behalf of Their Rights as Authorized Interpreters of the Bible by  
Catharine E. Beecher

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as Authorized  
Interpreters of the Bible

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AN APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE IN BEHALF OF THEIR  
RIGHTS AS AUTHORIZED INTERPRETERS OF THE  
BIBLE\*\*\*

An Appeal to the People in Behalf of  
Their Rights as Authorized  
Interpreters of The Bible

by Catharine E. Beecher

Author of "Common Sense Applied to Religion," "Domestic  
Economy," "Domestic Receipt-Book," "Letters to the People on  
Health and Happiness," "Physiology and Calisthenics," Etc.,  
Etc.

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AN  
APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE  
IN BEHALF OF THEIR RIGHTS  
AS  
AUTHORIZED INTERPRETERS OF  
THE BIBLE.

BY CATHARINE E. BEECHER,  
AUTHOR OF "MORAL GUILT ATTACHED TO SLAVERY," "SABBATH  
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[iii]

TO The Editors of the Secular Press, THE TRUE TRIBUNES  
OF THE PEOPLE, CALLED OF GOD IN BEHALF OF  
THE COMMONWEALTH TO DEFEND LIBERTY OF CON-  
SCIENCE, FREEDOM OF SPEECH, AND THE RIGHT OF  
ALL TO INTERPRET THE BIBLE FOR THEMSELVES, UN-  
RESTRAINED BY ANY ECCLESIASTICAL POWER, THIS  
VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

[001]

# Chapter I. Introduction.

There is an obvious crisis approaching, in the religious world, on questions of the highest moment. In past time such periods of change have been preceded by a slow and silent preparation, in which multitudes have been led into the same course of thought and feeling. Then, as the crisis approached, some efficient leader lifted the last stone which sustained the protecting dyke, and rode on the summit of the in-rushing tide to notoriety and influence. Thus it was in the day of Luther, in the day of Wesley, and at other periods of religious movement.

At the present time there are indications of a great impending change, which has been preceded by a long course of unobserved preparation. But it is believed that, in this case, it is not to be exhibited, like former ones, by leaders forming new sects and parties, amid more or less of conflict and commotion, but by the agency of *the people*, and by a healthful, quiet process, which, like leaven, shall gradually assimilate surrounding particles till the whole be leavened.

The matter involved is the great question of questions, to each individual for himself, and to every parent and educator for their children: "What must we DO to be saved?"

It is the object of this volume to show that the answer to this great question has, for ages, been involved in mystery and difficulty by means of a *philosophical theory* to account for the "origin of evil," which, in the fifth century, was forced on the people by popes and ecclesiastical councils, and which has been sustained by persecution ever since—that this theory is the basis of a system of religious doctrine incorporated into creeds and churches, which is so contrary to the moral sense of humanity,



that theologians have failed to render it consistent and satisfactory, even to themselves—that *the people* are endowed with *principles of common sense* by which they can educe from the works of God a system of natural religion far superior, which system is briefly set forth, and also the tendencies of the two opposing systems—that *both* systems are so incorporated into church creeds, and into theological teachings, that they are a compound of contradictions, and all the great religious controversies have been efforts to eviscerate the false system from the true, while through the long conflict, it is theologians who have proved the noble confessors and martyrs for truth—that it is impossible to establish the claims of the Bible, or of any other writings, as *revelations* from the Creator, when the Augustinian theory is made a part of their teachings; so that the real question for the people, is “Bible or no Bible”—that the leading theological teachers of the chief sects in this country have virtually conceded that this theory is sustained neither by common sense nor the Bible; and, finally, that the people are about to cast off this dogma, which for ages has darkened the way to eternal life, and by applying the principles of common sense to the Bible, thus establish its agreement with the system of natural religion herein set forth. [003]

In conclusion, the indications of the predicted change are set forth as they are manifested in the present position of theologians—of the parochial clergy—of the church—of educational interests—of women—of “Young America”—and of the religious and secular press.

## Chapter II. The Augustine Theory of the Origin of Evil.

The theory in question was introduced into the Christian church, as an article of faith, in the fifth century, chiefly by the influence of Augustine, an African bishop.

To understand how it was brought about, it is needful to bear in mind the distinction between facts and the philosophical theories that explain the *how* and the *why* of these facts.

Christ and his Apostles taught the fact that all men are sinners, and the way to escape from sin and its penalties. As, at first, Christianity prevailed chiefly among the uneducated, it was not till some three or four hundred years after Christ, that the philosophy of these facts agitated the churches. Augustine was a man of powerful mind and great learning, and with other philosophers, speculated as to “the origin of evil,” or the WHY and the HOW all men came to be sinners.

[004]

By the aid of a few misinterpreted passages in the Bible, the following theory was introduced and mainly by Augustine.

### The Augustinian Theory.

The Creator has proved his power to make minds with such “a holy nature” that they will have no propensity to sin, by creating the minds of angels and of Adam on this pattern. Adam having this holy nature, with no propensity to sin, did sin, and, as a penalty, or in consequence, all his posterity commence existence without this holy nature, and with such a depraved nature that every moral act is sin and only sin until God regenerates each

mind. This favor is bestowed only on a certain “elect” number, whose salvation was purchased by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ.

The rest of the race, after death, are to continue an existence of hopeless torment in hell.

This depraved nature is the “origin of evil;” that is to say, it is *the cause* of all the sin and consequent misery of our race in time and through eternity. It is what is meant by the terms “total depravity,” and “original sin” as used by theologians.

At first the pope and the church councils refused this theory, but eventually, the Augustinian party triumphed; Pelagius and his followers were persecuted and driven out of the church, and thus this dogma was established as a leading feature in all the creeds and confessions of both Catholic and Protestant churches. [005]

So thoroughly has it been adopted that, since the time of Pelagius, there has been little discussion among the great Christian sects on the theory itself. These disputes have chiefly related to certain questions connected with this dogma, which will next be noticed.

## Chapter III. Questions Connected with the Augustinian Theory.

In discussing the topics of this chapter it is needful to refer to certain religious sects and parties of this country in their relations to the subject.

The first class may be denominated the old school Calvinists, embracing the Old School Presbyterian churches, the Reformed Dutch and most of the Baptist denominations.

Their views are ably presented by the theologians of Princeton and their quarterly, and by the Baptist theologians of the Newton Theological Seminary and the Baptist periodicals.

The second class may be called the new school Calvinists, embracing Congregational and New School Presbyterian churches. These are ably represented in New England by the Andover and New Haven Theological Seminaries and their respective quarterlies; and out of New England, by the Theological Seminaries of Union and Lane, and their quarterly at Philadelphia.

[006]

The third class are the Arminian sects, including the Methodists and Episcopalians, whose views are ably presented in their quarterlies and other periodicals in New York and Philadelphia.

## In what does the depraved nature transmitted from Adam consist?

In seeking a definite and clear answer to the question, what is the depraved nature transmitted from Adam, we find so much vagueness and mistiness, that it will be needful to state first what it *is not*, and then it will be more easy to approximate to the affirmative reply.

We find, then, that theologians teach that this depraved nature does not consist in any of those constitutional powers and faculties of mind, of which God is the author. For they maintain that all that God has made is perfect and right, and that he is not the creator of that which is the cause or origin of sin, inasmuch as this would make him “the author of sin,” which they expressly deny. This depraved nature, then, is something which God did not

create. This is what is affirmed when theologians say that they do not teach a “physical depravity” which demands “physical regeneration” on the part of God.

Then on the positive side, we find that this depraved nature is something that mind can be created without, for God made the angels and Adam without it.

It is something which does not prevent sinful action, for Adam sinned before it existed.

It is something which God can at any time remedy, at least to some extent, by regeneration.

It is something which makes every moral act of every human being sin and only sin until regeneration takes place. [007]

It is something which man created himself, either *in* Adam, or *by* Adam, or *before* Adam.

It is something which man never can or never will rectify, so that he is entirely dependent on God for the remedy.

It is something which most theologians describe as “a bias,” or “a tendency,” or “a propensity,” or “an inclination,” or “a proclivity” *to sin*, while its opposite is called a *holy nature* which was created by God, and which consists in a bias, tendency, propensity, inclination or proclivity to holiness.

According to this, God created the holy nature of angels and our first parents, and *man* caused the depraved nature of all of Adam's posterity.

Some theologians attempt to define it as an *unbalanced state of the faculties*, while holiness consists in the perfect balance of the faculties. This balanced state of the faculties conferred at his creation on Adam has been withheld from all his descendants by a constitution formed by God in consequence of Adam's sin. Some theologians define this depravity as *like* a habit. Others hold that it is a state of *the will*, sometimes called a *disposition* or *ruling purpose*.

Some theologians teach that the presence of God's Spirit, in the soul of man is indispensable to its right action, and that

his depraved nature is the result of the “deprivation” of God's Spirit, which was bestowed on Adam, and is withheld from his descendants on account of his first sin. According to this view, a holy mind is one which enjoys the presence of God's Spirit, and a depraved mind is one that is deprived of it.

[008]

## Ability and Inability.

The next question connected with the Augustine theory is in regard to man's power or ability to obey God.

The old school Calvinists hold that man has no power of *any* kind to obey any of God's laws acceptably until his depraved nature is regenerated by God, and also that he has no power to do any thing that has any tendency to secure regeneration. Every act and feeling is sin and only sin from birth to regeneration.

The new school Calvinists hold that man has full power to obey *all* that God requires, but that owing to his depraved nature, he never will perform a morally right act in a single instance, until regenerated, nor will he do any thing that has any promise, or encouragement from the Word of God, as tending to secure regeneration. He is as entirely dependent on God as if he had no power of any kind. And as the inability, whether natural or moral, is all owing to the depraved nature consequent on Adam's sin, the fact that man has power to do what he never will do, only adds to the misery of the condition thus entailed.

The Arminian sects agree in the fact that the sin of Adam entailed such a depraved nature to all the race, as more or less incapacitates for right moral action until regeneration takes place.

The Episcopal Arminians hold to the Catholic view that baptism in part remedies the effects of Adam's sin, so that by the use

of the means afforded by a ministry regularly transmitted from the Apostles, the unregenerate can gain eternal life.

The Methodist Arminians hold that depravity consists in the “*deprivation*” of God's Spirit which was given to Adam, and that the death of Christ has so availed, that man now has some measure of this Spirit restored before regeneration, so that all men have power, by the use of certain appointed means of grace, to gain regeneration. [009]

The main point where the Calvinists and Arminians differ is, that the Arminians teach that man has an appointed mode for gaining regeneration, and the Calvinists teach that he has not.

## What is Regeneration?

The next question is, in what does that great change consist which is called regeneration, and which is indispensable to salvation from eternal woe?

The old school Calvinists say it is a new nature created by God which naturally acts right, in place of a depraved nature which naturally acts wrong and only wrong. With this new nature man has power to obey God acceptably, and without it he has no power of any kind.

The new school Calvinists say that regeneration is a change of the depraved nature of man by God, attended by a *choice* or *ruling purpose* to obey God in all things made by man himself. They teach also that man can and ought to make this choice without any help from God in changing his depraved nature, and yet, owing to this evil nature, he never will do so till God changes it. Meantime God points out no certain way of obtaining this indispensable aid from him.<sup>1</sup>

The Arminians teach that regeneration consists either in the implanting of a new nature by baptism, and the use of other [010]

---

<sup>1</sup> Note A.

means of grace, or in the restoration of God's Spirit which was withdrawn from man on account of Adam's sin, and in some degree restored by Christ's death.

## What must we do to be saved?

The next question for a race thus mournfully ruined is, "What must we do to be saved?"

In reply, the old school Calvinist says, you can do nothing at all. Whoever is saved will be regenerated by God, without reference to any unregenerate doings. It is all decided not by man in any way, but by the "decrees" and "election" of God.

The new school Calvinist says, You *can* do all that God requires, so as to be perfect in every thought, word and deed, from the beginning of moral action to the close of life, but you certainly never *will* feel or do a single thing that is right and acceptable until regenerated; nor will you ever do any thing to which any promise is offered by God as that which will secure his interference to regenerate. It is all decided, not by man, but by the "decrees" and "election" of God.

The Arminians say you can obtain regeneration and eternal life, by the use of the means of grace set forth in the Bible and by "the Church."

## True virtue, or right moral action.

The next question is, what is true virtue, or right moral action?

By *moral action* is meant the act of mind in *choosing*, in distinction from intellectual and other acts of mind.

The Calvinists, both old and new school, teach that true virtue, or right moral action in man, is choosing to obey God's laws



after regeneration takes place. Previous to regeneration, every choice is sin and has no moral goodness or rectitude. Thus truth, honesty, justice, self-denial for the good of others, obedience to parents, are all sin in an unregenerate mind, and true virtue in the regenerate mind.

The Antinomian Calvinist goes so far as to claim that *every* choice of a regenerate mind is right and holy, just as every choice of the unregenerate is sin. Thus the practice of the most hideous vices and crimes becomes virtue in the regenerate.

But all other Calvinists maintain that after regeneration we can and do sin, though previous to this change no truly virtuous act is ever performed.

The Arminians hold that true virtue consists in obeying God's laws, without reference to the question of regeneration. They do not hold, as do all Calvinists, that all the doings of the unregenerate are sinful, and thus have no promise or encouragement in the Bible as having an influence to secure regeneration.

## Chapter IV. The Difficulties Involved in the Augustinian Theory.

The difficulties involved in the Augustinian theory of “the origin of evil,” result from these facts. Our only idea of a benevolent being is that wherever he has the power to produce either happiness or misery, he prefers to make happiness. Our only idea of a malevolent being is that wherever he has this power he prefers to make misery. [012]

Consequently, the affirmation that all the sin and misery of man is the result of a depraved nature which the Creator has power both to prevent and to remove, conveys no other idea than that God prefers to make misery when he has power to make happiness, and thus is a malevolent being.

If God would make all minds perfectly holy, as theologians claim he has power to do, all sin would cease. He chooses not to do so, but rather to perpetuate the depraved nature transmitted from Adam, which is “the origin of all evil.”

Now all classes of theologians who hold to the depravity of man's nature consequent on Adam's sin, agree that this is the cause or origin of all sin and its consequent suffering.

They all agree, also, that God has proved his power to make a perfectly holy nature in the case of angels and of Adam, and that in consequence of the first sin of Adam, every human mind begins to exist with a depraved nature, according to a constitution of things instituted by God.

They all agree that God can regenerate every human mind, and that this boon is withheld, not for want of *power*, but for want of *will* on the part of God.

The difficulty that they have to meet is this—How can the Creator, having done thus, be regarded as any other than a malevolent being, the malignant and hateful “author of sin,” and all its consequent sufferings?

[013]

The following exhibits the several modes of attempting to meet this question.

## The Catholic Method.

The first mode of meeting this difficulty is called that of *mystery* and *sovereignty*. It is simply saying that there is no explanation to be given. It is a mystery that God as a sovereign does not

choose to explain, and it must be submitted to in uncomplaining silence.

This is the Catholic mode which has been perpetuated by many Protestants. It is the same method as is adopted in defending the Catholic doctrine of *transubstantiation*.

All who do not resort to the Catholic mode of mystery and sovereignty, endeavor to relieve the Creator from the charge of being the author of sin by maintaining that *man made his own depraved nature*.

This they set forth in the following ways:

## Mode of Augustine and of President Edwards.

Augustine, the father of this dreadful system, maintained that all men had a common nature *in Adam*, which was ruined by his act, after God had made this common nature perfect. That is to say, every human soul existed as a part of Adam, and thus his act was the act of each and of all. This act vitiated the common nature of all, and thus Adam and each of his posterity caused the depravity of their common nature. And thus, though God had the power to create each mind as perfect as he created Adam's, still he is not the author of sin.

President Edwards, the great New England theologian, taught that all the minds of our race so existed in Adam, and were so one with his mind, that when he chose to eat the forbidden fruit, all his descendants chose to do so too, and thus each man ruined his own nature, and God is not the author of the evil. [014]

## The Princeton Mode.

The theologians of Princeton set forth the following as the mode in which man caused his own depraved nature:

God created Adam with a perfectly holy nature. Adam sinned and ruined his own nature. God had previously “made a covenant with Adam, not only for himself, but for all his posterity, or in other words, Adam having been placed on trial, not only for himself, but also for his race, his act was in virtue of this relation *regarded (by God) as our act*. God withdrew from us as he did from him; in consequence of this withdrawal, we begin to exist in moral darkness, destitute of a disposition to delight in God and prone to delight in ourselves and in the world. The sin of Adam therefore ruined us; and the intervention of the Son of God for our salvation is an act of pure, sovereign, and wonderful grace.”

The above is extracted from a standard writer of the Princeton Theological Seminary, and expresses the views of the Old School Presbyterian church in this matter.

It is simply saying that man made his own depraved nature, inasmuch as God *regarded* Adam's act as our act *when it was not*, being performed before we existed, and that he punished us by withdrawing from us, as he did from Adam, and thus our nature becomes ruined and totally depraved.

[015]

## The Constitutional Transmission Mode.

The next way in which man is made to be the author of his own nature is called the *constitutional transmission mode*. It is as follows:

God made Adam with a perfectly holy mind, and then Adam sinned and ruined his own nature. *In consequence* of this act, God established *such a constitution of things* that Adam transmitted

his depraved nature to all his posterity, just as bodily diseases are transmitted from parents to children.

In this way *man* is said to be the author of his own depraved nature, meaning, by man, *Adam*.

In this case it is conceded that God had power to make such a constitution of things as that all human minds would begin existence, as Adam did, with perfectly holy minds, and that instead of this, he chose that such a depraved nature should be transmitted to all as would insure universal sin. And yet it is claimed that by this mode, man, and not God, is shown to be “the author of sin.”

This is the mode adopted by most of the Andover and New Haven theologians.

Dr. Edward Beecher, in his work “The Conflict of Ages,” advocates the idea that man ruined his own nature in a preëxistent state *before Adam*. But the evidence of this has not yet been presented.

Thus all who do not take the Catholic mode of *mystery and sovereignty* maintain that *man made his own depravity of nature*, either *in* or *by* or *before Adam*.

## Condition of infants.

The most difficult point of all, is the probable condition of infants after death. On the Augustinian theory they all have been ruined in nature by Adam's sin, and when they die, go with this depraved nature to their final state. Augustine acquired the name of “*durus pater*” (cruel father) because he was consistent with his theory and taught that these little ones, if unbaptized, were doomed to endless torments. [016]

But as humanity and common sense have gained ground this hideous tenet has passed away, and few are now found who do not sacrifice consistency to humanity, and allow that in spite of

their total depravity, all infants go directly to heaven and are forever blessed. Formerly some would confine this favor to the “elect infants,” others to the infants of “elect parents,” but few are found at this day who venture to teach that God sends even one new-born being to eternal misery for Adam's sin.

## The difficulties not removed but rather increased by these methods.

But the difficulties involved in the Augustine theory do not lie in *the mode* by which it came to pass that all men begin existence with depraved natures, but in *the fact*, that God, having power to create all minds as perfect as Adam's, and also the power to regenerate all, has chosen not to do so, and thus has preferred the consequent sin and misery to the happiness resulting from making perfect minds.

This grand difficulty stands entirely unrelieved by the above methods. Nay more, they all serve but to increase a sense of the folly and enormity of the awful result, and to present our Maker as the cruel cause of all our miseries, and the fullest and most awful realization of our idea of a perfectly malevolent being.<sup>2</sup>

[017]

## Illustration of the Augustinian Theory.

The following illustrates the case, though but very imperfectly, inasmuch as any finite temporal evils are as nothing compared to the eternal torments to which are assigned all of our race, whose ruined nature is not regenerated before death.

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<sup>2</sup> The theory of Dr. E. Beecher, as it has not been accepted by any denomination, is not referred to here.

A father places a poison in the way of his wife, forbids her to taste it, but knows she will do so and that the consequence will be that all his children will be born blind.

Then he places the children thus deprived of sight, in a dreadful morass filled with savage beasts and awful pitfalls, with a narrow and difficult path of escape, which it is certain no one will ever find without sight. The consequence is, that a large part of his children sink into the pitfalls and perish.

Then he justifies himself in these ways. To some he says, I have a right to treat my children as I please, and I allow no one to question me on the matter. All that I do is right and benevolent, and you must not inquire how or why.

To all the rest he says, I am not the author of this evil, it is *the mother* of the children who took the poison when I forbade her to do so. She either made herself blind by taking the poison, and then transmitted the evil to her children as a hereditary boon, or she had “a common nature” with her children and ruined all together, or they all “sinned in her” and became blind before they were born. And so I am not “the author of sin” in this matter. [018]

To intelligent persons not educated in the belief of the above theory of Augustine, and of these modes of explaining the difficulties connected with it, this account of the matter will seem so incredible and monstrous that they will demand evidence that the preceding statements are true. In the next chapters this evidence will be presented.

## Chapter V. The Augustinian Theory in Creeds.

The preceding chapters have presented the Augustinian theory of “the origin of evil,” and certain questions connected with it which have been debated by theologians; also the difficulties involved in the theory, and the modes of meeting these difficulties.

The next aim will be to verify these statements by extracts from the creeds and theologians of the great Christian sects.

## Creed of the Catholic Church.

It is well known that the Catholic organization preceded that of the Protestant sects. It is also well known that this church maintains that the decisions of her pope and councils are *infallible*.

The following extracts, then, from the decisions of the celebrated Councils of Trent at the period of the Reformation, exhibit the theory of Augustine incorporated as a part of the Roman Catholic creed:

[019]

*Extract from a decree of the Council of Trent.*

“Infants derive from Adam that original guilt which must be expiated in the laver of regeneration in order to obtain eternal life. Adam lost the purity and righteousness which he received from God, not for himself only but also for us.”

The catechism of the Council of Trent says:

“The pastor, therefore, will not omit to remind the faithful that the guilt and punishment of original sin were not confined to Adam, but justly descended from him, their source and cause, to all posterity. Hence a sentence of condemnation was pronounced *against the human race* immediately after the fall of Adam.”

## John Calvin.



The celebrated John Calvin, one of the greatest Protestant theologians at the period of the Reformation, wrote a complete *system* based on the Augustinian theory. This system has been perpetuated in all the various sects which from him are named *Calvinistic*. The following extract gives his views on this subject:

*John Calvin.*

“It is a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through all parts of the soul, which, in the first place, exposes us to the wrath of God, and then produces in us those works which the Scripture calls the works of the flesh.”

Of infants, he says:

“They bring their condemnation with them from their mother's womb, being liable to punishment, not for the sin of another, but for their own. For although they have not as yet produced the fruits of their iniquity, yet they have the seed inclosed in themselves; nay, their whole nature is, as it were, a seed of sin; therefore they can not but be odious and abominable to God. Whence it follows that it is properly considered sin before God, because there could not be liability to punishment without sin.”

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“The corruption of nature precedes and gives rise to all sinful acts, and is in itself deserving of punishment.”

## Westminster Assembly.

The Westminster Assembly represented the Calvinistic sects of Great Britain near the period of the Reformation.

The confession of faith and catechisms prepared by them have ever since been received as a true statement of the system of religious doctrine, as held by the Presbyterian, Congregational, and Calvinistic Baptist denominations in Great Britain and America.

## 20An Appeal to the People in Behalf of Their Rights as Authorized Interpreters

The following presents the Augustinian theory, as contained in their creed:

“A *corrupted nature* was conveyed from our first parents to all their posterity. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal.”

### The Episcopalians.

The following from the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England presents the same doctrine, as held by the Episcopalians of Great Britain and America:

“Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered in the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil—and this infection of nature doth remain in the regenerated.”

[021]

“The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he can not turn and prepare himself (by his own natural strength and good works) to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have *no power* to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us; that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.”

### The Methodists.

In the Methodist Quarterly Review for July, 1857, the editor, in speaking of the works of Arminius, says, p. 345, “Our denomination, *whose creed agrees so completely with the teachings of this learned, accomplished and holy man*, is bound to maintain the freshness of his precious memory.”

## Arminius.

In the same article are the following extracts from the works of Arminius, which, on so good authority, may be received as the views of the Methodist churches on this topic:

“The will of man, with respect to true good, is not only wounded, bruised, crooked and attenuated, but is likewise captivated, destroyed and lost, and has *no powers whatever*, except such as are excited by grace.

“Adam, by sinning, corrupted himself and all his posterity, and so made them obnoxious to God's wrath.”

“Infants have rejected the grace of the gospel *in their parents and forefathers*, by which act they have deserved to be deserted by God. For I would like to have proof adduced how all posterity could *sin in Adam* against law, and yet infants, to whom the gospel is offered *in their parents* and rejected, have not sinned against the grace of the gospel.”

“For there is a permanent principle in the covenant of God, that children should be comprehended and adjudged in their parents.”

Watson, the leading Arminian theologian, says that in the doctrine of the corruption of our common nature and man's natural incapacity to do good, the Arminians and Calvinists so well agree, “that it is an entire delusion to represent this doctrine, as is often done, as exclusively Calvinistic.”

## Various Protestant doctrines.

The following extracts from the creeds of various European bodies of Protestant Christians show the same doctrine. The Synod of Dort was a great council of Protestant divines at the period of the Reformation. It contained representatives from most of the large bodies of Protestants in Europe. The following gives their views on this subject:

### *Synod of Dort.*

“Therefore all men are conceived in sin and born the children of wrath, disqualified for all saving good, propense to evil, dead in sins, the slaves of sin; and without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit, they neither are willing nor able to return to God, to correct their depraved nature, or to dispose themselves to the correction of it.”

### *Confession of Helvetia.*

“We take sin to be that natural corruption of man derived or spread from those our parents unto us all; through which we, being not only drowned in evil concupiscences and clean turned away from God, but prone to all evil, full of all wickedness, distrust, contempt and hatred of God, can do no good of ourselves—*no, not so much as think of any.*”

### *Confession of Belgia.*

“We believe that, through the disobedience of Adam, the sin that is called original hath been spread and poured into all mankind. Now original sin is a corruption of the whole nature, and an hereditary evil wherewith even the very infants in their mother's womb are polluted: the which also, as a most noisome root, doth branch out most abundantly all kinds of sin in men, and is so filthy and abominable in the sight of God, that *it alone* is sufficient to the condemnation of all mankind.”

*Confession of Bohemia.*

“Original sin is naturally engendered in us and hereditary, wherein we are all conceived and born into this world.... Let the force of this hereditary destruction be acknowledged and judged of by the guilt and fault involved, by our proneness and declination to evil, by our evil nature, and by the punishment which is laid upon it.

“Actual sins are the fruits of original sin, and do burst out within, without, privily and openly, by the powers of man; that is, by all that ever man is able to do, and by his members, transgressing all those things which God commandeth and forbiddeth, and also running into blindness and errors worthy to be punished with all kinds of damnation.”

*French Confession (Protestant).*

“Man's nature is become altogether defiled, and being blind in spirit and corrupt in heart, hath utterly lost all his original integrity. We believe that all the offspring of Adam are infected with this contagion, which we call original sin, that is a stain spreading itself by propagation. We believe that this stain is indeed sin, because that it maketh every man (not so much as those little ones excepted which as yet lie hid in their mother's womb) deserving of eternal death before God. We also affirm that this stain, even after baptism, is in nature sin.”

*Moravian Confession.*

“This innate disease and original sin is truly sin, and condemns under God's eternal wrath all those who are not born again through water and the Holy Ghost.”

The preceding is sufficient to establish the unanimous agreement of Catholic and Protestant creeds and confessions in maintaining the Augustinian theory of the depraved nature of all

mankind consequent on the sin of Adam, as it has been set forth in the preceding chapters.

## Chapter VI. Modes of Meeting Difficulties by Theologians.

Having presented the Augustinian theory, as it is set forth in both Catholic and Protestant creeds, the next object will be to verify the statements of the preceding chapters as to the *modes of meeting difficulties* adopted by theologians.

The first extract will show that Augustine taught that all men had a common nature in Adam, so that his choosing to eat the forbidden fruit was the act of each and all human minds which were existing in or with him at that time. And thus that it was man and not God that caused our depravity of nature.

The extract introduced to verify the above was written to St. Jerome, who taught that all minds commenced their first existence at or near the birth of each. This Augustine denied, and the passage shows not only that he taught a common nature which was ruined in Adam, but also that all unbaptized infants go to endless punishment for the sin thus committed in Adam ages before they were born.

### Augustine's Mode.

“How can so many thousands of souls which leave the bodies of unbaptized infants be with any equity condemned, if they were newly created and introduced into these bodies for no previous sins of their own, but by the mere will of him who created them to animate these bodies, and foreknew that each of them, for no fault of his own, would die unbaptized? Since, then, we can not say that God either makes souls sinful by compulsion, or punishes them when innocent, and yet *are obliged to confess that the souls of the little ones are condemned if they die unbaptized*, I beseech you tell me how can this opinion be defended, by which it is believed that souls are not all derived from that one first man, but are newly created for each particular body?”

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Thus Augustine supposed that he escaped the charge of making God the author of sin by teaching that God created all the souls of the race *in Adam*, so that Adam's sin ruined the nature of himself and his posterity all at one stroke, while it made it right and just to send all unbaptized infants to eternal misery.

The next extract is introduced to verify the statement made as to the Princeton mode of making man the author of his own depraved nature. This mode is the one adopted by most theologians of the Old School Presbyterian church. It is thus set forth by Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, in his Commentary on Romans:

## Princeton Mode.

“The great fact in the apostle's mind was, that God regards and treats all men, from the first moment of their existence, as out of fellowship with himself, as having forfeited his favor. Instead of entering into communion with them the moment they begin to exist (as he did with Adam), and forming them by his Spirit in his own moral image, he regards them as out

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of his favor, and withholds the influences of the Spirit. Why is this? Why does God thus deal with the human race? Here is a form of death which the violation of the law of Moses, the transgression of the law of nature, the existence of innate depravity, separately or combined, are insufficient to account for. Its infliction is antecedent to them all; and yet it is of all evils the essence and the sum. Men begin to exist out of communion with God. This is the fact which no sophistry can get out of the Bible or the history of the world. Paul tells us why it is. It is because we fell in Adam; it is for the offense of one man that all thus die. The covenant being formed with Adam, not only for himself but also for his posterity—in other words, Adam having been placed on trial, not for himself only, but also for his race, his act was, in virtue of this relation, REGARDED AS OUR ACT.

“God withdrew from us as he did from him; in consequence of this withdrawal, we begin to exist in moral darkness, destitute of a disposition to delight in God, and prone to delight in ourselves and the world. The sin of Adam, therefore, ruined us; was the ground of the withdrawing of the divine favor from the whole race. But such evil was inflicted before the giving of the Mosaic law; it comes on men before the transgression of the law of nature, or even the existence of inherent depravity. It must, therefore, be for the offense of one man that judgment has come upon all men to condemnation.”

## Constitutional Transmission Mode.

Dr. Dwight's system of theology is regarded as the fairest exhibition of the theological opinions of the majority of the New England Congregational clergy.

While the Catholic mode, as taught by Dr. Woods so many years at Andover, is probably adopted by many, the views of Dr.



Dwight, and his successor, Dr. Taylor, on the point under consideration, are taught now both at the Andover and New Haven seminaries, and probably are adopted by the great majority of the clergy in the Congregational and New School Presbyterian denominations.

These theologians maintain that man is the author of his own depraved nature in this way. Adam sinned and ruined his own nature, and then, in consequence of this sin, God instituted *such a constitution of things*, that this ruined nature has been transmitted to all his posterity, after the same manner as bodily diseases are transmitted from parent to child. This constitution also was established when God had the power to bestow on each human mind the same “holy nature” which he gave to Adam. The following from Dr. Dwight sustains this statement: [027]

“The corruption of mankind exists in consequence of the apostasy of Adam. By means of the offense or transgression of Adam, the judgment or sentence of God came upon all men unto condemnation, because, and solely because *all men in that state of things which was constituted in consequence of the transgression of Adam*, became sinners.”

That is to say, God having the power to make all men with minds as perfect as Adam's before his fall, on account of Adam's sin *constituted a state of things* that would insure the universal sinfulness of the whole race.

Dr. Taylor, the successor of Dr. Dwight as head of the New Haven school of divines, teaches thus:

“Men are entirely depraved by nature. I do not mean that their nature is in itself sinful, nor that their nature is the physical or efficient cause of their sinning; but I mean that their nature is the *occasion or reason* of their sinning—that such is their nature, that in *all* the appropriate circumstances of their being they will *sin and only sin*.”

He further states:

“That sin is by nature owing to propensities to inferior good, with a difference between Adam's mind and ours (though we can not assert that in which this difference may consist); that our propensities are the same in kind, though different in degree, from those of Adam; that *perhaps* this distinction may consist in mental differences—or in superior tendencies, compared with Adam's, to natural good, and less tendency to the highest good.”

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Thus, on account of the first sin of the first pair, God constituted such a state of things, that instead of perfect minds, such as God gave to the angels and to Adam, all men receive such “a nature” as insures “sin and only sin,” until regeneration takes place.

The next extracts will verify the statements made as to the mode adopted by Catholic theologians.

## Catholic Mode.

The Catholic mode is that of *mystery and sovereignty*, and is based on the assumption that the mind of man, being utterly depraved, has no capacity to judge of what is right and wrong.

According to this, the most abominable and horrible crimes are to be considered virtues if God should commit them, or should teach us that they are so.

Among the most distinguished of the Catholic theologians is the learned Abelard, who teaches thus:

“Would it not be deemed the summit of injustice among men, if any one should cast an innocent son, for the sin of a father, into those flames, even if they endured but a short time? How much more so if eternal? Truly I confess this would be unjust

in men, because they are forbidden to avenge even their own real injuries. But it is not so in God, who says, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay;’ and again, in another place, ‘I will kill and I will make alive.’ Now God commits no injustice towards his creature in whatever way he treats him—whether he assigns him to punishment or to life.... In whatever way God may wish to treat his creature, he can be accused of no injustice; nor can any thing be called evil in any way if it is done according to his will. Nor can we in any other way distinguish good from evil, except by noticing what is agreeable to his will.”

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Another celebrated Catholic theologian, “the good Pascal,” thus disparages our natural sense of justice as “wretched,” and of no account before this awful doctrine.

“What can be more contrary to the rules of our *wretched justice* than to damn eternally an infant incapable of volition, for an offense in which he seems to have had no share, and which was committed six thousand years before he was born? Certainly nothing strikes us more rudely than this doctrine; and yet without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves.”

Thus it is seen that Pascal concedes it as a truth that infants are to be eternally damned for offenses in which they “seem to have no share,” and that our sense of justice, which revolts from it, is “*wretched*.”

The Andover Theological Seminary was the first one established in New England for educating ministers, and for nearly half a century Dr. Woods filled the leading theological chair. The following is introduced, from the CONFLICT OF AGES, to verify the statement that the Catholic mode of mystery and sovereignty was the method adopted by him in training the clergy of New England on this subject.

“He [Dr. Woods] expressly teaches that there is in the nature of man, anterior to knowledge or choice, a proneness or propensity to sin, which is in its own nature sinful, ‘the essence of moral evil, the sum of all that is vile and hateful.’ He also teaches that God inflicts this ‘tremendous calamity’ on all men for the sin of one man. ‘This,’ he says, ‘has been the belief of the church in all ages.’

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“He then asks, ‘But how is this proceeding just to Adam's posterity? What have they done, before they commit sin, to merit pain and death? What have they done to merit the evil of existing without original righteousness, and with a nature prone to sin? Here,’ he says, ‘our wisdom fails. We apply in vain to human reason or human consciousness for an answer.’ Nay more; he even admits that such conduct is ‘*contrary to the dictates of our fallible minds.*’ Yet he still insists that we ought not to judge at all in the case, but to believe that it is right because God has done it. ‘God has not made us judges. The case lies wholly out of our province. It is a doctrine which is not to be brought for trial to the bar of human reason. Mere natural reason, mere philosophy or metaphysical sagacity transcends its just bounds, and commits a heinous sacrilege, when it attacks this primary article of our faith, and labors to distort it, to undermine it, or to expose its truth or its importance to distrust.’ ”

The preceding serves to establish the correctness of the writer's statements as to the modes of meeting difficulties adopted by theologians.

In the next chapter we shall see that none of these methods prove satisfactory even to theologians themselves.

## Chapter VII. Theologians Themselves Concede the Augustinian Dogmas Indefensible.

Although each theologian claims that the mode of meeting difficulties adopted by his school is satisfactory, yet as each maintains that all other modes are unavailing, it comes to pass that a *majority* of theologians declare each attempt to make the Augustinian dogma consistent with the moral sense of humanity an utter failure.

It has been shown that the Catholic mode is not to attempt to defend the dogma. It is “decreed” by “the church,” which is the only infallible interpreter of God’s Word, to be in the Bible, and it is to be received, like the doctrine of transubstantiation, as an inscrutable mystery. This is the mode also adopted by Dr. Woods and many other Protestants. [031]

The following from the Princeton theologians presents their protest against this Catholic method. They perceive that if they allow it in this case, they have no excuse for denying the validity of the Catholic defense of transubstantiation. And so they proceed to claim that imputing to children sins that they never committed, and thus involving them in endless misery, is the true mode, while the Catholic one is vain.

### The Princeton Mode against the Catholic Mode.

The Princeton Reviewers, in opposing the Catholic mode, as defended by Dr. Woods, say:

“How is it to be reconciled with the divine character that the fate of unborn millions should depend on an act over which they had not the slightest control, and in which they had no agency? This difficulty presses the opponents of the doctrine (of imputation) more heavily than its advocates. God must produce such results either on the ground of *justice* or of *sovereignty*. The defenders of imputation take the ground of *justice*—their opponents that of *sovereignty*.

“Is it more congenial with the unsophisticated moral feelings of men that God, out of his *mere sovereignty*, should determine that because one man sinned all men should sin, that because one man forfeited his favor all men should incur his curse, or because one man sinned all should be born with a contaminated moral nature, than that, in virtue of a *most benevolent constitution* by which one was made *the representative* of the race, the punishment of the one should come upon all?”

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That is to say, they affirm interrogatively that imputing sins to innocent beings that they never committed, as the ground of penal inflictions, is a better defense of God from the charge of being the author of sin and of cruel injustice than the Catholic mode of *sovereignty and mystery*. At the same time they discard the *constitutional transmission* mode of Andover and New Haven.

The following from President Edwards the younger, gives the argument of a *constitutional transmission* divine against the imputation mode.

## The Transmission Mode against the Imputation Mode.

“The common doctrine has been, that Adam's posterity, unless saved by Christ, are damned on account of Adam's sin, and that this is just, because his sin is imputed or transferred to them. By *imputation his sin becomes their sin*.

“When the justice of such a transfer is demanded, it is said that *the constitution which God has established* makes the transfer just.

“To this it may be replied, that the same way it may be proved just to damn a man *without any sin at all*, either personal or imputed. We need only to resolve it into *a sovereign constitution of God*.”

The Andover and New Haven theologians regard both the Catholic and the Princeton modes as utterly unsatisfactory, and offer instead the mode of *constitutional transmission* as relieving the difficulties.

But Dr. Woods thus argues the case against them, and appeals powerfully to “intelligent and candid men:”

## Dr. Woods in behalf of the Catholic Mode against the Constitutional Transmission Mode.

“And is there not just as much reason to urge this objection against the theory just named? Its advocates hold that God brings the whole human race into existence without holiness, and with such propensities and in such circumstances as will certainly lead them into sin; and that he brings them into this fearful condition in consequence of the sin of their first father, without any fault of their own. Now, as far as the divine justice or goodness is concerned, what great difference is there between our being depraved at first, and being in such

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circumstances as will certainly lead to depravity the moment moral action begins? Will not the latter as infallibly bring about our destruction as the former? And how is it more compatible with the justice or the goodness of God to put us into one of these conditions than into the other, when they are both equally fatal? It is said that our natural appetites and propensities and our outward circumstances do not lead us into sin by any absolute or physical necessity; but they do in all cases certainly lead us into sin, and God knows that they will when he appoints them for us. Now, how can our merciful Father voluntarily place us, while feeble, helpless infants, in such circumstances as he knows beforehand will be the certain occasion of our sin and ruin?... What difference does it make, either as to God's character, or the result of his proceedings, whether he constitutes us sinners at first, or knowingly places us in such circumstances that we shall certainly become sinners, and that very soon? Must not God's design as to our being sinners be the same in one case as in the other; and must not the final result be the same? Is not one of these states of mankind fraught with as many and as great evils as the other? What ground of preference then would any man have?...

“Let intelligent, candid men, who do not believe either of these schemes, say whether one of them is not open to as many objections as the other.”

The idea of a preëxistence of the race *before* Adam, is not held by any denomination.

Thus it appears that whenever any person claims that each of these attempts to make the Augustine theory, as held by the great Christian sects, consistent with the moral sense of humanity is an utter failure, he is sustained by *a majority* of the most learned and acute theologians of our age and nation.



## Chapter VIII. The Augustinian Theory Contrary to the Moral Sense of Mankind.

Having presented evidence that both Catholics and Protestants of Europe and America unite in holding the Augustinian theory of the origin of evil, and also that theologians themselves find it indefensible, the next aim will be to present a portion of the evidence to show that this system is at war with the moral feelings and common sense of mankind.

There are remains of the writings of those who were the opposers of this theory in the time of Augustine, which show the strong emotions called forth at that remote period by the introduction of this doctrine.

The following is from one of the theologians of that day, addressed to the author of the theory:

### Julian to Augustine.

“The children, you say, do not bear the blame of their own, but of another's sins. What sort of sin can that be? What an unfeeling wretch, cruel, forgetful of God and of righteousness, an inhuman barbarian, is he who would make such innocent creatures as little children bear the consequences of transgressions which they never committed, and never could commit? God, you answer. What god? For there are gods many and lords many; but we worship but one God and one Lord Jesus Christ. What God dost thou make the malefactor? Here, most

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holy priest and most learned orator, thou fabricatest something more mournful and frightful than the brimstone in the valley of Amsanctus. God himself, say you, who commendeth his love towards us, who even spared not his own Son, but hath given him up for us all, he so determines—he is himself the persecutor of those that are born. He himself consigns to eternal fire for an evil will, the children who, as he knows, can have neither a good nor an evil will.”

The following is from the celebrated Dr. Watts, whose sacred lyrics endear his name to the Christian world:

## Dr. Watts.

“This natural propagation of sinful inclinations from a common parent, by a law of creation, seems difficult to be reconciled with the goodness and justice of God. It seems exceeding hard to suppose that such a righteous and holy God, the Creator, who is also a being of such infinite goodness, should, by a powerful law and order of creation, which is now called nature, appoint young, intelligent creatures to come into being in such unhappy and degenerate circumstances, liable to such intense pains and miseries, and under such powerful tendencies and propensities to evil, by the mere *law of propagation*, as should almost unavoidably expose them to ten thousand actual sins, and all this before they have any personal sin or guilt to deserve it.

“If it could be well made out that the whole race of mankind are partakers of sinful inclinations, and evil passions, and biases to vice, and also are exposed to many sharp actual sufferings and to death, merely and only by the original divine law of propagation from their parents who had sinned; and, if the justice and goodness of God could be vindicated *in making and maintaining such a dreadful law or order of*

*propagation* through six thousand years, we have no need of further inquiries, but might here be at rest. But, if the scheme be so injurious to the goodness and equity of God as it seems to be, then we are constrained to seek a little further for a satisfactory account of this universal degeneracy and misery of mankind.”

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The following was written by an American divine at the time of the commencement of the conflict in this country between the Old and New School Calvinists. At that time this theory of a depraved nature was accompanied, even in pulpit teachings, by the assumption of man's total inability to do any thing to gain salvation, and that Christ died, not for all men, but only for “the elect.”

## Dr. Whelpley.

“The idea that all the numerous millions of Adam's posterity deserve the ineffable and endless torments of hell for a single act of his, before any one of them existed, is repugnant to that reason that God has given us, and is subversive of all possible conceptions of justice. I hesitate not to say, that no scheme of religion ever propagated amongst men contains a more monstrous, a more horrible tenet. The atrocity of this doctrine is beyond comparison. The visions of the Koran, the fictions of Sadder, the fables of the Zendavesta, all give place to this; Rabbinical legends, Brahminical vagaries, all vanish before it.”

“The whole of their doctrine, then, amounts to this: that a man is in the first place condemned, incapacitated, and eternally reprobated for the sin of Adam; in the next place, that he is condemned over again for not doing what he is totally and in all respects unable to do; and in the third place that he is

condemned, doubly and trebly condemned, for not believing in a Saviour who never died for him, and with whom he has no more to do than a fallen angel.”

The elder President Adams at first designed to enter the clerical profession, but was deterred by doctrinal difficulties, of which he thus writes:

## John Adams.

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“If one man, or being, out of pure generosity, and without any expectation of return, is about to confer any favor or emolument upon another, he has a right and is at liberty to choose in what manner and by what means to confer it. He may confer the favor by his own hand or by the hand of a servant; and the obligation to gratitude is equally strong upon the benefited being. The *mode* of bestowing does not diminish the kindness, provided the commodity or good is brought to us equally perfect and without our expense. But, on the other hand, if one being is the original cause of pain, sorrow, or suffering to another, voluntarily and without provocation, it is injurious to that other, whatever *means* he might employ, and whatever circumstances the conveyance of the injury might be attended with. Thus we are equally obliged to the Supreme Being for the information he has given us of our duty, whether by the constitution of our minds or bodies, or by a supernatural revelation. For an instance of the latter, let us take original sin. Some say that Adam's sin was enough to damn the whole human race, without any actual crimes committed by any of them. Now this guilt is brought upon them, not by their own rashness and indiscretion, not by their own wickedness and vice, but by the Supreme Being. This guilt brought upon us is a real injury and misfortune, because it renders us worse than not to be; and therefore making us guilty on account of

Adam's delegation, or representing all of us, is not in the least diminishing the injury and injustice, but only changing the *mode* of conveyance.”

The celebrated Dr. Channing was educated a Calvinist. The following exhibits his views on this subject, after embracing Unitarianism:

## Dr. Channing.

He says of such views:

“They take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute a stern and unjust Lord. Our filial love and reverence rise up against them. We say, touch any thing but the perfections of God. Cast no stain on that spotless purity and loveliness. We can endure any errors but those which subvert or unsettle the conviction of God's paternal goodness. Urge not upon us a system which makes existence a curse, and wraps the universe in gloom. If I and my beloved friends and my whole race have come from the hands of our Creator wholly depraved, irresistibly propense to all evil and averse to all good—if only a portion are chosen to escape from this miserable state, and if the rest are to be consigned, by the Being who gave us our depraved and wretched nature, to endless torments in inextinguishable flames—then do I think that nothing remains but to mourn in anguish of heart; then existence is a curse, and the Creator is——. O, my merciful Father! I can not speak of thee in the language which this system would suggest. No! thou hast been too kind to me to deserve this reproach from my lips. Thou hast created me to be happy; thou callest me to virtue and piety, because in these consists my felicity; and thou wilt demand nothing from me but what thou givest me ability to perform!”

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The following is from the pen of a celebrated writer educated in the Baptist denomination, who finally became a Universalist:

## John Foster.

“I acknowledge my inability (I would say it reverently) to admit this belief together with a belief in the divine goodness—the belief that ‘God is love,’ that his tender mercies are over all his works. Goodness, benevolence, charity, as ascribed in supreme perfection to him, can not mean a quality foreign to all human conceptions of goodness. It must be something analogous in principle to what himself has defined and required as goodness in his moral creatures, that, in adoring the divine goodness, we may not be worshipping an ‘unknown God.’ But, if so, how would all our ideas be confounded while contemplating him bringing, of his own sovereign will, a race of creatures into existence in such a condition that they certainly will and must—must by their nature and circumstances—go wrong and be miserable, unless prevented by especial grace, which is the privilege of only a small portion of them, and at the same time affixing on their delinquency a doom of which it is infinitely beyond the highest archangel’s faculty to apprehend a thousandth part of the horror.

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“It amazes me to imagine how thoughtful and benevolent men, believing that doctrine, can endure the sight of the present world and the history of the past. To behold successive, innumerable crowds carried on in the mighty impulse of a depraved nature, which they are impotent to reverse, and to which it is not the will of God, in his sovereignty, to apply the only adequate power, the withholding of which consigns them inevitably to their doom; to see them passing through a short term of moral existence (absurdly sometimes denominated a *probation*) under all the world’s pernicious

influences, with the addition of the malign and deadly one of the great tempter and destroyer, to confirm and augment the inherent depravity, on their speedy passage to everlasting woe;—I repeat, I am, without pretending to any extraordinary depth of feeling, amazed to conceive what they contrive to do with their sensibility, and in what manner they maintain a firm assurance of the divine goodness and justice.”

The following is the experience of the author of the Conflict of Ages:

## Dr. Edward Beecher.

“If any one would know the full worth of the privilege of living under, worshiping, loving and adoring a God of honor, righteousness and love, let him, after years of joyful Christian experience and soul-satisfying communion with God, at last come to a point where his lovely character, for a time, vanishes from his eyes, and nothing can be rationally seen but a God selfish, dishonorable, unfeeling. No such person can ever believe that God *is* such; but he may be so situated as to be unable *rationally* to see him in any other light. All the common modes of defending the doctrine of native depravity may have been examined and pronounced insufficient, and the question may urgently press itself upon the mind, Is not the present system a *malevolent* one? and of it no defense may appear.

“Who can describe the gloom of him who looks on such a prospect? How dark to him appears the history of man! He looks with pity on the children that pass him in the street. The more violent manifestations of their depravity seem to be the unfoldings of a corrupt nature given to them by God before any knowledge, choice or consent of their own. Mercy now seems to be no mercy, and he who once delighted to speak of

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the love of Christ is obliged to close his lips in silence; for the original wrong of giving man such a nature seems so great that no subsequent acts can atone for the deed. In this state of mind, he who once delighted to pray, kneels and rises again, because he can not sincerely worship the only God whom he sees. His distress is not on his own account. He feels that God has redeemed and regenerated him; but this gives him no relief. He feels as if he could not be bribed by the offer of all the honors of the universe to pretend to worship or praise a God whose character he can not defend. He feels that he should infinitely prefer once more to see a God whom he could honorably adore, and a universe radiant with his glory, and then to sink into non-existence, rather than to have all the honors of the universe for ever heaped upon him by a God whose character he could not sincerely and honestly defend. Never before has he so deeply felt a longing after a God of a spotless character. Never has he so deeply felt that the whole light and joy of the universe are in him, and that when his character is darkened all worlds are filled with gloom.”

The following is from the Rev. Albert Barnes, a leading New School Calvinistic divine, and the author of a very popular Commentary on the Bible:

“That the immortal mind should be allowed to jeopard its infinite welfare, and that trifles should be allowed to draw it away from God and virtue and heaven; that any should suffer for ever—lingering on in hopeless despair amidst infinite torments, without the possibility of alleviation and without end; that since God *can* save men and *will* save a part, he has not purposed to save *all*; that on the supposition that the atonement is ample, and that the blood of Christ can cleanse from all and every sin, it is not in fact applied to all; that, in a word, a God who claims to be worthy of the confidence of the universe, and to be a being of infinite benevolence, should make such a world as this, full of sinners and sufferers, and



then, when an atonement has been made, he did not save *all* the race, and put an end to sin and woe for ever;—these and kindred difficulties meet the mind when we think on this great subject. And they meet us whenever we endeavor to urge our fellow-sinners to be reconciled to God. On this ground they hesitate. These are *real* and not imaginary difficulties. They are probably felt by every mind that has ever reflected on the subject; and they are unexplained, unmitigated, unremoved.”

“I have never known a particle of light thrown on these subjects that has given a moment's ease to my tortured mind; nor have I an explanation to offer, or a thought to suggest, that would be of relief to you. I trust other men, as they profess to do—understand this better than I do, and that they have not the anguish of spirit which I have; but I confess, when I look on a world of sinners and of sufferers, upon death-beds and grave-yards, upon the world of woe filled with hosts to suffer for ever; when I see my friends, my parents, my family, my people, my fellow-citizens; when I look upon a whole race, all involved in this sin and danger, and when I see the great mass of them wholly unconcerned, and when I feel that God only can save them and yet that he does not do it—I am struck dumb. It is all *dark, dark, dark* to my soul, and I can not disguise it.”

This is but a brief specimen of the shuddering protest which has arisen in all ages and from all sects, against this stern and awful dogma, and which has poured its most powerful records from the shivering hearts of theologians themselves.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Most of the extracts in this and the preceding chapter are furnished by Dr. E. Beecher in his *Conflict of Ages*.

## Chapter IX. The Principles of Common Sense Defined.

[042]

The preceding extracts exhibit a portion of the evidence to prove that the Augustinian system is contrary to the moral sense of mankind, and that theologians have failed, by their own concessions, to render it consistent and satisfactory even to themselves.

The next attempt will be to show that *the people* are endowed with *principles of common sense*, by the aid of which they can educe from the *works* of the Creator, independently of any revealed *Word*, a system of religion far superior to the one based on the Augustinian theory.

Our first aim will be to designate what is intended by “the principles of common sense.”

It is claimed, then, that there are certain truths, the belief of which exists in every rational human mind. This belief, in some cases, as all must allow, results from the constitution of mind given by the Creator, and not from any instruction or knowledge gained by other modes. Of this class is the belief of every mind in its own existence, and also the belief in the existence of other things beside ourselves.

There are other truths universally believed by every rational mind, where there may be room for question as to whether this belief is acquired or the result of constitutional organization. But this question is waived, as of little practical consequence for the present purpose of this work.

The fact on which the name and classification of these truths rests is, that the belief in them is *common* to all rational minds, and is regarded as so indispensable to true rationality, that whenever any person shows by words and actions that a belief in any

one of these truths does not exist, he is regarded as deranged, that is to say, his *reason* is said to be more or less destroyed. [043]

This, therefore, is the *test* by which we are to distinguish these principles of common sense from all other knowledge. They are truths which are believed by all rational persons, so that the disbelief of any one of them, evinced in words and actions, is universally regarded as proof of a deranged mind. In such cases, a man, in common parlance, would be said to have “lost his mind,” or to have “lost his reason;” inasmuch as he is lacking in some of those peculiar features which constitute man a rational being.

In this work the question is also waived as to the number of truths which are to be included in this class. In regard to certain of them there can be no dispute. Of those involving any discussion, there probably will be no occasion to speak in this work. The writer does not claim that the common people, or that metaphysicians, when they speak of “common sense,” always refer to what is here designated by this term.

All that the writer claims is that there are certain truths, the belief of which is *common* to all minds, either as the result of constitutional organization or of acquired knowledge; and that these can be classified by this *test*, viz., that men universally talk and act as if they believed them, and when they cease to do so, are regarded as more or less insane.

Moreover, it is claimed that it is proper to call them *principles of common sense*, because they are that kind of sense which is *common* to the whole race, and also they are *often* referred to, both by metaphysicians and by the common people, by this term.

In the following chapters it will be shown that by the application of these principles, a system of natural religion can be gained from the works of the Creator by the same methods that men employ in all the ordinary concerns of life, and that thus we are as fully qualified to gain religious knowledge and peace as we are to secure temporal comfort and prosperity. [044]

## Chapter X. Common Sense Applied to Gain the Existence of God.

Having explained what is intended by the principles of common sense, the next attempt will be to apply certain of these principles to gain a system of *natural religion*; meaning by this term that religion which may be gained from the *works* of the Creator independently of any revealed Word.

In all systems of religion the first article relates to the existence and character of the Deity to be worshiped and obeyed. The first principle of common sense to guide us in this inquiry is this:

### Every change has a producing cause.

In the widest sense of the word, *cause* signifies something as an antecedent, without which a given change will not occur, and with which it will occur. This is the leading idea in every use of this word.

Then there are two classes of causes; the first are *necessary* or *producing causes*, and the second *occasional causes*.

A *producing cause* is an antecedent which *produces* a given change.

*Occasional causes* are those circumstances which are indispensable to the action of producing causes.

Thus, fire applied to powder is the producing cause of an explosion, while the placing of the two together is the occasional cause of it.

The idea of a producing cause is one which probably is gained when we first discover that our own will moves our own limbs

and other things around us. When we will to move a thing, and find the intended change follows our volition to move it, then we can not help believing that our own mind *produced* this change. At the same time we gain the idea of *power* to produce this change, and the belief also that the thing changed had *no power* to refrain from the change.

Our only mode of defining the idea of a *producing cause*, of *power* and of *want of power*, is to refer to occasions when, by willing, we cause changes, and thus become conscious of the existence and nature of these ideas by experience.

So also we have no mode of defining our *sensations* but by stating the occasions in which we are conscious of them. For instance, *whiteness* is the sensation we have when we look at snow, and *blackness* is the sensation we have when we look at charcoal.

The same idea of causation and power in ourselves which we have when we make changes by our will, we always connect with any thing which by experiment and testimony we find, in given circumstances, to be an invariable antecedent of a given change. Our minds are so made, that whenever we find an *invariable* antecedent of a given change, we can not help believing that this antecedent *produced* the change, just as we believe our own will produces changes in our bodies and in things around us. And if any person were to talk and act as if he did not believe this, he would be regarded as having “lost his reason.” [046]

Moreover, whenever men, by frequent experiments, find that a given change is *invariably* preceded by a certain antecedent, they can not help believing that the antecedent has *power* to produce this change, and that the thing changed has *no power* to do otherwise. This idea of *power* and *want of power* always exists whenever men find an *invariable* antecedent to some change. It is by finding what are thus invariably connected as antecedents and consequents that men learn what are *causes*, and what are *effects*, and what are the *powers* of things around us.

Here, then, we have these as principles of common sense believed by all men, viz.:

1. Every change (in matter or mind) has a producing cause as an antecedent.
2. Every invariable antecedent of an invariable sequent is a *producing* cause, and the thing changed has no power to refrain from that change.
3. A producing cause, in appropriate circumstances, has power to make a given change.

Now every man, however unlearned, can judge for himself whether these principles of common sense exist in his own mind, as here set forth. For example, let any person take a magnet and discover, day after day, that when it is placed near a piece of iron it draws it to itself; let him find also, by testimony from others, that this is *invariable* and fails in not a single instance, and the inevitable result is a belief that the magnet is the *cause* of the moving of the iron, just as the mind is the cause of the movement of our bodies. So also there is a belief that the magnet, in given circumstances, has *power* to move the iron, as our will has power to move our body. So also there is a belief that the piece of iron, in the given circumstances, has *no power* to refrain from being thus attracted.

[047]

We see, then, that it is a universal fact, that when there is a change of any thing, or any new mode of existence, every sane man believes there is some *producing cause* of this change. Even the youngest child exhibits this principle as a part of its mental organization. And should a person be found who was destitute of a belief in this truth, so that he should talk and act as if things came into existence and were changing places and forms without any causes, he would be called insane, or a man who had “lost his reason.”

Our minds being endowed with this principle, we find the world around us to be a succession of changes which we trace back to preceding causes, until we come to the grand ques-

tion, “Who, or what first started this vast system of successive changes?” Only two replies are conceivable. The first is that of the Atheist, who, contradicting his own common sense, maintains that, in some past period, all this vast system of organization and changes began to exist without any cause. The other reply is, that there is a great, eternal, self-existent *First Cause*, who himself never began to be, and who is the author of all finite existences. This being, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, we call God.

The next principle of common sense is that by which we gain a knowledge of the natural attributes of the Creator. It is this:

*Design or contrivance* to secure a given end, is proof of an *intelligent* designer, and the *nature* of a design proves the intention and character of its author. [048]

The mind, as has been shown, is so formed that it can not believe that any existence can commence without some antecedent cause. The existence of *unorganized* matter, however, would be no proof that the cause was an *intelligent mind*.

But when any existence is discovered where there is an adjustment of parts, all conducing to accomplish some determinate end, no person can examine and understand its nature and adaptations without the accompanying belief that the cause of that contrivance was a mind endowed with the capacity of adjusting means to accomplish an end, and thus an *intelligent* mind.

Nor is it possible, when the object which any design is fitted to accomplish is clearly discovered, to doubt the *intention* of the designer. We can not help believing that it was the intention of the contriver to accomplish the end for which his contrivance is fitted.

As an example to illustrate the existence of these principles, even in the simplest minds, if a savage should find in the desert a gold watch, nothing could lead him to believe that it sprang into existence there without any cause. If he should open it and perceive the nice adjustment of the wheels and all its beautiful indications of contrivance, he could not believe that the mind

of an animal, or that any but an intelligent mind constructed its machinery. If he should have all its movements explained to him, and learn how exactly all were fitted to mark the passage of time, it would be equally impossible to convince him that the contriver did not design it for such a purpose.

[049]

Very early childhood gives evidence of the existence of these principles. An interesting instance of this is recorded by a celebrated philosopher, who, to test the existence of these principles in the mind of his child, planted a bed with seeds arranged in the form of the letters which spelled the child's name. When the green symbols had sprung from the ground and were discovered by the delighted child, the father in vain endeavored to force his belief that the letters came without *a cause* and without *a design*. "No, father. *Somebody* planted them; somebody *intended* to have them come up and spell my name!" And thus infancy itself maintains the principles which are our guide to the Great Source of all finite existences.

Another principle of common sense lends us still further aid in arriving at the natural attributes of the Creator. It is this:

**Things are and will continue according to our past experience till there is evidence of a change.**

All the business of life rests on a belief of this truth. Our confidence that the sun will rise, the seasons return, the ocean and rivers flow, the mountains remain; and in thousands of other things that regulate our plans and conduct, all depends on this implanted belief that things will continue according to our past experience till there is evidence of a change. A man who acted as if he disbelieved this principle would be regarded as having "lost his reason."



When, therefore, we have gained the idea that the Creator is an *intelligent mind*, we necessarily believe that his mind is *such as we have ever known in past experience*, that is, a mind *like our own*, endowed with reason, intellect, susceptibilities and will. We can not conceive of any other kind of mind, because we have never had any experience or knowledge of any other kind. [050]

The only respect in which we can conceive of the Creator as differing from our own minds is in the *extent* of those natural faculties which are exhibited in his works.

Thus by the use of the principles of common sense we have gained the positions that there is a Being who is the Author of all finite existences, whose mind is like our own in natural faculties, while in the extent of these faculties, as exhibited in his works, he is far beyond our conceptions.

## Chapter XI. The People's Mental Philosophy.

In the preceding chapter we have applied the principles of common sense to gain evidence of the existence of a Creator, or Great First Cause, whose natural attributes we can discover only by *the nature* of our own minds.

This being so, our next step in seeking after God is to examine the construction or nature of our own minds.

The only way to discover the nature of a thing is to examine what are its qualities, how it acts, and how it is acted upon. This also is the same as studying the *philosophy* of things. For when

learned men set forth any branch of philosophy, they only teach the qualities of certain things, how they act, and how they are acted upon.

[051]

Whoever, therefore, gives attention to the nature of mind so as to discover its qualities, how it acts, and how it is acted upon, is studying the philosophy of mind, or mental philosophy.

*The nature of mind, the philosophy of mind, and mental philosophy* are terms all expressing the same thing.

Now, the only possible way in which any person can discover the nature of another mind is by a knowledge of his own. We first learn by experience the qualities of our own mind, how it acts and how it is acted upon, and then, by a process of reasoning, we learn that there are other minds around us, and that they have similar qualities.

The study of mental philosophy, then, is directing attention to the nature of our own mind, and thus discovering the nature of other minds.

It differs from all other studies in this respect, that all men have the materials of the knowledge sought in their own minds, and are required simply to direct attention to their own mental states and acts.

This being so, the common people are as fully qualified to settle all questions in regard to the nature or philosophy of their own minds as the most learned and profound metaphysicians or theologians can be. All that is requisite to success is, that they direct their attention to the subject by suitable methods.

It will be found, on examination, that the common people have secured a written system of mental philosophy as real as has ever yet been furnished by any metaphysician or theologian, while it is free from the great defects which render many works on mental science unpractical and repulsive.

[052]

This—*the people's system of mental philosophy*—it will be the object of what follows to set forth.

In attempting it, we shall find that mankind, in the uses of every-day life, have arranged the various acts and states of mind into classes and subdivisions, and have given names to these classes, and to the specific acts or states included in these classes. These classifications and terms are recorded by lexicographers in their dictionaries.

All words have that meaning which is attached to them by the people who use them. The business of the lexicographer is, not to settle what meaning ought to belong to words, but rather to state the meaning which men actually attach to them in writing and speaking.

In setting forth the people's system of natural philosophy as contained in lexicographies, we find that almost every word is used to express several meanings, similar in some respects and diverse in others. In consequence of this, we only can attempt thus much for mental science, as for many other subjects, viz., to describe the thing intended, and then to select the word most frequently used to express this idea, as set forth in our dictionaries.

This, then, is the course pursued in the following pages. A description is set forth of a given act or state of mind, sufficient to identify it from all others, and then the word is selected from dictionaries of our language which has most frequently been used by the common people in expressing the idea intended. Thus every person who cares enough about the matter to read and think, can decide as well as the most celebrated metaphysician, whether the description given is *true to his own experience*, and also whether, according to lexicographers, the word selected is frequently used by man to express this idea.

[053]

The writer, in her first attempts to investigate the philosophy of mind, examined the works of Stewart, Reid, Locke, Edwards, Brown, Coleridge, Cousin, Jouffroy, Coombe, Spurtzheim and several others. More recently some attention has been given to the writings of Sir William Hamilton, Hickok and others. The

result has been the conviction, that most of these works contain the people's system, more or less disguised with diverse modes of classification and new technics, which tend to render the whole subject misty and perplexing. And still more unfortunately, some of them attempt the discussion of questions which are unpractical and often unintelligible.

As an example, certain metaphysicians have attempted to prove that there is nothing existing but mind, and that all which we believe to be realities without ourselves are not so, but merely ideas in the mind.

Other metaphysicians have attempted to meet their arguments, and to prove that the world around us is a reality.

Both attempts have ended in books which seem to have no sort of *practical* influence either way. Men can not help believing that there is an outer world, and that the men and things that affect our senses are realities, and such arguments neither lessen nor increase this belief.

Meantime, the books written to prove or disprove this truth are incomprehensible to most common minds, at least the writer of this work has in vain essayed to understand them, or to find any person who could communicate any clear ideas of their contents.

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## Chapter XII. The Nature of Mind, or Its Powers and Faculties.

We have seen, in the preceding chapters, that our only mode of gaining a knowledge of the natural attributes of God, is by the

study of the nature of mind. We have seen also that the only way to discover the nature of mind is to examine what are its qualities, and how it acts and is acted upon in *our own experience*.

When we discover what our minds actually do, we find out what they have *power* to do. The *faculties* of mind are its *powers of acting* as they are exhibited in our own experience.

The following presents a brief outline of the powers and faculties of mind as they have been classified and named by *the people*.

*Ideas* is the word most frequently used to include *all* the operations and states of mind.

Our ideas are often referred to as divided into two classes, viz., ideas gained by the senses, and ideas that pass through the mind without the aid of the senses.

## Intellectual Powers.

The power to gain ideas by the five senses is called *sensation* or *perception*.

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The power to have ideas without the use of the senses is called *conception*.

*Per* is the Latin word for *by*, and *con* is the word for *without*. So we have *perceptions by* the senses, and *conceptions without* the senses.

*Imagination* or *fancy*, is the power to make new combinations of our conceptions.

*Memory* is the power of recalling past ideas, and of recognizing them as having existed before.

*Judgment* is the power of comparing ideas, and noticing their relations to each other.

*Abstraction* is the power of noticing certain parts or certain qualities of things, while other parts or qualities are unnoticed.

*Association* is the power of recalling past ideas according to certain modes, called *laws of association*.

The above powers are usually classed together, and called *the intellectual powers*, or *the intellect*.

## The Susceptibilities, or Feelings.

The powers of feeling various kinds of pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, enjoyment and discomfort, are called the *susceptibilities*, the *emotions* and the *feelings*.

When any thing is found to be the cause of pleasurable feelings, there follows a desire to secure it, and it is called *good*. When any thing causes pain, a desire follows to avoid it, and it is called *evil*.

These *desires* to secure good and avoid evil are called *motives* (or movers), because they *move* the mind to action in order to secure the good desired or to escape the evil feared. The objects that cause such desires are also called motives.

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For example, *gold* is called the motive that led a man to murder, and the *desire* of gold is also called the motive of that act.<sup>4</sup>

Desires are measured as *strong* or *weak* by our own consciousness. When we desire two incompatible things and must choose one or the other, before the act of choice we are conscious that one creates a desire which is stronger than the other.

The only mode of deciding which desire is strongest, is by our own consciousness.

## The Will.

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<sup>4</sup> In scientific language, the *object* of desire is called the *objective motive*, and the *desire* itself is called the *subjective motive*.

The power of choosing, or willing, is called *the will*. It is also called the power of *volition*.

When several desires coexist, some of which must necessarily be denied in order to gratify others, we ordinarily choose that object which excites the strongest desire, as measured by our consciousness.

But it is often the case that we feel the strongest desire for that which is not *best* for us. Thus, when sick we have tempting fruit and nauseous medicine before us, with power to choose either. Our intellect decides that the medicine is best for us, but our strongest desire is for the fruit.

In such a case we have power to choose *either* that which excites the strongest desire or that which the intellect decides to be *best*, even when it does not excite the strongest desire.

This power is the chief feature of a *rational* mind in distinction from an irrational mind.

And the belief that we have this power is to be placed as one of the principles of common sense, because all men talk and act as if they believe they possess this power. And if any person were to talk and act as if he did not believe that he had power to choose in either of these two ways, he would be regarded as having lost his reason. [057]

## Reason, or Common Sense.

Of the thoughts which continually pass through the mind, we find that some are attended with a feeling of the real existence of the objects of our thoughts, and others are not so attended. For example, we may think of a man with a certain form carrying a dagger and going to commit murder, and with this, a feeling that no such thing is really existing. Again, we may have this same idea attended with the conviction that it is a reality.

This feeling of the *reality* of the objects of our thoughts is called *belief*, or *faith*.

Our minds are so made, that we necessarily believe not only that things *are* really existing at the present time, but that things *will* occur that are not now in existence. For example, we believe the sun will rise to-morrow morning in another place nearer toward the north or south than it did the present morning. We believe the tide will rise higher or lower on a coming day than it did the present day. And thus multitudes of events are believed to be in the future.

Those things which really do or will exist, in distinction from those we may think of but which do not and will not exist, are called *truths*, or *realities*.

[058]

All our comfort and happiness depend on our believing *the truth*, meaning by truth the *reality* of things. To believe that things exist when they do not, or that things are not existing when they are, involves certain pain, disappointment and mistake.

Our great safeguard from this is that part of our mental organization called *reason*, or *common sense*. This, as has been shown, consists in the necessary belief of certain truths by all men.

The *test* by which these truths are identified and distinguished from all other knowledge, is the fact that usually all men talk and act as if they believed them, and that when they fail to do so, they are regarded as having "lost their reason."

The truths thus necessarily believed are the foundation of the process called *reasoning*, which is a mode of establishing other truths by the aid of those already believed.

These principles of reason or common sense are often called by other names, such as *intuitions*, *intuitive truths*, *first principles*, etc.

Thus all the powers of mind are arranged in the four general classes, viz., *the intellect*, *the susceptibilities*, *the will*, and *reason* or *common sense*.



In regard to the power of mind called *reason*, what is claimed here is, not that either the common people or metaphysicians have usually thus clearly set forth what is here so described and named; but that all men, learned and unlearned, allow that there are truths which are necessarily believed by all mankind; that these are the foundation of all *reasoning*, and that they *often* are called *reason*. So when any one is found to lack a belief in certain of these intuitive truths, he is said to have “lost his reason.” And when any act or assertion is seen to contradict any of these truths, it is said to be “contrary to reason.” [059]

Therefore it is proper to put the belief in these implanted truths as a distinct power of the mind, and to call it “the reason.” And as the belief of these truths is *common* to all men, it is also proper to call it *common sense*.

## Chapter XIII. Nature of Mind.—Regulation of the Thoughts.

A system of natural religion includes not only the existence and natural attributes of the Creator, but his moral character and the duties owed to Him, to our fellow-beings and to ourselves.

To discover these by the principles of common sense, unaided by revelation, we must again turn to our own minds as our only directory. This demands a more enlarged consideration of many of the specific powers and operations of mind, as developed by experience and observation.

## Mode of regulating our thoughts.

The mode by which the succession of our thoughts is regulated is intimately connected with several subjects to be discussed, and will, therefore, first receive attention.

It will be found that our *sensations* and *perceptions* vary in vividness and distinctness according to the strength and permanency of certain feelings of *desire* which coexist with them. For example, we are continually hearing a multitude of sounds, but in respect to many of them, as we feel no desire to know the cause or nature of them, these sensations are so feeble and indistinct as scarcely ever to be recalled to the mind or recognized by any act of memory; but should we hear some strange wailing sound, immediately the desire would arise to ascertain its nature and cause. It would immediately become an object of distinct and vivid perception, and continue so as long as the desire lasted.

[060]

While one sensation becomes thus clear and prominent, it will be found that other sensations which were coexisting with it will become feebler and seem to die away. The same impressions may still be made upon the eye as before, the same sounds that had previously been regarded may still strike upon the ear, but while the desire to learn the cause of that strange wailing sound continues, the other sensations will all be faint and indistinct. When this desire is gratified, then other sensations resume their former distinctness and prominency.

Our *conceptions*, in like manner, are affected by the coexistence of emotion or desire. If, for example, we are employing ourselves in study or mental speculations, the vividness of our conceptions will vary in exact proportion to the interest we feel in securing the object about which our conceptions are employed. If we feel but little interest in the subject of our speculations, every conception connected with them will be undefined and indistinct; but if the desire of approbation, or the admonitions of conscience, or the hope of securing some future good stimulate

desire, immediately our conceptions grow more vivid and clear, and the object at which we aim is more readily and speedily secured. [061]

The mind is continually under the influence of some desire. It constantly has some plan to accomplish, some cause to search out, or some gratification to secure. The present wish or desire of the mind imparts an interest to whatever conception seems calculated to forward this object. Thus, if the mathematician has a problem to solve, and this is the leading desire of the mind, among the various conceptions that arise, those are the most interesting which are fitted to his object, and such immediately become vivid and distinct. If the painter or the poet is laboring to effect some new creation of his art, and has this as the leading object of desire, whatever conceptions seem best fitted to his purpose are immediately invested with interest, and become distinct and clear. If the merchant, or the capitalist, or the statesman has some project which he is toiling to accomplish, whatever conceptions appear adapted to his purpose soon are glowing and defined, in consequence of the interest with which desire thus invests them.

From this it appears that the *chief end*, or leading object of desire of the mind, will in a great measure determine the nature and the succession of its conceptions. If a man has chosen to find his chief happiness in securing power and honor, then those conceptions will be the most interesting to his mind that best fall in with his object. If he has chosen to find happiness in securing the various gratifications of sense, then those conceptions that most coincide with this desire will become prominent. If a man has chosen to find his chief enjoyment in doing the will of God, then his conceptions will, to a great extent, be conformed to this object of desire. The current of a man's thoughts, therefore, becomes the surest mode of determining what is the governing purpose or leading desire of the mind. [062]

But there are seasons in our mental history when the mind

does not seem to be under the influence of any governing desire; when it seems to relax, and its thoughts appear to flow on without any regulating principle. At such times the vividness of leading conceptions, which otherwise is determined by *desire*, seems to depend upon our past experience. Those objects which, in past experience, have been *associated with emotion*, are those which thus begin to glow in the distinct lineaments with which emotion at first invested them.

In past experience, all conceptions which were attended with emotion were most distinct and clear, and therefore, when such conceptions return united with others, they are the ones which are most interesting, and thus most vivid and distinct. Thus, in our musing hours of idle reverie, as one picture after another glides before the mind, if some object occurs, such as the home of our youth, or the friend of our early days, the emotions which have been so often united with these objects in past experience cause them to appear in clear and glowing lineaments, and the stronger have been the past emotions connected with them, the more clearly will they be defined. It appears, then, that there are two circumstances that account for the apparent *selection* which the mind makes in its objects of conception. The first is the feeling that *certain conceptions are fitted to accomplish the leading desire of the mind*; and the second is, that *certain objects in past experience have been attended with emotion*.

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But there is another phenomenon in our mental history which has a direct bearing on the nature and succession of our conceptions. When any conception, through the influence of desire or emotion, becomes the prominent object, immediately other objects with which this has been associated in past experience begin to return and gather around it in new combinations. Thus a new picture is presented before the mind, from which it again selects an object according as *desire* or *emotion* regulates, which, under this influence, grows vivid and distinct. Around this new object immediately begin to cluster its past associates, till still

another scene is fresh arrayed before the mind.

In these new combinations, those objects which are least interesting continually disappear, while those most interesting are retained to form a part of the succeeding picture. Thus, in every mental picture, *desire* or *emotion* seems to call forth objects which start out, as it were, in bold relief from all others, and call from the shade of obscurity the companions of their former existence, which gather around them in new and varied combinations.

Thus it is shown that the chief mode by which we regulate the nature and succession of our thoughts is by the *choices* we make of our objects of pursuit. Whatever we choose as our *chief end*, or leading object of desire, becomes the regulator of our emotions, our desires and our thoughts. Thus we have power to control our thoughts aright only by choosing right objects of pursuit. We have power to regulate them in this way, and but very little power to control them in any other. [064]

The mere determination to think only on certain subjects in which we feel very little interest avails but for a short time. Speedily the mind returns to its natural course, and brings forward only those objects connected with our chief objects of desire and pursuit.

## Chapter XIV. Nature of Mind.—The Moral Sense, or Moral Susceptibilities.

Those susceptibilities of pleasure and pain which are affected by the conduct of ourselves or others, in reference to rules of *right* and *wrong*, are called the *moral sense*, or the *moral susceptibilities*.

In order to a more clear view of this part of the subject, it is important to inquire as to the manner in which the ideas of *right* and *wrong* seem to originate.

The young child first notices that certain actions of its own are regarded with smiles and tones of love and approval, while other acts occasion frowns and tones of displeasure.

Next, it perceives that whatever gives pleasure to itself is called *good* and *right*, while whatever causes unpleasant feelings is called *bad* and *wrong*. Moreover, it notices that there is a right and wrong way to hold its spoon, to use its playthings, to put on its clothes, and to do multitudes of other things. It thus perceives, more and more, that there are *rules* to regulate the use and action of all things, both animate and inanimate, and that such rules always have reference to some plan or design.

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As its faculties develop and its observation enlarges, the general impression is secured that *all* plans and contrivances of men are designed to promote enjoyment or to prevent discomfort, and are called good and right just so far as this is done. At the same time, all that tend to discomfort or pain are called bad and wrong.

In all the works of nature around, too, every thing that promotes enjoyment is called good and right, and the opposite is called evil and wrong.

At last there is a resulting feeling that the great design of all things is to secure good and prevent evil, and that whatever is opposed to this is wrong, and unfitted to the object for which all things exist. The question whether this impression is owing solely to observation or partly to mental constitution is waived, as of little practical consequence.

In the experience of infancy and childhood, the *law of sacrifice* is speedily developed. It is perceived that much of the good to

be gained, if sought to excess, occasions pain, so that there must be a certain amount of self-denial practiced, which, to the young novice, sometimes involves disappointment and discomfort. It is also seen that frequently two or more enjoyments are offered which are incompatible, so that one must be relinquished to gain the other. It is perceived, also, that there is a constant calculation going on as to which will be the *best*—that is, which will secure *the most good with the least evil*. And the child is constantly instructed that it must avoid excess, and must give up what is of less value to secure the greater good. All this training involves *sacrifices* which are more or less painful, so that a young child will sometimes cry as it voluntarily gives up one kind of pleasure as the only mode of securing what is best. [066]

It is perceived, also, that there is a constant *balancing* of good and evil, so that a given amount of enjoyment cancels or repays for a certain amount of evil. When a great amount of enjoyment is purchased by a small degree of labor or trouble, the *compound result* is deemed a good, and called right; on the contrary, when the evil involved exceeds a given amount in comparison to the good, the compound result is called evil and wrong.

Thus is generated the impression that there is a law of sacrifice instituted requiring the greatest possible good with the least possible evil, and that this is the great design of all things.

The impression is, not merely that we are to seek enjoyment and avoid pain, but that we are to seek the *greatest possible* good with the *least possible* evil, and that in doing this we are to obey the law of sacrifice, by which the greatest good *is to be bought* by a certain amount of evil *voluntarily* assumed.

Moreover, the child is thus gradually trained to understand that *good* and *evil* are to be regarded in two relations. Any thing and every thing is called *good* when it in any way gives enjoyment to any being.

But if the good can be secured only by sacrificing a greater good or by inflicting a greater evil, then, in this relation, the good

is called evil and wrong. Thus, in one relation eating a delicious fruit is a good, because it gives enjoyment. But if such is the state of a child's stomach, that sickness and suffering will follow the act, then it is evil and wrong.

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The early training of infancy introduces the first part of the great *law of sacrifice* in regard to *self* alone. But as the intellect develops, the existence of other minds is learned, and their happiness or suffering become subjects of attention. Here the calculations of the *balance* of good and evil become more and more complicated. And the *two relations* also become more definite and extensive. Whatever gives pleasure is always called *good* and *right*, until some evil is discovered as connected with it, not alone or chiefly to self, but to others also. Then the compound result is sought for, and if it is seen that, *on the whole*, what by itself would be good and right if dis severed from its connected evil, does involve *more* evil than good, then it is called evil and wrong. But if the balance shows so great an amount of good as pays for certain incidental evils, then the result is called good and right.

The child also very early learns that the *character* of those around is estimated by their reference to this mode of regarding good and evil, right and wrong. If a child simply seeks good to itself without any regard to the amount of evil involved as a consequence, he is called a bad child. On the contrary, those who make sacrifice of their wishes and plans to avoid what would bring evil on others, are called good, generous, lovely and virtuous. The youngest child soon perceives that its mother and other friends are constantly making sacrifices for its own good, and bearing inconveniences and trouble for the good of those around. And those who perform such acts of benevolent self-sacrifice are praised, and their conduct is called good and right.

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Thus arises a conviction or belief that the design or end for which every thing exists is to make *the most* happiness possi-



ble, and that those who conform to this design are acting right, while those who do not are acting wrong. Eventually there is established this conviction, also, that the *voluntary sacrifice of self-enjoyment* to promote the *best* good of all, is the *highest* kind of right action, and that those who practice this *the most* are the *best in character*.

The first feature of our moral sense, then, is, *that impression of the great design of all things* which enables us to judge of the right and wrong in voluntary action. This also may be placed as one of the principles of common sense. God has so formed our minds and their circumstances, that the result is a universal *belief* in every rational mind that whatever secures the *most* happiness with the least evil is *right*, and whatever does not is *wrong*. The wanton and needless destruction of happiness also men believe to be wrong. Their only diversities of opinion are in regard to what will be *best* and what will not.

The second feature of our moral constitution is what is ordinarily called the *sense of justice*. It is that susceptibility which is excited at the view of the conduct of others as *voluntary* causes of good or evil.

In all cases where free agents act to promote happiness, an emotion of approval arises, together with a desire of reward to the author of the good. On the contrary, when there is a voluntary destruction of happiness, there is an emotion of disapproval, and a desire for retributive pain on the author of the wrong.

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These emotions are instinctive, and not at all regulated by reason in their inception. When an evil is done, an instant desire is felt *to discover the cause*; and when it is found, an instant desire is felt *to inflict some penalty*. So irrational is this impulse, that children will exhibit anger and deal blows on inanimate objects that cause pain. Even mature minds are sometimes conscious of this impulse.

That this impulse is an implanted part of our constitution, and not the result of instruction, is seen in the delight manifested

by young children in the narration of the nursery tale where the cruel uncle who murdered the Babes in the Wood receives the retributions of Heaven.

It is the office of the intellect to judge whether the deed was a voluntary one, whether the agent intended the mischief, and whether a penalty will be of any use. The impulse to punish is never preceded by any such calculations.

Another feature in this sense of justice is the *proportion* demanded between the evil done and the penalty inflicted. That this also is instinctive, and not the result of instruction, is seen in the nursery, where children will approve of slight penalties for slight offenses, and severe ones for great ones, but will revolt from any very great disproportion between the wrong act and its penalty. As a general rule, both in the nursery and in mature minds, the greater the wrong done, the stronger the desire for a penalty, and the more severe the punishment demanded.

Another very important point of consideration is the universal feeling of mankind that the *natural penalties* for wrong-doing are *not sufficient*, and that it is an act of love as well as of justice to add to these penalties. Thus the parent who forbids his child to eat green fruit will not trust to the results of the natural penalty, but will restrain by the fear of the immediate and more easily conceived penalty of chastisement.

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So, in the great family of man, the natural penalties for theft are not deemed sufficient, but severe penalties for the protection of property are added.

This particular is the foundation of certain distinctions that are of great importance, which will now be pointed out.

We find the terms “*reward* and *punishment*” used in two different relations. In the first and widest sense they signify not only the penalties of human law, but those *natural consequences* which, by the constitution of nature, inevitably follow certain courses of conduct.

Thus an indolent man is said to receive poverty as a punishment, and it is in this sense that his children are said to be punished for the faults of their father.

The violations of natural law are punished without any reference to the question whether the evil-doer intended the wrong, or whether he sinned in ignorance, or whether this ignorance was involuntary and unavoidable. The question of the justice or injustice of such natural penalties involves the great question of the right and wrong of the system of the universe. Is it just and right for the Creator to make a system in which all free agents shall be thus led to obedience to its laws by penalties as well as rewards, by fear as well as by hope? This question will not be discussed here.

Most discussions as to *just* rewards and penalties ordinarily relate to the *added* penalties by which parents, teachers and magistrates enforce obedience to natural or to statute law. [071]

In these questions reference is always had to the *probable results* of such rewards and penalties in securing obedience. If experience has shown that certain penalties do secure obedience to wise and good laws, either of nature or of human enactment, then they are considered just. If they do not, they are counted unwise and unjust.

So, if certain penalties are needlessly severe—that is to say, if a less penalty will secure equal obedience, then this also decides so severe a penalty to be unjust.

In deciding on the rectitude of the penalties of human enactments, it is always assumed to be unjust to punish for any lack of knowledge and obedience when the subject had *no power* to know and to obey. If *a choice to obey* will not secure the act required of a free agent, then a penalty inflicted for disobedience is always regarded as unjust. The only seeming exception to this is the case where a person, by voluntary means, has deprived himself of ability to obey. But in such cases the punishment is felt to be right, not because he does not obey when he has no

power, but because he has voluntarily deprived himself of this power. And he is punished for destroying his ability to obey, and not for violating the law.

These things in human laws, then, are always demanded to make a penalty appear *just* to the moral sense of mankind, namely, that the subject have power to obey, and that he has opportunity to know the law, and is not ignorant by any voluntary and improper neglect.

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In all questions of justice, therefore, it is important to discriminate between those penalties that are inherent as a part of the great system of the universe, and for which the Creator alone is responsible, and those additional penalties which result from voluntary institutions of which men are the authors.

The next feature in our moral constitution is the susceptibility which is excited by the intellectual judgment of our own feelings and conduct as either right or wrong.

In case we decide them to be right, we experience an emotion of self-approval which is very delightful; but if we decide that they are wrong, we experience an immediate penalty in a painful emotion called *remorse*. This emotion is always proportioned to the amount of evil done, and the consciousness that it was done knowingly and intentionally. No suffering is more keen than the highest emotions of this kind, while their pangs are often enduring and unappeasable. Sometimes there is an attending desire to inflict retribution on one's self as a mode of alleviating this distress.

This susceptibility is usually denominated *conscience*. Sometimes this word is used to include both the intellectual judgment of our conduct as right or wrong, and the consequent emotions of approval or remorse; sometimes it refers to the susceptibility alone. Either use is correct, as in the connection in which it is employed the distinction can ordinarily be easily made.

This analysis of our moral constitution furnishes means for a clear definition of such terms as *obligated*, *ought*, *ought not*, and

the like.

A person is obligated or ought to do a thing when he has the intellect to perceive what is *best*, and thus *right*, and the moral susceptibilities just described. When he is destitute either of the intellect or of these susceptibilities, he ceases to be a moral and accountable being. He can no longer be made to feel any moral obligations. [073]

## Chapter XV. The Nature of Mind.—The Will.

The power *to choose* exists in other animals as well as in man, so that it is not this faculty which distinguishes our race from the brutes. It is another part of our nature which elevates us above the lower animals, which will now be described.

### Irrational Free Agency.

We have seen that desires for good are measured as to their strength or febleness by our own consciousness, and that in multitudes of cases we choose those things which excite *the strongest* desire. A mind so constituted as never to be able to choose any thing but that which excites the strongest desire, would be entirely dependent on circumstances, and thus the helpless sport of chance. This is the kind of free agency which

belongs to the brutes, and may properly be called *irrational free agency*.

## Rational Free Agency.

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In contrast with the above, we have already described the mind of man as possessing the power to choose *either* that which excites the strongest desire or that which the intellect decides to be *best for all concerned*.

When there is nothing to excite desires, there is no power at all to choose; so that motives are as indispensable to the action of the will as physical causes are to the movement of matter. The more strongly desire is excited the more the power of choice is increased. This gives rise to the universal use of language which characterizes motives as stronger or weaker according as desire is more or less powerful.

The greater part of our choices are for things which are *best*, so that there is no conflict between what excites the strongest desire and what is best for all. Thus to eat, drink, walk, sleep and perform most of the daily duties of life, are cases where the strongest desire and what is best coincide. In all such cases we choose that which excites the strongest desire. And when we assign the cause or reason for our choice, we say it was the strongest desire which was the *cause*; that is to say, it was the *occasional* cause of our choice. But our own mind is the only *producing* cause of its own volitions.

This exhibits the grand principle of *free agency* in distinction from its opposite, which is called *fatalism*, viz.:

*Motives are producing causes of desire, and are occasional causes of choice. Mind itself is the only producing cause of choice, having power to choose either that which excites the strongest desire or that which reason and conscience decide to be best for all concerned.*

In opposition to this, the fatalist maintains that every act of choice follows the strongest desire, so that there is the same *invariable* antecedence and sequence between the two as there is in material changes between the necessary cause and effect. [075] This being so, the mind has no power to choose any thing but that which excites the strongest desire.

Now, this is a question which every person, learned or unlearned, can decide. Have we power to choose any other way than as we do choose? Here it is claimed that every human being *believes* that we have this power, and proves that he believes it by word and action. And if any person were habitually to talk and act as if he believed children and men had no power to choose right when they choose wrong, he would be regarded as having lost his reason.

This, therefore, is placed as one of the principles of common sense, viz., *every rational mind has power to choose either that which excites the strongest desire or that which the intellect decides to be best, even when it does not excite the strongest desire.*

*Moral power* is the power to control rational minds by motives.

When no desire for any good and no fear of any evil exists, the mind has no power to choose. Excited desires (or motives) are as indispensable to choice as physical causes are to any change in matter.

The stronger the desire for a thing, the *easier* it is to choose it; and the less desire there is for a given thing, the *harder* it is to choose it. This measuring of various degrees of power to choose, is a matter of consciousness to every mind, and it is recognized in all languages. And we find that all mankind, of all languages, recognize the fact that men have power to choose what is *best*, even when it conflicts with the strongest desire; so much so, that life itself has been relinquished for the good of others, when there was little or no expectation of a future life, or of any consequent good to self. [076]

Moreover, it will be shown in a future chapter that our *highest* idea of virtue implies a conflict between the strongest desire and the conviction of what is right and best on the whole; so that sometimes men choose what is seen to be wrong and yet excites the strongest desire, and at other times what is right or best, when it does not excite the strongest desire.

All self-control, self-denial and self-government involve the idea of a conflict between the decisions of reason and conscience as to what is best and right, and the importunities of the strongest desire for what is not so.

## Subordinate and General Purposes.

There is a constant succession of selections to be made between different modes of securing happiness. A lesser good is given up for a greater, or some good relinquished altogether to avoid some consequent pain. Often, also, some evil is sought as the means of securing some future good, or of avoiding some greater evil. Thus men endure want, fatigue and famine to purchase wealth. Thus the nauseous draught will be swallowed to avoid the pains of sickness; and thus the pleasures of domestic affection will be sacrificed to obtain honor and fame. The whole course of life is a constant succession of such decisions between different modes of securing happiness and of avoiding pain.

In noticing the operation of mind, it will be seen that there is a foundation for two classes of volitions or acts of choice, which may be denominated *subordinate* and *general purposes*.

A *subordinate purpose* is one that secures some particular act, such as the moving of the arm or turning of the head. Such volitions are ordinarily consequent on some more general purpose of the mind, which they aid in accomplishing, and which is, therefore, denominated a *general* or *generic purpose*. For example, a man chooses to make a certain journey: this is the



general purpose, and, in order to carry it out, he performs a great variety of acts, each one of which aids in carrying out the generic decision.

It can be seen that the general purposes may themselves become subordinate to a still more comprehensive purpose. Thus the man may decide to make a journey, which is a generic choice in reference to all acts subordinate to this end. But this journey may be a subordinate part of a more general purpose to make a fortune, or to secure some other important end.

It is frequently the case that a generic purpose, which relates to objects that require a long time and many complicated operations, exists when the mind seems almost unconscious of its power. For example, a man may form a generic purpose to enter a profession for which years will be required to prepare. And while his whole course of action is regulated by this decision, he engages in pursuits entirely foreign to it, and which seem to engross his whole attention. These pursuits may sometimes be such as are antagonistic to his grand purpose, so as at least to imperil or retard its accomplishment. And yet this strong and quiet purpose remains, and is eventually carried out.

It is the case, also, that a generic choice may be formed to be carried out at some particular time and place, and then the mind becomes entirely unconscious of it till the appointed period and circumstances occur. Then the decision becomes dominant, and controls all other purposes. Thus a man may decide that, at a specified hour, he will stop his studies and perform certain gymnastic exercises. This volition is forgotten until the hour arrives, and then it recurs and is carried out. [078]

This phenomenon sometimes occurs in sleep. Some persons, in watching with the sick, will determine to wake at given hours to administer medicines; then they will sleep soundly till the appointed time comes, when they will waken and perform the predetermined actions.

In regard to the *commencement* of a generic purpose, we find

that sometimes it is so distinct and definite as to be the subject of consciousness and memory. For example, a spendthrift, in some moment of suffering and despondency, may form a determination to commence a systematic course of thrift and economy, and may actually carry it out through all his future life. Such cases are often to be found on record or in every-day life.

In other cases, this quiet, hidden, but controlling purpose seems to be formed by unconscious and imperceptible influences, so that the mind can not revert to the specific time or manner when it originated. For example, a child who is trained from early life to speak the truth, can never revert to any particular moment when this generic purpose originated.

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It is sometimes the case, also, that a person will contemplate some generic purpose before it occurs, while the process of its final formation seems almost beyond the power of scrutiny. For example, a man may be urged to relinquish one employment and engage in another. He reflects, consults, and is entirely uncertain how he shall decide. As time passes, he gradually inclines toward the proposed change, until, finally, he finds his determination fixed, he scarcely knows when or how.

Thus it appears that generic purposes commence sometimes so instantaneously and obviously that the time and influences connected with them can be recognized. In other cases, the decision seems to be a gradual one, while in some instances the process can be traced, and in others it is entirely unnoticed or forgotten.

It is in reference to such generic purposes that the *moral character* of men is estimated. An honest man is one who has a fixed purpose to act honestly in all circumstances. A truthful man is one who has such a purpose to speak the truth at all times.

In such cases, the degree in which such a purpose controls all others is the measure of a man's moral character in the estimate of society.

The history of mankind shows a great diversity of moral character dependent on such generic choices. Some men possess firm and reliable moral principles in certain directions, while they are very destitute of them in others.

Thus it will be seen that some have formed a very decided purpose in regard to honesty in business affairs, who yet are miserable victims to intemperance. Others have cultivated a principle called *honor*, that restrains them from certain actions regarded as mean, and yet they may be frequenters of gambling saloons and other haunts of vice. [080]

In the religions world, too, it is the case that some who are very firm and decided on all points of religious observances and in the cultivation of devotional emotions, are guilty of very mean actions, such as some worldly men of honor would not practice at the sacrifice of a right hand.

## On a Ruling Purpose or Chief End.

The most important of all the voluntary phenomena is the fact that, while there can be a multitude of these quiet and hidden generic purposes in the mind, it is also possible to form *one* which shall be the dominant or controlling one, to which all the others, both generic and specific, shall become subordinate. In common parlance this would be called the *ruling passion*. It is also called the *ruling purpose*, or *controlling principle*. This consists in the permanent choice of some one mode of securing happiness as the *chief end* or grand object of life.

There is a great variety of sources of happiness and of suffering to the human mind. Now in the history of our race we find that each one of these modes of enjoyment has been selected by different individuals as the chief end of their existence—as the mode of seeking enjoyment to which they sacrifice every other. Some persons have chosen the pleasures of eating, drinking, and

the other grosser enjoyments of sense. Others have chosen those more elevated and refined pleasures that come indirectly from the senses in the emotions of taste.

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Others have devoted themselves to intellectual enjoyments as their chief resource for happiness. Others have selected the exercise of physical and moral power, as in the case of conquerors and physical heroes, or of those who have sought to control by moral power, as rulers and statesmen.

Others have made the attainment of the esteem, admiration, and love of their fellow-creatures, their chief end. Others, still, have devoted themselves to the promotion of happiness around them as their chief interest. Others have devoted themselves to the service of God, or what they conceived to be such, and sometimes by the most miserable life of asceticism and self-torture.

Others have made it their main object in life to obey the laws of rectitude and virtue.

In all these cases, the *moral character* of the person, in the view of all observers, has been decided by this dominant volition, and exactly in proportion to the supremacy with which it has *actually controlled* all other purposes.

Some minds seem to have no *chief* end of life. Their existence is a succession of small purposes, each of which has its turn in controlling the life. Others have a strong, defined and all-controlling principle.

Now experience shows that both of these classes are capable, the one of *forming* and the other of *changing* such a purpose. For example, in a time of peace and ease there is little to excite the mind strongly; but let a crisis come, where fortune, reputation, and life are at stake, and men and women are obliged to form generic decisions involving all they hold dear, and many minds that have no controlling purpose immediately originate one, while those whose former ruling aims were in one direction change them entirely to another.

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This shows how it is that days of peril create heroes, statesmen and strong men and women. The hour of danger calls all the energies of the soul into action. Great purposes are formed with the strongest desire and emotion. Instantly the whole current of thought, and all the coexisting desires and emotions, are conformed to these purposes.

The experience of mankind proves that a dominant generic purpose may *extend to a whole life*, and actually control all other generic and specific volitions.

## How the Thoughts, Desires and Emotions are controlled by the Will.

We will now consider some of the modes by which the will controls the thoughts, desires and emotions.

We have seen, in previous pages, the influence which desire and emotion exert in making both our perceptions and conceptions more vivid. Whatever purpose or aim in life becomes an object of strong desire, is always distinctly and vividly conceived, while all less interesting objects are more faint and indistinct.

We have also seen that whenever any conception arises it always brings connected objects, forming a new and complex picture.

Whenever the mind is under the influence of a controlling purpose, the object of pursuit is always *more interesting* than any other. This interest always fastens on those particulars in any mental combination that are connected with the ruling purpose and seem fitted to promote it, making them more vivid. Around these selected objects their past associated ideas begin to cluster, forming other complex pictures. In all these combinations, those ideas most consonant with the leading interest of the mind become most vivid, and the others fade away.

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The grand method, then, for *regulating the thoughts* is by the generic decisions of the mind as to the modes of seeking enjoyment.

In regard to the power of the mind over its own *desires and emotions*, it is very clear that these sensibilities can not be regulated by direct specific volitions. Let any person try to produce love, fear, joy, hope or gratitude by simply choosing to have them arise, and it is soon perceived that no such power exists.

But there are *indirect* modes by which the mind can control its susceptibilities. The first method is by directing attention to those objects of thought which are fitted to call forth such emotions. For example, if we wish to awaken the emotion of fear, we can place ourselves in circumstances of danger, or call up ideas of horror and distress. If we wish to call forth emotions of gratitude, we can direct attention to acts of kindness to ourselves calculated to awaken such feelings. If we wish to excite desire for any object, we can direct attention to those qualities in that object that are calculated to excite desire. In all these cases the mind can, by an act of will, *direct its attention* to subjects calculated to excite emotion and desire.

The other mode of regulating the desires and emotions is by *the direction of our generic volitions*. For example, let a man of business, who has never had any interest in commerce, decide to invest all his property in foreign trade. As soon as this is done, the name of the ship that bears his all can never be heard or seen but it excites some emotion. A storm, that before would go unnoticed, awakens fear; the prices in the commercial markets, before unheeded, now awaken fear or afford pleasure. And thus multitudes of varied desires and emotions are called into existence by this one generic volition.

One result of a purpose to deny an importunate propensity is frequently seen in the immediate or gradual diminution of that desire. For example, if a person is satisfied that a certain article of food is injurious and resolves on *total abstinence*, it will be

found that the desire for it is very much reduced, far more so than when the effort is to diminish the indulgence.

When a generic purpose is formed that involves great interests, it is impossible to prevent the desires and emotions from running consonant with this purpose. The only mode of changing this current is to give up this generic purpose and form another. Thus, if a man has devoted his whole time and energies to money-making, it is impossible for him to prevent his thoughts and feelings from running in that direction. He must give up this as his chief end, and take a nobler object, if he would elevate the whole course of his mental action.

These are the principal phenomena of the grand mental faculty which is the controlling power of the mind, and on the regulation of which all its other powers are dependent.

The *nature of regeneration*, and the question whether it is instantaneous or gradual or both, all are intimately connected with the subject of this chapter.

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## Chapter XVI. Constitutional Varieties of the Human Mind.

In the preceding chapters have been presented the most important mental faculties which are common to the race. There are none of the powers and attributes of the mind as yet set forth which do not belong to every mind which is regarded as rational and complete.

But, though all the race have these in common, yet we can not but observe an almost endless variety of human character, resulting from the diverse *proportions* and *combinations* of these several faculties.

These constitutional differences may be noticed, first, in regard to the intellectual powers. Some minds are naturally predisposed to exercise the reasoning powers. Others, with precisely the same kind of culture, have little relish for this, and little power of appreciating an argument.

In other cases, the imagination seems to be the predominating faculty. In other minds there seems to be an equal balance of faculties, so that no particular power predominates.

Next we see the same variety in reference to the susceptibilities. In some minds, the desire for love and admiration is the predominating principle. In others, the love of power takes the lead. Some are eminently sympathizing. Others have a strong love of rectitude, or natural conscience. In some, the principle of justice predominates. In others, benevolence is the leading impulse.

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Finally, in regard to the power of volition, as has been before indicated, there are some that possess a strong will that is decisive and effective in regulating all specific volitions, while others possess various and humbler measures of this power.

According to the science of Phrenology, some of these peculiarities of mind are indicated by the size and shape of different portions of the brain, and externally indicated on the skull.

That these differences are constitutional, and not the result of education, is clear from the many facts showing that no degree of care or training will serve to efface these distinctive traits of the mind. To a certain degree they may be modified by education, and the equal balance of the faculties be promoted, but never to such a degree as to efface very marked peculiarities.

In addition to the endless diversities that result from these varied proportions and combinations, there is a manifest variety



in the grades of mind. Some races are much lower in the scale of being every way than others, while the same disparity exists in individuals of the same race.

The wisdom and benevolence of this arrangement is very manifest when viewed in reference to the interests of a commonwealth. Where some must lead and others follow, it is well that some have the love of power strong, and others have it less. Where some must be rulers, to inflict penalties as well as to apportion rewards, it is well that there be some who have the sense of justice as a leading principle. And so in the developments of intellect. Some men are to follow callings where the reasoning powers are most needed. Others are to adopt pursuits in which taste and imagination are chiefly required; and thus the varied proportions of these faculties become serviceable. [087]

And if it be true that the exercise of the social and moral faculties secures the highest degree of enjoyment, those disparities in mental powers which give exercise to the virtues of compassion, self-denial, fortitude and benevolence in serving the weak, and the corresponding exercises of gratitude, reverence, humility and devotion in those who are thus benefited, then we can see the wisdom and benevolence of this gradation of mental capacity.

Moreover, in a commonwealth perfectly organized, where the happiness of the whole becomes that of each part, whatever tends to the highest general good tends to the best interest of each individual member. This being so, the lowest and humblest in the scale of being, in his appropriate place, is happier than he could be by any other arrangement, and happier than he could be if all were equally endowed.

This subject is very important, because some theologians present these disparities of mental organization as indications of the depravity consequent on Adam's sin.

## Chapter XVII. Nature of Mind.—Habit.

This chapter is introduced because some theologians claim that the depravity of man consists either in *a habit* or in something *like* a habit.

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Habit is a facility in performing physical or mental operations, gained by the repetition of such acts. As examples of this in *physical* operations may be mentioned the power of walking, which is acquired only by a multitude of experiments; the power of speech, secured by a slow process of repeated acts of imitation; and the power of writing, gained in the same way. Success in every pursuit of life is attained by oft-repeated attempts, which finally induce a habit.

As examples of the formation of *intellectual* habits, may be mentioned the facility gained in acquiring knowledge by means of repeated efforts, and the accuracy and speed with which the process of reasoning is performed after long practice in this art.

As examples of *moral* habits may be mentioned those which are formed by the oft-repeated exercise of self-government, justice, veracity, obedience, and industry. The will, as has been shown, gains a facility in controlling specific volitions and in yielding obedience to the laws of right action by constant use, as really as do all the other mental powers.

The happiness of man, in the present state of existence, depends not so much upon the circumstances in which he is placed, or the capacities with which he is endowed, as upon the *formation of his habits*. A man might have the organ of sight, and be surrounded with all the beauties of nature, and yet, if he did not form the habit of judging of the form, distance and size of bodies,

most of the pleasure and use from this sense would be wanting. The world and all its beauties would be a mere confused mass of colors.

If the habits of walking and of speech were not acquired, these faculties and the circumstances for employing them would not furnish the enjoyment they were designed to secure. [089]

It is also the formation of *intellectual* habits by mental discipline and study, which opens vast resources for enjoyment that otherwise would be for ever closed. And it is by practicing obedience to parents that *moral* habits of subordination are formed, which are indispensable to our happiness as citizens, and as subjects of government. There is no enjoyment which can be pointed out, which is not, to a greater or less extent, dependent upon this principle.

The influence of habit in regard to the *law of sacrifice* is especially interesting. The experience of multitudes of our race shows that such tastes and habits may be formed in obeying this law, that what was once difficult and painful becomes easy and pleasant.

But this ability to secure enjoyment through habits of self-control and self-denial, induced by long practice, so far as experience shows, could never be secured by any other method.

That the highest kinds of happiness are to be purchased by more or less *voluntary sacrifice* and *suffering* to procure good for others, seems to be a part of that nature of things which we at least may suppose has existed from eternity. We can conceive of the eternal First Cause only as we imagine a mind on the same pattern as our own in constitutional capacities, but indefinitely enlarged in extent and action. Knowledge, wisdom, power, justice, benevolence and rectitude, must be the same in the Creator as in ourselves, at least so far as we can conceive; and, as the practice of self-sacrifice and suffering for the good of others is our highest conception of virtue, it is impossible to regard the Eternal Mind as all-perfect without involving this idea. [090]

The formation of the habits depends chiefly upon the leading desire or governing purpose, because whatever the mind desires the most it will *act* the most to secure, and thus by repeated acts will form its habits. The *character* of every individual, therefore, as before indicated, depends upon the mode of seeking happiness selected by the will. Thus the ambitious man has selected the attainment of power and admiration as his leading purpose, and whatever modes of enjoyment interfere with this are sacrificed. The sensual man seeks his happiness from the various gratifications of sense, and sacrifices other modes of enjoyment that interfere with this. The man devoted to intellectual pursuits, and to seeking reputation and influence through this medium, sacrifices other modes of enjoyment to secure this gratification. The man who has devoted his affections and the service of his life to God and the good of his fellow-men, sacrifices all other enjoyments to secure that which results from the fulfillment of such obligations. Thus a person is an ambitious man, a sensual man, a man of literary ambition, or a man of piety and benevolence, according to the governing purpose or leading choice of his mind.

There is one fact in regard to the choice of the leading object of desire, or the governing purpose of life, which is very important. Certain modes of enjoyment, in consequence of repetition, increase the desire, but lessen the capacity of happiness from this source; while, in regard to others, gratification increases the desire, and at the same time increases the capacity for enjoyment.

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The enjoyments through the senses are of the first kind. It will be found, as a matter of universal experience, that where this has been chosen as the main purpose of life, though the desire for such pleasures is continually increased, yet, owing to the physical effects of excessive indulgence, the capacity for enjoyment is decreased. Thus the man who so degrades his nature as to make the pleasures of eating and drinking the great pursuit of life, while his desires never abate, finds his zest for such enjoyments

continually decreasing, and a perpetual need for new devices to stimulate appetite and awaken the dormant capacities. The pleasures of sense always pall from repetition—grow “stale, flat and unprofitable,” though the deluded being who has thus slavishly yielded to such appetites feels himself bound by chains of habit, which, even when enjoyment ceases, seldom are broken.

The pleasures derived from the exercise of power, when its attainment becomes the master passion, are also of this description. The statesman, the politician, the conqueror, are all seeking for this, and desire never abates while any thing of the kind remains to be attained. We do not find that enjoyment increases in proportion as power is secured. On the contrary, it seems to cloy in possession. Alexander, the conqueror of the world, when he had gained *all*, wept that objects of desire were extinct, and that possession could not satisfy.

But there are other sources of happiness for which the desire ever continues, and possession only increases the capacity for enjoyment. Of this class is the susceptibility of happiness from *giving and receiving affection*. Here, the more there is given and received, the more is the power of giving and receiving increased. We find that this principle outlives every other, and even the decays of nature itself. When tottering age on the borders of the grave is just ready to resign its wasted tenement, often from its dissolving ashes the never-dying spark of affection has burst forth with new and undiminished luster. This is that immortal fountain of happiness always increased by imparting, never surcharged by receiving. [092]

Another principle, which increases both desire and capacity by exercise, is the power of enjoyment from being the *cause of happiness to others*. Never was an instance known of regret for devotion to the happiness of others. On the contrary, the more this holy and delightful principle is in exercise, the more the desires are increased, and the more are the susceptibilities for enjoyment from this source enlarged. While the votaries of

pleasure are wearing down with the exhaustion of abused nature, and the votaries of ambition are sighing over its thorny wreath, the benevolent spirit is exulting in the success of its plans of good, and reaching forth to still purer and more perfect bliss.

This principle is especially true in regard to the practice of rectitude. The more the leading aim of the mind is devoted to *right feeling and action*, or to obedience to all the laws of God, the more both the desire and the capacity of enjoyment from this source are increased.

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But there is another fact in regard to habit, which has an immense bearing on the well-being of our race. When a habit of seeking happiness in some one particular mode is once formed, the *change* of this habit becomes difficult just in proportion to the degree of repetition which has been practiced. A habit once formed, it is no longer an easy matter to choose between the mode of securing happiness chosen and another which the mind may be led to regard as much superior. Thus, in gratifying the appetite, a man may feel that his happiness is continually diminishing, and that, by sacrificing this passion, he may secure much greater enjoyment from another source; yet the force of habit is such, that decisions of the will perpetually yield to its power.

Thus, also, if a man has found his chief enjoyment in that admiration and applause of men so ardently desired, even after it has ceased to charm, and seems like emptiness and vanity, still, when nobler objects of pursuit are offered, the chains of habit bind him to his wonted path. Though he looks and longs for the one that his conscience and his intellect assure him is brightest and best, the conflict with bad habit ends in fatal defeat and ruin. It is true that every habit can be corrected and changed, but nothing requires greater firmness of purpose and energy of will; for it is not *one* resolution of mind that can conquer habit: it must be a constant series of long-continued efforts.

The influence of habit in reference to *emotions* deserves spe-

cial attention as having a direct influence upon character and happiness. All pleasurable emotions of mind, being grateful, are indulged and cherished, and are not weakened by repetition unless they become excessive. If the pleasures of sense are indulged beyond a certain extent, the bodily system is exhausted, and satiety is the consequence. If the love of power and admiration is indulged to excess, so as to become the leading purpose of life, they are found to be cloying. But, within certain limits, all pleasurable emotions do not seem to lessen in power by repetition. [094]

But in regard to painful emotions the reverse is true. The mind instinctively resists or flies from them, so that often a habit of suppressing such emotions is formed, until the susceptibility diminishes, and sometimes appears almost entirely destroyed. Thus a person often exposed to danger ceases to be troubled by fear, because he forms a habit of suppressing it. A person frequently in scenes of distress and suffering learns to suppress the emotions of painful sympathy. The surgeon is an example of the last case, where, by repeated operations, he has learned to suppress emotions until they seldom recur. A person inured to guilt gradually deadens the pangs of remorse, until the conscience becomes "seared as with a hot iron." Thus, also, with the emotion of shame. After a person has been repeatedly exposed to contempt, and feels that he is universally despised, he grows callous to any such emotions.

The mode by which the mind succeeds in forming such a habit seems to be by that implanted principle which makes ideas that are most in consonance with the leading desire of the mind become vivid and distinct, while those that are less interesting fade away. Now no person desires to witness pain except from the hope of relieving it, unless it be that, in anger, the mind is sometimes gratified with the infliction of suffering. But, in ordinary cases, the sight of suffering is avoided except where relief can be administered. In such cases, the desire of administering [095]

relief becomes the leading one, so that the mind is turned off from the view of the suffering to dwell on conceptions of modes of relief. Thus the surgeon and physician gradually form such habits that the sight of pain and suffering lead the mind to the conception of modes of relief, whereas a mind not thus interested dwells on the more painful ideas.

The habits of life are all formed either from the desire to secure happiness or to avoid pain, and the *fear of suffering* is found to be a much more powerful principle than the *desire of happiness*. The soul flies from pain with all its energies, even when it will be inert at the sight of promised joy. As an illustration of this, let a person be fully convinced that the gift of two new senses would confer as great an additional amount of enjoyment as is now secured by the eye and ear, and the promise of this future good would not stimulate with half the energy that would be caused by the threat of instant and entire blindness and deafness.

If, then, the mind is stimulated to form good habits and to avoid the formation of evil ones most powerfully by painful emotions, when their legitimate object is not effected they continually decrease in vividness, and the designed benefit is lost. If a man is placed in circumstances of danger, and fear leads to habits of caution and carefulness, the object of exciting this emotion is accomplished, and the diminution of it is attended with no evil. But if fear is continually excited, and no such habits are formed, then the susceptibility is lessened, while the good to be secured by it is lost. So, also, with emotions of sympathy. If we witness pain and suffering, and it induces habits of active devotion to the good of those who suffer, the diminution of the susceptibility is a blessing and no evil. But if we simply indulge emotions, and do not form the habits they were intended to secure, the power of sympathy is weakened, and the designed benefit is lost. Thus, again, with shame: if this painful emotion does not lead us to form habits of honor and rectitude, it is continually weakened by repetition, and the object for which it was bestowed is not



secured. And so with remorse: if this emotion is awakened without leading to habits of benevolence and virtue, it constantly decays in power, and the good it would have secured is for ever lost.

It does not appear, however, that the power of emotion in the soul is thus *destroyed*. This is evident from the fact that the most hardened culprits, when brought to the hour of death, where all plans of future good cease to charm the mental eye, are often overwhelmed with the most vivid emotions of sorrow, shame, remorse and fear. And often, in the course of life, there are seasons when the soul returns from its pursuit of deluding visions to commune with itself in its own secret chambers. At such seasons, shame, remorse and fear take up their abode in their long-deserted dwelling, and ply their scorpion whips till they are obeyed, and the course of honor and virtue is resumed, or till the distracted spirit again flies abroad for comfort and relief.

There is a great diversity in human character, resulting from the diverse proportions and combinations of those powers of mind which the race have in common. At the same time, there is a variety in the scale of being, or relative grade of each mind. While all are alike in the common faculties of the human mind, some have every faculty on a much larger scale than others, while some are of a very humble grade. [097]

The principle of habit has very great influence in modifying and changing these varieties. Thus, by forming habits of intellectual exercise, a mind of naturally humble proportions can be elevated considerably above one more highly endowed by natural constitution. So the training of some particular intellectual faculty, which by nature is deficient, can bring it up nearer to the level of other powers less disciplined by exercise.

In like manner, the natural susceptibilities can be increased, diminished or modified by habit. Certain tastes, that had little power, can be so cultivated as to overtop all others.

So of the moral nature: it can be so exercised that a habit will

be formed which will generate a strength and prominence that nature did not impart.

One of the most important results of habit is its influence on *faith* or *belief*. Those persons who practice methods of false reasoning, who turn away from evidence and follow their feelings in forming opinions, eventually lose the power of sure, confiding belief.

On the contrary, an honest, conscientious steadiness in seeking the truth and in yielding to evidence, secures the firmest and most reliable convictions, and that peace of mind which alone results from believing the truth.

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The will itself is also subject to this same principle. A strong will, that is trained to yield obedience to law in early life, acquires an ease and facility in doing it which belongs ordinarily to weak minds, and yet can retain all its vigor. And a mind that is trained to bring subordinate volitions into strict and ready obedience to a generic purpose, acquires an ease and facility in doing this which was not a natural endowment.

Thus it appears that by the principle of *habit* every mind is furnished with the power of elevating itself in the scale of being, and of so modifying and perfecting the proportions and combinations of its constitutional powers, that often the result is that there is no mode of distinguishing between the effects of habit and those of natural organization.

## Chapter XVIII. The Nature of Mind Our Guide to the Natural Attributes of God.

The *natural* attributes of any mind are the powers and faculties to be exercised, while it is the *action* or *voluntary use* of these faculties that exhibits the *moral* attributes.

Having gained the existence of a Great First Cause by the use of one principle of common sense, and the fact that this cause is an intelligent mind by another, it has been shown that a third of these principles leads to the belief that the natural attributes of God are like our own. We can not conceive of any other kind of minds than our own, because we have never had any past experience or knowledge of any other.

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But while we thus conclude that the mind of the Creator is, so far as we can conceive, precisely like our own in constitutional organization, we are as necessarily led to perceive that the *extent* of these powers is far beyond our own. A mind with the power, wisdom and goodness exhibited in the very small portion of his works submitted to our inspection, who has inhabited eternity, and matured through everlasting ages—our minds are lost in attempting any conception of the *extent* of such infinite faculties!

Thus we are necessarily led to conceive of the Creator as possessing the intellectual powers described in previous pages. He perceives, conceives, imagines, judges and remembers just as we do.

So also all our varied susceptibilities to pleasure and pain exist in the Eternal Mind. The desire of good and the fear of evil which are the motive power in the human mind, exist also in the

divine. Thus by the light of nature we settle the question that the existence of susceptibilities to pain and evil are not the results of the Creator's will, but are a part of the eternal nature of things which he did not originate or control.

All the minds we ever knew or heard of are moved to action by desire to gain happiness and escape pain, and as we can conceive of no other kind of mind than our own, we must attribute to the Creator this foundation element of mental activity.

Thus we are led to attribute to the Creator all those susceptibilities included in *the moral sense*, as described in previous pages. His mind, like ours, feels that whatever makes *the most* happiness with *the least* evil is *right*; that is to say, *it is fitted to the eternal nature of things*, of which his own mind is a part.

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So also the Creator possesses that *sense of justice* implanted in our own minds, which involves the desire of good to those who make happiness, and of evil to those who destroy happiness; and which also demands that such retributions be *proportioned* to the good and evil done, and to the *power* of the agent.

So also we must conceive of the Creator as possessing the susceptibility of *conscience*, which includes in the very constitution of mind retributions for right and wrong action.

Again, we are led to conceive of God as a *rational free agent*, with power to choose either that which excites the *strongest desire* or that which is perceived to be *best on the whole for all concerned*, even if it does not excite the strongest desire.

Again, we are to conceive of the Creator as possessing a belief in those principles of reason which he has implanted in our minds, and made our guide in all matters, both of temporal and religious concern.

Again, our experience of the nature and history of mind, leads to the inference that no being has existed from all eternity *in solitude*, but that there is *more than one eternal, uncreated mind*, and that all their powers of enjoyment from giving and receiving happiness in social relations have been in exercise from eternal

ages. This is the just and natural deduction of reason and experience, as truly as the deduction that there is at least one eternal First Cause.

Again, all our experience of mind involves the idea of the *mutual relation of minds*. We perceive that minds are made to match to other minds, so that there can be no complete action of mind, according to its manifest design, except in relation to other beings. A mind can not love till there is another mind to call forth such emotion. A mind can not bring a tithe of its power into appropriate action except in a community of minds. The conception of a solitary being, with all the social powers and sympathies of the human mind infinitely enlarged, and yet without any sympathizing mind to match and meet them, involves the highest idea of unfitness and imperfection conceivable, while it is contrary to our uniform experience of the nature and history of mind. [101]

It has been argued that the *unity of design* in the works of nature proves that there is but one creating mind. This is not so, for in all our experience of the creations of finite beings no *great design* was ever formed without a combination of minds, both to plan and to execute. The majority of minds in all ages, both heathen and Christian, have always conceived of the Creator as *in some way* existing so as to involve the ideas of plurality and of the love and communion of one mind with another.

And yet the unity and harmony of all created things as parts of one and the same design, teach *a degree* of unity in the authorship of the universe never known in the complex action of finite minds.

Thus a *unity* and *plurality* in the Creator of all things is deduced by reason and experience from the works of nature.

## Chapter XIX. The Nature of Mind Our Guide to the Moral Attributes of God.

Having employed the principles of common sense to gain a knowledge of the natural attributes of God, we are next to employ the same principles to gain his *moral* character; or those attributes which are exhibited in *willing*. In other words, we are to seek the character of God as expressed in his *works* or *deeds*.

In our experience of the moral character of minds in this world, we find that some of the highest grades as to intellect and susceptibilities, are lowest as to good-willing. How is it, then, with the highest mind of all? Does he so prefer evil to good, that he deliberately plans for the production of evil when he has power to produce happiness in its place? Or does he sometimes prefer evil and sometimes good, with the variable humors of the human race? Or does he always prefer good when it costs him no trouble or sacrifice, but never when it does? Or is he one who *invariably* chooses what is *best for all*, even when it involves painful sacrifices to himself?

In seeking a reply to these momentous questions, we return once more to the principle of common sense before stated, *i.e.*, *the nature of any work or contrivance is proof of the character and design of the author*.

In examining the works of the Creator, we find that the material world impresses us as wisely adjusted and good in construction, only as it is fitted to give enjoyment to sentient beings. It is the intelligent, feeling, acting minds that give the value to every

other existence. If there were no minds, all perception of beauty, fitness and goodness would perish.

It is *minds*, therefore, which are the *chief* works of the Creator's hand, and which give value to all others.

If the *nature* of these minds is evil, then the author of them is proved to be evil by his works. If their nature is good and perfect, then their author is proved to be good and perfect.

Here again we are driven back to our own minds to gain the only conceptions possible to us, not only of wisdom, but of goodness or benevolence.

On examination, we shall find that we can form no idea of these qualities which does not involve a *limitation of power*.

Our idea of power is that which we gain when we will to move our bodies or to make any other change, and this change ensues. Our only idea of a *want* of power is gained when the choice or willing of a change or event does *not* produce it. Whenever, therefore, it shall appear that the Creator wills or wishes a thing to exist or to be changed, and that change or existence does not follow his so willing, we can not help believing that he has not the power to produce it?

Again; our idea of *perfectness* always has reference to power; for a thing is regarded as perfect in construction only when there is no power in God or man to make it *better*. When any arrangement is as good as it can be, so that neither God nor man has power to make it better, we regard it as *perfect*, even when there is some degree of evil involved.

We are now prepared to define what is included in the terms *perfect wisdom* and *perfect benevolence*, when applied to the Creator or to any other being, thus: A perfectly wise being is one who invariably wills the best possible ends and the best possible means of accomplishing those ends. [104]

An imperfectly wise being is one who does not invariably do this.

A perfectly benevolent being is one who invariably wills the most good and the least evil *in his power*. An imperfectly benevolent being is one who does not invariably will thus.

The *degree* in which a being is ranked as wise and good is estimated by the extent to which his willing good or evil corresponds with his power.

Thus it appears that, in a system where evil exists, the very idea of *perfect* benevolence and wisdom involves the supposition of a *limitation of power*.

To return, then, to the question as proposed at the commencement of the chapter—Is the Creator a being who prefers good to evil invariably, or is he one who only sometimes prefers evil to good, and at other times prefers good to evil, with the varying humors of man; or does he *invariably* choose what is *best for all*, even in cases where it may cost personal sacrifice and suffering to himself?

It will be the object of what follows to prove that the last supposition is the true one.

In attempting this, we again take the principle of common sense, that “*the nature* of any contrivance proves the design and character of the author.” Then we proceed to a review of *the nature*, first of mind, and next of the material world, to prove that the design or *chief end* of the Creator is, not to make happiness irrespective of the amount, but to produce the *greatest possible* happiness with the *least possible* evil. In other words, we are to seek for proof that God has done all things *for the best*, so that he has no power to do better.

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In still another form, we are to seek for evidence, in *the nature* of God's works, that he has ever done *the best he could*, so that the amount of evil that ever was or ever will exist, is not caused by his *willing* it, but by his want of power to prevent it; so that any change would be an increase of evil and a lessening of good to the universe as a whole.



In pursuing this attempt, it will be needful to reproduce two or three chapters of a work by the author, already before the public, entitled, *The Bible and the People; or, Common Sense applied to Religion*.

In this work *the nature of mind* is presented very much more in detail, for the same purpose as that here indicated. What will now follow is a brief review of previous chapters in that work, as a *summary* of the evidence there presented that the *chief end* of God in all his works is to produce the greatest possible happiness with the least possible evil.

Whenever we find any contrivances all combining to secure a certain good result, which, at the same time, involve some degree of inevitable evil, and then discover that there are contrivances to diminish and avoid this evil, we properly infer that the author intended to secure *as much of the good with as little of the evil as possible*. For example, a traveler finds a deserted mine, and all around he discovers contrivances for obtaining gold, and, at the same time, other contrivances for getting rid of the earth mixed with it. The inevitable inference would be that the author of these contrivances designed to secure as much gold with as little earth as possible; and should any one say that he could have had more gold and less earth if he chose to, the answer would be that there is no evidence of this assertion, but direct evidence against it.

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Again: should we discover a piece of machinery in which every contrivance tended to secure a *speed* in movement, produced by the *friction* of wheels against a rough surface, and at the same time other contrivances were found for diminishing all friction that was useless, we should infer that the author designed to secure the *greatest possible speed* with the *least possible friction*.

In like manner, if we can show that mind is a contrivance that acts by the influence of fear of evil, and that *pain* seems as indispensable to the action of a free agent as friction is to

motion; if we can show that there is no contrivance in mind or matter which is designed to secure suffering as its primary end; if we can, on the contrary, show that the direct end of all the organizations of mind and matter is to produce happiness; if we can show that it is only the *wrong action* of mind that involves most of the pain yet known, so that right action, in its place, would secure only happiness; if we can show contrivances for diminishing pain, and also contrivances for increasing happiness by means of the inevitable pain involved in the system of things, then the just conclusion will be gained that the Author of the system of mind and matter designed “to produce the greatest possible happiness with the least possible evil.”

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In the pages which follow, we shall present evidence exhibiting all these particulars.

The only way in which we learn the nature of a thing is to observe its qualities and actions. This is true of mind as much as it is of matter. Experience and observation teach that the nature of mind is such, that *the fear of suffering* is indispensable to secure a large portion of the enjoyment within reach of its faculties, and that the highest modes of enjoyment can not be secured except by sacrifice, and thus by more or less suffering.

This appears to be an inevitable combination, as much so as friction is inevitable in machinery.

We have the evidence of our own consciousness that it is fear of evil to ourselves or to others that is the *strongest* motive power to the mind. If we should find that no pain resulted from burning up our own bodies, or from drowning, or from any other cause; if every one perceived that no care, trouble, or pain resulted from losing all kinds of enjoyment, the effort to seek it would be greatly diminished.

If we could desire good enough to exert ourselves to seek it, and yet should feel no discomfort in failing; if we could *lose every thing*, and feel no sense of pain or care, the stimulus to action which experience has shown to be most powerful and

beneficent would be lost.

We find that abundance of ease and prosperity enervates mental power, and that mind increases in all that is grand and noble, and also in the most elevating happiness, by means of danger, care and pain. We may properly infer, then, that evil is a necessary part of the experience of a perfectly-acting mind. [108]

So strong is the conviction that *painful penalties* are indispensable, that the kindest parents and the most benevolent rulers are the most sure to increase rather than diminish those that are already involved in the existing nature of things.

Again: without a revelation we have no knowledge of any kind of mind but by inference from our experience in this state of being. All we know of the *Eternal First Cause* is by a process of reasoning, inferring that his nature must be *like* the only minds of which we have any knowledge. We assume, then, that he is a free agent, regulated by desire for happiness and fear of evil.

We thus come to the conclusion that this organization of mind is a part of the *fixed and eternal nature of things*, and does not result from the will of the Creator. His own is the eternal pattern of an all-perfect mind, and our own are formed on this perfect model, with susceptibilities to pain as an indispensable motive power in gaining happiness.

We will now recapitulate some of the particulars in the laws and constitution of mind which tend to establish the position that its Creator's grand design is "to produce the greatest possible happiness with the least possible evil."

## Intellectual Powers.

First, then, in reference to the earliest exercise of mind in *sensation*. The eye might have been so made that light would inflict pain, and the ear so that sound would cause only discomfort. And so of all the other senses.

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But the condition of a well-formed, healthy infant is a most striking illustration of the adaptation of the senses to receive enjoyment. Who could gaze on the countenance of such a little one, as its various senses are called into exercise without such a conviction? The delight manifested as the light attracts the eye, or as pleasant sounds charm the ear, or as the limpid nourishment gratifies its taste, or as gentle motion and soft fondlings soothe the nerves of touch, all testify to the benevolent design of its Maker.

Next come the pleasures of *perception* as the infant gradually observes the qualities of the various objects around, and slowly learns to distinguish its mother and its playthings from the confused mass of forms and colors. Then comes the gentle curiosity as it watches the movement of its own limbs, and finally discovers that its own volitions move its tiny fingers, while the grand idea that *it is itself a cause* is gradually introduced.

Next come the varied intellectual pleasures as the several powers are exercised in connection with the animate and material world around, in acquiring the meaning of words, and in imitating the sounds and use of language. The adult, in toiling over the dry lexicon, little realizes the pleasure with which the little one is daily acquiring the philosophy, grammar, and vocabulary of its mother tongue.

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A child who can not understand a single complete sentence, or speak an intelligible phrase, will sit and listen with long-continued delight to the simple enunciation of words, each one of which presents a picture to his mind of a dog, a cat, a cow, a horse, a whip, a ride, and many other objects and scenes that have given pleasure in the past; while the single words, without any sentences, bring back, not only vivid conceptions of these objects, but a part of the enjoyment with which they have been connected.

Then, as years pass by, the intellect more and more administers pleasure, while the reasoning powers are developed, the taste

cultivated, the imagination exercised, the judgment employed, and the memory stored with treasures for future enjoyment.

In the proper and temperate use of the intellectual powers, there is a constant experience of placid satisfaction, or of agreeable and often of delightful emotions, while no one of these faculties is productive of pain, except in violating the laws of the mental constitution.

## The Susceptibilities.

In regard to the second general class of mental powers—the *susceptibilities*—the first particular to be noticed is the ceaseless and all-pervading *desire to gain happiness and escape pain*. This is the mainspring of all voluntary activity; for no act of volition will take place till some good is presented to gain, or some evil to shun. At the same time, as has been shown, the desire to escape evil is more potent and effective than the desire for good. Thousands of minds that rest in passive listlessness, when there is nothing to stimulate but hope of enjoyment, will exert every physical and mental power to escape impending evil. The seasons of long-continued prosperity in nations always tend to a deterioration of intellect and manhood. It is in seasons of danger alone that fear wakes up the highest energies, and draws forth the heroes of the race.

Mind, then, is an existence having the power of that self-originating action of *choice* which constitutes free agency, while this power can only be exercised when desires are excited to gain happiness or to escape pain. This surely is the highest possible evidence that its Author *intended* mind should thus act. [111]

But a mind may act to secure happiness and avoid pain to itself, and yet may gain only very low grades of enjoyment, while much higher are within reach of its faculties. So, also, it may act

to gain happiness for itself as the chief end in such ways as to prevent or destroy the higher happiness of others around.

In reference to this, we find those susceptibilities which raise man to the dignity of a rational and moral being.

In the first place, there is that *impression of the great design* of the Creator existing in every mind, either as a result of constitution or of training, or of both united, which results in a feeling that whatever lessens or destroys happiness is unfit and contrary to the system of things.

Next there is the power to balance pleasure and pain, and estimate the compound result, both in reference to self and to the commonwealth. With this is combined the feeling that whatever secures *the most good with the least evil* is right and fit, and that the opposite is wrong and unfitted to the nature of things.

Next comes the *sense of justice*, which results in an impulse to *discover the cause* of good and evil, and when this cause is found to be a voluntary agent, a consequent impulse to make returns of good for good, and of evil for evil, and also to *proportion* retributive rewards or penalties to the amount of good or evil done.

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With this, also, is combined the feeling that those retributions should be applied only where there was *voluntary* power to have done otherwise. When it is seen that there was no such power, the impulse to reward or punish is repressed.

Such is the deep conviction that such retributions are indispensable, that where natural pains and penalties do not avail, others are demanded, both in the family and in the commonwealth.

Lastly, we find the susceptibility of *conscience*, which, by the very framework of the mind itself, apportions the retributive pangs of remorse for wrong doing, and the pleasure of self-approval for well doing. These, too, are retributions never to be escaped, and the most exquisite, both in elevated happiness and excruciating pain. The mind carries about in itself its own certain

and gracious remunerator—its own inexorable prosecutor, judge, and executioner.

This same design of the Creator may be most delightfully traced in what may be called the *economy* of happiness and pain.

One particular of this is set forth at large in the chapter on the *emotions of taste*.<sup>5</sup> Here we find the mind formed not only to secure multitudinous enjoyment through the nerves of sensation, but that, by the principle of association, there is a perpetual *reproduction* of these emotions in connection with the colors, forms, sounds, and motions with which they were originally associated. Thus there are perpetually returning emotions of pleasure so recondite, so refined, so infinite in variety and extent, and yet how little noticed or understood!

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Another indication of the same kind is the peculiarity pointed out on former pages, where it is shown that securing certain enjoyments which tend to promote the *general* happiness increases both desire and capacity for enjoyment, while those that terminate in the individual diminish by possession. Thus the enjoyment of power, which must, from its nature, be confined to a few, diminishes by possession. Thus, too, the pleasures of sense pall by indulgence. But the enjoyment resulting from the exercise and reciprocation of love, and that resulting from benevolent actions, and that which is included in a course of perfect obedience to all the rules of rectitude, increases the capacity for enjoyment.

Another illustration of the same principle is exhibited in the chapter on Habit, where it is seen that the power of pleasurable emotions increases by repetition, while painful emotions decrease when the good to be secured by their agency is attained. Thus *fear* serves to protect from danger till caution and habit render it needless, and then it decreases. And so of other painful emotions.

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<sup>5</sup> These references are to portions of the volume before mentioned which are not introduced into this work.

It is interesting to trace the same design in the constitution of minds in *regard to each other*. We find that the purest and highest kind of happiness is dependent on the mutual relations of minds. Thus the enjoyment resulting from the discovery of intellectual and moral traits in other minds—that resulting from giving and receiving affection—that gained by sympathy, and by being the cause of happiness to others, and that resulting from conscious rectitude, all are dependent on the existence of other beings.

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Now we find that minds are relatively so constituted that *what one desires, it is a source of happiness in another to bestow*. Thus one can be pleased by the discovery of certain traits in other minds, while, in return, the exhibition of these traits, and the consciousness that they are appreciated, is an equal source of enjoyment. One mind seeks the love of others, while these, in return, are desiring objects of affection, and rejoice to confer the gift that is sought. The desire of knowledge or the gratification of curiosity is another source of pleasure, while satisfying this desire is a cause of enjoyment to those around. How readily do mankind seize upon every opportunity to convey interesting news to other minds!

Again: we find that, both in sorrow and in joy, the mind seeks for the sympathy of others, while this grateful and soothing boon it is delightful to bestow. So, also, the consciousness of being the cause of good to another sends joy to the heart, while the recipient is filled with the pleasing glow of gratitude in receiving the benefit. The consciousness of virtue in acting for the general good, instead of for contracted, selfish purposes, is another source of happiness, while those who witness its delightful results rejoice to behold and acknowledge it. What bursts of rapturous applause have followed the exhibition of virtuous self-sacrifice for the good of others from bosoms who rejoiced in this display, and who could owe this pleasure to no other cause than the natural constitution of mind, which is formed to be made happy both in



beholding and in exercising virtue.

This same beneficial economy is manifested in a close analysis of all that is included in the affections of *love* and *gratitude*. [115]

It has been shown that, in the commencement of existence, the young mind first learns the sources of good and evil to self, and its sole motives are desire for its own enjoyment.

Soon, however, it begins to experience the happiness resulting from the relations of minds to each other, and then is developed the superior power of *love*, and its importance as a regulating principle.

In the analysis of this affection, it is seen to consist, first, in the pleasurable emotions which arise in view of certain traits of character in another mind. When these qualities are discovered, the first result is emotions of pleasure in the contemplation. Immediately there follows *a desire of good* to the cause of this pleasure. Next follows the desire of reciprocated affection—that is, a desire is awakened to become the cause of the same pleasure to another; for the desire of being loved is the desire to be the cause of pleasurable emotions in another mind, in view of our own good qualities. When we secure this desired appreciation, then follows an increased desire of good to the one who bestows it.

Thus the affection of love is a combination of the action and reaction of pleasurable emotions, all tending to awaken the desire of good to another. This passion may become so intensified that it will become more delightful to secure enjoyments to another than to procure them for self.

In what is thus far presented, we find that the desire of good to another results solely from the fact that certain mental qualities are *causes of pleasure to self*. Of course, this desire ceases when those qualities cease to exist or cease to be appreciated. This kind of love is the natural result of the constitution of minds in their relations to each other, making it *easy and pleasant* to live [116]

for the good of another in return for the pleasure received from their agreeable qualities and manifestations.

But the highest element of love consists in the *desire and purpose of good to another without reference to any good received in return. It is good willing.*

The desire of good to others exists as a natural impulse more or less powerful in differently constituted minds. It is the cause of that pleasure which is felt in the consciousness of being the cause of good to another. But this natural impulse can be so developed and increased by voluntary culture as to become the strongest impulse of the mind, and thus the source of the highest and most satisfying enjoyments. In many minds this becomes so strongly developed that securing happiness to others is sought with far more earnestness and pleasure than any modes of enjoyment that terminate solely in self.

This analysis lays the foundation for the distinction expressed by the terms *impulsive benevolence* and *voluntary benevolence*, or the *love of complacency* and the *love of benevolence*. The first is the involuntary result of good conferred on *self*; the last is a voluntary act. It is good willing toward others without reference to self. The first can only exist where certain qualities are perceived and appreciated in another mind. The second can result from voluntary effort, and become the subject of law and penalties.

We can never be justly required to love another mind with the love of complacency except when qualities are perceived that, by the constitution of mind, necessarily call forth such regard. But the love of benevolence can be justly demanded from every mind toward every being capable of happiness.

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Here it is important to discriminate more exactly in regard to the principle of *benevolence* and the principle of *rectitude*.

It is seen that the benevolence which is the subject of rewards and penalties as a voluntary act consists in *good willing*—that is,

in choosing the happiness of *other* minds as well as our own as the object of interest and pursuit.

But the principle of rectitude is more comprehensive in its nature. It relates to obedience to *all* the laws of the system of the universe—those relating to ourselves as much as those relating to others. It is true that, as obedience to these laws includes the greatest possible amount of good with the least possible evil, both to the individual and the commonwealth, the tendency of the two principles is to the same result. But benevolence may be exercised without any regard to the rules of right and wrong. Instead of striving to make the *most possible* happiness with the least possible evil, as our Maker's great design demands, a course may be taken that makes some happiness to some minds at the expense of vast suffering and wrong to others. No mind acts right, even in willing happiness to others, when it is done in disregard of those laws which demand that we should make happiness the right way, that is, the way which is *best for all*.

In the physical and mental constitution of man there is not a single arrangement the direct object of which is to produce suffering. The susceptibilities to pain seem designed to protect and preserve, while the greater the need the more strong is this protection. For example, in regard to physical organization, fire is an element that is indispensable to the life, comfort, and activity of man, and it must be accessible at all times and places. But all its service arises from its power to dissolve and destroy the body itself, as well as all things around it. Therefore the pain connected with contact with fire is more acute than almost any other. Thus even the youngest child is taught the care and caution needful to protect its body from injury or destruction. [118]

Another fact in regard to the susceptibilities of pain is their frequent *co-existence* with the highest degrees of enjoyment. The experiences of this life often present cases where the most elevated and ecstatic happiness is combined with the keenest suffering, while such is the nature of the case that the suffering

is the chief cause of the happiness thus secured. The highest illustration of this is in the suffering of saints and martyrs, when they “rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer shame,” or when, amid torturing flames, they sing songs of transport and praise.

Even in common life it is constantly found that a certain relative amount of happiness is felt to be more than a recompense for a given amount of pain. This relative amount may be such that the evil involved, though great, may count as nothing. Where there is a passionate attachment, for example, the lover exults in the labor and suffering that will joyfully be received as a proof of affection and will secure the compensating return.

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It is a very common fact that painful emotions *are sought*, not for themselves, but as ministers to a kind of mental excitement which is desired. This is the foundation of the pleasure which is felt in tragic representations, and in poetry and novels that present scenes of distress. The little child will again and again ask for the tale of the Babes in the Wood, though each rehearsal brings forth tears; and the mature matron or sage will spend hours over tales that harrow the feelings and call forth sighs. This also is the foundation of that kind of music called the *minor key*, in which certain sounds bring emotions of sadness or sorrow.

Another striking fact in regard to the desire for pain is the emotions that are felt by the most noble and benevolent minds at the sight of cruelty and injustice. At such scenes, the desire for inflicting pain on the guilty offender amounts to a passion which nothing can allay but retributive justice. And the more benevolent the mind, the stronger this desire for retributive evil to another.

Thus it appears that the mind is so made as to desire pain both for itself and for others; not in itself considered, but as the indispensable means to gain some consequent enjoyment.

The *highest kinds* of happiness result from painful emergencies. The transports of love, gratitude, and delight, when some benefactor rescues suffering thousands from danger and evil,

could exist in no other way. All the long train of virtues included in patient toil for the good of others, in heroic daring, in brave adventure, in fortitude, in patience, in resignation, in heavenly meekness, in noble magnanimity, in sublime self-sacrifice, all involve the idea of trial, danger, and suffering. It is only the highest and noblest class of minds that can fully understand that the most blissful of all enjoyments are those which are bought with pain. [120]

But the most cheering feature in the constitution of mind is all that is included in the principle of *habit*. We see in the commencement of existence that every action of mind and body is imperfect, and more or less difficult, while each effort to secure right action increases the facility of so doing. We see that, owing to this principle, every act of obedience to law makes such a course easier. The intellect, the susceptibilities, the will, all come under this benign influence. Habit may so diminish the difficulty of self-denial for our own good that the pain entirely ceases; and self-sacrifice for the good of others may so develop benevolence and generate a habit that it will become pleasure without pain. There are those even in this world, who have so attained this capacity of living in the life of those around them, that the happiness of others becomes their own, so that there is even less pain in self-denial for the good of others than for that of self. When this habit of mind is attained by all, the happiness of the commonwealth will become the portion of each individual, and thus be multiplied to an inconceivable extent.

## Chapter XX. Additional Proof of the Moral Attributes of God.

We have presented the “nature” of mind as the chief evidence of the grand design of its Creator in forming all things, and thus also presented the proof of his perfect wisdom, benevolence, and rectitude. We now will trace the evidences of the same beneficent design in the nature of all social and material organizations.

First, then, in regard to the domestic relations. We have seen that while all happiness depends on obedience to laws, every mind comes into existence in perfect ignorance of them, and without any power to learn what is good or evil but by experience and instruction. The intention of the Creator that each new-born being should be taught these laws and trained to obey them, is clearly seen in the first and highest domestic relation. In this we see two mature minds, who have themselves been trained to understand these laws, drawn by sweet and gentle influences to each other. They go apart from all past ties of kindred; they have one home, one name, one common interest in every thing. The one who has most physical strength goes forth to provide supplies; the delicate one remains behind, by domestic ministries to render home the centre of all attractions.

Then comes the beautiful, helpless infant, of no use to any one, and demanding constant care, labor, and attention. And yet, with its profound ignorance, its tender weakness, its delicate beauty, its utter helplessness, its entire dependence, how does it draw forth the strongest feelings of love and tenderness, making every toil and care a delight! And thus, month after month, both parents unite to cherish and support, while, with unceasing vigilance, they train the new-born mind to understand and obey

the laws of the system into which it is thus ushered. Its first lessons are to learn to take care of its own body. And when the far-off penalty of pain can not be comprehended by the novice, the parent invents new penalties to secure habits of care and obedience. During all this period the great lesson of *sacrifice* constantly occurs. The child must eat what is *best*, not what it desires. It must go to bed when it wants to sit up. It must stay in the house when it wants to go out. It must not touch multitudes of things which it wishes thus to investigate. And so the habits of self-denial, obedience, and faith in the parents are gradually secured, while the knowledge of the laws of the system around are slowly learned.

But the higher part of the law of sacrifice soon begins to make its demands. The child first learns of this law *by example*, in that of *the mother*, that most perfect illustration of self-sacrificing love. Then comes a second child, when the first-born must practice on this example. It must give up its place in the mother's bosom to another; it must share its sweets and toys with the new-comer; it must join in efforts to protect, amuse, and instruct the helpless one. And thus the family is the constant school for training ignorant, inexperienced mind in the laws of the system of which it is a part, especially in the great law of self-control, for the best good of self, and of self-sacrifice for the best good of others.

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Next comes the discipline of the school and the neighborhood, when the child is placed among his peers to be taught new rules of justice, benevolence, and self-sacrifice for the general good.

Next come the relations of the body politic, for which labors are demanded and pain is to be endured according to the grand law of sacrifice, by which the individual is to subordinate his own interests and wishes to the greater general good, so that the interests of the majority shall always control those of the minority.

Lastly, the whole world is to be taken into the estimate, and

the nations are to be counted as members of one great family of man, for which every portion is to make sacrifices for the greater general good.

Thus, as age, and experience, and habits of obedience to the laws of rectitude increase, the duties and obligations grow more numerous and complicated. But the same grand principle is more and more developed, that each individual is to seek the greatest possible happiness with the least possible evil, for the vast whole as well as for each subordinate part, while *self* is to receive only its just and proper share.

The same great design of the Creator can be detected also in specific organizations, by which minds so differ from each other as to fit them for the diverse positions and relations that the common good demands. If all were exactly alike in the amount of constitutional powers and in the proportionate combinations, it can easily be seen that the general result would be far less favorable to the happiness of the whole. But as it is, some have the love of power very large, and seek to lead and control; others have it small, and prefer to follow. Some have elevated intellect, and love to teach; others have humbler capacities, and prefer humbler pursuits.

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These varied combinations also give scope to the virtues of pity, tenderness, patience, mercy, justice, self-denial, and many other graces that could not be called into being without all the disparities, social, domestic, intellectual, and moral, that we find existing. Meantime the principle of habit and the power of the will give abundant opportunities for modifying these natural peculiarities to accommodate to varying circumstances.

To these indications of benevolent design may be added the “nature” of the bodily system, and the “nature” of the material world without. In examining the body we inhabit, so nicely adjusted, so perfectly adapted to our necessities, so beautifully and harmoniously arranged, so “fearfully and wonderfully made,” it is almost beyond the power of numbers to express the multiplied



contrivances for ease, comfort, and delight.

We daily pursue our business and our pleasure, thoughtless of the thousand operations which are going on, and the busy mechanism employed in securing the objects we desire. The warm current that is flowing from the centre to the extremities, with its life-giving energies, and then returning to be purified and again sent forth; the myriads of branching nerves that are the sensitive discerners of good or ill; the unnumbered muscles and tendons that are contracting and expanding in all parts of our frame; the nicely-adjusted joints, and bands, and ligaments, that sustain, and direct, and support; the perpetual expansion and contraction of the vital organ; the thousand hidden contrivances and operations of the animal frame, all are quietly and constantly performing their generous functions, and administering comfort and enjoyment to the conscious spirit that dwells within. [125]

Nor is the outer world less busy in performing its part in promoting the great design of the Creator. The light of suns and stars is traversing the ethereal expanse in search of those for whom it was created; for them it gilds the scenes of earth, and is reflected in ten thousand forms of beauty and of skill. The trembling air is waiting to minister its aid, fanning with cool breezes, or yielding the warmth of spring, sustaining the functions of life, and bearing on its light wing the thoughts that go forth from mind to mind, and the breathings of affection that are given and returned. For this design earth is sending forth her exuberance, the waters are emptying their stores, and the clouds pouring forth their treasures. All nature is busy with its offerings of fruits and flowers, its wandering incense, its garnished beauty, and its varied songs. Within and without, above, beneath, and around, the same Almighty Beneficence is found still ministering to the wants and promoting the happiness of the minds he has formed for ever to desire and pursue this boon.

We are now prepared to meet the questions proposed, (*i.e.*) is the Creator a being who, with the varying humors of man,

sometimes prefers evil to good, and sometimes prefers good to evil, or does he invariably choose what is *best for all*, even in cases where it may involve personal sacrifices and suffering to himself?

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In attempting to answer this question, we have set forth the evidence to be found in the works of the Creator which establishes the position that his *chief end* or *ruling purpose* is to produce the greatest possible happiness with the least possible evil.

The question then reads, does the Creator destroy happiness and cause needless pain, and thus thwart his own chief desire and great end; the end for which he made all things?

The very statement of the question is its most forcible answer.

We have seen that we are obliged to conceive of God as possessing such a social and moral nature as our own. This would lead him to desire the veneration, confidence, love, and gratitude of the children he has created.

But he has formed their minds to hate selfishness and to admire and reverence self-sacrificing benevolence. Will the Creator then oppose his own chief end and grand design by conduct which would make all his creatures necessarily, by the nature he implanted, withhold their respect and love, and feel only dislike and contempt? The very question involves its own answer.

Add to this, that all those causes which our experience and observation have shown to lead to wrong choices are necessarily excluded from our conceptions of the Creator.

The Eternal Mind can not err for want of knowledge, nor for want of habits of right action, nor for want of teachers and educators, nor for want of those social influences which generate and sustain a right governing purpose; for an infinite mind, that never had a beginning, can not have these modes of experience which appertain to new-born and finite creatures.

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Again: Such is the eternal system of the universe, as we learn it by the light of reason, that the highest possible happiness to each individual mind and to the whole commonwealth is promoted by

the right action of every mind in that system. This, of necessity, is seen and felt by the All-creating and Eternal Mind, and to suppose that, with this knowledge, he would ever choose wrong, is to suppose that he would choose pure evil. It is to suppose the Creator would do what he has formed our minds to believe to be impossible in *any* rational mind. It is to suppose that the Creator would do that which, if done by human beings, marks them as insane.

## Chapter XXI. Nature of Mind as Perfect in Construction.

The first article in every system of religion is, who is the God who controls our destinies, and what is his character?

In attempting to answer this question by the light of nature, independently of revelation, we have gained these positions. There is an Intelligent Mind who created all things, whose natural attributes are the same as ours in kind, but vast beyond our comprehension in extent. In moral character, or that which is exhibited in choice or action, he is perfect in wisdom, benevolence, and rectitude; that is to say, he is a being whose chief end or ruling purpose is to do the best he can to make the most possible happiness with the least possible evil. [128]

This being discovered as the grand design for which all human minds are created, we are thus enabled to decide as to what is the right and perfect *construction* or “nature” of mind, and also as to its right and perfect *action*.

In regard to the perfect *construction* of mind, we must again refer to the fact that in a system of things where both natural and moral evil exist, we are obliged to suppose a limitation of power by the nature of things, so that a system is perfect, not as excluding all evil; for as evil does exist, a system without any evil is impossible. All that remains, then, to constitute the idea of perfection, (as used in reference to things as they are) is this, that whatever is created by God, is the best possible in the nature of things.

The question then must be this, is the mind of man, *as a race*, the best in construction, that is possible in the nature of things? Is our mind made *as good as it can be*, so that no change is possible that would make it better?

In replying to this question, we must regard the matter in two relations. We have noticed, in the chapter on the Constitutional Varieties of the Human Mind, that while there are powers and attributes of mind which are common to all, there is an endless variety of character resulting from the diverse *proportions* and *combinations* of these several faculties, and also that there are diverse *grades* of mind, each having these diverse combinations. Some races of men are much lower in the scale of being, every way, than other races, while the same disparity exists among individuals of the same race.

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Now when we compare individuals with each other, or when we compare races in these respects, we regard them as more or less perfect in organization with reference to the highest grade or species known to us. In this relation some minds are to be regarded as imperfect and defective in organization. And in reference to any one individual or race in this relation, we feel that the organization could be improved.

But when we regard each mind as a part of a vast *system*, in which the highest good of the whole will prove the highest possible good of each individual part, we are to judge of perfection in the organization of mind in another relation. If it

is for the greatest happiness of the whole that there should be grades and ranks in mental powers; if disparities and varieties in organization give scope and exercise to virtues and modes of enjoyment that would be impossible were all minds exactly alike, and on the pattern of the highest in the scale of being, then the very points which are imperfections in the individual relations, become perfections in relation to the great whole. In this view, the lowest and humblest in the scale of being, when acting in his appropriate place and according to the great Creator's design, is perfect in mental construction, and is fitted to be happier in every respect than he could be if the whole system were changed by placing him among the highest in mental organization.

Just as it is with the human system—the lowly foot is perfect and complete in its place, though inferior in construction and service to the regal head and cunning hand. And should the foot be endowed with the higher gifts it would be a departure from its perfection in organization as related to the whole. The question, then, of the *perfect nature* of each human mind requires that we regard each one as a part of an infinite system demanding grades and ranks, and thus, also, relative disparities. And having proved that the chief design of the Creator is to make the *best possible* system, we are necessarily led to the conclusion that the lowest order of mind is as perfect in its nature, in relation to the great whole, as is the highest of all. [130]

From the above we gain this definition:

*A perfect mind*, as to *construction* or *nature*, is one which is better fitted to its position in the best *possible* system of minds than it would be by any possible change.

In this use of the words *nature* and *perfect* it is claimed that in the preceding pages it has been proved that the mind of man is *perfect in nature*. Our next inquiry will relate to the perfect *action* of mind in respect to that which is *voluntary* or *self-originated*. In other words, we shall inquire as to the *perfect moral action* of the human mind, as discoverable by reason and experience,

independently of revelation.

## Chapter XXII. Right and Wrong—True Virtue.

Having discovered the end for which mind is made, and thus gained the idea of what is meant by perfectness, in its *nature* or *construction*, we next inquire as to what is the perfect *action* of mind.

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Here we must again recognize the distinction between two classes of mental actions, viz., those acts which are *natural* as resulting necessarily from the constitution of mind, of which God is the producing cause, and those which are *voluntary* and of which man is the producing cause. The first are *natural and involuntary*, the latter are *moral and voluntary*.

This introduces the second part of the system of natural religion, that which relates to man's obligations or duty toward the Creator, toward his fellow beings, and toward himself. In other words, the question is, "what is *right voluntary or moral action*?"

In seeking the reply to this without the aid of revelation, the following particulars demand attention:

In all discussions on this question there is no mental analysis more important than the distinction between the desire, or what *moves* us to choose, and the act of choice.

The mind is always moved to choice by desire for some good to be gained or some evil to be avoided. The susceptibility or power of being thus led, in popular language is called a "bias,"

an “inclination,” a “propensity,” a “tendency,” or a “proclivity” toward the object which causes the desire. Thus the susceptibility to desire stimulating drinks is excited by liquors, and this is called “a propensity” to strong drink.

The susceptibility to desire to amass money is called a bias, or propensity to avarice. The only thing ever meant by a bias or propensity to choose any thing is, that there are such susceptibilities that desire can be excited for that thing.

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But all such propensities or biases are *from evil* and *toward good* in the widest sense of these terms. No rational mind ever desires pure evil, but always desires good of some sort. On the contrary, it is one of the implanted principles of common sense that *no rational mind will choose pure evil*. Any man who should do this would be regarded as insane—as having lost the distinctive feature of a rational mind.

But we find that desires are called *strong*, *imperative*, *powerful*, and the like, not at all with reference to the question whether what is desired would be *best* for all concerned. They are measured, as to strength or weakness, by the degrees of enjoyment their gratification secures, or the amount of pain that self-denial would involve. This *measurement* of varied degrees of pleasure and pain is a matter of consciousness to every mind, and is constantly referred to by all races and in all languages.

In this use of the term, the strongest desire often exists for that which is perceived to be the *best* good for all concerned. At other times the strongest desire is for that which is seen to be the lesser good. When the strongest desire is for that which is best, the choice is *easy*, and the mind always chooses the *best* good. But when the strongest desire is for that which is not best, then choice is more difficult, and there is a conscious struggle between the promptings of reason and conscience, and the importunities of strong desire for the lesser good.

At such periods there is a conscious *power* in every mind to choose *either* way, and sometimes we choose to gratify the

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strongest desire and give up the best good, and at other times we choose the best good and deny the strongest desire. Every human being has been conscious of this struggle between excited desire and the dictates of reason, and all the literature of the world refers to it as a universal fact. The terms *self-denial*, *self-control*, *self-government*, all are based on this experience of all minds.<sup>6</sup>

## Right Actions and Rewardable Actions.

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The preceding furnishes the ground for the distinctions always recognized between voluntary action which is *right* as *best* for all concerned, and those actions which are deemed *praiseworthy*, *rewardable*, and *meritorious*.

Whenever the dictates of reason and our strongest desire are coincident, so that choosing what is right and best involves no

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the mind of man like irrational brutes, inevitably and necessarily controlled by the strongest desire, (or strongest motive) and destroying all idea of *rational free agency*.

<sup>6</sup> Metaphysicians have mystified this subject thus:—They say “the will” (or choice) *invariably*, “is as is the greatest apparent good.” But when it is inquired, does “greatest good,” as here used, signify that which the intellect decides to be *best far all concerned*, and thus *right*, or does it signify that which causes the *strongest desire* as measured by our own consciousness? It will be found that, in this metaphysical statement above, it means *both*. This leads to the same sort of confusion as would result from using the word *straight* to include the two ideas of both *straight* and *crooked*. With such an enlarged, but improper, definition, it could truly be said that men *invariably* go *straight*, and as truly that they also *invariably* go *crooked*.

The only way in which the expression, “the will is as is *the greatest apparent good*,” can be true, is to use the term to include both what is the greatest good as judged by the intellect, and also the greatest good as causing the strongest desire, thus making one word express two *diverse* ideas.

It is this want of discrimination in the use of the term “greatest apparent good,” by President Edwards, which accounts for the fact that one class of the most acute metaphysicians regard him as the defender of free agency, and another class, equally acute, maintain that he teaches the exactly opposite



struggle; then the ideas of merit and of desert of reward, praise, and commendation are wanting. We say such acts are right, but there is no merit in them, and no proper ground for adding any other reward than that which naturally results from choosing what we desire most, and which is best for us and for all concerned.

On the contrary, when there is a struggle between a sense of what is right and best, and the strongest desire, and a choice is made which involves self-denial and self-sacrifice, we feel that the act is one which is meritorious, and deserving of reward and praise.

Any voluntary action, then, is *right* which is conformed to those rules of rectitude which tend to secure *the most* happiness for all, even when there is no temptation to another course. But an action is *meritorious* and *rewardable* only when there is a reference to the rules of rectitude in the mind of the actor and some degree of self-denial. To choose what we desire most, without any regard to what is right or wrong, even when it chances that our choice is that which is *best*, and thus *right*, does not meet our idea of a meritorious and praiseworthy act.

The greater portion of our choices are of those things which are good in all relations, as best for self and best for all concerned. Thus when we desire to eat, to drink, to breathe the pure air, to admire the beauties of nature, to enjoy the society of friends,—to choose these and a thousand other daily blessings, promotes our own best good and the best good of all concerned. In all such cases choosing what we desire most is morally *right* in all relations. But no acts of choice are *meritorious*, except as they involve a regard to law in the mind of the actor, and some degree of self-denial in conforming to rule.

The only cases where moral evil (or wrong choices) can exist,

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doctrine of fatalism. It is by this deceptive use of the words *greatest apparent good*, and *strongest motive*, that such *invariableness of antecedence* and *consequents* is made out, as is the proof of *producing causes* and *necessary effects* in the material world. Thus results the idea of *irrational free agency*, making

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are where desires are excited for some good, either for ourselves or for others, which is not *best for all concerned*. In all such cases there is a “bias,” “tendency,” and “propensity” to choose *good* of some sort, but it is not the *best* good, and therefore to choose it would be morally wrong. Thus there is a bias or propensity to what is good in one relation, but evil in another; good as tending to give enjoyment, but evil as contrary to a law which enjoins that the *best* good should always be preferred.

In such cases the *desires* for a good which is not for the *best* are not morally wrong, for they arise involuntarily from those susceptibilities implanted by God, which are not to be exterminated, but only regulated by law. The moral evil consists not in the *existence* of such desires, but in *choosing* to gratify them at the sacrifice of the best good of self or of others.

It has been shown that one result of the wrong action of mind is such a change in its constitutional nature, that there will be a desire to inflict evil on others as a malignant pleasure to the guilty mind. In these cases such desires may properly be called *morally wrong* because they are the result of the *voluntary* action of the sinful mind, and not of the natural susceptibilities implanted by the Creator. As they result wholly from wrong previous choices, the guilty mind itself is the author of them and not the Creator of mind.

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Here it is important to discriminate in regard to that natural impulse in all minds which is excited by the infliction of pain on self or on others. It is this natural impulse to inflict evil on the author of evil which is the foundation of *justice* in the family and in the civil state. Its design is for the best good of all concerned, and it becomes evil only by excess and misuse. So long as it is controlled by reason and conscience it is good and only good.

In view of the above distinctions, there can be no moral evil in *desires* for things which it would be wrong to choose, *except*

*as these desires are the result of previous wrong choices.*<sup>7</sup>

It has been shown that the principle of *habit* renders it more and more easy and agreeable to regulate our choices by the rules of rectitude. The habit of sacrificing personal gratification to the rule of duty may be so cultivated that what at first was difficult, and involved a painful struggle, becomes easy. It is possible so to cultivate such habits that our highest desires, and the dictates of reason and conscience, shall continually be more and more coincident.

We can conceive of newly-created beings as placed in such circumstances that, for a considerable period, all their strongest desires may be coincident with the best good of themselves and of others, so that there can be no opportunity to practice self-control in regulating their desires by the rules of rectitude. In such a case, while acting simply from impulse, without reference to rule, they would always act *right*, and yet they would form no habits of self-control, and thus would be liable to fail at the first temptation where their strongest desire conflicted with the known law of rectitude. [137]

The preceding statements are made in order to arrive at correct and discriminating definitions of certain fundamental terms on which the whole question of the “depraved nature” of the human mind will be found to turn.

## Right in Tendency and Right in Motive.

Mankind in all ages and in all languages speak of certain acts as right or wrong in reference to their *tendency* or their effect on human happiness, and without reference to the intention of the author. Thus they affirm that the stealing and selling of men is wrong, whatever may be the motives of the slave trader.

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<sup>7</sup> This is a very important point in regard to the question of a *depraved nature*.

Again, they speak of acts as right or wrong in reference to the *motive* or *intention* of the author. Thus they say a man who sacrificed his wealth and reputation, rather than to violate his conscience, acted right as to *motive*, although he was mistaken in his views of duty, so that his act, as it respects its tendency, may have been wrong.

## Right General Purpose.

Again, it has been shown that a man may form a *general purpose* to act right in obeying all the laws of God as discoverable by reason or revelation. This general purpose may be a quiet, abiding principle, so as to regulate the thoughts and emotions, and may control most of the specific choices of a whole succeeding life. The *main purpose*, or *chief end* of such a man is to bring all his thoughts, words, and actions into perfect agreement with the rules of rectitude. In reference to this and his consequent conduct, his would be denominated a *virtuous character*.

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No one will deny that this is a correct statement of the use of terms by mankind in every-day life. Thus then we have gained the following definitions as established, not by metaphysicians and theologians, but by *the people*.

## Definitions.

*A right moral act*, as it respects its *tendencies*, is one in which the thing chosen is for the *best* good of all concerned.

*A right moral act*, as to *motive*, is one in which the *intention* of the actor is to conform to the rules of rectitude.

*A meritorious* or *praiseworthy act* is one in which there is some *sacrifice* of feeling, either immediate or remote, in order to conform to law.

A *virtuous act* is one in which that which is chosen is right, both in *tendency* and in *motive*.

A *virtuous character* is one in which a general purpose exists to obey all the rules of rectitude. The *degree* of virtue is dependent on a correct judgment of what is right or wrong, and the strength or measure of the general purpose in controlling all other purposes. Some men carry out a general purpose much more steadily and consistently than others, and some men have much more correct ideas of what is right and wrong in conduct than others.

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The *natural character* of a man is that which results from his constitutional powers and faculties of mind, of which God is the author.

The *moral character* of a man is all that results from *his own willing*.

Our highest idea of a virtuous character, as gained by experience and observation, is that of a mind so trained to habits of self-control and obedience to rule, that it has become easier to obey the laws of rectitude, than to gratify any excited desire, however imperative, which is seen to violate law.

Thus, then, it is shown that a virtuous character consists, not in the *nature* of the mind which is given by God, but in the *purposes, habits, and feelings* generated by voluntary acts, of which the man himself is the author; God being the cause or author, of this virtue only as he is the Creator of mind and of all its circumstances of temptation and trial.

In regard to the formation of a virtuous character, as a matter of experience, it usually results from a slow and gradual process of training and development. The general purpose to obey all the laws of rectitude originates, as a general fact, not as a definitely formed purpose, whose time of inception can be distinctly marked. Yet it is not unfrequently the case that persons who have passed a life of unrestrained indulgence, by some marked and powerful influence, are suddenly led to a decided and definitely

marked purpose of virtuous obedience, and carry out this purpose with great success.

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Any such sudden change, in popular language, would be called “the commencement of a new life.” And when this sudden change takes place under the influence of motives presented in the Bible, it is called by one class of theologians the “new birth” or “regeneration.”

## Is True Virtue Possible before Regeneration?

In the discussions which are to follow, it will be found that almost every point debated involves, as a foundation question, “what *is* true virtue?” And the grand question at issue between the system of common sense and the teachings of all theologians who uphold the Augustine theory, is this: *is true virtue possible to an unregenerate mind?* Theology says no, common sense says yes. Theology teaches that previous to regeneration every voluntary act of every human mind is “sin, and only sin.” Common sense maintains, on the contrary, that every voluntary act which is in agreement with the best good of all concerned, when the *intention* is to act right, is virtuous without any regard to the question of the regeneration of the mind. In other words, theology teaches that true virtue is the right voluntary action of a mind after its “nature” is changed by God, and common sense teaches that true virtue is the right voluntary action of any mind without any change in its nature.

The discussion of this point involves the further consideration of certain mental experiences which will shed some light on the subject. It will be found that in case of all persons who are said to “act on principle,” or to be “conscientious persons,” that, in the greater portion of their voluntary acts, they have no *conscious*

immediate reference to the rules of rectitude. There seems to be an unconscious general purpose to act right on all occasions, which becomes obvious only when a case occurs involving a seeming violation of the rules of rectitude. At such times the mind becomes conscious of its ruling purpose. But the greater portion of all the daily acts of life have been decided upon as in agreement with the all-controlling general purpose, and a man chooses to do many things in which he has no *conscious* reference to rule. And still such acts have, in past time, been subjects of reflection in reference to the question of right and wrong, and have been decided to be right, and it is in consequence of this decision that the mind no longer considers these questions with a conscious reference to rule. [141]

The distinction between what is denominated “a man of principle” and an “unprincipled man,” is simply this, that the former is one who has formed habits of self-regulation by the rules of rectitude, and the latter has not.

This mental analysis is important in reference to deciding the character of *a virtuous action*.

A virtuous act, as defined above, is one in which the thing chosen is right and the motive is right. But it is not indispensable that the person who performs the act should be immediately *conscious* of a reference to rule in each right specific volition. It is sufficient that the mind be under the control of a *ruling purpose* of rectitude, so that all the subordinate minor purposes are in fact regulated, though unconsciously, by this purpose.

It is at this point that the class of theologians who make regeneration to include a voluntary act on the part of man, are in antagonism with the experience and common sense of mankind. Such maintain that every act of every human being is “sin, and only sin,” until a ruling purpose is formed to obey God as the chief end, and one also which is actually *more* efficient and stronger in controlling the ordinary acts of life than the purpose to gratify self. Previous to the existence of this general purpose, [142]

they maintain that every act of self-denial or self-sacrifice for the good of others is “sin, and only sin.” According to their theory, choosing that which is right because it is right, is not a virtuous act until a ruling purpose of universal obedience to God is formed.

That is to say, it is the *ruling purpose*, or *the want* of a ruling purpose to obey God in all things, which decides the character of every specific act of choice. Thus if a child is trained to be honest, truthful, and self-denying, and succeeds very often in conforming to such instructions, there is no true virtue in any such acts until a *ruling purpose* of obedience to God is generated, which is habitually *more* controlling than the impulses of self-indulgence. This is the point where *the people* and *theologians* are at issue.

The people insist that every act is virtuous when the thing chosen is right and the intention is right, even before the mind of a child has attained a ruling purpose of universal obedience. Theologians say no; such acts are “sin, and only sin,” in the sight of God.<sup>8</sup>

It will be shown hereafter that the theory of theology on this subject is not carried out consistently in practice, but that in the early training of little children theologians contradict their own theory and adopt that of the people.

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## Perfectness in Construction and Perfectness in Action and Character.

In a previous chapter we have seen [p. 103] that our idea of *perfectness* in moral character and action always has reference

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<sup>8</sup> This refers to those theologians who teach that regeneration consists not in a change of *nature* but of *purpose*.



to *power*. In a system where evil is actually existing, we regard a contrivance or an action as perfect when there is no power in God or man to make it better, even when evil is involved. A being is perfect in character and in action when his purpose is to do the best possible for all concerned, and when this purpose is carried out to the full extent of his power.

We have shown in the preceding chapter that the mind of man is perfect in *nature* or *construction* as being better fitted to its place in the best possible system of mind than it would be by any change possible either to God or man.

The preceding pages of this chapter enable us to point out what is the *perfect moral character* of minds which are perfect in construction. It consists in *a ruling purpose to discover and to obey all the laws of the Creator, which is carried out to the full extent of power in the one who thus purposes*.

It has been shown that the Creator himself is limited by the eternal nature of things to a system which, though the best possible, makes him, in one sense, the author of some evil, both natural and moral. He is the author only as the Creator of all things, and thus the author of all the consequent results of creation, even of those that are morally evil. In this sense alone is he the author of either natural or moral evil.

The infinite and eternal mind of God is limited, not by want of wisdom and knowledge, but by the eternal nature of things of which his own existence and natural attributes are a part. But finite minds are limited by a want of knowledge and wisdom which can be the result only of *experience and training*. For the want of this knowledge and training every finite mind, so far as we can discover by reason and experience, must inevitably violate the laws of God. And yet any mind may be perfect in moral character and action in exactly the same sense as God is perfect, (*i.e.*) it may form and carry out a purpose to conform to the laws of the existing system of things *to the full extent of its knowledge and power*. When this purpose is formed and carried [144]

out to the full measure of ability, the finite creature becomes “perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

## Common Sense Theory of the Origin of Evil.

What then is the cause or origin of evil as taught by reason and experience?

*It is the eternal nature of things existing independently of the will of the Creator or of any other being.*

What is the cause of the existence of this created system? It is the will of the Creator.

What is the cause or reason why God willed that this system should be as it is, with all the evil that exists? It is because it is the best system possible in the nature of things.

What is the cause or reason that any given event, however evil, is not prevented by God? It is because any change that would prevent it, would alter the best possible system, and thus make more evil than the one thus prevented.

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## Chapter XXIII. Laws and Penalties—Sin and Holiness.

The *laws of God*, in regard to voluntary action, are those *invariable* arrangements in mind and matter by which happiness or pain are connected with certain feelings and actions.

Thus it is an *invariable* arrangement that pain shall be connected with touching fire, and pleasure with seeing the light. So in regard to the intellect; pleasure is *invariably* connected with the exercise of wit and humor, and disgust with folly and fatuity. So the moral sense is *invariably* pleased with truth, justice, and integrity, and pained by the opposite.

Whenever, therefore, we discover what *invariably* affords pleasure or pain, we discover one of the laws of God.

To discover these laws, and to believe in them, is as indispensable to the right action of mind as light is indispensable to perfect eyes in order to see.

The first lesson of every new-born spirit is to discover the laws that relate to its own enjoyment. Whenever a child chooses any thing which secures enjoyment without harm to itself or to others, it is acting as its Creator designed, and this action is therefore right. And whenever it chooses what will cause needless pain to itself or to others, it acts wrong. Most of the choices of a little child are of what is right as giving enjoyment without harm.

The grand law of God, as learned by experience, is that every mind must *sacrifice* the lesser for the greater good in gratifying its own desires. When the interests of others are not concerned, the child must always choose not what it desires the most, but what is best for itself. It is the first labor of the educator to make a child understand and obey this first part of the law of sacrifice. [146]

But where the feelings and interests of others are involved, the law of God is, that the lesser good of the individual shall always be sacrificed to the greater good of the many. Each mind of the great commonwealth is to act, not to make self-gratification the first thing, but to make the greatest possible happiness with the least possible evil for the whole commonwealth the predominant purpose. And such is the system of the Creator that whatever

is for the best good of the whole is for the best good of each individual.

Thus it appears that *obedience to the laws of God, physical, intellectual, social, and moral*, is to be chosen as the ruling purpose of each mind. And this is *the mode* by which all rational beings are to promote the end or design for which all things are made, (*i.e.*) happiness-making on the greatest possible scale for the great commonwealth.

Now it is very certain that no human mind is able, by its own solitary investigations, to discover all the physical, intellectual, social, and moral laws of God.

Many of these laws we can learn by experience, but for the greater portion we are dependent on the instruction of others. Therefore *truth* on the part of educators, and *faith* on the part of the learners are as indispensable to the right action of mind as is light to the right action of the eye in seeing. Not a “dead,” merely intellectual belief, but a “saving faith” that controls the feelings and conduct.

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We now are enabled to define the kind of *inability* as to obeying the laws of God, which inevitably attends every mind that commences its existence in this world. As yet there have never been perfectly *true* educators of young minds, while perfect *faith*, that is to say, “saving faith,” in the teachings that are true is as much wanting. The young child can not be made to understand, and therefore can not believe, or have faith in many of the laws of God and the penalties connected with them. This no one will deny.

## Several Classes of Moral Actions.

There are several classes of moral actions. The first class includes those which *in all cases* destroy the best good of man. Of these are wanton cruelty to helpless creatures, and ingratitude

in returning needless evil for good. In regard to such the mind, by its very constitutional impulses, revolts from them and feels them to be wrong without any process of reasoning. So also all those actions that in all cases cause enjoyment without evil, are instinctively felt to be right without any reflection.

But there are many actions that are entirely dependent on circumstances for their moral character. Thus to punish a little child in one case would be cruel and wrong, in another it might be benevolent and right. To take a woman, when not married to another, for a wife is right, but wrong if she is married. And so with thousands of other actions.

Again, some actions that do no harm to any individual at a given time, are wrong because they would be destructive to general happiness, if generally allowed; or, in other words, they are wrong in *tendency*. Thus, in a given case, a lie might do a great deal of good and no immediate harm. And yet it would be wrong, because leaving it to every man's discretion when it was *best* to lie would in the end destroy all confidence in human testimony. [148]

Again, many of the laws of God can be discovered only by long experience of many communities. As soon as experience has shown that any practice will do more harm than good, then the law of God is discovered and it becomes obligatory. Thus the question of polygamy has been settled. Thus, too, the vending of alcoholic drinks has been decided to be wrong as a general practice.

Here comes up the distinction between wrong choices that deserve blame and punishment, and those that do not. In the natural system of the Creator all violations of law are followed by the natural penalties without any reference to the motives, knowledge, or ability of the agent. All questions among men, as to blame and retribution, have reference to the *adding* of other penalties and rewards in the present or future state. It is only in regard to such that the questions of blame, of justice, and of

mercy are to be debated. Without revelation we have no evidence that the natural penalties of law are ever suspended, either as a matter of justice or mercy. In the case of great crimes and wrongs, that *additional* penalties are to follow in a future state is what all men fear, and this it is which induces self-inflictions to secure pardon for sin.

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Now these are distinctions existing in all rational minds, and are continually referred to in every-day life. But it is impossible for any but an omniscient being to decide on all the motives that regulate the actions of others, while even our own motives are often so hidden and complex that we are blinded as to their true character.

The language of common life does not always recognize these distinctions. When a wrong action is done the actor is called a wrong-doer, and is blamed for the deed. And the fact that he believed that he was acting right, and even that he practices self-denial in performing what is imagined to be a duty, though it palliates, does not ordinarily end all displeasure. For in multitudes of cases the ignorance of duty results from pride or selfish neglect of inquiry. And few are competent to decide how far the ignorance is a misfortune and not a fault.

It is owing to this fact that most of the language of life assumes that all violations of law are blamably wrong, and are to be punished here or hereafter. In the most common use of the term, "sin is the transgression of law." At the same time men recognize the distinction between sins of ignorance and willful sin.

## Sin and Holiness.

The preceding, then, warrants the definition of *sin* as "*the transgression of law,*" whether known or unknown. The question of the rectitude of penalties *added* to the natural consequences of

violated laws, is confined to those sins which are attended by a knowledge of law and ability to understand and obey.

These distinctions and definitions are important because a large class of theologians maintain that sin is the voluntary transgression of *known* law, and make this definition the foundation of their assertion that all men have power to be perfect in conformity to all law, meaning by this all the laws of God that they *know* and *believe*. On this theory *sin* is the transgression of *known* law, and not of that which is unknown. And on this theory one way to keep children from sin would be to keep them in ignorance of God's laws. [150]

The writer maintains that this limited use is not the common meaning. Mankind do not stop to settle the question whether men were ignorant of what was right, before they decide that they sin. Often such ignorance results from an unwillingness or indolence that prevents attention, and few can decide how far our ignorance of law results from guilty neglect. It is true that when a perfect and innocent inability to know law is proved, the *added* penalties of statute law are remitted. But still the *natural* penalties are unremitted.

The word *holy* in its original use signifies *set apart* or *consecrate to the special service* of some deity. Thus the vessels of a temple, the priests and the building are called holy in this sense. In reference to moral acts or choices, this term is used as recognizing the fact that a mind may be voluntarily consecrated or devoted to the service of God by right action, or obedience to his laws. God himself is called holy on the supposition that there are rules of right and wrong in the nature of things, independent of his will, and that his will is conformed to these rules, while men are called holy in reference chiefly to the will or service of their Creator.

In the Creator holiness signifies perfect voluntary conformity to that which is *for the best* according to the eternal nature of things. In men perfect holiness is perfect conformity of will to the [151]

laws or *will* of God, both absolutely and in motive or intention. A mind is consecrated to God when its *ruling purpose* is to obey him in all things. In this use of the term holiness in man, is what can not be *created*, as it is a voluntary act of his own mind.

The question whether Adam was created with “a *holy nature*,” while his posterity begin existence here with an “*unholy nature*,” must be settled by a clear definition of the words employed.

If the term “nature” refers to the construction of the mind itself as made by God, a holy nature must signify that organization and combination of the natural powers of mind, which is the best possible for a mind in its appointed place in the best possible system.

If, on the contrary, the term “nature” refers to that character of mind consequent on its own volitions, then a holy nature can be caused or created only by man himself as the sole *producing cause* of his own volitions, God being the author or cause of this nature only in the sense in which men are causes of voluntary action in other minds, viz., *occasional causes* by the use of *motives* or objects that excite desires.

## Chapter XXIV. Love to God And Love to Man.

In a former chapter we have noticed the analysis of the principle of *love*. It is needful to refer to this again, as intimately connected with the question of the right moral action of finite minds.

We have seen that love is a complex exercise, its first element being agreeable emotions in view of certain qualities and actions.



Combined with these emotions co-exists a desire of reciprocated regard, that is to say, a desire to be the cause of similar agreeable emotions to the one loved. These are constitutional impulses not at all consequent on any volition or choice, and as the involuntary element of love, are properly called *involuntary love*. Such love can not be justly demanded except where those qualities are, or can be, perceived which naturally awaken agreeable emotions. In cases where the qualities exist that would naturally awaken affection if noticed, and the want of it is owing to inattention, a proper regard to such qualities can be justly demanded. But this is the only particular in which involuntary love can be made the subject of law and penalties.

But the main element of love, as practically estimated among men, is such a desire of good to the one loved as involves the *good willing* or voluntary effort to please and gratify. If a friend simply is pleased with our good qualities, and wishes to please us with his naturally agreeable traits in return, it is of little value in comparison with the truer love which is shown in *voluntary* efforts to please and make happy. This last is the main element of true affection, and properly is called *voluntary love* or *good willing*. Theologians express this distinction by the terms the *love of complacency* and the *love of benevolence*.

Thus we have gained these definitions:

*Involuntary love* toward God and toward men consists in agreeable emotions in view of admirable qualities. [153]

*Voluntary love* toward God and toward men consists in *good willing*, or the voluntary effort to please and make happy.

To “love our neighbor *as ourselves*” must refer solely to voluntary love, for we have no regard to our own agreeable qualities in the love of self. Self-love is simply the desire and will to please and gratify self. This then is *the kind* of love that can properly be demanded of all. Each one can justly be required to will or choose to please and gratify others the same as we do ourselves. Each can be required to estimate the happiness of

every other mind as of the same value as his own, and to exercise *good willing* for others as we do for our own enjoyment. From this primary principle necessarily results the law demanding that the good of the commonwealth shall always take precedence of any individual concern. If we are bound to value the happiness of each mind as *equal* in value to our own, the inevitable result is that we are to estimate the happiness of *many* minds as of *more* value than our own, so as always to make our own enjoyment and wishes subordinate and secondary to the general good.

Still more are we to regard the feelings and wishes of our Creator and Supreme Lord. He has infinite susceptibilities of enjoyment and suffering, and thus whatever retards or promotes his wishes and plans must be of as much more value as his powers of enjoyment and suffering are greater than ours. The *love of good willing* then should have first reference to God as the one whose will and wishes are of more value than any other being in this relation alone. Still more are we bound to regard his will and wishes as first in value, because his chief end and aim is the most possible happiness to all the creatures he has made. To will to please God as the chief end of our existence is the same as to choose to make the most possible happiness, not only to him, but to all his creatures.

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Involuntary love is valuable as rendering it easier and more agreeable to labor for the welfare of others. Those whose interesting traits please us; those who, as children or friends, contribute to our enjoyment, and those who in any way give us pleasure, it is far easier to will for their enjoyment than it is to do so for those who do nothing to please us, and perhaps only give us discomfort, anxiety or disgust.

This exhibits an indirect way of securing the love of good will toward those who neither please us by their agreeable qualities, nor are causes of enjoyment to us in any way. Involuntary affection may be so strongly excited toward one whose qualities or conduct cause delight to self, that the desire to please

that friend may become more animating than the desire for any personal gratification. Should such a friend be deeply interested in the happiness of his children, or of any other persons, whose character and conduct may in no way please us, still the desire to gratify such a friend may lead to good willing to those whom he loves, for his sake, in order to please and gratify him.

Thus it is that love to parents tends to produce “peace and good will” among children, who, in their little broils, are restrained by the desire to please their parents, when love to each other fails. [155]

Here we have a view of the importance of *right conceptions* of God's character, in order to secure the perfect action of finite minds, especially in the first stage of existence.

It has been shown that the rules of right action are to be gained, in many cases, only by long experience and by a course of reasoning. Often, too, general rules (such, for example, as that we are *never to lie*, even to save life, or for *any* reason,) must be obeyed when a person can see immediate evil, and no good to self or to any one by obedience. Now it is impossible for a rational mind to choose *pure evil*. There must be *some good* in an object to excite desire, or it is impossible to choose it. But pleasurable emotions toward an all-wise Creator, whose benevolence and wisdom excite love, delight, and confidence, may be such that *to please him* gives abundant motive to obey the rules of right he enjoins when no other good can be perceived except that obedience will please him. And the more we perceive in him that excites admiration, love, and gratitude, the more strength of motive is gained.

It has been shown that a choice or act is *virtuous* in all relations, when it absolutely is best for all, and when it is done in reference to a rule of rectitude, or *because* it is right. The motive or reason of a choice decides whether or not it is virtuous.

Now as the Creator's will and the rules of rectitude are the same, when we say that any act, in order to be virtuous, must have reference to God's will, the question comes up, is an act

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virtuous *because it pleases God*, or does it please God *because it is virtuous? i.e.*, because it conforms to those rules by which his chief end in creation is secured, and which rest on the eternal nature of things.

The last is the principle here assumed. God's great end is the highest happiness of his creatures. Obedience to his laws is the mode for securing this end; his own actions are right as they conform to this end; and the actions of all his creatures are right only in the same relation.

So God's "glory" consists in the highest happiness of his creatures, which can only be secured by their obedience to his laws.

This makes it clear that choosing as our chief end to obey all the physical, social, and moral laws of God, as learned by experience, is the same as loving God with all the heart, and our neighbors as ourselves. It is also living for God's glory as the chief end; and it is being a truly righteous, virtuous, and pious man.

This distinction between voluntary and involuntary love enables us to discover certain dangers that result from want of such discrimination. Men may conceive of the Creator as desiring to be loved, admired, and glorified, just as selfish conquerors, like Alexander and Napoleon have done. In this view all their aims would be to excite agreeable emotions toward God by the contemplation of his various attributes. And thus they might be so absorbed in the indulgence of such delightful emotions as to become entirely heedless of the wants and the wishes of those around them. This kind of experience would cultivate selfishness instead of benevolence.

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On the contrary, choosing to obey all God's laws for happiness-making on the largest scale, and viewing the lovely and glorious attributes of the Creator as *means* to this end, would induce the only true virtue, while it is the true mode of pleasing our Maker and increasing his enjoyment.

The preceding furnishes the mode of harmonizing a great variety of expressions that may properly be given in answer to the great question, “what must we do to be saved?” as we gain this answer independently of revelation.

The first answer is, “believe in God's teachings—or have faith in God.” This means, take the laws of God as revealed by reason and experience, and *obey* them, and you shall be saved. It is a *practical* and not a mere intellectual belief that constitutes this “saving faith.”

The next answer is, “repent,” or “repentance toward God.”

The word repent is used to signify, sometimes, simply remorse or pain for wrong-doing. In another sense it signifies that sorrow for wrong-doing which includes reformation. It is ceasing to disobey law and commencing a life of obedience. It is in this sense that men are saved by repentance.

Another answer is, “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.” This has been shown to signify, thou shalt choose as the chief end of life to make happiness the right way, that is, by obeying all the physical, social, and moral laws of God. “This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.”

Another answer is, “make it thy chief end to glorify God.” Inasmuch as God's glory consists in the exhibition of his character as a benevolent being, all who promote his chief aim by making happiness according to his will, are living to glorify God.

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Another answer is, “live a truly virtuous life.” It has been shown that true virtue consists in *obedience to the great law of sacrifice* by which the lesser personal good is sacrificed to the greater good of all concerned.

Thus faith, repentance, love to God and man, making it our chief end to glorify God, living a virtuous life, all signify one and the same thing, (*i.e.*) choosing to find out and to obey all the physical, social, and moral laws of God as our chief end or ruling purpose.

The *righteous* are those who have formed such a purpose, and who exhibit its results in their daily life.

The *wicked* are those who have not formed such a purpose, and do not exhibit it in their daily life.

In the common language of every-day life, when a person is intensely interested in any pursuit, it is said to be "his life." And when a man changes from a vicious to a virtuous course he is said to "begin a new life."

Thus it would be in agreement with the ordinary use of language to call a new-formed purpose to obey all the laws of God the commencement of a new life. And as the beginning of natural life is the commencement of a life of *impulsive choices unregulated by law*, the commencement of a life of *obedience to law* would, by a figure of speech, very naturally be called "a new birth."

We have seen, in previous pages, that the formation of a ruling principle or governing purpose is sometimes the result of a slow process of educational influences, and sometimes it is a marked and sudden change. In the history of mind we find, as a general rule, that it is the slow process of educational training that secures a virtuous character in childhood, while the more sudden and marked changes are incident chiefly to more advanced life.

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The term "*regeneration*" is used by theologians as meaning the formation of a ruling purpose to love and obey God, by man himself. By some, this change of mind is regarded as in all cases instantaneous, by others as sometimes a gradual and sometimes an instantaneous change.

The preceding still farther exhibits the fact that the whole foundation of religion and of morals rests on the answer to the question, what is *true virtue* or *right voluntary* action?

## Chapter XXV. Increased Civilization Increases Moral Difficulties.

From the preceding it appears that the more our race advances in civilization, the more numerous and complicated are the laws of God which must first be discovered and then obeyed.

By advance in civilization is signified increase in the capacities of the human mind for varied enjoyments, and increase in the appropriate supply of these capacities. The early history of the race resembles the early period of individual life, when the chief enjoyments are those of the senses. The refined and varied pleasures of taste are but little attained except by cultivation. So also the higher pleasures of the intellect and of the moral nature are dependent on culture. [160]

As every new avenue to enjoyment is opened, and every new capacity developed, there are inevitably resulting difficulties and temptations which, experience soon shows, must be regulated by laws and penalties. From this results the endless multitude of civil and statute laws, in addition to the various domestic and social rules enforced in the family, the school and the neighborhood.

All these laws and rules will be found to be only specific applications of the great law of sacrifice which demands that, in all cases, every mind shall choose what is best for self and best for the whole. The great democratic principle that the majority shall rule is but one mode of applying this general law of sacrifice.

In this aspect we can perceive how it is, that every attempt to develop any faculty of enjoyment in any created mind, and every effort to provide aliment for such developed capacities is right, as in agreement with the grand end designed by the Creator; provided it is done according to the great law of sacrifice disclosed

by reason, viz., that individual enjoyment be made subordinate to the general good, and that no greater good be sacrificed for a less, either for self or for the commonwealth.

In this light, music, drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, the drama, poetry, laughter, all things that impart enjoyment to any mind are *right*, provided no higher good is sacrificed in enjoying them. Nay, more; all these modes of imparting enjoyment may become positive duties, in cases where they do not interfere with some higher good.

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This view of the subject still further illustrates the nature of that inability which exists in *all* finite minds in discovering and obeying the laws of God.

There are only two conceivable modes by which we can learn these laws; one is by the *experience* of finite beings; the other is by *revelation* from the Creator. To learn what is right and wrong by experience involves not only the certainty, but the necessity, as it respects the absolute right, of wrong-doing; for no one, however right the motive or intention may be, can discover what will cause more or less good or evil but by experiments in which the evil as well as the good is detected by experience.

To learn what is right and wrong in all the thousand and million complications of life by revelation, would involve the necessity of a direct revelation every hour of every day, to every individual of the race. But the only conceivable mode by which revelations from God are possible, is by miracles and prophecy, which are interruptions of the ordinary uniformity of nature. It is the fact that the laws of nature are uniform that alone makes miracles possible, so that incessant revelations by miracles would destroy such uniformity, and thus destroy the only conceivable mode of communication from the Creator.

This being so, the only possible method by which mankind can discover what is right and wrong in the greater portion of their actions is by an experience involving, more or less, wrong-doing as a part.



There are *general rules* of right and wrong which can be communicated both by God and man, but these rules are to be *applied* by men to the numberless and ever-varying circumstances of life, involving still the same necessity of *experience of evil* in order to detect the *relative* amount of good to be gained in the varied courses offered for pursuit to which these rules are to be applied. [162]

Now the grand difficulty, as it respects both God and man, as before shown, is the positive inability of undeveloped mind to understand much of what is right and wrong. This difficulty meets the mature mind as really as it does the infant's; for while many of the general rules evolved by reason and experience are clear, and easily perceived, there are endless varieties of cases in which the *application* of these rules is a matter of uncertainty. For example, that men are to be honest and speak the truth, are rules universally appreciated. But then come the questions whether this and that thing *is* honest, or whether in this or that emergency it may not be right to say what is false. The higher men advance in civilization, and the more means and modes of enjoyment are discovered, the more complicated become the questions of right, and the more frequent the temptations to wrong.

All that can be done is to cultivate the conscience and train the reasoning powers of mankind, so that by means of the experience of life, as developed by individuals and communities, regard to the rules of right and wrong shall keep pace with the increasing civilization.

With these distinctions in the mind, we can perceive that *sin*, in its widest sense, including transgression of *unknown* law, is inevitable in a perfect system of finite minds, while in the limited sense, as transgression of *known* law, it is not so. [163]

So also we can see, that without the intervention of the Creator to teach us, it is an impossibility for any human being to live without sin; so that this intervention is impossible except to a limited extent, without an entire change in the eternal nature of things to which God's own will is conformed.

## Chapter XXVI. Humility and Meekness.

We have seen that we can learn what is right and wrong only by aid received from the experience of our fellow-beings around us.

But in order to this, there are certain virtues which are both difficult and indispensable. In studying the history of mind, it will be seen that the higher the grade of intellect and the greater its culture, the stronger is the love of intellectual supremacy and the more energetic the pride of opinion. It is a fact which none will dispute, that, as the general rule, having some exceptions, the class of minds most highly endowed by native talent and acquired culture, are most unwilling to take the attitude of *learners* toward their associates, and still more toward their inferiors in these endowments. When this pride of intellect and of opinion is combined with benevolence of disposition and with sensitiveness of conscience, there is nothing more difficult than to “become as a little child” in learning truth and duty. For the more benevolence and conscientiousness, the greater the unwillingness to be put in the wrong.

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And yet, in the smallest sphere of life, between every individual and his neighbors, thousands of questions of right and wrong turn on how our words and actions will affect the happiness of those around; and there is no possibility of settling such questions but by leaving every person at liberty to communicate freely what does, or does not, give them pain or pleasure, and thus teach others how to make happiness and save from pain. In order to this, it is indispensable that every one be made to understand that our chief aim is to make happiness the best and right way, and that for this end we wish to have a perfectly free expression

of wishes and opinions. For if it is perceived that irritability and alienation result from such a course, all those around us will conceal their feelings and opinions, and thus, for want of a true knowledge of circumstances, we shall “walk in darkness,” because we are not willing to be told the truths that put us in the wrong or expose our mistakes.

The same free expression of opinion and protest against all wrong, are as indispensable to the discovery of those rules of right and wrong, that are to be evolved from the general experience. Every man, woman and child in the commonwealth, should be perfectly free to set forth their opinions, experience, and reasoning, for the purpose of finding out what is best for the whole. Nor should they be withheld by the fear that such a course would place a parent, a brother, a friend, or a party in the wrong, and expose those dearest to us to blame. For the true happiness of each and all is to be secured by a knowledge of the truth, and often such knowledge can be gained only by exposing the evil results of courses that are pursued by the best and most conscientious persons. [165]

In carrying out this principle, there must be discretion exercised as to *time* and *manner* of performing the duty; and there are some *limitations* to be recognized, which are matters of *expediency*. For example, a man must seek the best time to expose what is wrong, and he must seek to do it in a manner that will secure the good aimed at with the least possible evil. And if it can be done better by the agency of another, the aid of that other should be invoked.

So in regard to limitations, what is strictly personal should be confined to the party who alone is concerned. What relates solely to the family concerns should be confined to the family. Nor should any wrongs or dissensions be brought before the public except those in which the public welfare is involved.

But with these limitations it is the demand of reason and common sense, that every man, woman and child freely protest

against all that they believe to be wrong in opinion or conduct.

In taking such a course, every man's success in discovering and propagating the truth will depend very much on the spirit with which it is attempted. If it is done in a self-sufficient, dictatorial, and denunciatory mode, the inevitable result will be to arouse those passions and prejudices which are most effectual in blinding the mind in discovering truth.

If, on the contrary, it is attempted with the humility, meekness and benevolence which are befitting ignorant, fallible and short-sighted beings, encompassed with such appalling difficulties and dangers, the most favorable of all influences will be exerted to secure a patient and candid attention.

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Still, so sensitive are men to all implications of their motives or conduct, so unwilling are they to acknowledge themselves mistaken, that the faithful discharge of the duty of protesting against wrong, will always be attended with more or less of ill-will and bad passions.

In view of the above, if we were to predict what would be the *first* preliminary teaching of a messenger from the Creator imparting to us the true way of happiness-making, we should say, reasoning from the experience of life, it would read thus:

“Blessed are the *poor in spirit*,” that is, those who feel their poverty of mind as to the knowledge required for right action.

“Blessed are they that *mourn*,” that is, those who are troubled by this want.

“Blessed are the *meek*,” that is, those that can quietly and patiently bear reproof and fault-finding.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness,” that is, those who are as earnest to find the right way of happiness-making as the hungry and thirsty are for food and drink.

“Blessed are the *happiness-makers*.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In the Greek, the word in the New Testament translated “peacemakers,” is more correctly rendered “happiness-makers.”

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake;” that is, those who are willing to *suffer* for the right.

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## Chapter XXVII. The Standard of Right and Wrong Decided by The Risks of Eternity.

It has been shown, that the more the capacities of men are cultivated, and the sources of enjoyment multiplied, the more complicated become the varying questions as to right and wrong moral action, and the more our reasoning powers and our conscience need to be cultivated in order to decide correctly.

Just as fast as men increase in the number and extent of the capacities and resources of enjoyment, will questions of right and wrong multiply, and rules be evolved, every one of which will rest on the grand law of *sacrifice*, which demands of every individual that he shall give up private feelings and choose what is *best for all concerned*.

These difficulties and complications are still more increased, if we are to take into account an immortal existence, and the influence which conduct and character in this life may have on a future eternity. What is best for each individual, and what is best for the commonwealth in such vast relations, involve questions far beyond the reach of human capacities, which only infinite wisdom can answer.

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In all questions of right and wrong, for individual and for public interests, the degree of danger and risk involved, always is the ruling consideration. The greater the danger of the commonwealth, or of the individual, the greater are the demands for sacrifices on the part of all concerned. What would be right in circumstances of ease and safety, becomes the height of selfishness and crime in hours of peril and suffering.

To illustrate this point on a humble scale, let it be supposed that a vast and dangerous morass is filled with a multitude of travelers, of all ages and all degrees of intelligence, who can press through it to their homes only by difficult, dark, and circuitous paths. In addition to its morasses, pit-falls, swamps and fens, each path is beset with venomous reptiles, and its woods with ferocious beasts, while it is the young and tender who are the special objects of pursuit to these terrific foes. In such a community, and amid such dangers, all decisions of right and wrong, as to what was owed to others or to one's self, would be entirely diverse from what would be demanded were all in their safe homes. Sleepless nights, constant watching, painful toils, incessant vigilance, would be the imperious duty of every one, who could render any service. Amusements and sports, that in other circumstances would be wise and right, would be allowed only just so far as they tended to give relaxation or repose of mind and body to those who needed them, and only for the great end of securing a safe and speedy escape to all.

Now suppose that, in these circumstances, some of the wanderers are taught that there were no such dangers, that the paths were all safe and certain, and that every one of them would sooner or later arrive safely at home.

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Others are taught that there probably is some danger and some doubt as to the amount of risks, yet as no one knows much about the matter, on any alternative, it is very wise to be careful and prudent.

Another class are taught that all these terrific dangers do

exist; nay more, that it is certain that some are to be lost in pit-falls, some torn with wild beasts, some poisoned to death with venomous reptiles, and some for ever lost in bleak and cold morasses.

Meantime, who should be the lost and who the saved, and the *number* of the lost, would be entirely dependent on the care, vigilance, labors and sacrifices endured by each, not only for self, but for others.

It can easily be seen, that in these three classes there must be an entirely different standard for deciding all questions of right and wrong. What would be right and wise, in case there is little or no danger, would be folly and crime amid such terrific perils. In one case, each would have little concern or responsibility for any but self; in another case, all benevolent minds would be overwhelmed with anxiety for others as well as for themselves.

This being so, it is claimed that the deductions of reason as to the future immortality of man, and his risks and dangers beyond the grave, are indispensable to deciding multitudes of moral questions of the highest moment, while every person's standard of morality must be regulated by their decision of this question.

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## Chapter XXVIII. The Destiny of Man in the Future Life.

It has been shown, that the teachings of reason as to the immortality of the soul, and our risks and dangers after death, are

indispensable to a true standard of morality, and to the decision of innumerable moral questions of the highest moment.

The next attempt, therefore, will be to set forth what can be learned by reason and experience, independently of revelation, in regard to the future destiny of man.

The first question relates to the existence of the soul after death, and its immortality. Here we have to guide us that great principle of common sense, which regulates mankind in all the practical business of life, viz., *things are, and will continue according to past experience, until there is evidence of a change.*

By the aid of this, we go forward in all practical affairs, believing that the beings and things around us are continued in existence till we have evidence that they are not. If any man were to talk and act as if every person was destroyed, and every town and village annihilated, as soon as the evidence of his senses failed, he would be deemed one who had “lost his reason.”

This same principle tends to the belief that the soul of man continues to exist after the dissolution of the body. We have *no evidence* that the separation of soul and body is an event that either injures or destroys the spiritual part. On the contrary, there are many analogies in nature that would lead to the impression that death gives new strength and powers to the disembodied spirit.

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This being so, we have the same reason to believe that the soul of man exists after death as we have for believing that our friends are living when they leave us on a journey, and we have no evidence of their death. We can not see them, hear them, or feel them, and yet we believe they are living, we know not exactly where, because we have no evidence of their death. And so, after the dissolution of the body, though all evidence of sense as to the existence of their immaterial part ceases, we believe the same thinking, sentient spirits continue to exist, because we have no evidence that they have ceased to do so.

We have perfect evidence that the body ceases to exist as a



body, for it moulders to dust. We have no evidence at all that the soul is either injured or destroyed. Such a thing as the destruction or annihilation of a spirit was never known or heard of from any quarter of earth or heaven.

We therefore conclude, that at the moment of death the soul is still existing with all its powers unchanged.

The same argument goes on still further, and leads to the immortality of the soul. We know of no cause or reason for the destruction of the soul at any future period. We never have known or heard that any soul ever ceased to exist. And so we infer, that the soul will keep on a perpetuated existence, by the same principle as that which leads us to believe the earth and the heavens will remain to future ages.

In regard to the *character and condition* of departed spirits, [172] again we have the same principle to guide us. Without revelation, the *past experience* of mind is our sole beacon to give light as to its future destiny.

Our next inquiry, then, is, what does the past experience of mind teach us as to its condition beyond the grave? In pursuing this inquiry, we must recall, in brief forms, some of the points of mental experience set forth in previous chapters.

Some of the most important of these relate to the principle of *habit* by which the exercise of all our faculties becomes more and more easy by use. This is true of the intellect, by which we gain our knowledge of what will secure *the most* happiness; of the *social* nature, by which we give happiness to other minds and receive the same from them; of our *moral* nature, by which we are guided to justice, equity, and the rule of conscience; of our *voluntary* nature, by which we regulate all our other powers. Each and all are developed, strengthened, and facilitated in right action, by being exercised according to the laws of God.

The legitimate use of all our faculties induces also not only increased facility, but increased *enjoyment*. The more the intellect is trained, the more agreeable its exercise. The more our social

nature is developed by use, the more its powers are developed and its *blessed* influence increased. The more our moral nature is exercised, the more vigorous becomes our sense of justice and the sensibilities of conscience, and the more pleasing their exercise. And the more the will is exercised in controlling every other faculty by the rules of rectitude, the more easy and delightful is this power of self-control.

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The influence of habit in regard to the great law of *sacrifice* for the *best* good of all, is especially to be regarded. Such is its power that, in many cases, self-sacrifices that at first were annoying, or even painful, become sources of the highest and noblest enjoyment.

Another not less important influence of habit is, in regard to those modes of enjoyment which are most important to the commonwealth, and most happyfying. The pursuit of these increases both desire and capacity for gratification, while those less important and more dangerous, if made the leading object of pursuit, diminish capacity while desire is increased. Thus the happiness gained in giving and receiving affection, in causing happiness to others, and in rectitude of action, all increase both the desire and the capacity for these important and elevated modes of enjoyments. Nor is there any danger of excess in forming habits in these directions. But the pleasures of the senses and the pursuit of power, honor, and other enjoyments that terminate in self, are liable to excess, and this excess diminishes the capacity for enjoyment, while the ceaseless craving of desire remains.

Thus it appears that a mind that forms habits of happiness-making according to right rules, becomes more and more strongly drawn to that course by finding more and more enjoyment in it, while a mind that pursues as a chief end the enjoyments that terminate in self, constantly loses capacity for such good, and yet the desire for it drives on to vain and cheerless efforts.

Another ominous fact in our mental nature is, the effect of habit in diminishing the control of the voluntary power. When

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any excessive or illegitimate mode of exercising the faculties becomes a ruling passion, the *change* of a habit thus formed becomes more and more difficult in exact proportion to the continuous repetition. Even when men see and feel that a habit is formed that increases their sorrow and diminishes their enjoyment, and that another course would render them every way nobler and happier, they find their purposes of change often are powerless. The control of the will continually yields to the force of habit, and so they are hopelessly driven on in their fatal pursuits.

Again, the effect of wrong action on the susceptibilities is as ominous as it is on the power of choice. We have seen that the design of painful emotions is to stimulate to the formation of good habits, and that when this legitimate object is not effected these emotions continually decrease in strength and vividness, so that the designed benefit is lost. Thus *fear* is designed to induce habits of caution, but if no such habits are the result, danger ceases to excite this emotion, and a man becomes at once fearless and careless. So with sympathy in the sufferings of others; if no habits of benevolent efforts to relieve are induced, that sensibility diminishes, and men become at once unsympathising, hard and cruel. So it is with *shame*; if it does not lead to habits of honor and duty, the susceptibility continually diminishes. And so it is with *remorse*; if habits of rectitude are not induced by its emotions, the conscience becomes "seared as with hot iron."

But the most deteriorating effect of wrong action is seen in regard to that fundamental point of the mental constitution which makes it a source of happiness to be the cause of happiness to others. It is a universal fact that the tendency of disagreeable emotions is to lead to the infliction of pain on others. This propensity to inflict pain on whoever is the cause of pain, when regulated by the rules of rectitude, is the source of justice in the family and state, and leads only to good. But when it is indulged and unregulated, it is the most fearful feature in our mental [175]

constitution. The records of history exhibit many monsters of our race, whose mental constitution has become so disordered by habits of fatal indulgence, that all love of happiness-making for others seems destroyed, and the baleful pleasure of tormenting becomes a ruling passion.

Another feature of our mental conformation which directly bears on this subject, is the fact, that all those good qualities and benevolent acts which naturally tend to please and awaken the desire of good to others, may become sources of pain and ill-will. This is the case when the lovely and benevolent traits of other minds are contrasted with opposite traits in self. Thus it is that the selfish, cruel and malignant hate and are powerfully repelled from the generous, just and virtuous, while the good as instinctively fly from the wicked.

The natural result of these features in the nature of mind, is a continual tendency toward a separation of the good and the bad, the righteous and the wicked.

According to the teachings of experience, a mind that forms habits of selfishness and sin is constantly tending to a deterioration of its nature in all directions. And the course of obedience to the grand law of self-sacrifice for the *best* good of all, becomes more and more difficult and improbable. As the natural result the good are more and more attracted toward each other, and the bad are more and more repelled.

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These tendencies, so plainly exhibited here, reasoning from experience, we infer are to continue after death, until the final result must be the entire exclusion of the evil from the good, whenever power exists to compel the separation. This power, all must feel is held and will be exercised by the Author of all minds, whose great plan, so far as reason teaches, can be carried to perfection only by such a consummation.

One point in the history of our race has a mournful pertinence to this question. We find that the improvement and the safety of the great commonwealth is always, more or less, promoted by

the ruin of individuals. Multitudes are deterred from evil courses by the miserable end of those who pursue them; so that the good are often preserved by the destruction of the bad.

So, too, we find exhibitions of the fact that minds are utterly ruined, and ruined *for ever*, so far as we can perceive. The man who has stultified his intellect, ruined his health, seared his conscience, and blunted all his generous and benevolent sensibilities by a course of debauchery, cruelty and crime, is a wreck as total and irretrievable, so far as we can see, as a watch whose springs and pivots are crushed beneath the hammer, or a human body whose every lineament is effaced beneath the rushing locomotive train.

The common language of life expresses such mental facts in precisely the same terms as are applied to physical catastrophes. Thus, a man who is given up to debauchery, intemperance and crime, is said to be a “total wreck”—“entirely destroyed,”—“utterly ruined.” [177]

Add to this the teaching of experience, that when men are bad, the increase of blessings only increases indulgence and crime. At the same time punishment does not tend to reformation. The more men suffer for their folly and guilt, the more hardened they become. The victims of licentiousness and intemperance, though they suffer such miseries, have ever been regarded as the farthest removed from the probabilities of reformation.

Add to all this, the deductions of reason as to the moral nature of the Creator and Governor of all minds. He has power to separate the good and bad; his great design, of which we here see only the *tendencies*, makes it indispensable to the perfect happiness of the good that they be separated from the bad—a *perfectly* happy commonwealth can not be attained where the bad form a part—while the *sense of justice* exists in God on a scale far above ours, demanding *added* penalties for the known and willful destruction of happiness. He, like his children on earth, feels that craving for retributive justice, which can never rest till

the guilty and remorseless monster receives the just recompense for his cruelty and crimes.

These teachings of reason and experience lead to the conclusion, not only that there is to be a grand consummation in which all sin and suffering shall be ended in a perfected commonwealth, but also to the conclusion that those excluded from this community of the good are to continue their existence in sin and its natural results for ever.

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That any portion, either of matter or mind, is to be annihilated, can not be inferred from any past experience. All that we can learn are the laws of perpetual *succession* and *change*. One single fact of annihilation has never yet been made known to man by any process of reasoning, or any recorded experience.

There is another question in reference to this awful subject, which is of deepest interest. Although the deductions of reason lead to the doctrine of the eventual separation of mankind into two distinct communities, the good and the evil, what are its teachings as to the *immediate* state of each individual soul after the event of death?

Here, as before, we have only the nature and past history of mind, from which the future is to be deduced. In this world we have found the changes in the character of individuals and of communities to proceed by slow and imperceptible movement. We have nothing in the past to lead to the belief that this slow process of discipline, culture and change may not proceed on for ages. As in this life, multitudes have the impress and direction of character given in early life, so that the first few years determine all their future history in this world, so the career of this short life may fix the future through eternal years. And yet the process of change to the full consummation of character may involve ages.

In studying the works of the Creator, we find that every thing goes forward on a system of *developments*. Nothing comes into being in full perfection, and unless there is an interruption of the natural tendencies of things, every thing reaches its full and

perfected state before its existence ends. And the nobler, larger, and grander the existence, the slower it proceeds to its consummated perfection. The oak and the palm demand centuries ere they reach their perfected prime. The highest grades of animal life are slowest in gaining their full development. The horse, the elephant, and the camel, are going forward to perfection for years after the feebler tribes that started with them have perfected and perished. [179]

Guided, then, by the analogies of experience, we should infer that *mind*, the noblest work of its Creator's hand—mind, that begins its career in such low and feeble development, is not to form the mournful exception to the general rule.

On the contrary, we infer from all past experience, both of matter and mind, that the soul, when it lays aside its outer covering, proceeds onward in its career of development. And if its period of progressive development is proportioned to its relative value in comparison with all other created things, the fleeting years of this life in relation to the ages previous to its prime, may be but as the first days of puling infancy to the whole career of manhood.

But this subject is imperfectly treated, if we neglect to consider the fact, that the soul, so far as we can perceive, is *disembodied* at death. We have perfect evidence, that the material part is destroyed, as to its organized existence. We have the same sort of evidence that the soul continues to exist, and will continue to exist, as we have that the sun exists when all evidence of sight ceases. But what is the experience of a disembodied spirit, we have no means of learning. It may be that its powers of knowledge and action are greatly increased, when freed from its earthly prison. If this be so, the experience of this life leads to the inference that its dangers and temptations are increased in exact proportion. Increase of civilization is only increase in sources of knowledge and enjoyment, and each addition brings new temptations, new rules, and the need of new penalties. It [180]

may be the same in the future life.

We can suppose the body a veil to hide our mind from another, and that death makes every soul "open and naked," in all its thoughts and feelings, to every other disembodied spirit. What would be the effect of such a revelation, no one could say. But we should fear rather than hope.

If men are exasperated by words that exhibit only a portion of the scorn, contempt, and disgust felt toward the base and mean, not only by the pure and good, but by the wicked themselves, such a *full revelation of all minds to all minds* presents a theme for awful forebodings to the guilty. And even the purest might tremble to encounter such an ordeal. But over such terrific conjectures rest the darkness and silence of the grave.

The following, then, are the deductions of reason and experience as to the future condition of our race after death.

The soul, at the dissolution of the body, remains unchanged in its tastes, habits and character. The *tendencies* indicated in this life are continued indefinitely, and eventually will result in the separation of the good and the bad into two separate communities, the one, being obedient to all the laws of God, will be forever and perfectly happy, and the other are to reap the natural results of disobedience, and whatever added penalties the best good of the universe may demand.

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The final consummation in which this separation will be achieved, may be at the distance of ages, and in the meantime all those minds that have passed, or will pass from this life, are in the same process of culture, discipline, and upward or downward progress, which exists in this life. Whether these advantages and temptations will be greater or less in the disembodied state, we have no data for inference or conjecture.

The conduct and character formed in this life will have an abiding influence on the character and happiness of every mind



through eternal ages.<sup>10</sup>

## Chapter XXIX. What Must We Do To Be Saved?

We have considered the risks and dangers of the future state, as taught by reason and experience, and also as the foundation of a true standard of morality. We have seen that the true mode of escape from these dangers is *the formation of a truly virtuous character*, or in other words, *it is making it our chief end to obey all the laws of God*.

The next question is, what are the teachings of reason and experience as to the most successful modes of securing true virtue, or voluntary obedience to all the laws of God?

This brings up the inquiry as to the *causes* of voluntary action, and of the power which one mind has of securing right or wrong volitions in another. [182]

In a previous chapter was pointed out the distinction to be recognized between the *producing* cause and the *occasional* causes of volition.

Mind itself is the *only* producing cause of its own volitions. Excited desires, and those objects which excite desire, are the *occasional* causes of choice.

The question is, in what sense can any being be the cause of virtuous actions, or virtuous character, in another mind?

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<sup>10</sup> Note B.

Here we must recur to the fact that the Creator, as the author of all minds, and of all the things that excite desire, is the cause, in one sense, of all the volitions and of all the characters of all finite minds. It is in this sense that, in the Bible, the Jehovah of the Old Testament says, "I make peace and *create evil*." No other being but the Creator can be regarded as the cause of volitions in this sense, viz., as the author of all minds and their circumstances of temptation.

There is a second sense in which the Creator is never the cause of sinful action in any mind. It is this: creating or modifying our susceptibilities, or arranging temptations with *the design* or *intention* of producing sinful action. This is established by proving, that the chief end of God is to make the most possible happiness, and that sin is the needless destruction of happiness, resulting from disobedience to the laws of God.

The only sense, then, in which God can be called the author or cause of sinful volitions in the minds of his creatures, is the fact that he is the author of all created minds and of their circumstances of temptation.

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In regard to man, there are only two conceivable modes, in which he can be the cause of sinful or virtuous character in other minds.

The first mode is so to combine circumstances of temptation as to affect the most excitable and powerful sensibilities, or to remove those objects and influences that sustain moral principle, or by a long course of training, to form habits and induce principles. The combinations of motive influences that one mind can thus bring to bear on another, as temptations to right or wrong action, are almost infinite.

Another mode is by *changing the constitutional susceptibilities*. This can sometimes be effected to a certain degree by education, and the formation of habits. It can be still more directly effected through the physical organization. For example, a child may be trained to use coffee, tea, alcohol, or tobacco, till the

nervous system is shattered, and then a placid temper becomes excitable, an active nature becomes indolent, and multitudes of other disastrous changes are the result.

When these two modes are employed with the *design* to induce wrong action, then men are blameable causes of sinful action and character in their fellow men. God, as above shown, never thus causes sin. When these modes are employed with the *intention* to induce virtuous actions and character, then both God and man are causes of right moral action in mankind.

Thus, it appears, that in the formation of virtuous character and habits, God, educators and self are the three combining causes, each being indispensable to the result, and thus each dependent on the others. God decides the nature and combinations of our susceptibilities and our circumstances of temptation. The edu- [184]  
cators of mind also modify the susceptibilities, and regulate the temptations. Self, as the producing cause of volition, decides the nature of our own volitions, and thus also coöperates to regulate circumstances of temptation.

The attainment of virtuous character, therefore, depends conjointly on God, man and self. It has been shown that God *invariably* does *the best he can* to secure the most perfect action possible in all minds.

The blamable causes of all failure in right and virtuous action are self and the finite educators of self. The unblamable causes are God, educators and self, so far as they are faithful in doing *all they can* to educate aright.

With these preliminary considerations, we proceed in the inquiry as to those modes which in past experience have been found most successful in securing virtuous character, or voluntary obedience to the laws of God.

The first cause of right moral action is a *knowledge* of and *faith* in the physical, social, intellectual and moral laws of God. It is impossible, in the nature of things, that a new-created mind should be possessed of such knowledge and faith. All that is

possible, so far as we can learn by reason and experience, is that there should be a slow and gradual development not only of each individual mind, but of the whole race, as each generation, in turn, receives by instruction the experience of the one previous, and transmits it with its own experience to a succeeding generation.

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The next thing that has been found efficacious in forming virtuous character is the formation of uniform *habits of obedience to parental rule*, in the early periods of existence. To secure this, *invariable steadiness in government* has been found indispensable. If a child finds that sometimes he is to obey and sometimes he is not, there is always a temptation to struggle against law. But if a parent's laws, rewards and penalties are as steady and sure as those of God, in due time the child submits as cheerfully to the domestic rules and commands, as he does to the laws of nature. He is no more tempted to contest parental commands than he is to attempt to stop the flow of a river or the falling of rain. In this way a habit of submission to law is generated, which makes all the future discipline and training of life comparatively easy. A child learns cheerfully to obey a heavenly Father, just in proportion as he thus obeys his earthly parents.

The next thing taught by experience is that children should be instructed as fast as possible in the *reasonableness and benevolence* of all the laws they are required to obey. Obedience is made easy and sure just in proportion as a child is made to perceive, that such obedience is *best for himself and best for all concerned*.

The next thing which experience has shown to be most effective in securing obedience to law, is *love* on the part of the educator, and corresponding love in return from the child. To gain the love of a child an educator must exhibit all lovable traits, and confer benefits, so as to call forth at once admiration, gratitude and affection. This renders it easy to the child to conform to the rules and wishes of one so beloved.

Sympathy with a child in all its trials and in all its enjoy-

ments, still further increases this power of another mind in right guidance.

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This sympathetic influence is greatly increased by the power of a virtuous *example*—especially if this example is exhibited by a beloved friend and benefactor, who would be gratified by thus guiding a dependent mind.

Another influence that tends to secure virtuous action is the bearing of pain and hardships even when it is not voluntary. Those children who are trained in a cold clime and on a hard soil, and who are early trained to hardships, find it far easier to conform to rule, and to bear sacrifices for the general good, than those whose lives have been a course of uninterrupted ease and indulgence.

To these, add the social influences of the example and sympathy of a surrounding community. Where all around are practicing virtuous conduct—where all admire and praise only what is good and right—it is far easier to secure obedience to the rules of rectitude, than where the example and sympathy of surrounding minds are opposed to virtue.

But the most powerful of all influences in securing virtuous action, is the principle of love and gratitude toward some noble benefactor, who saves from some terrible evils at the expense of great personal suffering and sacrifices, and who seeks his reward in the pleasure of redeeming those thus benefited, from the snares and ruin of sin. And the greater the evils averted, and the more severe the suffering on the part of the benefactor, the stronger the influence thus gained to secure virtuous character and action in the one thus rescued.

These are the influences which experience has shown to be most effective in securing virtuous character.

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When the question is asked, “What must *we* do to be saved?” it may be answered in reference to all concerned in the matter; that is to say, “What must self do—What must our fellow-men

do—What must the Creator do, to secure obedience to his laws, and thus to save from sin and its penalties?”

In view of the above teachings, each one for himself must seek, first, *knowledge* of the laws of God, and of their rewards and penalties as discovered by the experience of mankind. In order to do this, each must take all means to gain *true* teachers, and to receive their teachings in true *faith*, that is, that *practical* faith, which includes the purpose of obedience. Each must cultivate the intellect, the reason and the moral sense, in order to judge correctly in receiving and applying the rules of rectitude; each must seek to discover the reasonableness and benevolence of these laws, and form *habits* of steady obedience; each must seek to discover and rightly to appreciate all the good and lovable qualities of all who institute and administer laws, from the Creator to all subordinate rulers and governors in the domestic and civil state; each must seek the society of those whose sympathy and example would encourage and promote virtuous conduct; and finally, each must make obedience to all the laws of God the *chief end* or ruling purpose. These are briefly the reply to the great question in relation to self.

We are next to consider this question in relation to what men must do to *save others*.

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Here we are to take into account two subjects previously illustrated; the first is that great law of *sacrifice*, by which each individual must make his own wishes and welfare subordinate to the higher interests of the great commonwealth; the second is the fact that all questions of right and wrong are dependent on the *risks and dangers* that threaten the commonwealth. In cases where there is little peril or evil, each individual has little responsibility for others. On the contrary, when all are exposed to terrific dangers and hazards, every individual is bound to think and care as much for the danger of each one as for his own. And just as much as the interests of all are of more value than those of one, so much *more* should each place the public welfare above

that of self.

In a preceding chapter have been exhibited the risks and dangers of our race in reference to the future life. These are such, that without any appeal to revelation, every man of humanity and benevolence must feel that to save his fellow-beings from such dangers should become immediately his leading object of pursuit, his *chief end*.

In pursuing this as the main object of life, each individual is bound to follow the teachings of experience as to the most successful modes as set forth above. Each one, then, should become a *teacher of the laws of God* to all who are in ignorance, to the full extent of his power, and set forth all the motives to induce obedience; each should strive to exhibit all those qualities and deeds which will excite admiration, love and gratitude, in order thus to gain influence over other minds and guide them to virtuous conduct. Each should confer benefits and practice self-denying benevolence toward others and thus gain still farther influence. Each should strive to exhibit that *example* and that *sympathy* that are so effective in leading others aright. [189]

In regard to those who are the educators of the young, each must strive to maintain that *invariable steadiness in governments* which is so effective in forming virtuous habits and in rendering obedience to the laws of God more and more easy.

Finally, it should be the aim of each to establish such a *community* around all who are being trained to virtue, that every social influence shall repress vice and encourage virtue.

Next, we are to consider the great question in reference to the Creator. What then must God do to save our race from sin and its miseries? What would reason and experience teach us to expect he would do to secure obedience to his laws?

In answering this question we must again refer to the causes which experience has shown to be most effective, for we can conceive of no other. We have examined the evidence that the Creator has given to each of his children such a constitution of

mind and body, and such circumstances of temptation and trial as is *best on the whole*, as a part of an infinite *system* whose results are to develop through eternity. At the same time it has been shown that God is limited, by the eternal nature of things, to a course in which *some* evil must exist, so that all that is requisite to his character as perfectly benevolent, is that this evil should be reduced by him to its least possible amount.

[190] To suppose that God can impart at creation of each mind all the knowledge of the millions of rules needed for all the myriads of new relations, of myriads of beings through all eternity, is to suppose an impossibility in the nature of things.

If it be maintained that the Creator is not thus limited by the nature of things, but, as theologians teach, could make mind perfect in all needed knowledge as in all other respects, at the first, then we have the greater contradiction involved in the fact, that a perfectly benevolent being chose for his children ignorance and sin in preference to knowledge and virtue.

To say that it may be *best* to create minds destitute of all needed knowledge when the want insures infinite wrong and suffering, and when there is power to create the knowledge that would insure perfect happiness, is simply a direct contradiction. It is saying that *less* happiness may be *greater* than *greater* happiness. For by "what is for the best" we understand "that which secures the *most* happiness." And saying that making misery where there is power to make happiness in its place, is *best*, means nothing else but the assertion above, that less happiness is greater than greater happiness; or that *less* is *more* than *most*, which is a contradiction, inconceivable and absurd, so that no mind can either comprehend or believe it.

Now, every theologian of every school and of every sect maintains that "God does all things *for the best*." Every one who believes in a benevolent Creator does the same. This is simply saying that God does the best possible; that is to say, there is no power that can make a better system than God has made, or



administer it with more wisdom or benevolence. He has chosen the best possible and so he can not do any better. [191]

These things being granted, the teachings of experience would lead us to suppose, still farther, that the Creator must do all that is possible to maintain *invariable steadiness of government*. We can see that this, which is so important in family government, must be still more so in an infinite family. For this end, the natural penalties for wrong doing, must be as *invariable* as the rewards for well doing.

Again, the Creator must instruct his creatures in his laws and their rewards and penalties to the full extent of his power. That is to say, he must provide well-trained educators of mind, as fast and as fully as is possible in the nature of things, having in view the results of eternal ages to guide his decisions.

Again, to secure voluntary obedience, he must add to the natural rewards and penalties of his laws, the other class of motives which experience has shown to be most effective. Thus, he must present himself to his creatures as a being possessing all those qualities which call forth the delightful emotions of admiration, reverence and love; he must show himself as a constant benefactor, and as one who “does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.” He must manifest his love to his creatures by word as well as by deed. He must come personally to provide for their wants and cheer them with his care. He must show his tenderness and sympathy in their trials and sorrows as well as in their joys. And if they are exposed to great dangers and evils from which they can be redeemed by self-sacrifice and suffering on his part, this highest and most effective proof of love must be exhibited.<sup>11</sup>

To this must be added, a manifestation of his *chief desire*, [192] so that when love and gratitude ask, what can we do to please our benefactor in return, the answer shall be, obey his laws, and

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<sup>11</sup> Note C.

work and suffer for the good of all, as you see your Heavenly Parent does for you.

Finally, he must bring around each of his creatures the powerful social influence, not only of his own sympathy and example, but those also of a perfect commonwealth, where all shall be perfect as is the Father of all.

This is what we should evolve by the light of reason and experience, as what the Creator must do to save our race. Whether he has done all this, is a question that belongs to that system of religion which we can gain only by revelation from God.<sup>12</sup>

## Chapter XXX. How Far Reason and Experience are Sufficient Without Revelation.

The preceding chapters present the system of natural religion, as it may be gained by experience and those principles of reason or common sense with which all men are endowed.

Whether mankind ever have, or ever would, fully evolve this system of religious belief without any aid by revelation from the Creator, is a question which we can not readily decide—inasmuch as the claim of Christianity is, that from the first, our race have been instructed by revelations from God, which have been more or less preserved in traditions and written records. It is certain that the elimination of this system, by unaided humanity, is

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<sup>12</sup> Note D.

dependent on the development of both the intellectual and moral powers, just as much so, as the physical discoveries of Newton, Copernicus and Columbus were dependent on the intellectual progress of the race.

In reference to the question of the necessity or importance of revelations from the Creator, it is interesting to examine how far those nations that have been most advanced in intellectual development, have secured this system of common sense, independently of the revelations contained in the Bible—revelations which also have been more or less incorporated by Mohammed into the Koran.

In a brief review of the pagan systems, that of Boodhism occupies the first place, as one which has had longest and largest control over civilized pagandom—one which has been most unimpeded by resistance, and one which now controls *one half* the human race.

We have seen that the common-sense system teaches an eternally self-existent Creator, perfect in knowledge, wisdom, power and benevolence, administering a perfect system by laws—his chief design being to produce the most possible happiness with the least possible evil. It teaches also, that the right *voluntary* action of mind, as a part of this system, consists in *good willing* toward the Creator, toward self, and toward our fellow-beings, *according to the laws* of God, so as to secure what is *best* for all concerned—making it imperative that self be made subordinate to the public good. It teaches also, that the most effective mode of securing this right action is, first, by imparting a *knowledge* of these laws and their sanctions, and thus influencing mind by the motives of *hope* and *fear*; next, by the motive influences of *love*, *gratitude*, *sympathy* and *example*, as mutually exercised by God, our fellow-men and self. Finally, it teaches that all questions as to what is right and wrong, are to be regulated with reference to the risks and dangers of a *future life*, and not with chief reference to this life alone—and that in this estimate the interests of self

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are to be made subordinate to those of the commonwealth.

We will now notice how far the system of Boodh corresponds with that of common sense.

This religion<sup>13</sup> is one in which there is no intervention of any supreme God, or any self-existent being, or any Creator; on the contrary, all souls and all the universe exist from eternity. All souls from eternity have gone on transmigrating from one body to another, rising or falling in the scale of existence according to their merit or demerit. Boodh is a general name for a divinity or god. There have been innumerable Boodhs in different worlds and different ages, but in this world only four. These four are beings who have risen by merit through various transmigrations, and then became incarnate in human bodies. At last they were annihilated, none of them being now in existence—so that this world for centuries has been without any God.

The last Boodh of this world was Gaudama. He passed through innumerable transmigrations in four hundred millions of worlds, and attained immense merit. At last, he was born into this world the son of a king, about six hundred years before Christ. The moment he was born he exclaimed, “Now am I the noblest of men; this is the last time I shall ever be born!” He remained forty-five years as Boodh of this world—performed all sorts of meritorious deeds, promulgated excellent laws, and then was annihilated. Ever since, this world has had no God, and will have none for eight thousand years, when the next Boodh is to appear. The first three Boodhs left no laws or sayings. Those of Gaudama, the last Boodh, were reduced to writing A. D. 94, and these are the *Bedegat*, or Bible of the Boodhists.

These teachings of Gaudama are so obligatory, that disbelief of them is the only crime that incurs *eternal* punishment.

According to this system, true virtue or rewardable merit, consists in obeying the teachings of Gaudama. These teachings

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<sup>13</sup> This account is taken from Rev. Howard Malcom's *Travels in Asia*.

relate first to sins to be avoided. The five general laws are, not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie, and not to drink intoxicating liquors. These are subdivided so as to include all sins of similar kinds under each head. For example, the first law includes even the killing of animals for food, also capital punishments and war.

Sins are divided into these three classes: first, those of the body, such as killing, theft, fornication, etc.; those of the tongue, as falsehood, harsh language, idle talk, etc.; and those of the mind, as pride, covetousness, envy, heretical thoughts, etc.

These writings of Gaudama strongly denounce the evils of pride, anger, covetousness, and all inordinate appetites. Men are exhorted to avoid excess in perfumes, ornaments and laughter—also strong drink, smoking, opium, night wanderings, bad company, idleness, anger under abuse, flattery to benefactors, annoying jests, and all that leads to strife. [196]

For all such sins the most awful conceivable punishments are to follow in a future state, and for millions of ages.

Rewardable merit is of three kinds:

1. Obedience to all the preceding precepts and prohibitions, and the performance of all duties *fairly deducible* from them, such as integrity, gentleness, lenity, forbearance, condescension, veneration to parents and love to mankind in general.

2. Alms-giving and votive offerings. This includes feeding priests, building temples and accommodations for priests and for travelers, making roads, tanks and wells, planting fruit and shade trees, feeding criminals and animals, and finally, giving alms to all classes of men in need.

3. Prayers and reading the Bedegat, or religious books. Of this last kind of merit, there are three kinds: the first is the senseless repetition of prayers and reading; the second, reading intelligently; the last, is performing these exercises with strong desires and feelings. Prayers are not addressed to any God, as there is none existing now for this world. Gaudama, at his death,

advised that, in addition to obeying his laws, his relics and image should be worshiped, and temples be built to his honor till the next Boodh came.

Votive offerings of fruit, rice and flowers are made to priests or placed in temples. The prayers consist of the repetition of soliloquies that express our liability to bodily evils and to mental suffering, and our inability to escape. Also of protestations of this kind, "I will not lie;" "I will not steal;" "I will not kill," etc.

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There are four Sabbaths or days for public worship each month, when the people go with votive offerings and prayers to the temple of Gaudama, but they have no general united worship.

The Boodhists have a hierarchy very much like the Catholic church, with varied grades and ranks. The priests are required to practice celibacy, and are mainly supported by voluntary gifts from the people.

They reside in buildings erected especially for them, and as celibacy and the avoidance of women are enjoined on all, these establishments very much resemble Catholic monasteries. Few of the priests preach, and only by special request, after which, presents are made to them. They attend funerals only when invited, and then expect presents. Part of them spend some time in teaching novitiate priests, but most of them, regarding work as unprofessional, spend their time in sheer idleness. It is the rule that each priest perambulate the streets every morning till he receives boiled rice enough for his daily wants. The higher class of priests avoid this. In Burmah the priests are at the rate of one to every thirty persons, and they are well supported by the people, and without interference from the government to enforce it.

As to the motives that sustain this religion, there being no God to the Boodhist, all motives arising from relations and regard to him are excluded. All the motives presented appeal to hope of good and fear of evil to *self*. Those who attain a certain measure of merit in obeying Gaudama's teachings go to some

of the celestial regions, according to their attainments. These [198] consist of twenty-six heavens, one above another, which offer various degrees of enjoyment according to merit obtained.

There are eight principal hells; four that torment with cold and four with heat. In the other hells are other sufferings, although not connected with heat and cold. Worms bite, bowels are torn out, limbs are racked, bodies are lacerated, they are pierced with hot spits, crucified head downward, gnawed by dogs, torn by vultures. These are described with minuteness in the *Bedegat* and often depicted by the native artists in drawings, reminding one of Dante's *Inferno* illustrated.

For killing a parent or a priest a man will suffer in one of the hells of fire for inconceivable millions of ages. Denying the doctrines of Gaudama incurs *eternal* suffering in fire. Insulting women, old men or priests, receiving bribes, selling intoxicating drinks and parricide, are punished in the worst hell.

Merit gained by any good conduct in these hells enables the person to rise even to the celestial regions.

The souls of all the universe have existed from eternity, transmigrating for ever, and thus rising and falling in the scale of existence according to the degrees of merit at each birth. This is decided not by any deity but by immutable fate. In passing through these changes the amount of sorrow is incalculable. The *Bedegat* declares that the tears shed by one soul in its various changes are so great that the ocean in comparison is but a drop. Sorrow is declared to be the inevitable attendant of all existence, and therefore "the chief end," and the highest reward of Boodhism is, *annihilation*. [199]

The system of Boodhism commenced about six hundred years before Christ, and has pervaded eastern, central and southern Asia about as long and as fully as Christianity has pervaded Europe. The Burman empire, where this account of that faith was obtained, presents the most favorable results of this system on the character and condition of its votaries.

In China, Buddhism (another name for Boodhism) is the popular religion. With it is associated Confucianism, which is a system of morals and politics instituted by Confucius, B. C. 550, which teaches nothing in regard to any God or a future state. With them co-exist the sect of Laotze, which is a kind of rationalism. Most of the temples and priests are those of Boodh or Buddha, but there is no such organized priesthood as in Burmah, nor is this religion maintained by governmental power. It is also considerably modified by the more ancient system of polytheism.

In Thibet and Tartary, the religion of the Grand Lama chiefly prevails, which is one form of Boodhism.

In western India, Brahmanism is in constant warfare with Boodhism, and the two systems are perfectly antagonistic. Brahmanism teaches one eternal deity and three hundred and thirty-three millions of other gods, with hosts of idols representing them; Boodhism has no deity at all, and only one image, that of Gaudama. Brahmanism enjoins sacrifices; Boodhism forbids killing. Brahmanism requires atrocious tortures; Boodhism inculcates fewer austerities than even Popery. Brahmanism makes lying, fornication and theft sometimes commendable, and describes the gods as excelling in such crimes; Boodhism never confounds right and wrong, and never excuses any sin. Brahmanism makes the highest good or chief end of man to be absorption into the supreme deity; Boodhism makes *annihilation* the highest hope and aim of existence. These two systems, together with Mohammedanism, so prevail in Hindostan that the distinct results of each can never be compared. These are the prevailing religions in the most advanced pagan nations at the present time; and of the two, Boodhism is the best, and probably has been the most fairly tested in Burmah.

In past ages the two most highly developed heathen nations were those of Greece and Rome, and of their religion we have the fullest records. It is not probable that any one will consider



their system of religion superior to this now exhibited of modern paganism.

The result is that the most highly developed heathen nations, as yet, have attained but very imperfectly the system of common sense.

No heathen religion ever taught an eternally-existing Creator, perfect in knowledge, wisdom, power and benevolence. None ever taught that the chief end of our Creator is happiness-making on the greatest possible scale. None ever taught that this also is the chief end for which man is created. None ever taught that right moral action, or true virtue, consists in *good willing toward the Creator, toward self, and toward our fellow-beings, according to the laws of the Creator, so that every mind shall make the good of self subordinate to the general good.* None ever taught that all questions of right and wrong, or what is for *the best*, are to be decided with reference to the risks and dangers of a future life. None ever presented communion with, and the care, sympathy, sacrifices, and example of a “long-suffering” Creator, as motives to secure virtuous self-sacrifice from his creatures. If all this is taught by revelations from God in the Bible, it is what was never taught by any other religion yet known on earth. [201]

In the history of the heathen world, we find anxious inquiries on these subjects pressing on every thoughtful spirit. Who made this world with its profound and ceaseless sorrows? Are there contending deities, and are the malignant powers in the ascendant? If there be one supreme Creator of all, is he propitious or hostile to a race so guilty as ours? Does he feel any pity or sympathy for our profound ignorance, our infinite sorrows? Can we do any thing to gain his help in our darkness and misery? Where do we go when we die? Does our short and painful span of being end in eternal night, or are we to go on in another career of similar suffering and change? When we lay our beloved ones in the grave, shall we ever meet them again, or is “the only proper utterance of a broken heart, *vale, vale, in eternum vale?*”

These have been the mournful questionings of every age and every race, while the wisest sages of the wisest nations, without a revelation, have been unable to give any satisfactory reply.

Greece and Rome were the most civilized of all ancient nations, and they give us Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Cicero, as their best and wisest men, who most deeply pondered these great questions. Aristotle held to one superior deity, but taught that the stars are true and eternal deities. Cicero leads to the belief of many gods, and approves of worshiping distinguished men as gods. Socrates held to a plurality of deities, and also to transmigration. He held that the common sort of good men will go into the forms of bees, ants, and other animals of a mild and social kind. Plato held to two principles, God and matter, and that God was not concerned either in the creation or government of this world. He argued for the immortality of the soul on the ground of its *pre-existence*, and concludes some of his speculations thus:

“We can not of ourselves know what will be pleasing to God, or what worship to pay him; but it is needful that a lawgiver be sent from heaven. Such an one do I expect, and O how greatly do I desire to see him, and who he is!”

[202]

## Chapter XXXI. Augustinian Creeds and Theologians Teach the Common-Sense System.

In the former portion of this work the Augustinian theory, with the system based on it, has been presented as it is taught by

creeds and theologians. In contrast with it, has been presented the common-sense system of religion as evolved by reason and experience.

The evidence will now be presented, to show that those who teach the Augustinian system, at the same time teach the main points of the common-sense system; and where the two systems are contradictory, that they teach *both* sides of the contradiction, at once affirming and denying the same things.

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A leading feature of the common-sense system is, that the *nature* of the human mind is our only guide to the natural attributes of God.

It will now be shown that leading theologians and metaphysicians of the Augustinian school teach the same.

The Calvinistic theologians of New England have been universally acknowledged as among the most acute and profound metaphysicians in the world. At the head of these stands President Jonathan Edwards. In reference to our modes of gaining a knowledge of God, he says:

“If respect to the Divine Being is of any importance, then speculative points are of importance, *for the only way we can know what he is, is by speculation.*”

Dr. Woods, for near half a century a leading theological teacher of New England, says:

“All our particular conceptions of God may be found to take their rise from *the conceptions we form of created intelligences.*”

Dr. Emmons, a distinguished New England divine, says of man:

“In the very frame and constitution of his nature he still bears the natural image of his Maker. In a word, man is the living image of the living God, in whom is displayed more of the

divine nature and glory than in all the works and creatures of God upon earth.”

Dr. Taylor, the New Haven divine, says:

“The only ultimate source of knowledge, and ultimate umpire of truth, is *the knowing mind*.”

[204]

The celebrated Scotch metaphysician, Sir W. Hamilton, says:

“We can know God only as we know ourselves.”

In proof of this from the Bible, these writers quote from the Apostle James, that “men are made after the similitude of God.”

Another leading feature of the common-sense system is the position, that we can discover the chief *end* or *design* of the Creator, by *the nature* of his works, and that this end is to produce the greatest possible happiness with the least possible evil.

It will now be shown that leading theologians teach the same.

President Edwards, in his *Dissertation concerning the end for which God created the world*, teaches that

“What God had respect to as an *ultimate end* of his creating the world, was *to communicate of his own infinite fullness of good*.”

He teaches that God is in no way dependent on his creatures for happiness, but that his enjoyment consists in outpouring his own good to his vast family.

No one can read that essay without perceiving that, though disconnected passages may make a different impression, the above is a correct statement of the doctrine of that dissertation.

It is supposed that this view has been assented to by most of those American and European theologians who most strenuously defend the Augustinian system.

The end or design of mind being ascertained, its *right mode of action* is thus determined. Accordingly we shall find that the

great New England divines and metaphysicians, though they use different language, all express the same idea in defining true virtue or holiness. [205]

Thus President Edwards taught, as his son states, that

“Every voluntary action which, in its general tendency and ultimate consequence, leads to happiness—happiness *in general*—happiness *on the largest scale*—is virtuous; and every such action which has not this tendency, and does not lead to this consequence, is vicious.”

Here let it be noted that President Edwards expressly teaches that it is not voluntary happiness-making, irrespective of the amount, that constitutes virtue; but it is “happiness *in general*—happiness *on the largest scale*.” This corresponds exactly with the common-sense system, demanding that happiness-making be on the *greatest possible scale*, and in order to this, it must be *according to law or rules*.

Dr. Dwight, whose system of theology is accepted as the most satisfactory exposition of the new school Calvinistic views, teaches that

“True virtue is the love of doing good, or the love of promoting happiness. Its excellence consists in this, that it is the *voluntary* and only source of happiness in the universe. God wills our happiness; it is, therefore, right, it is virtuous in us, to seek to promote it both here and hereafter.”

In this case, the language of Dr. Dwight is not so discriminating and clear as that of President Edwards—for he does not show so clearly as does President Edwards that his real meaning is voluntary happiness-making *on the largest scale*. In this, and all the following quotations from other writers, it is a fact, as gained by their *combined* expressions, that the distinction made by President Edwards was accepted, and that by the “love of doing good,” or the “love of promoting happiness,” is intended [206]

that *voluntary love* or *good willing* which seeks not merely some good, but the *best good* of all.

Dr. Taylor, the distinguished successor of Dr. Dwight, teaches the same doctrine, as is so abundantly manifest in his published writings, that no quotations will be deemed needful.

The Westminster Assembly's Catechism teaches that

“The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever.”

The glory of God can be secured only by true virtue in himself and in his creatures; and if this consists in voluntary happiness-making on the greatest possible scale, then the chief end of man, as taught in that old standard of orthodoxy, is exactly the same as is taught in the system of common sense. Man is to make happiness on the greatest possible scale, guided by the laws of God—and thus doing, he will “glorify God and enjoy him for ever.”

The same theologians also teach that the laws of God are our guide as to what is good and evil, and that true virtue, or right action, is secured only by obeying these laws. They hold, therefore, the doctrine of common sense, that all true virtue consists in voluntary obedience to the will of God as manifested in his natural and revealed laws.

The next point of agreement is in the proposition, that God always has, and always will do what is “*for the best*”—so that it always is and will be, out of his power to do better—inasmuch as *to do better than best*, is a contradiction and absurdity. Every theologian, in one form of words or another, maintains that God always has done, and always will do, *the best he can*, so that he has no power to do better. This being so, it is the same as teaching that the past, present and future existence of sin and misery, is what is inevitable in the best system which God has power to create, so that any change in God's plans, laws, and

their results, would imply an act of folly and malevolence on his part.

This does not imply that the sinful conduct of man is what is desired or intended by the Creator—nor does it imply that sin was desired or intended by God as the “necessary means to the greatest good.” Instead of this, it is clear that if it had been *possible—i.e.*, if God had the power—to create all minds with *all the knowledge and all the motives* that would secure perfect obedience to law from all the race of Adam, there would have been more happiness. The universal obedience of all free agents to all God's laws for making happiness on the greatest possible scale, would secure perfect happiness to all, while every act of disobedience would lessen the amount. To deny this is the same as saying that less happiness is more than the most happiness, which is absurd.

The result is, that sin is not the fault of the Creator, but is the inevitable result of the commencement of finite, ignorant, inexperienced minds, and is what neither God nor man could prevent, in a perfect system of finite, free agents.

At the same time, it is the fault of all free agents who sin when they have adequate knowledge and motives. And it is only sins against *known* law and appropriate motives which are the proper subject of penalties *in addition* to the natural consequences of wrong doing. [208]

It is claimed, therefore, that when theologians teach—as all do—that “God orders all things for the best,” they really teach, in another form, the common-sense doctrine as stated above.

Having gained the teachings of leading theologians as to the nature of true virtue or right voluntary action, we also gain their definition of wrong moral action, or *sin*. In the words of President Edwards, “Every *voluntary* action which in its general tendency and ultimate consequence leads to happiness—happiness *in general*—happiness *on the largest scale*—is virtuous; and every such action which *has not this* tendency, and *does not* lead to this

consequence, is vicious,” or sinful.

That is to say, every volition that tends to lessen the general happiness, is vicious or sinful, and every violation of God's physical, social and moral laws, has this tendency. Thus the Bible definition of *sin* is the one accepted by theologians—*i.e.*, “*sin is the transgression of law*,” without reference to the question whether the law is known or not. *True virtue* is voluntary obedience to law, and *sin* is the voluntary transgression of law. These definitions then are a part of the Augustinian system as much as they are of the common-sense system.

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The next point of the common-sense system taught by theologians, is that our moral power to obey God—*i.e.*, power to choose according to law instead of impulse—is proportioned to our knowledge of law, and the motives of fear, hope, love and gratitude, as they are employed by God and man.

This doctrine is taught by all theologians, except those who hold that the sin of Adam so ruined the human mind, that there is no power of *any* kind to obey God, except as he gives new capacities. No quotations will be given to establish this point, because, it is believed, that no one will question it.

No quotations are needed to show that the Augustinian creeds and theologians agree with the common-sense system, in teaching that the soul is immortal—that our destiny in a future state depends on our conduct in this life—that there is to be an eternal separation of the righteous and the wicked, whose immortality will be happy or miserable according to their characters.



## Chapter XXXII. Augustinian Creeds and Theologians Contradict the Common-Sense System, and Thus, Also, Contradict Themselves.

The preceding chapter shows the agreement of distinguished Augustinian theologians with the leading points of the common-sense system. We next are to notice the particulars in which these theologians and the Augustinian creeds contradict the common-sense system, and thus, also, contradict themselves.

The grand point, which involves these contradictions, is the dogma that all mankind have a *depraved nature* consequent on the sin of Adam, which makes it certain that every voluntary act of every human mind is “sin, and only sin,” until this depravity of nature is more or less rectified by the Spirit of God. The opposite of this is the common-sense doctrine that all men have a *perfect nature*, created by God, which is unchanged and not in any way depraved by the sin of Adam. [210]

As involved in this common-sense view, *true virtue* consists in the *right action* of a perfect nature, as it now is. In opposition, Augustinianism teaches that true virtue consists in the right action of a depraved nature *after* it has been more or less renewed by the Spirit of God.

Common sense claims that the indispensable requisites to secure right voluntary action are, *knowledge, training* and *motives*, for which we are dependent on God, on man, and on self, conjointly. In opposition, Augustinianism claims that knowledge, training and motives are of no avail to secure true virtue, until

the damage done by Adam's sin to the nature of every human mind, is more or less rectified, and that for this we are entirely dependent on the Spirit of God.

[211] Common sense claims that man, at birth and through life, is entirely unable to obey many of the physical, social and moral laws of God, for want of adequate knowledge, training and motives; but that he is fully able to obey these laws as fast as he has the appropriate knowledge, training and motives, and that before regeneration he does perform truly virtuous acts. Augustinianism, in opposition, claims that man never obeys the laws of God acceptably until the Spirit of God more or less rectifies the depraved nature consequent on Adam's sin, and that previous to this influence of the Spirit, every voluntary act is "sin, and only sin."<sup>14</sup>

Common sense teaches that the commencement of "a new life" consists, not in the change of the nature of man, but in the commencement of a *ruling purpose* to obey all the laws of God, which purpose may be an unconscious, gradual process by educational training, or it may be an instantaneous and conscious act. Augustinianism teaches that "regeneration" or the "new birth" consists in the re-creation or change of the nature of mind, so as, more or less, to remedy the depravity consequent on Adam's sin.

Common sense teaches that every volition of every mind, which in act and intention is conformed to the laws of rectitude, is truly virtuous in every proper use of the term, without any reference to the question either of a ruling purpose or a change of nature. Augustinianism teaches that every volition of every mind is sin, and only sin, previous to the act of regeneration accomplished by the Spirit of God.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The Arminians hold that Christ's death has purchased the return of God's Spirit withdrawn for Adam's sin, and that owing to this aid, man has some power to obey God previous to regeneration, so that all the doings of the unregenerate are not sin.

<sup>15</sup> Those new school Calvinists, who teach that regeneration consists in the

To illustrate the above by examples, suppose that a child is trained to deny itself, to relieve suffering, or to make others happy. In its earlier efforts this is very difficult, though by practice the principle of habit renders it more and more easy. [212] Common sense teaches that the first act of self-denial for the best good of others, in which the aim or intention is to do right, is truly virtuous. For the thing done is right, and the motive or intention is right. But Augustinianism says no; such an act is “sin, and only sin,” previous to regeneration, though it is true virtue after regeneration.

Again, a young man is trained to abhor meanness and deceit and to suffer any thing rather than to violate his plighted faith. He is brought into an extremity where, by a false statement, he can escape poverty and disgrace to himself and his family. He sacrifices all rather than to violate his word and honor.

If he is not a regenerate man, Augustinianism says this act is not truly virtuous, but is “sin, and only sin.” Common sense says, it is a virtuous act in every sense of the term as used among men.

We have shown by quotations that Augustinian theologians teach that man's nature is the only guide to the nature of God, and, as his work and image, is perfect in construction. At the same time they teach that man's nature is so totally depraved that it never acts morally right, in a single instance, until it is regenerated by God, and that all sin is the natural result of this depravity of nature.

In consequence of this contradictory starting-point, they proceed to other contradictory instruction. For example, in the education of very young children most theologians, of whatever school, teach them that to speak the truth, to obey parents, to deny one's self for the good of others, is right, good and virtuous. [213]

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formation of a ruling purpose by man himself, hold that this never takes place until the Spirit of God more or less rectifies the depraved nature consequent on Adam's sin, and that previous to regeneration every moral act of every mind is “sin, and only sin.”

They teach that when little children act thus, before regeneration, they not only act virtuously, but that God approves and loves them for it. In doing this, they use the words *good*, *right* and *virtuous*, in the ordinary sense in which men understand these terms.

But at the same time, the same theologians are teaching from the pulpit and the press, that every voluntary act of every child is “sin, and only sin,” previous to regeneration; that there is no good, right and virtuous act in an unregenerated mind, and that God feels no approbation or complacency in such acts or the unregenerated as the above, which are called virtuous, but are really sin.

It is manifest that the educational training of the young must be radically diverse just in proportion as one or the other of these two systems prevails.

On the Augustinian theory, there is no hope of any right moral action, or truly virtuous conduct, until the depraved nature transmitted from Adam is regenerated. On the common-sense theory, every attempt of a parent or educator, and every effort of a child to secure what is best and right with the intention thus to secure it, is truly virtuous, and every repetition is valuable as tending to secure virtuous habits and character.

On the Augustinian theory, religious instruction is only an appointed mode by which God chooses to regenerate a depraved nature. It is a process for securing a new nature from God. On the common-sense theory, religious training is a process for securing the development and right action of mind by the influences of knowledge, training and motives, and without any change of its nature.

[214]

It is also clear that these two systems must be very diverse in reference to the interpretations of the Creator's will as gained by reason or by revelations from God.

On the Augustinian theory, mind is so totally depraved as to be incapable of interpreting correctly, either the natural teach-

ings of reason and experience, or the recorded revelations from God. Owing to this, *authorized interpreters* of God's will are indispensable. This makes the whole human race dependent on a class of men authorized by God to interpret his natural laws and revealed will.

On the contrary, the common-sense theory claims that every mind, in proportion as its powers are cultivated and developed, has the means of discovering the end for which all things are created, and of interpreting the teachings of reason and experience, and also of interpreting any revealed records of God's will.

It thus appears that theologians and creeds that adopt the Augustinian theory contradict themselves mainly in these two points:

First, they teach that man's nature *is* depraved and that it is *not* depraved.

Next, that previous to regeneration, men do not perform any truly virtuous acts, and yet that while unregenerated they do perform such acts.

The quotation from creeds and theologians, in preceding chapters, is proof that they teach that man's nature is thus depraved, and that previous to regeneration he never performs a single truly virtuous act. This and the preceding chapter present some of the evidence that they teach the opposite. [215]

The following is submitted as still further evidence of such contradictions.

In the first place, it is allowed by all, that the Augustinian creeds and theologians teach that man, as *a race*, including every individual, has a depraved *nature*. The question, then, all turns on the meaning of the word *nature*, and whether they affirm its depravity *in the same sense* as they affirm that in nature man is the living image of the living God and our only guide to a knowledge of him.

It is claimed that they do use the word *nature* in one and the same sense when they affirm that man's nature *is* and *is not*

depraved. In proof of this we must resort to our lexicographers who have collected the various senses in which mankind use the word *nature*. And here we must again recognize the fact that the true meaning of every word is settled simply by ascertaining *what meaning men attach to it when they use it*.

In examining our dictionaries, we shall find that the word *nature* is used sometimes to signify every thing that God has created; as when it is said, "all nature speaks its Maker's praise." Sometimes, by a figurative use, the Author of all things is called Nature, as when it is said that "Nature paints the flowers and spreads her repasts."

No one will claim that either of these is the sense in which the word is used in reference to the nature of the mind of man as a race.

[216]

The leading and primary signification of the word *nature* is that which is intended and understood when we say that "the *nature* of a design or construction is proof of the character and intention of the author." It is in this sense that men use the word when they speak of the nature of animals, the nature of trees, and the nature of the soul.

In this use, it has but one signification, and that is, *those qualities, powers and faculties which are discovered by experience and observation*. Or in other words, when we discover the qualities of a thing, how it acts, and how it is acted upon, we learn its *nature*.

In regard to all other existences except mind, the only mode of discovering *their nature* is to ascertain by experience and observation how they *invariably* appear and act. Thus we decide that it is the nature of water to run down hill by finding that it *invariably* does so; and that it is the nature of smoke to rise in the atmosphere by observing that it *invariably* ascends.

Owing to this, mankind often use the word *nature* as signifying *that which is according to ordinary experience*. That is to say, the same word is used to express the *qualities and powers* of

things, and also to express that *invariable experience* by which we learn these qualities and powers. What is according to our ordinary experience we say is according to nature, and what is contrary to ordinary experience is contrary to nature.

Thus it is according to nature for water to run down hill, and it is contrary to nature for it to run up hill.

It is mind, in distinction from matter, which has the power of *willing*, and this is a power which never is exercised *invariably* one way or another.

But theologians have practiced this fallacy on themselves and others. They first assume, what is contrary to fact, that mind *invariably* chooses one way, and that is *wrong*, from birth to regeneration. This being assumed without proof, they claim that the *nature* of the human mind is thus proved to be depraved, and totally so. [217]

Having thus, as they imagine, established its depraved voluntary nature, they claim that, like all other things, the mind *must act according to its nature*, which, being wholly depraved, all its moral acts are consequently depraved.

This is what logicians call *arguing in a circle*; *i.e.*, they prove that it acts *invariably* wrong because it is totally depraved, and it is totally depraved because it acts *invariably* wrong.

But common sense denies the starting assumption; *i.e.*, the *invariably* wrong volitions of every mind from birth to regeneration. On the contrary, it is claimed that every choice which secures enjoyment without violating law, is right, and that whenever a mind chooses what is right, with the intention to act right, the choice is a truly virtuous act, and that all men make such choices very often before regeneration.

Whatever is according to ordinary experience in the qualities and action of mind, is said to be according to its nature. It is according to the nature of mind, then, sometimes to choose what is good, right and virtuous, and at other times to choose what is evil and wrong, according to its knowledge, temptations and

habits. Such a case never was known as a mind that *invariably* chose wrong.

[218]

In view of the preceding, it is maintained that the word *nature*, as applied to mind, as settled by lexicographers, is always used to signify the same as its *constitutional powers and faculties*, and that this is the sense in which it is employed when we say “the *nature* of a construction or design is proof of the character and intention of the author.”

We are now prepared to show that theologians use the word *nature* in this same sense when they affirm that it is totally depraved, and when, at the same time, they teach that it is the image of God, and our only guide to his nature and character.

We shall first present the evidence that they use the word in this sense, when they teach that every human mind is so depraved in nature that from birth to regeneration every moral act is sin, and only sin.

The first item of evidence is the fact that all the other meanings of the word, in our dictionaries, except this, can be shown to be *not* the ones in which theologians use the word in reference to men as a race, so that this use is the only one remaining. They must use it in this sense, as the only one left, all others being necessarily excluded.

Again, the mode by which they attempt to *prove* that man has a depraved nature, shows that they use the word in this sense. For they exhibit the *wrong action*, or sinful feelings and conduct of the race, as the chief proof. Their argument is this: the *nature* of a thing is proved by its qualities, how it acts, and how it is acted upon. The human mind *invariably* acts depraved, therefore its nature is depraved. No one will deny that theologians always present the wicked feelings and conduct of children and of men as the proofs of a depraved nature.

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It is true, that in doing this they misstate facts, and maintain that *all* the actions of men are sin, and only sin. This contradicts experience and common sense, which affirm that the human



mind sometimes acts right and sometimes wrong, from the first; showing that the nature of mind is such that it naturally acts right as well as wrong. But this attempt proves that they used the word in the sense here stated.

Again: that theologians use the word in this sense, is manifest from their attempts to relieve the character of God from the charge of being “the author of sin.” They can not deny that the nature of a contrivance proves the character and intention of the author, and that, if God is the author of man's depravity by a wrong *construction* or *nature* of mind, it would be proof that he is the author of all the sin resulting from it, and thus a depraved character.

Instead of denying this use of the term, they allow it, and then try to make man himself the author of this depraved nature, either *by*, or *in*, or *before* Adam. That is, they allow that man's mind *is* wrong in construction, but claim that he himself is the author of this wrong.

Again: that theologians use the word *nature* in this sense, is proved by their description of the depravity intended by them. When they are urged to point out what the depraved nature of man consists in, they always state something which shows it to be wrong in *construction*, and which is exhibited in the wrong *action* of mind.

There are these following methods of describing this depravity, viz.:

1. It is called a *bias*, *propensity*, or *inclination* to sin.
2. It is called an *unbalanced* state of the faculties. [220]
3. It is called a *habit* of sinning formed in a pre-existent state.
4. It is called a wrong *combination*, or *proportion*, in the mental faculties.
5. It is called a state resulting from the *deprivation* of God's Spirit.

It will now be shown that each and all of these equally involve the idea of that malformation or wrong construction which proves

its author depraved.

The first is the most common method. On this view, it is claimed that the minds of angels and of Adam were constructed with such a *bias* or tendency to good as secured their perfect action for a given period. The mind of man, on the contrary, begins existence here so constructed that it has a contrary *bias* to evil; so that it never, in a single instance, chooses right till regenerated.

The angels and Adam had a *holy nature*, meaning a *bias*, which God created. Mankind have a contrary bias, which is a *depraved nature*, and of this, man is the author, either *in*, or *by*, or *before* Adam. And they all allow, that if God had created this depraved bias, or depraved nature, he would be “the author of sin.”

The second mode is, the claim that man's depravity consists in an *unbalanced state* of his faculties or propensities. The angels and Adam were created by God with the proper balance, and this is the holy nature made by God. Man is born with an unbalanced state of the faculties, and this was created by man himself, either *by*, or *in*, or *before* Adam. Now the balance of the faculties is as much a part of the construction of mind as any thing else, and if God created this depraved, he is proved to be depraved.

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The third mode is, the claim that the depravity of man's mind consists in a *habit of sinning*. On this view, God created man's mind aright, in all respects, in a preëxistent state. In this normal condition of mind, every propensity was toward not only *good*, but to the *best* good, while there was sufficient *knowledge* of right created also, to save from all mistakes of judgment as to what is best and right. In this perfect state *some* minds began to sin, and thus formed a habit of sinning, and were then sent into this world to be reformed.

Here it is plain, that the depravity intended is depravity of construction. For *habit*, as men use the term, expresses the fact that repetition in the use of any faculty *increases its power*. It

is a change in the constitutional *construction* of mind induced by use. For example, a child has little constitutional power of mind to reason or to calculate figures. By use, this deficiency of construction is modified.

*Habit*, then, modifies the constitutional organization of mind.

This mode of describing the depravity of mind teaches the misconstruction of constitutional organization as much as all the others, but it furnishes another mode by which it was induced, so as to make man the author in a way that is comprehensible, and not absurd.<sup>16</sup>

The fourth mode is the claim that the depravity of the human mind consists in the *disparities, or varieties, of constitutional organization*.

It has been shown that such disparities, as parts of a vast system in which the best good of the whole is the best good of each part, are indispensable to the perfect construction of mind in relation to that system.

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But the depravity claimed is, that which is common to *every* mind, and is so total that not a single mind, however highly endowed, ever, even in one case, acts virtuously till regenerated. Thus the best in mental construction are as totally depraved as the worst. At the same time, it is clear that it is constitutional malformation that is taught, and nothing else.

The fifth mode of describing the depravity of mind is that it consists in the *deprivation* of God's Spirit.

The result of this deprivation is thus described by Dr. Hodge, of the Princeton Calvinist school of divines:

“In consequence of this withdrawal we begin to exist in moral darkness, *destitute of a disposition* to delight in God.”

Arminius, the chief theologian of the Methodists, describes it thus:

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<sup>16</sup> Note E.

“The will of man, with respect to the *true good*, is not only wounded, bruised, inferior, crooked and attenuated, but is likewise captivated, destroyed and lost; and has *no powers whatever*, except such as are excited by grace.”

Thus the presence of God's Spirit in Adam's mind, according to Dr. Hodge, insured a “disposition” to delight in God, which was lost by its withdrawal. According to Arminius, this withdrawal so affected the whole race, that “in respect to the *true good*” the will of man has *no powers whatever*, except such as are excited by grace—that is, by a measured return of God's Spirit, withdrawn for Adam's sin, which return was purchased by Christ's death.

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It is clear, that it is the powers and faculties of mind that are meant here, in this explanation of the depravity of man's nature.

Thus it is shown that every attempt to explain what depravity consists in, by theologians, results in their teaching a *constitutional malformation*, which proves the author of the construction to be depraved.

We will now present the evidence, that theologians contradict themselves, and deny that they use the word *nature* in the sense of constitutional organization or construction, and maintain that they use it in some other sense.

In all creeds and all theological teachings, the authors expressly disclaim that they maintain any thing which makes God “the author of sin.” And they allow, that making God the creator of a depraved nature, would make him the author of sin. Therefore, to escape the difficulty, they claim that God is the author of one nature, which is perfect and in his own image, and that there is *another* nature which man himself made, either *by*, or *in*, or *before* Adam, which is depraved. Then when they are driven to identify the nature that God made and the nature that man made, they are again at fault. Man really has but one nature, and that is the nature which is discovered by his qualities and actions, as

learned by experience. There is no other nature conceivable, and no other idea that men ever attach to the word when applied to the mind or soul of man. Therefore, theologians really do use it in the sense which they deny, for there is no other.

Again, theologians deny that they teach “physical depravity” and “physical regeneration,” and the only intelligible sense of this disclaimer is, that they do not teach depravity of construction and the reformation of this depravity of construction. But, as before shown, when they describe the depravity and regeneration, they make out what actually is physical depravity and physical regeneration, and nothing else. [224]

Again, when they attempt to describe what they mean, one class of theologians—*i.e.*, new school Calvinists—teach that the whole depravity consists in a want of “*right willing*.” And this is exactly what the common-sense system teaches—*i.e.*, that the depravity of man is in the wrong *action* and not in the wrong *construction* of mind. And yet when they are charged with holding the Pelagian doctrine of perfect mental construction, they deny it, and say they teach depravity of nature.

As an example of this, is presented the following extract from the writings of Dr. Bennet Tyler, the president of a theological seminary established to sustain the New England theology of the President Edwards' type, in opposition to the supposed Pelagian innovations of the New Haven theologians:

“God has endowed you with understanding to perceive the rule of duty, with conscience to feel obligation, and with *will* to choose between good and evil. Possessing these powers, you are complete moral agents, and have *all* the ability to obey the commands of God that you ever will have, or ever *can* have—we do not mean that all the powers and faculties of his (man's) soul are so impaired that he *could not* do his duty if he would, but that he *will* not do his duty when he can.”

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In reading the above, one would suppose that there was nothing wrong at all in the construction of the human mind, and that the whole difficulty consisted in *not willing* aright—that is, that the depravity is not in a wrong *nature*, but in the wrong *action* of a perfect nature. And yet, at the time of this writing, the author was the leader of an effort to oppose this very doctrine, which was supposed to be taught by the New Haven divines.

In a recent work by the chief theological teacher of the leading Baptist Seminary,<sup>17</sup> we find similar contradictory statements. He thus writes:

“*Regeneration* is not only characterized by the sacred writers as a *creative act*, by which the subject of it becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus, and a generation from above, by which the soul is brought into new spiritual life; but also a washing, a bathing, effected by the Holy Ghost, by which the polluted soul is cleansed; as an illumination, by which it is filled with the knowledge of God, and qualified to appreciate spiritual things. The eye of conscience is cleared, the desires and affections are renewed and flow into new channels, and the selfish views, prejudices and motives, which formerly reigned in the soul, are superseded by faith, love and hope, resting in Christ, and leading to every good work. The *entire spirit* is readjusted morally, its aspirations, tendencies and relations to God are rectified, and it enters, so to speak, upon a new life.”

In this passage, regeneration is called “a creative act” changing the *conscience*, the *desires*, the *views*, the *prejudices* and the *motives*—so that “*the entire spirit is readjusted*,” and all its “aspirations, tendencies and relations to God are rectified.” It is not in the power of language to express *a change* in the *faculties* and *constitutional elements of mind* more entirely than this; and yet the very next paragraph reads thus:

<sup>17</sup> “State of the Impenitent Dead,” by Alvah Hovey, D.D.

“But all this pertains to the moral condition of the soul, affording *no evidence that its essence has been changed; that any faculty or constitutive element has been added, any fresh vigor or new principle of existence infused.*”

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But the most remarkable illustration of self-contradiction among theologians, involved in every attempt to maintain a depraved nature consequent on Adam's sin, is found in the teachings of Dr. Taylor, the leader of the New Haven school of divines.

In his *Concio ad Clerum*, in 1828, one aim probably was, to meet the charges against himself, of teaching the Pelagian tenet, that man's depravity consists, not in nature, but in action. In reference to this he writes thus:

“Men are entirely depraved by *nature*. I do not thereby mean that their nature is itself sinful, nor that their nature is the physical or efficient cause of their sinning; but I mean that their nature is the *occasion* or *reason* of their sinning—that such is their nature, that in all the appropriate circumstances of their being they will *sin* and *only sin*.”

Again—

“It is important to say that sin is by nature, owing to propensities to inferior good, with a difference between Adam's mind and ours—though we can not assert that, in which this difference may consist;—that our propensities are the same in *kind*, though different in *degree* from those of Adam; that perhaps this distinction may consist in mental differences, or in superior tendencies, compared with Adam's to natural good, and less tendency to the highest good.”

In the above extract, it is as clear as language can make it, that Dr. Taylor taught, in 1828, that in men *sin by nature* is owing to propensities to inferior good, which are “different from Adam's,” who was created perfect, and that this is “the occasion

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or reason” of their sinning, and that “such is *their nature*, that in all appropriate circumstances of their being, they *will sin, and only sin.*” This must mean the *construction* of mind. He does not claim to describe, certainly, what this difference is between the nature of Adam and that of his descendants; but he maintains that while Adam's nature was not so created by God at first, the nature of *all* his descendants is so depraved, that, as the result, they “sin, and only sin,” till regenerated.

But, in contradiction to this, is presented the extract below, sent by Dr. Taylor to the author, in a letter in which he was attempting to show that he did not teach the depravity of man in his *constitutional* faculties. And he claims that what he thus writes is what he has “*always taught:*”

“I have *always taught* that man, after the fall of Adam, was as truly created in God's image as was Adam; that Christ was tempted in *all* points like as we are; that the stronger are our inferior propensities, if we govern them, as we can, by the morally right act of the will, the greater is the moral excellence of the act. I *do not* maintain that man has full power to *change* his depraved nature without divine aid—for I have never supposed that he has a depraved nature in ANY sense, or a corrupt nature, much less a sinful nature, *to be* changed; but rather, that *in nature* he is like God. In discussions I have always opposed the use of language by your father and Mr. Barnes, of a *corrupt nature not sinful.*”

Now it is not possible to make these two extracts any thing other than exact contradictions. For in one he teaches that men are so totally depraved *in nature*, that “in all the appropriate circumstances of their being they will *sin, and only sin.*”

In the other, he says of man, “I have never supposed that he has a depraved nature, *in any sense*, or a corrupt nature, much less a sinful nature, to be changed; but rather that *in nature* he is like God.”



If it is asked, “How is it possible that a man, at once so honest and so acute, can thus contradict himself and not perceive it?” it may be replied, that he has done it no more than does every other theologian and every creed that teaches at once, that the *nature* of man is so depraved at birth that every moral act is sin, and only sin, till regeneration—and yet, that God, the Creator of all minds, is not the author of the sin resulting from such a depraved nature. [228]

And theologians are not peculiar in self-contradictions. *Every error is a contradiction to some principle of common sense.* Thus it is a fact, that, as all men believe and maintain, by a necessity of nature, the principles of common sense, every *false* principle or error which they defend, is a flat contradiction to some of their other declarations on other occasions. Meantime, it is the great mission of all free and fair *discussion* to bring men to see their own inconsistencies, and to forsake all which are shown to be *contrary to reason and common sense.*

## Chapter XXXIII. The Augustinian Theory Not In The Bible.

In the preceding chapters it is shown that theological creeds and teachings maintain the common-sense system, and at the same time the contradictory Augustinian system. In other words, it is shown that the Augustinian theologians contradict at once our common sense, our moral sense, and themselves.

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It will next be shown that the Augustinian theory *is not contained in the Bible*, and that theologians conflict with each other in regard to this point also.

There is *only one* passage in the Bible which was ever claimed by *any one* as teaching a depraved nature *consequent on Adam's sin*. That passage is Romans v., from the 12th to the 19th verse:

12 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:

13 For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift. For the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification.

17 For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore, as by the offense 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.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

In this passage these things are taught:

1. By one man sin entered and death by sin, and so [*i.e.*, by one man] death passed on all men, *for that all have sinned*.—Verses 12, 13, 14.
2. Through the offense of one many *have died*.—Verse 15.
3. The judgment was by one to condemnation.—Verse 16.
4. By one man's offense *death* reigned by one.—Verse 17.
5. By the offense of one, judgment came on all to condemnation.—Verse 18.
6. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.—V. 19.

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There are three modes of interpreting this passage, and the question all turns on whether the *death* spoken of is *natural* death or *spiritual*.

## Interpretation of the Apostolic Age.

The first interpretation is that of the Apostolic age and onward to the time of Augustine. It is briefly this:

Adam is a type of Christ, and as by Adam's sin natural death came on all who are his *natural children*, (for they all, like Adam, have *sinned* and suffer death as the consequence,) so by one man, Christ, spiritual life comes to all who are Christ's *spiritual children*.

This simply teaches that Adam as the head of a sinning race, who suffer death in consequence of his sin and their own, is an emblem or type of Christ, the head of a holy family, who by him receive spiritual life. Condemnation and natural death come from sinning, both to Adam and to all the children brought into being by him. Justification and spiritual life come from Christ to all whom he has caused to become his spiritual children.

For abundant proof that this was the interpretation of this passage, from the apostles to the time of Augustine, the author refers to Dr. E. Beecher's *Conflict of Ages*, book v., chapter 2.

## Augustinian Interpretation.

The Augustinian interpretation is this: The sin of Adam caused a *depraved nature* and consequent spiritual death to all his descendants. So also the obedience and death of Christ have purchased or caused a *holy nature* and spiritual life to all who are regenerated.

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## Princeton Interpretation.

It has been shown that the Princeton theologians teach, that though all men did not sin *in Adam*, or sin at all, before they were born, yet God *imputes* Adam's sin to them, and *regards* and *treats* them *as if* they had committed it.

Their interpretation of this passage then is briefly this:

As by, or on account of, Adam's sin a *condemning sentence* came on all men, so by Christ's obedience a *sentence of acquittal* (*i.e.*, justification) came on all who are regenerated.

According to these divines, verse 12 does not refer to a *depraved nature* nor to *actual sin*, but only to the fact that all suffer the penalty for Adam's sin through all time and eternity, unless they are regenerated. The Princeton school of divines are the most strongly Calvinistic in maintaining the total depravity of man and his entire inability to perform any truly virtuous act previous to regeneration.

Here, then, we have these results:

The Augustinian theory of *the depraved nature* of man, consequent on Adam's sin, contradicts the common sense and moral

sense of mankind, contradicts the creeds and teachings that contain it, and is not taught in the chief passage in the Bible claimed as teaching it, as interpreted by the whole Christian world in the first four centuries, and by a large body of Calvinistic divines who teach total depravity at the present time.

Whoever, then, denies that this passage of the Bible teaches this doctrine is sustained by the whole Church of the Apostolic ages and by a great body of the highest Calvinistic churches at this day. [232]

There are some other passages that may be referred to as relating to this subject. The first is Romans, chapter ii., 6 to 16:

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality; eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when *the Gentiles, which have not the law*, do *by nature* the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.”

Taken in its connection, the word *nature*, as used in this passage, evidently is used in its primary and chief meaning, to signify the constitutional powers or organization of mind. “The

work of the law written in their hearts,” “their conscience also bearing witness;” these are what are referred to when it is said, “the Gentiles do *by nature* the things contained in the law.” And it is *doing* those things which secures “glory, honor and peace”—“to the Jew first, and *also to the Gentile*.”

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Another passage is Ephesians, ii., 1-3:

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye 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: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were *by nature* the children of wrath, even as others.”

In this passage the apostle is addressing those who in a succeeding verse are told, “remember that ye being in times past *Gentiles* in the flesh:” this being so, they are those who, the same writer says, “do *by nature* the things contained in the law.”

The signification of nature in this passage must be *that which is according to ordinary experience*. That is, *according to ordinary experience* mankind “are children of wrath,” *i.e.*, subject to the wrathful penalties of disobedience to the laws of God. But by the influences brought by Christ, “a new life” is secured, which is a life of intelligent and *voluntary* obedience to law, an obedience which the natural penalties of law could not secure, but which the *knowledge* and *love* of God, as manifested by Christ, do secure.

One other text merits attention: 1 Corinthians, chapter ii., 14. “But the *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

In this passage the “*natural* man” must signify “man as he is found in our ordinary experience.” The idea evidently intended, is that mankind, as a race, do not understand or obey the truth as

it is taught by Christ and the Spirit of God. The fact is affirmed [234] that without Christ and the divine Spirit to aid, man as a race does not come to such knowledge of and obedience to the laws of God as secures eternal life.

In reference to most other texts quoted to prove a depraved *nature*, it will be found that they simply affirm depraved *action*. Men, in the Bible, are described as wrong-*doers* by their own wrong *willing or choice* and not by a depraved *nature*. Sometimes they are said to choose wrong and sometimes right, and their wrong willing no more proves a depraved nature than the right willing proves a holy nature.

## Chapter XXXIV. A Reliable Revelation From The Creator Impossible If It Contains The Augustinian Theory.

The object aimed at in this chapter demands attention to the following preliminaries.

Before we can gain a reliable revelation from our Creator, we are obliged to establish the truth that there is such a Creator. Our only mode of doing this is by the method already set forth in chapter 10, and for which we are dependent on our reason or common sense.

Having, by the aid of reason, arrived at a knowledge of the existence and character of the Creator, we next inquire as to the mode by which we can receive direct revelations from him.

Here we find that we are again wholly dependent on reason or common sense. The principle on which we alone rely for revelations from God is this:

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A CHANGE IN THE ESTABLISHED ORDER OF NATURE SURPASSING HUMAN POWER, IS EVIDENCE OF A SUPERNATURAL AGENCY THAT IS SANCTIONED BY THE AUTHOR OF THE LAWS OF NATURE.

The conviction of the wisdom and power of the Author of this vast and wonderful frame around us is such that, whatever changes may occur in its established order, must be felt to be by his permission.

To illustrate this, suppose a man appeared, claiming to be a teacher sent from God. In proof of this, he commands a mountain to be upturned and thrown into the sea. Now, if this phenomenon should follow his command, it would be impossible for any who witnessed it, to refrain from believing that the Author of Nature performed this miracle to attest the authority of his messenger.

In order to insure this belief in the interference of the Creator, there must be full evidence that there can be no deception, and that the miraculous performance is entirely beyond human power and skill. Men always talk and act on the assumption that *such* miracles are from God, and all rational minds so regard them.

We have shown that the chief cause of a wrong action of mind, is that it commences existence in perfect ignorance, while all those causes which experience shows to be indispensable to its right action, to a greater or less degree are wanting.

The grand want of our race is *perfect educators* to train newborn minds, who are *infallible teachers of what is right and true*.

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We have presented the evidence gained by reason and experience that the Creator is perfect in mental constitution, and that he always has acted right, and always will thus act. This being



granted, we infer that he always has done *the best that is possible* for the highest good of his creatures in this world, and that he always will continue to do so.

We proceed to inquire in regard to what would be the best that is possible to be done for us in this state of being, *so far as we can conceive*.

Inasmuch as the great cause of the wrong action of mind is the ignorance and imperfection of those who are its educators in the beginning of its existence, we should infer that the best possible thing to be done for our race, would be to provide some *perfect and infallible teacher* to instruct those who are to educate mind. This being granted, then all would concede that the Creator himself would be our best teacher, and that, if he would come to us himself in a visible form, to instruct the educators of mind in all they need to know, for themselves and for the new-born minds committed to their care, it would be the best thing we can conceive of for the highest good of our race.

We next inquire as to the best conceivable mode by which the Creator can manifest himself so as to secure credence.

To decide this, let each one suppose the case his own. Let a man make his appearance claiming to be the Creator. We can perceive that his mere word would never command the confidence of intelligent practical men. Thousands of impostors have appeared and made such claims, deceiving the weak and ignorant and disgusting the wise.

A person with such claims, were he ever so benevolent and intelligent, but having had no other evidence than his word to support them, would, by sensible persons, be regarded as the victim of some mental hallucination.

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But suppose that a person claiming to be the Creator of all things, or to be a messenger from him, should attest his claim by shaking the earth, or turning back the floods of the ocean, it would be impossible for any man to witness these miracles without believing, that the Author of all things thus attested his

own presence or the authority of his messenger. We have shown that the very organization of mind would necessarily force such a belief on all sane minds.

One other method would be as effective. Should this person predict events so improbable and so beyond all human intelligence, as to be equivalent to an equal interruption of experience as to the laws of mind, as time developed the fulfillment of these predictions, the same belief would be induced in the authority of the person thus supernaturally endowed.

In the case of miracles, the evidence would be immediate and most powerful in its inception. In the case of prophecy, the power of the evidence would increase with time.

*Miracles and prophecy*, then, are the *only* methods that we can conceive of, that would, as our minds are now constituted, insure belief in revelations from the Creator.

But if every human being, in order to believe, must have miracles, there would result such an incessant violation of the laws of nature as to destroy them, and thus to destroy all possibility of miracles.

The only possible way, then, to establish revelations to the *race*, is to have them occur at certain periods of time, and then have them adequately *recorded and preserved*.

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The Bible is a collection of books written at different periods of the world's history. These books profess to be records of the various manifestations and teachings of the Creator to mankind. It is claimed for them, that their authority is established by miracles and prophecy, *with all the evidence that is possible, so far as we can conceive*, and that there are no other books in the world having any *such* evidence of authorized revelations from God.

No attempt will be made to set forth this evidence, which, it is claimed, is peculiar to the Bible. The point here attempted is, to show that, were the Augustinian system contained in these writings, it would destroy their claims as *reliable* revelations

from God, even allowing that miracles and prophecy attested their authority.

All must allow that it is *possible* to have such things given in a revelation from God as would destroy its reliability. For example, suppose it were a fact that a revelation, supported by miracles, taught that *there was no God*. This would necessarily destroy its authority as a revelation from God.

Suppose again, that it taught that the Creator, who wrought the attesting miracles, was a liar, and loved to deceive his creatures; this would also destroy its reliability as a guide to truth.

Suppose again, that it taught that the Creator was a being who preferred evil to good, and chose to have his creatures ignorant and miserable, when he has power to make them wise and happy. This also would destroy the reliability of any revelation from the Creator, even were it sustained by undisputed miracles and prophecy.

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This last is precisely what the Augustinian system *does* teach, and, as its advocates claim, it is a part of a revelation from the Creator, supported by miracles and prophecy.

In opposition to this, it is maintained that this system is not to be found in the Bible, and that were it there, all the miracles and prophecy conceivable could not prove these writings to be revelations from the Creator, which are *reliable* as our guide to truth and happiness. A Creator who wills ignorance and misery to his creatures, when he has power to will knowledge and happiness in their place, is not a being to be believed or trusted as our guide to truth and happiness.

It is in this light that the Augustinian theory, as a part of the Bible, brings the question fairly before *the people*, as "*Bible or no Bible?*"

## Chapter XXXV. Tendencies of the Two Opposing Systems.

The preceding chapters have presented the distinctive features of two systems which, in their main points, are shown to be contradictory, while both are exhibited as incorporated into the chief creeds and theological teachings of the Christian world.

It is the object of this chapter to point out the *tendencies* of these antagonistic systems.

It is maintained, that the common-sense system, resting as it does on implanted principles common to all minds, is evolved and held very much in proportion to the development of the reasoning powers and the moral sense.

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That part of this system which relates to man's duties and best interests *in this life*, without reference to a future state, has been more harmoniously evolved by the wise and good of all ages and nations than any other. Thus, in the teachings of Confucius, Zoroaster, Gaudama, Solon, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, and the Antonines, who are among the chief heathen sages, we can find nearly all the moral duties of man, to himself and to his fellow-man, which are to be found in the Bible. It is true that there are diversities and deficiencies in all; but a large body of pure morality could be made up from their united teachings. The account given of the system of Boodhism in a previous chapter is one illustration of this fact.

But, while it is comparatively easy for the good and wise heathen to reason out what is *best* for man in this life, as taught by experience, the grand failure is in *motives* which will secure *obedience* to the rules of virtue. "We see the right and yet the wrong pursue," has been the universal lament of humanity.

The character of the Creator, as “the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow unto anger, of great kindness;” “who doth not *willingly* afflict or grieve the children of men;” who “like as a father pitieth his children;” who is “a father of the fatherless and a judge of the widow;” “a God without iniquity, just and right;” “a judge of the fatherless and the poor;” who “shall judge the world with righteousness;” “a righteous God, who trieth the heart and the reins;” who “will regard the prayer of the destitute;” who “knoweth the wants of the heart;” “who knoweth our down-sitting and up-rising, and is acquainted with all our ways;” who is “a righteous Lord who loveth righteousness;” “whose judgments are all right;” whose “word is right;” whose “word is truth from the beginning;” who is “plenteous in mercy and truth;” such a character as this, as it is recorded in the Jewish sacred books, was never evolved or set forth by the wisest and best sages of all the earth, unaided by these writings. [241]

That such a Being regards our race with long-suffering compassion, and came himself to earth, by his teachings, example and *self-sacrificing* love, to save us from sin, this was never even *imagined* by any of the heathen sages of earth.

The *power of motive*, secured by a belief in the omnipresence, sympathy and love of such a God, never was attained by the unaided reasoning of any human being.

The fact that the soul survives the dissolution of the body, and that the good go where they are happy, and the wicked where they are punished, has been more or less clearly evolved by the heathen world. In some nations, as for example the followers of Boodhism, this doctrine is quite definite and distinct, but with most heathen nations all their notions on this subject are dim, shadowy and unpractical.

It is those nations alone, who have had access to the Bible, who have ever attained the *powerful motives* which are found in the system of common sense. And yet, as has been shown, these influences have been, to a great extent, nullified by a

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contradictory system.

It is claimed, that the system of common sense is the one on which the revelations of the Creator, contained in the Bible, are founded. This being so, those who are most developed in their reasoning powers, and who also yield the most reverence to the Bible, are those who are most powerfully protected against the pernicious tendencies of the antagonistic system of Augustine.

Thus, a system which is antagonistic to reason and common sense, has, by ecclesiastical authority and perversion, been fastened most firmly on that class of minds who bring all their cultivated powers to its defense, while at the same time the very cultivation of these powers, and their reverence for the Bible, tend to the destruction of the same system. We consequently find the strongest defenders, and the strongest antagonists of the Augustinian system, in those sects who were educated within its entrenchments.

If common sense and the Bible are to conquer this false system, it must be done by those whose common sense and reverence for the Bible are most effective and most prominent. And yet this class of persons are the ones, who would the most vigorously apply their energies in the defense of a system in which they have been trained from infancy, and which is sustained by all the power of public sentiment, and church organization. This being premised, the tendencies of the two antagonistic systems will now be set forth.

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## Chapter XXXVI. Tendencies of the Two Systems As They Respect the Cultivation of the Moral and Intellectual Powers.

The system of common sense rests on the assumption that there are principles of right and wrong founded on the eternal nature of things, existing independently of the will of the Creator in his own eternal mind, and by which his character and conduct may be judged.

The human mind is constructed in accordance with these principles, as the embryo image of the Eternal Creator. By the aid of these principles, we discover the design and character of God in the *nature* of his works, and can perceive what is right or wrong in moral action as tending to fulfill or oppose this design. Thus we are enabled to understand and to adore the rectitude, wisdom and goodness of our Creator, as manifested either in his works or in more direct revelations from him.

According to this system, all voluntary action is right which produces happiness without violating the laws of God. Thus every person who is making self or others happy in the *best* way, guided by the teachings of experience or by revelations from God, is fulfilling the great design of our Maker, and thus pleasing him by promoting his chief desire.

On the contrary, the Augustinian system assumes that the human mind, being totally depraved, is entirely disqualified to judge of the character and ways of God. Nay more, it assumes [244]

that there is no standard of right and wrong by which we can judge of the rectitude of the ways of God.

According to this theory, the fact that God wills a thing is what makes it right; so that any thing is right if God does it, and true if he says it, however contrary it may be to our moral nature and common sense.

In the teachings of moral science, founded on this theory, it is maintained that God has formed our minds to feel certain emotions of approval or disapproval in view of certain relations and actions, which are right or wrong only as agreeing or disagreeing with his will. But as the mind of man is depraved, this constitution is no certain guide, and we are dependent on direct revelations from God to teach us what is in agreement with his will. Yet here again we are at fault; for such is our depravity that we are disqualified to *interpret* these revelations, except as we are regenerated by God.

Accordingly, man has no means of judging of the designs or character of his Maker—nor, while unregenerate, as most of our race are and have been, has he any sure means of discovering the will of God, either by reason or revelation, saving as he may find infallible priestly interpreters.

## Tendencies of the Two Systems in Regard to the Cultivation of the Reasoning Powers and Moral Sense.

The common-sense system, resting on the assumption that *happiness-making, according to the laws of God*, is the chief end of man, naturally leads to the development of the intellect and reason in order to discover these laws, and to the devotion of all our powers to happiness-making, according to these laws. This being so, every thing that tends to make enjoyment and



diminish evil without violating law, is valued as good and right. All noble, generous, self-sacrificing and honorable sentiments and acts are regarded as right, pleasing to the Father of all, and tending equally to promote the best good of ourselves and of all our fellow-beings. In this light we become *one* with the Father and with all good beings just so far as we obey all the physical, social and moral laws of our Creator, and thus conform to his will, and add to his happiness. Thus the direct tendency of this system is to promote an earnest desire, first to discover all that is true and right, and then to follow it. And such efforts naturally tend both to develop our highest powers, and to bring the mind into harmony and communion with the Father of our spirits.

On the contrary, the Augustinian system, resting on the assumption that all the plans and ways of God are a mystery beyond our comprehension; that man, by nature, has no power to understand what is right or wrong in God's dispensations; that what we call goodness and virtue in unregenerate minds is not so in God's sight; that every act of every unrenewed mind is sin, and only sin; that until regenerated we never do any thing to move God to re-create our ruined nature; all this in its *tendency* leads to recklessness, hopelessness and neglect of all virtuous efforts, as useless in regard to our highest interests. As before intimated, these tendencies are more or less counteracted by the teachings of common sense and the Bible. Still, such tendencies must always be, more or less, effective and disastrous.

## Chapter XXXVII. Tendencies of the Two Systems in Respect to Individual Religious Experience.

The Augustinian system, assuming that true personal religion consists in the exercises of “a new nature,” tends to introverted mental efforts, in order to discover whether the signs of such a nature exist in ourselves.

As, on this theory, it is certain that man will do nothing to change his fallen nature until the Spirit of God is given to aid, the great attention and effort must be directed to those methods, which “the church” decides, or experience has proved, to be connected with the bestowal of this spiritual gift.

Not knowing clearly what the depraved nature is, which is to be changed, nor the certain signs of its existence or re-creation, nor any certain mode of securing the desired change, there is a perplexing variety of vague instructions as to “what we must do to be saved?”

In illustration of this, the following from an article by the editor of the Methodist Quarterly, shows how Wesley and his followers instruct on this subject:

“I have continually testified, in private and in public,” says Wesley, “that we are sanctified as well as justified by faith.”

This being first stated, the great question follows, *what is that faith* by which we are justified and sanctified? The answer is this:

“It is a divine evidence and conviction, first that God hath promised it in the holy Scriptures; secondly, that what God hath promised he is *able* to perform; thirdly, that he is *able and willing* to do it *now*. To this, is to be added one thing more: a divine conviction *that he doeth it*. In that hour it is done.”<sup>18</sup>

That is, in order to be justified and sanctified we must have a divine evidence and conviction that God is *able* and *willing*, and actually *does now* give the justification and sanctification we seek. In other words, in order to gain what we seek we must believe that we have gained it. In order to get a blessing we must believe that we possess it.

Thus it is, that one of the largest sects of our country is instructed by its founder and his most intelligent and learned followers, as to the way of salvation from everlasting and inconceivable misery. It will be remembered, that this class of divines teach that the depravity of man's mind consists in the *deprivation* of God's Spirit, which is withheld from all the descendants of Adam on account of his sin.

The following presents the mode of instruction in which the author was educated. It is contained in a letter from Dr. Nettleton, a celebrated revival preacher, who often resided with the author's father during revivals in which they were co-laborers. This letter was written to oppose the views of the New Haven divines, who maintained that, although in consequence of Adam's sin, there is a tendency or bias to evil so powerful as to insure “sin, and only sin” till regeneration occurs, yet that *the act* of regeneration consists in a choice or purpose on the part of man himself. [248]

In reference to these views of Dr. Taylor and others, Dr. Nettleton says:

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<sup>18</sup> From the article on Sanctification, in the magazine *Beauty of Holiness*, January, 1859.

“They adopt a *new theory of regeneration*. It has been said by some that regeneration consists *in removing this sinful bias*, which is anterior to actual volition; this they deny. But whether we call this propensity *sinful* or not, all orthodox divines who have admitted its existence have, I believe, united in the opinion that regeneration *does* consist in removing it,” [which the New Haven divines denying, they are excluded from the “orthodox” ranks, in the view of Dr. N.]

He continues thus:

“No sinner ever did or ever will make a holy choice prior to an *inclination, bias or tendency* to holiness.

“On the whole their [*i.e.*, the New Haven divines] views of depravity, of regeneration and of the mode of preaching to sinners can not fail, I think, of doing very great mischief. This exhibition [*i.e.*, that regeneration consists in *man's choice*] overlooks the most alarming feature of human depravity and *the very essence of experimental religion*. It is directly calculated to prevent sinners from coming under conviction of sin....”

“The progress of conviction ordinarily is as follows: *Trouble and alarm* first, on account of *outward* sins; secondly, on account of hardness of heart, deadness and insensibility to divine things,—*tendency, bias, proneness or propensity to sin*, both inferred and felt; and this the convicted sinner always regards, not merely as calamitous, but as *awfully criminal* in the sight of God. And the sinner utterly despairs of salvation *without a change in this propensity to sin*. And while he feels this propensity to be thus criminal, he is fully aware that if God, by a sovereign act of his grace, does not interpose to remove or change it, he shall never give his heart to God, *nor make one holy choice*.”

The great point taught by Dr. Nettleton and his associates was, that man has a depraved nature consisting in a bias or propensity

to sin, consequent on Adam's sin, for which we are “awfully criminal in the sight of God,” and which man himself will never remedy; that regeneration consists in the change of this bias by God, and that until God does make this change man will “never give his heart to God nor make one holy choice.” And yet his sermons, as the writer heard them month after month, abounded in pungent addresses to sinners, commanding them in God's name to “give their hearts to God,” and maintaining that their inability to do so was owing to their own fault and *unwillingness* to do so. [249]

At the same time, the New Haven divines, in the same pulpit, were urging *their* views, showing that regeneration consisted in “choosing God and his service;” that man was fully able to do this, and yet that owing to his depraved nature, he never would do it, until that nature was in some way changed by God. Meantime, on their view also, every voluntary act, previous to regeneration, was “sin, and only sin.” Nor had God pointed out any sure mode of obtaining from him the gift of regenerating grace. They, however, urged that the results of *experience* proved that regeneration, though not promised to unregenerate doings, is, as a matter of fact, bestowed more frequently on those who use “the means of grace,” such as prayer, reading the Bible and frequenting religious meetings, than on those who do not.

The points of difference between the New Haven theologians and their opponents, seemed to be, that the former taught that regeneration was the act of man himself in choosing God's service; while Dr. Nettleton and his associates taught that it consisted in the change of man's *nature* by God, and not in what was done by man himself. The New Haven theologians have been more definite in their attempts to explain the exact nature of regeneration than any other class. They all agree, however, that man never will, in any case, become regenerated until God in some measure rectifies the injury done to human nature by Adam's sin; that God points out no definite way to secure this aid; and that previous to [250]

regeneration every moral act of man is “sin, and only sin.”

As to the signs or evidence of regeneration, those who teach that man's depravity consists in the *deprivation* of God's Spirit, on account of Adam's sin, often lead to the expectation of some sudden “light and joy,” as the first evidence of regeneration. Such, also, follow Wesley's direction, and try to believe that they *are* justified and sanctified, in order to become so. Others point out certain emotions toward God or toward Jesus Christ as the proof of the commencement of a new nature.

Some divines lead to the impression that the new nature consists in a mysterious indwelling of God in the soul, or a union of our nature to his, so that when it takes place, there is a natural outflowing of good feelings and good works, as there was of evil before this union. But they point out no intelligible way of gaining this union.

The Catholic church teaches that regeneration is conferred by the rite of baptism, and that thus a seed or some mysterious principle is implanted, which is developed by use of the forms and rites of “the church,” and exhibited in “good works.” The Episcopal churches, more or less, retain this view in the teachings of their clergy.

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“*Saving faith*,” or the “faith which justifies,” is described by religious teachers with most singular and inconsistent forms of expression. If any person will make a collection of the various diverse explanations of this indispensable requisite to eternal life, it would prove a most mournful illustration of vague teachings in reply to the great question, “What must we do to be saved?”

The following extract was prepared by a very intelligent theological student at the request of the author, in reference to the great question, “What must we do to be saved?” as set forth in a recent work, highly recommended for its clear and practical views on this great matter. This work, entitled “*The Higher Christian Life*,” exhibits not only the author's views of what regeneration consists in, but his views of another subject that has

greatly interested many minds in the religious world, under the name of *Christian Perfection*:

“I have examined, as you requested, the book entitled ‘*The Higher Christian Life*,’ with a view of gaining the author’s definition of ‘conversion,’ or ‘regeneration,’ and his directions for securing it, and also his idea of what the ‘second conversion’ consists in. His view of the first conversion, or regeneration, *is the generally entertained one, i.e., it is the pardon of our sins.* This pardon is instantaneous and entire. The moment a soul believes in Christ, and accepts his atonement, that moment it experiences *a complete sense of pardoned sin.*”

“Luther experienced this when, after fasting, and watching, and struggling under the weight of sins unforgiven had brought him to the brink of the grave, these words were brought home to his mind, ‘I believe in the forgiveness of sins.’ From that moment ‘joy filled his soul, and he arose quickly from the depths of despair and the bed of sickness.’”

“*Second conversion is the cleansing from sin,* which the author says ‘is a work of indefinite length,’ and in this particular alone differs from the first conversion.

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“But, in the examples cited by him, the experience of this second conversion has been as instantaneous as the first. Luther, climbing Pilate’s stair-case on his hands and knees, for the purpose of gaining holiness, was brought to his feet by the truth, ‘The just shall live *by faith.*’ ‘Then,’ Luther says, ‘I felt myself born again. As a new man I entered by an open door into the very Paradise of God.’”

“So in all the other examples of this author, the apprehension of *Christ as the way,* is instantaneous; and yet he says ‘the work of Christ remains yet to be done in the future.’ In this point only does it differ from the first conversion, that it is not all done in an instant, although, as I have said before, his examples all make the impression that in both cases the work is instantaneous.”

This extract is not given as a *correct* exhibition of the views of this author, for it may not do him justice. It is given to show how vague and indefinite are the teachings of religious writers and preachers on this subject. Here is a book recommended for its *clear views* by the highest class of minds. It is read and re-read by an intelligent, well-educated young man, who is studying theology in one of our first seminaries. He then gives this author's view of regeneration, as that which he supposes to be contained in that book, and also as "*the one generally entertained.*"

And what is this answer to the great question, "What must we do to be saved?"—a question on which the happiness of endless ages is suspended.

*It is the pardon of sin*, which "is instantaneous and entire." This is something which God does, and this, as it would seem, is regeneration.

Next it is stated that "the moment a soul *believes in Christ and accepts his atonement*, that moment it experiences *a complete sense of pardoned sin.*" Here one must ask, "what is signified by believing in Christ and accepting his atonement? Is this also regeneration, and if so, does it consist in the intellectual assent to the proposition that Christ as God suffered and died, and by this act secured the pardon of our sin?" There is nothing given to decide these queries.

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Next, it is stated that this act of faith is followed by "*a complete sense of pardoned sin.*" Is *this* regeneration, or is it a *part* of it? There is nothing given to decide this question.

It is certain that the young man, totally failed in his efforts to secure any *clear* and *definite* conceptions of the author's meaning, exactly as has been the case with the writer herself, for whom the above extract was prepared.

It has been the privilege of the writer, often to listen to the preaching of Dr. Bushnell, one of the most popular of all our religious teachers. On one such occasion during the present



season, the object of his sermon seemed to be to teach what was that *true knowledge of God*, which he urged on his hearers.

He stated that it was not merely an intellectual apprehension of his character and deeds, but something which every soul must gain in order to secure eternal life, something, as it seemed, which he deemed *regeneration*.

He finally enunciated this, which seemed to be his idea of this indispensable experience: "*It is the return of God into the human soul.*"

In enlarging on this, he described something which was so vague and indefinite as to make it useless to attempt to state the impression made. Afterward, aid was sought from one of the preacher's constant and most intelligent hearers. "Does Dr. Bushnell believe in a preëxistent state, when God, in the manner set forth, was *in* the soul of each human being? If not, what does he mean by a 'return of God into the soul?'" [254] After some discussion, this intelligent parishioner concluded that his meaning probably was, that when we desire and intend wholly to submit our wills to that of God, and to be guided wholly by him, we become in this respect *one* with God. And this is what is meant by God's *return* into the soul. At what *previous* time this state of union was experienced, and then lost, so that regeneration is its "return," seemed to remain, as it respects information to be gained from parishioners, a matter of hopeless speculation.

In a family of whom eight are ministers of religion, and several are theological professors, the one who has seemed most fully to agree with the writer in explaining the nature of regeneration, is the *Star contributor to the Independent*.

It has been shown that Phrenology is antagonistic to the Augustinian theory of implanted evil propensities, by teaching that every faculty, when developed and regulated aright, tends to the best good of the race, so that the extinction of any faculty or propensity would not be an improvement, but rather an injury to the constitution of mind.

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In regard to this brother, here referred to, the system of Phrenology was embraced by him before his theological education was commenced, and was never relinquished. In consequence, his mode of explaining the nature of regeneration has been diverse from most accepted methods of theological schools. And yet, when the writer, applied both to his published articles and to some of his most intelligent, regular hearers, to ascertain if the common-sense view of regeneration, as here stated, was in perfect agreement with her brother's views, it seemed difficult to decide.

In reading some of the Star Papers, the common-sense view of regeneration is clear and unmistakable; in others, there are statements as to the *distinctive* nature of Christian character, which seem to be both additional and diverse. The result is, an uncertainty as to the exact idea of what regeneration consists in, as taught by this brother.<sup>19</sup>

The editors of the Independent quote the following sentence from *Common Sense Applied to Religion, or the Bible and the People*, as a statement of "the doctrine of the new birth," which is "not materially different" from that held by "the fathers and mothers of New England for eight successive generations:"

"The 'second birth' is the sudden or the gradual entrance into a life, in which the will of the Creator is to control the self-will of the creature, while under the influence of love and gratitude to him, and guided by 'faith' in his teachings, *living chiefly for the great commonwealth* takes the place of *living chiefly for self*. For this, the supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit is promised to all who seek it, and without this aid, success is hopeless. But the grand instrumentality is *right training* by parents and teachers." (Common Sense, etc., p. 333.)

Let this statement, by the Independent, of what the new birth consists in, as held by the fathers and mothers of New England,

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<sup>19</sup> Note F.

be compared with the preceding account of “conversion,” given by a young theologian, born in Connecticut, and educated at Yale College, as the “generally entertained one,” and the case is rendered increasingly difficult and perplexing. [256]

In the view of the author, *all* theologians do so far hold the common-sense theory of regeneration, that when they find a person whose will seems to be entirely subjected to the will of God, while “under the influence of love and gratitude to Him, and guided by faith in his teachings, *living chiefly for the great commonwealth takes the place of living chiefly for self*”—such a person is regarded by them as *regenerated*. At the same time, bound by the Augustine system, they give other views of the nature of regeneration, which are vague and conflicting, as has been illustrated in the preceding pages.<sup>20</sup>

From all this results endless anxiety, doubt and distress, in conscientious minds, from uncertainty whether their depraved nature has been changed, and from perplexity in view of the multifarious modes of teaching in regard to the nature and signs of regeneration.

From this, too, results false confidence and indifference to right and wrong conduct, in those who imagine they discover in themselves the signs of a regenerated nature, which will, as they are led to believe, secure heaven without reference to the amount of good or evil deeds. [257]

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<sup>20</sup> In regard to the author of the *Conflict of Ages*, the writer is still uncertain whether he would or would not assent to the common-sense view of regeneration, here stated, as exact and complete, or whether he supposes that the “habit of sinning, generated in a preëxistent state,” is changed by some direct operation of the Spirit of God on the “nature” or faculties of the human mind, which is antecedent to any right voluntary action on the part of man, and without which, every moral act of every unregenerated mind is “sin, and only sin.”

These personal references are introduced to illustrate more effectively the vague and diversified teachings of theologians and religious teachers in answer to the great question, on which they claim that an eternity of blessedness or misery is depending.

This same incertitude as to what regeneration is, has also tended to induce the fanaticism, extravagance and absurdities often connected with religious excitements.

The idea that there is to be some mysterious change in the soul by the gift of God's Spirit; that this is to be gained by prayer; that the evidence of this change is to be found in sudden and great mental agitation; together with the belief that an *eternity* of misery or bliss is depending on such a change; and that death is the end of all hope—all this tends to great extremes of distress and excitement.

## Tendencies of the Common-Sense System.

In contrast to these tendencies of the Augustinian system, in regard to individual religious experience, we notice those of the common-sense system. According to the latter, the *first birth* brings man into existence as an undeveloped being, with perfect and wonderful capacities of knowledge, enjoyment and self-control. The first period of existence is necessarily a period of *experimenting*, in which mind is dependent on others for most of the knowledge indispensable to right action, and also for the training of the physical, social and moral habits. It is impossible to choose aright, intelligently, until a child learns *what is right*, and this is a slow and gradual process. In some cases, by a careful training, early virtuous principles and habits may be so induced, that there can not be any marked period in which the mind comes under the control of *a ruling purpose* to obey all the rules of rectitude as disclosed by reason and experience, or by revelations from God.

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In other cases, the child may grow up to manhood entirely unregulated by any such purpose, while self-gratification, unrestrained by rules, is the perpetual aim. In such cases, a sudden change, in which the man forms and carries out a ruling purpose

to act righteously and virtuously, in all his relations to man, to God and to himself, may take place. This change, in the language of common life, would be expressed thus: "The man has begun a new life; he is a new creature." And by a figurative use of language, the change might be called "a new birth," or, in theological language, "regeneration." In such a case, the chief desire or ruling passion would be, to discover and to obey all the physical, social and moral laws of the Creator, as they are taught by reason and experience, or by revelations from God.

Such an experience would be properly expressed by the terms, *faith* in God, *love* to God, *repentance* toward God, *as these terms are used by men in common life*. Thus "regeneration," according to the common-sense system, becomes an intelligible, rational and practical matter.

In case of a revelation from God by a prophet or messenger, confidence in, and obedience to, the teachings of that messenger, would be practical or saving faith, both in God and in his messenger also. Thus, if Christ is proved to be a messenger from God by miracles, whoever *practically believes* in Christ, believes in God also. And just so far as a man understands Christ's teachings *aright*, and *purposes* to obey him, and *carries out* this purpose, just so far he has faith, and love, and repentance toward God and toward Christ. And as men are named by the name of those they obey, every man is a *true Christian* just so far as he understands Christ's teachings *aright* and *obeys* them. [259]

In this view of the case, the true "*signs of regeneration*" would be each person's consciousness of the great end and purpose of his life, and the fruits or results of this purpose in an habitual obedience to the physical, social and moral laws of God, as learned by reason, experience and revelation. Thus the answer to the great question of life becomes clear, harmonious and practical, furnishing the means for every person to judge of his own character and prospects.

## Chapter XXXVIII. Tendencies of the Two Systems in Reference to the Character of God.

It has been shown (chapter 24) that *emotive* love, in view of noble and interesting traits of character, affords a most powerful motive in securing *voluntary love* or *good willing* according to the laws of God. This is the grand reason why it is so important that all his creatures should regard their Creator, whose laws they must obey, as perfect in every noble and lovable quality. This would render it easy and delightful to obey his will.

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The principle of gratitude is the strongest in our nature, in calling forth desires to please another. This renders it so important that we should regard our Maker, not only as noble and lovely, but as the dispenser of innumerable and constant favors to ourselves and to those whom we love.

The highest emotions of love and gratitude are evoked when a noble and lovely benefactor condescends to humiliation, suffering, and even to death to rescue from great calamity. And the greater the danger and suffering from which this goodness rescues, the stronger the gratitude and the desire to please the benefactor.

In this view we can conceive of no way in which our Creator could so powerfully influence his creatures to virtuous self-sacrifice for the general good in obedience to his laws, as by such an exhibition on his part.

It has been shown [Chapter 28] that by the light of reason and experience alone, we infer that our race are exposed to dreadful risk and danger of evils, which to *some* will prove interminable.

If, then, it can be made to appear that our Creator has submitted to great humiliation and suffering to rescue us, and that his *chief desire* is that his creatures should obey his beneficent laws, the strongest conceivable motives would be secured to lead to glad obedience to the rules of virtue. And having shown that the chief end of our Creator is to do all in his power to make the most possible happiness, we should infer that he had made or would make such a manifestation of his character to his creatures. And were this revealed to us as done, such a revelation would properly be called “glad tidings,” as that which was best fitted to save men from sin and suffering.

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According to the system of common sense, our Creator is presented as the Almighty Father, who forms each finite mind an embryo image of his own all perfect mind, with the great design of making all the happiness possible. Although the highest happiness of each and of all, depends on the perfect action of every mind, such action is not possible in the nature of things except as a knowledge of his laws and of the motives to secure obedience are made known by finite educators, who must first be trained themselves by a long and slow process. Thus every mind is dependent for its final success in attaining perfect obedience to law, and for perfected happiness, on God, on finite educators and on self.

In carrying forward the development and education of our race, the Creator always has done and always will do the *best that is possible* for the good of all. And yet, so far as reason and experience teach, some will be *ruined for ever*. The deteriorating process begun in this life, and its baleful results, will continue for ever.

The great consummation, when those that are hopelessly ruined will be separated from the good, is at an indefinite period ahead, and may be many ages, while the same process of labor and training are proceeding in the unseen world, and yet so that the conduct and character formed in this life have a *decided*

*influence* on the whole course of existence that follows.

Thus when the good man dies we may hope that his upward career is eternally secure. But when the wicked die there must be “a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.”

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The Creator does, has done, and will do *all that is possible* to save all that *can* be saved from this doom, and as the highest possible motives we can conceive to secure this end, would be the appearance of our Creator in human form as a teacher of his laws, an example of virtue and a self-sacrificing Saviour, we infer that he has done or will do this, at the time and in the manner which is best fitted to the great end in view.

The Augustinian system presents a view of the character and conduct of the Creator in mournful contrast to this.

Our only idea of a perfectly benevolent being is that of one who prefers happiness to suffering, and who does *all in his power* to promote one and prevent the other. Our only idea of a malevolent being is, that he wills misery when he has full power to make happiness in its stead. Our only evidence of the *moral* character of a being (or that exhibited in *willing*) is *the nature* of his works. On the Augustinian theory, all the chief works of the Creator's hand, the immortal minds, which alone give value to any other existences, are depraved so totally that there is no really good act done by any one of them till created anew.

In other words, the Creator, having full power to make every mind perfect in nature, and who still has power to re-create all with perfect natures, has instituted a system by which the sin of one man entails a depraved nature on a whole race, while the evil as yet has been remedied only in the case of a small, “elect” number. All the rest are doomed to eternal misery for conduct which is the certain consequence of this misformed nature.

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To save men from the punishment of the sins consequent on their depraved nature, Christ, the most perfect and only un sinning being that ever visited earth, undergoes deep humiliation and excruciating sufferings.



To call such conduct as this *just*, or *kind*, or *merciful*, is a violation of all our ideas of the meaning of such terms. What kindness is there in giving existence to *any* being on such terms? What blessings are all the comforts and enjoyments of this life, so soon to be snatched away, thus making the contrast of future misery so much the more horrible? What mercy is there in any mode of rectifying a wrong so needlessly inflicted? What mercy, or what justice is there in adding to all the miseries of our race the sufferings of so noble and lovely a being as Jesus Christ, when all, and more than all, effected by his agonies, could be so much more justly and reasonably secured by regenerating all the minds thus needlessly ruined in their nature? This strange and mysterious transaction only adds to the terror and gloom that shroud such a Creator, whose character can be learned only by the *nature* of his works.

To call all this a *mystery* is a misuse of terms, for there is no mystery about it. More direct, clear, and open injustice, folly and malevolence, can not possibly be expressed in human language than that here set forth and ascribed to God.

Every mind instinctively asks, why did not the Creator give us a perfect nature when he has the power to do so? Why does he not stop all the sin and misery resulting from the depraved nature of man by regenerating all, when he has power to do so? How can we either respect or love a being who has done such awful and endless wrong to our race, and for no conceivable good made known to us? What cause of gratitude for the sufferings and death of Christ to save the few of us who alone are to escape from such needless and intolerable evils? [264]

Meantime, the various theories invented to relieve the baleful impression thus made as to the character of our Creator, only add new difficulties.

To say that this perpetuated mode of bringing ruined minds into existence, is a penalty for a single sin of the first pair, thousands of years ago, what a violation of all our ideas of justice! To

say that this transaction is *just* because Adam was “*regarded*” by God as “the federal head” of our race, and that he “imputes” the sin of the father to all his descendants, what is this, to our conceptions, but puerile folly added to the baldest cruelty and injustice?

To say that we all “sinned *in Adam*,” thousands of years before we were born, and are punished by a ruined nature, so far as we can conceive of such an absurd proposition, what is this penalty better than inflicting endless tortures on myriads of new-born infants for their first ignorant and unconscious sin?

To say that *man*, or *Adam* is the author of all this ineffable wrong, because it is done by “a constitutional transmission” from parent to child, of which God is the author, when he had full power to make each child perfect in nature, what is this but adding to cruelty and injustice a mean subterfuge in order to cast the blame on Adam and his race?

The mind turns from a God so represented, with horror and dismay, and it is only by concealing this system, by representations that are *perfectly contradictory*, that the baleful impression is lessened.

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The view of God's character thus presented by the Augustinian theory, not only lessens the power of motive which the common-sense view of the Creator's character affords, but brings a powerful positive influence to turn the human mind from that love and obedience toward God which is so indispensable to peace and happiness.

## Chapter XXXIX. Tendencies of the Two Systems as to Church Organizations.

It has been shown that the common-sense theory teaches that all mankind must, in order to eternal happiness, be trained by human agencies to choose what is *best*, guided by the laws of God, as learned by experience or by revelation.

Under the guidance of this general principle, *associated* bodies would result, whose aim would be discussion and instruction to discover and perpetuate a *knowledge* of the rules of rectitude, and to secure all those *motives* which experience has proved to be most effective in securing obedience to these rules. In other words, the chief end of such associations would be to find out what is *best* and thus right, and also the *best* modes of securing right action.

The experience of mankind has shown that the most effective way to extend and perpetuate any religion is to have a body of men supported who shall give their chief energies and time to this object. Social gatherings at regular periods have also been found effective to this end. In short, were a system of religion established, founded *exclusively* and *consistently* on experience and common sense, it would include sabbaths of interrupted worldly affairs, social gatherings to promote worshipful obedience to the Creator and a body of men educated and sustained for the express purpose of discovering, instructing in and perpetuating the intellectual, social, moral and religious interests of humanity. Such a ministry would be not dogmatic teachers, but leaders in discussions and investigations. [266]

The great aim of all these arrangements would be to discover by inquiry and discussion what is best in all human interests and affairs, in view of the immortality of man, and the risks and dangers of eternity, and also to devise the best modes of influencing all to right action.

Were this life the end of our being, and were all questions of right and wrong to be settled in reference to the well-being of our race in this short span, no such separate class of religious leaders and organized instrumentalities would be needful. But if men are to be *trained* to act with reference to the invisible state as the *chief* concern, then organized instrumentalities to resist the overruling tide of worldliness become indispensable.

The full tendencies of such organizations, based *exclusively* on the principles of common sense, must be a matter of speculation merely, for the world has had no experience of this kind. As yet we have only the experience of mankind as to systems in which the teachings of common sense have been combined with contradictory influences of false dogmas, which have been sustained by the strongest organizations, civil and ecclesiastical.

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We will now trace some of the tendencies of the Augustinian system as they have been exhibited in the history of church organizations.

It has been shown that the Augustinian theory of a depraved nature is the foundation doctrine alike of the Catholic and the Protestant churches. All agree that man by nature is so miserably misformed that the gift of the Holy Spirit purchased by Christ to re-create is his sole hope of escape from everlasting perdition, while there is little or no ability to understand or obey God's revealed will until this gift is imparted. From this originated a priesthood as the medium through which this renewing gift is to be obtained, and who are the only authorized interpreters of God's revealed will. The transmission of this power through the rite of ordination, preserved in direct succession from the apostles, is the leading point in the Episcopal organization. Still

more is this carried out to extreme results in the Catholic church.

Both organizations assume that “the church” which has this power, does not include *the people*, but is the priesthood alone. It is the ecclesiastics of these churches who are to interpret the Bible for the people, and the people are to receive these decisions as from God. This is the *theory*, while common sense and the Bible have more or less modified its practical adoption, especially in the Episcopal churches.

The Puritans of England were the first among the Protestants who organized churches as consisting solely of those who “profess” to be “regenerated” on the theory of the renewal of the depraved nature derived from Adam. To this profession in most cases must be added an examination by persons who are regenerated in order to ascertain whether the true signs of a new nature, according to their pattern, really exist. Such churches are a close corporation, having a minister to preach and administer baptism and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and deacons, elders, or committees to decide who shall be received as regenerate or turned out as unregenerate. [268]

Among the Puritans and their descendants originated another practice which has become prevalent, by which the churches thus organized as regenerated persons, also claim the right of infallible interpreters of the Bible, so far as to exclude all from their communion who do not profess to agree with their interpretations. That is to say, all persons, in order to be admitted to their corporation and to the Lord's table, must not only profess to be regenerate in the nature transmitted from Adam, but must confess that they interpret the Bible according to the notions of the church they seek to join.

It will now be shown that most of our large denominations in this country are so founded on the Augustinian dogma that were *the people* all to give up this theory the whole basis of sectarianism would be destroyed.

The Congregational and Baptist denominations are severed

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simply in reference to the rite of baptism as the mode of admission to their regenerated churches. The Congregationalists hold that baptism should be administered by sprinkling, and to the infants of church members as well as to adults joining the church. The Baptists hold that baptism should be administered by immersion, and only to adults who join the church. This is all that divides the two sects.

Of course, if all the people ceased to hold that churches are to consist of persons whose nature received from Adam is re-created, all churches associated on the theory would be ended, and so these disputes about modes of admission would be ended.

Again, the Presbyterians and Congregationalists separate on the question of the appointment and duties of the *officers* of their churches. The Congregationalists manage by church committees. Each church is the sole tribunal in its own affairs, thus being strictly democratic. The Presbyterian churches manage the business of each church by *sessions* or *elders* appointed by the church, and when they fail to give satisfaction, an appeal is made to a Presbytery consisting of ministers and elders of several churches.

Thus again, if churches organized on the Augustine theory of the regeneration of a depraved nature should cease, this dispute in regard to *church officers* would end, and the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists would find all ground for separation gone.

Again, the old and new school Presbyterian churches separate on questions relating to man's ability to regenerate himself and in regard to what is the nature of regeneration.

This all depends on the fact of a depraved nature transmitted from Adam to be regenerated. If this dogma is relinquished by the people then these two sects will have no ground for division.

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Again, the Methodists differ from the other Augustinian sects chiefly in regard to the officers and management of churches organized on the theory of a depraved nature received from

Adam, which is to be regenerated. And if such organizations were ended the ground of separation between the Methodists and the preceding sects would be removed.

Again, the Episcopalian sect is founded on the idea of a succession of ordained priests through whose agency the gift of God's Spirit to renew our depraved nature and to impart the true interpretation of his revelations is to be obtained.

If, then, the people discard the dogma of a depraved nature consequent on Adam's sin, and assume that they have perfect natures, and are authorized to interpret the Bible for themselves, the chief ground for the existence of this as a separate sect will be removed. The Catholic church also would soon be ended as a distinct sect were all the people of that church to discard these and all opinions and practices immediately or remotely based on the Augustinian dogma.

The preceding will serve to illustrate the position that the tendency of the common-sense system is to unite all men in efforts to discover and to obey all the laws of God for making happiness the *best* way for time and eternity.

On the contrary, the Augustinian system tends to organize mankind into sects contending, not for truth and happiness, but for certain outward rites and forms of organization.

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## Chapter XL. Tendencies of the Two Systems in Regard to Humility, Meekness and a Teachable Spirit.

The result of receiving *church* interpretations as infallible, whether of priests or regenerated laity, is the assumption of a similar infallibility by each person who thus accepts them.

This is accomplished by a very singular fallacy, thus:

The regularly ordained priests, or the regenerated priests and laity of the *true* church, are claimed to be the only persons qualified to understand and interpret the meaning of God's revelations. The question then is, *which is the true church?* The Catholic says, "Mine, and no other." The Episcopalian says, "Mine, and no other;" and so says the Presbyterian. The result is, each man decides that the true church is *the one that agrees with his views of what the Bible teaches.*

Having thus decided that the church that agrees with himself is the true church, the man proceeds, not only to receive reverently the decisions of his church, but assumes that every other man is bound to do the same.

The Catholic receives one set of interpretations from the church that he himself has infallibly decided to be the true church. The Protestant receives the creeds and confessions of the church he has infallibly decided to be the true church, whose regenerated ministers and members are qualified to understand the Bible, as no unregenerated man can do.

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Being thus sustained by his own claims as a regenerated person, and also by the claims of the church he adopts as the true one, there is little foundation for poverty of spirit, humility and meekness. How can a man feel "poor in spirit," as destitute of the knowledge requisite for right action, when he has his own regenerated mind and the guidance of the regenerated true church? How can a man be meek when others strive to enlighten him by showing that he is in the wrong, especially when such efforts are those of the unregenerated, or those shut out of his true church?

How can a man become very humble and lowly in his own conceit, when, in contrast with most of the world, he alone can



feel and act virtuously or understand truly God's revelations?

The natural tendency to pride, self-sufficiency and dogmatism is still further increased by the assumption that humility consists mainly in a low opinion of “the nature” with which we are endowed. Thus, while assuming infallibility in one aspect, they still can claim to be humble and lowly, because they abhor and despise their depraved nature and its results in themselves.

At the same time, the most remarkable self-deception is practiced in regard to their own Christian graces. These all being supposed to spring from a regenerated nature imparted by God, they disclaim all honor or merit, and give all the glory to God, who has wrought these graces from their dead and sinful nature. By this method they imagine they attain a true humility and lowliness of spirit.

But every man of great genius, and every woman of uncommon beauty, understand as truly as the professedly regenerated person, that their gifts are from God, and are willing to give all the glory to him for thus distinguishing them from their fellow-creatures. And the ascription of all the power and glory to God does not save the professedly regenerated person from self-complacency and pride any more than it does the genius or the beauty. [273]

And yet we find religious writings abounding in such disclaimers and ascriptions, which are evidently regarded as proofs of humility and lowliness of spirit. It is true that such expressions do often flow from the hearts of the really humble and contrite; but the fact that a person regards and acknowledges God as the author of his own extraordinary gifts, that raise him above his fellows, is no *proof* of humility, while it is often so regarded.

In contrast to this tendency of the Augustinian system, the common-sense view teaches that while our nature is noble and perfect in construction—the embryo image of its Maker—it is destitute of that knowledge, experience and training, for which it is equally dependent on God and on man. And as the requisite

knowledge can be gained only by the aid of those minds around, whose happiness is affected by our conduct, it is clear that a willingness to learn from any quarter and to be told our mistakes by any person, is the natural result of an earnest desire to find out and obey the truth. And a consciousness of our own liabilities to mistakes, and a certainty that there is no one “that liveth and sinneth not,” tends to induce compassionate sympathy for the failings of others, and an indisposition to force opinions on them by any other mode than calm statement and argument.

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At the same time, an earnest desire for inquiry and discussion is generated, which naturally leads to patient investigation, courteous demeanor towards opponents, and to all the graces that wait on a gentle, humble and truth-loving spirit.

## Chapter XLI. Tendencies of the Two Systems in Regard to Dogmatism, Persecution and Ecclesiastical Tyranny.

It has been shown that the Augustinian system, teaching as it does man's depraved nature and destitution of any principles of right guidance in his own mind, makes him wholly dependent not only on revelations from his Creator, but on infallible interpreters.

Thus we find that wherever this system became dominant there has coëxisted the claim that *the people* are not to decide, each one for himself, what are the teachings of reason, experience and

revelation as to truth and duty. Instead of this, first it was popes and councils, in which the laity had no voice; next, as among the Puritans, it was the church, including both the clergy and the regenerated portion of their flocks.

From this resulted religious persecutions, in this manner: Men are to obey God as their first duty. *The church* is God's mouth-piece to interpret his commands to mankind. If men refuse to obey God, speaking through his church, they must be forced to do so by pains and penalties. And as in view of eternal happiness and eternal misery, all earthly interests are as nothing, every temporal consideration must be put out of account. Moreover, [275] whoever leads men to disobey the church and thus to disobey God, and so to peril not only their own eternal welfare, but that of others, commits a greater crime than is done by violating any human ordinances. Therefore, the heaviest penalties should be employed to enforce obedience to the church, and the church must take precedence of the civil government.

Thus it came to pass that the more sincere, conscientious and benevolent a person was, while holding these views, the more surely would he become a persecutor.

The pages of history give many mournful illustrations of this truth. One of the most striking will be here introduced.

Isabella of Spain, by whose generosity this western world was discovered, was one of the most gentle, conscientious, benevolent and lovely characters that ever adorned a throne.

She was trained to believe the church to be the representative of God on earth, and her father confessor, Torquemada, the originator of the Inquisition, was the guide of her conscience. By his commands the Inquisition reared its horrid dungeons. By his counsel the industrious, cultivated and chivalrous Moors, the most useful of all her subjects, were driven from their native soil. By his commands the Jews were brought to the cruel alternative of giving up their religion or relinquishing all that made life dear. And thus the historian narrates this dreadful tale of religious

persecution:

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“The experiment of conversion was tried upon the Jews, and it utterly and totally failed. In the first place, their position in Christian society was a source of continual discussion. ‘If we admit them to public offices, we have gained nothing,’ said the mercantile classes. ‘If we exclude them,’ said the clergy, ‘what motive is held out for the rest to join us?’ But as a religious experiment, the failure was even more complete. The fathers were nominal converts, and nominal converts the children continued to be. Ostentatiously they attended mass; but in their own houses their Sabbath was kept, their ritual was read, their psalms were sung. Meantime, intercourse and intermarriage with Christians became more fatally easy than it had been before. Shunned by the middle classes, they intermarried with the ‘blue blood’ of the nobility, they entered the priesthood, and ascended the highest steps of the Catholic hierarchy. Nay, they became, more than once, inquisitors, and wielded against their foes with cynical hatred the terrors of the Holy Office. Of the Inquisition there is no space to speak here;<sup>21</sup> sufficient to say that the ‘New Christians’ were the chief cause of its institution, and that during the eighteen years that Torquemada held office, ten thousand persons were burned alive.

“But two thirds of the Jews of Spain had remained unconverted; and with them the Inquisition had nothing to do; for they were under special laws and under royal protection. But Torquemada had not forgotten them. Working on the pride of Ferdinand, on the conscience of Isabella, he persuaded them to sign the celebrated Edict of Exile. They were to leave Spain

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<sup>21</sup> The extent to which Judaism had spread among the upper ranks is strikingly shown by the fact that one of the first inquisitors, Peter Arbues, was assassinated by a conspiracy formed of the chief officers of the Arragonese government, who were most of them, according to Llorente, of Jewish blood or connections. The Inquisition, however, was odious on other grounds, as a royalist institution, like our Star Chamber.—See Llorente's *History of Inquisition*.

in three months. They were to take neither silver nor gold with them. If it pleased God to change their hearts, the church would most willingly receive them.

“Ruinous alike to banisher and banished, this edict had cost a struggle. Isaac Abarbenel, wealthy, learned, high in royal favor, rushed into the queen's audience-chamber, on hearing what till then had been carefully concealed from his nation, threw himself at her feet, and doubtless won her over for the moment. To Ferdinand he offered thirty thousand ducats. But, in the wavering of debate, Torquemada appeared suddenly. ‘Judas,’ he said, ‘sold his master for thirty pieces. Your Majesties, it seems, want thirty thousand. Here He is; take Him; and what ye do, do quickly!’ Dashing a crucifix on the table, he left them. The omen was clear, and the die was cast.

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“To the Jews one road of deliverance was still left. To renounce the outward garb of their religion, never again to pass the threshold of a synagogue, never to chant a Hebrew hymn nor keep a Hebrew Sabbath; to change every household custom, to break all the rules of life, dear from the nursery and clung to on the bed of death; to repeat a false creed, to enter an idolatrous temple, to kneel down with God's enemies;—this road was open, though treading it they would have trampled on their fathers' tombs. Yet, on the other hand, thousands had taken that course; and would tell them that strict adherence to the laws of the land they lived in, abstinence from all that might offend, performance of harmless superstitions, bowing down for a season in the house of Rimmon, that this was a course plainly marked out by Providence. The loss, too, that they would suffer in exile was immense; and we must estimate this loss before we can estimate the worth of those who chose to suffer.

“We have seen the Jews of France leave it, enter it, leave it again, and count the value of their sojourn at exactly the price at which reëntrance could be bought. It was a market-stall, a field for acquisition; but it was not the seat of Jewish

learning, it was not the resting place of their fathers for many generations.

“Now Spain was something more to them than this. It was no foreign soil, passed and repassed with the indifference of a stranger. They had lived there for twelve hundred years. They had seen the Teutonic forest-creeds moulded and melted into the new faith of Rome. They had seen the Ishmaelite sweep that faith away. By him they had been welcomed as brothers. With him they had lit the lamp of science when all the world was dark. Then they had seen the Cross rise from the northern mountains, and the Crescent wane and wane before it. By the kings of Christian Spain their worth had been acknowledged; they had fostered their trade; they had called them to their councils; they had befriended and loved them. Persecution and jealousy had driven many of their brethren to accept another creed; but the new Christians were Jews still; they had married their daughters to the proudest nobles of a race where the peasant was proud; and not a duke in all Spain could despise them without despising his own mother's blood. Spain, too, was the land where Jewish wisdom had unfolded and blossomed. Their physicians and their astronomers were the first in Europe. Their poets and their philosophers were eminent among their nation. The psalms of Jehuda Halevi were sung in the synagogues of the Rhine. Aben Esra had eclipsed the fame of the great Eastern school of Pumbeditha; above all, Spain claimed the son of Maimon, the great prophet of the Exile, famed from the Seine to the Euphrates as the second Moses.

“Such, besides escape from utter ruin, were the temptations to apostacy. And those who issued the decree fully hoped that apostacy would have been its result. Every means was taken. ‘In the public squares, in the synagogues, Catholic preachers thundered forth invective against the Hebrew heresy.’ They might thunder—they were not heard.

“‘Come,’ said their priests and elders, ‘let us strengthen ourselves in our faith and in the teachings of our God, against

the voice of the oppressor, and the scorn of the enemy. If they destroy us—well; if they will let us live—well; but we will not depart from the Covenant, neither make our hearts froward; but we will go forth in the name of the Lord our God, who saved our fathers from Egypt, and brought them through the Red Sea.’

“The spirit of Moses and of Joshua rested on the aged rabbis, and their words prevailed. Few in number and bold in cowardice were those who yielded. They made ready for this second Exodus where no Canaan glistened in the distance. Forced to sell their possessions in three months, forbidden to sell them for gold, they were glad to exchange large houses or estates for an ass or mule, or for such trifling articles of travel as the wish to be first at the spoiling might induce purchasers to supply.

“Eastward, westward, northward—to Africa, to Portugal, to Italy and the Levant,—half a million Jews went forth. Eighty thousand sought shelter in Portugal, but did not find it. Thousands fell into the hands of the barbarians of Fez. They were sold for slaves; they were left to starve on desert isles; their bodies, yet living, were ripped open for the hidden gold. Thus writes Rabbi Josef:

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“‘And there were among them who were cast into the isles of the sea, a Jew and his old father, fainting from hunger, begging bread; and there was none to break unto them in a strange country. And the man went and sold his little son for bread, to restore the soul of the old man; and when he returned to his father, he found him dead; and he rent his clothes. And he went back to the baker to take his son; but the baker would not give him back; and he cried out with a sore and bitter cry for his son, but there was none to deliver. All this befell us in the year Rabbim—for the sons of the desolate are “Many”—yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Hasten to help us, O Lord! For thy sake we are killed all the day; we are counted as sheep appointed for the slaughter. Make haste to help us, O God of

our salvation.’

“Or listen to the chronicler of Genoa, who saw them as they drifted eastward:

“ ‘This expulsion,’ he says, ‘seemed to me at first a praiseworthy act, done in the cause and for the honor of God. Yet, when we remember that they were not brute beasts after all, but men made by God, surely it must be owned that some little cruelty was shown. Their woes were very piteous to see. The first who starved were the infants at the breast; then the mothers, carrying their dead children till they fell down and died with them. Many perished of cold and of squalor. Unused to the sea, countless numbers died from sickness; many were drowned by the sailors for their wealth; the poor, who could not otherwise pay their passage, sold their children. Lean, pale, with eyes deep-sunken, like ghosts from the dead, hardly moving enough to show that they were alive, they came into our city to find shelter for three days; for our ancient laws forbade a longer stay. Yet for the repair of their ships, and for health’s sake, a short respite was granted. They were allowed to live on the Mole, while they made ready for their long voyage eastward. Thus the winter passed, and many of them died. The spring came, and ulcers broke out that had been hitherto kept under by the cold, and all that year there was a plague in that city.’ ”

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This mournful narrative exhibits one of the most sublime examples of religious faith and conscientious self-sacrifice to what was deemed truth and duty in the persecuted. At the same time, when the avaricious Ferdinand relinquished thirty thousand ducats, and the tender and benevolent Isabella turned a deaf ear to such prayers and sufferings from her people, there can be no doubt that conscience ruled the persecutors also. Even Torquemada himself may have been acting from the most conscientious and benevolent motives in all the disastrous influences he brought to bear on his royal mistress.



This passage of history also teaches that honesty, and sincerity, and conscientiousness will not avail without a *knowledge of the truth*. Nay, more; had these persecutors been less conscientious, the natural instincts of humanity or personal interests would have mitigated or withheld the cruel doom.

It is in this light that we are enabled, in spite of their mistakes in opinions, to look upon theologians as among the noblest sufferers and confessors for what they believed to be truth. From the time of Augustine and Pelagius to the present day nothing can be more clear than that the combatants on both sides were actuated by a sincere love to God and to man, each believing, as sincerely as did Saul of Tarsus, that in these conflicts they were verily doing God service, and that all they were called to suffer was for the true church of God and the salvation of their fellow-men.

But the main purpose for which this record of history now appears is to illustrate the natural tendency of the Augustine theory in leading to dogmatism, persecution and ecclesiastical tyranny. [281]

The tendency of the common-sense system can not be illustrated by history, for unfortunately Christendom has never yet had an opportunity to test by a fair experiment its true tendencies. We can only imagine what would be the results were all ecclesiastical restraints and teachings based on the Augustine theory removed from our pulpit ministries, our hymns and prayers, our religious literature, and, most of all, from long established habits of thought and feeling.

Then all our religious organizations would have for their leading aim, not to maintain some outward rite or modes of organization, but to promote free discussion for the discovery of truth and harmonious coöperation to promote happiness according to the laws of God.

Then the ministry of the Word would be committed to men distinguished not only by natural endowments, acquired knowledge and skill in debate, but also ensamples to their flocks in the

virtues of humility, meekness, and a gentle and teachable spirit. Then the points that would divide men into parties would be chiefly *practical* questions, so that where no agreement in opinion could be secured, each would peaceably try a fair experiment and eventually bring the results forward for the general good.

Then every individual would be free to protest against all that he believes to be injurious and wrong, in regard to individuals, to the family, to the church and to the state, and be met in his efforts as a benefactor rather than an opposer or an enemy.

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## Chapter XLII. Tendencies of the Two Systems as Shown in Controversy and Sects.

It is the aim of this chapter to show that the chief controversies and chief sects of Christendom have resulted from the Augustinian system, and from attempts to eliminate it from the system of common sense with which it has been combined.

The dogma of a depraved nature consequent on Adam's sin, was a philosophical theory introduced to account for the prevailing sinfulness of the human race. The attempt of Pelagius and his associates to oppose this dogma, was met by civil and ecclesiastical power and persecution. "And thus," says the historian, "the Gauls, Britons and Africans by their councils, and the emperors

by their edicts, demolished this sect in its infancy and suppressed it entirely.”

For long ages after this, no attempt was made to oppose the system based on this theory in any of its branches. The doctrine that man, being so depraved in nature as to be incapable of knowing or judging aright, and having no standard of right and wrong but express revelations from God, resulted in the unresisted claim of popes and church councils as the only authorized interpreters of the Bible.

Then began the powerful influence of *education*. Every child was trained to believe the doctrine of a depraved nature as a part of the word of God, to be received with unquestioning submission. Thus the most powerful influences were enlisted to enchain the feeble and plastic mind of childhood at the starting-point of thought and reason. It was also taught by theologians to all the young ecclesiastics as a *system*, thus adding a new force to early educational training by the authority of the church, with all its solemn and awful sanctions.

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The idea that every man is to receive the teachings of Christ, uncontrolled by church authority, as *he* understands them, and that he is a Christian just so far as he *understands aright* and *obeys* them, found no advocates for long centuries. Meantime the ecclesiastics, as the only infallible interpreters of God's word, and the only source by which to gain regenerating influences, abused the influence thus acquired, to build up the awful prelatial power that ruled Christendom for ages. At last, with many other abominations, the regular sale of indulgences to commit all manner of crimes at fixed prices, brought intolerable follies and crimes to a crisis.

Then Luther and his compeers arose and waged war, not against the root of these evils, but against those inevitable branches, the infallibility of church interpretations and the substitution of outward creeds, rites and forms for the spiritual principle of love to God and man exhibited by obedience to the

Creator's laws.

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Luther claimed that he and all men were bound to interpret the Bible for themselves, and not to submit their judgment to any pope, council or ecclesiastical power. And he claimed that the Bible teaches that man is to be saved [justified], not by outward forms, but *by faith in Jesus Christ*. But retaining the doctrine of man's ruined and helpless *nature*, his ideas of *faith* and of the *mode* of attaining it, were vague and conflicting. Thus originated the long conflict between Catholic and Protestant Christianity, involving some of the most bloody and cruel wars and persecutions that ever afflicted humanity.

Next came Arminius and his associates, who, still clinging to the fatal root of a totally depraved nature, labored to devise *some way* in which, in spite of this ruin, man could do something to secure regeneration from God. For, as shown in the early chapters, Calvinism maintained that man was utterly helpless, and that *all* the doings of the unregenerate were sin and only sin, and therefore utterly unavailing in gaining regenerating aid from God. Hence originated the long conflict between Calvinism and Arminianism, which has been continued to this day.

Both these schools of divinity rested on the dogma of an entirely depraved nature, but their tendencies were diverse.

Calvinism, maintaining the utter helplessness of man, tended to despairing inefficiency. If man really could do nothing, why should he attempt any thing to secure salvation?

On the other hand, Arminianism, promising help through certain forms, rites and influences conveyed by ecclesiastics, tended to a reliance on rites and forms. If man is to be saved by these instrumentalities and can do nothing himself except through them, then, these being secured, the natural tendency must be to rest in them.

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These two diverse tendencies finally resulted in an equal torpor and indifference to religion in both parties, which was

interrupted on the Arminian side by Wesley and Whitfield, and on the Calvinistic side by Jonathan Edwards.

Wesley and his co-laborers taught anew the Protestant doctrine of man's independence of ecclesiastical interpretations and church forms, and the necessity of an immediate and higher spiritual life. From his efforts and those of Whitfield originated the great Methodist denomination in Great Britain and America.

In this sect is carried out the theory of regeneration, not as a slow process of educational training, but as an instantaneous change, manifested in excited sensibilities. As the depravity consequent on Adam's sin consists in the "deprivation" of God's Spirit, and regeneration is the return of this gift, to be secured by prayer and other "means of grace," we find their prayers, hymns and preaching all conformed to this theory. They gain grace when the Spirit comes, and when it departs they "fall from grace."

While Wesley and Whitfield, in Great Britain, appealed directly to the people in combatting the Arminian tendency to forms and laxness, Jonathan Edwards addressed the leaders of metaphysical thought in his profound and acute writings. He attempted to meet the universal paralysis consequent on the Calvinistic doctrine of man's inability, amounting almost to the loss of a consciousness of personal freedom.

His aim was to restore to man a sense of ability and responsibility. Thus originated his theory of *natural ability* and *moral inability*, which amounts simply to this: that man has *natural* power to obey all that God requires, but that he so lacks *moral ability*, on account of his depraved nature, that it is certain that he never will make a truly virtuous choice till he is regenerated, and regeneration is not to be secured by any unregenerated doings.

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From this resulted the division into the *old* and *new-school Calvinistic* parties in the Congregational and Presbyterian churches.

Lastly, the New Haven divines, while in some of their writings

they held exactly the views of President Edwards, and claimed to have made no innovation, in others they came exactly to the Pelagian ground, maintaining that man “has not a depraved nature *in any sense*, nor a corrupt nature, much less a sinful nature,” “but rather that in nature he is like God.”

This is the same doctrine as was held by Pelagius, and if it were only carried out consistently and not contradicted, would be the entire elimination, root and branch, of the Augustinian system.

From this resulted a theological controversy that has agitated the Presbyterian and Congregational churches for the last thirty years.

There are two denominations which all the Augustinian sects agree in excluding from their fellowship as not entitled to the name of Christian sects, which have had great influence in undermining the hold of the Augustinian theory. These are the *Universalists* and the *Unitarians*.

The former do not formally deny the Augustinian theory of a depraved nature consequent on Adam's sin, but leaving it undisputed, gain great influence by it. They allow that God has power to restore man to his original perfectness, and then maintain that the very idea of a benevolent being, who is the loving parent of all his creatures, makes it certain that he will do so. For, as shown before, our only idea of a benevolent being is, that he *wills* to do *all in his power* to secure that which will make the most happiness with the least evil. As, therefore, all the Augustinian sects concede that God has power to make all minds perfect at the first, and to regenerate all minds that are ruined through the sin of Adam, Universalists maintain that the very idea of the Creator as a benevolent being necessarily involves the certainty that he will in the end, bring all the creatures he has made to a state of perfectness, both in mental *construction* and mental *action*. This argument is unanswerable, and the people very extensively are led to so regard it, and to adopt this view of the future state of

our race.

The question, with this sect, all turns on whether it is possible in the nature of things for God to construct mind on a more perfect pattern than that of the human mind; and whether it is possible, in the nature of things, to make the best possible system of minds that are free agents, and yet save *all* of them from perpetuated disobedience to the laws of that system and the consequent suffering of the natural penalties.

It has been shown that the common-sense system teaches that it is not possible, so that it must be by revelation only, that man could gain such a doctrine as the eventual perfect holiness and happiness of the whole human race.

While the Universalists gain great power by not contesting the Augustinian dogma, the Unitarians have taken the ground of a full recognition of the Pelagian doctrine of the perfect *construction* of the *nature* of man. At the same time they have, [288] as a sect, almost universally adopted the Universalist doctrine of the eventual salvation of the whole of our race.

Both these sects have embraced men of great popular talents, who have widely influenced the public mind, in their attempts to lessen confidence in the doctrines and sects based on the Augustinian theory.

Meantime, in the scientific world, mental philosophy has made great progress in clear analysis and accurate definitions. The Scotch school of metaphysicians, headed by Reid and Stewart, have clearly developed and established in a popular form, the *principles of reason* and *common sense*; though as professors in a Calvinistic university and community, they never ventured to apply these principles to the investigation of religious theories as to the “depraved nature” of the human mind. They passed over the whole question in utter silence.

Still more recently has been developed the system of Phrenology, which is based on the *constitutional diversities* in mental faculties. This system has effectively warred on the theological

theory of implanted evil propensities, by teaching that every faculty, when developed and regulated aright, tends to the best good of the race, so that the extinction of any faculty or propensity would not be an improvement, but rather an injury to the constitution of mind.

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At the same time, by the influence of our schools, our colleges, our pulpits, our popular lectures and our wide-spread periodicals, both religious and secular, the mind of all classes has been rising to a larger development, and to clearer and more discriminating views of mental and moral science in every department. Thus the people are gradually throwing off the chains of ecclesiastical authority and assuming that liberty of thought and action, which their Almighty Father designed as the chief birth-right of all his intelligent offspring.

## Chapter XLIII. Practical Tendencies of the Two Systems.

In the preceding pages it has been shown that the common-sense system presents an intelligible, practical and consistent standard of right and wrong, by which we can judge clearly of the character and conduct, both of the Creator and of his creatures.

The mind of the Creator existing from all eternity, independently of his own will, is the pattern of perfectness in the construction of mind. He has formed and sustains a system fitted to his own perfections. The chief end of this system is happiness-making on the greatest possible scale. In order to this,



his *laws*, by which the most possible good with the least possible evil will be secured, must be discovered and obeyed.

Accordingly, all that tends to secure happiness without evil is right, and all that needlessly lessens or destroys happiness is wrong. Every effort to discover the laws of God and to obey them is right and pleasing to him as promoting his chief desire and great end. This view furnishes a foundation for clear conceptions in every practical question of right and wrong. What is *for the best* as discovered by reason and experience? This is the great question, when we have no direct revelation from God. And even when revelation intervenes, it must be only in regard to *general rules*, leaving it still a matter of experience and discussion in *applying* these rules to the multitudes of varying cases in human experience. Thus, for example, a command to be honest toward all, leaves innumerable questions to be settled as to what *is* honest and fair in the multiplied cases arising between man and man. [290]

But we always have the great principle of common sense to guide us, that *whatever is for the best is right*, leaving it for reason and experience to settle what is and what is not for the best.

But in contrast the Augustinian system, in many ways, tends to becloud the mind in regard to practical questions of right and wrong.

Thus the assumption that there are no principles in the human mind that enable us to judge of the character and conduct of God; that we have no means of learning what is the object or end for which all things are made; that man is so depraved as to be disqualified to know what is right and wrong, except as taught by revelations from God; and at the same time disqualified to interpret such revelations until regenerated, or by the help of a priesthood; all this tends to create the feeling of incertitude as to any question of right and wrong, while the abuses of priestly interpretations have so often set the Bible in opposition to our moral sense and common sense as greatly to increase the evil. [291]

Add to this, the assumption that there is no true virtue in any acts of the unregenerate, but that all their moral deeds are sin, and only sin, and the perplexity is increased as to what is right and what is wrong moral action.

Again, the fact that salvation from eternal misery is possible only to those who have gained a new "nature," while it is often seen that some of those received into churches as having this new nature, are not so charitable, amiable, just or honest, as many who are not thus admitted, and the mind is still more beclouded as to the real nature of right and wrong in practical conduct.

Again, the manner in which this new nature is recognized by those appointed to decide who are regenerated and who are not, in order to admit to or exclude from churches, still farther increases the difficulty. The questions often propounded on such occasions relate mainly to certain states of feeling toward God or Christ, or to certain doctrines involved in the Augustinian theory. If replies to these are satisfactory, the candidate is pronounced regenerated and received to the church.

Meantime, ever since the days of Luther, the doctrine of "justification by faith," in opposition to "salvation by works," has been assumed to be the foundation principle, both of Protestantism and of true piety, while there has been great indistinctness of conception as to the true meaning of these terms. At the time of the great conflict between Romanism and the Reformers, the grand evil to be combated was a reliance for salvation on the prescribed outward rites and forms of the church without any reference to an internal spiritual principle. The attempt of the Reformers was to substitute for these outward forms that spiritual principle which consists in a *ruling purpose to discover and to obey the will of God according to the teachings of Christ*, whom they regarded as "God manifest in the flesh." They recognized the fact that no man ever did or ever could live without some violations of the laws of God, so that no man could be saved on the ground of perfect obedience to law. Instead of this they

assumed that man could gain eternal life by “becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus,” meaning by this that “new life” which consists in ceasing to live to please self, and living to please God in Christ as the chief end of life, by earnest conformity to his will as learned either by reason and experience or by the Bible.

This is what they intended by faith in Jesus Christ. And the opposite doctrine of “salvation by works” was that which the Romish church was urging, viz., conformity to her outward rites and forms.

But in process of time, and for want of clear conceptions and clear teaching, it came about that the real good works, commanded by Christ, as a part of the love of God required, were confounded with the rites and forms, and outward deeds commanded by the church, and which may be performed without the principle of love to Christ, which is exhibited in obedience to his teachings. The result has been that the teachings and writings of many Protestants often make the impression that the good works of a pure morality are of no avail and often very much in the way of a man's final salvation. Thus has arisen the distinction often made between good *moral* men and good *religious* men. This classification rests entirely on the Augustinian dogma, that until the depraved nature received from Adam is regenerated, all the moral acts of men, however virtuous and excellent, are “sin, and sin only.” [293]

The true meaning of “justification by faith and not by works,” is that men are not to be saved by *actually finding out* in all possible cases what is for the best and then *doing* it, which no man ever did or ever can do without mistake; but rather by *a ruling purpose to discover and to obey* all the laws of the Creator. This last is the *spiritual* principle in opposition to mere *outward acts*. It is *practical* faith in God which is to save the soul of man. All, therefore, who believe Christ to be God are “justified” by *faith* in Christ. That is, they are regarded and treated as just and righteous, when they have this internal principle of obedience to

Christ, even though they are never free from actual transgression of law, either known or unknown. Thus the ancient patriarchs were saved by faith in Christ, he being the God of the old dispensation as much as of the new.

That this is the sense in which the Reformers used the words “justification, or salvation by faith,” in opposition to “salvation by works,” may easily be proved. At the same time, it is as easy to show that they used this term in another sense also. But at this time no reference will be made to any other use than the one under consideration. Their other use of this term in reference to the atonement of Jesus Christ will be referred to hereafter.

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The preceding exhibits the several ways in which the Augustinian theory tends to becloud the mind in regard to practical questions of right and wrong. These tendencies have been more or less counteracted by the implanted principles of reason. Still more have they been rectified by the steady and clear teachings of the Bible, which never, when truly interpreted, contradict either the moral sense or common sense of man, but rather strengthen them and guide them aright.

## Chapter XLIV. Tendencies of the Two Systems in the Training of Children.

It has been shown that the common-sense system results from the implanted principles of mind, so that no person can be entirely free from its influence.

The Augustinian system has also been shown in its Calvinistic and Arminian tendencies.

The Calvinistic form, making it certain that, owing to the depravity of nature consequent on Adam's sin, every moral act is sin and only sin, while there is no revealed mode of securing regeneration, leads to hopeless inefficiency and neglect of religious advantages. The Arminian form, maintaining the efficacy of certain rites and ceremonies in securing regeneration, tends to a disastrous dependence on outward observances.

Those parents who are trained in the Calvinistic school, usually *begin* education more or less on the common-sense theory that children can and do please God when they are obedient, gentle, kind, self-denying and conscientious. Prayers and hymns are also taught to the little ones that make this impression. [295]

But when advancing years bring the pulpit and other Calvinistic influences to bear, these impressions, more or less, fade away, and are followed by the depressing feeling that nothing that a child does is either good or pleasing to the heavenly Father till the "wicked heart" is changed by God, and that there is no definite, practical mode of securing this change. The consequence, in many cases, is, that all prayer and all attention to religious instruction ceases, and a desperate course of worldliness and departure from all recognition of God ensues. In other cases, the natural result of this Augustinian theory is more or less counteracted by conscience, common sense and the Bible.

On the other hand, the Arminian view of the efficacy of rites and means of grace sanctioned by God as the mode of securing regeneration, has led to great stress on the use of those rites and forms. The Catholic and a portion of the Episcopal church, have taught that the rite of baptism was the appointed mode of remedying the depravity engendered from Adam. And so indispensable was it deemed to the salvation of infants, that not only laymen, but women were allowed to administer this rite at the approach of death, when no priest could be obtained, lest

the infant soul should go to endless perdition with the taint of Adam's sin unremoved.

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There have been great dissensions in the Episcopal church as to the efficacy of baptism. Some have taught that regeneration was imparted by this rite. Others have taught that this rite secured the implanting of "a seed," or some new mysterious principle, which if cherished and cultivated by the church, would result in Christian character. Those who hold this view, rely chiefly on the training of children in the church as the appointed mode of securing their salvation.

That branch of the Arminian school which left the Episcopal church under Wesley and his associates, were driven off by the laxity and want of spiritual life consequent on these tendencies to reliance on rites and forms. In place of this, they urged the doctrine of instantaneous regeneration, to be gained by certain means of grace. According to these teachers, regeneration consists in the return of God's Spirit to the soul, which is withheld in consequence of Adam's sin. The tendency of this view was to lessen reliance on educational training and to exalt the importance of other means of grace by which regeneration seemed to be secured, and to which the Bible, as was claimed, promised success.

Thus, in the Arminian sects, where the efficacy of rites and forms by a regularly ordained and authoritative priesthood has been relinquished, educational training has conformed more to the Calvinistic view. As eternal salvation depends on securing regeneration, every thing is made secondary to those methods by which regeneration is to be gained.

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The Episcopal Arminians, therefore, depend more on educating the young aright, and have little dependence on revivals, while the Methodist Arminians look less to education and more to revivals and other modes of securing religious excitement.

But the foundation difficulty alike of the Calvinists, the Episcopal Arminians and the Methodist Arminians, is the assumption

that *regeneration of a ruined nature* is the thing to be sought, both by children and by adults, as the indispensable prerequisite to salvation, and that “the means of grace” are not for the training and development of a perfect nature, but to gain from God the cure of a ruined and helpless one.

In contrast to this, the common-sense system recognizes all that is practical in any of the three methods. It teaches that man's *nature* is perfect, and yet that he is utterly helpless without the *knowledge, training* and *motives*, for which he is dependent alike on God and on man. It teaches that this nature can be trained to “a new life” by educational instrumentalities and by a slow and gradual process. At the same time it teaches, that when men have lived a worldly life there may be a *sudden* change of character by *voluntarily* commencing a life of love and obedience to God, in place of a life of unregulated self-indulgence.

Since the days of Pelagius and Augustine, there has never been any large body of Christians who have trained children on the common-sense system dissevered from the Augustinian theory. This experiment is yet to be tried before its full and proper tendency can be truly developed.

The Unitarian sect, who reject the Augustinian dogma, also reject some of the fundamental principles of the common-sense system, especially that on which the whole system of moral and religious duty and motive rests, *the dangers of the race* in the invisible world, and the *power of motive* secured by “God manifest in the flesh” as the long-suffering and self-denying Creator, coming to aid his creatures by his teaching, sympathy, example, and abounding love. [298]

## Chapter XLV. The People Rejecting the Augustinian System.—Position of Theologians.

It is the object of what follows to present the evidence that *the people* are rejecting the Augustinian system, while they are retaining the system of common sense, as that alone which is taught in the Bible.

Preliminary to this, a brief statement of the prominent points of these systems, where their antagonism is most practical and apparent, will be allowed.

The Augustinian system teaches that on account of Adam's sin, man is born with a *nature so totally depraved*, that he never performs any truly virtuous acts till this nature is regenerated; that the true church of God on earth consists only of those who are thus regenerated; and that a visible church consists of an organization of persons who profess to possess a nature that has been re-created, so that they perform truly virtuous acts, as the unregenerated never do.

In opposition to this, the common-sense system teaches that man is born with a perfect nature, so that he can and does act virtuously without any change in this nature; also that the true church of God on earth consists of all those whose chief end and earnest purpose is to discover and to obey all his laws; and a visible church consists of any who associate by some outward organization to aid each other in attempts to discover and to obey the laws of God.

The evidence that the people are rejecting the former, and assuming the latter view as that which is taught in the Bible, will



now be presented under these heads:

- The present position of theologians;
- The state of the church;
- The position of the pastors of churches;
- The state of popular education;
- The position of woman;
- The position of Young America;
- The position of the religious and secular press.

## Present Position of Theologians.

In attempting to portray the present state of the theological world, it is needful first to distinguish between a class which may distinctively be termed theologians and the much larger class which are pastors of the people.

The two classes are so commingled that it would be impossible to draw any line so exact as to arrange all in these two classes; for sometimes the same person is both theologian and pastor. Still there is foundation for classification as distinct as ordinarily exists in regard to other professions where men combine diverse pursuits.

In attempting this classification, it must be noticed that the religious world is divided into great denominations, each having its theological schools, its colleges, its theological magazines and its religious newspapers. [300]

All these are conducted by men whose business is not that of pastors, and yet a great majority of whom were educated for this office by a regular theological training. Meantime, their position, professional reputation and daily bread depend on maintaining the particular peculiarities in doctrine and practice of a given sect. By this is meant, that should they publicly avow a renunciation of the peculiarities that distinguish their sect, they would suffer in the public estimation of their supporters, and be immediately

removed from their professional employment. It is this class who are usually among the chief leaders of each denomination, and who therefore are exposed to all the difficulties and temptations which beset those whose power, influence, profession and pecuniary support are more or less connected with a *conservative* course in all matters of religious opinion—difficulties and dangers to which a pastor is much less exposed, so long as he maintains his hold on the confidence and affection of his people, who are his chief protection against theological persecution of any kind.

The first class depend on a whole denomination for reputation and a livelihood; the last class depend chiefly on their own people. The first class, on every practical question, must regard the views and opinions of a sect, as leaders and guardians of the interests of a great organization, whose very existence depends on the dominance of certain opinions. The latter class must chiefly regard the highest spiritual good of the souls committed to their care.

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Thus, for example, the Baptist theological professors, and editors of religious periodicals, must maintain that baptism by immersion is the only scriptural mode of admission to the visible church of God and to the sacrament, or give up their influence, reputation and professional livelihood. And they must sustain the organized interests of that sect as its most trusted and talented leaders. Moreover, the very existence of the sect and of their position as its leaders, depend on the maintenance of this tenet, for it is this alone that separates them from the Congregational sect.

In like manner, the Congregational theological professor and editor must maintain that form of church organization or give up his post. And so the Presbyterian, Episcopal and Methodist theological professors and editors are equally bound.

This representation does not necessarily imply any thing invidious. If it is regarded as a duty to keep up the sectarian

divisions, which, as has been shown, all result from the Augustinian dogma, then men must be supported to do it by theological schools and periodicals. And when men are put into positions for the express purpose of sustaining the peculiar views of a sect, it is not honest for them to hold these positions after they can no longer conscientiously do the work they are hired to perform.

But each pastor is the leader of his flock; and their opinions and practices are more or less at his control as their religious teacher. And so long as he can carry his people with him he is independent of every other ecclesiastical power. True, he may be censured, deposed and excluded from a given sect or party, but his people only have to declare themselves independent, and that they choose to retain him as their religious teacher, and no one can harm him as to his professional employment or his support. [302]

Thus it is that the pastors of churches have fewer of those difficulties to meet which restrain the chief theological leaders of a sect.

We are now prepared to notice the present position of theologians in this country.

It has been shown that the chief theological conflicts, since the days of Augustine, and also the chief sects, have resulted from attempts to throw off the dogma introduced by him in some one of its developments. Thus the conflict headed by Luther was against the substitution of external rites and forms resulting from man's helpless depravity for an internal principle of love and obedience.

The conflict commenced by Arminius was to maintain man's ability to do something by his own efforts to gain eternal life, in opposition to the utter inability taught by Calvinism.

The conflict commenced by Wesley and his associates, was to rouse men from a resting in outward rites and forms and educational training, by making instantaneous regeneration a practicable aim, and one to be secured by the use of "the means of grace."

The conflict commenced by President Edwards was to remedy the Calvinistic tendency to hopeless inefficiency and waiting for God to regenerate, by insisting on man's ability to obey all that God requires.

The conflict led by the New Haven school of divines, was, in fact, an attempt to cut up the Augustinian system by the root, in maintaining that sin consists in the *wrong action* of a right nature, and not in a depraved nature and its inevitable results.

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All these controversies have been carried on, more and more, in the audience of *the people*, who, in the meantime, have been continually advancing in mental culture and knowledge.

Especially has this been the case in this country, where religion has been freed from civil restraints. Several of the religious sects have been so divided on these matters as to involve civil suits to settle questions of property, thus bringing theologians and lawyers on to the same arena. And thus discussions on theological points were reported in secular papers.

This was the case in the rending of the Presbyterian church into the Old and New-school sections. During this controversy, some of the most honored and talented of the clergy were suspended from their pulpit duties and threatened with dismissal from theological professorships, solely on the charge of denying certain points of doctrine of the Augustinian system. And the highest judicature of the nation was called to decide whether the men thus charged had, or had not so departed from orthodox creeds as to warrant the loss of place and income.

In this discussion, the endowments of colleges, of theological schools, and of church property, were so at stake, that the laymen all over the land were obliged to inquire into and understand the merits of a discussion strictly metaphysical and theological.

In Massachusetts, at one time, the whole State was excited by the question whether there were any other *churches* except the *congregations* that worshiped together and supported the minister. This question was argued before the highest court

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of the State, and decided in the negative, while for years the controversy was prolonged.

Meantime, the study of mental science has been introduced into both colleges and schools all over the land, and the sons, and even the daughters of our farmers and mechanics, have gained clearer and more discriminating views on such subjects than can now be found in the writings of Aristotle, Plato, and the wisest men of past ages.

Phrenology, also, has drawn maps of the mental faculties, so that even the senses have been trained to aid in metaphysics.

The pulpit, the press and public lecturers now, when they refer to the *intellect*, the *susceptibilities*, the *will*, the *moral powers*, and use other metaphysical terms, are understood by all.

In short, the human mind has developed in all directions, until it is impossible any longer to conceal absurdities under cover of hard names and metaphysical abstrusities, especially when the practical concerns of this life, as well as the life to come, are equally involved.

Meantime, the most vigorous and acute minds in the various opposing sects and theological schools, have been exhibiting, in magazines and newspapers, the difficulties and absurdities each finds in the creed and teaching of all who differ, while it is the laymen who read and pay for these periodicals. In these, and many other ways, the discussions which once were confined to metaphysicians and theologians, have come before the people, and the Augustinian system has been more and more clearly exhibited as contrary to the moral sense and common sense of mankind. [305]

A few years since, Dr. Edward Beecher published the *Conflict of Ages*, in which, with a calm and Christian spirit and in a popular form, was set forth the difficulties consequent on the Augustinian system, which for ages have agitated all Christendom.

In this work, it is shown that there are "principles of honor and right" which all theologians agree in maintaining that God

must and does regard and obey; that these principles are violated by God on the supposition that he has brought mankind into being in this world with a depraved nature; and finally, that all theories as yet invented by theologians to relieve the Creator from such an imputation are failures, except the theory, which is there presented, of a *pre-existent state*, according to which, mankind were created with perfect natures, which they ruined by sinning, and came into this life to be restored to their former perfect state.

Much that appears in the early portion of this work is from this source. Still more has been gained from that work in the clear manner in which it is there proved, that the Bible does not teach that the sin of Adam had any effect on “the nature” of the human race, and that the interpretation given to the passage in Romans v., which is the chief one claimed as teaching this doctrine, not only has been interpreted wrong, but is contrary to the rendering of the whole Christian world from the apostles to Augustine.

In other words, the *Conflict of Ages* came before *the people* with the claim, that the Augustinian theory of a depraved nature consequent on the sin of Adam, as taught by all theologians of the great Catholic and Protestant sects, is contrary to the moral sense of mankind and entirely unsupported by the Bible.

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This work was read, not only by theologians and pastors, but by intelligent laymen, to an extent never known before of a strictly theological work.

And what was the ground taken by theologians of all schools? They were bound to show to the people, in opposition to this work, if they could, that this Augustinian dogma *was not* contrary to the moral sense of mankind, and that it *was* taught in the Bible.

But not a single attempt of this kind has ever been made. This universal *silence* is as direct a confession of inability to reply as ever was known in the theological world. All that ever has been attempted has been, to show that the theory of a preëxistent state, offered by that author, affords little or no relief, and is without

scriptural authority.

The words of a distinguished theologian and editor of a theological quarterly, addressed to the writer, express the case exactly: “Your brother has succeeded in throwing us all into the ditch, but he has shown us no way to get out.”

That is to say, so long as the doctrine of a *depraved nature* that insures “sin, and only sin,” in every unregenerate mind, is maintained, there is no *satisfactory* way yet devised of proving the wisdom and benevolence of God, by the concessions of theologians themselves.

At the same time, the *Conflict of Ages*, in removing the chief passage in the Bible relied on for proving that *in consequence of Adam's sin* the nature of all men has become depraved, has equally removed the evidence most relied on to prove that there is any such *depravity of nature* taught in the Bible at all. [307]

This universal, tacit concession of theologians of all schools, in reference to this famous passage of Scripture, had no little influence in bringing before the public the volume entitled *Common Sense Applied to Religion, or the Bible and the People* before referred to.

In this work, the *principles of common sense* and the *nature or construction of mind* are by the author exhibited more at large than in this volume. And the common-sense system of religion as thus educed is also set forth, though less completely and extensively than in this work.

The laws of language and interpretation also are introduced into that work for the purpose of showing (in the second volume not yet published) that the common-sense system is also taught in the Bible.

But preliminary to this, it was seen to be important to apply the principles of common sense to prove that the Bible is a collection of *reliable* records, of *reliable* revelations from the Creator to mankind.

It was seen also, that if the Augustinian system is really taught in these writings, *it is impossible to prove them to be reliable revelations* from God, as is set forth at large in chapter 34 of this present volume.

For this reason, in the Addenda to the first volume the Augustinian theory is introduced, and very briefly shown to be, not only contrary to the common sense and moral sense of mankind, but also without support from the Bible.

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Before publication, this work was sent to a large number of those regarded as among the most acute and profound theologians of the several classes described herein, with the request that if they detected inaccuracies as to *facts*, or *fallacious reasonings*, they would point them out for revision. In making this appeal it was stated that the writer had little taste for metaphysics or theology, and had been driven to them in the stress of great sorrow and under a tremendous pressure of motive as narrated in the Introduction.

Several of those thus addressed, returned criticisms and remarks in reply. The book was then issued, in which the author appeared not in the attitude of a teacher, but as an inquirer. And the closing inquiries were:

Are these principles of common sense accepted?

Is *the system* of natural religion evolved by their aid accepted?

Is the Augustinian theory of depravity, as tried by these principles and the rules of interpretation, supported either by reason or the Bible?

The work, as thus revised, was again sent to these same theologians, and it was noticed in most of the periodicals.

The result was the same as was accorded to the arguments of the *Conflict of Ages*. Some criticisms on style, language and minor matters appeared in the notices of the book, but the above main questions thus submitted were met with an ominous *silence*.

None of the theologians of any school has pointed out any misstatement of any specific fact; nor have they attempted to



dispute the principles of common sense set forth, or the results of their application in the *system* thus evolved. Nor have they attempted to show that the passage in the Bible on which the Augustinian theory chiefly rests, is sanctioned by the interpretations of the apostolic ages, or that the interpretation of it in the *Conflict of Ages*, is incorrect. [309]

Moreover, in the columns of the *Independent*, in reply to their notice of her work, the following statement was made by the author:

“The case stands thus: I am aiming to present, in a short and popular form, in my next volume, the *evidence* that, in the Bible, we have *reliable* and *authoritative* revelations from the Creator, and to educe from these documents the true answer, not only to the question, ‘What must *we do* to be saved?’ but to the grand question of my own profession, ‘What must we do the most effectively to train the young mind to virtue and immortality?’

“At my first step I am met by ‘Young America,’ with such an honest, amiable, and powerful leader as Theodore Parker. Regarded as holding the creed in which I was educated, and most of my life have advocated, I am thus interrogated:

“ ‘Is not the Creator the author of the constitution of mind?

“ ‘If the Creator *had power* to make it right and yet has made it wrong, is he not proved by *his works* (the only mode of learning his character) to be unwise and malevolent, and is not a *reliable* revelation from such a being, to teach the way of virtue and happiness, impossible?

“ ‘Do you not claim that the Bible teaches that God *has proved* his power to make mind perfect by creating angels and Adam with *perfect minds*, and at the same time, as a penalty for the sin of the first parent, has made such a constitution of things, that every human mind comes into existence with a ruined and depraved nature, that never *can*, or never *will*, act right till God re-creates it, while as yet, for the great mass of mankind, he never remedies this wrong?’

“Do you not claim that the Bible teaches that no human being has any right and acceptable feelings or actions till God thus re-creates the mind?

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“If the Bible *does* teach thus, we can find a nobler Creator and more perfect system of religion by the light of nature without any revelation at all, while the God of the Bible, by its own showing, is *proved* unworthy of confidence as a teacher of the way to virtue and happiness.’

“Pressed by these questions, I have searched the Bible in vain to find any such doctrines in its pages. I find nothing of the kind, and so I acknowledge that I have been in the wrong, and relinquish the Augustinian dogma in which I have been educated, as unsupported either by reason or revelation; and first privately and then publicly ask for *any evidence* to sustain it.

“I come before the public, not as a teacher of metaphysics or theology, but as an *inquirer* for the truth. I state, as nearly as I am able, the difficulties I have met, and take every possible method to avoid mistake and misrepresentation in regard to the opinions of both those with whom I agree and those from whom I differ.

“I assume that theology is capable of improvement; that Protestant divines are no more infallible than Catholic; that a humble and teachable spirit is the distinctive mark of a Christian teacher; and that the courage and manliness that can acknowledge mistakes is not only more Christian, but even in the eye of the world, is more honorable and dignified than any assumption of infallibility, however well sustained.

“In publicly meeting such an amount of talent, learning, and influence as seems now to be arrayed against me, I deem that it in no way implies a presumptuous or self-confident spirit. I concede that many of those I thus meet are my equals or superiors in natural abilities, and certainly all are so in learning. I believe also they are men of conscientious integrity, and that, probably, most of them, would go to the stake rather than knowingly to sacrifice their allegiance to

truth, duty, and God. And I believe that if I have any special mission in this matter, it is to illustrate the truth that *common sense*, without any unusual talents or learning, united to a sincere desire to learn and to obey the truth, are sufficient for all men and all women, in all important decisions for this life, and as much so for the life to come.

“Nor do I regard this as a resort to old and *unpractical* meta-physical abstrusities. It rather involves that great *practical* question of life, before which all others fade into nothingness—that question which meets every parent and every teacher for every child—which meets every human being, as in sorrow, or disappointment, or sickness, or death, the soul asks from its Creator help and guidance for the dread and eternal future. Instead of leading to metaphysical and theological abstrusities, my hope is to entice from their dark and sorrowful mazes to the plain and cheerful path of common sense.

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“The great question involved is, have *the people* a reliable revelation from the Creator in the Bible, and are they qualified to decide what are its true teachings on that great question of life, ‘What must we do to be saved?’

“And at the same time, the great practical question for my sex is no less at issue, ‘How are we best to train the mind of childhood to virtue and eternal happiness?’ These questions surely are capable of being, and should be, discussed in the language of the common people, and not in those scholastic and metaphysical terms which they can not, and will not seek to comprehend.

“In these circumstances I endeavor first to meet the charge of my friends of the Independent, that I have misrepresented the views of that class of theologians with whom they fraternize, and with whom I claim to agree.

“I offer the following as the exact words in which I have heard the New Haven divines express their opinions, and which, on my application, were sent to me as a correct

statement of their views, as taught for more than a quarter of a century, in the New Haven School of Theology.

“They maintain that ‘man, *after* the fall of Adam, was as truly created in God’s image as was Adam; that Christ was tempted in all points like as we are; that the stronger are our inferior propensities, if we govern them, as we can, by the morally right act of the will, the greater is the moral excellence of the act. They do not maintain that man has full power to *change* his depraved nature without divine aid, for they have never supposed he has a depraved nature *in any sense*, or a corrupt nature, much less a sinful nature, to be changed; but rather that *in nature* he is like God. In discussions, they have always opposed the use of language by my father and Mr. Barnes of a corrupt nature, not sinful.’

“I present this as an exact statement of my own views, and I claim that, on the point of the native character of the human mind, it is the *Pelagian* ground in opposition to the *Augustinian*, and that no *third* ground is possible. If I am wrong in either particular, I ask to be enlightened by the editors of the Independent, and by the New Haven divines themselves. I claim also that, so far as I can see, this is the *only* ground on which the argument above stated, as that of ‘Young America,’ can be successfully met.

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“I understand the editors of the Independent that they occupy the Augustinian ground, and I therefore appeal to them, as well as to the theologians of Princeton, Andover, Union, and Lane, to instruct me and the public *wherein* I have misstated their views, and above all, to instruct us how, with this dogma fastened to it, the Bible can be sustained against the above infidel argument. In reference to this, should any thing be attempted, I offer these questions for attention:

“Is there any passage in the Bible that teaches that the minds of the angels or of Adam were not made exactly like those of the descendants of Adam, and subjected to the same slow and gradual process of acquisition and development?

“I have looked and inquired in vain to find any such passage, or to find any person who ever found one.

“Is there any passage in the Bible that teaches that the *nature* or constitution of the mind of man is not *the best that is possible in the nature of things*? I have never been able to find any.

“Is there any passage in the Bible that teaches that man has received a *ruined nature in consequence of Adam's sin*?

“I have read long arguments from Dr. Hodge of Princeton, proving that there is no such thing taught in Romans v., the only passage ever claimed to teach this doctrine that I ever heard of. My brother, Dr. E. Beecher, thus concludes a long argument on this subject in the Conflict of Ages: ‘The doctrine that our depraved natures or our sinful conduct have been *caused* or *occasioned* by the sin of Adam, is not asserted in any part of God's word.’ ”

The high, moral and intellectual character of the gentlemen to whom this appeal was thus made, forbids the idea that they would allow such statements and arguments and appeals to go unnoticed if they felt able to afford any light in reply to these questions. It was their highest duty as teachers of theology, if they could do it, to show how to answer the argument of “Young America” against the Bible as containing the Augustinian dogma; to show that the passage introduced above as a specimen of the Pelagianism taught by the New Haven divines either *is not* the doctrine they teach or is not Pelagianism; to show that there *are* some passages in the Bible that teach that the nature or the constitution of man is not the best possible in the nature of things, and *is* different from that of the unsinning angels or unfallen Adam; and finally, to show that there *is* some passage in the Bible that teaches that the depraved nature of man was caused or occasioned by the sin of Adam. [313]

Not only the professors and editors thus addressed, but all the theologians of all schools, so far as the writer can learn, have

maintained a profound *silence* on all these questions. The *Independent* also declined any *discussion* thus: "We have no intention of surrendering our columns to a *theological* or *psychological controversy* such as might be introduced by the communication we now publish."

The writer after this, in several cases, suggested to some of the most active and intelligent minds in some of the above theological seminaries, to endeavor to secure a full discussion of these topics in their lecture rooms, and was told, in reply, that all such efforts were decidedly discouraged.

She also addressed notes to several editors of the secular press to see if their columns could be used for the purpose. From the one whose past freedom led to the expectation of an affirmative answer, the reply was, that he had promised his orthodox friends that he would not *needlessly* introduce *heresy* into his paper, and that the greatest of all heresies was *common sense*!

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Finally, on consulting one of the most shrewd and best informed publishers in regard to the future volume, he expressed the opinion that "in whatever else theologians differed, they were all united in the determination that the investigation proposed by the author *should not be permitted*."

This being so, the author has concluded, and the public probably will conclude, that the most profound and acute theologians of this country have relinquished the idea of attempting any farther defense of the Augustinian dogma.

## Chapter XLVI. Present Position of the Church.

The word “church,” as used in this article, refers chiefly to those close corporations which claim to be regenerated persons, whose depraved nature, transmitted from Adam, has been so far rectified by re-creation, that they are, more or less, in the practice of true virtue, of which the unregenerate world are supposed to be totally destitute.

In this sense they claim to be “the saints,” “the righteous,” “the elect,” “the children of God,” “the salt of the earth,” “the light of the world,” “a holy nation,” “a peculiar people.”

While the members of these churches do not claim that all who do not come into their organizations are of the opposite class, they do, by their profession and admission to such churches, claim to be of the regenerated class, to whom the above terms of the Bible are to be applied, while the great majority of mankind, not in these organizations, are called by them “the world,” “the unregenerate,” “sinners,” “the wicked,” and by other similar terms. [315]

So long as the great body of the people were guided chiefly by ecclesiastics, and were thus trained to believe that heaven was to be gained by some unintelligible “change of nature,” imparted by priestly agency, or by some supernatural intervention of God's Spirit, these claims were regarded with mystified fear and doubt.

But the more intelligence and discussion have spread among the people, the more such claims have been questioned and distrusted.

Many things have combined to increase such distrust. Among these may be mentioned the discussions already noticed, conducted by theologians themselves, by which the absurdities and inconsistencies maintained by each, were exposed by all the others.

Another cause of distrust has been the great variety of *tests* and *signs of regeneration*. One class of religious teachers claim a certain kind of experience as indispensable to admission to the church. A second class reprobate this sign and set up another.

A third class depreciate both and insist upon still another. And thus it is made apparent, that theologians do not agree among themselves what the “depraved nature” of man consists in, nor what are the true signs or evidence of its “saving change.”

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Another cause of distrust has arisen from attempts to carry out a system of church discipline. Some churches expel persons for interpreting the Bible in a different mode from themselves or their creed. Others expel their members for vending alcoholic drinks, or for dancing, or for holding slaves, or for marrying the sister of a deceased wife. Meantime, the sins of pride, anger, covetousness, avarice, worldliness, evil temper, unfairness in business, hard dealings with the poor, and many other developments of selfishness, often are made no bar to full and honorable communion.

Again, in churches and sects that are most strenuous in attempting to maintain by church discipline a uniformity of interpretation of the Bible conformed to their own, it has come to pass that orthodoxy of interpretation is sometimes *practically* placed before morality of conduct. Thus, if a member of a church or a minister is suspected of denying the supreme divinity of Christ, or the depravity and need of regeneration of *nature* in man, a great agitation is produced, and attempts are made, by church discipline, to rectify the evil as very dangerous. In the meantime, a slanderous tongue, or dishonest dealings, or selfish worldliness, excite less concern, and arouse to less effort. The inevitable result is an impression that churches and ministers place conformity of interpretation to their own creeds or opinions before morality, and consequently the feeling is engendered, *that church organizations, founded on the Augustinian theory, tend to immorality.*

This impression as to the immoral tendency of such church organizations, has been increased by the fact that in times of special religious excitement, that class of men in many cases, become most prominent as leaders in prayer meetings and other

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public ministries whose character for consistency in private life, or in business matters, is low. It is perceived that this fact does not prevent these men from being regarded as religious men, and as superior to others, who, living exemplary lives, are unable or unwilling to take any conspicuous place in religious movements. And when the period of excitement is passed, it is found that these leaders in revival seasons are no better in their private life and business dealings than before.

It is also sometimes the case that men of high character and position, can not be reached by church discipline as are the humbler members, and thus sin is made respectable by its association at once with talents, influence, wealth and church membership.

In addition to this, the fact that so many ministers and churches have taken such an antagonistic course in the public movements to remove intemperance and slavery from our land, has led to open attacks on ministers and churches in the newspapers, in public lectures and in many other ways, in which their inconsistencies have been held up to public ridicule as well as to more serious denunciation.

So long as the "change of nature," which fits man for heaven, was regarded as a supernatural mystery which no one could understand or explain, while the approved signs of regeneration were submitted only to ministers, deacons, elders and church committees, the matter was exclusively in their keeping.

But as soon as the nature of regeneration began to be explained intelligibly, and men adopted the common-sense view, that the *true* church consists of persons who not only believe in Christ intellectually, but believe *practically, i.e.*, that they are those who *obey* Christ, the case bore a different aspect. "These are the persons," they say, "who organize on the assumption that they are regenerated because they obey Christ's teachings, while so many virtuous persons are shut out as *totally* and *entirely* disobedient,—as never feeling or acting truly virtuously in the sight of God in a single instance!" [318]

The more this questionable assumption has become apparent, the more has been the disturbing influence on both the church and the world.

Multitudes of serious, virtuous and conscientious persons, who are really living Christian lives and making it their chief concern to obey the great Master, have refused to join associations that make such dubious claims.

Still more has been the revulsion from those churches which demand as terms to admission professed belief in certain modes of interpreting the Bible contained in a creed. They, holding the Protestant doctrine that every man is to interpret the Bible for himself, responsible to no man or body of men, can not thus resign their religious liberty.

Meantime, the Christian profession has ceased to be a cross in any way, and has rather become honorable. Those who have been taught that a *purpose* or determination to obey Christ was regeneration, have in many cases formed such a purpose, confessed belief in the needful creeds and joined the church in great numbers, before they had time to ascertain whether they had moral strength to carry out this purpose. They find on trial that they have not, and then discover that though there is an open door to *enter* the church there is none for exit that is not discreditable, and so they remain.

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Others come into the church for worse motives, to secure the confidence, respect and trust that is accorded to that profession. Thus it has come to pass that the class, denominated "the world," has been growing in Christian character and practical virtue, while, as a body, "the church" has been deteriorating.

The writer, in her very extensive travels and intercourse with the religious world, has had unusual opportunities to notice how surely and how extensively the conviction of this fact has been pressed on the minds of the best class of Christian ministers and laymen. More than twenty years ago, one of the most laborious Episcopal bishops of the western States, in reply to inquiries as

to the state of religion in his large diocese replied, "the world is growing better and the church is growing worse."

More than ten years ago, a distinguished lawyer, who had extensive financial business to transact, himself an honored and exemplary member of the church, stated to the writer that he was decided in the conviction that the better class of worldly men were more honorable and reliable in business matters than the majority of church members. When asked to account for this, the reply was that religious men were chiefly interested to get to heaven, which in their view was to be secured "by faith and not by works," and so good works became a secondary concern. But the chief concern of worldly men is to succeed in this life, and they have learned that honesty is the best policy in attaining their chief end.

This statement was repeated to another exemplary church member, who, as a bank officer and lawyer of distinguished integrity, was said to transact more business than any other man in the north-western States. He remarked that the above was exactly his own opinion, and, moreover, he stated that a friend of his, also a church member, who, he said, did more business than any other man in Central New York, had expressed to him the same opinion. [320]

These statements were repeated not long ago to a business man, an exemplary member of an orthodox church in Boston, and he expressed the same opinion. In repeated other instances that need not be enumerated, in various sections of the country, the same opinion has been expressed by intelligent and consistent members of the church, whose prejudices would naturally lead them to the most favorable view of the case.

Such impressions have not been decreased by the recent multiplied defalcations, forgeries, and other business dishonesties that have occurred in the last three years among church members and officers of religious charities in high places of trust.

To all this add the fact, that a large class of men of exemplary

private life, who are spending their time, money and influence for the relief of human woes and the redress of social and political wrongs, are at the same time openly attacking the church as the chief bulwark of these wrongs, while all the delinquencies of ministers and churches are freely discussed and denounced by them *before the people*.

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The result is, that a large portion of the most exemplary and intelligent part of the church feel themselves to be in a dubious and false position, and are daily querying whether *professing* to be a *peculiar* people is not doing more harm than good; and whether it would not be better that the influence of good men should rest on their *unassociated* individual character, and not on organizations making such high profession where the light of goodness is obscured by associated darkness.

Great doubt and skepticism, both in the church and out of it, have thus arisen also as to *what real religion consists in*, and as to what *are* the true claims of the church and its ministry.

Multitudes who would enter the church if it was regarded simply as an association of persons to support the ordinances appointed by Jesus Christ, and to aid each other in obeying his Word, turn from its present position and claims with distrust or disgust. At the same time ministers and church members, feeling these difficulties, have more and more relinquished the Augustinian theory as the basis of their organization, and are advancing to an open avowal of the common-sense ground, *i.e.*, that the real invisible church of Christ embraces all those who acknowledge him as their Lord and Master, and make it their chief aim to understand and to obey his teachings, and that a *visible church* is any association of persons who organize to aid each other in this object, by sustaining a ministry and worship as *they* understand to be most in agreement with the teachings of Christ.

The Episcopal church, both in Great Britain and in this country, although as strictly Augustinian in its articles as any other,

has taken the lead of all others in practically renouncing that system. Any man can more readily secure all the privileges of membership in that church without any confession of faith or public profession of a “change of nature,” than in any of the other Augustinian denominations, and this is probably one great reason of its prosperity in this country. [322]

Any sensible man of good moral character, who should state in a respectful and candid spirit, that he could not conscientiously submit to acknowledging in any form, the rights of any man or body of men to decide for him in regard to the interpretation of the Bible; that according to his understanding of its teachings, he was bound to acknowledge Jesus Christ as his Lord and Master in all matters of faith and practice, and to associate himself with other avowed followers of Christ by some form of open acknowledgment; that as he understands the New Testament, the rites of baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted as forms of such acknowledgment and communion, and that he wished thus to connect himself with the Episcopal church without any creed, confession or acknowledgment; it is believed, that in such a case, there are few ministers and still fewer laymen who would not think it right to gratify such a desire. It is believed that there are many, also, of the highest standing for intellect, piety and position in the Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Congregational churches, who have so far thrown aside the system of Augustine, that they also would receive such a man to their communion on these terms.

In this state of feeling among laymen the developments of sectarianism, which, as has been shown, all relate to matters of rites and forms, resulting from the Augustinian theory, have become more and more suspicious and offensive. Especially is this the case in the newer States, where union and harmony among good men are most needed. [323]

In the volume, of *Common Sense Applied to Religion*, page 342, statistics are introduced from the reports of three of the

largest sects of this country, the Old and New school Presbyterian and the Congregational churches, showing that, owing to their sectarian divisions, *nearly one third* of their churches are without ministers, and *nearly one half* of these churches have not over fifty members, the majority of these being women, while the *relative* amount of ministers to churches is constantly decreasing. Not only in the large, but the smaller towns, the struggle to build churches and support ministers among the various sects, that differ only as to rites and forms, is most mournful, making a taxation both on the East and West for their support which is incredible.

Each denomination is trained to regard itself as “the church of God” and to labor for its increase as a service to God's cause, while the extension of other sects is not so regarded. Although few intelligent Protestants now believe that any forms or rites are indispensable to salvation, each sect regards its own peculiarity as of very great importance. And as all the large sects are divided only on modes of baptism or of church organization there is a constant tendency to magnify these points of difference. Were it not for this, in small places and in new settlements, all would unite in one large, harmonious church, that could not only support its own ordinances, but send of its surplus to supply the destitute. Instead of this, the feuds, envies, jealousies and bickerings between small and struggling churches, of from four to twenty diverse sects, are an occasion of reproach and contempt to the world, and of mortification to all honorable and pious minds.

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So in regard to education, each sect is now acting *as a sect*, in starting new colleges and seminaries, or in endowing those already started, and this often with little reference to the supply provided by other sects. For example, in Ohio there are *twenty-six* endowed colleges, in Indiana there are *eleven*, and thus at the same rate in other new States.

Besides endowments to support professors, vast sums have been spent in buildings, many of them unused for want of pupils.

After each sect has thus gained its colleges, it must struggle to find pupils, and thus multitudes of young boys are pressed into a Latin and Greek course, not at all demanded in their future pursuits, and often forsaken before the college is ever reached. The waste of educational benefactions in these ways is enormous.

These expenditures are all to be met by the laity, and the more the nature of these sectarian divisions is understood, the more distrustful are the people in regard to these profuse expenditures to keep up such divisions. Multitudes of intelligent laymen contribute simply because their clergymen urge it, and entirely without intelligent approval of these things. To their own view, Christianity, as exhibited by contending sects, is a source of more evil feeling, contention and needless expense than of compensating benefits, and distrust and misgiving increase and abound.

In such a position of the organized church, one of the most remarkable indications to be noted is the occurrence of a “re-  
vival” among all sects, in which *the people* take the lead, and theologians and pastors willingly resign their wonted place. All badges of sect are dropped, and the dogmas of Augustine, from which they originated, are thrown aside. The system of common sense is recognized, and its intelligent and harmonizing influence secures, for the first time, the respectful attention of worldly men toward religious developments, which in all past time have been regarded by them with suspicion or scorn.

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## Chapter XLVII. State of the Pastors of Churches.

That portion of the clerical world who, as pastors, are most nearly in connection with the people, are necessarily affected with the influences that touch theologians, and also with the condition of their people.

They find that what they have been trained to regard as a *fundamental* doctrine of the Bible, has ceased to be defended by those who have been their teachers in theology, and who are the leaders of their sect.

They find their own minds very greatly in doubt as to many points taught them in their theological training. They find intelligent laymen refusing to enter the church, whom they feel to be as really followers of Christ in heart and life as any in their churches, while they see many professors of religion as selfish, worldly and unprincipled as most of the world around, and yet they can not exclude them.

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They find intelligent young men coming to them expressing a desire to obey Christ and to unite with his followers in efforts to "be good and to do good," but unable to subscribe to the creed of the church in regard to a depraved nature and associated tenets, while by one expedient or another these pastors waive the difficulty and receive them into their churches. They find intelligent mothers and Sunday-school teachers throwing aside the Augustinian dogma, and training their little ones to believe that they can love and serve their Saviour with their present nature and faculties, and that every attempt to conform to the rules of duty is well-pleasing to God, and a step forward in the path to heaven.

They find intelligent Christian mothers wishing to bring their children to the communion with no other profession than that they desire and intend to obey their Saviour in all things.

In this state of things, some of the most successful and intelligent pastors have decided, in such cases, to cut loose from their creeds and confessions, and to receive to the communion any young children whom their parents believe and feel to be thus



prepared for it.

The position assumed by the parochial clergy in the great revival of the past year, has been a remarkable index.

*The people* of all sects and creeds came together to express their wish and intention to serve the Lord Christ by obedience to his word in heart and life, and their pastors sat with them as equals in all respects before the common Father. They related their experience; they exhorted each other to persevere; they united in prayers for help and guidance, and their pastors ceased to urge attention to those “doctrines” founded on the Augustinian theory, which in former revivals were made so prominent. [327]

There are incidents that have come under the personal observation of the writer the past year in regard to the parochial clergy which are very ominous on account of the character of the persons involved, who not only are among the first in intelligence and influence, but may properly be denominated, in reference to the leading class of pastors, “representative men.”

In one case, a young man of great intelligence and moral worth, who might properly be regarded as a “representative man” of the better portion of “Young America,” informed the writer that he and his wife had accepted the general invitation of their pastor to receive the communion. Inasmuch as the doctrines of the creed of that church were not accepted by him, the inquiry was made whether this step was taken with the approval of his pastor, and the reply was in the affirmative.

The inquiry was then made, on what ground he united in this ordinance. The reply was, substantially, that he wished to be good and to do good, guided by the teachings of Christ; that he wished to be united in feeling and action with good men, who cherish the same aims, and also to make it manifest that he was associated with that class; that he regarded this sacramental ordinance as instituted for this very purpose, while his minister, as a consistent Protestant, did not insist that he should interpret the Bible according to his creed or be shut out from this privilege.

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In another case, an intelligent mother who had trained her children exclusively on the common-sense theory, informed the writer that she had taken them to the Lord's Table with the consent of one of the most distinguished pastors of the land, without any examination or admission to the church. She simply narrated to him her own opinion that her children from early years had learned to love the Saviour and to be conscientious in daily efforts to obey his teachings; that they and she felt that they were commanded by their Saviour openly to acknowledge themselves as his followers, "even to the death," if need be, in order to fulfill all righteousness, and that they did not and could not believe the creed of that church, nor in the right of any man, or body of men, to exact such belief under penalty of exclusion from the table of their Lord.

The pastor welcomed these lambs of the fold with their mother, and felt that had he driven them away it would have been in defiance to their Saviour's word, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

In still another case, one of the most honored Congregational pastors of New England openly declared to friends of the writer that it was in vain to try to preach this Augustinian system any longer; that *the people would not hear it*, and that he should have to preach to bare walls if he attempted it any more.

Many other similar incidents that have come to the knowledge of the writer in different quarters of the country, might be added, but the above will suffice as illustrative indications of the present position of pastors.

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## Chapter XLVIII. The Position of Popular Education.

It is a significant fact in regard to the religious training of the young in this country, that the most influential leaders of popular education, especially in its earlier stages of improvement, have been laymen, and laymen who reject the Augustinian dogma, and all organizations founded on it. And yet they are men who believe in, and have exhibited by their example, the great duty of love to God and love to man, in a life of obedience to the physical, social and moral laws of God.

Meantime, the laws of the land which forbid any exclusive favor to any religious sect, do, in fact, forbid any religious training in common schools that conflicts with the common-sense system. It has been shown (chapter 39) that the larger Christian sects are all founded, in their distinctive features, on the Augustinian dogma. This being so, the law that excludes distinctive sectarian teaching excludes the Augustinian system.

In regard to smaller sects, not Augustinian, the distinctive doctrine of the Unitarian creed is such a *unity* in regard to the Creator as forbids the idea of more than one divine person who has all the attributes of God. This, it has been shown in chapter 18, is contrary to the common-sense system.

The distinctive doctrine of the Universalist creed forbids the idea of the perpetuated existence of sinful and miserable beings; this, also, is contrary to the common-sense system, as shown in chapter 28. Thus the chief sects that are not counted as Augustinian or Evangelical, are also excluded from introducing their distinctive tenets into the common schools of the people.

Moreover, while the people, in the schools under their control, thus forbid by law any religious training which conflicts with the common-sense system, they permit prayers to God and the use of the Bible, *provided* the privilege is not used, in opposition to the spirit of the above law, to introduce distinctive sectarian tenets.

It is also very noticable that in Great Britain the most influential patrons of popular education, and writers on the training of the young, have, though members of the established church, vigorously opposed the Augustinian system. Archbishop Whateley has written a most powerful argument, and one which none have attempted to answer, in favor of the common-sense view of church organization. He also has given all his influence to the establishment of schools for the people, in which every parent and child shall, as far as possible, be *free* in regard to religious matters.

The beloved and honored name of Arnold, dear to every liberal educator of every sect and name, has set the example of a religious training that is based entirely on the common-sense system. And probably there is not a man living or dead whose influence has been so extensive in guiding public opinion on this subject. Without openly denying the articles, or forsaking the established church, Whateley, Arnold and their associates have warred on the Augustinian theory and its offsets more energetically and effectively than any two men that can be named.

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Thus, it appears, that the people themselves, and the chief leaders in popular education, have decided that no teaching that conflicts with the system of common-sense shall be introduced into the common schools.

## Chapter XLIX. The Position of Woman as Chief Educator of Mind.

One of the most important indices of religious change is the advance in the character of female education during the last thirty years.

Fifty years ago, to read, write and cipher, and a few accomplishments, were all that were attempted in the school education of women. A little history and one or two other branches were added in some of the higher schools.

It being assumed that the *equal* culture of *all* the faculties, so as to insure a *well-balanced* mind, is the chief aim of all education, it is probable that the mental culture of women in this country for the last thirty years has approached nearer to the true standard than was ever known in the experience of any other nation.

The training to the handicraft of the needle, even if only for ornament, the measure of domestic duty that most young girls learn to perform, the culture of the musical taste and the art of drawing, the combination in female schools of mathematics, languages and general knowledge, and the immense variety of culture from lectures and general reading, all have tended to develop the female mind on a scale of advancement and equable culture never before known.

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The result is a generation of women well trained for high and independent thought and action. At the same time, it is probable that there never before was so large a proportion of the best educated women who were so decidedly conscientious and religious.

It is granted by all, that it is to woman more than to man, that is committed the chief business of training the human mind at its most important stage of development. It is granted, also, that in order to success in culture, both physical and mental, it is the first step to understand *the nature* of that which is to be trained and developed. The first question, then, to every woman, in reference to her first duty is, what is *the nature* of the minds given us to train?

In this light, it is as if a gardener were to receive some rare and delicate plant with directions from his lord to train it with the utmost care; his first inquiry would be, What is its nature? Does it require sun or shade? Does it need a moist or a sandy soil? Is it a climber, or a shrub, or a tree? Or, it is as if a young machinist should receive from his master a collection of wheels and springs, and a great variety of delicate machinery, with the direction to put them together and adjust them for right action. His first inquiry would be, what is the *nature* of the thing to be thus arranged? For what *end* or *purpose* is it constructed? What is the *mode of working it* which will best accomplish the end designed?

In like manner woman receives from her Lord the delicate physical form and immortal spirit of her child to train *aright* for an existence never to end. She asks of those who are her Lord's messengers for this very end, what is *the nature* of this wonderful and delicate organization? What is the *end* or *purpose* for which it is made? What is the *mode of training* which will best accomplish the end designed?

The preceding pages exhibit the kind of replies that for ages have met these heart-wrenching queries of womanhood. From most, it is shown, she hears that the *ruined nature* of her offspring is such that she can do absolutely nothing to secure any right development. Others tell her that no one knows what was the end or purpose for which the mind of her child was made. Others tell her that no one knows what are *right* means in regard to

the training and action of mind. Others tell her that the mind of her child is constructed wrong, and that nothing can be done to secure its right training and development, but in some way to induce its Maker to re-create it.

Meantime, also, her teachers are in conflict as to what is the difficulty with the *nature* of her child, and what would be its right action, and what is to be done to secure its right development. At the same time, the greater portion of the teachings on this great matter are so enveloped in abstruse theological and metaphysical technics as to baffle the wisest in their attempts to gain clear and definite ideas from them.

In this state of the case many sensible mothers and teachers, all over the land, have adopted a course dictated by their own common sense and their experience of the *nature* of mind, as discovered in their attempts to train it. In pursuing such a course, many of them have taught simply the system of common sense, leaving out entirely the Augustinian contradictions. They have in various forms of language taught their little ones after this fashion: “Your heavenly Father made you to be happy and to make others happy. In order to this, he wishes that you should always have what you like best, except when it would injure you or others. But when what you like best and want the most, is not *best* for you or *best* for others, you must always choose what is *for the best*, and in so doing you act virtuously and please and obey God. And just so far as you do all that is best for yourself and for others, guided by the teachings of Christ, and with the desire and purpose to obey him, you become a virtuous, pious and holy child, and a true Christian.” [334]

In taking such a course as this, many mothers and teachers find themselves in antagonism with the teachings of the pulpit, the Sunday School and the great body of religious books, and yet they persevere. And sometimes they take their children from the Sunday School because the home training is there so directly assailed. And they would, in some cases, keep them from the

church also, were not the theological technics so effective in protecting childhood from all comprehension of a large portion of pulpit teachings.

It is such intelligent, cultivated and pious mothers and teachers that go to their pastors with their perplexities and troubles, and not unfrequently find that tender sympathy which those only can give who have suffered the same kind of distress.

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## Chapter L. Present Position of Young America.

By the term "Young America," as it is used at this day, seems to be intended that class of youthful minds who are striving to free themselves from all past ecclesiastical and conventional restraints, and who are aiming to think and act with entire freedom on all subjects.

The most active and efficient of this class are those who by general reading and study have both strengthened their reasoning powers and been most affected by the causes before described, which have tended to lessen respect for the church founded on the Augustinian theory of such a depraved nature transmitted from Adam, that all unregenerate doings are "sin, and only sin."

These young minds find the power of the pulpit, the church, the religious press, and the religious training of the family, the school and the college all combined to enforce this doctrine. They feel galled and indignant at the chains which they find



around them; and trained to interpret the Bible as teaching this doctrine and the system based on it, they secretly revolt from the authority of that book. They feel that the ministers and churches which sustain this doctrine are the grand impediments to freedom of thought and opinion, and the chief fortress of a system which to them is hateful in theory, and, in their view, destructive alike to a true manhood and a pure morality.

But if they speak out their feelings they will be denounced as infidels and avoided as dangerous persons. What is more trying still, the mother they love so much will be distressed, their father will be equally grieved and perhaps offended with their self-conceit, and all their Christian friends will be disturbed and displeased. [336]

Under these conflicting influences there exists a constant conflict between their honest convictions and desire for truth and independent action, and their gentle and generous impulses. This is the condition of multitudes of young minds, who to please a mother, a father, a sister or a friend, attend church and listen in silence to much that they do not believe and to some things which they abhor. Others quietly withdraw from all religious ministries, on the plea that Sunday is more profitably spent by them in quiet strolls or reading at home, while the real trouble, secretly burning in their hearts, is scarcely breathed aloud.

Of this class of minds not a few are found in our theological seminaries. And here they encounter new difficulties. As the system of Augustinianism is developed as the basis of their professional training, they attempt to meet it with some discussion. In this they find little or no encouragement. *Free discussion* seems to be deemed inadmissible, and those who urge it find themselves in an uncomfortable minority, who are regarded rather as agitators than as manly and independent seekers after truth.

But the most powerful influence on the most influential class of "Young America," as highest in intellectual and moral devel-

opment, has been the practical working of *two false principles*.

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The first of these is, that *organizations* to promote truth and righteousness are of more consequence than truth and righteousness. Thus, to a Catholic, the reputation and interests of *the church*—that is, the clergy—are to be regarded first, so that its pope and priesthood are to be shielded from the public exposure of whatever crimes they may commit, lest the influence of the church should suffer. Thus, in Protestant ecclesiastical organizations, the sins of their chief leaders are sometimes covered and palliated, lest their church and order be discredited. Thus the college faculty are sometimes sustained by parents or the public in unjust proceedings, lest the respect and confidence of the pupils or the public toward them should be impaired. Thus, also, the officers of benevolent associations are tolerated and shielded from odium for conduct that should receive universal disapprobation. In such cases, the *end* is made secondary to the means—the instrumentalities to promote virtue receive more regard than virtue itself. This, among “fishers of men,” is making taking the fish secondary to the care of the net.

The other false principle is, that men are to be restrained from protesting against wrong, in cases where it would make great trouble and difficulty to individuals or to communities involved in it.

That men are to use discretion and consult expediency as to the *time* and *manner* of exposing and denouncing wrong, is one of the teachings of common sense. But that men are to protest against wrong only when it makes little or no trouble to any one, and be silent when contention and trouble would result from such protesting, is a principle that would have inhibited the spread of Christianity by the apostles, of the Reformation by Luther, and of every other great reform.

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The extent to which wise and good men have adopted and acted on these false principles has probably done more to undermine faith in the Bible and the church than all other causes

united.

The tendency has been to generate the feeling that the great organizations based on the Bible and aiming to extend its authority, are really little better than associations to sustain the power and the influence of a certain privileged class, at the sacrifice of not only truth and righteousness, but of manly freedom of thought and speech.

The extent of real infidelity, not only in our colleges, but among the young mechanics of our shops and manufactories, the young farmers in our fields, the clerks in our offices and stores, and Young America all over the nation, is little imagined by those, who, on the field of conservatism, are striving to repress free discussion. There are seething and glowing fires gathering for vent, which such attempts are as vain to restrain as are bands of cobwebs to confine an outbursting volcano.

In speaking thus confidently of the present position of woman and of "Young America," it seems proper to notice the opportunities that have been furnished to attain some knowledge in this direction.

During twelve years of service as principal of institutions at the East and West, in which nearly a thousand young girls from the most influential classes and from nearly every State in the Union have been under her training, the writer gained no little insight into the varied experiences of the young. Later in life, ill health and other causes led to frequent reunions with former pupils all over the land, who as mothers, wives and sisters sought sympathy and counsel. Thus was gained the private history and the personal acquaintance of their husbands, brothers and sons, in many professions and in various colleges.

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In many cases the sons would disclose to a candid and sympathizing friend mental experiences and histories of themselves and their companions, which, from motives of tenderness, were hidden even from the most kind and judicious parents. The affiliated societies that bring the most influential young men

of different colleges together, their meetings for anniversary and club reunions, have generated a common pulse, as it were, through the great body of the most highly educated and most influential young men in the land; so that learning what affects a small portion teaches also what affects the whole.

These intimations indicate but a small portion of the opportunities which have led to the opinions expressed in this and the preceding chapter.

## Chapter LI. Present Position of the Religious Press.

To any one who examines the religious press of the different sects of the present time, it is clear that there never was a period in which the *ecclesiasticism* founded on the Augustinian theory was more a leading object of effort. At the time that the Bible Society and other benevolent religious associations originated, the tendency of the different sects was to a harmonious union for the great end of sending the gospel to the destitute. At that time, questions in relation to the modes of ordination and baptism, and as to church officers, seemed to vanish as matters of small concern to all whose chief aim was to save the lost. But now the reverse tendency is manifest. Every sect is engaged in magnifying the importance of its own distinctive peculiarity, in getting up publishing houses to disseminate its own peculiar modes of religious teaching, in raising funds to build churches, and in building up its own distinctive schools and colleges. And

this is done not so much, as it would seem, because the salvation of ignorant and guilty men depends on these sectarian peculiarities, as because the extent, respectability and influence of a sect will be thus promoted. Every editor of every religious paper, therefore, is a chief leader in an effort to build up a sect, which as before shown, originates from the Augustinian dogma.

It is an established maxim in law and all administration of justice, that where a man's property, character, and professional success are involved, he is barred from testimony as an incompetent witness. And it is deemed no disparagement to the most honorable and high-minded men in the community to be dealt with on the assumption that such personal interests so bias men's judgment that they can not be trusted.

Now it will not be denied by any one, that our religious periodicals are all supported by the differing sects with the express understanding that each shall advocate the views of the sect that especially patronizes it. And should any editor become convinced that the opinions he was appointed to advocate are false, he could not honorably retain his office without declaring his change of opinion, and this declaration would inevitably result in the loss of his professional character and income among his friends and supporters. [341]

For example, if the editor of the Independent were to become convinced that churches organized on the Congregational mode were unscriptural, and should attempt to defend such a view, he would either resign his post or be removed from it. The same would be true in regard to the editors of the Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist and Methodist religious magazines and newspapers.

So in regard to the professors of our theological schools, who are the chief supporters of theological magazines. They must all teach the Augustinian dogma of a depraved nature transmitted from Adam to all his descendants, or resign their professional reputation, their office and its income.

These being facts, it may properly be affirmed that the religious press in this country is barred from the full and free discussion of the great question of eternal life, "What must we do to be saved?"

One of the most remarkable indications of this fact is the course pursued by the leading religious periodicals of each sect in noticing the work before referred to, *Common Sense applied to Religion, or the Bible and the People*. In that work, and in an article in the Independent, as well as by private letters, an appeal was made to their editors, who, many of them, are personal friends of the writer, to instruct her and to instruct the public wherein there was any failure in that work, either in setting forth truly the principles of common sense and the rules of interpretation, or in deducing by these principles the *system* of common sense, or in proving that the Augustinian dogma and the system founded on it were contrary to the common sense and the moral sense of mankind, and unsupported by the Bible.

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As these editors are not only honorable and Christian gentlemen, but among the most acute and profound metaphysicians in the world, it would be the height of ill manners to assume that, discerning any failures, they refused to specify them, either in private or in public, except for the reasons intimated. No editor whose periodical is supported by a sect for the express purpose of maintaining its distinctive peculiarities, could indorse that work as correct in its statements and arguments without giving up the basis on which the existence of that sect depends which supports his periodical.

In these circumstances the editors of the Independent fairly and openly avowed that they could not open their columns to "a psychological and theological discussion" of this sort. And every editor of every other religious periodical tacitly made the same declaration by *entire silence* on the main subject of the volume—the very principles, involving the existence of the sect for whose defense they were appointed.

So manifest was this position of these leaders of the theological world, that the most intelligent and best informed publishers came to the conclusion that whatever else theologians differed about, they were all united in the determination that such a discussion of these points as was sought by the author should not be permitted. And even the editors of the secular press were urged not to allow their columns to be used for such purposes. [343]

## Chapter LII. The Present Position of the Secular Press.

The most decided index of the coming agency of the people, in throwing off the Augustinian system, is the present position of the secular press.

It has been shown how much the religious press is restrained in liberty of opinion and expression, so that it is probable that there is not a professedly religious paper in the nation that could controvert the *distinctive* doctrines of the sect that patronizes it without losing its character and income.

But the secular press is far less encumbered with such difficulties. The progress of this great power toward the discussion of such subjects has been very striking. At first there began to be seen simple reports of the religious anniversaries in some secular papers. This proving popular, next there came notices of missionary and benevolent operations. Then notices of the sermons of distinguished clergymen were given, and then whole columns of daily papers were occupied with sermons from ministers,

without regard to denomination. Finally, the great “revival” became a topic of the secular press. Reports of religious meetings, the number who were counted as converts, and all the details connected with this great popular movement were chronicled in the secular almost as fully as in the religious press.

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The comments of editors, also, on this subject, were usually respectful, candid, and in many cases very able and discriminating. The result has been, that inasmuch as the religious press circulates chiefly among “the church” and the secular press among “the world,” the gospel has been preached to sinners far more by secular than by religious editors. And it may be assumed as a fact, that the secular editors of this nation have far more power and influence in guiding the religious opinions and moral conduct of “the world” than either the clergy or the religious press, and probably more than both combined.

In this state of the case, all the interests of the religious press are opposed to free investigation and discussion, and all the interests of the secular press are as powerfully interested to promote it.

In appealing, therefore, from the theological world to “the people,” it is the editors of the secular press—the true “*Tribunes of the people*”—who will render the verdict, and this verdict is awaited with very little doubt or apprehension in regard to its nature.

The questions submitted for decision are not so comprehensive as those of the volume referred to in which theologians chiefly were invoked, and which they have as yet declined to answer. The questions submitted to *the people* are briefly these: Does common sense, or does the Bible teach that every human being possesses such a depraved nature as never to perform any truly virtuous act until this nature is re-created by God? and are the churches organized on the assumption that its members are diverse from the world, in that they, as regenerated persons, perform virtuous acts as no unregenerated person ever does,



sanctioned by common sense or by the Bible?

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## Chapter LIII. What The People Will Do?

It has been shown that the Augustinian dogma of a depraved nature is the foundation of all the large sectarian organizations in this country, and of the contentions, evil passions and waste of property resulting from such divisions among Christians.

It has been shown that the leading theologians have ceased to defend this dogma, that the pastors of churches are practically evading it, that the educators of the young are throwing it aside, and that the people in all directions are rejecting it.

This process of eliminating the Augustinian system from the system of common sense and the Bible, with which, for ages, it has been entwined, thus far has gone on as the result chiefly of the development of the intellectual and moral nature of all classes, but especially of the *common people*. A period has now arrived in which the question has become so far an intelligible and a *practical* one, that the two great principles of society indicated by the words *conservatism* and *progress* are arranging and accumulating antagonistic forces for an open and decided manifestation on this great question. What will be the precise nature of this manifestation no human mind can predict. But the distinctive principles of the two parties furnish some data for anticipating some future results, as they may occur in the several

classes referred to in preceding chapters under the following heads:

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## What Theologians will do?

In attempting to indicate the probable future course of theologians, it is important to notice the relative positions of persons trained to sustain a *system* of doctrines, and of those who seek for truth and duty without any such commitment.

Most theologians grow up from infancy under a system of doctrines inculcated both from the pulpit and in the family. This enlists all the strong and inveterate influences of early education in its favor. Next, the collegiate pulpit instructions and associations all favor the same system. Next, the theological school brings the young under the direct training of the most acute minds, whose express business it is to teach all methods of supporting and defending that *system*. Here the young minister is taught how to construct his sermons so as most effectually to bring the popular mind under its control, and so as to most effectively oppose all antagonistic sects and teachings.

Finally, the office of a clergyman involves such ecclesiastical relations as subject a man to constant espionage, and to ecclesiastical discipline and ejection if he adopts any views that would essentially modify the *system* in which he is trained.

If, therefore, any theologian or pastor finds himself doubting as to any doctrine, he perceives that it is so interlocked with the *system* of which it is a part that he is at once brought face to face with the question, Shall I give up *the whole system* in which I was educated, all the lectures and sermons framed on that system, all my ecclesiastical connections, my professional character and my salary?

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It is as if a man should find himself in some emergency upholding by a single timber a portion of a building which so interlocks with every other portion that he can not let it go without throwing down the only house that can shelter himself and all he holds dear. In such a case a man must come to a decision as to whether the piece of timber *ought* to be removed, and *when* and *how* it should be done, with an anxiety, deliberation and forecast that would be inappropriate to a man who finds only a disconnected stick of timber in his way. This illustrates the relative position and difficulties of theologians in contrast with those which impede the common people in the search after truth and duty.

In this view of the case it would be unreasonable to expect that theologians *as a class*, though among the wisest and best of men, are to be leaders in any great or sudden change in religious opinions. On the contrary, it is to be anticipated that they will be the most earnest, energetic, and at the same time honest, defenders of time-honored religious dogmas, which it is their professional business to uphold. Nor is it any implication of their talents, learning, honesty or piety to suppose that they will be among the last to perceive the fallacies and evils involved in whatever *system* they defend.

Yet there are considerations which indicate that the experience of the past is not to be the exact image of the future. The progress of mind is as distinctly marked among theologians as it is among any class of society, and this being toward the system of common sense, involves the waning of the dogmatic spirit of infallibility and the increase of that humble and teachable spirit, which is alike the mark of true philosophy and of Christianity. [348]

In the infantile development of our race mere physical prowess was deemed the chief virtue and was the grand aim of all manly culture.

In the next higher stage of development *intellectual power* became the object of highest veneration and assiduous cultivation.

The advent of a still higher stage of development is now dawning, which is best illustrated by the docile spirit of a little child, which feels exalted by taking a low place, which understands that true dignity and magnanimity consists, not in assumed infallibility, but in a modest and humble acknowledgment of ignorance, of mistakes, and of the need of knowledge and guidance, not only from God but from men.

It is believed that it is not too much to expect that this stage of high development is to be found even among that class most unfavorably placed for the attainment of it.

Should this be the case, there will soon be the *conservative* and the *progressive* parties among theologians; the one holding on to both of the contradictory systems, and maintaining their infallibility; the other, openly cutting loose from all that conflicts with their common sense and moral sense, will manfully and honestly confess their fallibility and past mistakes.

Between these two parties will be a third class, who either from policy or from timidity, or from inability to form decided opinions, will maintain entire silence as to any thing involving entire commitment to either party.

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## What the Pastors will do?

The pastors of the people are that class in which the division of *conservatism* and *progress* must most immediately and most distinctly appear. And the reason is, that the question to them is a *practical* one, more so than it can be to any other class of men.

It is their business and calling to teach men what they must do to be saved, and every week they must appear before the public to give their opinions on this very question.

In this situation, the conservative class will include all who have taken the opinions of their theological teachers as an act of memory, with very little original thought or investigation. These, being helpless as to any ability to investigate or to reason independently, will continue to preach and teach in the same round as was given them in their course of theological study. Such will be alarmed and distressed at the changes in opinion all around them, and will mourn over them as departures from the good old paths of truth and safety. Such will be sustained chiefly by the old and conservative portion of their parishes, while the most active minds, both young and old, will become more and more restless and dissatisfied, or forsake entirely such ministrations.

In the progressive class of pastors, there will be a marked division. The first will include those who have clear and decided perceptions of truth and duty, and at the same time a full conviction that outspoken frankness and honesty is not only a duty, but the best policy.

Thus, when they find their minds perplexed and doubtful as to the system in which they have been trained, they will, if called to speak, frankly say so. If they advance to a new position, and yet are not clear in regard to certain connected topics, they will say so. If they are clear that the system of Augustine is false, root and branch, they will say so, and carry out all the results involved in this position. In short, they will go forward in a perfect faith in truth, honesty and freedom of speech. [350]

Nor will they consult "expediency," except as to the *time* and the *manner* of making known their change of opinion.

The other portion will adopt the policy which assumes that peace and quiet in holding error is more important than truth which involves trouble and contention. Such will conceal their real opinions under forms of expression that will deceive the conservative portion of their people, by making the impression that they hold to old creeds and formularies, in the sense in which they formerly did, when they do not. They will use

the stereotyped forms of orthodoxy, knowing that those of their people who are alarmed at supposed changes, will be quieted by impressions which are false. And they will do this, believing it to be Christian expediency, although it is a course exactly opposite to that pursued by Christ and his disciples.

## What the Church will do?

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In regard to church organizations, it has been shown that there are two diverse principles on which these organizations may be perpetuated. The first is the Augustinian, in which the principle of union is a supposed change of the nature transmitted from Adam, enabling a man to perform truly virtuous acts, as none ever do who are not thus re-created. The second is that of common sense, in which the principle of union is the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Lord and Master, and the purpose to obey him in all things; or, in the words of the Episcopal formula, "a church is a *congregation* of faithful men, in which the pure word is preached and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinances." This definition, in order to represent the common-sense view, assumes that "faithful men" are persons who believe in Christ's authority, as the Lord of all, and who purpose to obey him.

It has been also shown, in a previous chapter, that the church organizations based on the Augustinian theory, are gradually modifying their practice so as more and more to recognize the common-sense principle.

It is believed that this process of quiet change is to be greatly accelerated by *discussion*. The people are not aware that the mode of church organization and discipline now most prevalent is an *innovation*, which has existed less than two centuries, and chiefly in this country, and that there can be found no authority for it, either in the Bible or church history. The word "church,"

as used in the New Testament, in the original Greek means *congregation*, and includes all who unite in one assembly to worship.

No case can be found in the Bible of any such organization as corresponds with that which is now called by the name of “church,” as distinct from the “congregation.”

These being facts, the whole matter of church organization and discipline is soon to become a matter of general discussion, the result of which, of course, can not be predicted in any details. But it is certain that the more discussion there is, the more the common-sense system will become dominant. And it is certain that the portion of the people connected with churches will more and more demand discussion. They will assume that their pastors are not to be their authoritative, dogmatic teachers; but their leaders in worship and ordinances; their presiding officers in discussions, and the administrators of much of that kind of knowledge needed by the people, to enable them to act independently in interpreting the Bible for themselves. [352]

## What Women will do?

The great principle of Protestantism, in distinction from Catholicism, is, that every person is to be an independent interpreter of the Bible, responsible to no man or body of men; and that every person is to *protest* against all that conflicts with this right.

This principle carried out consistently, makes theologians and pastors a class sustained by the people, not as dogmatic teachers of their own opinions, but as persons set apart for the purpose of gaining and of communicating to the people all the knowledge needful to fit them to use their rights as *authorized interpreters of the Bible*.

But though all Protestants hold this principle theoretically, by far the larger portion have never practically adopted it, but, as a

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matter of fact, go to theologians and pastors for their *opinions*, and not for the *knowledge* on which opinions are to rest. Thus it is that ecclesiastics control the faith of a large portion of the Protestant churches, as authoritatively as do the pope and priests control that of the Catholic church.

We have seen, in the case of Isabella of Spain, one of the most benevolent, conscientious and lovely of women led on to the most unjust and cruel deeds, simply from practically adopting the principle, that her religious teachers must be authoritative guides of her opinions, and that her own common sense and moral sense must bow to ecclesiastical dictation.

The present time is one in which the women of this country must decide in regard to this same principle and on practical questions of the deepest moment.

It has been shown, that with small exceptions, the Catholic and Protestant theologians and clergy unite in teaching a depravity of *nature* in every human being, involving these questions:

Are we so depraved as to be incapacitated to interpret the Bible, and made dependent on ecclesiastical and regenerated persons to interpret for us?

Does the *invisible true church* consist only of those whose *nature* has been re-created, or of those who, without any newly-created nature, truly desire and purpose to use all their natural powers according to the teachings of Christ?

Does a "*visible church of Christ*" consist of persons possessing a newly-created nature, by which alone any truly virtuous acts can be performed, or does it consist of persons who unite to sustain the public worship, ordinances and teachings of Jesus Christ?

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Are children to be trained to believe that all their feelings and actions are "sin and only sin," till they receive a new nature from God, or be taught that whenever they choose what is *right*, with the *intention* to do right, they act virtuously and please God?



Are children to be allowed to come to the table of their Lord and Saviour as soon as they can understand the nature of the ordinance, and wish and intend to obey Jesus Christ in all things, or are they to be excluded until church officers decide whether the signs of a *new nature* are to be found?

Are women and children to be excluded from the Lord's table because they interpret the Bible diversely from the church with which they worship?

These are the practical questions involved in the doctrine of the depraved nature of man, as taught by the clergy of the great Christian sects.

It has been stated that many intelligent and pious women in various parts of our country have already quietly assumed their rights as authorized interpreters of the Bible on all these questions, have cast off the Augustinian theory, and thus, in fret, have set themselves in opposition to the clergy, except so far as the clergy themselves have come to the same results. The writer, in this work, has done little more than has also been done by many pious and intelligent mothers and teachers, except to define, methodize and publicly express opinions which other women have *practically* adopted in training children, as the result of their own experience, common sense and study of the Bible.

Some of the leading organs of the High Church party in the Episcopal church, and thus the most strenuous defenders of ecclesiastical infallibility and authority, in noticing the writer's volume, *Common Sense Applied to Religion*, previously referred to, ask with *naive* simplicity, what right has a woman to apply common sense to religion, or to have any opinions except as she is taught them by the church, at the same time sneering at the idea, that "the dear people" are competent to understand and interpret the Bible for themselves. [355]

This shows that the issue is now fairly presented and understood. The ecclesiastical party, more or less, openly claim that the only authorized interpreters of the Bible are the ordained

priesthood, or the regenerated church. On the other hand, the people, and women, as that half of the people to whom the training of the human mind is especially committed, maintain that they are ordained to this office by a Higher Power and by the imposition of a nobler hand than any who boast an uninterrupted apostolical succession.

Moreover, it is claimed that every well-educated, pious woman of good common sense, who has trained young children, is *better* qualified to interpret the Bible correctly, on all points pertaining to such practical duties, than most theologians possibly can be. And the reasons are, that she is free from those biasing difficulties which have been pointed out as embarrassing theologians, while all her employments and all her culture eminently tend to aid rather than to embarrass her judgment on such subjects.

Add, also, that the Bible was written for common people, and not for metaphysicians, and in the language of common life, and not in theological terms, and that if it teaches the system of common sense, it is better fitted to the apprehension of those whose training has been practical rather than scholastic.

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Finally, the promises of aid from the Author of the Bible, is to the meek and lowly of heart. "*The meek* will he guide in judgment; *the meek* will he teach his way." That the position of those accustomed to rule and teach is as favorable to the cultivation of a meek, humble and teachable spirit as that of those trained to learn and to obey, few will maintain.

These facts being so, it is believed that ere long the greater portion of the most intelligent and conscientious women in this country, will gradually and quietly take this course. They will perceive that they are bound, not only to assume and exercise the distinctive rights of Protestantism, as authorized interpreters of the Bible, but to *protest*, by word and deed, against all that opposes the exercise of these rights.

In accordance with this, they will respectfully and privately express to their pastor and fellow-Christians their *protest* against

the Augustinian system, as involving a dreadful slander on their Lord and Saviour, veiling in mystery and gloom his lovely character, which is the light and life of the soul; they will protest against every creed or confession or church ordinance that is based on this system, as an indorsement of this fatal slander; they will protest against being regarded as members of a church in any other sense than as persons united with a *congregation* to sustain the worship and ordinances instituted by Christ, and to aid each other in obeying his word; they will make it clear to all concerned, that they do not claim to possess any other *nature* than that received from God at birth, nor to be regenerated in any other sense than that they now desire and sincerely purpose to obey Christ in all things. [357]

They will, moreover, protest against the exclusion of themselves or their children from the Lord's table, for interpreting the Bible diversely from the church with which they worship, and against the interference of church officers to examine them or their children in order to ascertain their mode of interpreting the Bible or the any other signs of regeneration, than the expressed desire to unite with the congregation in the worship and ordinances appointed by Christ.

Should such a course as this result in exclusion from the Lord's table, those thus protesting can depart peaceably to some church which could conscientiously receive them on such terms. And if no such church is to be found, they can quietly relinquish the privilege, until such time as it can be enjoyed without a sacrifice of principle and religious liberty.

If those thus protesting act consistently, they will accord to the church excluding them the same liberty to interpret the Bible, in regard to duty on this subject, as they claim for themselves. The church in cutting them off may feel as conscientiously bound to the course they adopt, according to their way of understanding the Bible, as those do who protest and withdraw. And if the true spirit of Christ, the spirit of humility, meekness and love

prevails, such disruptions will occur without contentions or ill feelings on either side.

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But in churches embracing many who possess very little of this spirit and cherishing the claim of infallibility,—first in deciding which is the true church and next in maintaining its dogmas,—there would result a mode of dealing with such *Protestants* very similar to that of former ages. This would lead to agitation and discussion. But even on this trying alternative more good than evil might be hoped, especially if those who protest and withdraw, maintain the meek, peaceable and quiet spirit required and exhibited by their Master.

## What Young America will do?

The higher the development of humanity, the more the capacities for enjoyment and suffering are increased, and the more civilization multiplies the means and modes of gratifying increasing desires, the stronger becomes the deep-felt anxiety in regard to the invisible future. Are all these capacities, so infinite in their tendencies, to expand for ever, only to be wrenched and crossed and baffled as they are in this life? What are our dangers? What are we to do to escape them? This is more and more the agonizing demand of humanity.

It has been shown that a system of doctrine has been forced upon Christendom which has shrouded this great question in mysterious gloom. It has been shown also that the great *organizations* of the religious world are so vitally based on this system that its renunciation involves their certain dissolution. And though the advance of humanity has, more or less, modified the opinions and practice of the individuals embraced in such organizations, still the *principle* remains unchanged. Consequently any formal, open attack on this principle involves the combined

antagonism of all the most powerful religious organizations of society.

*Free* discussion is not to be expected in our theological schools, where the young men know that they can not be recommended for license if they fail to adopt the creed of their sect. Nor can it be found in our colleges, most of which depend for patronage on, or are pledged to the interests of a sect. Nor can it be expected in our pulpits, where the minister teaches and the people have no chance of rejoinder or disputation. Nor can it be expected of the religious press, which is also bound to sustain sectarian interests. What power is there then which can contend against such portentous combinations, sustained not only by the prestige of ages and all the innate forces of long-drilled organizations, but by the honest and conscientious convictions of the great majorities thus enrolled? [359]

It is *the power of truth evolved by free discussion*, and mainly as it is and will be administered in the hands of *Young America* and *the secular press*.

The young men of the nation have the control of their literary societies in our colleges and seminaries, and of the popular lyceums and other associations, where every member has a vote in deciding what shall be discussed; and here the battle will be fought for religious liberty and the Bible.

In this conflict there will appear two distinct classes. The first will be those of shallow capacity and acquirements, who, perceiving themselves to be in the party of reason and common sense, will imagine that they have acquired this position, not by the progress of the age, brought about to a great extent by the discussions, the labors and sufferings of wise and good men, many of them distinguished as metaphysicians and theologians, but that it is all owing to their own remarkable genius and independent thought. Thus they will become "heady, high-minded," rash and contemptuous. Of these, some will be borne away to utter skepticism, immorality and final ruin. Others, unable to reason [360]

correctly, and bewildered by the conflict, will swing around to the opposite extreme, and enter a church where they can rest their faith on a priesthood claiming to be heaven-inspired, which shall decide all questions of faith and practice for them.

But the nobler portion of Young America will understand truly their great mission, and, taught by the mistakes and darkness of the past, with a modest and humble sense of their own inability to go forward without help, both from God and their fellow-men, will seek for truth, duty and happiness in the appropriate path of *calm, honest, fair and free discussion*. And their generous hearts and strong arms will be shield and buckler even to the feeblest who may enter the lists.

## What the Religious Press will do?

This question is the most perplexing of all, at least to those who have attentively marked the recent developments in the religious world.

What is there that more clearly defies at once the moral sense, the common sense and the teachings of the Bible, than the system of slavery as it now exists in this country, and yet a majority of not only editors, but of the ministers of Christ, in some of our most intelligent and large denominations, openly refuse freedom of discourse on this subject; nay, more, some of the religious papers are openly justifying the slave trade, which politicians, even those without any pretensions to religious principle, have placed as piracy, the highest civil crime.

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And the last year has witnessed the deliberate crushing of free debate on this subject, in one of our largest and most effective benevolent associations. And some of those whose whole lives have exhibited them among the most amiable, conscientious and exemplary men, are to be found upholding such a course.

Who then can predict what will be the course of the religious press, when every editor must maintain the distinctive tenets of a sect, or at once lose his professional character and his income?

It is very easy to predict what will be the course of those who will make no sacrifice for truth. A large portion will neither read, or think or discuss, or, so far as they have power to prevent, allow others to do so. Some will take this course in the satisfied belief that they, and the church which they have infallibly decided to be infallible, can never err. Others will avoid all discussion for fear of being convinced of mistakes, obliging them, if acknowledged, to sacrifices of pride, character and income.

Others will make some show of discussion, so far as to use the disgraceful arts sometimes resorted to, in order to satisfy and blind ignorant and unreflecting readers. Unfair and garbled quotations, misstatement of facts, depreciating implications of character and motives, invidious allusions to family or party connections, the use of unpopular terms, which humbler minds have been trained to regard as designating the most dangerous and destructive heresies, these, and many other discreditable methods, will probably be employed to stave off discussion, or to nullify its power. [362]

But there is a class of minds who have access to the religious press, and can more or less control its action, who are far above such humiliating littleness and dishonesty. In regard to these, such are the influence of education and long-trained habits of thought, that an entire change of a *whole system* must be a gradual process. And when sermons, lectures, books and pulpit ministries have all been in accordance with one system, they can not be modified to meet another without many practical difficulties. Nor can men, whose professional associations with ecclesiastical bodies and with parishes impede them, settle many practical questions involved in any change of views, without demanding *time* for reflection, examination and consultation.

In this position of affairs in the religious world, a measure

of retention, and even of protracted silence, in many cases, may be wise and justifiable. And charges of compromise, or of cowardice, or of intellectual deficiency, in such cases, would be false, ungenerous and unjust. All this should be taken into account in judging of the future action of those who control the religious periodicals and literature.

## What the Secular Press will do?

The answer to this question is much more clear than the preceding one, inasmuch as the secular press, to a great extent, is free from the embarrassments that restrain the religious press.

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It has become so manifest that the great body of the people are determined to enjoy perfect liberty of conscience, and to defend the right of free discussion in religion and morals, as well as in politics, that it is clearly for the interests of editors, not committed to sectarianism, to uphold these rights.

The distinguished popularity and success of that Daily which now boasts the largest circulation in the nation, is a most significant fact. Its career began long before the religious world had its distinctive tenets rudely assailed by any but ecclesiastical hands, and long before the secular press ventured to bring its common-sense maxims to bear on religious topics.

Single-handed, it fearlessly opened its columns to discussions on Fourierism, women's rights, intemperance, slavery, religious doctrines, and all other matters that concerned the public weal, giving every party a fair chance to speak for itself. The religious world took the lead in the outcry and alarm against this course. But *the people*, and even a large proportion of the *religious people*, sustained this attempt at fair and free discussion, so honestly and fearlessly pursued, until the battle was fairly won. And now it is probable that the larger proportion of the most candid and intelligent editors of the secular press perceive that



their pecuniary interests, in regard to free religious discussion, are in the same direction as their reason and conscience.

This being so, it is probable that the most powerful, fair and effective discussions of the grand question of life hereafter, will be found more in the secular than in the religious press, at least for a considerable period of time.

Should this be so, there would probably be an improvement in *modes* of discussion in several respects. [364]

Among these may be anticipated an advance in a spirit of Christian humility, charity and of gentlemanly courtesy in dealing with the character and motives of those whose opinions, either in religion or morals, are discussed. The true spirit of Christian charity demands that we endeavor to present the best rather than the *worst* construction of our opponent's character, motives and arguments.

A true humility implies such a self-distrust, and such a sense of our need of aid in discovering truth, not only from God but from our fellow-men, as will be indicated in a modest and unimpassioned exhibition of opinions and arguments, and a courteous reception of all criticisms and counter arguments. With this spirit the weakness or mistakes, or sophistries of an opponent would be exhibited more in sorrow than in triumph or scorn.

A true gentlemanly courtesy would enforce the same rules of delicacy and good breeding in public encounters as are regarded by well-bred persons in the drawing room. This would necessarily banish all allusion to personal or family failings, and all invidious or disrespectful modes of address or language.

No one who is familiar with the controversies on doctrine and morals, as conducted in the religious papers, can doubt that there is room for improvement in all these particulars.

Such improvement is to be anticipated, not on account of any mental or moral superiority of the conductors of the secular press, but rather from the fact that they are free from many of the embarrassments and exciting influences already pointed out as [365]

surrounding those who conduct the religious periodicals.

Another improvement to be anticipated is the withdrawal of the great questions in debate from the mists of metaphysical and theological technics to the clear, popular language of common life.

In the preceding pages it is shown that the most important questions of religious truth and duty can be discussed in the language of common life, so as to be made intelligible to all persons of ordinary education, who are sufficiently interested to give their attention to matters which demand intellectual exertion. Men will find that they must “*labor* to enter into the strait gate,” intellectually as well as morally, and that they are to “*work* out their own salvation with fear and trembling,” while thus they will learn to understand the nature of the encouraging assurance that “it is God that worketh in us *to will and to do* of his own good pleasure.”

When, therefore, the secular press and the popular lyceum take up these great questions they will insist that the discussions shall be carried on in popular language, so that the labor demanded shall not be increased by the unknown tongue of theological and metaphysical science.

Again, there will be an improvement in the mode of conducting such discussions, by the banishment of all adventitious topics and the firm grasping of the one great fundamental point in debate. It will be insisted that the question is not at all whether Arminians or Universalists, or Unitarians hold this or that opinion, nor whether advocating such and such views would injure the cause of this or that institution, or sect or individual; nor whether this or that person has certain faults, or is a proper advocate of some innovations; nor whether undesirable results would follow from expressing certain views, but simply *what is the truth*, so far as it can be discovered by honest statements and fair discussion.

The grand question in debate is not whether men are *depraved*

in *character and action* as they appear in the history of the world. All parties agree in the *fact* of such dreadful depravity. The question is in regard to the *philosophy* of this fact, that is to say, What is the *cause* or reason of this depravity?

Here it will be found that two classes exist in all the great Protestant sects, viz.:

Those who hold that the cause is a depraved *nature*, [signifying what men mean when in common life they use the terms, *nature, organization, construction* or *constitution*,] and those who deny that any such depraved nature exists. These two opposite opinions, ever since the third century, have been expressed by the terms, *Augustinian* and *Pelagian*.

The case is now so fairly and clearly before *the people*, that every theologian who has capacity and training sufficient to understand an argument must knowingly do one of these things:

1. Deny depravity of *nature* and allow that he is a Pelagian; or
2. Affirm such depravity, take rank as an Augustinian and then meet the argument which, on this assumption, destroys all evidence of the benevolence of God, and renders a *reliable* revelation from him impossible.

3. Withdraw from all discussion either by entire silence, or by hiding in the fogs of metaphysical and theological technics, or by the disgraceful arts of debate practiced to alarm and delude the ignorant. [367]

Heretofore the editors of secular papers have practically conceded that the religious disputes and conflicts that agitated the churches were matters out of their province and to be turned over to the clergy and religious editors. And inasmuch as most of these contentions have related to matters of rites and forms, or to abstract doctrinal points having little *practical* bearings on the daily life, such abstinence seemed appropriate. But the progress of the age has at last fairly brought the organized church front to front with the unregenerate world on the greatest of all *practical* questions—a question with which every editor of every

secular paper has as deep a personal and family interest as has any religious editor, or any doctor of theology, or any parochial pastor.

Is it a *fact*, or is it not, that every man at birth is so depraved in *nature* that every one of his moral acts is *sin, and sin only*, until a change in this *nature* is wrought by the creative power of God, and must all young children be educated on this assumption?

The training of the family, our institutions of education, the church organizations of the great religious sects, all depend on this question. The answer to it must be *yes* or *no*, for no third supposition is possible. Every *intelligent* man then must speak out in the affirmative, or in the negative, or else hide in silence or in the mists of deceit.

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In this view of the case, it is believed that the educated class of powerful and cultivated minds, who are, by their position and talents, the leaders of the secular press, will not turn this matter over to their theological contributors, but will take the case into their own hands, and fearlessly and earnestly meet their high responsibilities.

Thus they may prove not only the most effective leaders in the intellectual and moral advance of humanity, but the protectors of many suffering, struggling minds, who unaided would sink in the conflict before them.

In this exhibition of the position of the religious world, the attitude of this work is very remarkable. It is in open and direct antagonism with *all* the religious *organizations* of the Christian world, and that too in regard to the very fundamentals on which each of these organizations depends for its existence. All the Augustinian sects are against the position of this work, that the mind of man is *perfect in nature*, and should they adopt the Pelagian ground *consistently*, every one of them would either come to an end, or change the very basis of its organization.

The only sect that openly and consistently avows the Pelagian view, is the Unitarian; but this organization is founded on the

distinctive tenet of such a unity in God as forbids the idea of a plurality of eternal, self-existent Persons, having the highest attributes of God. This is contrary to the system of common sense, as exhibited in this work, page 100. The Universalist organization is based on the doctrine that none of the human race will continue sinful for ever, and thus insure the natural consequences of sin. This also is shown to be contrary to the system of common sense, as presented in this work, page 177. [369]

The great body of persons, as yet unorganized, who agree in resisting the claims of the Bible as containing reliable revelations from the Creator, and thus *authoritative* rules of faith and practice, will be arrayed against such claims maintained in this work, as one of the inevitable results of the application of the principles of common sense.

Consequently, the whole religious organizations of the world, who rest their faith on the Bible, are antagonistic to this work, while those who repudiate the authority of the Bible are equally so.

Still more remarkable is the fact exhibited in this volume, that the writer, in a family circle embracing so many theologians and pastors, appears before the public as antagonistic to most, and supported openly by not one of them.

What then is the foundation of that confiding and cheerful equanimity with which all this imposing array of organizations and individual talents, learning and influence is regarded? It is, first, confidence in truth and the God of truth, and next, the intimate knowledge gained by the writer, of the *characters* and the *mental experiences* of some of the most powerful minds that are leaders of this host, and at the same time a similar knowledge of some of the noblest minds, who are most effectively influencing that great portion of the popular mind which is not embraced in these organizations. Whatever may be the opinions of these powerful classes, who may in form and position appear antagonistic, they will never be leaders in any attempt to crush

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perfect freedom of thought and expression, or to restrain that free and earnest discussion which is impending.

Nay more, if the distinctive feature of a follower of Christ is to be humble and teachable in spirit, "meek and lowly of heart," and if that highest form of human development is dawning, when moral magnanimity shall take precedence of intellectual power in human estimation, then the world will soon behold what as yet has been deemed impossible, great and learned men, even doctors in theology, nay more, even men that have written books, resigning the claim of infallibility, and confessing that they have made mistakes.

The hope of this, moreover, is sustained by the character and position of some, who not only stand high in the theological world, but are among the most revered and beloved in that family circle, where the golden chain of perfect love has never for a moment been sundered by the widest diversities of opinion or the freest discussion of differences. What has transpired in one Christian family, it is believed, may be but the emblem of what is yet to prevail among the true children of Him, "of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named."<sup>22</sup>

## Note.

The work often referred to in the preceding pages, was written, at first, on a more limited plan than now appears. After a portion was printed, it was perceived that the discussion

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<sup>22</sup> Note G.

contained in this volume was indispensable, and the title at first designed for the *whole* work, became inappropriate to the first portion when issued alone. In making a change, the result has been, that the work has sometimes been advertised by its first name, the BIBLE AND THE PEOPLE, and sometimes by its second name, COMMON SENSE APPLIED TO RELIGION, and sometimes by both together.

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Hereafter, the title of the first volume will be COMMON SENSE APPLIED TO RELIGION. This volume is the second portion. The final portion, not yet published, will be entitled THE BIBLE INTERPRETED BY COMMON SENSE.

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## Notes.

### Note A.

The new school divines agree with the old school in teaching that previous to regeneration every moral act is *sin and only sin*, and that God has made no promises to unregenerate doings, which would obligate him to re-create the soul, in return for such performances.

On the contrary, they urge man himself to change his own heart, as that which is possible without any aid from God. And the interference of God to regenerate is represented by them as

an act of sovereign, elective mercy, unbought by any labor or striving on the part of man.

Still, they encourage the use of the means of grace as the way in which God ordinarily meets the sinner, in bestowing this gift. They urge that *experience* proves, that though regeneration is not *promised* to the use of the means of grace, it is more frequently bestowed on those who use them than on those who neglect them.

## Note B.

There are three points on the subject of the future state, which need to be discussed separately.

The first is, will there be an eventual separation of the human race, at some final consummation, so that from that point, through all eternity, there will be two separate communities, the good being perfect in character and happiness, and the bad reaping the natural results of their evil tempers and conduct *for ever*?

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The second is, does our conduct in this life have an influence in deciding our *degrees* of happiness or misery in a future state, so that we reap the natural good or evil consequences of all we do here *for ever*?

The third is entirely independent of the other two, and is this: Is the *eternal* condition of *every* human being fixed *at the hour of death*; or is there with *some* a continued process of culture and discipline, and of upward and downward progress in a future state, extending to the day of final separation and consummation?

That *some* may become so good in this life as to insure an eternal upward progress, and that *some* may become so bad as to insure a perpetual downward progress, may be true, and yet, to others new opportunities may be given.

It is by *revelations from the Creator* alone that these points can be effectually settled. It is shown in chapter 27, that every



system of religion or morals must be decided by these questions. Therefore, these questions, and the authority of the Bible on these points, must become the subject of renewed and earnest discussion.

## Note C.

The doctrine of the Atonement can be regarded simply as a fact without any reference to the philosophy of it, *i.e.*, the mode or *cause* of this fact. *Jesus Christ came into this world to save men from sin and its inevitable penalties, by his teachings, sufferings and death.* This fact may be received without any attempt to explain the *why* or the *how* it came to pass, or how it is made efficacious, which are the *philosophy* of this fact.

In regard to this philosophy, various theories have been incorporated into creeds and theological systems.

The most common theory at the present time, in this country, is, that the sufferings and the death of Christ avail to sustain the justice and the laws of God as effectually as would the infliction of eternal misery on all who are regenerated. That is to say, if by repentance and reformation, without an atonement, men should escape all the penalties for past sin, the result would be that God's justice would be impeached and his laws be nullified, just as human lawgivers become unjust and their laws are made void when all penalties are remitted. This difficulty, it is supposed, on the common theory, was met by the sufferings and the death of Jesus Christ, as a *vicarious substitute* in behalf of those saved. That is to say, this atoning sacrifice operates to preserve the justice of God and the efficiency of laws, as effectually as would the eternal punishment, from which all regenerated persons are thus rescued. [374]

This mode of explaining the *why* and the *how* may be relinquished and another mode adopted, or no theory at all may be deemed needful, while belief may remain in the great *fact*, that Jesus Christ wrought out the salvation of those who are saved, by his advent, sufferings and death, and that they could be saved by no other mode.

It is very important to recognize this distinction between the *fact* and the *philosophical theories* invented to explain the fact; because it is frequently the case that the denial of a theory is regarded as a denial of the great fact, when such is not the case. All may agree in the fact when very diverse theories are held to explain it.

Whether our Creator actually has come in human form into this world, and exhibited an example of *self-sacrifice* and *suffering* for the general good, is what we may infer as *probable* by the light of nature, but which we can *fully prove* only by revelation.

## Note D.

Whether the Creator ever communes with the human spirit except through the material organizations, is one on which reason and experience furnish no intimations.

No record is to be found of any communications from the Creator to mankind that were not made either by visible forms or intelligible sounds, or by visions and dreams in sleep. All the revelations recorded in the Bible were by some one of these methods.

This being so, the system of common sense neither affirms or denies the direct access of the creative mind to the minds of his creatures. It is a question to be settled solely by revelation.

## Note E.

This mode of explaining the depravity of mind is to be found in the *Conflict of Ages*. On page 90 the following passage exhibits the author's idea, both of a *perfectly constructed mind*, and of a *depraved mind*:

“So there is a *life of the mind*. It involves an original and designed correlation to God, and such a state of the affections, passions, emotions, intellect and will, that communion with God shall be *natural*, habitual, and the life of the soul. He who has been so far healed by divine grace as to reach this state, has a true idea of the *normal* and *healthy state* of the soul. And if he finds that there is that *in the state of his moral constitution and emotions* which seems to lie beneath his will and undermine its energy to follow the convictions of reason and conscience, and that by divine grace *this has been changed*, and an energy not only to will but to do good is supplied, is it to be wondered at that, in some way, he should come to the conclusion that there is in *his nature or moral constitution, depravity or pollution, anterior to the action of the will?*”

The theory which this author adopts is, that the “normal” state of man's “*nature or moral constitution*” was created in man by God in a preëxistent state, and that man's “*depravity or pollution anterior to the action of the will*” consists in “a habit of sinning,” generated in this preëxistent state.

This habit of sinning was not a part of the perfectly-constructed nature made by God. Man himself introduced it into his own mind, thus rendering it so depraved that every moral act is sin, and only sin.

*Regeneration*, according to this theory, consists in a change of the “state of the moral constitution,” whereby “an energy not only *to will* but *to do good* is supplied.” That is to say, the “habit of sinning” can be lessened or removed by some supernatural change of the “moral constitution” by God. And yet all men are

born with this depravity which God *can* remedy, and *will not*, except for a select few.

It is manifest, therefore, that this writer holds to a depravity of *nature* in the true and proper sense of the term, signifying constitution or *construction*.

[376]

This being so, his theory puts it out of his power to prove the benevolence of the Creator, or to establish any revelation from him as a *reliable* guide to truth and happiness.

For it is the *nature* of any created thing which proves the character and intentions of its creator. If then all human minds are depraved in *nature* or “constitution,” the Creator of these minds is thus proved to be depraved, and no revelations from him can be *reliable*. He prefers sin and evil to virtue and happiness, and of course his teachings can be no guide to truth, virtue and happiness. Thus, by his own theory, this author is debarred from any proof of a preëxistent state by revelation.

On page 20 it is further stated that “inasmuch as *the mind of man is depraved*, and there may be *danger in trusting* its unrevised, uncorrected decisions as to these principles [of honor and right], it is of great importance, for purposes of revision, carefully to study those developments of benevolent, honorable and just feelings, towards which the human mind, *after regeneration*, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is found most directly to tend.”

This passage shows that this depravity of the “moral constitution,” generated in a preëxistent state, in the view of this author, is such that there is danger in trusting our mental decisions as to the principles of honor and right at first implanted by God, but vitiated and impaired by the “habit of sinning.” This danger, it is suggested, is lessened “after regeneration,” so that regenerated persons are thus entitled to guide their unregenerate fellow-men in matters of truth and duty. This lays the foundation for the claims of a regenerate church and clergy to superior authority in deciding on the interpretations of the Bible. The tendencies of

such claims to pride, dogmatism and persecution, are pointed out in chapter 41.

## Note F.

The following extract from the *Views and Experiences of Religion*, by Henry Ward Beecher, is an example of the vagueness and uncertainty referred to. It is part of an article entitled *How to Become a Christian*.

[377]

“The moment you realize this goodness of Christ, his helpfulness to you, his lenient, forgiving, sympathizing spirit, then you know what *faith in Christ* means. If such a Saviour attracts you, and you strive all the more ardently, from love toward him and trust in him, then you are a Christian: *not a religious man*, but a *Christian*.

“A man may worship through awe, or through a sense of duty, and I think there are hundreds of men in the churches who are *only religious men*, and *not Christians*. A man who feels toward God only awe or fear, who obeys merely from a *sense of duty*, who is under the dominion of *conscience* rather than of love, may be religious, but he is *not a Christian*.”

There is nothing said in this article of any need of any new creation of *the nature* of the mind; nor is this Augustinian dogma to be found in any of this author's published works.

In this article, written expressly to give clear views of what it is to become a Christian, and *how* to do it, we find it taught “a man who feels toward God only awe or fear, who obeys merely from a sense of duty, who is *under the dominion of conscience* rather than of love, may be *religious*, but *he is not a Christian*.”

Suppose, then, a person with a strong sense of justice and great natural benevolence, is trained to believe the Calvinistic form of the Augustinian system, so that God appears to him only

the awful, incomprehensible author of this dreadful system, and Jesus Christ, this same God, so united to a man (as this transaction is usually represented) that the human soul alone bears all the grief and suffering involved in the expiatory sacrifice demanded. Suppose, also, that, in this view, unable to feel any emotions but fear and awe, he says, “*There must be a dreadful mistake somewhere. I can not fathom it; but I can and will do this: I will trust the word of Jesus Christ as to the character of God, and I will obey his teachings conscientiously in all things, as nearly as I am able;*” and this determination is carried out in his life.

Is such a man a Christian, or is he not? Guided only by the above extract, it would be very difficult to decide, or to state what is this author's view of regeneration; nor is there any thing in his published writings to remove the vagueness and uncertainty caused by such teachings as are embraced in the above extract, as to what *change* makes a man a true Christian.

[378]

According to the system of common sense (as explained chapter 24, and also on page 258) to form and carry out a ruling purpose to obey the laws of God, as made known by Jesus Christ, is loving God and Christ in the only way in which love can justly be made a subject of command. And when a man forms and carries out such a purpose, he is “under the dominion of conscience,” and is a true Christian.

The point where this writer seems to fail, in this extract, is, in a want of the distinction, pointed out in the chapter above mentioned, between *voluntary* and *involuntary* love. A person may be “under the dominion of conscience,” by a purpose to obey all the laws of God, and for want of the true view of God's character, as exhibited in Jesus Christ, may experience only emotions of fear and awe in performing such obedience.

It is the true, *efficient* purpose to obey Christ which constitutes a man a Christian. It is right views of God's character, as seen in Jesus Christ, that gives new *strength* to carry out such a purpose.

“When we were yet *without strength*, in due time Christ died

for the ungodly," thus giving new motives of love and gratitude, in addition to those of fear and awe. Not until all the false theories that hitherto have veiled the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ are cast away, will the full meaning of the above text be fully understood.

## Note G.

Among theologians and pastors there are two classes now existing, in all the great Protestant sects, the one holding to a *real* depravity of *nature*, and striving to make such a fact consistent with common sense and with the ideas of benevolence and justice in the Creator; the other, holding only to a depravity of *action* and of character, resulting from such action in this life, are striving to evade open antagonism with the Augustinian theory.

No third position being possible, every man is necessarily Augustinian or Pelagian; either holding that man *is* depraved *in nature*, or that he is *not*.

In the first class, is one whom, above all others, the writer would prefer to meet in a discussion on this great question. [379]  
It is one who is remembered in early life as the honest, serious, book-loving boy; next as the earnest Christian and faithful student, winning the highest honors of a collegiate course; next as a student of theology called to several of the highest city pulpits, even before finishing his preparatory course; next, even in youth, the president of a flourishing western college, taking a decided stand on the slavery question, defending the *freedom of the press* with its first martyr, and very nearly sharing his fate; next resuming the pastor's office, mainly to gain more freedom to write and publish his peculiar views, which he well understood would encounter all the organized interests of Christendom, and place a drag-chain on all his personal and professional interests;

finally, one who, as scholar, metaphysician and theologian, in the writer's view, has never been surpassed, while he never has, and never will, resort to a cowardly or unfair mode to weaken or escape an argument. Thus much, if not allowable toward a brother, may be permitted toward an antagonist.

It is this brother who for years has been laboring to sustain the Augustinian dogma by a theory which—could it be proved—is the only one yet devised that is at once rational, intelligible and actually secures the end designed. For if it were a fact that the *nature* of mind is depraved, and if it were possible to prove that our race originally, in a preëxistent state, were created with a perfect nature, ruined themselves, and were born into this world for purposes of pardon and redemption, the grand difficulty *would* all be remedied, and God *could* be exhibited as wise, just and good in spite of this mournful fact.

But it is *the fact* of the *depraved nature* of the human mind, where the writer and this brother are at issue, and not on any theory to relieve the difficulties incident to that fact.

The argument of this work, to prove that there is no possible mode of proving the benevolence of God, or of proving that the Bible is a reliable revelation from him, to any man who teaches that the *nature* of the human mind is depraved in *any* sense that can be made intelligible by human language, *this* is the place where the author of the Conflict of Ages, in due time, will meet this discussion fairly, openly and honorably.

In the second class, mentioned above, is another brother, whom the writer believes to be as decidedly on the Pelagian ground. Whether he yet fully understands his position, is not affirmed by one, who has, for so short a time, fully understood her own bearings in this matter. But ere long, the only question remaining for him will be, whether he shall openly attack this strongly-entrenched error, this wholesale slander on his Lord and Master, or take the Tract Society mode of evading discussion. All who best know the writer of the *Star Papers*, best understand



that any question of *expediency* will relate, not to the fearless, outspoken exhibition of his opinions, but only to the *time* and *manner* in which it shall be done. He must soon perceive that it is as much his duty openly to attack the *African*[A] enslavement of Anglo-Saxon *minds*, as it ever was to combat the Anglo-Saxon enslavement of African *bodies*.

It will be noticed that this public appeal to family friends was not made until all other theologians, especially obligated to meet this discussion, had evaded it, and some of them by unfair, ungentlemanly and unchristian methods.

[Transcriber's Note: Obvious printer's errors have been corrected.]



## Footnotes



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