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## Doctrinal Theology.

### VOCATION.

Man, in his fallen state, is alienated from God and the life of God,<sup>1)</sup> ἄθεος ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.<sup>2)</sup> *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned away every one to his own way.*<sup>3)</sup> Nor is there in natural man a desire or willingness to return to God, to enter into union and communion with him. *The carnal mind is enmity against God.*<sup>4)</sup> But *God loved the world;*<sup>5)</sup> he longed for union and communion with fallen man; and in order to reestablish the bond of union which had been severed by sin, *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.*<sup>6)</sup> And not only has God prepared salvation for all men, but he also sends forth the call: *All things are ready; come to the marriage;*<sup>7)</sup> *Come; for all things are now ready.*<sup>8)</sup> To the wayward children who go astray, famishing in the desert, he extends the call: *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*<sup>9)</sup> *Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*<sup>10)</sup>

1) Eph. 4, 18.

4) Rom. 8, 7.

7) Matt. 22, 4.

10) Matt. 11, 28.

2) Eph. 2, 12.

5) John 3, 16.

8) Luke 14, 17.

3) Is. 53, 6.

6) 2 Cor. 5, 19.

9) Is. 55, 1.

Such is the call whereby sinners are to be brought to God and Christ and the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. God *hath saved us and CALLED us with an holy CALLING.*<sup>1)</sup> *Κλήσις, vocation*, is the work of God whereby he, through the means of grace, earnestly offers to all who hear or read the gospel, or to whom the sacraments are administered, the benefits of Christ's redemption, truly and earnestly invites and exhorts them to accept and enjoy what is thus offered, and endeavors to move and lead them by the power inherent in the means of grace to such acceptance and enjoyment of the benefits of the redemption.

Vocation, then, is the work of God, of divine grace. *He called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.*<sup>2)</sup> In his pentecostal sermon, Peter says, *The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD OUR GOD shall CALL.*<sup>3)</sup> And Paul writes, *GOD is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*<sup>4)</sup> And St. Peter, *Ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*<sup>5)</sup> The same God who by his almighty word called primeval light to shine out of primeval darkness,<sup>6)</sup> also calls men from the darkness of sin and death to the light in the Lord.<sup>7)</sup>

But while the power of God commanded the light to shine out of darkness in the beginning by immediate action, the same power of God exerts itself in the calling of sinners by mediate action, by the means of grace. *He called you by our gospel, ἐκάλεσεν ὑμᾶς διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἡμῶν,*<sup>8)</sup> says the apostle of Christ. This gospel, being the word of God, is not only *quick and powerful,*<sup>9)</sup> but is itself *δύναμις θεοῦ, the power of God unto salvation.*<sup>10)</sup> Thus the call whereby sin-

1) 2 Tim. 1, 9.

2) Ibid.

3) Acts 2, 39.

4) 1 Cor. 1, 9.

5) 1 Pet. 2, 9.

6) 2 Cor. 4, 6.

7) 1 Pet. 2, 9. Eph. 5, 8.

8) 2 Thess. 2, 14.

9) Hebr. 4, 12.

10) Rom. 1, 16.

ners are called to the fellowship of Christ is always efficacious, always earnestly intent upon the effect for which the efficacious gospel is the means. *The gifts and calling of God are without repentance,*<sup>1)</sup> even where, as in Israel according to the flesh, they meet with unbelief and obstinate resistance. *To Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*<sup>2)</sup> To furnish the wedding with guests, the servants of the Lord are charged, *Go ye into the highways; and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.*<sup>3)</sup> The gospel, *εὐαγγέλιον*, is *παραγγλία* to all men everywhere to repent.<sup>4)</sup> The ambassadors of Christ preach Christ *νουθετοῦντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον καὶ διδάσκοντες πάντα ἄνθρωπον*, *admonishing every man and teaching every man,*<sup>5)</sup> not *pro forma*, but with the intention of presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus.<sup>6)</sup> A prophet is an official spokesman of God, through whom God deals with those to whom the prophet is sent, not only with those who accept his message. When God sent Ezekiel to the children of Israel, he said: *They are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. . . . And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.*<sup>7)</sup> The same is true of the written word of God. Here, too, the prophets are the spokesmen of God. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*<sup>8)</sup> The written gospel, too, has the *vis operativa* and the *vis collativa*. These, says St. John, *were written, that ye might BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might HAVE life through his*

1) Rom. 11, 29.

2) Rom. 10, 21.

3) Matt. 22, 9.

4) Acts 17, 30.

5) Col. 1, 28.

6) Ibid.

7) Ezek. 2, 4. 5. 7.

8) 2 Tim. 3, 16.

name.<sup>1)</sup> Hence the admonition, *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life.*<sup>2)</sup>

The same is also true of the sacraments. Baptism is a means of divine grace, not for a chosen few only, but for all the world. *Be baptized EVERY ONE OF YOU in the name of Jesus Christ FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS*, says Peter in his pentecostal sermon;<sup>3)</sup> and the church is charged to *disciple all nations baptizing them.*<sup>4)</sup> By this charge Baptism is for all times stamped an efficacious means of leading men to the fellowship of Christ, as truly as by saying, "Go ye and heal all the sick by giving them quinine," God would have stamped this drug a panacea for all physical ailments. The Lord's supper, likewise, is but another form of declaring to sinners that God is gracious to them for Christ the Redeemer's sake, that their sins are forgiven and life and salvation is prepared for them, every one of them.

The power of the means of grace being twofold, colative and operative, vocation, which is performed by the administration, *in usu constituere*, of the means of grace, implies a twofold activity of the saving grace and power of God. In the first place, God seriously offers to all who hear or read the gospel, and to whom the sacraments are administered, the benefits of Christ's redemption. The gospel call is, *Be ye reconciled to God,*<sup>5)</sup> that is, possess and enjoy what was procured for you when *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.*<sup>6)</sup> God calls sinners to *the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ,*<sup>7)</sup> *unto his kingdom and glory,*<sup>8)</sup> *to eternal life,*<sup>9)</sup> *unto his eternal glory,*<sup>10)</sup> to all the blessings which Christ has procured for us.<sup>11)</sup> At the same time, by the same call, God endeavors to move and lead all those to whom the call is extended to the acceptance of what he offers. The call is an earnest invitation to the marriage

1) John 20, 31.

2) John 5, 39.

3) Acts 2, 38.

4) Matt. 28, 19.

5) 2 Cor. 5, 20.

6) 2 Cor. 5, 19.

7) 1 Cor. 1, 9.

8) 1 Thess. 2, 12.

9) 1 Tim. 6, 12.

10) 1 Pet. 5, 10.

11) 1 Pet. 3, 7. Phil. 3, 14.

prepared by the grace of God: *Come; for all things are ready;*<sup>1)</sup> yea, *All things are ready; come to the marriage.*<sup>2)</sup> The gospel call is: *The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*<sup>3)</sup> Christ the Prophet sent of God came to call sinners to repentance,<sup>4)</sup> and it was his will and command that *repentance and forgiveness of sins be preached in his name among all nations.*<sup>5)</sup> In obedience to this charge, the apostles preached, *Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.*<sup>6)</sup> By this call, God would work *μετάνοια*, a change of heart and mind, engender faith, which is the acceptance of Christ and his benefits, save us according to his own purpose and grace.<sup>7)</sup> God would not only declare to fallen man his willingness to draw him toward himself, but actually *draws him,*<sup>8)</sup> *leads him to repentance.*<sup>9)</sup>

All this is in no wise invalidated by the many instances of obstinate and persistent refusal on the part of man to yield to the divine call and to accept what is offered by the means of grace. The power of God, exerting itself by mediate action in the calling of sinners to repentance, does not act irresistibly. There are those who decline the divine invitation to the great supper,<sup>10)</sup> who *would not come to the royal marriage to which they were bidden,*<sup>11)</sup> who *despise the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and longsuffering,*<sup>12)</sup> who, *being stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, do always resist the Holy Ghost.*<sup>13)</sup> But *What if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid.*<sup>14)</sup> The call is of God, not of man; and *God is faithful, by whom we were*

1) Luke 14, 17.

2) Matt. 22, 4. 9. 10.

3) Mark 1, 15.

4) Matt. 9, 13. Mark 2, 17. Luke 5, 32.

5) Luke 24, 47.

6) Acts 3, 19; cf. 5, 31; 17, 30.

7) 2 Tim. 1, 9; cf. Acts 11, 14.

8) Jer. 31, 3.

9) Rom. 2, 4.

10) Luke 14, 16—20.

11) Matt. 22, 2—8.

12) Rom. 2, 4.

13) Acts 7, 51; cf. Matt. 23, 37.

14) Rom. 3, 3 f.

called unto the fellowship of his Son.<sup>1)</sup> All those in whom the effects of the calling grace of God are not by obstinate resistance frustrated are, by the divine power acting through and residing in the means of grace, regenerated or converted.

## REGENERATION OR CONVERSION.

Regeneration or Conversion, in the stricter sense of the terms, is the work of divine power and grace by which man, born of the flesh, void of all power to think, to will, or to do, any good thing, and dead in sin, is, through the means of grace, quickened from spiritual death, born into a new spiritual life, endowed with spiritual power to know and understand spiritual truth, to will and to do what is spiritually good, and is thus transferred from his natural state of sin and wrath and spiritual death into a state of spiritual life, of faith and grace, and made to accept and enjoy the benefits of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, the Redeemer and Savior of mankind.

Regeneration, *παλιγγενεσία*, and Conversion, *ἐπιστροφή*, *ἐπιστρέφειν*, are scriptural terms, synonyms naming the same thing differently viewed. Other synonyms are *ἀναγεννᾶν*,<sup>2)</sup> *ἀποκτείν*,<sup>3)</sup> *γεννηθῆναι ἐκ θεοῦ*,<sup>4)</sup> *γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν*,<sup>5)</sup> *γεννηθῆναι ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος*,<sup>6)</sup> *ζωοποιεῖν*,<sup>7)</sup> *ἐγείρειν*,<sup>8)</sup> *καινὴ κτίσις*,<sup>9)</sup> *δοῦναι μετάνοιαν*.<sup>10)</sup> All these terms may be divided into two groups, the one comprising those looking to the act or process as a change in man proceeding from a *terminus a quo* and leading to a *terminus ad quem*; the other comprising those terms which look rather to the *terminus ad quem*, the product or result brought about by the act or process designated. Terms of the former class are *conversion*, *giving repentance*, *raising up*, *quickening*. Of the second

1) 1 Cor. 1, 9.

2) 1 Pet. 1, 3. 23.

3) James 1, 18.

4) John 1, 13. 1 John 5, 1.

5) John 3, 3.

6) John 3, 5. 6.

7) Eph. 2, 5.

8) Eph. 2, 6.

9) 2 Cor. 5, 17. Gal. 6, 15.

10) Acts 5, 31.

class are *regeneration, begetting, begetting again, being born again, being born of God, of water and of the Spirit, a new creation*. But all these terms describe the same act or process. Conversion and regeneration are not similar acts or processes, but identical, the same thing only differently named as differently viewed. In a similar way the same person may, according to the same official capacity, be called a minister, a preacher, a pastor, a bishop, a presbyter; sanctification and renovation mean the same process differently viewed; justification and remission of sins are in the same sense synonymous terms.

The subject of regeneration or conversion, *subjectum regenerandum sive convertendum*, is man in his unregenerate, unconverted state, man as born of the flesh.<sup>1)</sup> In this state man is flesh, and only flesh.<sup>2)</sup> He is still essentially man, not a brute, nor a devil, but a human being with a human mind, human understanding, human affections and desires, a human will. But *the carnal mind is enmity against God*, τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἐχθρὰ εἰς θεόν.<sup>3)</sup> The understanding of natural man is darkened, ignorant, blind, in spiritual things,<sup>4)</sup> so that *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither CAN he know them*.<sup>5)</sup> The affections of natural man are evil, depraved; he *is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts*.<sup>6)</sup> The will of natural man is set against the will of God; he is God's *enemy*.<sup>7)</sup> And this depravity is total. Darkness, *σκότος*,<sup>8)</sup> is not twilight, but the total absence of light. Blindness is not defective vision, but a total inability to see. Not many or most of natural man's imaginations, but *every* imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil, and *only* evil, and *continually* evil,<sup>9)</sup> and *evil from his youth*.<sup>10)</sup> Natural man's attitude toward God is

1) John 3, 6.

4) Eph. 4, 18; 5, 8.

6) Eph. 4, 22.

8) Eph. 5, 8.

2) Ibid.

5) 1 Cor. 2, 14; cf. 2 Cor. 3, 5.

7) Rom. 8, 7; 5, 10. Col. 1, 21.

9) Gen. 6, 5.

3) Rom. 8, 7.

5) 1 Cor. 2, 14; cf. 2 Cor. 3, 5.

7) Rom. 8, 7; 5, 10. Col. 1, 21.

10) Gen. 8, 21.

not neutrality, but *enmity against God*.<sup>1)</sup> Man, in his natural state, is not only weakened by sin, but *dead in sins*,<sup>2)</sup> and death is the total extinction of life. And such is the state of man by nature; we are *τέχνα φύσει ὀργῆς*,<sup>3)</sup> not by example, education, or any manner of deterioration after we came into being, but conceived and born in sin and iniquity.<sup>4)</sup> And such is the universal state of *all* natural men; they are *ALL gone aside, they are ALL together become filthy; there is NONE that doeth good, no, NOT ONE.*<sup>5)</sup>

Such, then, is unregenerate, unconverted man, such the *terminus a quo* of regeneration or conversion. And now we read of such as were sometimes darkness, *Now are ye light in the Lord*;<sup>6)</sup> of such as were dead in sins that they were *quicken*ed and *raised up*;<sup>7)</sup> having *passed from death unto life*;<sup>8)</sup> of such as were blind and ignorant, that *the eyes of their understanding are enlightened*;<sup>9)</sup> of such as had been *δοῦλοι ἁμαρτίας*, *bondslaves of sin*, but are *now made free from sin*;<sup>10)</sup> of such as are no longer children of wrath, but *under grace*,<sup>11)</sup> having *obtained mercy*;<sup>12)</sup> of such as were as sheep going astray, but are *now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls*;<sup>13)</sup> of such as in time past were not a people, *but are now the people of God*,<sup>14)</sup> having *become the sons of God*.<sup>15)</sup> In all these instances we have the *terminus ad quem* of a remarkable change. All these scriptural statements speak of men in whom a change has taken place from the natural state of man into a contrary state, the very reverse of what the same scriptures and, in most cases, the same texts teach concerning natural man and concerning those very men in their former state.

1) Rom. 8, 7; 5, 9. Col. 1, 21.

2) Eph. 2, 5. Col. 2, 13.

3) Eph. 2, 3.

4) Gen. 8, 21. Job 14, 4; 15, 14. Ps. 51, 5.

5) Ps. 14, 3; cf. Is. 51, 6. Eph. 2, 3.

6) Eph. 5, 8.

7) Eph. 2, 5. 6. Col. 2, 13.

8) 1 John 3, 14. John 5, 24.

9) Eph. 1, 18.

10) Rom. 6, 20. 22.

11) Rom. 6, 14. 15.

12) 1 Pet. 2, 10.

13) 1 Pet. 2, 25.

14) 1 Pet. 2, 10.

15) John 1, 12.

1 John 3, 2.

Rom. 8, 15.

Gal. 3, 26; 4, 6.



Whence this change? It cannot be by natural growth or development. There is such a thing as spiritual growth, a *growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*,<sup>1)</sup> a growth unto perfect manhood, to *the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*.<sup>2)</sup> But there the *terminus a quo* is not spiritual blindness and death, but the inferior knowledge and stature of infants, *babes*, as compared with that of men of *full age*.<sup>3)</sup> Here, however, we have a change from death to life, from darkness to light, from blindness to sight, from slavery to freedom, from a state of wrath to a state of grace, from slaves of Satan to children of God. Of course, a dead man may undergo changes, natural and otherwise. Of Lazarus in his sepulchre his sister Martha said, *Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days*.<sup>4)</sup> Or we may change a dead man's garment; but he is as dead in a decent shroud as he was in the clothes in which he died. You may put spectacles on a blind man's eyes and by education teach him to speak and write compositions on the nature and beauty of colors; but all this will leave him as blind as he was before. St. Paul gives us a description of what changes natural man may undergo by way of natural devolution in his portraiture of heathendom sinking away into deeper depths of darkness, of spiritual ignorance and the filth of sin, until, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and yielding themselves up to the lusts of their corrupt nature they sinned even against nature.<sup>5)</sup> All the attainments and accomplishments of art and science throughout a pagan world were, at their very best, but a beautiful shroud and wreaths of flowers decking a corpse decaying in spiritual death. In all nature there is no such thing as life engendered out of death. Even the evolution of life of a higher order from life of a lower order, as of animal life

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1) 2 Pet. 3, 18; cf. Hebr. 5, 12—14.

2) Eph. 4, 13.

3) Hebr. 5, 12—14; cf. Eph. 4, 13.

4) John 11, 39.

5) Rom. 1, 21—32.

from vegetable life, is without an instance in the universe. Nothing short of a new creation, *καὶνὴ κτίσις*, could change an inorganic body into an organism, and a vegetable organism into an animal. Thus also Adam, by nature, could only beget a son in his own likeness, after his image,<sup>1)</sup> flesh born of the flesh,<sup>2)</sup> and flesh, by natural development, can only become flesh. Flesh cannot, by a natural process, be changed into spirit any more than oxygen can be changed into carbon, or carbon into hydrogen.

*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, καὶνὴ κτίσις: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*<sup>3)</sup> Such is the explicit statement of Scripture, and it is in full keeping with the observation and experience of all ages and all the laws governing the operations of all the innumerable forces throughout the universe. The new man does not come into being by evolution from the old man, who is corrupt,<sup>4)</sup> but *κατὰ θεὸν κτισθεὶς, created after God,*<sup>5)</sup> according to the image of him *that created him, τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν.*<sup>6)</sup> This is none the less true in view of the circumstance that this creation is accomplished by mediate action. As the procreation of children into physical life is in every instance a creative act of God, so the new spiritual man is created by a new birth, not flesh born of the flesh, but *spirit born of the Spirit,*<sup>7)</sup> *born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God.*<sup>8)</sup> As this act or process goes on in a person already existing in physical life by natural birth, though by nature void of spiritual life, the birth of the spirit is *regeneration, παλιγγενεσία,*<sup>9)</sup> by which, as God *hath begotten us again,*<sup>10)</sup> we were *born again, ἀναγεγεννημένοι.*<sup>11)</sup> Of this spiritual birth we read that God *of his own will BEGAT us with the word of*

1) Gen. 5, 3.

2) John 3, 6.

3) 2 Cor. 5, 17.

4) Eph. 4, 22.

5) Eph. 4, 24.

6) Col. 3, 10.

7) John 3, 6.

8) John 1, 13.

9) Tit. 3, 5.

10) 1 Pet. 1, 3: ἀναγεγεννησας ἡμᾶς.

11) 1 Pet. 1, 23.

*truth, βουληθεὶς ἀπεκόησεν ἡμῶς λόγῳ ἀληθείας,<sup>1)</sup> that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures, ἀπαρχήν τινα τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων.<sup>2)</sup> Regeneration, whereby we are born of God, is the spiritual process whereby we were made new creatures, created by the will of God, according to the image of him who created us. The same process is also described as a spiritual quickening, whereby man is raised up from a state of spiritual death and transferred into a state of spiritual life. \*Οὐκ ἦμῶς νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασι συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ Χριστῷ . . . καὶ συνέγειρεν, when we were dead in sins, he quickened us together with Christ, . . . and hath raised us up together.<sup>3)</sup> Thus were we made ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντες, alive from the dead;<sup>4)</sup> μεταβεβήκαμεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν, we have passed from death unto life.<sup>5)</sup> Again, this translation or transition from death into life is also described as *conversion*. As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the DEATH of the wicked, but that the wicked turn, בָּשׁוּב, from his way and LIVE. Turn ye, turn ye, שׁוּבוּ, שׁוּבוּ, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?<sup>6)</sup> Those who were sometimes darkness were transferred from their former to their present state by being converted, turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.<sup>7)</sup> In our natural state, all we like sheep have gone astray.<sup>8)</sup> But there are those who are no longer in their former state, but of whom the apostle says, \*Ἦτε ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, the time is past when ye were as sheep going astray,<sup>9)</sup> ἦτε being in emphasis. How, then, was this change brought about? \*Ἐπεστράφητε ἄν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν, ye are now returned, converted, unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls,<sup>10)</sup> says the apostle.*

1) James 1, 18.

3) Eph. 2, 5. 6; cf. Col. 2, 12. 13; 3, 1.

5) 1 John 3, 14.

6) Ezek. 33, 11.

8) Is. 53, 6.

9) 1 Pet. 2, 24.

10) Ibid. Cf. Acts 14, 15; 26, 18. Jer. 24, 7. Hos. 14, 2. Joel 2, 13.

2) Ibid.

4) Rom. 6, 13.

7) Acts 26, 18.

In the texts quoted and elsewhere in the Scriptures, this change is viewed in two aspects, as an act performed in the *subjectum convertendum*, by a superior power, and as a process going on within the subject and brought about by such power. The former mode of conception views conversion as active, transitive, objective, *conversio activa, transitiva, objectiva*; the latter, as passive, intransitive, subjective conversion, *conversio passiva, intransitiva, subjectiva*. It is God who brings about the change, who begets the new man, quickens him from spiritual death, *who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son,*<sup>1)</sup> *who giveth repentance to Israel.*<sup>2)</sup> But the change thus wrought takes place in man, in the particular subject whose understanding is enlightened, whose will is changed from disobedience and enmity against God to the willing obedience of a servant of God who yields himself to God.<sup>3)</sup> This change, while it is not a work of man, is a work of God in man, not a change of God, but a change of man wrought by God. Conversion is *μετάνοια*, a change of mind, of man's mind; but *μετάνοια* is a gift of God.<sup>4)</sup>

All this is also apparent when we learn that regeneration or conversion is essentially the bestowal of faith. We *are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*<sup>5)</sup> *Who-soever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*<sup>6)</sup> We *are risen with Christ through the faith of the operation of God,*<sup>7)</sup> *and believing we have life through his name.*<sup>8)</sup> At Antioch, *the hand of the Lord was with them that preached the Lord Jesus; and a great number believed and turned, ἐπέστρεψεν, unto the Lord.*<sup>9)</sup> They who turned were men, the men who believed; but that believing they turned to

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1) Col. 1, 13; cf. 1 Pet. 1, 3. Eph. 2, 6. 7.                      2) Acts 5, 31.  
 3) Rom. 6, 13. 17. 22.                      4) Acts 5, 31; 11, 18. 2 Tim. 2, 25.  
 5) Gal. 3, 26.                      6) 1 John 5, 1; cf. John 1, 12. 13.  
 7) Col. 2, 12.                      8) John 20, 31.                      9) Acts 11, 21.

the Lord was an effect wrought by the hand of the Lord which was with the preachers of the Gospel of Christ.

While, then, it is man who is converted or regenerated, it is not man who converts or regenerates himself. Conversion or regeneration is wholly and exclusively the work of God, wherein the person being converted or regenerated can in no wise, measure or respect concur, but is merely the passive subject in which the salutary internal change is wrought *in solidum* by the power of God through the means of grace. 'The power which, *when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us,*<sup>1)</sup> is the same power which raised Christ from the dead. In our conversion God made manifest *what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead.*<sup>2)</sup> This converting, regenerating, quickening power of God finds the *subjectum convertendum* in a state of spiritual death, of enmity against God, and *ὄντας ἡμῶς νεκρούς, when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us.*<sup>3)</sup> God does not bring about a state in man which qualifies or enables him to quicken himself, but it is God who quickens him, who, until he is quickened, is dead, void of all spiritual power and energy to turn himself to God. Paul expressly says that our salvation is NOT *of ourselves, οὐκ ἐξ ἡμῶν*, but *the gift of God, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον*, the emphasis being on *θεοῦ*.<sup>4)</sup> Hence we are simply and solely HIS *workmanship, αὐτοῦ ποίημα*, with the emphasis again on *αὐτοῦ*.<sup>5)</sup> We are not a product of spiritual evolution, but *created in Christ Jesus, κτισθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*,<sup>6)</sup> just as truly as Adam was not a product of physical evolution, but wholly God's handiwork, without any manner or measure of concurrence or cooperation in his own creation. Until this change was wrought in us by the power of God, we were in our natural state,

1) Eph. 2, 5.

2) Eph. 1, 19. 20.

3) Eph. 2, 5.

4) Eph. 2, 8.

5) Eph. 2, 10.

6) Ibid.

walking 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. Nowhere in this text or context, and nowhere in the Scriptures, do we find a vestige of an intermediate state, in which man were neither dead nor alive, neither in the kingdom of Satan nor in the kingdom of God, neither carnal nor spiritual, neither darkness nor light, neither believer nor unbeliever, so that, if he should die while in this intermediate state, he would be meet neither for hell nor for heaven, but for some intermediate nowhere. There is not and cannot be such a thing as neutrality between Satan and God; and if there were, it would be a damnable thing. Before his conversion, man is simply and solely *flesh born of the flesh*;<sup>1)</sup> and flesh will not and cannot concur with spirit; for *the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other*.<sup>2)</sup> No sooner can there be in man this *lucta carnis et spiritus*, than *after* his regeneration, when there is in him *spirit born of the Spirit*.<sup>3)</sup> All the energies of the old man are carnal. The new spiritual energies engendered by the grace and power of God are energies of the new man, and cannot exist by themselves, but are inherent in and peculiar to the new man. They cannot concur in the production of the new man, man's regeneration, but are themselves the product of regeneration. The faculty of hearing and the sense of sight are not engendered before the child, but in and with the child; they do not concur in, but presuppose the procreation of the living child. The spiritual man as well as the physical man with all his energies is *θεοῦ ποίημα*, not of himself, but of him who made him, God.

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1) John 3, 6.

2) Gal. 5, 17.

3) John 3, 6.

And as the procreation of physical life is now a work of God performed by mediate action, so also the creation of spiritual life is a divine work accomplished by means, the means of grace. *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.*<sup>1)</sup> *Men are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.*<sup>2)</sup> Regeneration is essentially the bestowal of faith; *and faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*<sup>3)</sup> *It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*<sup>4)</sup> *Baptism is the washing of regeneration.*<sup>5)</sup> *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*<sup>6)</sup> When God created Adam and Eve, he created them into spiritual life as well as into physical life, creating them in his image and likeness, endowed with concreated spiritual wisdom and knowledge and in perfect righteousness, goodness, and holiness,<sup>7)</sup> and all this without the employment of means, directly exerting his omnipotence in his creative work. Now, however, he brings forth physical man, body and soul, through the union of father and mother out of corruptible seed, and spiritual man through the word of God, the washing of regeneration, the gospel in its various form, as of incorruptible seed. In both instances, the will of God can be resisted and its intended effect can be frustrated by the interposition of created will, by parents who resort to various methods for the prevention of offspring, and by those *stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears who do always resist the Holy Ghost,*<sup>8)</sup> who, *when the word of God is spoken to them, put it from them and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life.*<sup>9)</sup> The gospel is at all times and everywhere the power of God unto salvation,<sup>10)</sup> *coming not in word only but also in power.*<sup>11)</sup>

1) James 1, 18; cf. 1 Cor. 4, 15.

3) Rom. 10, 17; cf. John 17, 20.

5) Tit. 3, 5.

7) Gen. 1, 26. 27. 31.

9) Acts 13, 46. Cf. Rom. 10, 21. Matt. 23, 37. John 1, 5. 11; 3, 19—21.

10) Rom. 1, 16.

2) 1 Pet. 1, 23.

4) 1 Cor. 1, 21.

6) John 3, 5.

8) Acts 7, 51.

11) 1 Thess. 1, 5.

Of his quickening word, the Lord says, *My word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*<sup>1)</sup> Yet the same word, preached by the same messengers of God, does not produce the same effect in all who hear it. It was preached by Paul and Barnabas to certain Gentiles, who, when they heard it, *were glad and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*<sup>2)</sup> It was preached by Paul and Barnabas to certain Jews at the same place, and they *spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.*<sup>3)</sup>

Whence this difference? Was it because the Gentiles were by nature more favorably disposed toward the Gospel than the Jews? No; the Gentiles were by nature dead in sins and children of wrath, *even as others.*<sup>4)</sup> Or was it because of a difference in the word? No; the word preached to the gainsaying Jews was the word of God,<sup>5)</sup> and when they put it from them, they judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life,<sup>6)</sup> which was truly and efficaciously offered to Jews and Gentiles alike, as by the same Gospel, *the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*<sup>7)</sup> When this Gospel was preached at Jerusalem, it met with resistance, and those who resisted did not set themselves against the apostles only, but *resisted the Holy Ghost,*<sup>8)</sup> even as their fathers had done when they withstood and persecuted *the prophets,*<sup>9)</sup> who preached to them the Gospel, *showing before the coming of the Just One.*<sup>10)</sup> Yet by this same Gospel of Christ crucified, which was proscribed and prohibited by the priests and rulers,<sup>11)</sup> thousands were converted, and even a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.<sup>12)</sup> Thus

1) Is. 55, 11.

2) Acts 13, 48.

3) Acts 13, 45.

4) Eph. 2, 1—3. 11. 12.

5) Acts 13, 46; cf. 48.

6) Ibid.

7) Rom. 1, 16.

8) Acts 7, 51.

9) Acts 7, 52.

10) Ibid.

11) Acts 4, 1. 10—12. 17. 18.

12) Acts 6, 7; cf. 2, 41; 4, 4. 32.



was Christ crucified preached, *unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, yet unto them which were called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God,*<sup>1)</sup> the same Gospel, resisted by Jews and Gentiles in unbelief, and received by Jews and Gentiles in the obedience of faith.

Whence this difference? Two solutions present themselves, only two, and both of them are wrong. The one is the Calvinistic denial of the universality of divine grace, of the universality of Christ's redemption, and of the universal efficacy of the Gospel. The other is the synergistic denial of the universality of the total depravity of natural man, of spiritual death as the common state of all flesh born of the flesh. Both are denials of what, under their proper heads, we have shown to be doctrines clearly revealed and firmly established in the Scriptures. If the grace of God is not universal, if it never was God's good and gracious will that all men should be saved,<sup>2)</sup> if Christ is not the Redeemer of all men,<sup>3)</sup> if the Gospel is not everywhere efficacious,<sup>4)</sup> then the difference of God's attitude toward men can account for the difference between regenerate and unregenerate men, as between those whom God would not and did not regenerate because he would not save them, and those whom God would and did regenerate because he would save them, and them only. Or, if all men are not alike in spiritual death, carnal, and enemies of God, by nature,<sup>5)</sup> then the difference between the spiritual constitutions of different natural men

1) 1 Cor. 1, 23 f.

2) Against John 3, 16. 1 John 4, 9. 10. 1 Tim. 2, 4. Col. 1, 23. Matth. 11, 28. Ezek. 18, 31 f.

3) Against 2 Cor. 5, 14. 15. 19. John 1, 29. 1 John 2, 2. Col. 1, 20. Gal. 4, 5. Hebr. 2, 9. 1 Tim. 2, 6. Rom. 8, 32. 1 Cor. 8, 11. 2 Pet. 2, 1.

4) Against Mark 16, 15. Rom. 1, 16. Luke 10, 16. Rom. 10, 16. 21. Acts 7, 51; 13, 46. Is. 55, 10 f.

5) Against Rom. 3, 9. 23. Job. 15, 14. Ps. 51, 5; 14, 3. Eph. 2, 1. 2. 3. 5. Col. 2, 13. 1 Pet. 2, 10. Rom. 8, 7; 5, 7. Col. 1, 21. Eph. 4, 18. 1 Cor. 2, 14. Rom. 7, 18. 2 Cor. 3, 5.

may account for the difference between the attitude of some and that of others toward God and his grace and the means of grace, the attitude or conduct of some, who were better constituted, leading to their conversion, while the conduct of others, who were differently constituted, prevented their conversion. But while these supposed solutions of the problem are theologically false, because they are unscriptural, they are also philosophically false, because they are solutions that do not solve; for they do not finally answer the question, Whence the difference? They endeavor to explain the difference to be accounted for by falling back upon another difference which must also be accounted for. We ask the Calvinist, Whence this difference in God, this will to save some and not to save others in like perdition and condemnation, while God is one, and His will is one and indivisible? We ask the synergist, Whence this difference in men? Is it by nature? How can this be, as all men have their nature from a common origin by the same process of propagation? Is it by grace? Then why does not grace work the same in all? We know the cause, the sole cause, of the conversion of those who are converted; it is God. We know the cause of the persistence of others in their unconverted state; it is their own hardness of heart, *σκληρότης καὶ ἀμετανόητος καρδία*.<sup>1)</sup> This we know, because God has told us in the Scriptures. Beyond this our knowledge does not go, because beyond this revelation does not go.

There are, however, certain *dicta* in Scripture which have been adduced with a view of lending color to the synergistic perversion of the doctrine of regeneration or conversion. They are of two classes, the one comprising texts that deal with acts preparatory to conversion, the other, texts referring to acts subsequent to conversion in the strict sense of the term.

Regeneration or conversion in the strict sense is an instantaneous act or process. It is the quickening of one

1) Rom. 2, 5.

dead in sin into spiritual life; it is the bestowal of living faith, and a man must be either spiritually dead or in spiritual life, either in or without faith. There is no intermediate state through which he might pass for a length of time as by successive stages. But this transition from the one state into the other is, in adults, preceded by preparatory operations, whereby the sinner is convicted of his sinful state and helpless condition under divine wrath, by means of the law, and is, by reading the Scriptures or other books, or by oral instruction, led to a logical and historical understanding of the contents of the Gospel. Of all this, unregenerate man is, in a measure, capable. Cain and Judas knew that they had done evil and were under the righteous wrath of God; for *by the law is the knowledge of sin.*<sup>1)</sup> Felix trembled when Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,<sup>2)</sup> and the people of Nazareth, when Jesus had spoken to them, *all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.*<sup>3)</sup> Yet Felix bade the preacher go his way, and the Nazarenes did not get beyond a passing wonderment and said, *Is not this Joseph's son?*<sup>4)</sup> Indeed, this outward use of the means of grace and a certain logical and historical knowledge of the statements of the Law and the Gospel are not only within the power and reach of unconverted man, but are a prerequisite to his conversion. The man who persistently refuses to hear the word or to search the Scriptures cannot be converted, and whether a man will or will not hear what God would say to him is in a measure subject to the choice of his will. Felix, for a time, heard Paul as he discoursed on sin and righteousness, and then refused to hear him longer.<sup>5)</sup> And God will certainly hold every man responsible for the use he has made of his oppor-

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1) Rom. 3, 20; cf. Gen. 4, 13. Matt. 27, 4.

2) Acts 24, 25; cf. Acts 26, 26 ff.

3) Luke 4, 22.

4) Ibid.

5) Acts 24, 25.

tunities for hearing the word of salvation.<sup>1)</sup> But important as the hearing of the word most assuredly is, it is not tantamount to conversion. Augustine heard Ambrose for his oratory. Voltaire read the Psalms which he would ridicule. Celsus and Thomas Paine searched the Scriptures to refute them. The word may even rouse emotions in the hearer, as Felix trembled, and Agrippa said, *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*<sup>2)</sup> Yet neither Felix nor Agrippa was converted, but Felix answered, *Go thy way*, and Agrippa said, *Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad.*<sup>3)</sup> While man may decide to hear or not to hear, and while his will may set itself against the word he hears, it is not within the natural power of human will to yield to the power of God exerted in the Gospel and be converted. Man may determine himself to hear; but when he is converted by the word which he hears, it is not his will which determines him, but it is God who determines the will of man. By nature, every man is unwilling to be converted. *The carnal mind is enmity against God.* God only can change the will of man from evil to good, and this change does not precede conversion, but is itself conversion.

On the other hand, the instantaneous act of conversion superinduces a state to which a progressive spiritual transformation of the subject is peculiar. This process, beginning with conversion in the stricter sense and continuing while the state of faith and spiritual life endures, is conversion in the wider sense. In this sense the prophet, who has already been converted, says, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented.*<sup>4)</sup> In the same sense regeneration is conceived as continuous in those who have been born into newness of life. Thus Paul writes to the Christians in Galatia, his children in Christ, *My little children, of whom*

1) Matt. 11, 21, 23. Mark 6, 45; 8, 22. Luke 9, 10; 10, 13. Rom. 2, 4. 5. Matt. 23, 37.

2) Acts 26, 28.

3) Acts 26, 24.

4) Jer. 31, 18.

*I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.*<sup>1)</sup> Of this progressive transformation in the regenerate the same apostle says, *Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.*<sup>2)</sup> This is also a work of God. *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned,* are words of a regenerate man, and he expressly adds, *For thou art the Lord my God.*<sup>3)</sup> The Christians at Philippi are exhorted, *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*<sup>4)</sup> But the apostle does not proceed, "For ye are now able to will and to do according to your good pleasure." His words are, *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*<sup>5)</sup> While the regenerate are no longer dead in sin, but live and walk in newness of life, living branches in the vine, Christ, yet the Master says, *Without me ye can do nothing.*<sup>6)</sup> The regenerate man is a good tree and as such *bringeth forth good fruit,*<sup>7)</sup> and Paul writes, *Being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness.*<sup>8)</sup> He says τὸν καρπὸν ὑμῶν, YOUR fruit, and the article indicates that such fruit is considered our proper fruit. But he also says of himself, *By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*<sup>9)</sup> In view of all this it is a gross perversion of the doctrine of conversion to ascribe to unregenerate man any measure of cooperation in his conversion in the stricter sense, and an abuse of Scripture to point out texts which deal with regenerate man and to apply them to unregenerate man. Conversion, whether in the narrower or in the wider sense, is a work of divine power and grace. But the *subjectum convertendum* in the former is a passive subject only, while in the latter it is an active subject. To confound the one with the other is like issuing a burial permit for a living man, or prescribing medicine and diet for a corpse.

1) Gal. 4, 19.

2) Rom. 12, 2.

3) Jer. 31, 18.

4) Phil. 2, 12.

5) Phil. 2, 13.

6) John 15, 5.

7) Matt. 7, 17.

8) Rom. 6, 22.

9) 1 Cor. 15, 10.

When Nicodemus first heard of regeneration, he saw himself face to face with a mystery. And when he asked, *How can a man be born when he is old?* the Master tells him, how: *of water and the spirit.* But he is so far from clearing away the mystery from this mysterious work of God, that he rather points out to his enquirer the hopelessness of his endeavors to fully comprehend and understand the subject of their discourse. *Marvel not, he says, that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*<sup>1)</sup> Every regenerate man is a mysterious work of God. And this is not to be marveled at. There are thousands of other things, even natural things, which are beyond the full grasp of human understanding. Round about us and within us there are innumerable mysteries, and the new birth is but one of them. And when his visitor persists in his enquiry, *How can these things be?* Jesus reprimands him, saying, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness.*<sup>2)</sup> When God teaches us concerning the things pertaining to our salvation, also concerning regeneration or conversion, we are not to ask, *How can these things be?* but believe what he says and leave the rest to him. God has revealed to us what we should know here beneath in the manner and measure in which these things are to be taught and known here beneath. It was God's will that here we should know in part and that, accordingly, we should prophesy in part.<sup>3)</sup> What he has reserved to himself in heaven, τὰ ἐπουράνια, shall be revealed to us in the light of glory. *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*<sup>4)</sup> Then Nicodemus, too, shall know "how these things could be."

1) John 3, 7 f.

3) 1 Cor. 13, 9.

2) John 3, 11.

4) 1 Cor. 13, 10.

## SAVING FAITH.

Regeneration or conversion is essentially, *formaliter*, the bestowal of saving faith. What, then, is faith? It is the acceptance of the benefits of Christ. This is saving faith everywhere, in infants and adults.

What the peculiar manner of faith in infants may be beyond this we cannot know. But we know that *it is not the will of our Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish*,<sup>1)</sup> that the redemption which is in Christ Jesus should be appropriated to them also, that *of such is the kingdom of God*.<sup>2)</sup> We know that whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish,<sup>3)</sup> and that *he that believeth not shall be damned*.<sup>4)</sup> We know that baptism is the washing of regeneration,<sup>5)</sup> which is essentially the bestowal of faith. We know that these little ones believe in Christ.<sup>6)</sup> Knowing all this, we know that baptized infants, born again of water and the Spirit, are believers in Christ, having and holding the benefits of Christ. *Whosoever BELIEVETH on him shall RECEIVE remission of sins*.<sup>7)</sup>

In adults, likewise, saving faith is the acceptance or possession of the benefits of Christ. *As many as RECEIVED him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that BELIEVE on his name*.<sup>8)</sup> Here to *receive* Christ and to *believe* on his name are used as synonymous terms. St. Paul writes in the same sense, *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*.<sup>9)</sup> The benefits of Christ's redemption are offered in the gospel, a precious treasure in a precious shrine, so that he who takes the vessel also takes the treasure it contains. And Christ, speaking of his disciples, says, *I have given them the words which thou gavest me; and they have RECEIVED them, and*

1) Matt. 18, 14.

2) Matt. 19, 14. Mark 10, 14. Luke 18, 16 f.

3) John 3, 16.

4) Mark 16, 16.

5) Tit. 3, 5.

6) Matt. 18, 2. 6.

7) Acts 10, 43.

8) John 1, 12.

9) Col. 2, 6.

have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have BELIEVED that thou didst send me.<sup>1)</sup> That the Samaritans received the word of God<sup>2)</sup> says that they believed. Of those who receive the word with joy, the parable says, For a while they believe.<sup>3)</sup> In his discourse with Nicodemus, Christ says, Ye receive not our witness,<sup>4)</sup> and immediately after, Ye believe not.<sup>5)</sup> When Luke writes, They that gladly received his word were baptized,<sup>6)</sup> he uses but another form for, All that believed,<sup>7)</sup> and, Many of them which heard the word believed.<sup>8)</sup> The gospel is the divine offer of grace and blessing in Christ Jesus; faith is the acceptance thereof, and as such it is saving faith.

This acceptance being a mental, not a physical act, it is also described as *knowledge*. For οὐ παρέλαβον, *received him not*,<sup>9)</sup> the previous context has the equivalent, οὐκ ἔγνω, *knew him not*.<sup>10)</sup> To know, γνώσκειν, is to grasp with the mind, to obtain or have mental possession of that which is communicated. When the prophet says, By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many,<sup>11)</sup> this is equivalent to the form, by faith in him shall my righteous servant justify many; and when Christ says, This is life eternal, that they might KNOW thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,<sup>12)</sup> this is of the same import as, The just shall live by FAITH,<sup>13)</sup> and, That BELIEVING ye might have life through his name.<sup>14)</sup> Of this saving knowledge as man's acceptance of what God gives St. Peter says, His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.<sup>15)</sup> This is the γνώσις σωτηρίας ἐν ἀφέσει ἁμαρτιῶν, the *knowledge of salvation with which is connected (ἐν) remission of sins*.<sup>16)</sup>

1) John 17, 8.

2) Acts 8, 14.

3) Luke 8, 13.

4) John 3, 11.

5) John 3, 12.

6) Acts 2, 41.

7) Acts 2, 44.

8) Acts 4, 4.

9) John 1, 11.

10) John 1, 10.

11) Is. 53, 11.

12) John 17, 3.

13) Rom. 1, 17.

14) John 20, 31.

15) 2 Pet. 1, 3.

16) Luke 1, 77.



This salutary knowledge, saving faith, is not a mere intellectual acquaintance with the object known, of which we read, *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble.*<sup>1)</sup> It is a mental acceptance and appropriation of what God communicates in the gospel, whereby the believer makes that his own which is extended to him, and firmly clings to what he has thus appropriated to himself. The Hebrew *אֱמוּנָה*, *faith*, from *אָמַן*, *to be firm, to stand fast*, like *אֱמוּנָה*, *firmness*, *אֱמוּנָה*, *certainty*, *אָמֵן*, *Amen*, and the Greek *πίστις*, *faith*, from the root BHIDH, BHADH, whence we have *πιστός*, *πιστεύω*, *πέπεισμαι*, the Latin *fidus*, *fides*, the English *to bind*, *bond*, the German *Band*, *Bund*, and many other formations, indicate *firmness*, *unwavering confidence*, *full assurance*. The very word, *faith*, is, by its etymology, opposed to all manner of uncertainty or doubt. Thus *πιστεύειν* is used side by side with *γινώσκειν ἀληθῶς*, when Jesus says, *They have . . . KNOWN SURELY that I came from thee, and they have BELIEVED that thou didst send me.*<sup>2)</sup> *Πιστεύειν*, *to believe*, means *to accept as true*,<sup>3)</sup> *to confide in*, *to rely on.*<sup>4)</sup> When God speaks in his word, the believer says, *Yea and Amen*. Thus the disciples of Christ *believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had said.*<sup>5)</sup> When God promises his grace and blessing, offers forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, in the gospel, the believer does not reject or doubt the truth or sincerity of such promises, but accepts the offer and relies on the promise and assurance tendered in the word and sacraments. Thus *πιστεύομεν σωθῆναι*, *we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved.*<sup>6)</sup> Abraham's faith is thus described: *He*

1) James 2, 19.

2) John 17, 8.

3) John 1, 26. Luke 22, 67. John 10, 25; 11, 27. 42; 20, 29; 17, 8; 5, 47. 1 John 5, 1. Matt. 9, 28.

4) 2 Tim. 1, 12. Rom. 4, 3. 5. 24; 6, 18; 9, 33. 1 Tim. 1, 16. Rom. 9, 33. Acts 9, 42; 22, 19. Luke 24, 25. John 12, 46; 2, 11; 3, 16. Rom. 10, 14. Gal. 2, 16.

5) John 2, 22.

6) Acts 15, 11.

staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.<sup>1)</sup> And Paul professes his faith saying, *I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*<sup>2)</sup> As there can be no reliance without something to rely on, so there can be no faith without a divine assurance or promise. Now, God is true, and his word toward us is not yea and nay, but *all the promises of God in Christ are yea, and in him Amen.*<sup>3)</sup> Faith is the human *yea and Amen* based upon this divine *yea and Amen*, which by its very nature excludes every doubt and uncertainty. Doubt is *pro tanto* unbelief.<sup>4)</sup> The difference between the assurance of faith and the certainty of human knowledge based upon the testimony of the senses and on experience or experiment is not that the former were less and the latter more certain, but *vice versa*, faith is more sure than any merely human assurance can be. For the foundation whereon it rests is far more firm and reliable than the facts and fancies underlying merely human assurance. St. Peter, having pointed to what as an eyewitness he had seen and heard, continues, *We have also a more sure word of prophecy,*<sup>5)</sup> *βεβαιώτερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον.* As the prophetic word is more sure, *βεβαιώτερον*, than the evidence of the senses and human observation and experience, so faith, derived from and based upon that word, is more than human assurance. On the other hand, what claims the dignity of faith, but is not derived from and based on the divine word, is not faith but fanaticism. Faith may come short of the full measure as, being weak, it fails to grasp and hold all that the word affords. But nothing short of or besides the word can establish faith, and where the word has ceased, faith must cease.

1) Rom. 4, 20 f.

2) 2 Tim. 1, 12.

3) 2 Cor. 1, 18—20.

4) Rom, 4, 20. Matt. 14, 31. Mark 4, 40.

5) 2 Pet. 1, 16—19.

This must be especially maintained with regard to Christian hope. Hope is the grounded expectation of things desired, and the ground of Christian hope is the word of divine promise. Thus Christian hope is essentially faith concerning things to come,<sup>1)</sup> as Abraham *believed in hope*,<sup>2)</sup> firmly relying on the promise of God, *being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform*.<sup>3)</sup> This is also a purpose of the written word, *that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*.<sup>4)</sup> Whatever would pass as Christian hope must prove its title by the word of divine promise laid down in the Scriptures. St. Peter says, *Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you*.<sup>5)</sup> But without a word of divine promise there can be no such readiness, because without such promise there is no reason of hope and, in fact, no hope, no grounded expectation, but an idle dream. The hope in which we may *rejoice*,<sup>6)</sup> by which we *are saved*,<sup>7)</sup> as in *hope of eternal life*,<sup>8)</sup> the hope unto which God has begotten us again as *unto a lively hope*,<sup>9)</sup> could not stand and prevail in the tempests of life and in the billows of death if it were based on any foundation less sure and abiding than the infallible word of God, the promises of God in the Scriptures, which are yea and Amen in Christ.<sup>10)</sup>

IN CHRIST. The cardinal subject, Alpha and Omega, of Scripture is Christ, the author and finisher of our faith.<sup>11)</sup> *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*.<sup>12)</sup> Christ the Savior as taught in the Scriptures is the *fundamentum personale* of saving faith. The name of Christ is Christ as he has revealed himself and as he would be known

1) Rom. 8, 24. Tit. 1, 2; 3, 7. 1 Pet. 1, 3. 13. al.

2) Rom. 4, 18.

3) Rom. 4, 20 f.

4) Rom. 15, 4.

5) 1 Pet. 3, 15.

6) Rom. 5, 2; 12, 12.

7) Rom. 8, 24.

8) Tit. 1, 2; 2, 7.

9) 1 Pet. 1, 3.

10) 1 Cor. 1, 20.

11) Hebr. 12, 2.

12) Acts 10, 43.

by us, Jesus, the Savior, Christ, our Righteousness, and to *believe on his name*, πιστεύειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ,<sup>1)</sup> is trust in him of whom it is said, *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*<sup>2)</sup> Not the so-called historical Christ, but the Christ exhibited in the gospel,<sup>3)</sup> is the rock of our salvation, on whom we must repose our confidence unto life everlasting, πιστεύειν ἐπ' αὐτῷ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον,<sup>4)</sup> and *whosoever believeth on him, ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ, shall not be ashamed.*<sup>5)</sup> This is, in brief, the divine plan of salvation, that God gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, looks to him in firm, unwavering confidence, πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτόν, should not perish, but have everlasting life.<sup>6)</sup> This is faith in Christ, πίστις εἰς Χριστόν,<sup>7)</sup> εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν,<sup>8)</sup> the trust and confidence directed upon Christ, laying hold of him as our only help in every trouble, in the depth of sin and guilt, under the curse of the law, in our struggles with the enemies of our salvation, in trials and tribulations, in the agony of death, in view of the yawning gulf of hell. And as the redemption which is in Christ Jesus is God's own salvation, the salvation provided by him through Jesus Christ, faith is also reliance on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,<sup>9)</sup> on him that justifieth the ungodly.<sup>10)</sup>

Such is the nature of faith as saving faith. As such it must not be confounded with faith as an active principle in the regenerate, *faith which worketh by love*,<sup>11)</sup> or as itself a work according to the first commandment.<sup>12)</sup> When the apostle says, *By grace are ye saved through faith*, διὰ τῆς πίστεως,<sup>13)</sup> faith is conceived merely as the acceptance of the benefits of Christ, whereby the believer appropriates to him-

1) John 1, 12; cf. 3, 18.

2) Acts 4, 12.

3) John 20, 31.

4) 1 Tim. 1, 16.

5) Rom. 9, 33.

6) John 3, 16.

7) Acts 24, 24; 26, 18. Col. 2, 5.

8) Acts 20, 21.

9) Rom. 4, 24.

10) Rom. 4, 5.

11) Gal. 5, 6.

12) Prov. 3, 5.

13) Eph. 2, 8.

self what is offered in the gospel and with firm reliance on the divine word and on Christ in the word lays hold of his Redeemer, the Lord his Righteousness and his salvation. Thus faith is not a cause of our salvation. We are not saved *διὰ τὴν πίστιν, because of faith*, but *διὰ τῆς πίστεως, by or through faith*.<sup>1)</sup> Faith is not properly a condition of our salvation, to be fulfilled by us. Faith is rather the means, mode, or method, whereby we are saved. God offers and gives, and we receive and take. God gives by the gospel in the word and sacraments, and we take by faith. What is given and taken is salvation. Thus are we saved by the word<sup>2)</sup> and by baptism;<sup>3)</sup> thus are we saved by faith.<sup>4)</sup>

Inasmuch as faith is the acceptance of what God offers in the gospel, the yea and Amen of the heart believing what God says and promises in the word, it is an act of the believer's mind responding to the divine act of offering and assuring what God would have us accept and believe. The centurion had, in a particular instance, when he sought relief for his stricken servant, placed his trust and confidence in Christ, being assured that his petition would be granted; and Jesus said, *As thou hast believed, ἐπίστευσας, so be it unto thee*.<sup>5)</sup> When the angel had announced to Mary that she should be the mother of the Son of God, she said, *Be it unto me according to thy word*,<sup>6)</sup> and Elisabeth, praising the virgin's faith and professing her own, said, *Blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord*.<sup>7)</sup> Whenever a believer hears a word of divine promise or assurance, or partakes of the Lord's sacrament, he, by an act of his mind, lays hold of such promise or assurance extended to him in that word or sacrament, appropriates to himself anew what is given him anew, as in the word of absolution, say-

1) Eph. 2, 8.

2) Acts 11, 14. James 1, 21.

3) Tit. 3, 5. 1 Pet. 3, 21.

4) Eph. 2, 8.

5) Matt. 8, 13.

6) Luke 1, 38.

7) Luke 1, 45.

ing in his heart, "I believe, trust and confide in what my God has again declared to me."

But faith is also conceived as a state, as the continued possession of the benefits of Christ by an enduring confidence in Christ the Savior and the promises of the gospel. *Examine yourselves, whether ye BE in the faith*, says Paul.<sup>1)</sup> We read of those who are *established in the faith*,<sup>2)</sup> who *continue in faith*,<sup>3)</sup> whose *faith is increased*,<sup>4)</sup> and of others who *for a while believe*.<sup>5)</sup> Paul says, *I have kept the faith*,<sup>6)</sup> and Jesus says to Peter, *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, μὴ ἐκλείπη, may not give out or come to an end*.<sup>7)</sup> A Christian's life is a life of faith. He says with St. Paul, *The life which I live I live by the faith of the Son of God*.<sup>8)</sup> Even in a state of unconsciousness, when he is incapable of performing any voluntary act, as when in profound sleep, or in the delirium of fever, or in amentia brought on by disease, or in narcosis under the surgeon's knife, a child of God is at all times and everywhere bound up with Christ by faith. Christ not only sojourns, but *dwells in our hearts by faith*,<sup>9)</sup> enduring faith, which has and holds Christ and all his benefits as an enduring possession. This faith may be *increased*,<sup>10)</sup> growing in extension or intensity, as more of the saving truth of God comes within its grasp, or as that grasp becomes more firm and tenacious. *Abraham was strong in faith*,<sup>11)</sup> others are *weak in the faith*.<sup>12)</sup> Jesus reproves his disciples for being *of little faith, ὀλιγόπιστοι*.<sup>13)</sup> Their faith lacked in vigor and firmness, in intensity; when they should have been sure of their safety in their Lord's presence, they were *fearful*.<sup>14)</sup> Peter, seeing the wind boisterous, was *afraid*. Though he was not entirely without faith, but cried, *Lord, save me*, yet Jesus said to him, *O thou of*

1) 2 Cor. 13, 5.

2) Col. 2, 7.

3) 1 Tim. 4, 7.

4) 2 Cor. 10, 15.

5) Luke 8, 13.

6) 2 Tim. 4, 7.

7) Luke 22, 32.

8) Gal. 2, 20.

9) Eph. 3, 17; cf. Gal. 2, 20.

10) 2 Cor. 10, 15.

11) Rom. 4, 20.

12) Rom. 14, 1.

13) Matt. 6, 30; 8, 26. Luke 12, 28.

14) Matt. 8, 26.

*little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*<sup>1)</sup> Again, the Syrophenician woman exhibited a firmness of faith which gained for her the Master's approving testimony, *O woman, great is thy faith,*<sup>2)</sup> and of the heathen centurion's faith Jesus said admiringly, *I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*<sup>3)</sup> Theirs was a faith that could not be shaken by doubt as to the Savior's power or willingness to grant their petitions, a faith which rested on and confided in the word of Christ. But as our faith should grow in intensity, it should also grow in extension, that we be *enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge.*<sup>4)</sup> This, too, is accomplished by continued training in the saving truth of the gospel. For this purpose Christ has established the ministry of the word, and gives us pastors and teachers to instruct us, *till we all come in the unity of the FAITH, and of the KNOWLEDGE of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.*<sup>5)</sup> Thus are we *Rooted and built up in Christ, and established in the faith, as we have been taught.*<sup>6)</sup> With this purpose in view we should also search the Scriptures, *which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*<sup>7)</sup> The weakness of faith in the disciples of Christ consisted in this that they were *slow of heart to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken;*<sup>8)</sup> and to build up and strengthen their faith, Jesus *opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures,*<sup>9)</sup> and *beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*<sup>10)</sup>

This growth of faith is the gift of God. Paul writes to the Thessalonian Christians, *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your*

1) Matt. 14, 30 f.

2) Matt. 16, 28.

3) Matt. 8, 10.

4) 1 Cor. 1, 5.

—5) Eph. 4, 13. 14.

6) Col. 2, 7.

7) 2 Tim. 3, 15.

8) Luke 24, 25.

9) Luke 24, 45.

10) Luke 24, 27.

*faith groweth exceedingly.*<sup>1)</sup> And as for the growth of faith thanks are due to God, so also for faith itself as a gift of God, a blessing bestowed upon us by regeneration. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.*<sup>2)</sup> We believe according to the working of his mighty power.<sup>3)</sup> To believe in Christ is a gift of grace. To you, says Paul, *it is given, ἐχαρίσθη, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεῦεν, but also to suffer for his sake.*<sup>4)</sup> By the ministers of Christ who preach the Gospel of Christ, God, whose ministers they are and whose work they perform through his means of grace, engenders faith in the hearts of the hearers. Thus we read, *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?*<sup>5)</sup> Hence our faith does *not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God,*<sup>6)</sup> and we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.<sup>7)</sup>

A. G.

1) 2 Thess. 1, 3.

2) 1 John 5, 1.

3) Eph. 1, 19.

4) Phil. 1, 29.

5) 1 Cor. 3, 5.

6) 1 Cor. 2, 5.

7) 1 Pet. 1, 5.