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ARTICLE I.

THE THEOLOGY OF DR. CHALMERS.

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THOMAS CHALMERS [D. D. LL. D.] was born on the 17th of March, 1780, at Anstruther, Scotland. While yet in his twelfth year, he joined the United College of St. Andrew's. In 1803, he was ordained as minister of the parish of Kilmany. During this ministry, he published his first volume, "On the Evidences and Authority of the Christian Revelation;" and also gained celebrity by his enthusiasm in the study of science. In 1815, he was transferred to the Tron Church in Glasgow. Here he preached the Astronomical Discourses, and started his noble enterprises in behalf of the poor. He became the incumbent of the chair of Moral Philosophy, at St. Andrews, in 1823; and of the chair of Divinity, in the University of Edinburgh, in 1828. He was a leader in the movement which resulted in the organization of the Free Church of Scotland; and was appointed "Principal of the New College" in 1846, which post he occupied till his death, which took place May 30, 1847. The last years of his life were devoted to the preparation of his "Institutes of Theology." This work contains his theological system,

in its maturity, and in the form in which he desired it to be given to the world. The substance of many of his sermons, as well as of his lectures to his classes in divinity, is recast in these volumes. We hardly need to look elsewhere for any direct contribution which he has made to theological science. The present Article aims to give a concise statement of the system of theology thus elaborated. It does not undertake to estimate the theological opinions of Dr. Chalmers; much less does it attempt to class him with a particular school in theology. Any comments on his views, which it may be found to contain, are intended chiefly to mark certain things which characterize him as a theologian. His opinions will be given, so far as practicable, in his own words, and in connection with the arguments with which he supported them. In proportioning this epitome, regard will be had to what seems to have been his own idea of the relative importance of the subjects he has handled. By so doing, the hope may, perhaps, be reasonably indulged, that somewhat of the excellent spirit of his system will be preserved in the abstract of it, which we now proceed to give.

I. *Ethics.*

Moralists of the deistical school are wont to affirm that ethics and theology are distinct sciences, and that the former occupies a much higher sphere than the latter. This distinction was not admitted by Dr. Chalmers; and he was eager to remove the stain thus cast upon his favorite science.

"So much am I impressed with the unity of the two subjects [moral philosophy and Christianity], or rather with the way in which the one graduates into the other, that I scarcely feel myself translated to another walk of speculation by the removal, which is now before me, from an ethical to a theological chair. I feel it as if but a step in advance from the rudiments to the higher lessons of the same science."[1] "The study of the Natural is rightly held a proper introduc-

[1] Farewell Address to the Students of St. Andrew's.

tion to the study of the Christian Theology. And the study of ethics should be anterior to the study of both these theologies."[1] This connection, however, is not regarded by Dr. Chalmers as "strictly logical." He guards the student from supposing that all theology is a *deduction* from the science of ethics. Whatever principles of morality are clearly true, may be extended into systematic divinity. But in this process the uncertainties of the one are not necessarily carried forward into the other.[2] Among those ethical principles which belong also to the science of the theologian, he ranks the immutability of moral distinctions. "We hold that morality [virtue, in the Edwardean sense] has a stable, inherent, and essential rightness of itself; and that, anterior to, or apart from, whether the tacit or expressed will of any being in the universe. God is no more the Creator of virtue than he is of truth."[3] "This resolution of all virtue into the will of God has been designed the theological system of morals, and they who hold it have had the title given to them of theological moralists. Whether this be meant as a stigma on our profession or not, the principle on which it has been affixed to us is one that we disclaim as alike inconsistent with sound ethics and sound theology. We cannot consent to a proposition so monstrous as that, if an arbitrary God had chosen to reverse all the articles of the Decalogue, He would thereby have presented the universe with a reverse morality that should henceforth be binding, in point of duty and rectitude, on all His creatures. Vice and virtue cannot be thus made to change places at the will or by the ordination of any power."[4] "Virtue is not right because God wills it; but God wills it because it is right."[5] Dr. Chalmers does not fail to note the practical value of the principle which he so earnestly contends for. "This argument is alike applicable both to the credentials of Revelation and to its practical lessons. For one can image a professed message from Heaven resting its authority on the evidence of undoubted miracles, yet in its subject-matter palpably and glaringly immoral."[6] His

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 3. [2] Ibid. p. 4. [3] Ibid. pp. 4, 5.
[4] Ibid. p. 6. [5] Ibid. p. 7. [6] Ibid. p. 7.

belief in the independence of virtue, led Dr. Chalmers to oppose the utilitarian theory of morals. On this question he adopted, substantially, the views of Bishop Butler.[1] He did not make the usefulness of virtue an identical proposition. "If utility be virtue, then, in some other economy of things taken at random, it is imaginable both of mind and matter as so constituted, that society might have found its greatest happiness in a morality the reverse in all its characteristics to that which now commands and unites the suffrages of mankind. It is difficult to see how an ethics thus framed and originated could at all help to build up a theology, or constitute any evidence for a God."[2]

II. *Metaphysics.*

The view which Dr. Chalmers gives of the science of metaphysics is, if we mistake not, peculiar. His definition of it is such as we might expect from an advocate of the Baconian philosophy.[3] "Our definition, then, of metaphysics is, that as *scientia scientiarum*, her proper office is to assign the relations, whether of resemblance or distinction, which subsist between the various branches of human knowledge. Each science has its own individual objects, which it classifies according to certain relations and resemblances. The individual objects of metaphysics are the sciences; of which, therefore, it may be said that the office is to classify, *on a large scale*, all the objects of human knowledge."[4] This definition, it will be seen, amounts to a denial of the science of causes. It confines the search for truth to phenomena. The idea of power is rendered incompetent as an object of inquiry. The only business of the metaphysician is to classify classifications; and to do this by noting their "re-

[1] See Butler's Works (Carter's ed.), pp. 309—312. [2] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 11.

[3] That the inductive method, as laid down by Bacon, is not an adequate guide for the theologian on all points, is now generally conceded, we believe, by the best divines; and its sufficiency for the student of nature has recently been questioned by eminent authority in the scientific world. See *Sir David Brewster's Life of Newton*, Vol. II. pp. 403—406.

[4] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. pp. 31—34.

semblances or distinctions," without any reference to their causes.

III. *Conscience.*

"It may not be the habit of all men to obey conscience—its precise function being to take cognizance of the right and the wrong, of the *ought* and the *ought not*. The supremacy of conscience, therefore, may be regarded as an identical proposition. To say that it is right to obey conscience, is to say that it is right to do what is right."[1] Dr. Chalmers extends the authority of conscience to the credentials and subject-matter of the Scriptures. And he infers the duty of all men to examine the Bible, from the fact that its lessons do, at first sight, commend themselves to the moral faculty.[2] The sovereignty, which is here claimed for conscience, should not be lost sight of in examining some of the details of the author's system. In estimating certain opinions respecting the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity [Inst. Theol. Vol. I. pp. 447—476], it will be found to possess especial value.

IV. *Existence of God.*

On this theme Dr. Chalmers rejects all the *à priori* reasonings as worthless, except so far as they serve to show the historical progress of the argument, and to indicate the congeniality of the doctrine to the human mind. Nor does he stop with these exclusions. "Besides the *à priori*, there is a certain *à posteriori* style of reasoning, which, to our apprehension, is alike invalid and meaningless with the former. It begins with matter as an effect, and would thence reason upwards to a cause or maker of it."[3] Theologians have styled this the Cosmological argument. But Dr. Chalmers denies the validity of the reasonings by which they attempt to show that matter is not eternal and self-existent. Even if this attempt should prove successful, he would reject the argument as "metaphysical," since it views matter simply

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. pp. 52, 53. [2] Ibid. p. 58. [3] Ibid. pp. 73, 74.

as an "entity," without any regard to its properties. It is an "obscure and lofty transcendentalism."[1]

Having "descended" from the essence to the phenomena of matter, Dr. Chalmers distinguishes between the "laws" and "dispositions" of the material world.[2] He affirms that the former do not constitute a valid proof for the Divine existence; but relies on the latter, as furnishing "the main argument for a God from the external world."[3] "We do not ask if ever a time was when the matter of the world had no existence, or if ever a time was when the laws of this matter were not in operation; but if ever a time was when the present order of the world — its machinery and exquisite organic structures — had yet to be set up? It is in these that the wisdom of a presiding Mind is most legibly held forth to us; these form our chief, if not our only, materials on the field of external nature for the demonstration of a God."[4] Whatever may be said of the eternity of *matter*, Dr. Chalmers thinks that the present *dispositions* of matter can be shown to have had a beginning. For the proof of this he relies chiefly on the science of geology; or rather, perhaps, on the conclusions which have been reached, from the facts of geology, by the botanist and zoologist. The science of anatomy teaches that many of the organic remains, enclosed within the rocks of the earth, belonged to races of beings which are now extinct; and it is equally true that some of the present orders of animal life do not reach beyond a certain point in the history of the globe. The dispositions of matter, then, are plainly an effect. Physical science proves that they had a beginning, and that they did not come into existence as a result of the workings of natural law. This effect involves the idea of an adequate cause, which is God. It does not make him the Creator of bare matter, nor of the laws of nature; but it demonstrates his existence as an intelligent contriver.[5] "We know of no power, in all the magazines of nature, that could have originated the new races, whether of animals or vegetables, which now replenish our

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. pp. 74, 75.
[2] Ibid. pp. 75, 76.
[3] Ibid. p. 77.
[4] Ibid. p. 79.
[5] Ibid. pp. 81—88.

world; and at no transition in nature's history do we meet, either with a more palpable necessity, or more palpable evidence, for the finger and forthputting of a God."[1] Dr. Chalmers has presented this argument with great force and wealth of illustration; but, in leaving out the question of the eternity of matter, he has exposed it to a very obvious objection. For, if God be not older than nature, we demand a contriving cause for him, not less than for it. Only that which is self-existent can be without a contriver. If, then, there be contrivances in nature, does not this fact, of itself, prove that nature is a created existence?

Dr. Chalmers does not recognize the doctrine of primary beliefs, so ably stated by the best Scottish philosophers, in his argument for the Divine existence. "The argument by which we reason upward from a workmanship to a workman, or from a structure of any sort, in which we behold part adapted to part in the relations of convenience and order, to an artificer of adequate strength and skill for the completion of it — this argument is *strictly and altogether an experimental one;* and to seek for any other on which to vindicate the conclusion, beside being mystical and unsatisfactory, is, in our apprehension, wholly uncalled for."[2] Having thus denied that our belief in the connection of the terms in every sequence is instinctive, Dr. Chalmers attempts to answer the celebrated objection of Mr. Hume, that we have no experience in world-making.[3] The reply of the theologian to the skeptic is satisfactory; though it would not be so, if it did not tacitly assume the validity of certain beliefs of the human mind which are independent of experience.[4]

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[1] Instt. Theol. Vol. I. p. 89. [2] Ibid. p. 92. [3] Ibid. pp. 93—98.

[4] We find ourselves not alone in the want felt in this part of Dr. Chalmers's writings. A recent work has the following: "We consider that these writers (Chalmers and others) while rightly repudiating the conclusiveness of *à priori* reasoning in reference to our subject [Theism], have failed to set forth, and even to apprehend with comprehensiveness and clearness, the subjective conditions, or principles, which their *à posteriori* argument at once presupposes as its essential basis, and demands in order to its complete and effective validity." — *Tulloch's Theism*, p. 8

The other general argument, adduced by Dr. Chalmers for the being of God (he gives but two), is drawn from the mental phenomena, especially from those of conscience. He prefers this argument to that from design in nature, since it throws light upon the Divine character. "It is obvious that were the views of an inquirer after God confined to the material world, he could infer nothing from all he saw as to the moral, but only as to the natural attributes of its maker."[1] But the fact that pity is awakened in the minds of men at the sight of distress, that vice excites their abhorrence, and patriotism, their admiration, proves the existence of a righteous God, who has thus wisely constituted the human mind. "[The workings of conscience] suggest the idea, and more than this, we doubt not, the conviction — the firm, yea the sound and warrantable conviction — of a God, based, too, on an *argumentum à posteriori*; and if not the result of an inferential process, since to be a process it must consist of several steps, yet as good as this, an instant conclusion of the mind, and which comes to us as if with the speed of lightning, in the course of one rapid transition from the feeling of a judge within the breast, to the faith of a Judge and a Maker who placed it there. This internal evidence outweighs in impression, and perhaps also in real and substantive validity, all the external evidence that lies in those characters of design, which are so variously and voluminously inscribed on the face of the material world. It has found an access for itself to all bosoms. We have not to look abroad for it, but it is felt by each man within the little homestead of his own heart; and this theology of conscience has done more to uphold a sense of God in the world than all the theology of academic demonstration."[2]

V. *Future Life.*

As introductory to this topic, Dr. Chalmers briefly notices the problem of the origin of moral evil. "We attempt no

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 105.

[2] Ibid. p. 103.

positive solution of this question; but are far from regarding the conjectural solutions of Leibnitz and others as altogether worthless. It is enough for our purpose, that they might be the just and true solutions, *for aught we know*. It is thus that the objection grounded on this difficulty against the religious system in any form, if not mastered and overcome, is at least neutralized."[1]

Dr. Chalmers presents but two arguments for the immortality of the soul, taken from the same sources as those on which he rested the doctrine of the divine existence. "The first of these arguments is grounded on that general law of adaptation which is observable throughout all nature."[2] He dwells with much apt and splendid illustration on the prevalence of such a law. The nice correspondence of the objective to the subjective is traced throughout the lower orders of created life. "The inferior animals [have] an actual fulness of enjoyment up to the measure and capacity of their actual powers of enjoyment."[3] "That the creature man should be endowed with capacities and desires, and yet be left unprovided with objects whereon to exercise or to indulge them, were a sort of half-formed or unfinished economy, most unlike to all that we can observe in every other department of nature or experience, and most incongruous with all our notions of that wisdom which is so discernible in all creation besides, as one of the best established while also one of the highest of the natural attributes of God."[4]

The main reliance of Dr. Chalmers, to prove a future life, is on the argument from conscience. "The cry of the oppressed on earth reaches heaven's throne, and enters into the ears of Him who sitteth thereon; and by whose coming awards

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[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 120. "I know not why it is that moral evil exists in the universe of the All-Wise and All-Powerful; nor through what occult law of Deity it is that 'perfection should come through suffering.' The question, like that satellite, ever attendant on our planet, which presents both its sides to the sun, but invariably the same side to the earth, hides one of its faces from man, and turns it to but the eye from which all light emanates. And it is in that God-ward phase of the question that the mystery dwells."—*Hugh Miller's* "*Foot-Prints of the Creator*," p. 327.

[2] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 123. [3] Ibid. p. 124. [4] Ibid. p. 125.

we expect that the appetency of our moral nature for justice will at length be satisfied. It is thus that the sense of right and wrong in every breast, if not the great originator, has been the great upholder of natural theology in the world; insomuch that to it, the faculty of conscience, we mainly owe the two great articles of its creed. It is this conscience, as we have repeatedly affirmed, which tells most audibly of a God; and to its forebodings also are we mainly indebted for the faith of immortality in all ages."[1] Dr. Chalmers contends, at some length, that the validity of this argument depends on the existence of justice in the divine character, as a moral attribute distinct from benevolence.[2] Such reasoning is entirely consistent with the view that the divine benevolence is not only a specific attribute, but a generic quality into which all the perfections of God, so far as they are moral, are resolvable. There is a psychological, but not a moral distinction between justice and benevolence. General benevolence may take the form of justice, or of specific benevolence, or of any other moral exercise which the object of its attention is fitted to awaken.

VI. *Need of a Revelation.*

By our study of external nature and of the human spirit we come to the apprehension of a God and of the immortality of the soul. With this knowledge, however, are associated certain painful questions, for the solution of which man needs some superior light. "How shall a God with such attributes [wisdom and justice] leave either the sins of our history unreckoned with, or the sanctities of His own nature without a vindication? To make clear the terms of this dilemma is one thing, to solve the dilemma is another. Natural theology achieves but the first. The second is beyond her. She can tell the difficulty, but she cannot solve the difficulty. Revelation is called for, not merely as a supplement[3] to the light and the informations of nature; but

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. pp. 126, 127. [2] Ibid. pp. 127—131.

[3] There is an allusion here to Butler's remark that the light of revelation is

far more urgently called for as a solvent for nature's perplexities and fears. Natural theology possesses the materials out of which the enigma is framed; but possesses not the light by which to unriddle it. It can state the question which itself it cannot satisfy; but the statement of the question is not the solution of it. Natural theology prompts the inquiry; but it is another and a distinct theology from that of nature which meets the inquiry, and tells man what he shall do to be saved."[1]

VII. *Evidences of Christianity.*

The reasonings of Dr. Chalmers, thus far, have been such as to make some of his views of this topic a matter for surprise. He is not inclined to believe in the antecedent probability of a revelation. In asserting "our inability to surmise, and far less to affirm, what God will do in given circumstances," he seems to leave the ground on which he stood while setting forth the doctrine of a future life. "Instead of founding our convictions of the truth of the gospel on the real or the imagined necessities beforehand for such a dispensation, would we look both to the event itself, and to the events which followed it, and thus build up an argument for the reality of our faith."[2] This is yielding too great an advantage to the skeptic. There are valid presumptions for a revelation from the sad state of the pagan world viewed in connection with the manifest character of God. These presumptions are of use especially in the argument for miracles, since they neutralize the objection that no exigency had occurred which was worthy of the divine interposition. Dr. Chalmers makes a distinction between the "historical" and the "experimental" necessity for a revelation.[3] Of the latter he says, it is "not in itself an evidence" for a revelation, but "the adaptation between its [revelation's] proposed remedy and the felt necessity or disease is a most influential argu-

"additional" to that "afforded us by reason and experience." For the real meaning of Butler, see the "Analogy," Part II. Chap. 2.

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. pp. 134, 135. [2] Ibid. p. 141. [3] Ibid.

ment."[1] At one period of his life, Dr. Chalmers rejected the internal Christian evidences altogether. In 1812, he wrote: "We hold by the total insufficiency of natural religion to pronounce upon the intrinsic merits of any revelation, and think that the authority of every revelation rests exclusively upon its external evidences, and upon such marks of honesty in the composition of itself as would apply to any human performance."[2] Thirty-two years later, however, he retracted this denial of the "supremacy of conscience." In reviewing his early treatises on the evidences of Christianity at that ripe age, he modified or entirely omitted many of his previous statements, and introduced much new matter. His final view of the question is as follows: "Of all the evidence that can be adduced for the truth of Christianity, it [the moral and experimental] is that for which I have the greatest value, both from its being the only evidence which tells on the consciences and understandings of the great mass of the people, and also, I think, that evidence which is the main instrument for conversion."[3]

Though Dr. Chalmers remained partial to the external proofs of revelation through life, yet many will be disposed to think that he has not presented them in the most convincing manner. This remark may not be true except with regard to the evidence from miracles. In attempting to fix the historical certainty of such events, he rejects the antecedent probability of them by asserting "our inability to surmise what God will do in given circumstances." The miracles of the New Testament are thus reported to us as bare events, without any regard to their fitness in the circumstances. Besides the loss of this advantage, the validity of testimony is made to rest wholly on experience. Dr. Chalmers rejects the principle adopted by Campbell in his reply to Hume, that "our belief in testimony is an ultimate law of the mind." He does not view the reasoning of Mr. Hume on this question as "atheistical," but only as "deis-

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 143.
[2] Article "Christianity," in the Edinburgh Encyclopaedia, Vol. VI. p. 389.
[3] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 251.

tical." "We should therefore like, if possible, to raise an argument in defence of miracles, even as we raised our argument in defence of a God, on an experimental basis. It is for this reason that we were led to accept Mr. Hume's premises, and with him to view the question as a contest between opposite experiences."[1] "The error of Mr. Hume lies here. He has failed to resolve testimony into its distinct species. He has chosen not to observe that of two kinds of testimony, the one may possess wholly different characteristics, and have been given in wholly different circumstances from the other."[2] "Has ever such testimony [as that for the Christian miracles] deceived us, possessed of such specific characters, and given in such specific circumstances, that its falsehood were as great a miracle in the moral, as the most stupendous prodigy ever recorded to have taken place in the material world?"[3] Taking the testimony of each evangelist to be of this unexceptionable character, Dr. Chalmers proceeds as follows to decide the contest against Mr. Hume. "By a single testimony of such a kind as that its falsehood would be as miraculous as the event testified, we might at least countervail the inherent probability which lies in the miracle."[4] "Let the improbability of a miracle be so great as that of a million to one, but let the credibility of the testimony which vouches for its truth be also a million to one, then the proof is, at least, a full equivalent for the disproof; and the mind, with this view of a miracle and its accompanying evidence, will be in a state of simple neutrality regarding it. Let there now be added another testimony distinct from the former, and of the same high quality, or a million to one; this will now represent the amount of credit due to the miracle; and should we still imagine another and another, we should soon arrive by a most rapid multiplying process at many million-fold millions by which to estimate the value of the historical proof which might be accumulated in favor of a miraculous story."[5] The reasoning here seems to be, that since the falsity of one instance of testi-

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 146. [2] Ibid. p. 147. [3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid. p. 147. [5] Ibid. p. 148.

mony, such as that for the Christian miracles, would be a miracle, therefore the falsity of the several instances, which we actually have, is *more* than a miracle; and so there is a balance of evidence against Mr. Hume. A refutation of this character would probably have pleased the skeptic not less than did the essay of Dr. Campbell. Most theologians will doubtless choose to avail themselves of the anterior probability of a revelation, in discussing this question; and then, since miracles would be incident to any message from God, the objection of Mr. Hume disappears at once. We do not demand "miraculous" testimony in order to the belief of events which are thus rendered probable.

The historical evidence for a revelation, "partly external, and partly internal," is admirably presented by Dr. Chalmers. Perhaps no portion of his writings exhibits more clearness and purity of style than is manifest throughout the pages given to this subject. The Scriptures wear "a credible aspect, a certain tone and bearing of honesty." These are "the natural signs of truth," "so many tokens of veracity," fitted "strongly to prepossess us in [their] favor."[1] Each narrator's "consistency with himself" is additional reason for our faith in his narrative. He cannot "by a skilful cross-examination be made to break down."[2] This credibility is still further increased "when we institute the same process [of cross-questioning] on [the] several witnesses, comparing or confronting their testimonies with each other."[3] Such comparison of the inspired writers brings to light many "hidden harmonies," which "no impostor would have buried so far beneath the face of his composition."[4] The Evangelists do not seem to be aware of their consistency with each other. The correctness of the Biblical chronology is confirmed by the facts of profane history. Each one of the sacred penmen so locates personages and events, not only within but outside of his own sphere, as to be in harmony with the authentic statements of uninspired writers.[5] Besides, the events of sacred history "have left certain vestiges behind

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. pp. 158, 159. [2] Ibid. p. 160.
[3] Ibid. p. 161. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid. pp. 163—168.

them, which serve as the indices or memorials of their reality even to the present hour. These monuments are such as to make the ocular lend a certain confirmation to the historical, or the evidence of the senses at this moment to coincide with the evidence of testimony given many generations before our day."[1] The "geography" of Palestine and its vicinity is an "articulate testimony" to the correctness of the inspired narrative;[2] and idioms of "language," local customs, "coins," and specimens of ancient art still survive to aid in vindicating the veracity of the divine record.[3] Dr. Chalmers continues this argument, in a highly interesting and lucid manner, joining to it the evidence from prophecies,[4] which he has fitly styled "miracles of knowledge;" and he closes the argument with a full statement of the "moral and experimental" proofs,[5] in which many of his early opinions are either omitted or presented in a different form.[6] Throughout this defence he strengthens his position by regarding the Bible as a unity. "The records of the evangelical dispensation compose the entire Scriptures of the Old and New Testament."[7] A mediator between God and man, viewed as about to come, or as present on the earth, or as having finished his work, is the informing fact of the Scriptures. That a collection of writings extending over a period of several thousand years, composed by men belonging to different nations, coming from shepherds and warriors and fishermen and kings, receiving contributions on one page out of the depths of savage life, and on another from the centres of intellectual culture, stooping in places to the level of the Hottentot, and elsewhere transcending the reach of the loftiest sage; that such a mass of writing should palpitate with the same heavenly life throughout its every part, is a fact which calls *loudly* for the doctrine that it was "given by inspiration of God."

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[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 168. [2] Ibid. p. 169. [3] Ibid. pp. 170—173.
[4] Ibid. pp. 214—226. [5] Ibid. pp. 227—245. [6] Ibid. pp. 246—254.
[7] Ibid. p. 174.

VIII. *Scripture Criticism.*

Having proved that the Bible is a communication from God, Dr. Chalmers proceeds to the work of ascertaining its contents. There are two departments in this work: "Emendatory Criticism," which is concerned with "the integrity of the text," and "Interpretative Criticism," which attempts to fix "the meaning" of the text.[1] Whatever may have been the attainments of Dr. Chalmers as a biblicist, he was deeply impressed with the importance of this general field of labor. He did not believe that any supernatural aid can be relied on as a substitute for biblical scholarship. "There is a confusion of sentiment, into which pious Christians are apt to fall, and that too in very proportion to their piety. They have been led to ascribe the illumination of every Christian mind to a special influence by the Spirit of God, and to look with comparative indifference, if not with suspicion, on all that lore which is connected with the illustration of the word of God."[2] "It is by the letter of the Old and New Testaments that God enlightens man; and it is with this letter that man should hold studious and unremitting converse. He should do with the Bible what he would do with some antiquated seal, which he wanted to preserve in the very condition in which it was struck by the hand of him who fashioned it. Time may have effaced or shaded some of its lineaments. The corrosions of many ages may have somewhat obliterated, or even somewhat transformed the device and inscription. His labors to ascertain its primitive state are precisely analogous to the labors of him who brings his erudite criticism to bear on the readings and the renderings of Scripture. And it goes, not to depreciate the worth of Scripture criticism; it mightily adds to its importance and its glory that the Spirit of God, acting with and by the Scripture, is the enlightener of men."[3] Dr. Chalmers had the wisdom to perceive that the systematic theologian should never be jealous

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 282. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. p. 285.

of the honest biblical critic. There was no just cause for the assault of Dr. John Owen upon Walton, the editor of the London Polyglot. "The amalgamation of the two properties, thus arrayed in hostile conflict, would have just made up a perfect theologian."[1] He is careful, however, to fix the limits of Scripture criticism. It cannot presume to take liberties with the inspired text; nor to sit in judgment on the work of the scientific divine. Its only office is, to bring out the actual contents of the volume of celestial truth; to theology belongs the work of framing the precious materials into a system. The remark of John Newton is hardly too strong, that Bible philologists are the Gibeonites of the Christian church, the hewers of wood and drawers of water to the children of Israel.[2] "Scripture criticism must just be conducted on the same principles and by the same methods with the criticism of all other ancient authorship. It matters not whether it be a classical or a Christian, and even inspired composition. When you sit in judgment, be it on the integrity of the text, or on the sense of it, both should receive the like treatment at your hands."[3] The only method of sacred criticism "worthy of a man of erudition, [is] that which is called the grammatical." And "the doctrine of the Spirit, rightly understood, so far from superseding [such] criticism, gives an impulse to its labors."[4] Dismissing the subject of emendatory criticism, Dr. Chalmers speaks of that which is "interpretative," as having "three distinct objects:" "First, to ascertain the meaning of single words and phrases, when the exercise might be called a *philological* one; second, to ascertain the meaning and scope of a passage, when he should say that we are now engaged in a *contextual* investigation; and third, to verify or ascertain the articles of the Christian faith, when it becomes what may be called a *doctrinal* inquiry."[5] Philological interpretation has ceased to be of any very great value "for the purposes of *discovery*," though "it may be all in all for the purposes of *defence*."[6] Its researches are limited to the ἅπαξ λεγόμενα

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 286. [2] Ibid. pp. 286—289. [3] Ibid. p. 290.
[4] Ibid. pp. 291, 292. [5] Ibid. p. 299. [6] Ibid. pp. 309, 301.

of Scripture. "When, for the elucidation of any text, philology needs to be put upon her extreme resources, that text is, in theology, what *nugæ difficiles* are in science. It occupies the same place in the system of nature [Scripture?] that a *lusus naturæ* does in the system of the universe."[1] The difficulty of philological researches "stands in an inverse proportion" to their practical value. "A philological divine overrates exceedingly the importance of his instrument, when he thinks that by it he is to unlock such treasures as shall mightily enrich and enlarge the theology of our land; philology still remains to us an instrument of discovery in things that are minute, but is not an instrument of discovery in things that are momentous."[2] Dr. Chalmers confessed, more than once, that he had but little "propensity to this department of study; and he often amused himself and friends over the arrogant pretensions of certain German philologists. He vastly preferred the "doctrinal" and "contextual" methods of interpretation. "What is most important in the [inspired] volume, is also, in general, most pervading; and thus there is least danger of missing the sense in those passages where the subject-matter is of most vital consequence. I will not say in our most corrupt, but in our most careless and illiterate, if only honest, versions, all the *capita fidei*, the main and leading articles of Christianity, are to be found."[3] Dr. Chalmers would not dispense with recondite criticism altogether; yet he seems to have thought that the obvious meaning of Scripture is sufficient for the purposes of systematic theology. "We have fallen in with ploughmen and mechanics, in our own land, who of course knew nothing of the first vocables of inspiration, but who, on the substance of its doctrines or its lessons, far surpassed, in the depth and enlargement of their views, the most erudite Biblists in Germany, or even many of the most accomplished for the treatment of textual difficulties in our sister kingdom. The best critics are not always, I could almost say not generally, the soundest and ablest theologians. The best theologians, as President Edwards, are not always the most expert and

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 304. [2] Ibid. p. 309. [3] Ibid. p. 308.

skilful and full of scholarship in the walk of philological criticism, or of that criticism which seeks for the meaning of recondite texts in the original languages of the Old and New Testaments."[1] It will be seen that this statement is made with reference to such criticism as has subserved the purposes of neology. The candid author has excepted from his general proscription the critical works of such scholars as Stuart, Wetstein, and Griesbach.[2] The results of biblical criticism during the present century show, that the divine authority of the Scriptures can be defended with weapons of the same nature as those with which it has been assailed. Nor do the present aspects of physical science, and of polemic divinity, indicate that the office of sacred philology is about to become a sinecure. It has not only much to do in way of defence, but also many important *discoveries* yet to make. The tendency of scientific research, and of systematic theology, already warrants the belief that nature and revelation are coincident throughout. In these two great books, which God has given us, we are gradually tracing, by means of different characters, the same vast aggregate of truth. Nor will the investigators of the sacred text have occasion to rest from their labors, until the fondest anticipation of the Christian philosopher shall have been fulfilled; till all the objects of human knowledge, whether natural or revealed, shall have been brought to light and woven together, in one absolute, grand, and harmonious system.[3]

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[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. pp. 17—21. [2] Ibid. Vol. I. p. 311.

[3] No one can feel, after reading such a work as the "Six Days of Creation," by Prof. Lewis, that sacred philology is, of necessity, either a barren or an uninteresting study. He claims in that treatise to have studied the problem of the origin of the world "solely from the light of the Divine Word, determined that no geological considerations, on the one hand, and no irrational independence of science, on the other, should deflect his inquiries from their true exegetical course." And yet the conclusions which he reaches are such as to be, apparently at least, in harmony with the scientific conclusions of Prof. Guyot. Such instances of agreement, between exegetical and physical research, give cheering promise that the Christian philologist and the man of science, although working independently of each other, will, at no distant day, find themselves standing side by side upon a common basis.

IX. *Systematic Theology.*

Dr. Chalmers has treated this subject in the true spirit of the inductive philosophy. He fails not, in the first place, to mark the "analogy between a system in theology and a system in general science."[1] As the latter is reached by "induction among the phenomena of nature," so is the former the result of "induction among the sayings of Scripture." Neither the natural philosopher nor the theologian "invents" anything. They only "find," "examine," "trace resemblances," "classify," and "infer;" the one, laws; and the other, doctrines. The "philologist" is, to the systematic divine, what the "experimentalist" is to the framer of a natural science. Theology is a "generalization" of the "individual sayings" which the critic discovers in the Word of God.[2] Thus rigidly is the province of the theologian defined. He must keep "within the four corners of the Bible."[3] He "superadds nothing" to the contents of the inspired volume. "To group and classify the sayings [of Scripture], by the similarities which are between them, by means of some common and pervading truth, is the part of systematic theology."[4] There is this difference between "systematizing" in nature and in the Bible: the individuals of the former are the direct objects, the "*ipsa corpora* of the science;" but the individuals of the latter are only "sayings which relate to the direct objects, or *ipsa corpora*, in theology."[5] Furthermore, in nature a wide induction of particulars is requisite to the inference of a general law; but in the Bible "one saying" may fix a comprehensive truth.[6] "Systematic theology and Scripture criticism go hand in hand."[7] Even a false theology may be useful, since it stimulates to investigation; thus performing the office of "an hypothesis in science." It "is not a discovery, but it may serve as a finger-post to those places where the discovery is at length to be found."[8]

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 329.
[2] Ibid. pp. 332, 333.
[3] Ibid. p. 338.
[4] Ibid. pp. 333, 334.
[5] Ibid. p. 338.
[6] Ibid. p. 339.
[7] Ibid. p. 352.
[8] Ibid. p. 345.

"Theology without Scripture criticism is just as airy and unsupported a nothing, as were a philosophy without facts; and, on the other hand, without a systematic divinity, it is just as confused and chaotic a jumble, as were an undigested medley of facts without a philosophy. Scripture criticism and systematic theology are the integral, the essentially component parts of one and the same science. Without the first, it were a baseless, unsupported fabric. Without the second, it were an inextricable labyrinth."[1] Thus is theology represented as a progressive science. It does not invent, but discovers and systematizes; and it performs this twofold work gradually. The truth furnished it, is a fixed quantity; but it has not yet appropriated all that truth. It is incorporating more of the treasure into itself, from age to age. When the whole of the substance of revelation shall have been taken up by it, its office will be complete. Then it will cease to be progressive; for then it will have realized its ideal.

We cannot pass from this topic without giving the following remarks, intended to allay a common, but happily decreasing, hostility to the study of theological science: "The work of the systematic theologian is, throughout, an experimental process, beside having the firmness of an experimental basis to rest upon. When a system is said to be fabricated, the very term begets an antipathy against it. It is felt as if to fabricate were to create; but systematic theology, when rightly conducted, creates nothing. It does not excogitate, it explores. The doctrine of the atonement in Scripture is as little a thing of invention, and as much a matter of discovery, as the doctrine of gravitation in nature. A system, even though designated by the name of its human inventor, may be the production of God. The Newtonian system was the work of God, though the discovery of Newton; and so a theological system may be the work of God, though the discovery of man. When one says he will draw his theology, not from Calvin, but from the Bible, he may, under the guise of a great and undoubted principle, have

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 334.

been prompted to make such an utterance by as irrational an imagination, as when one says that he will draw his astronomy, not from Newton's Principia, but from a direct view of the nocturnal heavens."[1]

X. *Human Character.*

Dr. Chalmers gives the "reasons why man's state of guilt and moral depravation should form the initial doctrine of a systematic course on the subject-matter of Christianity."[2] "First, Christianity is a remedial or restorative system;" and hence its application should be preceded by "a view of the disease."[3] "Secondly, it [the disease] lies within the sphere of our own immediate consciousness."[4] "Thirdly, it is generally the very topic which first awakens and engages the attention of the inquirer."[5] Having reached the field of the theologian, and stated the nature of the work before him, he aims to be practical even in the order of his labors. "We do not want to abandon the scientific treatment of our subject; but we shall ever hold it to be fortunate, and a thing not to be pedantically despised, but to the uttermost valued and rejoiced in, whenever the scientific is at one with the popular, or when the systematic, as taught in universities, quadrates with the practical, as realized in congregations and parishes."[6] "The sinfulness of humanity" may be proved by "conscience," as well as by the Bible. Hence the present inquiry belongs in part to natural theology.[7] "Man has within him a measuring line, by the application of which he can observe the straightness of human conduct, and which he refers to virtues in the human character; and by which also he can observe the unevennesses of human conduct, which he in like manner refers to vices in the human character."[8] Whoever tries the members of the human family by this standard, will find "that from one ex-

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. pp. 352, 353.
[2] Posthumous Works, Vol. IX. p. 235.
[3] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 364.
[4] Ibid. p. 365.
[5] Ibid. p. 367.
[6] Ibid. p. 367.
[7] Ibid. p. 370.
[8] Ibid. pp. 370, 371; Posthumous Works, Vol. IX. p. 236.

tremity of our earth to another, or from the first creation of man to the present age, no such [sinless] individual, though the purest and most perfect of his kind, can possibly be fixed upon, or, in other words, that all have sinned; all have come short of pure and absolute virtue."[1] Dr. Chalmers here takes occasion to express his dissent from "certain stern theologians" who affirm "that not one grace or virtue of character is to be found among the sons and daughters of our race, which is worthy of the name."[2] He argues at length, with much indignant censure of those who differ from him, to show that our humanity is not "one mass of moral putrefaction."[3] "It [virtue] exists as a substantive reality in the hearts and habits of many an individual, who does what is right because of a spontaneous preference which impels him to it."[4]

Sentiments like these might be regarded as coming from a Pelagian; but Dr. Chalmers explains his meaning farther on. He saves his orthodoxy by introducing the novel distinction of a "social" and a "divine" morality. "There is a terrestrial as well as a celestial ethics."[5] We are here presented with "two moralities." An action, which is right so far as its earthly relations are concerned, may be wrong in some of its more extended relations. This is not a distinction in the nature or degree of moral acts; it means simply that conscience may judge them in view of a part or of the whole of the divine system. Dr. Chalmers was led to insert this theory, by a desire to show that the doctrine of human sinfulness is not misanthropical; that it allows to men, all those amiable traits which they really possess. But he does not teach that any moral act of the unregenerate is right, when it is tested by the ultimate standard of morality. He asserts that if the actions of men be examined in view of their broadest relations, they will be found to be totally sinful. Men may not be as bad as they are capable of becoming; but this is only for want of temptation.[6] The total depravity of the race is made certain by the principle, recog-

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 372. [2] Ibid. p. 373. [3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid. pp. 373, 494. [5] Ibid. p. 375. [6] Ibid. pp. 378—381.

nized in all jurisprudence, that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all."[1] It is because mankind do not love God supremely, and as a *holy* being, that "the whole world lieth in wickedness."[2] Those amiable qualities, discernible in unregenerate character, are outside the sphere of all proper morality. There is nothing meritorious in them; they are natural gifts; they increase the obligation to be holy, and deepen the guilt of impenitency.[3] Thus did Dr. Chalmers vindicate the doctrine of the entire sinfulness of man's character. He viewed the inquiry as coming within the province of natural theology. Taking conscience as the "supreme" judge of character, and throwing out of the account all which is "spontaneous" and "inborn" in man, he showed to reason and conscience, that the whole world is guilty before God. In this way he laid a basis on which to rest the Scriptural argument for the same doctrine. Undeniable fact prepares the way for the teachings of the Bible. Philosophy agrees with "the faith once delivered to the saints." "Deep calleth unto deep."

XI. *Human Nature.*

From the consideration of human character, Dr. Chalmers passes on to examine human nature. We here leave the sphere of the moral, and descend into that of the natural; go from what he does, to what he is. Our concern is not with sin as manifest in act to reason, but with the "origin" to which this moral disorder conducts us. "We have properly to do at present not with this depravity as a fact, but as a consequent."[4] In attempting to account for the sinfulness of the race, Dr. Chalmers says: "Every man is a sinner not alone through example, or education, or aught that was merely partial and accidental and contingent, but, apart from, and independently of these, he is a sinner solely in virtue of his being a man."[5] Thus human nature is made the immediate occasion of human depravity. Hence there is, in the nature

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 378. [2] Ibid. p. 379.
[3] Ibid. pp. 380, 381. [4] Ibid. p. 416. [5] Ibid. p. 417.

of fallen man, "a universal bias" to sin.[1] Dr. Chalmers calls this proclivity a "sinful" bias, in one or two instances; but more usually he designates it as "a prior tendency to sin."[2] "We cannot but regard as of momentous import all those [Scriptural] expressions which serve to connect the actual wickedness of man with a *tendency* to wickedness from his youth up."[3] Again he speaks of this "native tendency" as implied, though "not expressly affirmed, in the Scriptural narrative of the antediluvian times."[4] Viewing men morally, we find them totally depraved. No exceptions to the statement can be adduced. This universal fact carries us to the doctrine that every man is afflicted with a "sore mental disease."[5] If the actual depravity be general, the "hereditary disposition" must be general also.[6] "When we say that all men have sinned, it is on the basis of their *actual* sins that we are enabled to speak in terms of such generality. When we say that in all men there is a prior tendency to sin, we are but resolving this general fact into its principle or cause."[7] "There is an original and an actual in the sins of men, a prior tendency to sin, bound up, as it were, in the very frame and composition of humanity, an element within the receptacles of every infant's bosom, and which, should he live long enough for its expansion and forthgoings, will infallibly yield in every instance the bitter fruit of transgression."[8] This is the language of the orator, rather than of the scientific theologian, but the meaning of the author is sufficiently plain. He makes a clear distinction between original and actual sin; and it is in view of the latter that he most vividly portrays human guilt. The aversion of Dr. Chalmers to "metaphysics"[9] led him to dismiss the subject of the immediate "origin of human depravity" sooner than we could desire. Leaving the domain of our fallen nature, he carries the question back, not only to Adam, but beyond him, making Satan the chief cause of human sinfulness.[10] He says, however, that the diseased state of our nature, no

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 417. [2] Ibid. p. 421. [3] Ibid. p. 416.
[4] Ibid. p. 417. [5] Ibid. p. 418. [6] Ibid. p. 421.
[7] Ibid. p. 241. [8] Ibid. [9] Ibid. p 440. [10] Ibid. pp. 428—434.

less than its infallible consequence, which is actual sin, is a fact which reason may discover. Philosophy teaches the doctrine as really as the Bible. He also explains his meaning, in speaking of the disease of man's nature as a state of *sinfulness.* "We did not need the information of Scripture to teach us that a universal sinning on the part of our species argued a universal sinfulness; and which sinfulness too, we could, without the help of Scripture, have denominated a prior tendency."[1]

In attempting to trace this tendency of human nature to its source, Dr. Chalmers brings us to the first sin of Adam. Previous to that act of disobedience, man's nature was an image of God's, and it had the power to multiply itself as such. But, as a result of the transgression of Adam, humanity underwent an essential change, and this altered substance remained under the same law of reproduction. The disordered nature was "transmitted as if by a law of physical necessity."[2] "We read of Seth, that he was born after the image of Adam; not of Adam in his original, but of Adam in his transformed likeness."[3] This "first descent," in the line which survived the flood, "was marked by a transition of the same likeness from father to son, which transition we have only to suppose to take place at every future descent, that a connection in the way of cause and consequent may be established between Adam's first sin and the universal sinfulness of our race."[4] Dr. Chalmers attempts a philosophical analysis of the process by which Adam's sin resulted in the corruption of his own nature.[5] His reasoning may not, in this instance, be satisfactory to all minds; he does not seem to have valued it very highly himself. The transmission of this corrupt nature, however, to all the posterity of Adam, he regards as necessitated by a universal law. He insists with much earnestness that such is the true account of the present corruption of human nature. He brings many analogies from the animal and vegetable kingdoms, to support this position. And so far is he from teach-

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 422. [2] Ibid. p. 418. [3] Ibid. p. 415.
[4] Ibid. p. 415. [5] Ibid. pp. 413, 414.

ing that this change was total in the beginning, that he resorts to history to show that the transmitted "poison" has steadily increased in depth and malignity, from age to age.[1] Infants are more corrupt now, than they were in the days of the patriarchs. This natural bias, which we inherit by fixed law of descent, and which becomes stronger in proportion as it is yielded to, does not strictly necessitate actual transgression. It is in part the occasional, but not the efficient cause of sin. The remarks of Dr. Chalmers are guarded on this point. He does not here teach that our evil nature is a judicial penalty; he only traces it to a well known law, which God, in His sovereignty, saw fit to make. That nature, though a necessity itself, seems only the certainty of disobedience. The language of Dr. Chalmers is explicit, to show that an exercise of free agency comes between the tendency to sin and actual guilt. "Nothing is virtuous, or vicious either, which is not voluntary."[2] "Because of Adam's sin all *do* sin, just as because of Adam's sin all *must* die."[3] He asserts in various places,[4] that native corruption is no excuse for actual sin, and that the latter is "the rightful object of condemnation and punishment."

XII. *The Extent of Human Guilt.*

In his treatment of this topic, Dr. Chalmers begins with the actual sins of men. The sphere which they occupy is certainly one which admits of guilt. There is no controversy among theologians here. It is in the guilt "charged upon" original sin that the difficulty lies.[5] Sinful acts are connected with a prior disposition to sin, but this does not affect their character. The guilt of every such act "lies in the *nature* of it, and not in its cause."[6] The doctrine of philosophical necessity, as explained by Edwards, is applicable to the volitions of the human mind.[7] This vinculum, which binds the act to the tendency, admits of degrees of strength;[8]

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. pp. 419, 420.
[2] Ibid. p. 15.
[3] Ibid. p. 419.
[4] Ibid. pp. 441, 451, 454.
[5] Ibid. p. 438.
[6] Ibid. p. 441.
[7] Ibid. p. 448.
[8] Ibid. p. 442.

and hence we are left to infer that it is never a strict necessity.[1] "There is a force *ab extra*, which might compel a man against his will; and there is a force *ab intra*, in virtue of which it [the will] is fixedly and resolutely bent."[2] "The former kind of force does away with all the moral characteristics of an action."[3] "Whether the other kind of force cancels, in like manner, the demerit of an evil action, I would make a plain appeal to the moral sense and consciences of men."[4] Examples are here brought forward, to illustrate the universal judgment of mankind, that the greater the *ab intra* force, the deeper the guilt of the individual who yields to it.[5] In each of these instances it must be admitted, since all men imply it in their judgments, that the stronger propensity to sin is the result of previous indulgence. It is in view of the entire character of the delinquent, and not merely of a single act, that this deeper guilt is imputed to him. In regard to the connection between sinful volitions and their antecedent motives, Dr. Chalmers says: "This is a transcendentalism of which common minds may be incapable; and yet they have just as vivid, and, let me add, as just a perception of the right and wrong, as the most philosophic and profound of our mental analysts. Let the philosophical speculation of these prior tendencies be what it may, or let the theological doctrine of original as distinguished from actual sin be what it may; it leaves the real character and desert of the sins themselves just where it found them, the rightful object of blame."[6]

Thus far Dr. Chalmers feels assured that conscience keeps pace with the Bible in charging guilt upon mankind. Does the Bible advance still farther in the discovery of human demerit? On this question the students of the Sacred Volume are divided. "All men commit actual sin, because of an

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[1] By the term "cause" Dr. Chalmers ordinarily means an invariable antecedent. He regards the wrong bias of our nature and actual sin as the two terms of a sequence. Such a connection does not restrict the idea of efficiency to the former; hence guilt may be predicated of the latter.

[2] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 441. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid. p. 442. [6] Ibid. p. 440.

original and prior tendency to sin in all men — a tendency derived, they [some theologians] allow, from Adam — insomuch that, because Adam sinned, all men are sinners; yet responsible, they say, only for their own sins."[1] This language, however, does not express the opinion of Dr. Chalmers. He admits that conscience stops at the limit of actual transgression; but he thinks that revelation oversteps that limit. "Now, it is at this point that we think the Bible shoots ahead, as it were, of the conscience."[2] The Scriptures reveal to us a sphere of human guilt, which "unaided nature" is not able to discover; and which, when known, must rest entirely on the authority of the Bible.[3] This opinion is frankly avowed, notwithstanding the previous statement of Dr. Chalmers, that "the supremacy of conscience is an identical proposition."[4] Yet he will not admit any "conflict" between "the light of nature and the light of revelation." When the latter states, "if statement it really be,"[5] that men "have the guilt laid to their charge of that specific transgression into which Adam fell in the garden of Eden," it is a doctrine "not against but beyond" conscience.[6] *How* that can be only beyond conscience, the "justness and reasonableness" of which she fails to admit even after its discovery, Dr. Chalmers does not explain. Neither does he attempt to account for the fact, that she so often asserts her "supremacy" in opposition to "the doctrine of the direct and proper imputation to us of Adam's sin." Yet every one will be ready to admire the spirit in which he states this theory. Nothing is said of a federal headship, or of an organic unity of the race; but every such idea is left out, as a vain attempt to "rationalize" the mystery. He "believes" that he is stating a doctrine of the Bible; and "when God speaks to us, it is our part to keep silent." "Having satisfied ourselves with the credentials of a professed message from Him, nothing remains but that, with the docility of little children, we should learn and receive the contents of it."[7] He says that at one time he was disposed to a "middle view"

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 452. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. p. 453.
[4] Ibid. p. 452. [5] Ibid. [6] Ibid. [7] Ibid. p. 453.

of the "subject of imputation,"—that "taken by Edwards, in his book on Original Sin." "We confess that we hailed it as a great acquisition, when we first became acquainted with Edwards's view."[1] Dr. Chalmers understood that view to be, "that the guilt, which rests upon us, is not the guilt of Adam's act of disobedience, but the guilt of our own proneness to disobey."[2] "It is the parallelism which the Scripture affirms between the imputation of Adam's sin and the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which has broken up this illusion, as I now regard it to be."[3] "On the authority of revelation, and in obedience to the analogy of the faith," he felt "inclined" to another view of the subject of imputation.[4] It may be a question in the minds of some, whether he rightly apprehended the teaching of the New England divine, in this instance. If Edwards (as not a few of his disciples maintain) taught that we share in Adam's guilt only as we, by our voluntary disobedience, are partakers in his sin, he seems to have followed "the analogy of the faith;" for the benefits of Christ's death become ours, only as we accept them by a voluntary act. Neither the guilt nor the pardon is forced upon men against their will. In the one case, there is a personal act of transgression; in the other case, there is a personal act of faith. By adopting the theory of "direct and proper imputation," Dr. Chalmers not only shot ahead of conscience and the analogy of the faith, but sided with a theory which he was compelled to forget in his remarks on the atonement as available to all mankind.

It is while giving his views of the theory of imputation, that Dr. Chalmers speaks of a "sinful disposition" as the *penalty due to a previous demerit*.[5] He does this in an attempt to "rationalize" the theory of the imputation of Adam's guilt to his posterity. By assuming that the "prior tendency to sin" is a punishment, he can logically infer the presence of guilt in the being thus punished. This, however, does not seem to be resting the whole matter on the authority of the Bible, as a thing for which reason can find

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 455. [2] Ibid. p. 454. [3] Ibid. p. 456.
[4] Ibid. p. 454. [5] Ibid. p. 457.

no basis, and the justness of which conscience fails to see after it has been brought to light by revelation. He alleges that history sustains this theory by many analogous facts. One generation inherits the guilt of previous generations, and is "punished" for it. In these cases, also, it is *assumed* that the calamities referred to are strictly penal.[1] But Dr. Chalmers does not seem, in this instance, to have been fully satisfied with his speculation; for he soon returns from the idea of a judicial infliction, and commits the whole subject to the Word of God, with unquestioning faith. He acknowledged that his view of "imputation" could not be safely presented in the pulpit. "It is fitted to set the conscience into a state of revolt and resistance against the truth as it is in Jesus."[2] He regarded it as an *esoteric* article in the creed of the church; as a dogma to be pressed upon the attention of such only as are far advanced in the Christian life.[3] The preacher is directed to begin with actual sins. These may be so urged home as to make all men feel guilty before God. Thus they will be prepared to accept the theory of the imputation of their guilt to Christ, and of Christ's righteousness to them. But not until they are firmly established in such belief can they, with safety, be told that they are guilty of Adam's sin. To teach this theory openly is "the part of an over-zealous orthodoxy."[4] It is by arraigning men on the charge of their personal transgressions, that they are led to implore the Divine mercy. Such was the course which Dr. Chalmers recommended to the preachers of the Gospel. Whatever the views of theologians respecting our connection with Adam may be, the doctrine of human guilt is valuable only so far as it is fitted to impress on the minds of men the conviction of their personal demerit. The theory of imputed guilt is for the initiated only;—for those who have schooled themselves to delight in that which is incomprehensible; whose faith finds nothing hard enough for it; who, with Sir Thomas Brown, are disposed to complain of the Bible for containing so few mysteries; and by whom it

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. I. p. 461.
[2] Ibid. p. 503.
[3] Ibid. pp. 504—509.
[4] Ibid. p. 506.

is esteemed a kind of lofty distinction, to be *able to believe impossibilities, because* they are impossible.

XIII. *The Work of Christ.*

From the "disease," Dr. Chalmers passes to its "remedy." This is found in what the Son of God has accomplished in his mediatorial office. The Greek word *καταλλαγή*, which is applied to the Redeemer's work, signifies an "atonement or reconciliation."[1] The reconciliation, here spoken of, implies a change in each of the two parties concerned; to be complete, it must be mutual.[2] It is a "Socinian artifice" to fasten "the work of reconciliation exclusively on man." An attempt is thus made to "get rid of the propitiation by which God is reconciled to the guilty."[3] These statements need to be explained by a previous remark,[4] to the effect that the reconciliation had its origin in the mind of the Father. It is as a moral governor, that God must be "propitiated." Although He is disposed to pardon His sinful creatures, yet, as an upholder of the law, He must be reconciled to them, in order to their actual forgiveness. The work of Christ renders God propitious, in no other sense than it satisfies the demands of the sinner's own conscience. The terms "reconciliation" and "atonement" [at-one-ment] express primarily the *result* of Christ's mediation. But the word atonement has acquired a secondary meaning, in which sense it expresses the *nature* of the mediatorial work.[5] This is in accordance with rhetorical usage, by which the name of an effect is often transferred to its cause. It is "atonement-money" (Exod. 30: 16.) rather than an atonement, *λύτρον* and not *καταλλαγή*, to which we refer in speaking of the work of Christ.[6] The Son of man came *δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον*. This price (*λύτρον*), paid for the release (*λύτρωσις*) of the guilty, is the essential thing in the redemptive work. "When it is said that Christ gave himself a propitiation for our sins, this tells me only that the effect of

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 33. [2] Ibid. p. 34. [3] Ibid. p. 35.
[4] Ibid. p. 34. [5] Ibid. pp. 36, 37. [6] Ibid. pp. 37, 38.

His doing so was to make God propitious to us; or that He gave himself to purify us, this is still an effect, that of our deliverance from the guilt and pollution of sin. But when told that He gave himself a ransom, I learn more from that word singly, than I do from either of the other words singly. I learn that His life was the PRICE of our deliverance. The death, by which His life is given up, is characterized in itself, and not merely in its effects."[1]

But Dr. Chalmers does not rest his belief in the sacrifice of the Son of God, as a substitute for sinners, on the force of any word or words. It is true that he rejects all the light which might be supposed to come from *à priori* considerations. He thinks that no creature should "presume to imagine" how a merciful God will treat sinful beings. He denies that natural theology "smooths the way" to this doctrine. We are incompetent to form a "conjecture" concerning it, until we have found it; and its "adaptation" to the wants of the guilty is only an inference from actual "experience."[2] Yet in viewing the doctrine, which he does wholly from the *à posteriori* ground, he relies not so much on particular terms and phrases, as on the obvious design of the writers. Different words, each having a distinct signification, are used in describing the propitiatory act. The context, however, shows that these various terms have reference to Christ's sacrificial death. "We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son." "We are justified by His blood."[3] "Detach these (καταλλαγή, θυμίαμα, ἱλάσκεσθαι, etc.) from the passages in which they occur, and an interminable controversy might be struck out of one meaning against another meaning, and where the combatants, with their respective instances, might both be in the right."[4] But standing as they do, in connection with such statements as, that we are reconciled to God *by the death of His Son*, that *Christ is our passover sacrificed for us*, and that He purges us *by His own blood*, "the doctrine we are in quest of, as if written with a sunbeam, stands forth, patent and unequivocal, in the sight of all men."[5]

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[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 38. [2] Ibid. pp. 5—9.
[3] Ibid. pp. 40—45. [4] Ibid. p. 45. [5] Ibid.

Dr. Chalmers viewed Christ's work for us as twofold. "He not only suffered for us, but served for us."[1] His obedience was an essential part of His work, and not merely a qualification for it. "He is made unto us righteousness as well as redemption."[2] His death did not secure any "positive favor." In consequence of it "the prisoner is dismissed *simpliciter* from the bar."[3] Christ did more for us than simply to atone. "By the doctrine of the atonement, I am told that He hath borne for sinners their punishment, so as to rescue them from hell; and by the doctrine of the imputed righteousness, I am told that He hath earned for sinners a right which entitles them to heaven."[4] "These two services are not distinguishable in thought only."[5] They should be "looked to as separate objects of regard."[6] "Salvation may be made to lie in to particulars, our deliverance from hell, and our translation to heaven."[7] We are advanced "to the midway state of innocence" by the death of Christ. It is by the imputation of His righteousness to us, that we are "advanced to a state of positive favor."[8] The views of President Edwards are adduced, as favoring this distinction of "the negative and the positive in the matter of our justification."[9] This definition of the work of Christ differs somewhat, at least in its language, from the view of many orthodox divines. While all agree in the statement that the Son of God obtains for us positive blessings, as truly as the forgiveness of sin, not a few prefer to regard the obedience of Christ as an indispensable qualification for His work, rather than an essential part of it. In this way the whole of salvation is made to depend upon the one great sacrifice on Calvary. We are drawn from everything else to the *cross* of Christ. This, though foolishness to the Greek, and to the Jew a stumbling block, is to every true believer the wisdom of God and the power of God. The division of the mediatorial work into two distinct parts "is more scholastic than scriptural."[10]

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[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 46. [2] Ibid. p. 66. [3] Ibid. p. 46.
[4] Ibid. [5] Ibid. [6] Ibid. [7] Ibid. p. 47.
[8] Ibid. p. 47. [9] Ibid. pp. 48—52. [10] Ibid. p. 58.

The remarks of Dr. Chalmers on the effects of the mediation of Christ are of great value. That work meets the demands of "our moral nature."[1] "It is the only scheme which brings the offers of mercy to the sinner into practical adjustment with what the sinner himself feels imperatively due to the holiness and the justice of God."[2] "We have often felt, when thinking of the doctrine of the atonement, how much the orthodoxy of Scripture is at one with the orthodoxy of that sound ethical system which is espoused by the best and the greatest of our philosophers."[3] In view of the truth that One has borne our sins, we can see the justice of God in pardoning us; the redemptive work has made it consistent for Him to confer happiness upon the unworthy. In Christ we are reconciled to *ourselves* as truly as to God. In advancing these opinions, Dr. Chalmers speaks of the righteousness of Christ as "imputed to us." But he says that such is only a "judicial or forensic" use of language. It denotes "that change in a man's relation to the law and lawgiver, by which he is now reckoned with, and treated *as* a just person." The term justification "describes not the man's moral rightness, but his legal right."[4] It is, therefore, in the *treatment* made possible to the sinner by the atonement, that we find the meaning of those terms which impute our guilt to Christ, and His righteousness to us. By the remark that Christ has both "suffered and served in our stead," we are to understand that the believer is dealt with *as if* he had himself obeyed the whole law. Dr. Chalmers reiterates his belief in the "immutability of divine justice." But he does not attempt to follow the vicarious work of Christ beyond its immediate and practical relations. He seems to be addressing himself directly to some heavy-laden penitent, when he says that the Redeemer "took upon Him, not merely the punishment that we should have borne, but the performances that we should have rendered."[5] Were this the language of a scholastic divine, a question might be raised as to the justice of demanding of Christ a twofold

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 68. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid. p. 69. [5] Ibid. p. 81.

satisfaction of the law. If He as our substitute has *performed* all that we should have done, whence the propriety of subjecting Him to punishment? While His obedience literally takes the place of ours, it must of itself cover the entire ground of our responsibility, thus leaving no room for *penal* infliction on our account. Hence every one of the redeemed could claim eternal blessedness, by the highest conceivable right; and we might reject the doctrine of the atoning death of the Saviour, as a needless sacrifice. Thus the theory of the strict imputation of the righteousness of Christ to His followers hides the glory of His cross.[1] These remarks of Dr. Chalmers were not made, as some might think, in the spirit of Atinomianism, but in an attempt to set forth vividly the wondrous provisions of the Gospel. He was too intent on this purpose, to pause to notice the distinction between general justice and distributive justice. He had no thought of advancing a theory which ends, logically, either in the dogma of a limited atonement, or in the falsehood of universal salvation.[2]

XIV. *Saving Faith.*

Dr. Chalmers taught that saving faith is never exercised by the unregenerate. "Men do not believe naturally."[3] He alludes to the theory, held by some, that faith "originated the process" of the new birth. "Hence the erroneous dogma that faith comes before regeneration itself; nay, is the cause of it; whereas, instead of its cause, itself is but a constituent part of it."[4] In this remark he regards regeneration, in its broadest sense, as including a voluntary act on

[1] Dr. Chalmers has elsewhere said that "virtue [righteousness] is the ultimate and highest good of existence." Certainly, then, the righteousness of Christ, which is of infinite value, ought not to be represented as the means to an end; much less should this be done, where the end proposed is the happiness of sinful creatures. Suffering may be endured for the guilty, but holiness cannot be thus degraded; it is itself higher and nobler than any other object.

[2] For the eloquent remarks of Dr. Chalmers on the fitness of the doctrine of the atonement for popular impression, the reader is referred to pp. 87—90 in the second volume of the "Institutes."

[3] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 122. [4] Ibid.

the part of the subject of it. Elsewhere, however, he views the process as restricted to a sphere lying back of all proper volition. Regeneration, in this latter sense, he refers wholly to the agency of God. It is an erroneous theory, "that if the intellectual in man were so renovated as to fulfil its part aright, the emotional would not be wanting to its part."[1] "All which is good and new in the result of this process cometh from above."[2] So far as there is any change in the natural sensibilities, it is wholly the work of God. This is true no less of the emotional than of the intellectual nature. The Spirit not only makes the perception clearer, but the heart more tender. God may use instruments, yet the work is referable to himself ultimately. Only such as are thus renewed, exercise faith in Christ. "The fact of dependence," however, should not be separated from that of "duty."[3] "There is a useless and inoperative Calvinism, which has its evils," no less than Pelagianism and Arminianism."[4] Regeneration "does not supersede intelligence."[5] The newborn soul exercises "faith upon conviction, and on right grounds of conviction."[6] "The views of the understanding have the same mastery over the determinations of the will in the new creature, which they have in the old."[7] In accordance with these views, Dr. Chalmers represents faith as a rational act. It is the belief, of the renewed man, in that which appears to him to be worthy of belief. The process of regeneration does not justify the sinner, unless it involve within itself this element of intelligent faith.[8]

Faith cannot be defined, except nominally. The term expresses "a simple idea." Many theologians teach that saving faith is belief "joined with something else — perhaps with love."[9] But "we incline to faith in its simplicity."[10] "Faith is belief, and nothing more."[11] Saving faith does not involve the idea of obedience. It is an act of the "understanding."[12] It is by a somewhat unusual process of reasoning, that Dr. Chalmers shows how such faith secures the sal-

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 114. [2] Ibid. p. 113. [3] Ibid. p. 120.
[4] Ibid. p. 121. [5] Ibid. p. 123. [6] Ibid. [7] Ibid. p. 124.
[8] Ibid. p. 123. [9] Ibid. p. 124. [10] Ibid. [11] Ibid. [12] Ibid. p. 143.

vation of the guilty. He supposes several distinct acts of faith, in order to the possession of a saving faith. There is a belief in the atonement of the Gospel, and also in the obligations which it imposes. Saving faith is "not confined to the one object of Christ having died a sacrifice."[1] It looks "freely and abroad over all the statements of Scripture."[2] Nor is his belief in all the objective truths of Christianity enough to justify the sinner. He must also "look subjectively."[3] After one act of faith in the atonement, and another in the precepts of the Gospel, he needs to have faith "in the consciousness that he is resolved, on the strength of divine grace, to be all which the Bible requires of him."[4] "One may believe in an offer of salvation made to all who will; yet, if conscious to himself that he will not and has not consented, he has no ground for believing in the very different proposition that he has any part in this salvation."[5] Thus saving faith is made out to be much more than simply faith in Christ; while it is, at the same time, represented as belonging wholly to the "understanding." The first act has reference to a Redeemer; the second, to all Christian duties; and the third, to the consciousness of a personal appropriation, not only of the promises, but also of the precepts of the Gospel. This consciousness cannot exist, however, without obedience. Thus is saving faith shown to be wholly an intellectual belief.[6] Salvation is conditioned upon an exercise of the "understanding," and "nothing more;" but this act of the intellect is, in the last instance, founded on personal obedience. It certainly seems more natural that a man should be accepted for what he has done, than for his belief that he has done it; for his worthiness, rather than for his consciousness of being worthy.

Such, according to Dr. Chalmers, is the nature of saving faith. But in representing it as the condition of salvation, he is careful to explain his meaning. It is not the only, nor the all-important condition of an acceptance with God. Though a *sine qua non* on our part, it is by no means meri-

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 164. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. p. 142.
[4] Ibid. p. 185. [5] Ibid. p. 142. [6] Ibid. p. 186.

torious. If faith saves us, in the sense that it renders us deserving, the Gospel does not differ essentially from the law. "There is only a change in the condition,—the performance of the commandment to believe, instead of the performance of the commandment to obey."[1] "The obedience of works was the condition of everlasting life, under the old dispensation; and the matter still seems to rest on as legal, as mercantile an imagination as before, if under the new dispensation the condition of everlasting life be the obedience of faith."[2] The Gospel teaches that our "right" to eternal life "has been won by another."[3] So far as man is concerned, heaven is "not a purchase," but "a gift."[4] "The believer, in looking to the ground of his meritorious [the meritorious ground of his?] acceptance, looks not to his belief, but to that which is the object of his belief; not to any right or righteousness which faith hath wrought in himself, but to the righteousness which Christ hath wrought for him."[5] "When faith is said to enrich a man, it is just as the recipient hand of the mendicant appropriates the supply that is rendered to him by the bounty of an almoner."[6] Dr. Chalmers saw, that the doctrine of justification by faith alone might seem to possess "an immoral tendency."[7] He is careful to remove all ground for such a suspicion. Should a man be rejoicing in his fancied exemption from the punishment of sin, while living in the practice and under the power of it; and such a man be appealed to as an evidence against the doctrine of justification by faith; I would reply by questioning the reality of his faith."[8] "The same Bible which tells us of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, tells us also of the indispensable need, ere heaven can be ours, of a personal righteousness of our own. How can faith draw any vitiating influence to the

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[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 189.

[2] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. pp. 189, 190. It will be perceived that in this remark Dr. Chalmers represents faith as a voluntary act of obedience. He thus appears to controvert the position, that saving faith is intellectual belief, "and nothing more." It is belief in compliance with a command to believe, and hence dependent on the will as truly as on the "understanding."

[3] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 190. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid. p. 191.

[6] Ibid. p. 191. [7] Ibid. p. 210. [8] Ibid. p. 205.

heart from the first of these passages, when, if it have any being at all, it must recognize a coördinate authority and truth in the second of these passages?"[1] It is the work of Christ which secured a "title" to the divine fellowship; still personal holiness is needed to fit one for that fellowship. "In the claim for heaven, it [human virtue] is of no account; in the indispensable character for heaven, it is all in all."[2] The assigning of such a place to virtue, does not "degrade" it to the rank of "a price paid" for happiness.[3] It thereby ceases to be "the purchase-money wherewith we buy heaven," and becomes heaven already in possession."[4] Under a legal dispensation, virtue is viewed as establishing the right to be saved; but under the dispensation of grace, the work of Christ makes good the claim, and virtue is "the very substance of salvation."[5] In this way Dr. Chalmers shows that the doctrine of justification by faith does not tend to "Antinomianism," while it exalts virtue to the position of "the ultimate and the highest good of existence."[6]

XV. *The Doctrine of the Spirit.*

We have now passed through those portions of the theological system of Dr. Chalmers, in which most of his views, of any distinctive character, are to be found. The remaining topics may, perhaps, be embraced in a notice of his view of the work of the Spirit. Ample space is given, in the "Institutes," to the doctrine of the Trinity. He held it, in the strict Scriptural sense, arriving at the divinity of each person by the induction of inspired statements, and, in the same way, establishing his belief in their essential unity. By a

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 209. If virtue be indispensable as a preparation for heaven, as here represented, then it cannot be said that the righteousness of Christ is strictly imputed to His followers. They are not treated in all respects as if His character were theirs.

[2] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 211.

[3] If Dr. Chalmers taught that the righteousness of Christ purchases for us a title to heaven, did he not "degrade virtue," in that instance, from the rank of an ultimate to that of a secondary good? Shall the righteousness of the disciple hold a more honorable place than that of his Master?

[4] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. pp. 226—229. [5] Ibid. p. 239. [6] Ibid. p. 228.

like process he reached the doctrine of the twofold person of Christ. But in neither instance did he attempt to harmonize the separate conclusions to which he came, so as to make them appear consistent to human reason. He was satisfied in knowing that the Bible teaches them, and that they cannot be proved to be irreconcilable.[1] However mysterious the doctrine of the Trinity may be to us, when we attempt to view it philosophically, it is fitted to meet some of the deepest wants of the soul. Especially do we feel that the Spirit, whose office it is to render the Gospel effectual, and to counteract the power of Satan, needs to be a distinct and Almighty Person.[2]

The fact that regeneration is the assigned work of the Spirit, taken with the fact that a large portion of mankind are never renewed, suggests the scriptural doctrine of predestination. On this "high topic" Dr. Chalmers adopted, mainly, the views and the phraseology of President Edwards. He believed in a "philosophical necessity," extending to all the processes of the human mind. Not only the operations of nature, but every act of the wills of men, lies "within the universal category of cause and effect."[3] He rejected the notion of "metaphysical liberty," which denies that the volitions of the mind are, in any sense, caused.[4] He endeavored to show, from the facts of history, that the Edwardean view of "necessity" is acted upon, by all men, in the affairs of life.[5] But there is a sense in which he could not be called an advocate of the scheme of necessity. All that he attempts in his reasoning is, to prove such a necessity as shall shut out the idea of "contingency" from the moral government of God. He admits that the doctrine might be stated in a more defensible form, by "substituting certainty for necessity."[6] "We should not object to this change. Grant but a certainty as absolute in the mental as in the material world, and we require no more."[7] "Perhaps it were better to be rid of the term 'necessity' altogether in con-

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. pp. 417—462. [2] Ibid. p. 291.
[3] Ibid. pp. 299—305. [4] Ibid. pp. 310—317. [5] Ibid. pp. 305, 306.
[6] Ibid. p. 356. [7] Ibid.

nection with this subject, as it is ever suggesting the idea of compulsion, and of compulsion too against the will, which latter conception is in no way involved with our doctrine."[1] He denies that the doctrine under notice implies "a blind and mechanical necessity." It "simply affirms regularity of procedure in each class of beings, but amply secures the distinction between them by ascribing to each its own properties and its own powers."[2] God has not predestinated one portion of mankind to eternal life, and another portion to eternal death, in such a sense as to be insincere in offering salvation to them all. Dr. Chalmers regretted the course of "some theologians," who "unwisely" restrict the overtures of the Gospel to the elect. "A message so constructed, as that it might circulate round the globe, and by which the blessings of the upper sanctuary are made as accessible to one and all of the species, as the light, or the air, or any of the cheap and common bounties of nature, has now, since its wings of diffusiveness and glory have been clipped by the hands of controversialists, shrunk and shrivelled into the dimensions of their own narrow sectarianism."[3] When the doctrine of the divine decrees is rightly understood, it stimulates to activity and is an incentive to prayer. God's eternal plan is composed of an infinite number of sequences; and "the connection between the beginning and the ending, sure and irreversible though it be, is not more sure than the connection" which binds the consequent to the antecedent, in each intermediate succession.[4] The fulfilment of the promise in Matt. 7: 8, is fixed by a divine decree. As many as perform the condition, are made sure of the blessing by an absolute certainty. Every one ought to be aroused to earnestness in asking and seeking, by the doctrine that he will thus make good the first term of a sequence, whose second term is the object of his desire.[5]

But men are, of themselves, unwilling to do what they can in the attaining of salvation; they will not, naturally, exercise saving faith in Christ. Hence they are "made willing"

[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 356. [2] Ibid. p. 357.
[3] Ibid. p. 404. [4] Ibid. p. 398. [5] Ibid. pp. 399—402.

by the Spirit; so many of them as God chooses to rescue by His gracious interposition. The work of the Spirit, however, does not lessen the value of instrumentalities. He "acts upon the mind mediately, and not immediately."[1] "The Spirit of God does not act but by the intervention of the Word;" just as Satan "does not act but by the intervention of the world."[2] "He makes Scripture effectual to conversion; but it is only made effectual to those who know Scripture."[3] This fact should stimulate ministers and churches in their efforts for the conversion of the impenitent. By so doing, they will "keep right the instrument that is wielded by the hands of a mighty workman; and the higher and nobler the agent is, the more momentous an interest is concerned in the right keeping of the instrument which he employs."[4]

Such were the views of Dr. Chalmers, on the relation of the Word to the Spirit's agency, in the work of bringing mankind to Christ. He believed in the "moral," but not in the "natural" inability of man. He taught that all can exercise saving faith if they will, so that the offer of salvation is unlimited and sincere. The duty of presenting this offer to a fallen world has been laid upon the Christian church; while the doctrine of the Spirit ever keeps in view the humbling, and yet animating truth, that as many as enter the kingdom of heaven, are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

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[1] Insts. Theol. Vol. II. p. 463.
[2] Ibid. p. 464.
[3] Ibid. Vol. I. p. 284.
[4] Ibid. p. 285.