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ARTICLE VI.

DR. FORBES ON ROM. V. 12-21.

BY REV. DANIEL T. FISKE, D.D., NEWBURYPORT.

SEVERAL years ago Rev. John Forbes, LL.D., of Edinburgh, a distinguished minister of the Established Church of Scotland, published a work on "The Symmetrical Structure of Scripture." In that volume he appeared as an advocate of a theory, advanced by Bishop Jebb, that "Parallelism" is not simply a characteristic of Hebrew Poetry, but extends to prose also, and, "being perfectly independent of any peculiarities of the Hebrew language, is by no means confined to the Old Testament, but pervades a great part of the New."

In his recently published Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, the same learned divine has applied the principles of "Parallelism" to the interpretation of that difficult portion of the Scriptures. He arranges the text in parallel lines, grouped in sentences and paragraphs, according to a careful analysis of the contents of the Epistle. This arrangement, as a "mere tabulated form," is certainly convenient, enabling the eye more readily to mark the progress of the apostle's reasonings, his transitions, and the mutual relations of the different parts of the argument. We very much doubt, however, whether Paul in writing this friendly letter to the "saints" at Rome, was consciously governed by the rules of any such elaborate and artificial system of composition as Dr. Forbes finds in it; and we should be very slow to accept an exegesis of any passage which rested solely on the demands of such a supposed system.

Dr. Forbes does not aim "to furnish an exhaustive Commentary, but to illustrate those passages alone which parallelism seems to place in a new light." For proof of the utility of parallelism he refers especially to chap. v. 12-21; and he asks particular attention to "the perfect order and perspicuity which it introduces into what has generally been

considered a very intricate and perplexed passage." No better test, surely, could be appealed to. All commentaries on Romans stand or fall by this passage. We propose to review the results of the examination of it which Dr. Forbes has made by the aid of parallelism.

The parallelistic arrangement presents the passage in this form; the parenthesis in vs. 15, 16 and 17, being omitted.

- A** { 12 Ὡςπερ δι' ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου
 ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν,
 καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος,
 καὶ οὕτως εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διήλθεν,
 ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἤμαρτον.
- B** { 13 ἄχρι γὰρ νόμου ἁμαρτία ἦν ἐν κόσμῳ,
 ἁμαρτία δὲ οὐκ ἔλλογεῖται μὴ νόμου.
 14 ἀλλ' ἐβασίλευσεν ὁ θάνατος ἀπὸ Ἀδάμ μέχρι Μωϋσέως
 καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς μὴ ἁμαρτήσαντας ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοιώματι τῆς
 παραβάσεως Ἀδάμ.
- C** ὅς ἐστιν τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος.
- D** { Points of disparity in the comparison
D { stated in verses 15, 16, 17.
- C** { 18 { Ἄρα οὖν ὡς ἐνὸς παραπτώματος
 εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς κατάκριμα,
J { οὕτω καὶ δι' ἐνὸς δικαιοῦματος
 εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς δικαιοσύνην ζωῆς.
 19 { ὥςπερ γὰρ διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου
S { ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν οἱ πολλοί,
 οὕτω καὶ διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἐνὸς
 δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί.
- B** { 20 Νόμος δὲ παρεῖσθη
 ἵνα πλεονάσῃ τὸ παράπτωμα·
 οὐ δὲ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία
 ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις,
- A** { 21 ἵνα ὥςπερ ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία
 ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ,
 οὕτω καὶ ἡ χάρις βασιλεύσῃ διὰ δικαιοσύνης
 εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον
 διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν.

The passage thus arranged, forms what Dr. Forbes calls an *Epanodos*, or "Introverted Parallelism," in which the first member, *A*, corresponds to the last *A*; the second, *B*, to the next to the last, *B*; etc.

I. GENERAL SCOPE AND DESIGN OF THE PASSAGE.

According to our author, "much of the obscurity that has attached to this passage has arisen from inadequate apprehension of the place which it holds in the argument of the apostle." He regards it, not as an episode, or mere illustration, "but as the grand central point and focus towards which all the lines of his [Paul's] argument converge; in which all that he has hitherto said finds its culmination, and from which the succeeding chapters (vi. vii. viii.) naturally branch forth as simple corollaries."

He thinks that the apostle gave "an epitome of the whole doctrinal portion of the Epistle," in i. 16. Paul there says that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for three reasons.

1. *Its universality.* It is for Greek, as well as for Jew; designed to meet a universal want of mankind. This point is discussed in i. 18-iii. 20, where it is proved that there is "none righteous, no not one;" that "all the world" are "guilty before God." And, as all are involved in sin, so the provisions of the gospel are for all.
2. Its condition is *faith*, not works. Its blessings are secured by "every one that believeth." This point is discussed in iii. 21-iv. 25.
3. It is "the *power* of God," to accomplish what the Law was *power*-less to accomplish — complete salvation. This point is treated in chapters v-viii.

These three topics are repeated in verse 17.

(1) The gospel reveals the great need of "every one"; "the righteousness of God" contrasted with the "all *un*-righteousness of man."

(2) This righteousness is appropriated by faith, begins and ends in faith, "from faith to faith."

(3) It is the power of God, by which all who believe "live." The quotation from Habakkuk (ii. 4), summing up all three topics, and forming the apostle's text, *ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται*. "The *Righteous, by Faith, shall Live.*"

The first two topics having been already discussed, in the fifth chapter the third and principal topic is reached, viz. the *life-giving power* of the gospel. Expositors generally, by mistaking the connection of this chapter with what precedes, have entirely missed the great object of the apostle in vs. 12-21, which is not merely to repeat and illustrate the doctrine of justification by faith, already stated; but, to show that the union of believers with Christ is such that "his righteousness and life enter into their being so thoroughly as finally to overcome and displace the sin and death introduced by Adam." Most commentators suppose that the transition from justification to sanctification is made at the beginning of the sixth chapter. Dr. Forbes thinks that it is made at the beginning of the fifth chapter, and that the main topic of this chapter is not *imputed*, but *imparted* righteousness; illustrated by reference to the consequences of the sin of Adam.

12. "As by one man
Sin entered into the world,
 and *Death* by sin : [even so]
21. Grace reigns through *Righteousness*
 unto eternal *Life*,
 By Jesus Christ our Lord."

Sin and Death by Adam; Righteousness, and Life by Christ. The apostle is not ashamed of the gospel, because it thus provides a complete remedy for the evil which has come upon the race. Not only is it for "all," requiring no impracticable condition, simply "*faith*," but it is the "power of God unto *salvation*;" it saves from the great and universal evil, "*sin*," as well as from its inseparable consequence, "*death*." This thought, that through faith in Christ men are saved not merely from the penalty incurred by sin, but from sin itself, is carried forward to the close of the eighth

chapter, and is the leading and central thought of the Epistle.

That, in the main, Dr. Forbes is correct in his analysis of the apostle's argument, and that he has indicated the true position and scope of the passage under consideration, (v. 12-21), we are constrained, to believe. His exegesis of the more difficult portions of the passage is clearly indicated, as it is largely determined, by his view of its position in the argument, and of its general scope. Dr. Hodge claims that his interpretation of the phrase πάντες ἡμάρτων (vs. 12): making it mean, all sinned putatively or representatively in Adam, "is required by the whole scope of the passage and drift of the argument." And the scope of the passage he declares to be, "to illustrate the doctrine of justification on the ground of the righteousness of Christ, by a reference to the condemnation of men for the sin of Adam."¹ Dr. Forbes denies that the doctrine of justification is the main topic under discussion. He attempts to show, and we think does show conclusively, that the scope of the passage is broader, and includes sanctification as well as justification; complete salvation, righteousness *imparted* as well as righteousness *imputed*. Here is a fair issue between the two learned commentators. Dr. Hodge assumes that the scope of the passage is limited to justification; but until he can justify this assumption by a careful analysis of the apostle's argument the advantage will remain with the Scotch divine.

Dr. Forbes having stated what he conceives to be the general scope of the passage, proceeds to develop more particularly the meaning of its several parts. It is proposed to examine his views only so far as they bear upon the two principal points presented in the passage, viz. the relation of Adam to the race, and the relation of Christ to believers.

II. THE RELATION OF ADAM TO THE RACE.

In the twelfth verse, the apostle asserts that, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Dr.

¹ Commentary on Romans (ed. 1864), p. 239.

Forbes distinguishes between *παράπτωμα* and *ἁμαρτία*. The former, "transgression," "belonged to Adam alone properly, and is only imputed to his posterity"; the latter, "sin" or "the principle of sin," entered into his and our nature, and "equally affects us as him." Not guilt or imputed sin, merely, is meant by *ἁμαρτία*, but "sinfulness," or inherent corruption, which, entering by Adam's one act of transgression, 'as through an open door, extended not only to his nature, but to the nature of all his descendants.

If this distinction be just, and the argument founded on it be valid, why does it not wholly exclude from *ἁμαρτία* the idea of "imputed sin"? If anything of Adam's is imputed to his posterity, it is his *παράπτωμα*, and not his *ἁμαρτία*; and if anything is transmitted to them, it is his *ἁμαρτία*, and not his *παράπτωμα*. Yet Dr. Forbes inconsistently admits that *ἁμαρτία* includes "guilt," or "imputed sin," as well as "corruption of nature."

"*And death by sin.*" As, according to our author, "sin" means "the principle of sin," or sinfulness, so "death" means "the principle of death," or mortality; but he is hardly consistent in his representations of their relations to each other. Sometimes he speaks of sin as the "cause," and death as the "effect," or sin as "the cause leading to God's judicial sentence of death." And the words of the apostle would seem to mean this, or at least to denote some kind of a causal relation. As in the previous clause *διὰ* with the genitive (*ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου*) denotes that Adam was, in some sense, the cause of the entrance of sin into the world, so here, with the same case (*τῆς ἁμαρτίας*), it would seem to denote that, in some sense, the sin caused by Adam is the cause of the entrance of death into the world. Sin came *by* Adam, and death came *by* sin.

But in other statements Dr. Forbes overlooks, or denies, the immediate causal relation of sin to death, and makes them both sustain the same relation to Adam. He says: "By his [Adam's] transgression the principles of sin and death entered into man's nature, and extended over all";

and again, "St. Paul's representation is, not that Adam's sin entered into and corrupted all, and that, *on the ground* of this corruption, their condemnation to death is to be ascribed, not to his sin, but to their own [*mediate* imputation]; but that through Adam, as the primary source, both sin and death entered simultaneously into all his offspring." This seems to imply the very opposite of what he had before asserted, that sin is "the cause leading to God's judicial sentence of death"; and that death is to be attributed, not to *ἀμαρτία*, whether in Adam or his offspring, but solely to the *παράπτωμα* of Adam. Death comes, not, as the apostle says, *διὰ τῆς ἀμαρτίας*, but *διὰ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου*, or *διὰ τοῦ παραπτώματος ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου*, which the apostle does not say; but which is precisely the view of Dr. Hodge.

Dr. Forbes gives us no definition of "death." Sometimes he seems to make it refer solely to physical death, and again to include all penal evil; but holds that it is always *penal*. If we ask, "Of what is it the penalty?" he at one time answers, *ἀμαρτία*, and of course *ἀμαρτία* is not included in *θάνατος*; again he answers, "the *παράπτωμα* of Adam," and then *ἀμαρτία* may be a part of the penalty, *θάνατος*, although he nowhere affirms that such is the case. The Princeton divines hold that "corruption of nature" is a part of the "death," judicially inflicted on the race, on account of Adam's sin imputed to them. Consistency required Dr. Forbes either to adopt the same view, or else to adhere to the position that corruption of nature (*ἀμαρτία*), and not Adam's "transgression," is the cause of death, or the ground of its judicial infliction on the race.

Having stated generally that death entered the world by sin, the apostle reiterates the statement with this difference, that the *universal* prevalence of *death* is in consequence of the *universal* prevalence of *sin*.

"And so death passed upon *all*,
For that *all* have sinned."

The word "sinned" (*ἥμαρτον*), Dr. Forbes thinks must take its meaning from the word "sin" (*ἀμαρτία*), in the preceding

clause, and as this means "inherent depravity, or corruption of nature," so "sinned" must mean "were corrupt or sinful," and "cannot be limited to the idea of sin merely *imputed*," as Dr. Hodge maintains, "but must include sin *inherited* and *communicated* also." But why this double meaning of the word? If it refers to *inherited* sin, why make it refer at all to *imputed* sin, especially as it is, according to our author, *παράπτωμα*, and not *ἀμαρτία*, that is imputed? The word, it would seem, must have one simple, definite meaning. "All *sinned*." In what sense? Several answers have been given to this question. Some say "sinned by actual and personal transgression." Others say, "sinned actually, but not *personally* in Adam, his act being the act of that generic humanity which was in him." Others say, "sinned putatively," in Adam, i.e. his sin was imputed to the race; and Dr. Hodge has the boldness to affirm that this is "the simple and natural meaning" of the word! Others, with Dr. Forbes, making *πάντες ἤμαρτον*, equivalent to *ἀμαρτία εἰσῆλθεν, εἰς τὸν κόσμον*, say, "sinned by becoming corrupt, inheriting a sinful nature from Adam." The objection of Dr. Hodge to this interpretation, "That it is contrary to the simple meaning of the words — *ἀμαρτάνω* in no case having the sense here assigned to it," may well be retorted against his own view. But a more serious objection is that drawn from the use of the historical, or aorist tense, *ἤμαρτον* meaning, not *are sinful* or *have sinned*, but *sinned*, "expressing momentary action in past time." Dr. Forbes summarily disposes of this objection by referring to a similar use of the same words, *πάντες ἤμαρτον*, in chap. iii. 23, where the aorist seems to be used with the meaning of the perfect tense, and where it denotes that all, even the Gentiles, are *actual*, not *putative* sinners, and are *personally* guilty before God. He might have shown, allowing to the aorist here its full peculiar significance, and even making it point back to the sin of Adam, that it may yet relate to the universal sinfulness of the race, actual and personal. It is no uncommon thing to represent by this tense future events as having occurred simultaneously with

some other event which made their occurrence certain. If Adam's sin simply involved the certainty that all his posterity would sin, it would be natural to say that when he sinned we all virtually sinned. In that case the aorist tense would be used, though in a somewhat figurative sense, and would not mean that we literally or putatively sinned with or in Adam, but that when he sinned our sinfulness was made so certain that it could be spoken of as having been then incurred. In almost every language we find something analogous to this figurative use of the Greek aorist. Thus we say: "When the Stamp Act was passed in the British Parliament, England lost her American Colonies." "When the Rebels fired upon Fort Sumter, slavery perished." "When Louis Napoleon declared war against Prussia, thousands of lives were sacrificed, and the days of his reign were numbered." And since we must give some kind of a figurative meaning to *ἡμαρτον*, it seems more reasonable to give it a meaning against which there is no moral objection, and which is abundantly justified by the usage, not only of the Greek, but of other languages, than to give it one which conflicts with our fundamental idea of justice, by attributing to the race the guilt of an act of which they are confessedly innocent.

In verses 13, 14, according to Dr. Forbes, the apostle is simply further insisting upon the universality of that sin and death which, in vs. 12 he had asserted, came upon all men by the sin of Adam. In the expression, "For until the law sin was in the world," "The reference manifestly is to the historical existence of sin in the old world." "The law did not introduce it, for it prevailed before the giving of the law." "But should the gainsayer still object that sin is not imputed where there is no law, the apostle stops all further discussion by an appeal to the undeniable principle on which he had already insisted, that where death is, there must be sin as its antecedent cause, and that, consequently, as death had reigned over all from Adam to Moses, the universal prevalence of death proved the universal prevalence of sin,

whether they had sinned, or had not sinned, 'after the similitude of Adam's transgression,' by breaking some positive commandment."

Our author sees no allusion to infants in the phrase, "them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." He thinks the apostle's language implies that there were some among those who lived between Adam and Moses, who sinned "after the similitude of Adam's transgression," that is, against a known positive commandment, as, for example, those who transgressed the law given to Noah against murder (Gen. ix. 6). Not only these died, but even those who had not thus sinned, who had only disregarded the law written on their hearts, or had inherited a sinful nature, without any positive law to reveal and take cognizance of it. This interpretation makes *even* (*καί*) imply that there were two classes of persons who lived between Adam and Moses, viz. those who had, and those who had not, transgressed a positive precept. Other interpreters make it refer to a distinction between those who lived before and those who lived after Moses's day. Death reigned not only over the latter, but *even* over the former, although they had not sinned in the way of transgressing a positive law, as Adam had done. Either of these interpretations seems more natural, and in every way preferable to that which makes the expression, "them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," refer to infants, an interpretation which, it would seem, nothing but the exigency of a false theory could ever have suggested.

As verses 15, 16, 17, are parenthetical, designed to show that in some particulars, the comparison between Adam and Christ does not hold, Dr. Forbes reserves them for a separate consideration; and as they cast no additional light on the point now under consideration, viz. the relation of Adam to the race, we will not in this connection dwell upon his interpretation of them.

The comparison between Adam and Christ begun in v. 12, but left incomplete, is resumed and more fully drawn out in

vs. 18, 19; the first member of the comparison being restated thus: "Therefore as by one offence, judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (v. 18). "For as by the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners" (v. 19). These two expressions are equivalent to the assertion in v. 12, that "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all for that all have sinned." "Death," or "judgment unto condemnation," "came upon all men," "entered into the world" and "passed upon all men," in consequence of the offence of one man. In v. 12, "sin" (*ἁμαρτία*), consequent on the original "offence" (*παράπτωμα*), is mentioned; but the "offence" is only implied. In v. 18 the "offence" is mentioned, and the consequent "sin" implied; while in v. 19, the "offence," "disobedience of one man," and the "sin," "were made sinners," are both mentioned. Thus both statements agree and observe the same order, viz. "Adam's offence," universal sinfulness, and universal death. The apostle refers "death" to Adam's "offence," as its primary source; and yet teaches the "inseparable connection between "sin and death;" the former always "in logical sequence preceding the latter, and being its judicial vindication."

In regard to the meaning of the expression *ἁμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν* in v. 19, Dr. Forbes takes issue with Dr. Hodge, and other imputationists. Dr. Hodge says: "*καθίστημι* never, in the New Testament, means *to make*, in the sense of effecting, or causing a person or thing to be other than it was before." "When, therefore, the apostle says that the many were (*κατεστάθησαν*) constituted sinners by the disobedience of Adam, it cannot mean that the many thereby were rendered sinful, but that his disobedience was the ground of their being placed in the category of sinners. It constituted a good and sufficient reason for so regarding and treating them."¹ That is, all men are *regarded* as sinners on account of Adam's sin, and treated accordingly; or, in other words, Adam's sin is imputed to them, and then they

¹ Comentary on Romans, pp. 271, 272.

are treated as if it were really their sin. Our author points out the inconsistency of Dr. Hodge in limiting the expression "made sinners" to imputed sin, after having acknowledged it to be equivalent to the expression in v. 12, "Sin entered the world," where he admits that "sin" "includes guilt, depravity, and actual transgression." He then proceeds to disprove the assertion of Dr. Hodge, as to the meaning of *καθίστημι*, examining first the cases cited in support of it. In the passage Rom. i. 4, where Christ is said to have been "constituted the Son of God," the verb is not *καθίστημι*, but *ὀρίζω*, and of course furnishes no argument in point. The other two passages cited in which the verb in question is found, are Acts vii. 35: "Who *made* thee a ruler and a judge?" and Matt. xxiv. 45, "Whom his lord *made* ruler over his household." "Was either ruler," pertinently asks Dr. Forbes, 'before he was so constituted or made'? Was he not thereby 'caused to be other than he was before'? If it be objected 'not in character or nature,' this is a mere evasion, since neither character nor nature is in question in the change spoken of. The real question is: Does *κατέστησεν*, constituted, mean in either instance, as Dr. Hodge affirms that it does in v. 19, merely, 'made to be regarded as a ruler,' or 'set down in the rank or category of rulers,' without implying and involving that he was thereby *made* and *constituted* ruler?"

Other passages in which the word occurs, not cited by Dr. Hodge, are then examined: 2 Pet. i. 8, "If these things be in you and abound, they *make* you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful," etc. "Does the possession of the virtues enumerated by St. Peter not 'cause' their possessors to be in character and nature other than they were before?" James iv. 4, "Whosoever will be a friend of the world *is* (*καθίσταται*, constitutes himself) the enemy of God." "Does the verb mean merely 'makes him to be regarded and treated as an enemy,' 'places him in the category of enemies,' without implying and involving that he is really an enemy of God?"

Had Dr. Forbes extended his examination to all of the twenty-one passages in the New Testament in which this word occurs, he would only have shown more clearly the utter groundlessness of Dr. Hodge's assertion in regard to its meaning. But had he been driven to admit that it never, in the New Testament, means *to make*, in the sense of effecting or causing a person or thing to be, in its character or nature, other than it was before," he might have insisted that it cannot have the meaning which Dr. Hodge ascribes to it, who says that in v. 19 it means that all men are "regarded and *treated* as sinners," when they are not really such. Can it possibly have this meaning even in the passages cited by himself? "Who made thee a ruler and a judge"? Did Moses mean "who *regarded* and *treated* thee as a ruler and judge," when you were not such? Again, "Whom his lord made ruler over his house." Did Jesus mean that the lord merely *regarded* and *treated* his servant, as ruler or steward, when he was not such at all? Or, to take other passages already referred to; did James mean merely that if a man would be a friend of the world, he would make himself *appear* to be the enemy of God, be so *regarded* and *treated*, when he was not such in reality? Does Peter mean that they, in whom certain Christian virtues should abound, would put themselves into the category of the fruitful ones, while they would really be barren and unfruitful?

Manifestly neither the negative nor the positive part of the assertion of Dr. Hodge can stand. The meaning which he says *καθίστημι* never has in the New Testament, it often does have; while the meaning which he says it always has, it never has.

Dr. Forbes interprets *ἀμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν* consistently with the meaning given to *ἀμαρτία* and *ἡμαρτον*. "By one offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation," "For," or because (*γάρ*) "by the disobedience of one man many were *made sinners*," i.e. were made partakers of his sinfulness; inherited from him a nature which sin had invaded and made inherently corrupt.

Having thus examined our author's interpretation of this passage, so far as it bears on the question of the relation of Adam to his posterity, we are prepared to state and estimate his theological position on this subject. He holds as follows: (1.) In consequence of Adam's transgression, his nature became corrupt and sinful, and he was subject to death. (2.) This sinfulness, or corruption of nature, is entailed upon the race, not by a judicial sentence, and as a penal infliction upon the guiltless, but by "a necessity of nature" — "that which is born of the flesh being necessarily flesh — the branches necessarily partaking of the corruption of the stem." (3.) Condemnation, or death, on account of Adam's imputed sin, came upon the race simultaneously with corruption of nature; "the branches, by sharing in the sinfulness of the stem, necessarily and justly sharing in the sentence pronounced against it." (4.) The condemnation of the race to death, "though it be through Adam's transgression, is not a merely arbitrary sentence, but receives its full vindication, from the existence in each individual of corruption and sin."

Are these views self-consistent? and, wherein do they agree with, and wherein differ from, the views held by that class of theologians represented by Dr. Hodge? That they are not, throughout, self-consistent is evident from the fact that the condemnation, or death of the race, is ascribed both to the transgression of Adam and to their own inherited sinfulness. It is repeatedly said that sin and death are both the result of Adam's transgression, and came upon the race *simultaneously*; and yet, the inherited sin of the race is said to be the "cause leading to God's judicial sentence of death." But how, of two things proceeding simultaneously from a common cause, can one be the cause of the other? If inherited sin leads God to inflict death on the race, then how can the transgression of Adam be the cause or ground of its infliction? Again, it is said, that sin and death which came upon Adam in consequence of his transgression, making his nature corrupt and mortal, are both conveyed to the race by the transmission of that nature. But that nature is transmitted, not

by a judicial act, but by a natural law, or "a necessity of nature"; how then is death *penal* at all? or, at least, how is it any more penal than is inherited sinfulness? If they are both simultaneous effects of a common cause, it would seem to follow that they are both penal, or neither of them. Again, it is said that the inherited sinfulness of the race is not the judicial ground or reason of their condemnation to death; but is the vindication or justification of their condemnation. This is a point upon which Dr. Forbes lays great stress. It is the most marked peculiarity of his views on this subject; and is put forward with great confidence, and with great variety of statement. God condemns men for Adam's sin; not because they inherit a sinful nature from him, but their inherited sinfulness fully vindicates his condemnation of them! Condemned for one sin they never committed, and their condemnation justified by the existence of another sin, which came upon them, not by their own free choice, but by "a necessity of nature"! We cannot understand either the logic or morals of such a statement; nor can we suppress our surprise that a man of Dr. Forbes's acumen should deliberately make it, and allow it to stand in type. It is as if we should justify a judge in condemning a man for a murder committed by his father, on the ground that the man is a thief; or, to make the cases more nearly parallel, on the ground that the man inherits an avaricious disposition from his father! It is a principle of jurisprudence, and of common sense, that a penalty can find its vindication only in the offence for which it was inflicted. If we are condemned for the one offence of Adam, then that offence, and nothing else, is the vindication of the sentence; but, if we are condemned for our own sinfulness, then our own sinfulness, and nothing else, is the vindication of the sentence.

Dr. Forbes professes not to discard the common doctrine of imputation, but only to reject that interpretation of Rom. v. 12-21, which many have regarded as the main support of that doctrine. He observes: "We scarcely need say that it is not to the doctrine of imputation in itself that we object."

“It seems strange and illogical that this doctrine should ever have been questioned by those who admit that it is for Adam’s sin that his race is condemned.” “To say that a man is condemned, presupposes that guilt has been imputed to him.” “Now” (according to the connection of ideas so familiar to St. Paul) ‘in Adam all die’ — infants die. But ‘death is the wages of sin.’ Whose sin? Not their own, for infants are incapable of personal sin. They are condemned to death therefore for Adam’s sin. In other, and equivalent terms, *The guilt of Adam’s sin has been imputed to them.*”

We are surprised at two things in this statement: First, that Dr. Forbes should limit the word “death,” as the wages or penalty of sin, to physical death. Infants do *not* die in the sense which the apostle gives the word in the expression quoted from him. Secondly, that he should affirm that “infants are incapable of personal sin,” when elsewhere he says, “By natural birth *sin* is an essential part of our nature, so that however unseen and undeveloped in unconscious childhood, the moment we come to act for ourselves its existence and pernicious influence become manifest.” Again: “Through Adam they were ‘*made sinners*,’ and, ‘that which is born of the flesh being flesh,’ and necessarily corrupt, were *justly* punished. Like branches that spring from a corrupt root or stem, they share with it in its corruption, and consequently in its sentence of extermination.”

Evidently Dr. Forbes does not hold such a doctrine of imputation as the Princeton divines hold. According to Dr. Hodge, Adam was the federal head and legal representative of the race, so that his act of transgression was putatively their act; that is, it was the judicial ground or reason why death passed on all men; and death includes “all penal evil — death, spiritual and eternal, as well as the dissolution of the body. His sin being regarded as their sin, that is, as belonging to them as well as to him, the same penalty is due to them as to him; and as he lost the favor of God, and became inherently corrupt and mortal, so they begin exist-

ence subject to the same terrible evil — loss of the divine favor, inherent corruption and physical death — to issue, as with him, so with them, unless grace intervene, in eternal death.

Dr. Forbes's idea of Adam's representative character differs from that of Dr. Hodge. He regards Adam as a *typical* rather than a *legal* representative of the race. We see human nature — our nature — acting in him. Had we been in his place, we should not have acted differently. "What Adam did, therefore, each can with truth feel and say, I did. His sin was my sin. When Adam fell, I fell. I can take the guilt and shame of Adam's fall to myself, as being the fall of our common nature." "His transgression and our participation in its results, sin and death, are but an *anticipation* of what we should have brought upon ourselves." That is, Adam represented us in this sense, that, had we been in his place, we should have done precisely as he did. Therefore, we are regarded as having had our trial in Adam, and as having fallen and incurred the sentence of death. We are condemned; not because he sinned, but because we in his place should have sinned; not because he was our legal representative, we coming under all the penal obligations which he incurred; but because he was our natural or typical representative, showing how we should have acted had we been placed in the same circumstances.

Again, Dr. Forbes excludes from the penalty, or death inflicted on the race in consequence of Adam's transgression, "inherited corruption." Sin and death come upon all men through Adam; the latter as a "judicial infliction," the former by a "necessity of nature." To suppose sin, or "inherent depravity," to be entailed as a judicial infliction for Adam's sin would, he thinks, "make God the direct author of sin," and would represent him as acting in an "arbitrary manner, condemning men to the most dreadful of all evils while yet innocent."

An advocate of the old doctrine of imputation would doubtless say, that when you have stricken out the idea that

Adam is our "legal representative," and also the idea that "inherent depravity" is penal, there is but little of the doctrine left; and he would naturally be disposed to ask: "How is God any more the author of sin, on the theory that inherent depravity comes upon the race as a 'judicial infliction,' than he is on the theory that it comes by 'a necessity of nature,' or by a 'natural law which God has established'?" And how is it any more 'arbitrary' to condemn men, for the sin of Adam, to the most dreadful of all evils, than it is to oblige them, on account of Adam's sin, to begin existence with a sinful nature, which is certainly one of the most dreadful of all evils?"

III. THE RELATION OF CHRIST TO BELIEVERS.

Adam is a "type" of Christ. As all the evils which come upon the race are traceable to the former, so deliverance from these evils and the bestowal of all blessings are traceable to the latter; and as sin is the principal evil derived from Adam, so deliverance from sin, or righteousness, is the principal blessing derived from Christ; and as by "sin" the apostle in this passage means not merely imputed, but also imparted sin, so by "righteousness" he means not merely imputed, but also imparted righteousness, or sanctification. This, as Dr. Forbes shows in indicating the general scope of the passage, is the point which the apostle had reached in the course of his argument. Having proved that the provisions of the gospel are for *all*, designed to meet the universal sinfulness of men, and having proved that they are conditioned on *faith* in Christ, not on works of the law; the justification of sinners being wholly and of necessity a matter of grace, he reaches in chap. v. the main reason why he is not ashamed of the gospel; viz. it is the power of God to save men from *sin* — the sin which, entering the world through Adam, extended to the whole race. Justification is incidentally treated as being inseparably connected with sanctification; just as death is represented as being inseparably connected with sin. But the two leading thoughts of the

passage are *sin* and *righteousness*; sin communicated by Adam; righteousness communicated by Christ; death communicated simultaneously with sin, but in logical sequence following it; justification communicated simultaneously with righteousness, but in logical sequence preceding it. This, Dr. Forbes thinks, is clearly the meaning of vs. 18, 19, where the comparison between Adam and Christ, begun in vs. 12, is taken up and completed. Regarding the particle *γάρ*, *for*, as confirmative rather than causative, and as connecting each of the two clauses of vs. 18 with each of the two clauses of vs. 19.

As the declaration (vs. 18): "By one offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation," finds its vindication in the statement (vs. 19): "By the disobedience of one man many were *made sinners*"; in like manner the declaration (vs. 18): "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," finds its vindication in the statement (vs. 19): "By the obedience of one the many shall be *made righteous*"; and the expression *made righteous* means, not "regarded and treated as righteous," but made inherently righteous, just as the expression *made sinners* means, not "regarded and treated as sinners," but made inherently sinful. As through our connection with Adam sin becomes, by natural birth, a part of our nature, so through our connection with Christ righteousness becomes, by spiritual birth, a part of our nature. The sin derived from Adam may at first be undeveloped, but is sure to manifest itself and become all-pervading as our faculties unfold; so the righteousness derived from Christ is, at first, only an imperceptible germ, but it is sure to expand in due and orderly development; "first the blade, then the ear, and finally the full corn in the ear."

This righteousness of believers is not the judicial cause or ground, although it is the vindication of their justification. Men are not justified because they are righteous, but they are righteous because they are justified; yet their justification and righteousness come through Christ simultaneously

as to time. The imputation of Christ's righteousness, or justification, is not a mere outward and arbitrary forensic act, which has no immediate corresponding reality. "In justification God's word and act are simultaneous. While he declares the sinner righteous for the sake alone of Christ's all-perfect righteousness, he, at the same time, makes a complete change upon the heart, and turns it from the love of sin to the love of holiness." "Justification, we maintain, *involves* and *suggests* the idea of a change not of state alone, but of character also. If God justifies a man — δικαιωῶ, pronounces him righteous — he is, and must be, what God calls him, δικαίος, righteous." "God's judgment as well as that of an earthly judge must be according to truth. Since it cannot, like the sentence of the latter, be true *retrospectively*, it must be true *prospectively*. In justification God pronounces not what *was*, but what *is to be*. His word is creative. He justifies, and the man is just, in the eye of that God who sees the end from the beginning. He declares him righteous, and immediately he becomes righteous; not in word only, but by a mighty change that has passed upon him, involving, as the germ does the blossom and seed, his full and final sanctification."

That we may be sure of doing justice to Dr. Forbes's view on this subject we quote his summary of the meaning of the entire passage: "What the apostle teaches is, that *all the evil* (the moral element, sin, and the judicial element, death), originates with, and comes through the man, simultaneously as to time; and that *all the good* (the judicial element, justification of life, and the moral element, righteousness unto sanctification), originates with and comes through Christ simultaneously as to time; but that in logical sequence, on the contrary, in the case of man, the *moral* element (sin, which is all his own) comes first, and the judicial element (death, in which God has his part), comes second, as the consequence; whereas in the case of Christ the *judicial* element (justification of life) comes first, as the cause, and the moral element (righteousness unto sanctification) comes second, as the consequence."

And now we are disposed to ask the same questions in regard to Dr. Forbes's views of the imputation of Christ's righteousness that we asked in regard to his views of the imputation of Adam's sin, as developed from this passage. Are they self-consistent? How far do they agree with the doctrine of imputation held by the Princeton divines?

Dr. Forbes attributes both the justification and sanctification of believers to the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, as their common cause or source; and yet he speaks of justification as the "cause" of sanctification. But if two streams flow simultaneously from a common fountain, how can one be the cause or consequence of the other?

Again, he says: "When God justifies a man, or pronounces a man righteous, the man must be what God pronounces him; that is, must be righteous, and yet it is the *ungodly* whom God justifies." Can a man be ungodly and righteous at the same instant? If God justifies the ungodly and his justifying act changes the ungodly man into a righteous man, then his righteousness is subsequent to, and not simultaneous with, the justifying act.

Again: Dr. Forbes holds that this imparted righteousness is the vindication of the divine procedure in justifying men on the ground of Christ's imputed righteousness. But if the imputed righteousness of Christ is a good and sufficient reason with God why he should justify men, then his justifying act needs no other vindication. But if it does need some other vindication, and if the imparted righteousness of believers is that vindication, then is that righteousness in part, or in whole, the ground or reason of their justification, and they are not justified by the righteousness of Christ alone imputed to them. The real question is: Why God justifies and sanctifies men; or, why he justifies men, thereby insuring their sanctification? And the answer must be found, not in the sanctification, which is a part of the bestowed blessing, but in the righteousness of Christ, or in the infinite grace of God, which could consistently, in view of the righteousness of Christ, *save*, i.e. justify and sanctify, believers.

Again: in justification, according to Dr. Forbes, God's judgment does not, after all, answer to the reality. He pronounces the believer righteous *now*; and yet his righteousness is almost wholly *prospective*. If the two things are to agree, so that the one shall vindicate the truth and justice of the other, then must the justification be just as *prospective* as the righteousness; and the righteousness must be just as immediate and complete as the justification.

How far does Dr. Forbes agree with Dr. Hodge in regard to the imputation of Christ's righteousness? He says: "Believers in Christ are justified, or pronounced righteous; that is, righteousness is imputed to them. Whose righteousness? Not their own; for that cannot justify, being imperfect. It is, therefore, *Christ's righteousness that is imputed to them.*" Dr. Hodge says: "In justification, according to Paul's language, God imputes righteousness to the ungodly. This righteousness is not their own; but they are regarded and treated as righteous on account of the obedience of Christ. That is, his righteousness is so laid to their account, or imputed to them, that they are regarded and treated as if it were their own, or as if they had kept the law."¹

These statements of the two divines seem to be identical in meaning. Believers are justified solely on account of Christ's righteousness imputed to them; and not at all on account of their own inherent righteousness. But in other statements a diversity of views becomes apparent. Dr. Forbes says: "Justification *involves* and *suggests* the idea of a change not of state alone, but of character also." Dr. Hodge says: "Imputation does not alter the moral character. . . . Neither does it imply that his (Christ's) righteousness becomes personally and inherently ours; or that his moral excellence is in any way transferred from him to believers."² Dr. Forbes attributes to the very act of justification an efficacy which insures the sanctification of believers, making them what they are declared to be, *righteous*. Dr. Hodge does not deny, but would readily admit, that all

¹ Commentary on Romans, p. 287.

² *Ibid.* pp. 279, 280.

who are justified are gradually sanctified, and made inherently righteous; he would not, however, make their justification either the cause or vindication of their sanctification, but would refer both to the grace of God, which on account of the righteousness of Christ is bestowed upon believers.

According to Dr. Forbes, unless the idea of sanctification is involved in justification, the veracity of God is impeached. If he declares men righteous, the declaration is false, unless it makes them inherently and potentially righteous. To this Dr. Hodge replies, that, although the believer be personally most unrighteous, "God's judgment in pronouncing him righteous is none the less according to truth. He does not pronounce the sinner subjectively righteous, which he is not, but forensically righteous, which he is, because Christ has satisfied the demands of justice in his behalf."¹ Dr. Forbes thinks there is little comfort and joy in the doctrine of justification "so long as it is conceived that by a mere forensic act alone, and legal fiction, Christ's righteousness is imputed to the penitent, without any real change immediately and necessarily passing on the believer himself." "Only, then, when the believer comes to the full apprehension of the truth, that, as really and truly as by natural birth, sin is an essential part of our nature, even so by the spiritual birth and vital union with Christ, righteousness becomes an inherent part of the believer's nature, will he experience the full joy and peace in believing which this blessed truth is fitted to impart." This statement implies that Dr. Forbes attaches more importance to the *moral* than to the judicial element in salvation. A justification, except it be viewed as involving or insuring sanctification, he deems of little practical value. The Princeton divines, and men of that school, lay the stress upon the *judicial* element. Deliverance from condemnation, legal justification, is by them put first and foremost, and dwelt upon as the principal thing. Dr. Forbes, on the contrary, as he believes sin to be the chief evil brought upon the race, so he believes deliverance from sin, or sanc-

¹ Commentary on Romans, p. 288.

tification, to be the one thing needful. Justification, or deliverance from death, he admits, is first in logical order, whereas its inseparable attendant or consequence, personal righteousness or deliverance from sin, is first in importance. The difference between him and Dr. Hodge in regard to this branch of the doctrine of imputation seems to be a difference, not as to the nature or ground of justification, but as to its connection with sanctification, and the relative importance of the two.

In his exegesis of the passage under consideration, he is undoubtedly right in so far as he makes the leading thought to be, not *imputed*, but *imparted*, righteousness through Christ; salvation from sin, as well as from death, resulting from sin. And he has rendered an important service to theology and practical religion by showing so clearly that it is upon salvation from *sin* that the apostle lays the chief stress. As sin is a greater evil than punishment, so deliverance from sin is a greater blessing than deliverance from punishment. The salvation we need is inward and spiritual, more than outward and forensic. To be pronounced righteous before the law would avail little without being righteous in character.

Dr. Forbes evidently feels the difficulties which attend the old doctrine of imputation, but is, at best, only partially successful in removing them. A sounder philosophy of the nature of sin would, we think, make him a better exegete and a more consistent theologian. It can hardly be otherwise than that a man should have an unmanageable element in his theology who believes that sin is something which can be inherited precisely as are physical qualities, becoming by natural birth "an essential part of our nature."

There are many things in Dr. Forbes's Commentary which indicate a mind feeling for the way that leads from Scottish theology to New England theology, which was opened by President Edwards. In some respects his theological status seems to resemble that of President Edwards when he was so earnestly laboring to develop a "consistent Calvinism."

He retains the old terminology, but cannot retain, unmodified, the old doctrine. He is a thorough Calvinist, but is not yet, according to the New England standard, a "consistent Calvinist."

We have not attempted to show how he has employed parallelism to reach his exegetical conclusions. Indeed, allowing that his theory of parallelism is true, and is exemplified in this Epistle, we can but think that he greatly overestimates the advantages which, as a commentator, he derives from it. His fine power of analysis renders any such aid needless; and results which he credits to the principles of parallelism, we can but think are due to his own logical and philological skill.

ARTICLE VII.

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION.

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NO. VII.

ANTECEDENTS OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY.

FROM the great central truth of our Lord's supernatural manifestation, we legitimately infer, as has been shown in a previous number, the probability of *subsequent* supernatural revelations, such as those recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and everywhere implied in the apostolic Epistles. With even greater certainty may we infer the existence of *antecedent, preparatory* revelations. Consider, for a moment, how much is implied in the great historic fact that the Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world, and that he certified to men his heavenly mission, as well by the supernatural character of his teaching as by the stupendous series of supernatural works which he performed. It establishes at once the fundamental principle that supernatural interposition enters into the plan of the divine