

not by faith. A preacher may be a servant of Christ, even if his body be shattered by disease, and a discourse may be in the main a good one even if it be composed in defiance of the laws of grammar. The speech of a converted savage derives a certain kind of charm from its expression of sublime thought in an uncultivated style, just as a flower receives a new attraction by its contrast with the mire out of which it grows. Still the tendency of a pious heart is to favor the observance of philosophical rules. These rules, being adapted to the human constitution, are prescribed by God, and hence their observance both aids the spirit of piety and receives aid from it.¹

ARTICLE VI.

REPLY TO DR. FISKE ON ROM. V. 12-21.

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THE new sphere of duty to which I was suddenly called in November of last year, and which required my undivided attention to the work of the College Session, prevented my giving any reply immediately to the Review of my Commentary on the Romans, with which Dr. Fiske favored me in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for October, 1870. To an author desirous only of attaining to the truth, the objections of one who has given so much attention to the subject as Dr. Fiske are far more valuable, and even acceptable, than the indiscriminating general commendations with which the Commentary has met in most of the reviews of it which I have seen. I feel not more indebted to Dr. Fiske for the confirmation he affords me of the correctness of my conclusions on those points in which he agrees with me in opposition to

¹ This Article will be followed by others, on the Reading of Sermons, and the Practice of preaching Memoriter and Extempore.

Dr. Hodge, than for the objections which he states to others in which he differs from me. Such objections enable an author to correct his statements, if erroneous; or, if correct in the main, to remove the difficulties that stand in the way of the general acceptance of his argument by others.

I feel the more anxious to reply to the objections of Dr. Fiske, because they appear to me to furnish a good example of what I have stated to be the prevailing defect in our theological speculations, and which leads to so much misunderstanding and unnecessary controversy among Christians — the habit, I mean, of overlooking the “many-sidedness” of scripture, and, in forgetfulness that every object, like the shield in the fable, has at least two sides, examining but one side of the truth, and concluding that that which has specially attracted our own attention is the only one, to the exclusion of every other.

Dr. Fiske charges me with inconsistency, because I do not adhere invariably to the same point of view, but look sometimes to the more immediate cause, sometimes to the more remote. Thus, for example, he says: “That his [Dr. Forbes’s] views are not throughout self-consistent is evident from the fact that the condemnation or death of the [human] race is ascribed both to the transgression of Adam, and to their own inherited sinfulness.” But where is the evident inconsistency here? Having traced a phenomenon to its proximate cause, are we thereby precluded from going one step further back in the series of causes and effects? Having traced the death of a man found murdered in a wood to a bullet which had pierced his head, is it inconsistent to inquire further, and to endeavor to discover the hand that pointed and discharged the gun? Suppose a gardener to find that the water from his watering-pan kills his plants, is there any inconsistency in his inquiring whether its noxious qualities are traceable to the watering-pan alone, or to the cistern from whence the water was originally drawn? We have a striking instance in the Old Testament, where one and the same act is ascribed to God as the permissive Author,

and to Satan as the more immediate agent. In 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, we read: "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and *he* moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah"; whereas, in 1 Chron. xxi. 1, it is said: "And *Satan* stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." God's purpose was to humble and correct David and Israel, who, flushed with a long series of victories, began to think that their own arm had got them all this might, and in their "prosperity to say, I shall never be moved" (Ps. xxx. 6); and he found, as in the case of Job, a ready instrument to effect his benevolent ends in the malignant agency of Satan.

Dr. Fiske continues: "It is repeatedly said [by Dr. Forbes] that sin and death are both the result of Adam's transgression, and come 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 the one be the cause of the other?" Why not? I would beg to ask. Are not the igniting of the gunpowder and the emission of the bullet from the gun simultaneous (proceeding from the same common cause, the drawing of the trigger), and yet the former the cause of the latter? Or (since every succession in the *material* world involves an interval of space and time, however minute), were not God's command, "Let there be light," and its instantaneous consequence, "And there was light," simultaneous; yet the former the cause of the latter, and both traceable to one and the same Author? I am surprised that Dr. Fiske should have supposed that there was even the semblance of contradiction between the two statements, after I had clearly drawn the distinction (quoted too by himself), that the *simultaneousness* of the entrance into human nature of the two evil principles of sin and death, as of the two blessings of justification and sanctification, referred to *time* (both evils being transmitted together at one and the same moment by natural birth, and both blessings together by spiritual birth); whereas, the consecution of

death upon sin, and of sanctification upon justification, belonged to an altogether different category, and referred to *logical sequence*.

But what I would particularly beg Dr. Fiske to keep in mind is, that what I have attempted is not to uphold any theory of my own with regard to the relation of Adam and of Christ to their respective seeds, but to discover and expound the views of St. Paul on this subject. Now, even on the most cursory glance at the parallel drawn between Adam and Christ, both views which I have stated stand upon the very face of the argument. *All* our evils, here summarized under the two principal, sin and death, are ascribed to Adam as their originating cause or author; as *all* our blessings, righteousness and life, are ascribed to Christ as their author; and at the same time, by Dr. Fiske's own admission, death is referred to sin as its proximate cause — "and death [entered] by sin" just as "the gift of righteousness" [unto sanctification] is said to be "*by the grace*" of "justification of life." Christians are called upon to "glory in God," as their God, with whom they have now "received the reconciliation, on this account," *διὰ τοῦτο*, that all that is Christ's is communicated to them by a union with him as intimate as their previous union with Adam, by which all that was Adam's became theirs. "As by one man [Adam] sin and death entered into the world," so "by one man [Christ] righteousness and life" were brought in. Not sin [*ἀμαρτία*, sinfulness] alone, which affects the whole race, is here assigned to Adam as its author; but (in order that there might be no misunderstanding on the subject) its penalty "death" or "condemnation" is, with remarkable reiteration, again and again ascribed to Adam's first transgression as its cause.

Ver. 15. "Through the *offence* of the one the many *died*."

Ver. 16. "The *judgment* was from one *offence* to *condemnation*."

Ver. 17. "Through one *offence* *death* reigned by the one."

Ver. 18. "Through one *offence* [the issue was] upon all men to *condemnation*."

But, obvious as this ascription to Adam, as the original source, of death as well as of sin is on the very face of the parallel, while yet death is said to be *by* sin, a closer consideration of the points which the apostle had more particularly in view to illustrate and enforce by this parallel will strengthen our conclusion, that he meant to trace death to both its more immediate and more remote causes. These points seem to be principally two :

1. That the blessings of Christ's salvation are altogether gratuitous and unmerited, wholly and solely to be ascribed to him, and not to aught that we do.

2. That the two great blessings (under which he comprehends all) of justification and sanctification are so inseparably connected, that the one cannot be dissociated from the other.

The former of these points led to the apostle's ascription of the evils, and so of the blessings, to one author; the latter, to the noting of the more immediate connection of the one evil with the other, in order to enforce the similar connection of the one blessing with the other, as cause and effect.

1. The zealots for Moses' law objected that to make the blessings of justification and sanctification gratuitous and wholly unmerited,—gifts to be received from Christ, and not awards arising from anything that we ourselves do,—was derogatory to God's perfections, and subversive of morality as encouraging to continuance in sin. To answer this objection, the apostle reminds his readers that this was in accordance with what God had done from the first, and refers them to his still more remarkable procedure in involving in sin and condemning the whole race of Adam, not for what they themselves had done, but for what their one representative, Adam, had done. The words with which the parallel begins — "As through one man," δι' ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου — are intended to apply to all the expressions which follow,

and include death, as well as sin, as consequences of Adam's transgression :

As THROUGH ONE MAN

Sin entered into the world,

And Death by sin,

And so Death passed upon all men,

For that all sinned [through one man].

Restrict our indebtedness to Adam to sin alone, as Dr. Fiske would do, while the death is to be ascribed not to him, but to the sin that is within us (= mediate imputation), and the first great object of St. Paul's parallel is nullified. Sanctification we owe no longer to Christ, but only our justification. Sanctification is connected with justification, like death with sin, as effect and cause; but if this causal connection renders it inconsistent to ascribe our death and condemnation to Adam as the originating author, it must be equally inconsistent to ascribe our sanctification to Christ as its author.

But 2. In order to repel still more effectually the objection that justification by the free grace of Christ alone would encourage to sin, instead of leading to sanctification, the apostle remarks that there is a still more immediate connection, as between sin and death, so between justification and sanctification, than that each of the connected pairs is derived from the same originating author. They are connected together as cause and effect, and therefore inseparable (except in thought). Sin must be followed by death, and so justification by sanctification. We cannot partake of sin, and yet escape its inevitable penalty, death. In like manner, we deceive ourselves in supposing that we have attained to justification, if its invariable attendant, sanctification, produces no change on the heart and life. The two are linked together indissolubly. Subjectively, the faith that appropriates and relies upon God's justifying mercy and love must call forth that corresponding love towards him which is "the fulfilling of the law" and true righteousness. Objectively, God's word must be followed by God's

deed. God's justifying, or *declaring* the believer righteous, is as necessarily followed by his sanctifying, or *making* him righteous, as his creative word, "Let there be light," was followed by its effect, "And there was light," or Christ's declaring to the leper, "I will; be thou clean," involved the consequence that he was made clean. This is the true connection, for the first time, I believe, pointed out in my Commentary, between verses 18 and 19 of Rom. v., as expressed by the *confirmative* term "FOR," in verse 19.

Ver. 18. By one act of righteousness

[The issue was] to all men unto justification of life.

Why? How declared righteous, when not righteous?—when the righteousness is that of another—not theirs in deed, but only in word? The answer is:

Ver. 19. FOR by the obedience of the one

The many shall be made righteous.

God cannot say a thing, and not do it. When he pronounces a man righteous, if not instantly made perfectly righteous, yet he is so in the sight of him who sees the end from the beginning, who, as the apostle had already explained, in iv. 17 (referring to God's words to Abraham, "I *have made* thee a father of many nations," when as yet he had no son) "calletlh those things that be not as though they were." And, as God's *reckoning* the believer dead to sin and alive to righteousness necessarily involves his eventually being made truly dead to the one and alive to the other, so his faith, which appropriates God's justification (or reckoning of him righteous), is called upon to reckon himself as sure of perfect sanctification as if he were already in possession of it: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (vi. 11); and in this confidence of certain victory to carry on steadfastly the arduous conflict.

It is in order to draw attention to this vital connection between justification and sanctification that the apostle is so persistent in pointing to the like invariable connection

between the two evils introduced by Adam of sin and death, summed up finally in

Ver. 18. By one offence

[The issue was] upon all men to condemnation.

If it is asked, Why? How is this? Condemned for the sin of another, and not for our own? The answer is:

Ver. 19. FOR by the disobedience of the one

The many were made sinners.

This I have stated to be in both cases a vindication of God's truthfulness and judicial declarations. Against this statement it is that Dr. Fiske declaims with much vehemence in the case of our participation in Adam's condemnation, though not a word is said against our participation in the justification flowing from Christ's righteousness, notwithstanding that both cases must stand or fall together. "What!" he exclaims, "men 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."

The statement I have shown to be not mine, but the plain meaning of St. Paul's words; or else let Dr. Fiske say, as to the first point, what other meaning he can possibly put upon St. Paul's reiterated assertions, that it is for Adam's "one offence" that condemnation to death comes upon all; and, as to the second point, let him show what other connection, indicated by the "FOR" of vs. 19, subsists between vs. 18 and 19, since he justly repudiates the signification attempted to be put upon καθίστημι, by Dr. Hodge, and will not of course adopt the Romish interpretation, viz. "vs. 18= we are justified, because [FOR], vs. 19, we are sanctified."

Dr. Fiske continues, "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!"

Here we come, in Dr. Fiske's appeal to the principles of [*human*] *jurisprudence*, to the true source of all his difficulties and fallacious reasonings, and of his plausible objections founded on his own misapprehension—in his supposing that he, or I, or any one else can, on the principles of *human jurisprudence* offer a full justification of God's proceedings in either of the judicial sentences here referred to, or that St. Paul was attempting anything of the kind. On what principle of human jurisprudence shall we explain God's "justifying the *ungodly*," i.e. pronouncing *righteous* those who avowedly and by their own confession are *unrighteous*? It is to repel the obvious objection to his doctrine on this score, that the apostle appeals to the case, equally inexplicable on any principle of human jurisprudence, of God's involving the whole human race in condemnation for the transgression of their first parent. Had God's proceeding in this latter instance not involved something fully as strange and anomalous as God's justifying the ungodly, the parallel would not have been in point.

But—"condemned for a sin they never committed,"—urges Dr. Fiske. A king may of his mere clemency remit a penalty without reason assigned, but never judicially inflict one on the innocent.

We must not presume (we would reply) to limit God to the same standard which is prescribed for us. Are his dealings with the creatures of his hands, of that God who sees the end from the beginning, to be judged of in all respects by the same rules as must regulate the dealings of short-sighted mortals one with another? The full explanation of God's holding all men condemned from the moment they begin life, the apostle does not touch, as being far beyond the limits of our understanding to comprehend,—

and a difficulty not to be escaped by those who, as apparently Dr. Fiske would do, think they have explained the mystery by attributing the condemnation of each not to Adam, but to the sin which commences with the earliest dawn of personal responsibility in each individual. The *fact* is, the constitution of our nature is such, and the circumstances in which we are placed, that no mere man ever yet was found, nay, we can with certainty affirm, ever will be found, who "liveth and sinneth not." Now what *human* parent would dare to expose his children to such irresistible temptation and certainty of pollution? And, if we were to presume to judge of God by man's standard, it is as inexplicable and as hard to justify God's placing all men in circumstances such that they will with moral certainty transgress and bring upon themselves death, as that God should take the first man as a representative of all and start his posterity as it were a stage in advance, already partakers of condemnation and sin which they have to confess, but with an Almighty Saviour revealed to them, and every means, for their overcoming sin and attaining finally to salvation, provided for them, which they merely have submissively and gratefully to receive and improve.

The justification then, I repeat, of God's procedure in holding all men as condemned, not for what they themselves have done, but for Adam's offence, St. Paul does not attempt (leaving it to God in a future world to clear up this mystery), but takes the fact merely as he finds it, and employs it to illustrate, and to commend to the acceptance specially of the Jewish zealots for the law, the analogous proceeding of God's justifying believers not for what they themselves have done, but solely on the ground of Christ's merits.

But though it is not given us here below to attain to a full understanding of all the ways of God, is it no satisfaction — no "*vindication*" of the truthfulness and propriety of God's sentence — to be permitted to see that we are not condemned without being at the same time sinful? Nay, is it not some explanation of God's treatment of us, that it is

in accordance with a general "law of nature"? We consider that we have sufficiently explained the fall of an apple, or the maintenance of the earth in its orbit, if we refer them to the general law of gravitation, though we know nothing of the cause of gravitation itself. Now it is a general law established by God that "like produces like," and that the offspring partakes in the qualities and fortunes of the parent. Suppose then a vine to have become corrupt, and its fruit corrupt, and that the owner of the vineyard gave command to extirpate not only the parent tree, but every slip taken from it. Should the gardener remonstrate, "Why condemn all for the sake of one, before they have time to show what their fruit would be?" Would it be no *vindication* to reply, "All partake of the taint of the parent stem, and are therefore properly condemned?"

Or, to take the case of human beings. Suppose it were a fact, as universal as the inherited corruption of all Adam's posterity, that in a community of Thugs every child had invariably and without exception turned out a murderer, would not the government be sufficiently justified in (what our government, without such *universal* experience, virtually did) sentencing all, *children* as well as parents, to be consigned to a penal colony and reformatory discipline in which every possible means would be employed for their amelioration, with the final condemnation of utter extermination awaiting all, who, after every means of reformation had been exhausted, failed to give any satisfactory proofs of amendment?

Dr. Fiske, however, can see no distinction between Dr. Hodge's view which represents God on account of Adam's transgression as adjudging *sin* as a *penal infliction* on all his posterity while yet guiltless — "before even the existence of inherent depravity in them" (which to me appeared to make God the *direct author of sin*) — and the view which I have propounded, that St. Paul represents it as some *vindication* of the condemnation passed by God on all Adam's posterity, that "by a necessity of nature" (that which is born of flesh

being flesh) they partake of his sinfulness and therefore of his condemnation. "How," he asks, "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 [sin], 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?"

To make clear the distinction between Dr. Hodge's view and mine, let us change slightly our illustration. An eastern monarch in the course of visiting his dominions, having some meat placed before him which was found to be diseased and poisonous, issued an order commanding the whole flocks of the district to be killed. The first account propagated of this proceeding represented the monarch as acting in a most arbitrary manner, condemning all the undeserving flocks "before the existence of any inherent corruption in them;" and though, indeed, on examination they were found to be diseased, yet this very disease, it appeared, had been caused by the king himself, who was possessed of a mysterious power, pronouncing a curse upon them all, and with malignant eye casting such a blight upon them, that all became corrupted and their flesh poisonous — the king himself being thus the real and direct author of the distemper. Widely different, however, was the estimation formed by his subjects both of the proceeding and of the character of the king, when they learned that the flocks were all the offspring of one original pair of diseased sheep that had been imported into the district, and that by no special influence of the monarch, but according to a "general law" and "necessity of nature" the descendants inherited the disease of the parents. The king's condemnatory sentence, passed upon all the flocks, was at once vindicated in their eyes, and, instead of appearing a mere wanton exercise of authority, seemed

to be necessarily called for by the circumstances, and a benevolent means calculated to check as far as possible the wider spread of the malady.

The other minor charges of inconsistency alleged by Dr. Fiske are of a similar character, and admit of a similar reply. I must confess that the examination of these objections, if I may assume, from the acuteness of Dr. Fiske's mind, that they are among the strongest that can be adduced against my views, has tended rather to strengthen my belief in the general correctness of my interpretation. I could have wished much that Dr. Fiske had indicated more clearly his own solution of the difficulties which surround this perplexing portion of St. Paul's Epistle, instead of confining himself mostly to stating objections to mine. Evidently he believes that the "New England theology," towards which he considers that I am darkly groping my way, offers such a solution, and leads to a more "consistent Calvinism." He will confer on me a great favor, if he will point me to the work which he thinks best calculated to give me the new light which I require on this subject.