

**The Rev. CHARLES G. FINNEY'S
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY**

1851

**LECTURE XLII.
REGENERATION.**

In the examination of this subject I will--

I. POINT OUT THE COMMON DISTINCTION BETWEEN REGENERATION AND CONVERSION.

II. STATE THE ASSIGNED REASONS FOR THIS DISTINCTION.

III. STATE OBJECTIONS TO THIS DISTINCTION.

IV. SHOW WHAT REGENERATION IS NOT.

V. WHAT IT IS.

VI. ITS UNIVERSAL NECESSITY.

VII. AGENCIES EMPLOYED IN IT.

VIII. INSTRUMENTALITIES EMPLOYED IN IT.

IX. THAT IN REGENERATION THE SUBJECT IS BOTH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE.

X. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN REGENERATION.

XI. PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES OF REGENERATION.

XII. EVIDENCES OF REGENERATION.

I. I am to point out the common distinction between regeneration and conversion.

1. Regeneration is the term used by some theologians to express the divine agency in changing the heart.

2. With them regeneration does not include and imply the activity of the subject, but rather excludes it. These theologians, as will be seen in its place, hold that a change of heart is first effected by the Holy Spirit while the subject is passive, which change lays a foundation for the exercise, by the subject, of repentance, faith, and love.

3. The term conversion with them expresses the activity and turning of the subject, after regeneration is effected by the Holy Spirit. Conversion with them does not include or imply the agency of the Holy Spirit, but expresses only the activity of the subject. With them the Holy Spirit first regenerates or changes the heart, after which the sinner turns or converts himself. So that God and the subject work each in turn. God first changes the heart, and as a consequence, the subject afterwards converts himself or turns to God. Thus the subject is passive in regeneration, but active in conversion.

When we come to the examination of the philosophical theories of regeneration, we shall see that the views of these theologians respecting regeneration result naturally and necessarily from their holding the dogma of constitutional moral depravity, which we have recently examined. Until their views on that subject are corrected, no change can be expected in their views of this subject. I said in a concluding remark, when upon the subject of moral depravity, that erroneous views upon that subject must necessarily materially affect and modify one's views upon most of the questions in practical theology. Let us bear this remark in mind as we proceed, not only in the discussions immediately before us, but also in all our future investigations, that we may duly appreciate the importance of clear and correct views on the subject of practical theology.

II. I am to state the assigned reasons for this distinction.

1. The original term plainly expresses and implies other than the agency of the subject.

2. We need and must adopt a term that will express the Divine agency.

3. Regeneration is expressly ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

4. Conversion, as it implies and expresses the activity and turning of the subject, does not include and imply any Divine agency, and therefore does not imply or express what is intended by regeneration.

5. As two agencies are actually employed in the regeneration and conversion of a sinner, it is necessary to adopt terms that will clearly teach this fact, and clearly distinguish between the agency of God and of the creature.

6. The terms regeneration and conversion aptly express this distinction, and therefore should be theologically employed.

III. *I am to state the objections to this distinction.*

1. The original term *gennao*, with its derivatives, may be rendered, (1.) To beget. (2.) To bear or bring forth. (3.) To be begotten. (4.) To be born, or brought forth.

2. Regeneration is in the Bible the same as the new birth.

3. To be born again is the same thing in the Bible use of the term, as to have a new heart, to be a new creature, to pass from death unto life. In other words, to be born again is to have a new moral character, to become holy. To regenerate is to make holy. To be born of God, no doubt, expresses and includes the Divine agency, but it also includes and expresses that which the Divine agency is employed in effecting, namely, making the sinner holy. Certainly, a sinner is not regenerated whose moral character is unchanged. If he were, how could it be truly said, that whosoever is born of God overcometh the world, doth not commit sin, cannot sin, &c.? If regeneration does not imply and include a change of moral character in the subject, how can regeneration be made the condition of salvation? The fact is, the term regeneration, or the being born of God, is designed to express primarily and principally the thing done, that is, the making of a sinner holy, and expresses also the fact, that God's agency induces the change. Throw out the idea of what is done, that is, the change of moral character in the subject, and he would not be born again, he would not be regenerated, and it could not be truly said, in such a case, that God had regenerated him.

It has been objected, that the term really means and expresses only the Divine agency; and only by way of implication, embraces the idea of a change of moral character and of course of activity in the subject. To this I reply--

(1.) That if it really expresses only the Divine agency, it leaves out of view the thing effected by Divine agency.

(2.) That it really and fully expresses not only the Divine agency, but also that which this agency accomplishes.

(3.) The thing which the agency of God brings about, is a new or spiritual birth, a resurrection from spiritual death, the inducing of a new and holy life. The thing done is the prominent idea expressed or intended by the term.

(4.) The thing done implies the turning or activity of the subject. It is nonsense to affirm that his moral character is changed without any activity or agency of his own. Passive holiness is impossible. Holiness is obedience to the law of God, the law of love, and of course consists in the activity of the creature.

(5.) We have said that regeneration is synonymous in the Bible with a new heart. But sinners are required to make to themselves a new heart, which they could not do, if they were not active in this change. If the work is a work of God, in such a sense, that He must

first regenerate the heart or soul before the agency of the sinner begins, it were absurd and unjust to require him to make to himself a new heart, until he is first regenerated.

Regeneration is ascribed to man in the gospel, which it could not be, if the term were designed to express only the agency of the Holy Spirit. "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."--1 Cor. iv. 15.

(6.) Conversion is spoken of in the Bible as the work of another than the subject of it, and cannot therefore have been designed to express only the activity of the subject of it. (1.) It is ascribed to the word of God.--"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."--Ps. xix. 7. (2.) To man. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."--James v. 19, 20.

(7.) Both conversion and regeneration are sometimes in the Bible ascribed to God, sometimes to man, and sometimes to the subject; which shows clearly that the distinction under examination is arbitrary and theological, rather than biblical.

(8.) The fact is, that both terms imply the simultaneous exercise of both human and Divine agency. The fact that a new heart is the thing done, demonstrates the activity of the subject; and the word regeneration, or the expression "born of the Holy Spirit," asserts the Divine agency. The same is true of conversion, or the turning the sinner to God. God is said to turn him, and he is said to turn himself. God draws him, and he follows. In both alike God and man are both active, and their activity is simultaneous. God works or draws, and the sinner yields or turns, or which is the same thing, changes his heart, or, in other words, is born again. The sinner is dead in trespasses and sins. God calls on him, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. v. 14. God calls; the sinner hears and answers, Here am I. God says, Arise from the dead. The sinner puts forth his activity, and God draws him into life; or rather, God draws, and the sinner comes forth to life.

(9.) The distinction set up is not only not recognized in the Bible, but is plainly of most injurious tendency, for two reasons:--

(i.) It assumes and inculcates a false philosophy of depravity and regeneration.

(ii.) It leads the sinner to wait to be regenerated, before he repents or turns to God. It is of most fatal tendency to represent the sinner as under a necessity of waiting to be passively regenerated, before he gives himself to God.

As the distinction is not only arbitrary, but anti-scriptural and injurious, and inasmuch as it is founded in, and is designed to teach, a philosophy false and pernicious on the subject of depravity and regeneration, I shall drop and discard the distinction; and in our

investigations henceforth, let it be understood, that I use regeneration and conversion as synonymous terms.

IV. *I am to show what regeneration is not.*

It is not a change in the substance of soul or body. If it were, sinners could not be required to effect it. Such a change would not constitute a change of moral character. No such change is needed, as the sinner has all the faculties and natural attributes requisite to render perfect obedience to God. All he needs is to be induced to use these powers and attributes as he ought. The words conversion and regeneration do not imply any change of substance, but only a change of moral state or of moral character. The terms are not used to express a physical, but a moral change. Regeneration does not express or imply the creation of any new faculties or attributes of nature, nor any change whatever in the constitution of body or mind. I shall remark further upon this point when we come to the examination of the philosophical theories of regeneration before alluded to.

V. *What regeneration is.*

It has been said that regeneration and a change of heart are identical. It is important to inquire into the scriptural use of the term heart. The term, like most others, is used in the Bible in various senses. The heart is often spoken of in the Bible, not only as possessing moral character, but as being the source of moral action, or as the fountain from which good and evil actions flow, and of course as constituting the fountain of holiness or of sin, or, in other words still, as comprehending, strictly speaking, the whole of moral character. "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."--Matt. xv. 18, 19. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."--Matt. xii. 34, 35. When the heart is thus represented as possessing moral character, and as the fountain of good and evil, it cannot mean,--

1. The bodily organ that propels the blood.
2. It cannot mean the substance of the soul or mind itself: substance cannot in itself possess moral character.
3. It is not any faculty or natural attribute.
4. It cannot consist in any constitutional taste, relish, or appetite, for these cannot in themselves have moral character.
5. It is not the sensibility or feeling faculty of the mind: for we have seen, that moral character cannot be predicated of it. It is true, and let it be understood, that the term heart is used in the Bible in these senses, but not when the heart is spoken of as the fountain of

moral action. When the heart is represented as possessing moral character, the word cannot be meant to designate any involuntary state of mind. For neither the substance of soul or body, nor any involuntary state of mind can, by any possibility, possess moral character in itself. The very idea of moral character implies, and suggests the idea of, a free action or intention. To deny this, were to deny a first truth.

6. This term heart, when applied to mind, is figurative, and means something in the mind that has some point of resemblance to the bodily organ of that name, and a consideration of the function of the bodily organ will suggest the true idea of the heart of the mind. The heart of the body propels the vital current, and sustains organic life. It is the fountain from which the vital fluid flows, from which either life or death may flow, according to the state of the blood. The mind as well as the body has a heart which, as we have seen, is represented as a fountain, or as an efficient propelling influence, out of which flows good or evil, according as the heart is good or evil. This heart is represented, not only as the source or fountain of good and evil, but as being either good or evil in itself, as constituting the character of man, and not merely as being capable of moral character.

It is also represented as something over which we have control, for which we are responsible, and which, in case it is wicked, we are bound to change on pain of death. Again: the heart, in the sense in which we are considering it, is that, the radical change of which constitutes a radical change of moral character. This is plain from Matthew xii. 34, 35, and xv. 18, 19, already considered.

7. Our own consciousness, then, must inform us that the heart of the mind that possesses these characteristics, can be nothing else than the supreme ultimate intention of the soul. Regeneration is represented in the Bible as constituting a radical change of character, as the resurrection from a death in sin, as the beginning of a new and spiritual life, as constituting a new creature, as a new creation, not a physical, but a moral or spiritual creation, as conversion, or turning to God, as giving God the heart, as loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. Now we have seen abundantly, that moral character belongs to, or is an attribute of, the ultimate choice or intention of the soul.

Regeneration then is a radical change of the ultimate intention, and, of course, of the end or object of life. We have seen, that the choice of an end is efficient in producing executive volitions, or the use of means to obtain its end. A selfish ultimate choice is, therefore, a wicked heart, out of which flows every evil; and a benevolent ultimate choice is a good heart, out of which flows every good and commendable deed.

Regeneration, to have the characteristics ascribed to it in the Bible, must consist in a change in the attitude of the will, or a change in its ultimate choice, intention, or preference; a change from selfishness to benevolence; from choosing self-gratification as the supreme and ultimate end of life to the supreme and ultimate choice of the highest well-being of God and of the universe; from a state of entire consecration to self-interest, self-indulgence, self-gratification for its own sake or as an end, and as the supreme end of

life, to a state of entire consecration to God, and to the interests of his kingdom as the supreme and ultimate end of life.

VI. *The universal necessity of regeneration.*

1. The necessity of regeneration as a condition of salvation must be co-extensive with moral depravity. This has been shown to be universal among the unregenerate moral agents of our race. It surely is impossible, that a world or a universe of unholy or selfish beings should be happy. It is impossible that heaven should be made up of selfish beings. It is intuitively certain, that without benevolence or holiness no moral being can be ultimately happy. Without regeneration, a selfish soul can by no possibility be fitted either for the employments, or for the enjoyments, of heaven.

2. The scriptures expressly teach the universal necessity of regeneration. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."--John iii. 3. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."--Gal. vi. 15.

VII. *Agencies employed in regeneration.*

1. The scriptures often ascribe regeneration to the Spirit of God. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."--John iii. 5, 6. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."--John i. 15.

2. We have seen that the subject is active in regeneration, that regeneration consists in the sinner changing his ultimate choice, intention, preference; or in changing from selfishness to love or benevolence; or, in other words, in turning from the supreme choice of self-gratification, to the supreme love of God and the equal love of his neighbour. Of course the subject of regeneration must be an agent in the work.

3. There are generally other agents, one or more human beings concerned in persuading the sinner to turn. The Bible recognizes both the subject and the preacher as agents in the work. Thus Paul says: "I have begotten you through the gospel." Here the same word is used which is used in another case, where regeneration is ascribed to God.

Again: an apostle says, "Ye have purified your souls by obeying the truth." Here the work is ascribed to the subject. There are then always two, and generally more than two agents employed in effecting the work. Several theologians have held that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit alone. In proof of this they cite those passages that ascribe it to God. But I might just as lawfully insist that it is the work of man alone, and quote those passages that ascribe it to man, to substantiate my position. Or I might assert that it is alone the work of the subject, and in proof of this position quote those passages that ascribe it to the subject. Or again, I might assert that it is effected by the truth alone, and quote such passages as the following to substantiate my position: "Of his own will begat

He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."-- James i. 18. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."--1 Peter i. 23. The fact is, when Dr. Woods and others insist that regeneration is the work, or a work of God, they tell the truth, but not the whole truth. For it is also the work of man and of the subject. Their course is precisely like that of the Unitarian, who when he would prove that Christ is not God, merely proves that he was a man. Now we admit that he was a man, but we hold that he is more, that he is also God. Just so we hold that God is active in promoting regeneration, and we hold also that the subject always and necessarily is active in the work, and that generally some other human agency is employed in the work, in presenting and urging the claims of God.

It has been common to regard the third person as a mere instrument in the work. But the fact is, he is a willing, designing, responsible agent, as really so as God or the subject is.

If it be inquired how the Bible can consistently ascribe regeneration at one time to God, at another to the subject, at another to the truth, at another to a third person; the answer is to be sought in the nature of the work. The work accomplished is a change of choice, in respect to an end or the end of life. The sinner whose choice is changed, must of course act. The end to be chosen must be clearly and forcibly presented: this is the work of the third person, and of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them to the soul. The truth is employed, or it is truth which must necessarily be employed, as an instrument to induce a change of choice. See this illustrated in Sermons on Important Subjects, Sermon I. on Regeneration.

VIII. *Instrumentalities employed in the work.*

1. Truth. This must, from the nature of regeneration, be employed in effecting it, for regeneration is nothing else than the will being duly influenced by truth.

2. There may be, and often are, many providences concerned in enlightening the mind, and in inducing regeneration. These are instrumentalities. They are means or instruments of presenting the truth. Mercies, judgments, men, measures, and in short all those things that conduce to enlightening the mind, are instrumentalities employed in effecting it.

Those who hold to physical or constitutional moral depravity must hold, of course, to constitutional regeneration; and, of course, consistency compels them to maintain that there is but one agent employed in regeneration, and that is the Holy Spirit, and that no instrument whatever is employed, because the work is, according to them, an act of creative power; that the very nature is changed, and of course no instrument can be employed, any more than in the creation of the world. These theologians have affirmed, over and over again, that regeneration is a miracle; that there is no tendency whatever in the gospel, however presented, and whether presented by God or man, to regenerate the heart. Dr. Griffin, in his Park Street Lectures, maintains that the gospel, in its natural and necessary tendency, creates and perpetuates only opposition to, and hatred of God, until

the heart is changed by the Holy Spirit. He understands the carnal mind to be not a voluntary state, not a minding of the flesh, but the very nature and constitution of the mind; and that enmity against God is a part, attribute, or appetite of the nature itself. Consequently, he must deny the adaptability of the gospel to regenerate the soul. It has been proclaimed by this class of theologians, times without number, that there is no philosophical connexion between the preaching of the gospel and the regeneration of sinners, no adaptedness in the gospel to produce that result; but, on the contrary, that it is adapted to produce an opposite result. The favourite illustrations of their views have been Ezekiel's prophesying over the dry bones, and Christ's restoring sight to the blind man by putting clay on his eyes. Ezekiel's prophesying over the dry bones had no tendency to quicken them, they say. And the clay used by the Saviour was calculated rather to destroy than to restore sight. This shows how easy it is for men to adopt a pernicious and absurd philosophy, and then find, or think they find, it supported by the Bible. What must be the effect of inculcating the dogma, that the gospel has nothing to do with regenerating the sinner? Instead of telling him that regeneration is nothing else than his embracing the gospel, to tell him that he must wait, and first have his constitution recreated before he can possibly do anything but oppose God? This is to tell him the greatest and most abominable and ruinous of falsehoods. It is to mock his intelligence. What! call on him, on pain of eternal death, to believe; to embrace the gospel; to love God with all his heart, and at the same time represent him as entirely helpless, and constitutionally the enemy of God and of the gospel, and as being under the necessity of waiting for God to regenerate his nature, before it is possible for him to do otherwise than to hate God with all his heart?

IX. In regeneration the subject is both passive and active.

1. That he is active is plain from what has been said, and from the very nature of the change.

2. That he is, at the same time, passive, is plain from the fact that he acts only when and as he is acted upon. That is, he is passive in the perception of the truth presented by the Holy Spirit. I know that this perception is no part of regeneration. But it is simultaneous with regeneration. It induces regeneration. It is the condition and the occasion of regeneration. Therefore the subject of regeneration must be a passive recipient or percipient of the truth presented by the Holy Spirit, at the moment, and during the act of regeneration. The Spirit acts upon him through or by the truth: thus far he is passive. He closes with the truth: thus far he is active. What a mistake those theologians have fallen into who represent the subject as altogether passive in regeneration! This rids the sinner at once of the conviction of any duty or responsibility about it. It is wonderful that such an absurdity should have been so long maintained in the church. But while it is maintained, it is no wonder that sinners are not converted to God. While the sinner believes this, it is impossible, if he has it in mind, that he should be regenerated. He stands and waits for God to do what God requires him to do, and which no one can do for him. Neither God, nor any other being, can regenerate him, if he will not turn. If he will not change his choice, it is impossible that it should be changed. Sinners who have been taught thus, and have believed what they have been taught, would

never have been regenerated had not the Holy Spirit drawn off their attention from this error, and ere they were aware, induced them to close in with the offer of life.

X. What is implied in regeneration.

1. The nature of the change shows that it must be instantaneous. It is a change of choice, or of intention. This must be instantaneous. The preparatory work of conviction and enlightening the mind may have been gradual and progressive. But when regeneration occurs, it must be instantaneous.

2. It implies an entire present change of moral character, that is, a change from entire sinfulness to entire holiness. We have seen that it consists in a change from selfishness to benevolence. We have also seen that selfishness and benevolence cannot co-exist in the same mind; that selfishness is a state of supreme and entire consecration to self; that benevolence is a state of entire and supreme consecration to God and the good of the universe. Regeneration, then, surely implies an entire change of moral character.

Again: the Bible represents regeneration as a dying to sin and becoming alive to God. Death in sin is total depravity. This is generally admitted. Death to sin and becoming alive to God, must imply entire present holiness.

3. The scriptures represent regeneration as the condition of salvation in such a sense, that if the subject should die immediately after regeneration, and without any further change, he would go immediately to heaven.

Again: the scripture requires only perseverance in the first love, as the condition of salvation, in case the regenerate soul should live long in the world subsequently to regeneration.

4. When the scriptures require us to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, this does not imply that there is yet sin remaining in the regenerate heart which we are required to put away only by degrees. But the spirit of the requirement must be, that we should acquire as much knowledge as we can of our moral relations, and continue to conform to all truth as fast as we know it. This, and nothing else, is implied in abiding in our first love, or abiding in Christ, living and walking in the Spirit, &c.

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**LECTURE XLIII.
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XI. PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES OF REGENERATION.

Different classes of theologians have held very different theories in regard to the philosophy of regeneration, in accordance with their views of moral depravity, of intellectual philosophy, moral government, and of the freedom of the human will. In discussing this subject I will--

1. State the different theories of regeneration that have been held by different classes of theologians, as I understand them; and--

2. Examine them in their order.

1. The principal theories that have been advocated, so far as my knowledge extends, are the following:--

(1.) The taste scheme. (2.) The divine efficiency scheme. (3.) The susceptibility scheme. (4.) The divine moral suasion scheme.

2. I will examine them in their order.

1. The taste scheme.

(i.) This theory is based upon the view of mental philosophy which regards the mental heart as identical with the sensibility. Moral depravity, according to this school, consists in a constitutional relish, taste, or craving for sin. They hold the doctrine of original sin--of a sinful nature or constitution, as was shown in my lectures on moral depravity. The heart of the mind, in the estimation of this school, is not identical with choice or intention. They hold that it does not consist in any voluntary state of mind, but that it lies back of, and controls voluntary action, or the actions of the will. The wicked heart,

according to them, consists in an appetency or constitutional taste for sin, and with them, the appetites, passions, and propensities of human nature in its fallen state, are in themselves sinful. They often illustrate their ideas of the sinful taste, craving, or appetite for sin, by reference to the craving of carnivorous animals for flesh. Of course,--

(ii.) A change of heart, in the view of this philosophy, must consist in a change of constitution. It must be a physical change, and wrought by a physical, as distinguished from a moral agency. It is a change wrought by the direct and physical power of the Holy Spirit in the constitution of the soul, changing its susceptibilities, implanting or creating a new taste, relish, appetite, craving for, or love of, holiness. It is, as they express it, the implantation of a new principle of holiness. It is described as a creation of a new taste or principle, as an infusion of a holy principle, &c. This scheme, of course, holds and teaches that, in regeneration, the subject is entirely passive. With this school, regeneration is exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit, the subject having no agency in it. It is an operation performed upon him, may be, while he is asleep, or in a fit of derangement, while he is entirely passive, or perhaps when at the moment he is engaged in flagrant rebellion against God. The agency by which this work is wrought, according to them, is sovereign, irresistible, and creative. They hold that there are of course no means of regeneration, as it is a direct act of creation. They hold the distinction already referred to and examined, between regeneration and conversion; that when the Holy Spirit has performed the sovereign operation, and implanted the new principle, then the subject is active in conversion, or in turning to God.

They hold that the soul, in its very nature, is enmity against God; that therefore the gospel has no tendency to regenerate or convert the soul to God; but, on the contrary, that previous to regeneration by the sovereign and physical agency of the Holy Spirit, every exhibition of God made in the gospel, tends only to inflame and provoke this constitutional enmity.

They hold, that when the sinful taste, relish, or craving for sin is weakened, for they deny that it is ever wholly destroyed in this life, or while the soul continues connected with the body, and a holy taste, relish, or craving is implanted or infused by the Holy Spirit into the constitution of the soul, then, and not till then, the gospel has a tendency to turn or convert the sinner from the error of his ways.

As I have said, their philosophy of moral depravity is the basis of their philosophy of regeneration. It assumes the dogma of original sin, as taught in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, and attempts to harmonize the philosophy of regeneration with that philosophy of sin, or moral depravity.

Upon this scheme or theory of regeneration, I remark,--

(i.) That it has been sufficiently refuted in the lectures on moral depravity. If, as was then shown, moral depravity is altogether voluntary, and consists in selfishness, or in a voluntary state of mind, this philosophy of regeneration is of course without foundation.

(ii.) It was shown in the lectures on moral depravity, that sin is not chosen for its own sake,--that there is no constitutional relish, taste, or craving for sin,--that in sinful choice, sin is not the end or object chosen, but that self-gratification is chosen, and that this choice is sinful. If this is so, then the whole philosophy of the taste scheme turns out to be utterly baseless.

(iii.) The taste, relish, or craving, of which this philosophy speaks, is not a taste, relish, or craving for sin, but for certain things and objects, the enjoyment of which is, to a certain extent, and upon certain conditions, lawful. But when the will prefers the gratification of taste or appetite to higher interests, this choice or act of will is sin. The sin never lies in the appetite, but in the will's consent to unlawful indulgence.

(iv.) This philosophy confounds appetite or temptation to unlawful indulgence, with sin. Nay, it represents sin as consisting mostly, if not altogether, in that which is only temptation.

(v.) It is, as we have seen, inconsistent with the Bible definition both of sin and of regeneration.

(vi.) It is also inconsistent with the justice of the command, so solemnly given to sinners, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die?"

(vii.) It also contradicts the Bible representation, that men regenerate each other. "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."--1 Cor. iv. 15.

(viii.) It throws the blame of unregeneracy upon God. If the sinner is passive, and has no agency in it; if it consists in what this philosophy teaches, and is accomplished in the manner which this theory represents, it is self-evident that God alone is responsible for the fact, that any sinner is unregenerate.

(ix.) It represents regeneration as a miracle. This is affirmed.

(x.) It renders holiness after regeneration physically necessary, just as sin was before, and perseverance also as physically necessary, and falling from grace as a natural impossibility. In this case holy exercises and living are only the gratification of a constitutional appetite, implanted in regeneration.

(xi.) It renders perseverance in holiness no virtue, as it is only self-gratification, or the gratification of appetite.

(xii.) It is the assumption of a philosophy at war with the Bible.

(xiii.) Upon this theory regeneration would destroy personal identity.

Let us consider next,--

(2.) The divine efficiency scheme or theory.

This scheme is based upon, or rather is only a carrying out of, an ancient heathen philosophy, bearing the same name. This ancient philosophy denies second causes, and teaches that what we call laws of nature are nothing else than the mode of divine operation. It denies that the universe would even exist for a moment, if the divine upholding were withdrawn. It maintains that the universe exists only by an act of present and perpetual creation. It denies that matter, or mind, has in itself any inherent properties that can originate laws or motions; that all action, whether of matter or mind, is the necessary result of direct divine irresistible efficiency or power; that this is not only true of the natural universe, but also of all the exercises and actions of moral agents in all worlds.

The abettors of the divine efficiency scheme of regeneration apply this philosophy especially to moral agents. They hold, that all the exercises and actions of moral agents in all worlds, and whether those exercises be holy or sinful, are produced by a divine efficiency, or by a direct act of Omnipotence; that holy and sinful acts are alike effects of an irresistible cause, and that this cause is the power and agency, or efficiency, of God.

This philosophy denies constitutional moral depravity, or original sin, and maintains that moral character belongs alone to the exercises or choices of the will; that regeneration does not consist in the creation of any new taste, relish, or craving, nor in the implantation or infusion of any new principles in the soul: but that it consists in a choice conformed to the law of God, or in a change from selfishness to disinterested benevolence; that this change is effected by a direct act of Divine power or efficiency, as irresistible as any creative act whatever. This philosophy teaches, that the moral character of every moral agent, whether holy or sinful, is formed by an agency as direct, as sovereign, and as irresistible, as that which first gave existence to the universe; that true submission to God implies the hearty consent of the will to have the character thus formed, and then to be treated accordingly, for the glory of God. The principal arguments by which this theory is supported, so far as I am acquainted with them, are as follow:--

(i.) The Bible, its advocates say, teaches it in those texts that teach the doctrine of a universal and particular providence, and that God is present in all events; such, for example, as the following:--"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."--Prov. xvi. 33. "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us."--Isa. xxvi. 12. "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things."--Isa. xlv. 7. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"--Dan. iv. 35. "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people be not afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"--Amos iii. 6. "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."--Rom. xi. 36. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."--Eph. i. 11. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of

his good pleasure."--Philip. ii. 13. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."--Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

These may serve as a specimen of the proofs of this theory cited from holy scripture, and upon which great stress is laid by its defenders.

Concerning these I would remark:--

(a.) That they prove nothing to the point. The question in debate is not whether God is, or is not, in some sense, present in every event, or whether there be not some sense in which everything may be ascribed to the providence and agency of God, for this their opponents admit and maintain. But the true question at issue respects only the *quo modo* of the divine agency, of which these passages say nothing. It is neither affirmed nor implied in these passages, nor in any other, that God is the direct, efficient, irresistible agent in all those cases.

(b.) Other passages abundantly imply and affirm that he is not the direct, efficient, and irresistible agent in the production of moral evil. For example: "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?" Jer. vii. 14. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James i. 13-17. "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." James iii. 14-17.

These passages plainly teach and imply that God's agency, to say the least, in the production of sin, is not direct, efficient, irresistible. Their scripture argument then proves nothing to the purpose of their philosophy.

(ii.) Another argument by which the divine efficiency scheme has been sustained is that divine foreknowledge implies it.

This is an assumption without the shadow of proof.

(iii.) Third argument: The divine purposes imply it.

This is also a sheer assumption.

(iv.) Fourth argument: Prophecy, or the foretelling of future events, implies it.

This again is assumption without proof. These arguments assume, that God could not know what future events would be, especially what the free actions of men would be, unless he produces and controls them by a direct and irresistible efficiency.

(v.) Fifth argument: The Bible ascribes both the holy and sinful actions of man to God, and in equally unqualified terms.

This settles nothing of the *quo modo*, or the sense in which it does so, in either case.

(vi.) It is admitted, say some, that holy actions are produced by a direct divine efficiency; and as the Bible ascribes the sinful actions of men to God in as unqualified terms as holy ones, we have no right to infer a difference in the *quo modo* of his doing it.

We are not only allowed, but are bound to infer that his agency is different in the one case, from what it is in the other. The Bible has, as we shall see, settled the philosophy, or the manner in which he produces holy exercises in moral agents. It also everywhere assumes or affirms, that he is concerned only providentially in the permission of sin; that sin is an abuse of his providence, and of the liberty of moral agents.

(vii.) It has been assumed, that it is naturally impossible for God to create a being that should have the power of originating his own actions.

This is surely an assumption, and of no weight whatever. It certainly is not an affirmation of reason; and I cannot see any ground for such an affirmation. Human consciousness is against it.

(viii.) It has been asserted, that if such a creature existed, he would be independent of God, in such a sense, that God could neither certainly control him, nor know what he would do.

This is a mere begging of the question. How can this be known? This argument assumes that even Omniscience cannot know how a free moral agent would act upon condition of his originating his own choices, intentions, and actions. But why this assumption?

To this theory I make the following objections:--

(i.) It is mere philosophy, and that falsely so called.

(ii.) It is supported, so far as I can see, only by the most unwarrantable assumptions.

(iii.) Its tendency condemns it.

(a.) It tends to produce and perpetuate a sense of divine injustice. To create a character by an agency as direct and irresistible as that of the creation of the world itself, and then treat moral beings according to that character so formed, is wholly inconsistent with all our ideas of justice.

(b.) It destroys a sense of accountability, or tends to destroy it.

(c.) It contradicts human consciousness. I know it is said, that consciousness only gives our mental actions and states, but not the cause of them. This I deny, and affirm that consciousness not only gives us our mental actions and states, but it also gives us the cause of them, especially it gives the fact, that we ourselves are the sovereign and efficient causes of the choices and actions of our will. In our passive states we can almost always recognize the cause of these phenomena. At least we can very often do so. I am as conscious of originating in a sovereign manner my choices, as I am of the choices themselves.

(d.) This theory virtually denies, or rather stultifies, the eternal distinction between liberty and necessity.

(e.) If this theory were true, with our present consciousness, we cannot believe it. We cannot but affirm to ourselves, that we are the efficient causes of our own choices and volitions.

(f.) The philosophy in question, really represents God as the only agent, in any proper sense of that term, in the universe. If God produces the exercises of moral beings in the manner represented by this philosophy, then they are in fact no more agents than the planets are agents. If their exercises are all directly produced by the power of God, it is ridiculous to call them agents.

(g.) If this theory be true, what we generally call moral beings and moral agents, are no more so than the winds and the waves, or any other substance or thing in the universe.

(h.) Again: if this theory be true, no being but God has, or can have, moral character. No other being is the author of his own actions. He is the subject, but not the author of his actions. He is the passive subject, but not the active efficient cause of his own exercises. To affirm moral character of such a passive subject is truly ridiculous.

(i.) This theory obliges its advocates, together with all other necessitarians, to give a false and nonsensical definition of free agency. Free agency, according to them, consists in doing as we will, while their theory denies the power to will, except as our willings are necessitated by God. But as we have seen in former lectures, this is no true account of freedom, or liberty. Liberty to execute my choices is no liberty at all. Choice is connected with its sequents by a law of necessity; and if an effect follow my volitions, that effect follows by necessity, and not freely. All freedom of will must, as was formerly shown, consist in the sovereign power to originate our own choices. If I am unable to will, I am

unable to do any thing; and it is absurd and ridiculous to affirm, that a being is a moral or a free agent, who has not power to originate his own choices.

(j.) If this theory is true, God is more than the accomplice of the devil; for--

(I.) Satan cannot tempt us according to this theory, unless God by a direct divine efficiency, moves him and compels him to do so.

(II.) Then, we cannot possibly yield to his temptation, except as God compels us to yield, or creates the yielding within us. This is a blasphemous theory surely, that represents God as doing such things. That a philosophy like this could ever have been taught, will appear incredible to many. But such is the fact, and such the true statement of the views of this class of theologians, if I can understand them.

(k.) But this theory is inconsistent with the Bible, as we have seen.

(l.) It is also inconsistent with itself, for it both affirms and denies natural ability. Its advocates admit, that we cannot act except as we will, and affirm that we cannot will, except as our willings are created by a direct Divine efficiency. How absurd then is it to maintain, that we have natural ability to do anything. All that can truly be said of us, upon the principles of this theory, is that we have a susceptibility to be acted upon, and to be rendered the subjects of certain states, immediately and irresistibly created by the power of God. But it is absurd to call this a natural ability to do our duty.

(m.) If this theory is true, the whole moral government of God is no government at all, distinct from, and superior to, physical government. Then the gospel is an insult to men, in two respects, at least:--

(I.) Upon this theory men do not, cannot deserve punishment, nor require a Saviour from it.

(II.) If they do, the gospel is presented and urged upon their acceptance, when, in fact, they have no more power to accept it, than they have to create a world.

(n.) Again: this theory overlooks and virtually denies the fundamentally important distinction between moral and physical power, and moral and physical government. All power and all government, upon this theory, are physical.

(o.) Again: this theory renders repentance, remorse, and self-condemnation impossible, as a rational exercise.

(p.) This theory involves the delusion of all moral beings. God not only creates our volitions, but also creates the persuasion and affirmation that we are responsible for them. O, shame on such a theory as this!

(3.) *Let us proceed now to notice the susceptibility scheme.*

(i.) What this theory is.

This theory represents, that the Holy Spirit's influences are both physical and moral; that he, by a direct and physical influence, excites the susceptibilities of the soul and prepares them to be affected by the truth; that he, thereupon, exerts a moral or persuasive influence by presenting the truth, which moral influence induces regeneration.

(ii.) Wherein this and the Divine moral suasion theory agree.

(a.) In rejecting the taste and Divine efficiency schemes.

(b.) In rejecting the dogma of constitutional moral depravity.

(c.) In rejecting the dogma of physical regeneration; for be it remembered, that this theory teaches that the physical influence exerted in exciting the susceptibilities is no part of regeneration.

(d.) They agree in maintaining the natural ability or liberty of all moral agents.

(e.) That the constitutional appetites and passions have no moral character in themselves.

(f.) That when strongly excited they are the occasions of sin.

(g.) That sin and moral depravity are identical, and that they consist in a violation of the moral law.

(h.) That the moral heart is the ruling preference or ultimate intention of the mind.

(i.) That the carnal mind, or heart, is selfishness.

(j.) That the new or regenerate heart is benevolence.

(k.) That regeneration consists in a change from selfishness to benevolence, or from the supreme love of self, to the supreme love of God, and the equal love of our neighbour.

(l.) That this change is effected through the truth presented by the Holy Spirit, or by a Divine moral persuasion.

(iii.) Wherein they differ.

This philosophy maintains the necessity and the fact of a physical influence superadded to the moral or persuasive influence of the Holy Spirit, as a *sine qua non* of regeneration. The Divine moral suasion theory regards regeneration as being induced alone by a moral influence. This theory also admits and maintains, that regeneration is

effected solely by a moral influence, but also that a work preparatory to the efficiency of the moral influence, and indispensable to its efficiency, in producing regeneration, is performed by a direct and physical agency of the Holy Spirit upon the constitutional susceptibilities of the soul, to quicken and wake it up, and predispose it to be deeply and duly affected by the truth. The arguments by which that part of this theory which relates to a physical influence of the Holy Spirit is supported, are, so far as I am acquainted with them, as follows:--

(a.) It is maintained by the defenders of this scheme, that the representations of the Bible upon the subject of the Holy Spirit's agency in regeneration, are such as to forbid the supposition, that his influence is altogether moral or persuasive, and such as plainly to indicate that he also exerts a physical agency, in preparing the mind to be duly effected by the truth. In reply to this argument, I observe,--

(i.) That I fear greatly to disparage the agency of the Holy Spirit in the work of man's redemption from sin, and would, by no means, resist or deny, or so much as call in question, anything that is plainly taught or implied in the Bible upon this subject.

(ii.) I admit and maintain that regeneration is always induced and effected by the personal agency of the Holy Spirit. The question now before us relates wholly to the mode, and not at all to the fact, of the divine agency in regeneration. Let this be distinctly understood, for it has been common for theologians of the old school, as soon as the dogma of a physical regeneration, and of a physical influence in regeneration, has been called in question, to cry out and insist that this is Pelagianism, and that it is a denial of divine influence altogether, and that it is teaching a self-regeneration, independent of any divine influence. I have been ashamed of such representations as these on the part of Christian divines, and have been distressed by their want of candour. It should, however, be distinctly stated that, so far as I know, the defenders of the theory now under consideration have never manifested this want of candour towards those who have called in question that part of their theory that relates to a physical influence.

(III.) Since the advocates of this theory admit that the Bible teaches that regeneration is induced by a divine moral suasion, the point of debate is simply, whether the Bible teaches that there is also a physical influence exerted by the Holy Spirit, in exciting the constitutional susceptibilities. We will now attend to their proof texts. "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures."--Luke xxiv. 45. It is affirmed, that this text seems to teach or imply a physical influence in opening their understandings. But what do we mean by such language as this in common life? Language is to be understood according to the subject-matter of discourse. Here the subject of discourse is the understanding. But what can be intended by opening it? Can this be a physical prying, pulling, or forcing open any department of the constitution? Such language in common life would be understood only to mean, that such instruction was imparted as to secure a right understanding of the Scriptures. Every one knows this, and why should we suppose and assume that anything more is intended here? The context plainly indicates that this was the thing, and the only thing, done in this case. "Then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.--And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."--Luke xxiv. 25-27, 46. From these verses it appears that he expounded the Scriptures to them, when in the light of what had passed, and in the light of that measure of divine illumination which was then imparted to them, they understood the things which he explained to them. It does not seem to me, that this passage warrants the inference that there was a physical influence exerted. It certainly affirms no such thing. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."--Acts xvi. 14. Here is an expression similar to that just examined. Here it is said, "that the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, so that she attended," &c.; that is, the Lord inclined her to attend. But how? Why, say the advocates of this scheme, by a physical influence. But how does this appear? What is her heart that it should be pulled, or forced open? and what can be intended by the assertion, "that the Lord opened her heart?" All that can be meant is, that the Lord secured her attention, or disposed her to attend, and so enlightened her when she did attend, that she believed. Surely here is no assertion of a physical influence, nor, so far as I can see, any just ground for the inference, that such an influence was exerted. A moral influence can sufficiently explain all the phenomena; and any text that can equally well consist with either of two opposing theories, can prove neither.

Again: there are many passages that represent God as opening the spiritual eyes, and passages in which petitions are offered to God to do this. It is by this theory assumed that such passages strongly imply a physical influence. But this assumption appears to me unwarrantable. We are in the habit of using just such language, and speak of opening each other's eyes, when no such thing is intended or implied, as a physical influence, and when nothing more than a moral or persuasive influence is so much as thought of. Why then resort to such an assumption here? Does the nature of the case demand it? This I know is contended for by those who maintain a constitutional moral depravity. But this dogma has been shown to be false, and it is admitted to be so by those who maintain the theory now under consideration. Admitting, then, that the constitution is not morally depraved, should it be inferred that any constitutional change, or physical influence is needed to produce regeneration? I can see no sufficient reason for believing, or affirming, that a physical influence is either demanded or exerted. This much I freely admit, that we cannot affirm the impossibility of such an influence, nor the impossibility of the necessity of such an influence. The only question with me is, does the Bible plainly teach or imply such an influence? Hitherto I have been unable to see that it does. The passages already quoted are of a piece with all that are relied upon in support of this theory, and as the same answer is a sufficient reply to them all, I will not spend time in citing and remarking upon them.

(b.) Again: A physical influence has been inferred from the fact, that sinners are represented as dead in trespasses and sins, as asleep, &c. &c. But all such representations are only declaratory of a moral state, a state of voluntary alienation from God. If the death is moral, and the sleep moral, why suppose that a physical influence is needed to

correct a moral evil? Cannot truth, when urged and pressed by the Holy Spirit, effect the requisite change?

(c.) But a physical influence is also inferred from the fact, that truth makes so different an impression at one time from what it does at another. Answer: this can well enough be accounted for by the fact, that sometimes the Holy Spirit so presents the truth, that the mind apprehends it and feels its power, whereas at another time he does not.

(d.) But it is said, that there sometimes appears to have been a preparatory work performed by a physical influence pre-disposing the mind to attend to, and be affected by, the truth. Answer: there often is no doubt a preparatory work pre-disposing the mind to attend to, and be affected by, truth. But why assume that this is a physical influence? Providential occurrences may have had much to do with it. The Holy Spirit may have been directing the thoughts and communicating instructions in various ways, and preparing the mind to attend and obey. Who then is warranted in the affirmation that this preparatory influence is physical? I admit that it may be, but I cannot see either that it must be, or that there is any good ground for the assumption that it is.

(4.) *The last theory to be examined is that of a Divine moral suasion.*

This theory teaches--

(i.) That regeneration consists in a change in the ultimate intention or preference of the mind, or in a change from selfishness to disinterested benevolence; and--

(ii.) That this change is induced and effected by a divine moral influence; that is, that the Holy Spirit effects it with, through, or by the truth. The advocates of this theory assign the following as the principal reasons in support of it.

(a.) The Bible expressly affirms it. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."--John iii. 5, 6. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."--1 Pet. i. 23. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."--James i. 18. "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."--1 Cor. iv. 15.

(b.) Men are represented as being sanctified by and through the truth. "Sanctify them through the truth: thy word is truth."--John xvii. 17. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."--John xv. 3.

(c.) The nature of regeneration decides the philosophy of it so far as this, that it must be effected by truth, addressed to the heart through the intelligence.

(d.) Unless it is so effected, it has no moral character.

(e.) The regenerate are conscious of having been influenced by the truth in turning to God.

(f.) They are conscious of no other influence than light poured upon the intelligence, or truth presented to the mind.

(g.) When God affirms that he regenerates the soul with or by the truth, we have no right to infer that he does it in some other way. This he does affirm; therefore the Bible has settled the philosophy of regeneration. That he exerts any other than a moral influence, or the influence of Divine teaching and illumination, is sheer assumption.

To this theory the following objections have been made.

(i.) To represent sinners as regenerated by the influence of truth, although presented and urged by the Holy Spirit, is virtually to deny total depravity. To this it is answered--

(a.) It does indeed deny constitutional moral depravity, and therefore constitutional or physical regeneration.

(b.) Adam and the sinning angels were changed or regenerated from perfect holiness to perfect sinfulness, by motives presented to them, at least Adam was. Now, if they could be regenerated from entire holiness to entire sinfulness by a moral influence, or by means of a lie, is it impossible that God should convert sinners by means of truth? Has God so much less moral power than Satan has?

(c.) To this it may be replied, that it is much easier to convert or regenerate men from holiness to sin, than from sin to holiness.

(I.) This, I answer, seems to reflect upon the wisdom and goodness of God, in forming the human constitution.

(II.) Should the fact be granted, still it may truly be urged, that the motives to holiness are infinitely greater than those to sin, so that the Holy Spirit has altogether the advantage in this respect.

(ii.) If sinners are regenerated by the light of the truth, they may be regenerated in hell, as they will there know the truth.

(a.) The Bible, I answer, represents the wicked in hell, as being in darkness, and not in the light of the truth.

(b.) The truth will not be presented and urged home there by the persuasive Spirit of God.

(c.) The gospel motives will be wanting there. The offer of pardon and acceptance, which is indispensable to induce repentance and obedience, will not be made there. Therefore sinners will not be converted in hell.

REMARKS.

1. This scheme honours the Holy Spirit without disparaging the truth of God.
2. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit through the truth illustrates the wisdom of God. There is a deep and divine philosophy in regeneration.
3. This theory is of great practical importance. For if sinners are to be regenerated by the influence of truth, argument, and persuasion, then ministers can see what they have to do, and how it is that they are to be "workers together with God."
4. So also sinners may see, that they are not to wait for a physical regeneration or influence, but must submit to, and embrace, the truth, if they ever expect to be saved.
5. If this scheme is true, we can see, that when truth is made clear to the mind and is resisted, the Holy Spirit is resisted, for this is his work, to make the mind clearly to apprehend the truth.
6. If this theory is true, sinners are most likely to be regenerated while sitting under the sound of the gospel, while listening to the clear exhibition of truth.
7. Ministers should lay themselves out, and press every consideration upon the attention of sinners, just as heartily and as freely, as if they expected to convert them themselves. They should aim at, and expect the regeneration of sinners, upon the spot, and before they leave the house of God.
8. Sinners must not wait for and expect physical omnipotence to regenerate them.
9. The physical omnipotence of God affords no presumption that all men will be converted; for regeneration is not effected by physical power.
10. To neglect and resist the truth is fatal to salvation.
11. Sinners are not regenerated, because they neglect and resist the truth.
12. God cannot do the sinner's duty, and regenerate him without the right exercise of the sinner's own agency.
13. This view of regeneration shows that the sinner's dependence upon the Holy Spirit arises entirely out of his own voluntary stubbornness, and that his guilt is all the greater, by how much the more perfect this kind of dependence is.

14. This view of regeneration shows the adaptedness of the law and Gospel of God to regenerate, sanctify, and save the souls of men.

15. It also demonstrates the wisdom of appointing such means and instrumentalities to accomplish their salvation.

16. Physical regeneration, under every modification of it, is a stumbling-block.

17. Original or constitutional sinfulness, physical regeneration, and all their kindred and resulting dogmas, are alike subversive of the gospel, and repulsive to human intelligence; and should be laid aside as relics of a most unreasonable and confused philosophy.