

Or take the doctrine of *regeneration* in its relation to faith, or the relations of *faith* and *life*; it cannot but be painful to the exegetical scholar, or the systematic theologian, to hear the confidence with which the semi-Pelagian, or, in more recent nomenclature, Morrisonian, talks of a man's sufficiency, without any special subjective operation of the spirit of God, to embrace the Gospel message, and to appreciate spiritual truth. It is of course easy for him to quote a half dozen texts, or more, which assert that men must believe in order to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost—must believe in order to have life. He rings the changes on the Saviour's assertion of the guilty alienation of man's will: ("Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life"—John v., 40) as if this necessarily implied the sufficiency of the depraved will. But does he look, or with anything else than a blind eye at the cognate statement, within one chapter's reach of the other, which declares the disability of the carnal mind, or its dependence on external power, to move it Godwards and Heavenwards?

I have been at some pains to point out to those of you who have been attending in the senior theology class, the fallacies, at least three in number, which may be detected in the reasoning of those parties. You have only to distinguish life initial from ulterior; faith as an act from faith as a principle or habit; and the process of operation as God's part from the rule of duty for man:—to be enabled to turn all their arguments.

But let us cast the mote out of our own eye. Let us consider if inattention to the relations of truth may not be injuriously affecting faith and practice in some other departments. Nothing, perhaps, has been more fruitful of error than the distinction that has been made between the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace—a distinction, no doubt, so explained by certain writers as to be harmless, but greatly misunderstood or perverted by others. Hence the word "condition"—so innocent a word in itself—has been either injuriously used by some, or, by others, has been perhaps with excessive zeal proscribed: and difficulties and uncertainties have been felt, what to do with it. There is a covenant—does it not seem?—made with us, as well as a covenant between the Father and the Son; and what is the condition of this covenant *with us*? Much misconception might have been avoided, if we saw that the covenant is just strictly one, or that every condition in what is called a second, is covered by the promises in the first. Conditions indeed they are in the sense of being necessarily antecedent to ulterior benefits; conditions, if we may so express it, in the covenant, but not of it. It may be interesting to a portion of my present auditors for us to say that I do not remember any one expressing this better than a lady writer,* who thus relieves some anxiety of her friend and correspondent: "there are no conditional promises in the Gospel but which are resolvable into unconditional grace." It was well said.

We find, particularly in the department of Sacraments, this confusion of things to work not a little evil, affecting the sentiments and feelings of Christian worshippers, in an important part of their duty, and a valuable privilege of Christian fellowship. Are we sure that the teaching of the pulpit is not in some degree responsible for this? Is the proper relation of the sacraments to the covenant of redemption or grace with distinctness enough brought out, and with sufficient frequency insisted on? Does it not seem, from the prevailing phraseology on the subject, that the idea that is uppermost with many, is the engagement by us, the vow to the Lord, the

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