

sist on what is general, and to confine attention to the principles that are considered common to all evangelical bodies.

But more than this there has been a strong disposition to modify the system—to seek some middle ground—to explain its doctrines according to some prevailing theory of the human mind, and thus to harmonize them with human philosophy. These attempts have been closely connected, and though their efforts have been widely spread, and though the forms of doctrine in which they have issued have been multifarious, yet they are all more or less connected with the New School Theology of the United States. In some instances they have originated in an attempt to amend the nomenclature of Theology—to exchange what is considered the scholastic form of a past age for a more scientific terminology suited to the present day. In this way some good men have lent their names to speculations which have ended in the grossest forms of Pelagianism. This is the real character of what is there called Finneyism, from the Rev C. G. Finney, and sometimes “Oberlin doctrines” from his having founded his theological school at Oberlin.* He has been followed implicitly by Morrison in Scotland, with the exception that the latter has not decidedly adopted the views of the former regarding perfection, and hence in Scotland the system has usually borne the name of Morrisonianism.

We are not, however, to regard the New School Presbyterians, or the advocates of what is called New England Theology as opposed to Calvinism. This is supposed to be the case, but it is not correct. The adherents of the latter system speak of it as “Calvinism in an improved form.” “It is,” said one of its leading advocates, “not mere Calvinism, but it is consistent Calvinism. It is a revised and corrected edition of the Genevan creed.”† They in general agree with Calvinists in holding the doctrines of the divine decrees, election, and the Perseverance of the Saints. But they differ from the “Old Calvinists” in denying the doctrine of human inability, making man’s responsibility commensurate with his ability, also in denying the doctrine of the imputation either of Adam’s sin or of Christ’s righteousness, and of any covenant relations between Adam and his posterity, or Christ and his people, and of a definite efficacious atonement. On these and kindred topics they have adopted certain speculations founded principally on certain philosophical theories of the human mind, which have led to every variety of error.

An extreme section represented by Finney in America and Morrison in Scotland have adopted a system of the grossest Pelagianism, not only denying the doctrines of the divine decrees and Election, but also adopting the views advocated by Pelagius in the fifth century regarding man’s moral nature, regeneration and the work of the Spirit. From the peculiar and insidious form, in which their views on these last points are presented, we feel it due to notice them more particularly.

In reference to the natural state of man, they deny any corrupt nature descending from Adam to his posterity. They represent sin as consisting in acts of transgression, committed by those who have come to years to have a knowledge of the law, and holiness in acts of obedience. They regard the idea of a sinful nature as absurd. They represent Adam at his creation as being neither sinful nor holy, but as acquiring a holy character by holy acts—that our Saviour when he was born was only holy in the

* From the Oberlin School come several if not most of the Morrisonian ministers in British America.

† Prof. Parker of Andover.