

mental conditions of the central problem of human salvation, three facts which must always be taken into account : (1) man's innate depravity ; (2) the personality and freedom, or sovereignty of God ; and (3) the subordinate personality and freedom of man. These three facts lie upon the surface of Scripture, and are involved in any fair account of human nature ; and they are recognized in the Calvinistic system throughout.

Nearly all the difficulties which are urged against the peculiarities of Calvinism, arise from no lack of evidence for these three independent facts, but from the inability of the speculative reason to comprehend how, if man is fallen and depraved, and God is sovereign, and man free, the two freedoms, the supreme and the subordinate, can each have a place, in working out man's deliverance from sin. If we deny, or ignore these facts, it is easy to conjure up a theory of things which will eliminate these difficulties. If we deny personality and freedom to God, and imagine that human freedom is a mere mental delusion, we can fall back on a Pantheistic system of evolution, and, if the problem is not solved, it is obliterated. If with Socinians and Pelagians, we deny human depravity, and practically shut out all present agency of the Most High in human salvation, a self-determining power in the human will may seem adequate to accomplish the work. The radical objection to these systems is that they solve the problem by denying its existence. Calvinism finds the recognition of these facts demanded both by Scripture, and by human-nature, and, therefore, it cannot adopt these short-hand methods of solving the problem. It accepts the facts, and assigns to each its proper place in the system of revealed truth. This is what gives to Calvinism its distinctive character.

This characteristic explains why the Calvinistic type of doctrine has, in all ages, attracted towards it so many devout master minds. The system which could satisfy such men as Augustine, Aquinas, Anselm, Luther, Calvin, Cranmer, Jewell, Knox, Bacon, Owen, Howe, Pascal, Edwards, Cunningham, Hodge and Thornwell, and a multitude of others, who have stood in the front rank of thinkers, must have in it an affinity for minds of the widest range.