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EFFECTUAL CALLING

I. *Does the Bible teach Effectual Calling?*

The Greek word "kaleō," translated *call*, is used in several different senses.

To call, accordingly, may mean : (1) to call with the voice. Thus in Mark i. 20, "straight way he called them : And they left their father Zebedee in the ship" ; John x. 3, "he calleth his own sheep by name." (2) To summon authoritatively, Acts xxiv. 2, "And when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse him." (3) To invite, Matt. xxii. 3, "and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden." (4) To appoint to office, Heb. v. 4, "No man taketh the honour unto himself but he that is called to God." (5) To name, Matt. i. 21, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus." (6) To call (effectually) so as to secure a thorough-going response of the kind desired (said of God). 1 Pet. ii. 9, "a people for God's own possession that he may show forth the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" ; v. 10, "Who called you into his eternal glory in Christ" ; Rom. viii. 28-30, "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are the called according to his purpose" ; (29) "For whom he foreknew he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren" ; (30) "And whom he foreordained them he also called and whom he called them he also justified and whom he justified them he also glorified." In this passage "the called" of verse 28 are referred to in verse 30, in the clause "them he also called," and of them it is affirmed, "them he also justified," and further affirmed, "them he also glorified." The call in the mind of the apostle, and of the inspiring Spirit in this passage, is clearly an effectual call—one that secures a response of the whole soul—those called believe, are justified and ultimately glorified. The "purpose" of God (verse 28) insures the justification, sanctification and glorification of them. Their call is one which does not take effect on the ear merely ; it is one which is responded to by the whole man, one that is effectual. It is worth while, at this point, to notice that the term "called" ("klētois") used in the clause, "them that are called according to his purpose"

(in verse 28) occurs ten times in the New Testament: Twice of Paul, as called to the office of apostle (Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1); once, of some who receive the external call of the Word (Matt. xxii. 14); seven times of those so called as to secure the right response of the whole man—of the effectually called (Rom. i. 6, 7; viii. 28; 1 Cor. i. 22, 24; Jude i.; Rev. xvii. 14).

We should notice also "calling" ("klēsis") occurs in the New Testament eleven times: once in the sense of business, or trade, 1 Cor. vii. 20, "Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called;" ten times in the sense of effectual calling, Rom. xi. 29, "The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable," 1 Cor. i. 26, "For behold your calling brethren, that not many wise after the flesh . . . are called," Eph. i. 18, "That ye may know what is the hope of his calling," Phil. iii. 14, "Toward the goal, unto the prize of the calling of God in Christ Jesus," 2 Thes. i. 11, "That our God may count you worthy of your calling," 2 Tim. i. 9, "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, according to his purpose which was given us in Christ Jesus, before times eternal," Heb. iii. 1, "Holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling," 2 Peter i. 10, "Give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure." Without doubt the Bible teaches of a calling which is heeded by the called.

In further confirmation of this fact, it should be noted that the Greek word for church ("ekklēsia") signifies symbolically a company called forth—a body constituted by calling. It is the term applied in the New Testament to the assembly of believers or the faithful. The church is the body of the called out. But as it is true that "they are not all Israel that are of Israel" (Rom. ix. 6), so it is true that not all that profess to be *of the called*, have been reached in heart and soul by the call—true that not all of them have been so reached that they have given a vital response to the call in spirit, soul and body. Some men, though they have received very pressing sorts of invitations to accept offered salvation, have refused. Some have professed to accept and have nevertheless given no genuine acceptance. Some have made no pretence of having accepted. Some have openly scoffed. Since man is "dead in trespasses and sins" this rejection, and indifference and contempt are not to be wondered at. If we only thought straight from Biblical premises touching the natural man's sinfulness, more of mystery would

appear in any man's acceptance than in his rejecting the divine call to salvation.

From the Scriptures cited, it is clear that the Bible teaches of a call that may with correctness be termed, "effectual calling," and that it also teaches of another call that can not be so termed, since it is not accepted.

The question which next presents itself is :

- II. *How does the call which secures no vital response which is not accepted differ from the effectual calling—the call which is accepted with head and heart? How does this call considered objectively to the called differ from the effectual call?*

These calls as they come from God, have much in common. They contain in common a depiction of every attractive feature of a life for God set forth in the Scriptures, and every repellant feature of a life not in harmony with God set forth therein. The whole Scripture is an invitation and an argument in support of that invitation to be quit of rebellion against God and to accept His overtures of mercy, to all to whom they come; and these invitations and warnings are usually accompanied by certain convicting and convincing operations of the Holy Spirit. These calls go just as widely as the Scriptures themselves go. But no one accepts either simply because of what they contain in common.

The call which is followed by a vital acceptance on the part of the called, consists in these elements and in addition, of the work of God's Spirit, whereby "convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the Gospel."

The ancient Pelagians denied that the Holy Spirit produced any change in the heart except by persuasion chiefly through the Scriptures. This was a natural view for them to take since they held the false psychological tenet that man has full ability of will to cease from sinning at any time. The Semi-Pelagians have held that man must, of himself desire to cease from sin; and that, thereupon, God may be expected to aid him in carrying out his desires—that is, that man must first start toward godly living; but that to carrying on the process he must have, and may

count on, divine grace, "which is promised." The Arminian admits the doctrine of man's total depravity, and that, consequently man can do nothing perfectly good unless he be aided by divine grace; but holds that Christ died equally for all, that God grants to every man ability to do all that is required of him, upon his co-operating with the grace given. A trouble with the Arminians is that the tenet that God grants to every man ability to do all that is required of him has support neither of the Bible nor the uninspired reason. The Lutheran Synergists had already adopted the parallel of the Arminian view. Modern Rationalists tend toward a view closely akin to if not identical with the Pelagians, of the will on the one hand and of regeneration on the other. This Immanuel Kant seems to have taught that the freedom of which man is possessed is the power of determining the will by the moral law, uninfluenced by desire; and that the new birth which he seems to have regarded as the subjection of the propensities, which make up our fundamental disposition—to the will, is by an act of man's own will.

To return to the Arminian view. It asserts that the calls—common and effectual—are the same, as far as God's disposition toward man is concerned to all under the Gospel; and that the apparent difference is only in their results; "which difference is made merely by man's free-will." This Arminian assertion may be briefly disproved by these considerations: (a) a difference between the nature of God's calls is clearly indicated by Scripture, Matt. xxii, 14 (2), "For many are called but few are chosen," John vi. 44, 45, "No man can come unto me except the Father who hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father and hath learned, cometh unto me." (b) The call that secures a vital and thorough-going response is a result of God's electing love but the issue proves that not all are elect. Rom. viii. 28, "To them that are the called according to his purpose"; viii. 30, "And whom he foreordained, them he also called"; xi. 28, 29, "But as touching the election, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and calling of God are not repented of." (c) If the call only differed in the answer made to it by the free will of man, 1 Cor. iv. 17 ("Who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?") would

not be true. Nor would Rom. ix. 16 ("So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth but of Him that hath mercy") be true; and Paul would be talking nonsense in 1 Cor. i. 20, 21, "For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong."¹

It thus appears that according to His word, God makes a big difference between call and call—between the call that is hearkened to in our spiritual depths, and the call which teaches and invites but does not revolutionise the will. The latter—the call which does not include the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, renewing the will, revolutionising the active and practical powers of man called by the work and affected by the convicting powers of the Holy Spirit—wins no true follower to Christ.

Our Arminian friends say, "Why, if there be those two differing calls, and if the 'common' call is never heeded, does God issue the common call at all?"

It may be answered:

1st. How else could the effectual call be delivered to man and woman for whom it was intended? Every positive element in the common call inheres in the effectual call. These objectors should show therefore how the effectual call could be sounded forth in all the world without setting forth the elements which go to make up the common call; how salvation could be presented as attractive to the effectually called without setting forth the contents of the common call—how faith in Christ could be evoked without preaching the elements of which the common call is constituted; how the effectually called can be treated as free, self-determining agents in the matter of acceptance of Christ and growth in holiness except by preaching the contents of the common call? These objectors will hardly say that God should have first herded out those to receive the effectual call from the others and then delivered to them the call and that he should have refused the others even the common call?

2nd. The common call—the declaration of the plan of salvation—of the duty resting on every man to repent and believe,

¹ Dabney's *Theology*, p. 555.

and obey God's holy law, of the declaration of the motives which should influence the sinner's mind, in view of God's law, of His love for the world, and of his promise to receive all who shall repent and believe—is no mean blessing. Non-believing men show that when they are not befogged in mind, they often seek such privileges for themselves and for their children. They have seen corners of their towns or of their mountain coves immensely bettered by the introduction of such privileges.

3rd. In making the common call universal, God purposed the manifestation of His holiness and of His compassion of nature toward all natural creatures, in dissuading them against sin and self-ruin. Because He is holy, He necessarily hates sin and has the divine urge to dehort against sin. Simply because God has not determined to use in a given sinner's behalf His almighty recreative power to remould his rebellious nature, is He to be denied the expression of His hatred of sin, and His desire that the sinners turn to Him? And may He not, though for wise and righteous reasons He pass a sinner by without saving him eternally, still long to make the sinner's future less intolerable; and may He not therefore express a genuine compassion for him? Why may He not say: Ezek. xxxiii. 11, "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that he may turn from his wicked way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways for why will ye die, Oh house of Israel?" Psalm lxxxi. 13, "Oh that my people would hearken unto me, that Israel would walk in my ways." 1 Tim. ii. 4, "Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." God may long for a thing which He has not purposed to bring about. There are wise reasons why He should not intervene to bring it about by His almighty power. May He not nevertheless express a desire which He sees He should not gratify? Why, in fine, may He not by publishing universally the common call make it clear to the universe—that He not only has swept every objective obstacle to salvation out of man's way but has published the fact the world over in making the common call? Why may He not thus vindicate Himself, when men perish? For many reasons, among which these suggested may be found, God saw the importance of the common call.

The Arminian holds that God has willed the salvation of all men; that He has called every man to win salvation, has

given to all men severally grace sufficient to enable him to win it, if he will use it. The Arminian maintains that, if God does not give to those who have received the common call grace enabling them to obey it, He is wanting in wisdom or sincerity.

But that God is wise in inviting and commanding all to receive and obey all that is offered and commanded in the Gospel has already appeared. It is one of the best possible means of expressing His benevolence toward all men. It is a means of clearing himself in the eyes of the universe, when sinners plunge on in their evil courses to their eternal ruin. It is the best possible way to gather in and build up His elect.

That He is sincere in issuing the common call, He teaches by the very earnestness of His language, in Scripture after Scripture. Ezek. xxxiii. 11, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his wicked way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" In Scripture, God represents Himself as giving admonitions and invitations to men of whom at the same time He declares that He intends to permit them to destroy themselves. He sends Isaiah to preach to His people (Isa. i. 18), "Come now and let us reason together, saith Jehovah, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Yet He knew how Israel had behaved and would behave, Isa. vi. 9. In Matt. xxiii. 33-35, our Lord is represented as saying: "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell? Therefore, behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them shall ye kill and crucify: and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar." And verse 37, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate." God avows the doing of the very thing which our Arminian brother avows He can not do. He implies in the strongest way His sincerity. For undisclosed but good reasons God does not give volitional expression to all His desires.

The providence of God teaches though more vaguely the same lesson. Paul writes in Rom. ii. 4, "Not knowing that the goodness of God (His benevolence) leadeth thee to repentance." It has been well argued: "If His admitting sinners to the gospel call, whom He yet foresees to be bent on their own destruction, is insincere, and the reality of His benefit therein is doubted, because He never efficaciously purposed to cause them to repent, His providential goodness also is no true goodness. But what sinner believes that? We have here every feature, in which, Arminians say, their difficulty inheres. Those earthly blessings are overtures of mercy, and are intended as such. God foresees their neglect and the continued impenitence of the recipients. Physically, He is able to add to these suasives the other means, and the efficacious grace, which would certainly bring the recipients to repentance. But He does not see fit to add them."¹

God may see reasons why He should make one man the object of the effectual call and see that any such reasons for making neighbours of that man objects of that call do not exist. In this case, He can not be supposed to will that these neighbours be effectually called; since He does nothing out of caprice; but, at the same time, His great heart may move Him to do somewhat for them—to give them the Gospel and the consequent amelioration of the earthly evils about them. He may tell them that He so loves the world that He sent His Son that whosoever believes on Him shall have life eternal. He may bid them repent. Indeed if He say anything to a sinner about the way in which the sinner should behave in regard to the Gospel, His excellences of character must insure His saying: Repent, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the only right course for the sinner to take. God can command the right only.

It is in order to ask next:

III. *Why no man ever really accepts the common call while unaccompanied by the effectual call—Why, if God will save any sinners, the effectual call is necessary?*

The explanation is easy. The unregenerate man—the natural man is "dead in trespasses and in sin." It requires more than physical light for the physically dead to see. There must be life: the physically dead must be quickened to life

¹ Dabney's *Theology*, p. 557.

before he can see the light of the noon-day sun. Just as true is it that there must be spiritual life in order to be spiritual vision. Accordingly the Psalmist prays (Ps. cxix. 18), "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law"; and Luke wrote (Acts xvi. 14), "Whose (Lydia's) heart, the Lord opened to give heed unto the things spoken by Paul"; and our Lord said (John iii. 5), "Except a man be born of water, even of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (John vi. 68), "It is the Spirit that giveth life." Paul explains the spiritual visions and beliefs of Christians (in Eph. i. 19), by a reference to God's mighty recreative power, saying, "And what the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead."

The use of God's word—the Scriptures—in effectual calling is not to be forgotten, or minimised. It is the great instrument with which conviction of sin is brought about; and conviction of sin is an element in effectual calling. It serves as the matrix or mould, into which the child of God in being born is thrown to be shaped. No other standard, or instrumentality of effectual calling has a divine warrant. The recreative Spirit, by His own word shapes the nature of the coming child of God, in his very coming, as He reshapes and reshapes it later on. Both Spirit and word are unchangeable. Christians have been born again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23). The Holy Spirit immediately revolutionises the sinner's will in effectual calling and also at the same moment, supernaturally illuminates his mind. The word which He has previously given furnishes the light which is necessary as the medium of vision, and provides the atmosphere which conditions spiritual life. To give up the doctrine of effectual calling is to give up the doctrine of Grace, and if logical, to go over to Naturalism. To give up the doctrine that the word of God—the Holy Scriptures—which alone furnishes in this world the medium of vision as to what the Christian life is, is to open the flood gates to every wild delusion.

IV. *It is desirable, at this point, to distinguish between effectual calling and regeneration.*

In the sub-Reformation times the terms were often used as synonymous. In subsequent times more careful writers have

distinguished between them : There are four effects wrought in effectual calling : (1) Conviction of sin ; (2) Illumination of the mind ; (3) Renovation of the fundamental dispositions ; (4) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Hodges, Shedd, Strong, Dabney, and many others have in this period been representing Regeneration as embracing the two middle effects of effectual calling only—been identifying it with the supernatural renovation of the will, or of the active and practical powers of man, and the supernatural illumination of the intellect for the apprehension of spiritual truth ; so that as a result the regenerated man both sees and loves the good ; and sees and hates the evil as evil.

V. *With the distinction between effectual calling and Regeneration (which consists of the two middle elements in effectual calling) clearly before us, let us raise and endeavour correctly to answer the following questions :*

I. *What is Regeneration ?*

Regeneration is a work of God's Spirit wherein He makes prevalently holy the governing dispositions of a man, and recreates in him the subjective foundations for discerning spiritual truth with relative clearness. In the very work of regenerating a man the Spirit generates an inclination to love God and a foundation subjective to the man for seeing spiritual truth, and of knowing God with increasing clearness. There is no sensation of this change. It is believed that no man was ever conscious of the work of the Holy Spirit in the moment of regeneration. There is no need that man should be conscious of the operation in its doing. God is the agent. He alone. In the matter of regeneration in the sense in which we now use the term—of the middle work of effectual calling—the adult has as little to do as the infant. What had the infant John the Baptist to do with his being “ filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb ” ? Luke i. 15. The radical change thus produced in an indivisible moment is known to the subject wrought upon only by its consequences. He who has been wrought upon regeneratively can say very soon, if he can interpret his consciousness and recall and compare his past with his present : “ Whereas I was blind, now I see ” (John ix. 25) ; “ The old things are passed away ; behold they are become new ” (2 Cor. v. 17). Whereas

once I did not love God, now I love Him, though not as I should.

2. *Is Regeneration necessary?*

We are not asking whether a mere reformation of life and habit is necessary. The Pelagians and many other rationalists reduce regeneration to reform of life and character, which they hold to be quite within the ability of man. We are not asking whether man must regenerate himself by an act of will, neither morally good, nor morally evil, brought about by the mental conviction that God is the chief good, according to the teaching of N. W. Taylor and his school. They seemed to have in mind somewhat that was much more like conversion than regeneration. We are not asking whether men must receive water baptism that through it they may also receive a germ of spiritual life into the soul which may, thereafter, be developed or blasted, as the Roman Catholics and Puseyite Anglicans, and others hold. We are asking about something infinitely more profound than the reform contemplated by the Pelagians and rationalists, than any change to be effected according to the scheme of Dr. Taylor—about something that lies back of and causatively conditions man's choosing God as his chief good. We are asking whether such a change as that just described is necessary.

Every natural man must undergo this change in order to see the Kingdom of Heaven. Scripture teaches this in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: John iii. 3-5, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born anew, he can not see the Kingdom of God," . . . "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except one be born of water and of (even of) the Spirit, he can not enter into the Kingdom of God." Nor are we to forget that Scripture teaches that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; and that "the mind of the flesh (of the unregenerate man) is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be." Other such teaching, confirming John iii. 5, abounds in God's word if we be not too wise (in our own conceits) to receive it.

A radical change in his ruling dispositions is required if any man is to be holy and live holily, if he is to be happy in heaven; and holiness does not come as a mere natural development or growth as the evolutionist may in cases claim. Man's natural tendencies are into more sinfulness. Nor does holiness in fallen

man come of mere purpose to be holy. Nor is it brought about by our fellow men—by the presentation of reasons why we should be holy. Their reason will not be of force with us unless we be prevalently holy—that is, unless a taste for holiness has been generated in us.

With this description of regeneration in mind, and with the necessity for it in mind, if any are to be saved, let us ask :

3. *What is the efficient cause or agent of regeneration ?*

(1) Some have said the efficient cause is the human will ; that the human will alone is the efficient cause, that regeneration is the work of the individual man—that it is simply self-reformation—that a man regenerates himself by forming and maintaining a purpose to live differently from the way in which he has been living in the past and present. This however is bald and shallow Pelagianism. It supposes, contrary to the fact, that the natural man has not a fixed character of hostility to God's will as the law of his life ; whereas man has this trait of hostility, of self-will. Desiring his own way, he does not and will not of himself, choose God's law as the rule of his life. He will not of himself take Christ's yoke upon him. Without a change of his character from which all his moral actions take their character, he will not choose holiness, will not subordinate himself to God's holy will. These whose views have just been stated are Pelagians and their rationalistic offspring.

(2) Semi-Pelagians, Dutch Arminians and others hold that regeneration is brought about by man "co-operating with divine influences applied through the truth." They are synergists.

But man, until his nature—his fundamental disposition toward God—has been radically changed—will not co-operate with God. He will not choose to co-operate. Morally he is unable to do so. He is self-determined to the contrary course by his own active desires, loves and hates. He is bent on doing his own will by the strongest urges of his nature. The service of God looks unattractive until his fundamental disposition has been changed. Disposition, character determines conduct. Take the best act of an unregenerated man's life—say that the founding of a great library of helpful, instructive and morally uplifting books for public use. Why did he found it ? To

glorify God? No, God was not in all his thoughts, he says. He was not trying to do His will, nor to glorify Him. Suppose he sees the advantage in being saved from hell himself. Many sinners appear to believe this. Let him "choose Christ" only because he desires salvation from hell, his motives would be fatally defective, he could not be co-operating with Christ. Christ's name was to be called Jesus because He was to save His people from their sin. This man was not wishing to be rid of sin but only of certain consequences of sin.

(3) Some say that the truth is the efficient cause of regeneration. They build on the fact that truth presents inducements to holier living. They fail to perceive that any truth depends for its attracting power on a love for that which it reveals already in the hearts of the beholders. This view that truth is the efficient cause of regeneration is to be rejected because: 1st, It has mistaken inducements for motives; and because it attributes to inducements a power which they do not possess. Motives are internal. They belong to the agent, are his desires and hates and appetencies and repulsions. Motives determine the volitions of the free-agent. Inducements are only occasions of his action, if his motives be of certain sorts. Unless that which is presented as an inducement is a consideration, his appetency will lay hold of, it will not prove to be ever an occasion of action on his part. Truth may present what ought to be an inducement but which nevertheless is not an inducement, because the tastes of those to whom it is presented do not awake to activity on sight of it. Present God's desires for the salvation of men from selfishness and sin to godliness; and the sinner naturally goes out to Him, not in love but in more hatred. The natural heart is enmity to God. He who is hated, is hated the more in proportion as He is seen with greater clearness. It is clear that the truth can not be regarded by him who thinks clearly as the efficient cause of the regeneration of a sinner who is enmity against God.

Someone may object that the sinner does not hate God but only some view of Him which it mistakes for Him. It is granted that some who love God hate certain representations of Him because they are misrepresentations; but Scripture says: "The mind of the flesh (the natural man) is enmity against God." It is not clear either from Scripture or human experience that the mind of the natural man is enmity against misrepresentation of God. History abounds in these misrepresentations. Go to

heathen pantheons, the gods of which have come ultimately from the misrepresentations of the true God. Men seem to like gods made by men, by compounding true visions of God with their wretched fancies of what they would have their gods to be. Truth will no more make natural men Christians than the light will make a corpse to see. Truth is the God-given instrument for building up Christians in a holy faith and love ; but to make a rebel against God into a child of God, a creative agent is called for—one who can create a new fundamental and controlling disposition in the rebel.

(4) The efficient and *immediate* cause of regeneration is God, God in the person of the Holy Spirit. The reader is reminded that we are using the term regeneration not in the wider sense, inclusive of all the elements of effectual calling, of conviction of sin, enlightening the mind in the knowledge of Christ and renewing our moral dispositions and persuading us to embrace Jesus Christ offered to us in the Gospel. Means are used in convincing us of sin ; and means are used in persuading us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered in the Gospel. This is conceded generally ; but at present we are discussing regeneration in the narrow sense of the term, using it to denote the supernatural illumination of the mind and the supernatural renovation of the will, or the active and practical powers of our nature. In these acts God removes spiritual cataracts from spiritually blind eyes ; and recreates the very capacity for spiritual visions, puts a heart fitted for loving God in place of the heart which is at enmity with God. He graciously brings the principle of spiritual life into being, where before spiritual death has reigned. The soul of the natural man being spiritually dead prior to regeneration, there is no principle of life and power within it to be correlated to means or instruments of regeneration. The unenlightened understanding is unable to apprehend and the unrenewed will is unable to believe. Vital force is lacking in these two principal faculties. What is needed at this point is life and force itself. Consequently the author of spiritual life Himself must operate directly without the use of spiritual means or instruments, and, outright give spiritual life and power to the dead, that is, *ex nihilo*. The new life is not implanted because man perceives the truth : but he perceives the truth because new life has been imparted. A man is not regenerated because he has believed in Christ ; but he believes in Christ with head and

heart because he has been regenerated. He is not regenerated because he first repents, but he repents because he has been regenerated.¹

In support of the thesis that regeneration proper is by the power of the Holy Spirit, let us observe the general tenor of the Scriptures in the following particulars: First: They represent man's natural condition as one of blindness. In Rev. iii. 17, "He that liveth and was dead and is alive for ever more," made John write to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, "Thou . . . knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind." He addresses the church of the Laodiceans as officially represented by its leading minister. He shows it to be blind. If it, notwithstanding all its privileges, was blind, much more the individual natural man, whose privileges are indefinitely less, and those privileges not more appropriated. The Scriptures not only represent man's natural condition as one of blindness, and as one of deadness, but as one of impotency. Rom. v. 6, "For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly." The Scriptures not only represent man's natural condition as one of blindness, of deadness, of impotence, but also, as one of bondage. Acts viii. 23, "I perceive that thou art in the bonds of iniquity." This is said indeed of an individual; but according to Romans i-iii, and many other Scriptures, it might be said of every son and daughter of Adam; though eminently appropriate when said of Simon, the sorcerer. The Scriptures not only represent man's natural condition as one of blindness, of deadness, of impotency, of bondage, but as one of stony-heartedness. Ezek. xi. 19, "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them an heart of flesh." In this passage, God is promising Israel's renewal and restoration. Dr. R. L.

¹ "The words in James i. 18 are sometimes quoted to prove that the truth is a means of regeneration. 'Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth.' The original is *Βουληθεὶς ἀπεκύθησεν ἡμᾶς λόγῳ ἀληθείας*, 'According to his purpose he brought us forth by the word of truth.' *Ἀποκύειν* denotes the maternal act, not the paternal act; as *ἔγεννησεν* primarily does in Psalms ii. 7, 'I have begotten thee.' And *λόγος ἀληθείας* means the gospel as in Eph i. 13, 'After that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation'; and in Col. i. 5, 'Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel which is come unto you as it is in all the world.' The teaching then of St. James in this text is that 'in accordance with the divine purpose man is born a child of God under the gospel dispensation.' There is a similar statement in 1 Pet. i. 23, 'Being born again (*ἀναγεννημένοι*) not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible by the word of God.' The 'word of God' here is not the 'incorruptible seed' itself from which the birth takes place. It denotes the gospel dispensation, like 'the word of truth' in James i. 18. Christians are born again of incorruptible seed, namely of the Holy Spirit under the Christian dispensation. The revised version of this verse is: 'Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God' Shedd: *Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. II, p. 509.

Dabney well says¹, "These are figures but if there is any accuracy or justice in the Bible's use of figures, they must be incompatible with the idea that light alone causes vision in the blind eye, or truth and inducement alone, motion in the dead, bound and helpless soul."

Second: The genuinely supernatural character of regeneration is proved by the Scriptural accounts of the work itself. It is described as a new creation, Ps. li. 10, "Create within me a clean heart, O God." Eph. ii. 10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." It is described further as a new birth, John iii. 5, "Except he be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the Kingdom of heaven." Tit. iii. 5, "According to His mercy, He saved us, by the washing of regeneration." It is described as a resurrection from death, Eph. ii. 1, 4, 5, "And you did He make alive, when you were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom we also all lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God being rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses made us alive together with Christ, by grace are ye saved." It is described as giving a fleshly in place of a stony heart, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." It is described also as due to a miraculous shining of God into our hearts, 2 Cor. iv. 6, "Seeing that it is God that said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness who shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'" Here again, as the creature can not create itself, as the child can not beget itself, as the dead body can not make itself alive, as the stony heart can not change itself, nor the darkness illuminate itself, these figures at once show that the soul can have no part in originating the change, and demand a gracious and almighty power as alone adequate to produce it.

¹ Dabney, *Theology*, p. 568.

Third: There are numerous Scriptures which speak renewing grace as in order to a man's doing the things which a converted man characteristically does. To quote a few: Acts xvi. 14, "Whose (Lydia's) heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things spoken by Paul." Psalm cxix. 18, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Jer. xxxi. 19, "Surely after that I was turned, I repented." Jer. xxxii. 4, "and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they may not depart from me." Ezekiel xxxvi. 27, "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances and do them." John vi. 44, 45, "No man can come unto me except the Father sent me draw him: And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God everyone that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." According to the first of these texts (Acts xvi. 14), the opening of Lydia's heart was done by the Lord that she should attend to the things spoken by Paul. The opening of her heart was antecedent to, and causative of her attending to the things spoken by Paul. The like thing is taught by the prayer voiced in Psalm cxix. 18, "the opening of the eyes is in order to vision." The light which enters by vision can not be the original opening agent.

Fourth: A number of Scriptures distinguish the working of the Holy Spirit from that of the word, toward conversion. 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5—"And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." Here the Apostle makes a clear distinction between "persuasive words" and "demonstration of the Spirit and power." 1 Cor. iii. 6, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." (Verse 9), "Ye are God's husbandry, God's building."

Fifth: The immediate operation of God is asserted in Scripture in not a few places, "in most discriminating forms of speech." John i. 12, 13, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God, even to them that believed in His name; who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Eph.

i. 19, 20, "And what the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places." Eph. ii. 10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God afore prepared that we should walk in them."

Sixth: Certain passages of Scripture represent a man who is in a state of salvation as having no ground for self-praise as over against the unsaved. I Cor. iv. 7, "For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? But if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" Now, if one be made Christ's, not by an almighty and gracious recreation, but by merely yielding to the persuasion brought to bear upon him, he has somewhat whereof to glory, viz, his docility, his readiness to yield to the teaching of Christ's servants.¹

There is a large class of professed theologians of today, who seem to regard the doctrine of regeneration as "a magical doctrine." It is a doctrine of the supernatural; and these men sneer at the notion of the supernatural as a doctrine of the magical. Some of them sit in the seat of Knox and Melville and Henderson and Chalmers. They, nevertheless, cast away plain Scripture teaching, quietly assuming that they are godlike enough to be able to affirm that God does not work in ways that the Bible describes as miraculous or at least as supernatural. They whittle down their conceptions of God—conceive Him as a fallible man. Rationalism rides them.

In further support of the thesis that in regenerating men, the Holy Spirit operates immediately upon their souls and not merely through the Truth, the reader may be pointed to the Scriptural assertion that the Holy Spirit dwells by His mighty power in the souls of believers; that He establishes and maintains a vital union with them. Although this union is often mentioned and though we are taught that the union once established is furthered by faith, there is no intimation of a means of its establishment. Now, God efficiently establishes the union between Himself and a human soul at the time He regenerates that soul. Regeneration would seem to be done as immediately and directly as the formation of the vital union.

¹ Compare Dabney's *Theology*, pp. 568, 569.

Again, were God's works of regeneration through the vitalising of the truth applied to the soul, the soul would need imperatively a direct spiritual quickening in order to profiting by the Truth. A man born blind is not made to see by making more brilliant the light. The eye itself must be changed, it must be changed so as to be competent to the uses of the medium of light. So also the soul spiritually blind must be quickened to life before it can use the light and by it see. Regeneration is not by moral suasion. It is a divine work wrought in an instant, upon a sinner hostile to God, who lacks the spiritual urge toward becoming godly, who is at enmity with God. God may have filled his intellect with one or more truths about Himself. He may pour into his mind on the heels of quickening many other truths about Himself and His grace; and the newly awakened soul may at once begin the living, vital, appropriation of that truth and of all other truth, which by reason of its quickening it is able better to take in. But prior to regeneration, it is spiritually dead and morally unable to save itself or do anything that tendeth thereto.

Strenuous objectors will arise against this doctrine. Some will say: "According to this teaching, God alone can regenerate. There will be few regenerations."

The objector might as well take the position: Since God is the only Creator, there can be few stars. The objection is not well taken.

(1) God has promised to bestow widely regenerating grace. He has promised "to bestow remission of sins on as many as he shall call unto him." Acts ii. 38, 39. "He has exalted Jesus with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins," Acts v. 31. God "also unto the Gentiles hath granted repentance unto life," Acts xi. 18. God has revealed His purpose to regenerate "a multitude which no man can number out of every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues," Rev. vii. 9.

(2) God's regenerative grace under this dispensation is being continually exerted. The Apostle Peter teaches that the Holy Spirit accompanies faithful preachers of the Gospel: "The prophets preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven" 1 Pet. i. 12.

(3) God has promised to pour out regenerating grace in

answer to His people's prayers : " If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him " Luke xi. 13.

Some reader may anxiously inquire : How can I help in my own regeneration, or suggest to another how he can further his regeneration. To him it must be said : You have no agency in your regeneration ; nor can you aid a fellow in this particular work in himself. Remember that we are not using the term regeneration in the wide sense, in which the great John Owen and many others used it—namely as synonymous with effectual calling. We are using it to denote the supernatural renovation of the will, and illumination of the intellect. And you can have no part in this regeneration proper of yourself or your fellow. You can do somewhat in effecting the other elements in effectual calling. You can, for instance, do somewhat to bring about a conviction of yourself and your neighbour, of sinfulness ; which conviction is often a forerunner of regeneration. It is a proof of a man's need of regeneration, and is to that extent a preparation for regeneration, on which the Holy Spirit may, if He chooses, do the great recreative work of regeneration, to which God alone is competent. A man may further this preparation for regeneration not only by the discovery of his need of it but by reading and hearing the word of God. " Faith cometh by hearing," Rom. x. 17 ; and by the diligent study of and meditation on, the word of God. " Take heed how ye hear, for whosoever hath, to him shall be given," Luke viii. 18. By prayer also for the Holy Spirit that He may convict of sin, and regenerate. Our Lord encourages prayer for the Holy Spirit for regeneration, " I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you. If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit *unto them that ask Him* " Luke xi. 9, 13.

In doing those things a man does nothing causative of regeneration, or creative of an obligation on God to come with His regenerative power. Regeneration is wholly of God and is of pure grace on His part. But a man who has done this preparatory work of conviction so far as man can do it, has at least a mind and heart conscious of sin, he knows that he is a sinner and that sin has a terrible hold on him, and he has at least an inkling that he needs mercy. He " feels his need of Him " and

has some truth stored away in his mind which the Holy Spirit, if He regenerate him, may use, when He does recreate him to bring him on in the divine life.

The God of all grace is urgent in His word that men pray for regenerating grace: "The Lord is rich unto all them that call upon Him," Rom. x. 12; "Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found, call upon him while he is near," Isa. lv. 6. Let us not forget that "while regeneration is a sovereign act of God according to election, it is an encouraging fact both for the sinner and the preacher of the word, that God's regenerating grace is commonly bestowed where the preparatory work is performed. This is the rule under the gospel dispensation. He who reads and meditates upon the word of God is ordinarily regenerated by the Holy Spirit, perhaps in the very act of reading. 'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.'" Acts x. 44.¹

There is another question which deserves more attention than we can give within the limits of this paper:

VI. *In regeneration, which faculty, the intellect or the dispositions—fundamental moral dispositions—is more immediately affected by the quickening agent?*

The Pelagians—Socinians, Unitarians and other extreme rationalists, say that the intellect is the faculty primarily affected. They deny all evil fundamental disposition—disposition of the will—hold that regeneration is mere self-determination to a new purpose in life, and that it is wrought by mere moral suasion of truth and inducement. They practically leave out of consideration the Holy Spirit.

The Semi-Pelagians deny that man is dead in trespasses and sin, but assert that he is spiritually very sick—that he has been greatly corrupted by evil desires, is taken up with the cares of the world, weakened with respect to worthy action by bad habits (customs) so that gospel truth fails to engage the soul's attention in such wise as to exert efficacious moral suasion until the Holy Spirit calms and fixes the mind upon it by his gracious suasive influences so that the truth thus given access to the soul, regenerates it.

¹ Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. II, p. 525.

Certain representatives of the Saumur School of Reformed Theology in France, particularly Claude Pajon and some of his disciples, had entertained the view that the change wrought in the soul in regeneration is primarily in the intellect *by the presentation of the truth*, and not in the will, or moral disposition: but that the will by a psychological law follows the truth thus imparted to the intellect; and that thus, upon the presentation of the proper aggregate of truth (including the Gospel truth) the spiritual change follows by a sort of necessity. It was also held that this truth is applied without any direct and immediate action of the Spirit.

There is a fourth class represented by Dr. John Dick, at times by Dr. Archibald Alexander, and in what seems to have been an off moment, or moments, by Dr. Chas. Hodge, which held that the rudiments of our depravity are primarily in the blindness of our minds, and derivatively in the perverted will; that illumination is regeneration since the will follows the judgment of the intellect; but that for this illumination an immediate supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit is necessary. This distinguishes their scheme from that of the Pajonites. However, when asked: Is this immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, which conditions causatively illumination, the sovereign and immediate revolution of the fundamental disposition? they say: No, for the answer yes would imply that the revolution of the disposition tends to produce the illumination. When asked: What then is the cause? they say: "We do not know. The cause lies back of the consciousness." But if the regenerating work of God on man produces merely illumination, then should we not conclude with Pajon that regeneration is mediated through the truth? These great teachers did not hold that regeneration is not a supernatural work of grace but they supposed that the radical change—the illumination of the intellect which God's Spirit with almighty power and grace accomplishes by securing for the truth a spiritual understanding—was, in itself and its consequences that work of grace. The truth being apprehended, they (Dick habitually, and Charles Hodge and Archibald Alexander at least at times) expressed themselves as believing that the renovation of the will follows necessarily, since according to Calvinistic psychology, the souls emotions are governed by its views of the objects thereof, and that the will always follows the latest and most decisive conviction of the understanding.

This explanation of the rise of volitions by the assertion that the will always follows the latest and decisive convictions of the understanding, needs to be carried a step further, back into the source of convictions. We should raise the question : How does the soul come to have its convictions, particularly on moral subjects ? If it be true that man feels as his mind sees, it is pertinent to ask : " How is it that the mind sees as it does, particularly on moral subjects ? " Are its convictions always of purely intellectual origin ? Or is it not true that moral opinions follow the heart to no small extent ?

Dr. R. L. Dabney was a profound thinker on psychological subjects. He taught that there are radical dispositions of the active and practical powers of the soul—of the will—which are as truly spiritual appetencies as the bodily appetites are animal appetencies ; and that just as our judgments as to the physical excellence of certain foods are in part echoes of our physical gratification by those kinds of foods, so our judgments of spiritual objects are determined in part by our spiritual tastes—our spiritual likes and dislikes ; and that these judgments, " however purely intellectual when abstracted from their source, are yet but the echoes of the original or regenerated appetencies of the will."¹

He continues : " Let us apply this analysis to the sinner's conversion. Why does the renewed sinner embrace Christ as a Saviour from sin, by his faith and new obedience, instead of sin ? Because his understanding illuminated by grace, now judges clearly that salvation and new obedience are not only the obligatory but the preferable good. The original native disposition of the will was to prefer sin and dislike obedience. It was only because the Holy Ghost sovereignly revolutionised the disposition of the will that he changed his taste. This revolution of the will was the primary cause ; the illumination of the intellect the immediate consequence ; and faith and repentance the practical result. Thus the profound Pascal (*Pensées* Ire Partie, §3), ' God alone can put divine truths into the soul ; and by the mode which pleases Him. I know He hath willed them to enter from the heart into the mind, and not from the mind into the heart in order to humble the proud power of reasoning which presumes to be judge of the things the will chooses, and in order to heal this infirm will, which has wholly corrupted itself by its unworthy

¹ Dabney, *Theology*, pp. 574, 575.

attachments. And hence it results, that while in speaking of human affairs, men say : One must know in order to love, which hath passed into a proverb ; the saints on the contrary say, in speaking of divine things : One must love in order to know.'"¹

In support of the correctness of this bit of psychology, see Eph. iv. 18, "Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart." Here the Apostle traces sinful ignorance to the heart as its source. He describes the Gentiles as "darkened in their understanding because alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, *because of the hardening of the heart.*" A hard heart is the ultimate source of sinful ignorance. Acts xvi. 14 : "A certain woman named Lydia . . . whose heart the Lord opened to give heed to the things spoken by Paul." If the natural heart is at enmity with God and can not be subject to Him, no exhibition of God's gracious efforts to save a man from his sin will serve as objective inducement to him to turn from his sin. Any object whatsoever is not inducement to every being whatsoever. "One can not attract a hungry horse with bacon, nor a hungry man with hay. Whether an object shall be an inducement depends on its relation to the existing appetency of the being to be influenced. And that state of appetency is obviously related, as cause, to the influence of the inducement, as occasion. Hence, if the sinner's will is naturally indisposed and disabled to all spiritual good, that good can not exert moral suasion over that will ; for the simple reason that the effect cannot reverse its own cause."²

These various considerations lead to the sure conviction that the primary seat of sin in the soul is the moral disposition and that the faculty of the soul primarily affected in regeneration is the "will," if we use that term in the wide sense, or the active and practical powers which were perverted with the first sin—given a perverted moral character ; and that in regeneration the renovation of the moral dispositions is not only supernatural but immediate—by the naked power of God on the naked heart of the sinner.

Were this paper not already too long, we might consider the first great consequence in the sinner of regeneration.

¹ Dabney, *Theology*, p. 575.

² Dabney, *Theology*, p. 577.

VII. *The Consequence, Subjective to The Sinner.*

The grand consequence of regeneration, subjective to the sinner is conversion ; or, considered in its two branches, is faith and repentance ; but these consequences are of such practical importance that they should be dealt with in distinct papers.

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