

show, in a word, the relations of grace and faith, to this part of the salvation of God. Briefly stated, the redeemed are ransomed, rescued, and raised. The whole of this work proceeds upon the principle of grace, and according to the law of faith.

Grace is everywhere apparent in the ransom. The Son of Man himself tells us that he came "to give his life a ransom for many." The devoting, then, of his life for this purpose was a pure gift, and was, originally in no wise a due from him; and subsequently, there was not, nor could be, anything acquired by them that are redeemed, which could be of the nature of a due to them.

The rescue, like the ransom, is wholly of grace. As God delivered the children of Israel from Egypt by favour according to the law of faith, so he delivers his ransomed ones, their antitype. The type exactly foreshadowed the antitype. God had accepted the title of the Redeemer of Israel, and assumed the responsibility of their redemption purely of favour, and he wrought their deliverance accordingly. "I am come down," said he to Moses, "to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians;" and "by strength of hand" he brought them out. They did not deliver themselves. They could not. It had never been made their duty. Had this been so, and the duty been discharged, the glory of their deliverance would have been their own. So, also, it has never been made the duty of those that are ransomed by the gift of the life of Christ to rescue themselves. Had this been so, and the duty been discharged, they would owe their rescue to themselves and might claim the glory of it. They would then have "whereof to glory," though not, indeed, before God. That is, they would have something whereof to boast that is righteously due to them as a debt according to law, though not anything that is meritoriously acquired above the requirements of law. Works then, and not faith, would have been the rule of their deliverance. But it is God, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath

translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." He bound the strong man armed. He took the prey from the mighty. He delivered the lawful captive. He led his ransomed ones into their inheritance. All is of gift and acceptance.

So is the raising. The redeemed that are quickened together with Christ, are, at this present time, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is a higher state than the earthly places in which Adam stood originally. Redemption is more than a restoration. It is more than the restoration of the lost image. The redeemed have borne the image of the earthly; they are raised to bear that of the heavenly. It is more than a restoration of the lost state. Creation gave an earthly state; redemption gives a heavenly one. All this is of grace. Man in his created state had all that was due from his Creator to a creature possessing his endowments. He was entitled to look for nothing more. He lost all. He became criminal. He deserved to die. Is it supposable that if, in his uprightness and honour he was entitled to look for nothing more as a due from his Creator, that he should have the right to expect something more now under his fall and disgrace? If by the discharge of his natural duty man might not expect an advancement upon his original condition, is it to be imagined that it has been made his duty to advance himself from his fallen state to a higher than his first by obedience rendered according to some law? Yet this is the theology of every one who teaches that it is the duty of the unregenerate to believe with the heart in Christ in order to their elevation to the supernatural standing of those who are redeemed unto God by the blood of his Son.

Justification is another of the essential elements of salvation. Grace and the law of faith wholly obtain in this also. "It is God that justifieth." He devised all and he accomplished all. He admitted and provided the Surety. He wounded and bruised the Substitute for the iniquities of the principals. He discharged and raised and honoured the Surety when the respon-

sibilities of his suretiship, so far as his substitution was concerned, had been fully met. He bestows the precious blessing of the acquired righteousness upon the ungodly for their justification. He justifies them. They are from first to last, "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Their justification, therefore, was no due from him.

Neither is it a due from men to God that, in whole or in part, they should justify themselves. Men receive this blessing from the Lord, this righteousness from the God of their salvation. They are "justified by faith;" that is, according to the law of faith, the principles of which are giving and receiving as a matter of pure favour on both sides. This is the meaning of the term, "justified by faith," in the Scriptures. This expression is almost universally taken to mean that sinners are justified by their belief; and it is almost as extensively taught that the belief is a duty. Nothing can be more erroneous, and no error more mischievous. Nothing but righteousness justifies, and this is of God. Men "receive the gift of righteousness." By no possible act of his own can a sinner be justified. Sinners, therefore, are not justified by the discharge of any duty. Neither does the discharge of any duty whatever contribute in the slightest degree to their justification. If it had been made the duty of a sinner to believe with the heart unto (that is, in order to) righteousness, justification would then be by the law of works, not by the law of faith. No doubt that sinners blessed with an appreciative and receptive power do believe with the heart unto righteousness, but they discharge no duty in so doing. Cannot those who make it the duty of a sinner to believe with the heart unto righteousness perceive that in so doing they have as much "fallen from grace" as had those who had accepted the doctrine that it was their duty to be circumcised in order to their justification? Are any so wanting in perspicacity as to be unable to see that the discharge of any duty in order to the enjoyment of any good whatever is altogether alien from the law of faith?

Lastly, regeneration also forms a constituent element of salvation. "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. iii. 5. Grace, then, and the law of faith rule here also. God was under no obligation, originally, to regenerate a sinner; but he does this according to his mercy. Neither was it ever made the duty of a sinner to regenerate himself. If any one imagines this to be a mistake from what God said to Israel by Ezekiel, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit," he has yet to learn to distinguish the law of works and its use among the Jews, from the law of faith and the place it holds in the economy of grace. But does not the idea of a man regenerating himself represent itself to the mind as nonsense of the broadest type? Because there are mysteries in the religion of Christ, it would seem that there are those who will not hesitate to derive thence, in support of a favourite theory, a divine warrant to propagate the grossest of absurdities and perpetrate the silliest of mummeries, and who will make such follies to belong inherently to the highest manifestation of the wisdom of God. No teacher vents so much nonsense under the guise of mystery, nor contradicts plain truth and himself so flatly and unblushingly—we do not say insincerely—as the ordinary religious instructor. He will often light on two testimonies, each of which, to his mind, contradicts the other. He says that he cannot, and that he is not bound to reconcile them. He affirms that each is true. He believes them both. He demands, often on pain of a terrible retribution, a practical acceptance of the truth of both in his view of their meaning, although this is confessedly self-contradictory, and does not seem to know that the human mind cannot receive, and that it does not come within the range of human powers to act on both testimonies of a contradiction; neither does it appear that he is at all conscious that he is talking folly, *ex cathedra*, on the most momentous of all subjects. What mummery has been perpetrated, and what nonsense uttered about regeneration! Some, having, it is

presumed, been so regenerated themselves, regenerate their neighbours by the performance of a religious rite; a rite that is plainly and, indeed, in the judgment of many that still observe it, confessedly without any Scripture authority. Others, having, as it is to be supposed, so regenerated themselves, cry in the ears of all, "Only believe, only believe!" confident, it seems, of the practicability and efficacy of a simple volition to work a radical change in a sinful man's whole moral being.

But this great change is the work of God. The very terms by which it is designated in the Scriptures demonstrate this truth. Beside the word regeneration, which is usually employed in speaking and writing to represent this change, it is spoken of as a creation, a resurrection, and a transformation. Is the work represented by such terms as these predicable of a man upon himself, or upon others? To those that know the grace of God in themselves it will ever be an unspeakable joy to see this moral miracle in others; but in periods when multitudes are converted under extraordinarily exciting conditions, a very natural fear will possess the minds of sober persons that the possibility of a conversion which is purely the work of man, and one that has no basis in regeneration, (which is the sole work of God) will in too many cases prove a fact. To be instrumental in converting a fellow-sinner to Christ is something an angel might covet; but he that persuades to a profession of Christ, any one who is without such Christian principle as is the fruit of the Spirit, tempts a terrible consequence, grave enough to make men and angels weep.

If, then, it was never made the duty of a sinner to regenerate himself, will it not follow that it was never a due from him to produce in himself spiritual faculties? We know, on the highest authority, that, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Ought he to produce in himself this perceptive faculty? If it will not stand with any sane conception of things that a man is obliged to produce in himself a new and supernatural faculty, will it stand nevertheless that

it is his duty to exert a new and supernatural act, the enabling faculty for which he does not possess, and which was never a due from him to have? We know on the authority just mentioned, that, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Ought a man, then, to exert that power which is indicated in the words, "Enter into the kingdom"? That is, ought he to act by a faculty which he has not, and which it never was his duty to have? But even if an unregenerate man were under the extraordinary obligations indicated here, would not such a state of things be wholly subversive of the law of faith in relation to this part of the salvation of God? Would not works be the law in force here?

Substantially the same remarks will apply to every other branch of the salvation of God. Everything contributory to the saving of a sinner yet to be accomplished, after his regeneration, "belongeth unto the Lord." All, therefore, that there is yet to do or to possess, is to be done and possessed, according to the law of faith. Nothing of all to be done or to be possessed is made the duty of the regenerated man to accomplish or to acquire. Unto the consummation of his salvation, "The just shall live by faith." Eternal life as it is possessed and enjoyed here and hereafter, is purely the gift of God. Whatever, therefore, without him or within him, that is requisite for the preservation and the perseverance of the believer in Christ, is effectually secured to him, and the whole is of grace. Faith, as a law of living, will obtain, and "grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

As grace will complete the whole, so this precious principle will characterize the whole when finished. As the law of works is shut out from everything belonging to the salvation of God here, so it will be hereafter. It may be that there will be degrees in glory, arising from the sovereign pleasure of God. But if there are — a proposition that is open to the gravest objections — inferior and superior degrees established among the saints in light, among those that are perfectly trans-

formed into the image of Christ, among those that are all one in him, and among the children when they are at home, this difference will not be of works. At best this difference is a very doubtful theory when it is based on the sound principle of divine sovereignty. But they have more than founded a doubtful theory on a sound principle who would give a superior place in heaven to those believers that have rendered a better obedience or a longer service on earth than others. They have conjured up a palpable and mischievous delusion from a false notion. They have made degrees of glory in the salvation of God in heaven to be of the law of works; and they, in effect, teach worms to put on the airs of boasting pride before the throne of the Most High! No terms are too strong to reprehend justly the perniciousness of this detestable doctrine.

Salvation, then, in sum, is the design purposed to be brought to pass by the economy of grace. Salvation in every part of it from beginning to end is so of grace that in nothing is it a due from God to the sinner; and it is so according to the law of faith, as to its appropriation, possession, enjoyment, and all the means necessary thereto, as to exclude all duty necessarily and wholly. From first to last, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

If these truths are thoroughly digested, it will be no presumption to predict that a complete revolution will follow in not a few minds as to the meaning of the word faith in many of its occurrences in the Scriptures. But the change will be from error to truth; from confusion to clearness. No one that does so digest them when, for instance, he reads again, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," will imagine that "faith" there simply means belief, and that the belief is a duty.

But if the law of works has no place in the economy of grace in relation to the purpose and the accomplishment of salvation, it nevertheless holds an important sphere of its own therein. If this law has nothing to

do with the saving of sinners, it has a great deal to do with those that are saved.

Moral law is ever in force among moral beings in whatever state they may happen to be. It is inconceivable that a man can ever be released from the law which obliges him to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. It is monstrous to suppose that a Christian is relieved from this obligation. Why should he be? It is cheerfully enough admitted that a regenerated man will be naturally disposed under the prevailing power of Christian principle to live in conformity with this law; but is it to be supposed that because he is raised to a privileged state, and endowed with a law-loving disposition, he is therefore to be freed from obligation? No fallacy could be more egregious. But while it is conceded that a Christian is naturally disposed by the prevailing power of godly principle to love and delight in the law of his God, it is past question that this disposition is often overmastered by another. What Christian is there, save such a one that is blinded by pious pride, that is not found sometimes confessing his faults in the Apostle's language, "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I"? Does he on any grounds excuse himself for the wrong? Emphatically and indignantly, he will answer, No. And this is just. For independently of his privileged standing, and of his sympathies and antipathies, he experiences that he is, and knows that he must be, under moral law. Whether he likes or dislikes it, whichever of the principles in him that "are contrary the one to the other" may be in the ascendant, a Christian is always bound by divine law to keep the moral commandments of God, and he is subject to an economical penalty for every breach. If he is instructed in the gospel he will not endeavour to his utmost, with a sense of slavish dread, to observe the precepts of this law with any view to his justification as a sinner before God; but he will try to put forth all his powers to do so with filial sentiments that he may not be prevented by transgression

from enjoying communion with his beloved Lord. In case of disobedience, he will not dread the damnation of hell as the penalty of his wrong; but his flesh will tremble for fear of his God, and he will be afraid of the judgments of his displeased Lord. If, on the other hand, his heart is sound in God's statutes, and he has respect to all the commandments binding on him, he will not imagine the proud folly that this economical righteousness forms the matter of his justification as a sinner; but he will experience an unashamedness before God, and in his intercourse with his Lord he will lift up his face with confidence.

Not only is the law of works in force in the economy of grace respecting moral law, but it obtains also in relation to what is specifically, and may be so designated, Christian law. Precisely the same state of things obtained under the typical economy. The Jews, in common with all men, were under the moral law; but they were also specially bound for particular reasons to observe, what was specifically, Jewish law. There were things to be done by law in the typical economy which, if a properly qualified Jew did not do, the omission would have been to him a sin; but if the same things had been done by a Jew not so qualified, or by a Gentile, the doing would have been a transgression. The antitype answers to the type herein. Some things there are that a Christian by the law of Christ is obliged to do, which if he does not the omission will be to him a sin. Were others that are not Christians to do the same things they would transgress.

When the Lord Jesus, said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;" he clearly pointed out a distinction of persons and precepts. He that hath the commandments of Christ is one that has been brought into relation to him. One that, having found favour, has become a willing subject. One that, having experienced the power of the cross of Christ, has become devotedly attached to his throne. One that, having obtained mercy, is not only willing to render an obedience to his merciful Lord, but is fer-

vently desirous to have some service prescribed to him that by serving he may practically testify his affectionate gratitude. As another can feel none of these obligations, and have none of these sentiments, so neither has he any of these commandments. He that is not a disciple of Christ, is under no obligation to observe specially Christian precepts. More; if an unbeliever practises those things that are specially commanded to believers, he will add presumption to his unbelief. He is ineligible to keep the special precepts of Christ.

Among the commandments of Christ that are specially Christian may be reckoned that confession of him which he requires of his disciples at whatever cost this may be to them as to their worldly substance, their kinsmen and friends, or their life. It is clear that the Lord Jesus bound his disciples to such a confession at whatever sacrifice this might involve; but it is equally clear that he neither bound nor expects others to do anything of the kind. Indeed, if others imitate Christians herein, they are but imitators, and must be dealt with accordingly. Believers, according to the commandment of Christ, ought to be baptized; but an unbeliever is under no obligation to observe this ordinance. More; no unbeliever ought to be baptized; and no minister of religion who understands the Scriptures, and reveres the authority of Christ, will ever dare, wittingly, to baptize one that believes not. Christians are obliged to keep the feast of the Lord's Supper. "Do this," said the Lord to his disciples, "for my memorial." But if another than a Christian does this, one that has no spiritual power to discern Jesus in the ordinance, he acts presumptuously, he partakes of the sacred symbols unworthily, and becomes "guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord."

The "new commandment" (John xiii. 34,) must be included among those that are specially Christian. Both as to its reason and to its rule, this differs from the old commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The reason of the old commandment is simply moral; that of the new is Christian; that is, the love of

Christians to Christians is to be shown for Christ's sake. We say, shown, because this affection is as far superior to mere feeling as is a living energy to an empty utterance of an expression of sentiment. The rule of the old commandment is, "as thyself;" this of the new is, "as I have loved you." In the former case a man's neighbour is to be set on a level with himself; in the latter a Christian is to advance his fellow-Christian above, or before himself. Jesus taught his disciples that he that sitteth at meat is greater than he that serveth; "but," said the Lord of all, "I am among you as one that serveth." Answerably to this example, the new commandment must be interpreted as binding Christians to prefer each other in honour; to submit themselves one to another; each to esteem other better than themselves; and all to make themselves of no reputation, cheerfully to take upon themselves the form of a servant, and in this capacity lovingly to serve their brethren "for Jesus' sake." But more; Jesus repeated his commandment to his disciples with a very important additional instruction. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." From this, then, it will be seen without doubt, that Christians, if occasion require, "ought to lay down their lives for the brethren." But all this is peculiarly Christian law for Christians. Bound as all men are, independently of belief in Christ, to love their neighbours as themselves, no unbeliever is obliged to love a Christian, as such, more than he is a heathen. If a heathen refuses to prefer in honour a Christian, as such, before himself, to esteem him better than himself, to submit to him, and to lay down his life for him, he will be a transgressor of no precept under which he is bound; but a default in either of these cases would be chargeable upon a Christian as a breach of the "new commandment."

But here a question of considerable importance presents itself, namely, What are the consequences

which arise to the Christian from obedience to moral and Christian law, and what from disobedience? In the case of Adam in Eden it may be taken that the maintenance and loss of a right to his standing and life were involved in his obedience or disobedience; and in the case of the Jews in Canaan the retention or the forfeiture of their inheritance. What reward, then, will arise to the Christian from obedience, and what penalty from disobedience?

By obedience, even the most perfect that ever was or ever will be rendered, no reward of merit, properly speaking, is acquired. Rewards of merit from God are beyond the reach of men in any state; but rewards of debt are not. If the Divine Sovereign is pleased to give a promise of good upon the principle of works, he makes himself a debtor on the fulfilment of the conditions upon which it was given. When, therefore, God gives the Christian a commandment with promise, and a due obedience is rendered, the good promised becomes a reward of debt. But it ought to be distinctly and constantly held in mind that everything which constitutes salvation itself, and all that may be necessary in order to its being acquired and possessed, are of the Lord; and that absolutely nothing belonging to these was ever made the subject matter of a promise to sinner or to saint, to be fulfilled upon the keeping of any commandment. "For ye are saved by grace, through the faith (of Jesus Christ;) and this (namely, *ye are saved*, all that is comprehended in the completion of the whole action of the word *saved*, is) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not of works, that no man may boast." Eph. ii. 8, 9.

But if the Christian can contribute absolutely nothing to his salvation by any obedience which he can render, in keeping the commandments of his God and Saviour, he can do much by which he will experience, in exact accordance with the law of works, that in a thousand things "there is great reward." Among very many other advantages which might be mentioned, he will enjoy confidence towards God at all times. When he walks in

paths of light and pleasantness, and when he walks in darkness and has no light. Not only when, appreciably to himself, all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth; but when, also, the methods of God in his providence and grace are as if his Father were cruel to him. Communion will be another privilege. "If a man love me," said Jesus, "he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." God will walk with that man who walks before him. A good conscience will be another advantage. Before God, though an honest man may stand in the good opinion of all others who know him, it profits him nothing so long as he stands out of his own; but if he stands in his own, this will sustain him even when he may stand out of every one's else. When the friends of the afflicted man of Uz charged him with wrong, he appealed from them to God, and said to him, "Thou knowest that I am not wicked." Spiritual fruitfulness will be another advantage. "He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Respecting the penalty of disobedience to Christians, two or three things require to be premised. Disobedience is frequently chargeable upon them. If any Christians say they have no sin they deceive themselves; and if they say they have not sinned, they make God a liar. In many things we offend all, both against moral and against Christian law. Further, God, as King and Father, in his economical dealings with his subjects and children, punishes them for their transgressions; but this punishment, it should be observed, is wholly independent of, and different from the judicial penalty of their sins, which was borne alone by their Surety, when he was wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities. Further, that in all economical punishments God never deals with his children after their sins, nor rewards them, according to their iniquities (Psa. ciii. 10;) but, which is wholly unlike the judicial penalty borne by Christ, he ever punishes them less than their faults deserve. (Ezra ix. 13.) Further, unlike the case of Adam in Eden,

and like that of the Jews in Canaan, repentance is admitted to Christians. For them there is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared. If they confess their sins, God is faithful and just to forgive them their sins. "If any (Christian) man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." 1 John i. 1. Yet one thing more: just as the Christian contributes nothing to his salvation by his obedience, so he suffers the loss of nothing that constitutes his salvation by his disobedience. Being entirely of the Lord, this great matter exists wholly independently of Christian obedience, and is altogether unharmed by Christian disobedience; and concerning nothing of all that "God doeth," can it be affirmed more completely and confidently than of "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory," that "nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." It is immutably true that, "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom. viii. 29, 30. No obedience of man ever formed a link in that wondrous chain of sequences, which Christians can never enough admire, and no disobedience has ever broken, or ever can break one.

What then is the penalty of Christian disobedience? Much, and many things, the barest contemplation of the least of which may well enough fill a Christian with awe, and lead him to say humbly to God, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." But this is a subject which must not be elaborated here. Briefly, by their faults, churches may lose their purity of doctrine, their spiritual vitality, their moral honour, their "candlestick," and their organic existence. Ministers may build improper materials on the true foundation, and suffer the loss of their reward; they may make shipwreck concerning the faith; they may defile the temple of God, and themselves may be defiled by God; (*phtheirei, phtherei*,

1 Cor. iii. 17;) that is, God may put them aside as vessels that are unsanctified and unfit for his, the Master's, use, and they may end their days in that condition which, for himself, Paul so earnestly deprecated and so sedulously endeavoured to avoid, namely, O horrible consummation! that of a castaway. Christians of every condition, although not condemned with the world, are, nevertheless, judged of the Lord. Although their God will never suffer his loving kindness and faithfulness to fail, yet if they forsake his law, and walk not in his judgments; if they break his statutes, and keep not his commandments, he will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. If they walk contrary to him, he will walk contrary to them. If they sow to their flesh, they shall of the flesh reap corruption. Pride will lead to destruction. A haughty spirit will be followed by a fall. Covetousness will tend to penury. Envy will be the rottenness of the bones. Wrath will bring strife and drive away peace. A lying tongue will be silenced in shame. The house of the idle will drop through. A backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways. Fleshly lusts indulged will become an army with banners warring against the soul. Sin will separate from communion with God, and make all the means of his grace dry breasts. What God said to Israel by Azariah he says to Christians now: "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." Indeed, over and above all of a like kind recorded in the New Testament, having a due regard to existing differences, almost all the promises and threatenings, the reasonings and the invitations which were delivered to the Jews, not only may, but should be, transferred to Christians. *Those* were to enjoy their Jewish, *these* are to enjoy their Christian privileges, by keeping the commandments of God. All those promises, and threatenings, and expostulations, and invitations, addressed to the Jews in the typical economy were written, partly, for the learning of Christians. Christians, therefore, should be

taught their truth and importance relative to themselves. But the monstrous blunder and criminal folly already alluded to, namely, the use of the language of the law of works addressed to the Jews as that of the law of faith addressed to men in general, cannot be avoided with a too sedulous care, nor, where it is found, be denounced too strongly, by whomsoever it may be committed, or sanctioned.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE BEGINNER AND THE PERFECTER OF THE FAITH;
THE PROPORTION OF THE FAITH; THE RIGHTEOUSNESS
OF THE FAITH; AND THE MYSTERY, SHIELD, AND SPIRIT
OF THE FAITH.

IF I may be permitted to urge the importance of the subject as a justification of the lengthened remarks made on the first example of the word *faith* construed after a noun, perhaps I may excuse myself for the brevity of what may be said on others which it may be felt necessary to notice, from the length of what has been said already.

We have an example of the construction under consideration in Heb. xii. 2, where "faith" is construed after two words which represent, in part, the acquired character of our Lord Jesus. Jesus is here said to be the "Author and the Finisher of the faith"; but as to what is meant there is a considerable divergence of opinion, save that all seem to be of one mind that faith must be understood in a subjective sense.

Respecting the words here rendered Author and Finisher, there ought to be no doubt that the ideas of beginning and perfecting are represented by them. With submission, I would rather say Beginner and Perfecter, than Author and Finisher; for, with respect to Finisher, while *telein*, equally with *teleioun*, will mean to finish, the latter, the root of the word in question, will signify the perfect quality of the finishing attained. But of what is Jesus here said to be the

Beginner and Perfecter? Our version having added the word "*our*," supplies one answer. On authority so high it is no wonder that this view should have many firm adherents. All, perhaps, of the older English expositors explain according to this opinion. Owen may be taken as a sample. He says that Christ is the Author and the Finisher of our faith by reason "of procurement and real efficiency;" that "he by his death and obedience procured this grace for us." He adds further, "So he is the Author or Beginner of our faith in the efficacious working of it in our hearts by his Spirit; and the Finisher of it in all its effects in liberty, peace and joy, and all the fruits of it in obedience." But however true and pleasing these thoughts about Jesus may be in themselves, it is felt that, when employed to express the mind of the apostle speaking of him as the "Beginner and Perfecter of the faith," they are utterly unsatisfactory.

Another view may be given in the words of Bengel. He says, "By this appellation Jesus is distinguished from all those who are enumerated in chap. xi. He himself is the only matchless example, the only rule and standard of our faith. He is called the *Prince and Finisher of faith*, because he himself showed faith in the Father from the beginning to the end." For, ourselves, we cannot receive this exposition. Christ an example of trust is the sum of this interpretation; the true one will present him as an object of trust also. Unquestionably he is an example of trust and of all else that is excellent, and it is equally without doubt that this feature of his character is found in this connexion; but there is also something exhibited to incite confidence as well as to provoke emulation. And this is needful. Sinful and weak believers, in the struggles and conflicts of their life, require for their encouragement something more than the example of One who was without sin, and who knew no moral weakness. They have more. In their infirmity of purpose and of power against all fightings without and fears within, they are encouraged to run the race, looking trustfully to Jesus,

who giveth power to the faint, and increaseth strength in them that have no might. While compassed about with a whole cloud of witnesses, who have in their day run the same race, won the prize, and have left to all that come after them the benefit of their example, believers have in Christ, the Beginner and Perfecter of the great scheme of favour, designated "the faith," an object of trust throughout their whole course, to assure them of their perseverance and final success.

Bengel's opinion is shared by other men of name, and among these is Alford; but he goes further. It is true that the remarks by which he conveys his more extended views on perfecting the faith are somewhat perplexed; but we may gather with certainty what, in his judgment, faith itself in this text does not, if we cannot what it does, mean. For, speaking of *the faith*, he says, "That faith of which we have been speaking through chap. xi.: and thus, rather *the faith* than *our faith*, which latter is soliable to the mistake so often made in English, viz., to be taken as if it were equivalent to *faith in us*, so that Jesus should be said to be the Author and Finisher of each individual Christian's faith which he has within him." I am very grateful that Dean Alford should lend the weight of his name to correct the very prevalent mistake of which he speaks, and am equally sorry to be unable to receive the rest of his teaching on this text. No doubt the beginning and the perfecting of the individual faith of believers is a great, is a Divine work; but it is devoutly to be wished that men, especially teachers of religion, will leave off supposing that these great names of Jesus Christ receive a satisfactory interpretation when the beginning and completing of that operation are considered as the sum of their significance. What, then, is the meaning?

Wholly unsanctioned as the opinion may be, and, perhaps, is, by any great name, no other interpretation satisfies my mind than that which makes the words, "The Beginner and the Perfecter of the faith," to represent the official engagements, the responsibilities,

and work of Jesus, in connection with that great scheme which has been planned for the salvation of his people, and which here, as frequently elsewhere, is called "the faith." This view I hold to be strongly corroborated by the terms used in relation to the accomplishment of salvation in chap. ii. 10. There we are taught that Jesus, as it respects his official character, was made perfect through sufferings; and we know that the perfecting of his character and the perfecting of his work were contemporaneous, and were effected by the same means. But what in particular corroborates our judgment of his being the Beginner and the Perfecter of the faith, in the view we take of it, is that the word rendered "Author," in chap. xii. 2, is the same as that which is rendered "Captain" in chap. ii. 10; and the verb rendered "make perfect," in the latter place is the root of the substantive, rendered "Finisher" in the former.

As we read these Scriptures, therefore, we find the Beginner of salvation perfected through sufferings in chap. ii. 10; and the Beginner and the Perfecter of the faith in chap. xii. 2, presented as an object of trust to believers, for their confidence and comfort throughout the whole of their suffering and sorrowing course. If they suffered, their afflictions had been foretold; these were, in the nature of things, a moral certainty, and had been accomplished in their brethren already; nevertheless they had for their consolation, the end of their faith, that of which Christ is the Beginner and Perfecter, which is the salvation of their souls. And—

" A hope so much divine,
May trials well endure."

The point which they were to "consider" respecting Jesus in verse 3, was not so much an example of excellence in suffering to emulate, as one of fact, the recurrence of which might, in their own case, be looked for with the moral certainty of its coming to pass. For as an infant cannot equal a giant

in feats of strength, so it would not sound like the voice of wisdom if some one were heard encouraging a babe to emulate a man in prowess and power. So, therefore, those who "cannot do the things that they would" in the spiritual conflict, because of the lustings of the flesh against the spirit, can hardly be encouraged with any wisdom to equal the example of Him overcoming all opposition, who was "Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" and who could say of himself, "The prince of this world cometh, but he hath nothing in me." But if Jesus is pointed out to those that are resisting almost to blood, striving against sin, as the Beginner and the Perfecter of that grand scheme called faith, which has their salvation for its purpose; and if multitudes, as a cloud of witnesses, are introduced, who have, within the sphere of faith, looked to him trustfully and come off victorious, the heartening will be as forceful for its propriety as it will be pertinent to the occasion.

Let us now pass to a brief consideration of another example of this construction, namely, the *proportion* or *analogy* of the faith. When the apostle spoke of "the proportion of (the) faith" in Rom. xii. 6, he undoubtedly intended the word "faith" to represent the idea of doctrine. He that prophesies must prophesy according to the proportion of that doctrine; and this is so designated, among other reasons, to distinguish it from that of the law; from that of all other religions; from that of all the different schools of philosophy then existing; and, perhaps, from "that most curious amalgam of Hellenic and Oriental speculation with Jewish superstition, which was afterward called the Gnostic heresy." As "faith" serves to represent the principle on which the salvation of sinners originated, proceeds, and will be finished, so this word fitly designates the true teaching on this great subject. Therefore, while it may be possible to imagine a false doctrine, or to give a false interpretation of a Scripture text, which is in harmony with the principle of faith, it will be impossible to imagine a true doctrine of salvation, or to give a true exposition