

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

CHAPTER XV.

REGENERATION

§ 1. *Usage of the Word.*

THE subjective change wrought in the soul by the grace of God, is variously designated in Scripture. It is called a new birth, a resurrection, a new life, a new creature, a renewing of the mind, a dying to sin and living to righteousness, a translation from darkness to light, etc. In theological language, it is called regeneration, renovation, conversion. These terms are often used interchangeably. They are also used sometimes for the whole process of spiritual renovation or restoration of the image of God, and sometimes for a particular stage of that process. Thus Calvin gives the term its widest scope: “Uno verbo pœnitentiam interpretor regenerationem, cujus non alius est scopus nisi ut imago Dei, quæ per Adæ transgressionem fœdata et tantum non oblitterata fuerat, in nobis reformetur. . . . Atque hæc quidem instauratio non uno momento, vel die, vel anno impletur, sed per continuos, imo etiam lentos interdum profectus abolet Deus in electis suis carnis corruptelas.”¹

With the theologians of the seventeenth century conversion and regeneration were synonymous terms. In the acts of the Synod of Dort, we find such expressions as “Status conversionis aut regenerationis,” and “effecta ad conversionem sive regenerationem prævia.” John Owen, in his work on the Holy Spirit, follows the same usage. The fifth chapter of the third book of that work is entitled “The nature of regeneration,” and one of the heads under this is, “Conversion not wrought by moral suasion only.” “If the Holy Spirit,” he says, “acts no otherwise on men in regeneration or conversion,” then so and so follows. Turretin, as we have seen, distinguishes between what he calls “conversio habitualis” and “conversio actualis.” “Conversio habitualia seu passiva, fit per habituum supernaturalium infusionem a Spiritu Sancto. Actualis vero seu activa per bonorum istorum exercitium. . . . Per illam homo renovatur et convertitur a Deo. Per istam homo a Deo renovatus et convertus convertit se ad Deum, et actus agit. Illa melius regeneratio dicitur, quia se habet ad modum novæ nativitatis, qua homo reformatur ad imaginem Creatoris sui. Ista vero conversio, quia includit hominis ipsius operationem.”² This is clear and accurate. As these two things are distinct they should be designated by different terms. Great confusion arises from this ambiguity of terms. The questions whether man is active or passive in regeneration and whether regeneration is effected by the mediate or immediate influence of the Spirit must be answered in one way if regeneration includes conversion, and in another if it be taken in its restricted sense. In the Bible, the distinction is generally preserved; *μετάνοια*, repentance, change of mind, turning to

¹ *Institutio*, lib. III. cap. iii. 9, edit. Berlin, 1834, vol. i. p. 389.

² *Locus xv. quæs. iv. 13*, edit. Edinburgh, 1847, vol. ii. p. 460.

God, *i.e.*, conversion, is what man is called upon to do; ἀναγέννησις, regeneration, is the act of God. God regenerates; the soul is regenerated. In the Romish Church justification is making subjectively just, *i.e.*, free from sin and inwardly holy. So is regeneration. So is sanctification. These terms, therefore, in the theology of that church are constantly interchanged.

Even by the Lutherans, in the “Apology for the Augsburg Confession,” regeneration is made to include justification. That is, it is made to include the whole process by which the sinner is transferred from a state of sin and condemnation into a state of salvation. In the “Form of Concord” it is said, “Vocabulum regenerationis interdum in eo sensu accipitur, ut simul et remissionem peccatorum (quæ duntaxat propter Christam contingit) et subsequentem renovationem complectatur, quam Spiritus Sanctus in illis, qui per fidem justificati sunt, operatur, quandoque etiam solam remissionem peccatorum, et adoptionem in filios Dei significat. Et in hoc posteriore usu sæpe multumque id vocabulum in Apologia Confessionis ponitur. Verbi gratia, cum dicitur: Justificatio est regeneratio. . . . Quin etiam vivificationis vocabulum interdum ita accipitur, ut remissionem peccatorum notet. Cum enim homo per fidem (quam quidem solus Spiritus Sanctus operatur) justificatur, id ipsum revera est quædam regeneratio, quia ex filio iræ fit filius Dei, et hoc modo e morte in vitam transfertur. . . . Deinde etiam regeneratio sæpe pro sanctificatione et renovatione (quæ fidei justificationem sequitur) usurpatur. In qua significatione D. Lutherus hac voce, tum in libro de ecclesia et conciliis, tum alibi etiam, multum usus est.”³

As this lax use of terms was unavoidably attended with great confusion, the “Form of Concord” itself, and the later Lutheran theologians were more precise. They made especially a sharp distinction between justification and anything signifying a subjective change in the sinner.

In the early Church regeneration often expressed, not any inward moral change, but an external change of state or relation. Among the Jews when a heathen became a proselyte to their religion, he was said to be born again. The change of his status from without to within the theocracy, was called regeneration. This usage in a measure passed over to the Christian Church. When a man became a member of the Church he was said to be born anew; and baptism, which was the rite of initiation, was called regeneration. This use of the word has not yet entirely passed away. A distinction is still sometimes made between regeneration and spiritual renovation. The one is external, the other internal. Some of the advocates of baptismal regeneration make this distinction, and interpret the language of the formulas of the Church of England in accordance with it. The regeneration effected in baptism, in their view, is not any spiritual change in the state of the soul, but simply a birth into the visible Church.

§ 2. *Nature of Regeneration.*

By a consent almost universal the word regeneration is now used to designate, not the whole work of sanctification, nor the first stages of that work comprehended in conversion, much less

³ III. 19, 20, 21; Hase, *Libri Symbolici*, 3d edit. p. 686.

justification or any mere external change of state, but the instantaneous change from spiritual death to spiritual life. Regeneration, therefore, is a spiritual resurrection; the beginning of a new life. Sometimes the word expresses the act of God. God regenerates. Sometimes it designates the subjective effect of his act. The sinner is regenerated. He becomes a new creature. He is born again. And this is his regeneration. These two applications of the word are so allied as not to produce confusion. The nature of regeneration is not explained in the Bible further than the account therein given of its author, God, in the exercise of the exceeding greatness of his power; its subject, the whole soul; and its effects, spiritual life, and all consequent holy acts and states. Its metaphysical nature is left a mystery. It is not the province of either philosophy or theology to solve that mystery. It is, however, the duty of the theologian to examine the various theories concerning the nature of this saving change, and to reject all such as are inconsistent with the Word of God.

Not a change in the Substance of the Soul.

Regeneration does not consist in any change in the substance of the soul. The only advocate of the opposite doctrine among Protestant theologians was Flacius Illyricus, so called from the place of his birth. He was one of the most prominent Lutheran theologians in what is called the second Reformation in Germany. He did great service in the cause of truth in resisting the synergism of Melancthon, and the concessions which that eminent but yielding reformer was disposed to make to the papists. He contributed some of the most important works of the age in which he lived to the vindication of the Protestant faith. His “Catalogus Testium Veritatis,” designed to prove that the doctrine of the Reformation had had their witnesses in all ages; his “Clavis Scripturæ Sacræ;” and especially the great historical work, “The Magdeburg Centuries” (in thirteen volumes, folio), of which he was the originator and principal author, attest his learning, talents, and untiring industry. His fervent and uncompromising spirit involved him in many difficulties and sorrows. He died worn out by suffering and labour, says his biographer; one of those men of faith of whom the world was not worthy. Always extreme in his opinions, he held that original sin was a corruption of the substance of the soul, and regeneration such a change of that substance as to restore its normal purity. All his friends who had sided with him in his controversy with the Synergists and the supporters of the Leipzig Interim, forsook him now, and he stood alone. In the “Form of Concord,” adopted to settle all the controversies of the period, these peculiar views of Flacius were condemned as a virtual revival of the Manichæan heresy. It was urged that if the substance of the soul be sinful, God, by whom each individual soul is created, must be the author of sin; and that Christ who, in assuming our nature, became consubstantial with us, must be a partaker of sin. No Christian Church has assumed the responsibility of the doctrine of Flacius, or held that regeneration involves a change of the essence of the soul.

Regeneration does not consist in an Act of the Soul.

Regeneration does not consist in any act or acts of the soul. The word here, of course, is to be understood not as including conversion, much less the whole work of sanctification, but in its restricted sense for the commencement of spiritual life. The opposite view, which makes regeneration, even in its narrowest sense, an act of the soul, has been held by very different classes of theologians. It is, of course, involved in the Pelagian doctrine which denies moral character to everything except acts of the will. If “all sin is sinning,” and “all love loving,” then every moral change in man must

be a change from one form of voluntary activity to another. As the later Remonstrants held the principle in question they made regeneration to consist in the sinner's own act in turning unto God. The influence exerted on him was one which he could yield to or resist. If he yielded, it was a voluntary decision, and in that decision his regeneration, or the beginning of his religious life, consisted.

Dr. Emmons's View.

Dr. Emmons, holding that all sin and holiness consist in acts, which acts, whether sinful or holy, are immediately created by God, makes regeneration to consist in God's giving rise to the commencement of a series of holy acts. In his discourse on Regeneration, the first proposition which he undertakes to establish is, "that the Spirit of God, in regeneration, produces nothing but love." This is maintained in opposition to those who say that the Spirit produces a new nature, principle, disposition, or taste. "Those in the state of nature," he says, "stand in no need of having any new power, or faculty, or principle of action produced in them, in order to their becoming holy. They are just as capable of loving as of hating God. . . . This is true of all sinners, who are as much moral agents, and the proper subjects of moral government, before as after regeneration. Whenever, therefore, the divine Spirit renews, regenerates, or sanctifies them, He has no occasion of producing anything in their minds besides love."⁴ "The love which the Spirit of God produces in regeneration is the love of benevolence, and not the love of complacency."⁵ "Though there is no natural or necessary connection between the first exercise of love and all future exercises of grace yet there is a constituted connection, which renders future exercises of grace as certain, as if they flowed from a new nature, or holy principle, as many suppose."⁶ His first inference from the doctrine of his sermon is, "If the Spirit of God produces nothing but love in regeneration, then there is no ground for the distinction which is often made between regeneration, conversion, and sanctification. They are, in nature and kind, precisely the same fruits of the Spirit. In regeneration, He produces holy exercises; in conversion, He produces holy exercises; and in sanctification, He produces holy exercises."⁷ Secondly, "If the Spirit of God in regeneration produces nothing but love, then men are no more passive in regeneration than in conversion or sanctification. Those who hold that the divine Spirit in regeneration produces something prior to love as the foundation of it, that is, a new nature, or new principle of holiness, maintain that men are passive in regeneration, but active in conversion and sanctification. . . . But if what has been said in this discourse be true, there is no new nature, or principle of action, produced in regeneration, but only love, which is activity itself."⁸

Professor Finney's Doctrine.

Professor Finney, in his "Lectures on Systematic Theology, teaches: (1.) That satisfaction, happiness, blessedness, is the only absolute good; that virtue is only relatively good, *i.e.*, good as tending to produce happiness. (2.) That all virtue lies in the intention to promote the happiness of

⁴ Sermon 51, *Works*, edit. Boston, 1842, vol. v. p. 112.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 114.

⁶ Sermon 51, *Works*, edit. Boston, 1842, vol. v. p. 116.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 116.

⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 117, 118.

being, that is, of universal being. There is no virtue in emotion, feeling, or any state of the sensibility, for these are involuntary. Love to God even is not complacency in his excellence, but “willing him good.” (3.) All sin is selfishness, or the choice of our own happiness in preference to the good of universal being. (4.) Every moral agent is always “as sinful or holy as with their knowledge they can be.” (5.) “As the moral law is the law of nature, it is absurd to suppose that entire obedience to it should not be the unalterable condition of salvation.”⁹ (6.) Regeneration is an “instantaneous” change “from entire sinfulness to entire holiness.”¹⁰ It is a simple change of purpose.

The system of Professor Finney is a remarkable product of relentless logic. It is valuable as a warning. It shows to what extremes the human mind may be carried when abandoned to its own guidance. He begins with certain axioms, or, as he calls them, truths of the reason, and from these he draws conclusions which are indeed logical deductions, but which shock the moral sense, and prove nothing but that his premises are false. His fundamental principle is that ability limits obligation. Free will is defined to be “the power of choosing, or refusing to choose, in compliance with moral obligation in every instance.”¹¹ “Consciousness of the affirmation of ability to comply with any requisition, is a necessary condition of the affirmation of obligation to comply with that requisition.”¹² “To talk of inability to obey moral law, is to talk sheer nonsense.”¹³

But it is acknowledged that man’s ability is confined to acts of the will, therefore moral character can be predicated only of such acts. The acts of the will are either choices or volitions. “By choice is intended the selection or choice of an end. By volition is intended the executive efforts of the will to secure the end intended.”¹⁴ We are responsible, therefore, only for our choices in the selection of an ultimate end. “It is generally agreed that moral obligation respects strictly only the ultimate intention or choice of an end for its own sake.”¹⁵ “I have said that moral obligation respects the ultimate intention only. I am now prepared to say, still further, that this is a first truth of reason.”¹⁶ “Right can be predicated only of good-will, and wrong only of selfishness. . . . It is right for him [for a man] to intend the highest good of being as an end. If he honestly does this, he cannot, doing this, mistake his duty, for in doing this he really performs the whole of duty.”¹⁷ “Moral character belongs solely to the ultimate intention of the mind, or to choice, as distinguished from volition.”¹⁸

The end to be chosen is “the highest good of being.” “Good may be natural or moral. Natural good is synonymous with valuable. Moral good is synonymous with virtue.”¹⁹ Moral good is only a relative good. It does meet a demand of our being, and therefore produces satisfaction. This satisfaction is the ultimate good of being.”²⁰ “I come now to state the point upon which issue is

⁹ *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, by Charles G. Finney, edit. Oberlin, Boston, and New York, 1846, p. 364.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 500.

¹¹ *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, by Charles G. Finney, edit. Oberlin, Boston, and New York, 1846, p. 26.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 33.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 44.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 26.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 36.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 149.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 157.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 45.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 48.

taken, to wit: That enjoyment, blessedness, or mental satisfaction, is the only ultimate good.”²¹ “Of what value is the true, the right, the just, etc., aside from the pleasure as mental satisfaction resulting from them to sentient existences.”²²

It follows from these principles that men perform their whole duty, and are perfect, if they intend the happiness of being in general. There is no morality in emotions, sentiments, or feelings. These are involuntary states of the sensibility, and are in themselves neither good nor bad. “If any outward action or state of the feeling exists, in opposition to the intention or choice of the mind, it cannot by any possibility have moral character. Whatever is beyond the control of a moral agent, he cannot be responsible for.”²³ “Love may, and often does exist, as every one knows, in the form of a mere feeling or emotion. . . . This emotion or feeling, as we are all aware, is purely an involuntary state of mind. Because it is a phenomenon of the sensibility, and of course a passive state of mind, it has in itself no moral character.”²⁴ Gratitude, “as a mere feeling or phenomenon of the sensibility, . . . has no moral character.”²⁵ The same is said of benevolence, compassion, mercy, conscientiousness, etc. The doctrine is, “No state of the sensibility, . . . has any moral character in itself.”²⁶ The love which has moral excellence, and which is the fulfilling of the law, is not a feeling of complacency, but “good-will,” willing the good or happiness of its object. Should a man, therefore, under the impulse of a benevolent feeling, or a sense of duty, perform a right act, he would sin as really as if, under the impulse of malice or cupidity, he should perform a bad act. The illustration is, that to pay a debt from a sense of justice, is as wicked as to steal a horse from acquisitiveness. A man “may be prevented [from committing commercial injustice] by a constitutional or phrenological conscientiousness or sense of justice. But this is only a feeling of the sensibility, and if restrained only by this, he is just as absolutely selfish as if he had stolen a horse in obedience to acquisitiveness.”²⁷ “If the selfish man were to preach the gospel, it would be only because upon the whole it was most pleasing or gratifying to himself, and not at all for the sake of the good of being as an end. If he should become a pirate, it would be exactly for the same reason. . . . Whichever course he takes, he takes it for precisely the same reason; and with the same degree of light it must involve the same degree of guilt.”²⁸ To feed the poor from a feeling of benevolence, and to murder a parent from a feeling of malice, involve the same degree of guilt! Such a sacrifice to logic was never made by any man before. But still more wonderful, if possible, is the declaration that a man may “feel deeply malicious and revengeful feelings toward God. But sin does not consist in these feelings, nor necessarily imply them.”²⁹

Moral excellence is not an object of love. To say that we are bound to love God because He is good, is said to be “most nonsensical. What is it to love God? Why, as is agreed, it is not to exercise

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 120.

²² *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, by Charles G. Finney, edit. Oberlin, Boston, and New York, 1846, p. 122.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 164.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 213.

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 278.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 521.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 317, 318.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. p. 355.

²⁹ *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, by Charles G. Finney, edit. Oberlin, Boston, and New York, 1846, p. 296.

a mere emotion of complacency in Him. It is to will something to Him.”³⁰ “Should it be said that God’s holiness is the foundation of our obligation to love Him, I ask in what sense it can be so? What is the nature or form of that love, which his virtue lays us under an obligation to exercise? It cannot be a mere emotion of complacency, for emotions being involuntary states of mind and mere phenomena of the sensibility, are without the pale of legislation and morality.”³¹ “We are under infinite obligation to love God, and to will his good with all our power, because of the intrinsic value of his well-being, whether He is holy or sinful. Upon condition that He is holy, we are under obligation to will his actual blessedness, but certainly we are under obligation to will it with no more than all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. But this we are required to do because of the intrinsic value of his blessedness, whatever his character might be.”³² Surely such a system is a ὑπόδειγμα τῆς ἀπειθείας.

Dr. Taylor’s View.

The system of Dr. Taylor of New Haven agrees with that of Professor Finney in making free agency include plenary power; in limiting responsibility and moral character to voluntary acts, in regarding happiness as the chief good; and in making regeneration to consist in a change of purpose. The two systems differ, however, essentially as to the ground of moral obligation or nature of virtue; and as to the nature of that change of purpose in which regeneration consists. Professor Finney adopts the common eudæmonistic theory which makes the happiness of being, *i.e.* of the universe, the chief good; and therefore makes virtue consist in the governing purpose to promote that happiness, and all sin in the purpose to seek our own happiness, instead of the happiness of being; consequently, regeneration is a change of that purpose; that is, it is a change from selfishness to benevolence.

Dr. Taylor, on the other hand, recognized the fact that as the desire of happiness is a constituent element of our nature, or law of our being, it must be innocent, and therefore is not to be confounded with selfishness. He hence inferred that this desire of happiness is rightfully the controlling principle of action in all sentient and rational creatures. Sin consists in seeking happiness in the creature; holiness in seeking happiness in God; regeneration is the purpose or decision of a sinner to seek his happiness in God and not in the world. This change of purpose, he sometimes calls a “change of heart,” sometimes “giving the heart to God,” sometimes “loving God.” As regeneration is the choice of God as our chief good, it is an intelligent, voluntary act of the soul, and therefore must take place according to the established laws of mental action. It supposes the preliminary acts of consideration, appreciation, and comparison. The sinner contemplates God as a source of happiness, estimates his suitability to the necessities of his nature, compares Him with other objects of choice, and decides to choose God as his portion. Sometimes the word regeneration is used in a comprehensive sense, including the whole process of consideration and decision; sometimes in a restricted sense, for the decision itself.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 64.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 91.

³² *Ibid.* p. 99.

Such being the nature of regeneration, it is of course brought about through the influence of the truth. The Bible reveals the nature of God, and his capacity and willingness to make his creatures happy; it exhibits all the motives which should determine the soul to take God for its portion. As regeneration is a rational and voluntary act, it is inconceivable that it should take place except in view of rational considerations. The Spirit's influence in this process is not denied. The fact is admitted that all the considerations which ought to determine the sinner to make choice of God, will remain without saving effect, unless the Spirit renders them effectual.

These views are presented at length in the "Christian Spectator" (a quarterly review) for 1829. On the nature of the change in question, Dr. Taylor says: "Regeneration, considered as a moral change of which man is the subject — giving God the heart — making a new heart — loving God supremely, etc., are terms and phrases which, in popular use, denote a complex act. . . . These words, in all ordinary speech and writing, are used to denote one act, and yet this one act includes a process of mental acts, consisting of the perception and comparison of motives, the estimate of their relative worth, and the choice or willing of the external action." "When we speak of the means of regeneration, we shall use the word regeneration in a more limited import than its ordinary popular import; and shall confine it, chiefly for the sake of convenient phraseology, to the act of the will or heart, in distinction from other mental acts connected with it; or to that act of the will or heart which consists in a preference of God to every other object; or to that disposition of the heart, or governing affection or purpose of the man, which consecrates him to the service and glory of God."³³

"Self-love or desire of happiness, is the primary cause or reason of all acts of preference or choice which fix supremely on any object. In every moral being who forms a moral character, there must be a first moral act of preference or choice. This must respect some one object, God or mammon, as the chief good, or as an object of supreme affection. Now whence comes such a choice or preference? Not from a previous choice or preference of the same object, for we speak of the first choice of the object. The answer which human consciousness gives, is, that the being constituted with a capacity for happiness desires to be happy; and knowing that he is capable of deriving happiness from different objects, considers from which the greatest happiness may be derived, and as in this respect he judges or estimates their relative value, so he chooses or prefers the one or the other as his chief good. While this must be the process by which a moral being forms his first moral preference, substantially the same process is indispensable to a change of this preference. The change involves the preference of a new object as the chief good; a preference which the former preference has no tendency to produce, but a direct tendency to prevent; a preference, therefore, not resulting from, or in any way occasioned by a previous preference of any given object, but resulting from those acts of considering and comparing the sources of happiness, which are dictated by the desire of happiness or self-love."³⁴

Regeneration being a change of purpose, the mode in which it is produced is thus explained. "If man without divine grace is a moral agent, then he is qualified so to consider, compare, and

³³ *Christian Spectator*, vol. i. New Haven, 1829, pp. 16-19.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 21.

estimate the objects of choice as means of happiness, and capable also of such constitutional excitement in view of the good and evil set before him, as might result in his giving his heart to God, without grace. . . . The act of giving God the heart must take place in perfect accordance with the laws of moral agency and of voluntary action. If the interposing grace violate these laws, the effect cannot be moral action; and it must violate these laws, if it dispense with the class of mental acts now under consideration. Whatever, therefore, be the influence which secures a change of heart in the sinner, the change itself is a moral change, and implies the exercise of all the powers and capacities of the moral agent, which in the nature of things are essential to a moral act.”³⁵ On a previous page it had been said, “The Scriptures authorize us to assert, generally, that the mode of divine influence is consistent with the moral nature of this change as a voluntary act of man; and, also, that it is through the truth, and implies attention to truth on the part of man.”³⁶ “Cannot,” Dr. Taylor asks, “He who formed the mind of man, reach it with an influence of his Spirit, which shall accord with all the laws of voluntary and moral action? Because motives, without a divine interposition, will not secure this moral change in sinful man, and because they have no positive efficiency in its production, must God in producing it dispense with motives altogether? Must the appropriate connections between motives and acts of will, or between the exercise of affections and the perception of their objects, be dissolved, and have no place? Must God, if by his grace He brings sinners to give Him their heart in holy love, accomplish the change in such a manner that they shall have no prior perception or view of the object of their love; and know not what or whom they love, or wherefore they love Him, rather than their former idols? Does a consistent theology thus limit the Holy One, and oblige Him to accomplish the veriest impossibilities, in transforming the moral character of sinful man?”³⁷ This may be a correct account of the process of conversion, with which this system confounds regeneration. Conversion is indeed a voluntary turning of the soul from sin to God. From the nature of the case it is produced proximately by appropriate motives, or it would be neither rational nor holy. But this proves nothing as to the nature of regeneration. The most accurate analysis of the laws of vision can throw no light on the way in which Christ opened the eyes of the blind.

Remarks.

It is plain that these views of regeneration are mere philosophical theories. Dr. Emmons assumes that such is the dependence of a creature upon the creator, that it cannot act. No creature can be a cause. There is no efficiency in second causes. Then, of course the first cause must produce all effects. God creates everything, even volitions. In the soul there are only acts or exercises. Regeneration, therefore, is an act or volition created by God; or, it is the name given to the commencement of a new series of exercises which are holy instead of sinful.

Professor Finney assumes that plenary ability is essential to moral agency; that a man, so far as his internal life is concerned, has power only over his choices and volitions; all, therefore, for which he is responsible, all that constitutes moral character, must fall under the category of choice, the selection of an ultimate end. Assuming, moreover, that happiness is the only absolute good, all

³⁵ *Christian Spectator*, 1829, p. 223.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 17.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 433.

sin consists in the undue pursuit of our own happiness, and all virtue in benevolence or the purpose to seek the happiness of being. Regeneration, therefore, consists in the change of the purpose to seek our own happiness, for the purpose to seek as our ultimate end the happiness of the universe.

Dr. Taylor, agreeing with Professor Finney on the nature of free agency, and in the doctrine that happiness is the chief good, holds with him that all sin and holiness consist in voluntary action. But assuming that self-love, as distinguished from selfishness, is the motive in all rational moral action, he makes regeneration to consist in the choice of God as the source of our own happiness.

All these speculations are outside of the Bible. They have no authority or value which they do not derive from their inherent truth, and any man is at liberty to dispute them, if they do not commend themselves to his own reason and conscience. But besides the purely philosophical character of these views, it would be easy to show, not only that they have no valid ground on which to rest, but also that they are inconsistent with the teachings of Scripture and with genuine Christian experience. This will be attempted when the Scriptural account of regeneration comes to be considered.

Regeneration not a change in any one Faculty of the Soul.

Regeneration does not consist in a change in any one of the faculties of the soul, whether the sensibility, or the will, or the intellect. According to some theologians, the feelings, or heart, in the restricted sense of that word, is the exclusive seat of original sin. Hereditary corruption, in other words, is made to consist in the aversion of the heart from divine things, and a preference for the things of the world. The end to be accomplished in regeneration, therefore, is simply to correct this aversion. The understanding, it is urged, so far as moral and religious truth is concerned, apprehends aright and appreciates what is loved; and in like manner, in the same sphere, we believe what we apprehend as right and good. If, therefore, the feelings are made what they ought to be, all the other operations of the mind, or inner man, will be right. This theory is founded in part upon a mistaken view of the meaning of the word "heart" as used in the Scriptures. In a multitude of cases, and in all cases where regeneration is spoken of, it means the whole soul; that is, it includes the intellect, will, and the conscience as well as the affections. Hence the Bible speaks of the eyes, of the thoughts, of the purposes, of the devices, as well as of the feelings or affections of the heart. In Scriptural language, therefore, a "new heart" does not mean simply a new state of feeling, but a radical change in the state of the whole soul or interior man. Besides, this theory overlooks what the Bible constantly assumes: the unity of our inward life. The Scriptures do not contemplate the intellect, the will, and the affections, as independent, separable elements of a composite whole. These faculties are only different forms of activity in one and the same subsistence. No exercise of the affections can occur without an exercise of the intellect, and, if the object be moral or religious, without including a correspondent exercise of our moral nature.

Regeneration not merely Illumination.

Another and antagonistic theory equally one-sided, is that the intellect only is in fault, and that regeneration resolves itself into illumination. This view is far more plausible than the preceding. The Bible makes eternal life to consist in knowledge; sinfulness is blindness, or darkness; the

transition from a state of sin to a state of holiness is a translation from darkness into light; men are said to be renewed unto knowledge. *i.e.*, knowledge is the effect of regeneration, conversion is said to be effected by the revelation of Christ; the rejection of Him as the Son of God and Saviour of men is referred to the fact that the eyes of those who believe not are blinded by the god of this world. These Scriptural representations prove much. They prove that knowledge is essential to all holy exercises; that truth as the object of knowledge, is of vital importance, and that error is always evil and often fatal; and that the effect of regeneration, so far as they reveal themselves in our consciousness, consist largely in the spiritual apprehension or discernment of divine things. These representations also prove that in the order of nature, knowledge, or spiritual discernment, is antecedent and causative relatively to all holy exercises of the feelings or affections. It is the spiritual apprehension of the truth that awakens love, faith, and delight; and not love that produces spiritual discernment. It was the vision Paul had of the divine glory of Christ that made him instantly and forever his worshipper and servant. The Scriptures, however, do not teach that regeneration consists exclusively in illumination, or that the cognitive faculties are exclusively the subject of the renewing power of the Spirit. It is the soul as such that is spiritually dead; and it is to the soul that a new principle of life controlling all its exercises, whether of the intellect, the sensibility, the conscience, or the will is imparted.

Not a Change of the Higher, as distinguished from the Lower Powers of the Soul.

There is another view of the subject, which falls under this head of what may be called partial regeneration. it is founded on trichotomy, or the assumption of three elements in the constitution of man, namely, the body, the soul, and the spirit (the σῶμα, ψυχή, and πνεῦμα); the first material, the second animal, the third spiritual. To the second, *i.e.*, to the soul or ψυχή, are referred what man has in common with the lower animals; life, sensibility, will, and understanding; to the spirit what is peculiar to us as rational, moral, and religious beings, namely, conscience and reason. This third element, the πνεῦμα, or reason, is often called divine; sometimes in a literal, and sometimes in a figurative sense. In either case, according to the theory under consideration, it is not the seat of sin, and is uncorrupted by the fall. It remains, although clouded and perverted by the disorder in the lower departments of our nature, the point of contact and connection between man and God. This at least is one view of the matter. According to another view, neither the body nor the soul (neither σῶμα nor ψυχή), has any moral character. The seat of the moral and divine life is exclusively the πνεῦμα or spirit. This is said to be paralyzed by the fall. It is figuratively dead insusceptible of impression from divine things. There are as many theories of the nature of regeneration among the advocates of this threefold division in the constitution of man, as there are systems of anthropology. The idea common to all, or to a majority of them, is that regeneration consists in restoring the πνεῦμα or spirit to its normal controlling influence over the whole man. According to some, this is a natural process in which an animal man, *i.e.*, a man governed by the ψυχή, comes to be reasonable, or pneumatic, *i.e.*, governed by the πνεῦμα or higher powers of his nature. According to others, it is a supernatural effect due to the action of the divine (Πνεῦμα) Spirit upon the human πνεῦμα or spirit. In either case, however, the πνευματικός, or Spiritual man, is not one in whom the Holy Spirit dwells as a principle of a new, spiritual life; but one who is governed by his own πνεῦμα or spirit. According to others again, the πνεῦμα or reason in man is God, the