

is adhered to. So far as the old man remains in the regenerate there must be a perpetual turning away from the sins of the past and advancement towards holiness: whether that holiness be separation from sin in a perpetual conversion, or union with God in a never-ceasing faith. In other words, there is an ethical conversion that goes on until the soul is entirely dead to sin and one with God. But in the Order of Grace Conversion is the process of the soul's first coming to Christ, and it would be well on the whole to restrict its use to that meaning.

REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

Repent-
ance and
Faith

As the conditions of that salvation which is the personal possession of the common heritage, Repentance towards God and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ are always united in the New Testament. They cannot be separated, as repentance implies pre-existing faith, and faith implies pre-existing repentance. But they differ in this, that faith is the instrument as well as a condition of individual acceptance; and, as such, springs out of and follows repentance. Both are produced by the preliminary grace of the Holy Spirit, but not perfected without the concurrence of the will of man. Though both are only introductory to the state of grace, properly so called, faith in its saving exercise is the transition point where the state of conviction passes into life in Christ.

REPENTANCE.

Repent-
ance.

Repentance is a Divinely-wrought conviction of sin, the result of the Holy Spirit's application of the condemning law to the conscience or heart. It approves itself in contrition, which distinguishes it from the mere knowledge of sin; in submission to the judicial sentence, which is the essence of true confession; and in sincere effort to

amend, which desires to make reparation to the dishonoured law. Hence it must needs come from God and go back to Him: the Holy Spirit, using the law, being the Agent in producing this preliminary Divine change.

Law. Repentance, or conviction of sin with its effects, is described throughout the Scriptures as simply the sanctified direction, under the influence of Divine grace, of the same feeling which is excited by personal affliction, or loss, or prospect of danger. But in the repentance of which we here speak as the preliminary condition of salvation, there is the spiritual revelation of the Divine law to the sinner, which leads to certain results.

Divine. I. Repentance is the effect of a Divinely-wrought application of the holy law.

Gift of God. 1. It is generally said to be the gift of God. In the words of the early Church, receiving the first tidings of the vocation of the heathen, *then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life*, we must understand not only, first, that the opportunity of repentance was proclaimed, and, secondly, the promises to repentance set forth, but, thirdly, the actual power of repenting also afforded. Similarly in that first full statement of the Gospel: *Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*. But it needs no express testimony to prove that every right feeling concerning self and concerning God's law must come from on high: *every good gift and every perfect gift is from above*, and this includes all spiritual influences. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit*; they are the sacrifices OF GOD: of these also it may be said, *I have given it to you upon the altar, though NOT to make atonement for your souls*.

Lev. xvii. 11. **The Spirit** 2. More particularly it is the office of the Spirit of conviction, Whom the Saviour promised to send to *reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*. This conviction of the Spirit, in its threefold character, is the essence of evangelical repentance as preached under the Gospel: repentance following the applica-

tion of the law—for there is no other repentance preliminary to grace—but in its peculiar relation to Christ. And the Spirit Himself is called, as accomplishing this office, *the Spirit of bondage*.

Rom. -iii.
15.
Human.

II. The human evidences of repentance are both its fruits and its tests. They are so described in Scripture as to show that the Divine operation is wrought through the human faculties, and finds human expression as if it were the act of man himself. They constitute his threefold recognition of the majesty of the law to the existence and claims of which he is now awakened.

1. CONTRITION or sorrow for sin is expressed in many ways: especially in the Old Testament, the descriptions of which have no parallel out of themselves, none even in the New Testament.

Contri-
tion

(1.) It is a *broken and a contrite heart*; the heart being the inmost personality and not the sensibilities only, nor the judgment only, nor *only* the will. The word has its Hebrew meaning; corresponding with the *broken spirit* which precedes: this last being the perfect watchword of that true repentance to which, as running through the life, the promise is given: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. The hidden man mourns before God: his mind meditating on the sinfulness of his sin, his feeling oppressed with grief, and his will absolutely turned against it. Hence (2.) it is godly sorrow, ἡ κατὰ θεὸν λύπη, and not the sorrow of the world, which dreads the consequences of transgression rather than hates the transgression itself. It is mourning that proves its genuineness by refusing to be comforted save by Divine mercy: it is not so much *godly*—this is regenerate repentance—as towards God. (3.) It is a keen sense of sin universal, and not of particular sins. The conviction of its sinfulness is a new and peculiar experience: a new moral consciousness which makes perfect the conscience of sin. *By the law, applied by the Spirit, is the knowledge of sin*. But our Lord tells us that the world is to be convinced of sin *because they believe not on Me*: Christ the Saviour is Himself the best and only revelation of the evil from which He saves.

Ps. li. 17.

Matt. v. 3.

2 Cor. vii.
10.

Rom. iii.
20.
John xvi.
9.

2. Submission to the condemning law is of the essence of true repentance and takes the form of CONFESSION. This may be regarded in two lights: it is the utterance of utter hopelessness, and of a profound sense of the justice of God in the visitation of

Submis-
sion.

- iniquity. But the latter takes precedence. (1.) The law pronounces condemnation, the terrors of which are now first felt; and the sinner, even though in the presence of Christ, Who preaches repentance, and all the more because he is in the presence of Christ, accepts the utmost rigour of judgment as just. He sees his guilt, and sees his inexpressible pollution, in the light of the Divine countenance, and abhors himself, while he fears his Judge. (2.) The law convicts of impotence: and so the penitent cries, *when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died*. True repentance absolutely withers all hope in self as to present or future ability. (3.) These are united in CONFESSION, which is especially in this preliminary stage only to Heaven. True repentance comes from God and returns back to Him Who gave it.
- Rom. vii. 9.** Confession. There is a confession *one to another* commended by the Apostle James, which belongs rather to the Christian life and is consistent with confession of universal sin to God alone.
- Jas. v. 16.** Amendment. 3. The repentance which is a condition of salvation approves its genuineness by endeavours to amend the life: negatively by turning from sin; positively by aiming at obedience. This effort is imposed on every penitent by the command of Scripture: *Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance* is the New-Testament formula. The Baptist, the representative preacher of repentance, gives the solitary instance of these fruits of a tree neither corrupt nor as yet sound. They are not the acts of a regenerate life; for the promise of the Holy Ghost is held out as a future gift. They are not fruits of a corrupt tree; for the Spirit gives the prevenient grace that enables the penitent to present them to God. They are tokens of sincerity, and are essential as such; for the Scripture invariably demands obedience to God's law, and reparation of every injury to man; not indeed as securing forgiveness, but as its peremptory condition. Both are expressed by the two New-Testament terms: *μεταμέλεια* and *μεάνοια*, the latter a change of mind, the former a change of purpose. In this turning from sin and turning towards holiness, the act is rather dwelt upon than the feeling. The feeling may vary, as it regards both the sense of sin and the sense of condemnation; it may have endless varieties of expression, but the act is always the same.
- Is. i. 16, 17.**
Matt. iii. 8.

III. Repentance, thus described, is still in the outer court. It belongs to the midway state between nature and grace; but has, nevertheless, a special relation to the dispensation of law. This may be finally illustrated by a summary view of the New-Testament method of enforcing its necessity and its requirements.

1. John the Baptist is the pre-eminent preacher of repentance. The forerunner of Christ, he is also the forerunner of His Gospel. His doctrine contains every principle necessary to its perfection; and his ministry, not less than that of the Apostles, was *in power, and in the Holy Ghost*. He preached repentance as universally necessary and available. *Repent ye!* was his one word to all alike. He enforced it as incumbent on every man at the present moment: on the one hand, because *the axe is laid unto the root*; and, on the other, because *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*. He required it to be thorough, profound, and perfect: *Prepare ye the way of the Lord! Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low*. He proclaimed it as accompanied by its meet fruits of reformation, restitution, and pledges of amendment: *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance*. And, finally, he preached it as preparatory to the salvation of Christ and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. *All flesh shall see the salvation of God*. But the one supreme theme of his enforcement is the necessity of repentance as the preparation for Christ.

2. Further illustrations of this are found in the Gospels. *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*: words which, whatever other meaning they bear, have evident reference to John's baptism, and the desperate discipline of preparatory repentance. The blind man at Bethsaida, whom the Saviour exhibited in a state of intermediate and halting cure—no longer wholly blind, but more miserable than when he was; not yet fully enlightened, but on the way to it—illustrates the preventient grace of repentance. This solitary instance of our Lord's suspended power has a meaning for all ages. There is a first touch, the effect of which is: *I see men as trees walking*. There is a second, when *he was restored and saw every man clearly*. Teaching other lessons as to the progression of grace, and its critical stages, this unique miracle teaches also that repentance is the transition to the mercy of the Gospel. The Baptist's relicts

Legal as
by the
Law.

The
Baptist.

1 Thess. i.
5.

Luke iii.
3—16.

Matt. xi.
12.

The
Teaching
of the
Gospels.

Mark viii.
24, 25.

Acts xviii. 24—27. are found in the Acts: Apollos required only to be taught *the way of God more perfectly*; and the Ephesian Twelve were prepared for the full Christian baptism which they had long waited for. Then said Paul, *John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him that should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*

Legal and Evan- 3. Hence, finally, while the evangelical element is not wanting gelical. in this repentance—it has a presentiment of the Gospel—it is yet under the law. All that has been said may be summed up thus. The Holy Spirit of conviction applies the law to the conscience, and thus works His reproof. The effect is sorrow before God as the Lawgiver rather than as the Father, or before the Father as the Fountain of moral authority; acceptance of the righteous sentence pronounced upon transgression; and sincere though imperfect, necessary though not meritorious, endeavours to make reparation to the dishonoured majesty of right. Beyond this the repentance which is the condition of salvation does not go. But it does not fall short of this: it is in all its processes the soul's tribute to the law from the condemnation of which the Gospel, received in faith, can alone save the transgressor.

Faith.

FAITH.

Faith as the instrument of appropriating salvation is a Divinely-wrought belief in the record concerning Christ and trust in His Person as a personal Saviour: these two being one. It must be distinguished, on the one hand, from the general exercise of belief following evidence which is one of the primary elements of human nature, and from the grace of faith which is one of the fruits of the regenerating Spirit. As Divinely wrought, it is attended by assurance; as human, it works by love. And thus, while belonging to the state of prevenient grace, it passes insensibly into the regenerate life.

Divine and Human.

Faith, viewed here more comprehensively as the condition and instrument of personal salvation, is a state or an act of the human