

A REVIEW  
OF  
REV. J. B. JETER'S BOOK  
ENTITLED  
"CAMPBELLISM  
EXAMINED."

BY  
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MISSOURI.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

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# *Preface*

IN the work here offered to the public, the writer has had two objects in view:—1st, to furnish a reply to the material parts of "Campbellism Examined;" 2d, to present a compressed vindication of the chief doctrines therein attacked.

In endeavoring to execute the former task, he has aimed to present, with what he believes to be an equitable fullness, and with as much order as was attainable in the case, what he supposed Mr. Jeter himself would deem the strong points of his work, and to reply to these without evasion or injustice. He may not always have understood, in the sense in which its author intended it to be understood, the position or the argument he has replied to; but, if in any instance such has been the case, he claims to say that the error has not been intentional at least. The confusion amidst which these positions have had to be sought, and the rubbish in which they have been found embedded, have made a clean elimination and clear presentation of them at times not a little difficult. It is believed, however, that no important argument has been permitted to pass without notice; while many have received notice far beyond their claims.

In attempting to execute the latter task, one end constantly kept in view has been to *state the position* to be defended with the utmost clearness, drawing such distinctions and submitting such qualifications as would tend to free it from any existing doubt or ambiguity. The arguments then presented are believed to be at least valid and pertinent; but whether conclusive or not is left with the candid reader to decide. Some of these arguments, be it said, are not intended so much to establish the immediate question at issue, as to prepare the mind for others better adapted to that end. Still, all are thought to be important and necessary.

A work similar in object to the present has been for some time past impatiently looked for from quite another quarter. The immense labors, however, which have accumulated on Mr. Campbell's hands, have rendered it utterly impracticable for him to comply with this just expectation. This is much to be regretted. The present work is not an attempt to accomplish what he would have done. It is, however, an attempt to do all that it is believed the merits of the case demand, and

that, too, with a view to leaving him to prosecute far more important labors. And, while the public will hardly feel inclined to acquit the writer for presuming to do what it was just possible even might have been done by a hand so much more competent, still, he begs that it will be remembered that, had not this much been attempted, it is almost certain nothing would have been realized,—at least without almost superhuman efforts. Mr. Campbell has not lacked the will to gratify the public expectation, but he has certainly lacked the power.

Should it be inquired why it is that the present work makes its appearance at so late a date, the reply is, that it has not been felt to be in the slightest degree necessary to be in haste. It was meet that Mr. Jeter's book should be allowed ample time to do its work. Meanwhile, all has been calm in our ranks. No defections have occurred, no dissatisfaction has prevailed, no alarm existed. Hence, no peculiar necessity was felt to be in haste to repel an attack from which no perceptible injury was accruing.

But the reader will doubtless feel curious to know why it is that Mr. Jeter's second book—"Campbellism Re-examined"—has been treated so cavalierly. The writer's reply is simply that he has seen and read the swaggering little thing: should a more elaborate reason be demanded, that reason must be sought in the character of the silence with which the work is passed.

In citing the passages of Scripture introduced into the present work, the book, chapter, and verse, in which each can be found, has not, except in a very few cases, been referred to. This course has been adopted for two reasons:—1st, the passages are generally such as most readers may be presumed familiar with, in which case no reference is needed: 2d, references, even when given, are rarely ever consulted; for this reason it was not thought necessary to consume space with them.

LIBERTY, MISSOURI, 1857.

## *Introduction*

THE first and the last course of the spiritual banquet of Old-School or New-School Baptists—whether Gillite, Fullerite, or Sandemanian, English, Scotch, German, or American—is the *New Birth*, technically called Regeneration. What the Reformer Luther affirmed of justification by faith, they affirm of some indefinable idea called by them "Regeneration." It is their criterion of a standing or a falling church. Yet this word, occurring only twice in Holy Writ, in neither case refers to their conception or definition of regeneration. The Messiah in all his teachings alludes to it only once, and then in reference to the literal resurrection of the dead in Christ,—Matt. 19: 28. Paul once, in allusion to baptism, calls it the "washing of the New Birth," and not that New Birth itself of which he speaks.

But it is not the *fact* of the New Birth, but the *theory* of it, that has become the apple of discord and contention, even among the orthodox themselves. There have been sundry ecclesiastic patents issued in theological schools for diverse modern theories of the spiritual *modus operandi* in all cases of genuine regeneration. One theory glories in pure spiritual *contact* or *impact* of spirit upon spirit, in some indescribable way—as a potter's hand upon clay—new-molding it, antecedent to faith and independent of it. Another assumes that regeneration is effected by the mere word of God, through its own inherent power upon the understanding, the conscience, and the heart. Another class contends for both the word and the Spirit co-operating; and even here there are two schools of theological metaphysicians,—one assuming that the word is first in order, the other, that the Spirit is first in order,

—the word working by the Spirit, the Spirit working by the word. Such may not be precisely their terminology, but such is virtually our conception of their theory. In this, as in all other cases, we prefer the inspired nomenclature to the uninspired. The Messiah prays for his disciples in these words:—"Sanctify them *through thy Truth*: thy word is truth." There is then no abstract *sanctification*, else there are two forms or characters of it:—one *through the Truth*, and one by the Spirit *without the Truth*. So of being born again. Hence James oracularly

says, (James 1: 18,) "*Of his own will begat he us with the word of Truth;*" and that, too, "that we should be first-fruits of his creatures." To the same effect Peter speaks, (1 Ep. 1: 23:)—"Being born (or begotten) again, not of corruptible seed, but of *incorruptible*, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever." While then the Spirit is the *agent*, the *word of God* is the instrument, in all cases, unless there be two distinct forms of generation and regeneration.

Next to the empty and deceitful philosophy on the subject of regeneration, wholly inoperative and ineffectual of good to saint or sinner, comes, from the same metaphysical cloisters, the absorbing theme of something called "*Christian experience.*"

We never doubted nor denied *Christian experience*. But in this case as in the former, in our benevolent endeavors to correct the diction and the palpable errors everywhere canonized on this subject, we were obliged to take exception to the *misappropriation* of the term "*Christian experience*" to the states of mind occurring or existing antecedent to faith, repentance, and baptism. This was formerly almost universal in Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee,—indeed, in all the fields of my early labors among the Baptist brotherhood.

On my first visit to the Dover Association, Virginia, A. D. 1828, I witnessed scenes of the wildest enthusiasm ever witnessed by me in any camp-meeting. There were "the mourners," "the seekers for religion," "the screaming penitents," "coming up to be prayed for," "relating their Christian experience." Elder Carr, of Richmond, and Elder Jeremiah B. Jeter were contributing their smiles and exhortations. And there too were Bishop Semple and Bishop Broaddus, &c. &c., all concurring in the scenes transpiring, so far as I could judge.

The candidates for baptism in those days, when presenting themselves for baptism, occasionally related strange *sights*, marvelous *scenes*, irrepressible *emotions*, but they generally ended in "getting religion;" and such was the relation of their "*Christian experience.*" The head and front of my offending consisted in remonstrating against this wild enthusiasm. "It had this extent, no more." It was, indeed, not peculiar to the Dover Association, nor to any other association in Virginia, Kentucky, or over the great West or South, to have from every candidate for baptism a *relation of his feelings and emotions*, on which a vote of approbation was taken to entitle him to Christian baptism. I

*have no recollection of ever hearing a single confession of Christian faith or of a belief of the gospel from any candidate among the Virginia Baptists in order to baptism. The candidate was baptized into his own experience, rather than into the Christian faith, as I understand it.*

In calling these customs into question, we, in their view, denied Christian experience! All the appreciable difference indeed between the Virginia, Kentucky, Southwestern Baptists, and the adult Methodists or Congregationalists of those days, was, the former were *immersed*, the latter *sprinkled*, "*in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*"

True, they differed in ecclesiastic politics, tactics, and economics. But in no one grand, distinctive, characteristic doctrine, or Christian practice, did they differ; and in no special reverence or regard for the apostolic institutions. In these respects the Virginia and Kentucky Baptists in those days were greatly excelled by the Scotch and some of the English and Welsh Baptists, especially in their zeal for primitive Christianity, and in their more profound piety and consecration to the Redeemer's cause and glory.

While, then, we cannot approve the equivocal and temporizing course adopted by Mr. Jeter on the subject of Christian experience before conversion, which he himself and his brethren formerly demanded or inquired for as a passport to baptism, we cannot but congratulate the denomination on the felicitous change which has already come over it in this and some other respects,—so that considerable numbers (as the report has reached us) are now being substantially baptized *into the faith* of the person, office, and character of the Lord Jesus Christ. Alarmed at the prospects in his horizon, and eager to become a heroic "defender of the faith," Mr. Jeter, with characteristic zeal, has unsheathed his polemic sword, and, with clarion sounds, has in two consecutive volumes twice killed an appalling hydra of his own creation nicknamed "Campbellism."

Not being an impartial judge in my own case, and being absorbed in matters of transcendent moment, we found a brother, comparatively young,—one of the graduates of Bethany College,—into whose hands we have fearlessly confided this gigantic hero of world-wide fame, without one lingering doubt that he will render to him all due honor and fully satisfy Mr. Jeter that he has as much mistaken himself as he has his subject.

If Mr. Jeter be not yet satisfied with the honors done him by our brother Lard, but is still covetous of a larger fame, we have other brethren on hand—even youths in progress—that will, on the appearance of his third, or at most his seventh, exposition and interment of "Campbellism," confer upon him the highest degree in the Roman calendar,

BETHANY, VA., 1857.

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# *Chapter I.*

REASONS FOR THE PRESENT WORK—BIOGRAPHY—TITLE  
OF MR. JETER'S BOOK—SECTS, CLERGY, ETC.

## *Section I.*

MR. JETER'S book has now been in the hands of the public for nearly two years. All have read it who felt the inclination to do so, and on its merits have passed their opinions. It has now, therefore, taken its place on the shelf, seldom, or never, perhaps, to descend from that quiet abode of intellectual labor, great and small, to be read a second time. It may not be amiss therefore, now that it has well-nigh done its work, to cast over its pages a sober second view, with the intention of pronouncing upon its contents a more mature and dispassionate judgment.

The views "examined" by Mr. Jeter are deemed by him not sound, hence utterly untenable, and fast becoming obsolete. They have been published to the world in an age of great mental activity, and, to say the least, have now been before the community in their present form for more than a quarter of a century. The men, the means, and the motives to examine these views thoroughly have been abundant. Have they been subjected to that examination? and if so, in what way?

In the pulpit they have been incessantly assailed. Uneducated preachers, in their rude and earnest style, have pressed the attack with great violence. Learned divines, deep-read in the various forms of heresy and versed in the surest methods of detection and exposure, have laid the line and the plummet to them. The shrewd disputant has attacked them with whatever of skill practice can impart, and all the hoarded means which experience can collect. Even grave professors, with their subtle distinctions and rigorous logic, have tried them by all the laws analysis can supply and every rule induction can suggest.

Nor have they fared better from the press. From transient paragraphs in daily sheets to the careful strictures of monthly periodicals; from trashy letters in weekly newspapers to the most elaborate essays of

pamphleteers; from the coarsest attacks malevolence can direct to the most polished critiques which learning can produce,—in all these ways have they been subjected to examination.

And yet, notwithstanding all this, and much besides; notwithstanding these views are unsound,—utterly so; notwithstanding they have well-nigh spent their force; notwithstanding their hold on the mind of the pliant credulous public is daily becoming less firm; notwithstanding the great and general distrust with which the awakened world begins to view them; in a word, notwithstanding "*The Reformation*," in Mr. Jeter's own language, "*has proved a failure*," there yet exists a necessity—an inexorable necessity—for a formal, methodical, and masterly exposition of these views. Surely this is not without its significance. We may affect contempt for a foe, may speak of his broken ranks and enfeebled warriors; but, while we marshal our own forces with so much tact, select our positions with so much caution, and consult with our subalterns with so much solicitude, it will be somewhat difficult to persuade a looker-on that no formidable enemy awaits our attack.

But what reception has Mr. Jeter's book met with? His brethren have received it well. Its summary of Baptist principles, though neither full nor strong, they accept as sound. Its defense of these principles they regard as satisfactory. Its style they pronounce good, its spirit excellent. And, as a refutation of the doctrines it professes to review, they have, or at least persuade themselves they have, a deep interest to consider it successful.

Nor can we doubt that it enjoys the favor of those denominations who have agreed, with as much pleasure and as little justice as Mr. Jeter, to pronounce us heretics. Those denominations agree with him on the points touching which he dissents from us. The interests of both, therefore, being identical, their sympathies are mutual. Hence they consent to favor his book, because his book subserves their cause. Nor has he ever allowed himself for a moment to overlook this circumstance. He has, it is most evident, intentionally refrained from introducing into his book any matter, has studiously avoided every expression, which could have given the slightest offence to the parties whose favor he hoped to secure. And the gentlest note that warbles through his book is the oft-recurring *te deum* to orthodoxy. All of which has concurred to render the book acceptable, if not popular.

But ought the book to be reviewed? We believe it should, and for so believing assign, from among other reasons, the following:—

1. The book as such does us as a people, but most of all our cause, great and gross injustice. This needs to be exposed.
2. It has attained a respectable circulation, and hence the injustice done has been widely disseminated. This should be counteracted.
3. It is highly due the cause we plead, or at least so much of it as is attacked in Mr. Jeter's book, that it should stand before the world, not in the garbled form, in which it there appears, but, as far as this can be accomplished in a limited review, in its own true and proper character, and resting on its own proper foundation.
4. It is due ourselves as a people that we should not tamely submit to the odium to which it is the almost sole intention of this book to expose us.
5. It is due the word of God that the scandalous perversions of it with which the book abounds should be exposed.

Justice to the cause of truth demands that, the sophistry and unfairness with which Mr. Jeter attempts to sustain his own doctrines should not be allowed to pass unrebuked.

We decide, therefore, to review his book, and, in BO doing, hope to make its contents the occasion of achieving good,—contents which, whether it was designed or not, have no tendency but to evil.

In executing this task, we think it best to notice the topics to be treated of in the order, for the most part, in which they are met with in Mr. Jeter's book. Whatever lack of method, therefore, may be discovered in the present work, (and we shall admit it to be both great and obvious,) must be attributed to the very immethodical manner in which he has arranged the materials of his own work. For, although he has affected a method, it is only a method of being affected.

Of Mr. Jeter's book as a whole, we shall not, for the present, further intimate our appreciation than to say, its style is dull and haggled, its thoughts narrow, its arguments absolutely nil, its reflections trite and

shallow, its air vain and pretending, its spirit dissembled and mean.

## *Section II.*

But Mr. Jeter's book has more objects than one in view. It is intended to contain an attack no less on Mr. Campbell himself than on his views. On what ground else can we account for the wretched biography of Mr. Campbell which it contains? There was no necessity for this. Mr. Campbell's private personal history is not the ground on which his published views must stand or fall. These are to be tried by quite a different rule.

But the case admits of a short solution. Mr. Jeter hates Mr. Campbell with an intense hatred. Hence, while professing to furnish a candid exposition of his errors, he could not resist the temptation to present a brief sketch of his life, that he might be afforded the opportunity of giving expression, much as the fact is sought to be concealed, to this absorbing feeling of his heart.

But he had, besides, an additional reason for this sketch. He feared to risk himself in a grapple with Mr. Campbell's views on their own merits; and he hence wished to enfeeble them by an effort to make it appear that they have emanated from a source not wholly unattended by suspicious and vitiating circumstances. If Mr. Campbell's views have strength, reasoned he, their author, it may be, is not faultless; hence they must be made to appear attainted by being connected with him. The sole design of this sketch is to present Mr. Campbell before the world in a doubtful and half-ridiculous light, and thus bring discredit on his views. We leave the reader, however, to form his own estimate of an effort to blur a character from which, nevertheless, the author of that effort derives his sole distinction in the world.

Had Mr. Jeter's book contained a manly examination of Mr. Campbell's real views, and not so many proofs of personal animosity, certainly it would have been less objectionable than it is. A strong, dignified analysis and examination of these, with no indications of personal ill-will, would have been received, however much we might have differed from him in his judgments, in a spirit of genuine kindness.

He could not even select a title for his book without furnishing a verification of what has just been alleged. "*Campbellism*" was the only

term which could vent the feelings of his heart. And yet he knew no term to be more offensive to us as a people. And he should have known that it is an act of high discourtesy to attempt to designate the views of any body of believers by terms which they hold to be unjust, and which they have repeatedly avowed do not express them. And no man, we must add, but a boor in feelings, whatever may be his factitious position in society, will stoop to the deed. The views associated in the public mind with the term "Campbellism" are not the views entertained by Mr. Campbell and his brethren. They are such as our enemies represent us as holding, and not such as we ourselves believe in. Of this fact we believe Mr. Jeter to be not ignorant. On what principle, then, except on that of a willingness to become a trafficker in misrepresentations and opprobrious epithets, could he consent to employ the term? He knew the term to be one of reproach, and hence felt himself called on to offer an explanation for using it; and yet he knew it became not a whit the less a term of reproach for all that. If a man consent to deal in slander, it is far from being a sufficient apology for his offence to say he does not mean his slander to be slanderous. No apology can justify the application of this discourteous epithet to our views. But the author's scanty vocabulary, it would seem, is to be blamed for the use of the term. It could afford him no descriptive epithet for a cause the merits of which he proposes gravely and decently to argue; and he is hence driven to the use of a term familiar to none but the charlatan, save Mr. Jeter.

### ***Section III.***

Of much that is said in Mr. Jeter's book we purpose taking no notice whatever. Especially is this remark intended to apply to the first part of the book, in which so little is said that is worth reading, and so much less that is worth reviewing. Accordingly, under the caption "*Campbellism in its inception*" occur but two passages to which we shall invite the attention of the reader. These we notice, because they acquaint us at the outset with that depth of penetration which we shall so frequently have occasion to admire in the volume before us.

"It cannot be questioned," remarks Mr. Jeter, "that circumstances exert a mighty influence in forming the tastes, opinions, and characters, and guiding the lives, of most men;" and then on the next page adds, "Had Mr. Campbell not passed his early years in Scotland, his religious

views and career would have differed widely from what they have been."

Now, that Mr. Campbell's views *might* have differed from what they are at present is certainly not impossible; but that they *would* have differed is what Mr. Jeter does not know, though he scruples not to assert it. But, conceding the truth of his hypothesis, what then? Does it follow that Mr. Campbell's present views are wrong? What his views might have been, had the scene of his early life been different, has nothing whatever to do with the truth of his present views. Their truth rests on quite a different foundation. And yet Mr. Jeter's position, if it amounts to anything, amounts to this:—that Mr. Campbell's views, because formed not in America but in Scotland, are wrong; and of course, by the same conclusive reasoning, that Mr. Jeter's views, because formed not in Scotland but in America, are right! We admire his complacent logic!

Mr. Jeter's classic education has not only had a fine effect on his fancy, but it has enriched his speech with the most choice selection of terms which language can afford. "Campbellism," mutable and transient as a dream, dances through his imagination in forms styled, with exquisite taste, "*inception*," "*chaos*," and "*formation*." There are many reasons why these terms should have been chosen; some which even a child can understand. Their number is three; their syllables, eight; their letters, a score and three. One is a dissyllable, the other two are not; two are trisyllables, the other one is not. They can be counted, spelled, and accented. They can be written, printed, and transposed. They can be sung in poetry, read in prose, and delivered in declamation. And, no doubt, many other like curious and weighty reasons for their selection would occur to a person of Mr. Jeter's penetration; but these are enough, surely, to satisfy even the dullest that the terms have been wisely chosen.

Mr. Jeter styles his second chapter "*Campbellism in its chaos*;" and the striking resemblance between its contents and the meaning of a term in the heading occurs to us as one of the happiest coincidences in his book. In the second paragraph of this chapter, he says, "It would have puzzled the most careful, discriminating, and candid reader of the 'Christian Baptist' to form any clear conception of Mr. Campbell's principles or aims."



But few persons, we suspect, acquainted with Mr. Campbell's writings, will be prepared to admit the correctness of this statement. From the writings of no author with whom we happen to be acquainted is it easier to collect his principles and aims, than from the writings of Mr. Campbell. His learning, accurate discrimination, and fertile speech, enable him to express himself with a clearness and precision equaled by few, excelled perhaps by none. Simple justice to the character of a great man demands that at least this much shall he said in defense of a style of writing singularly strong and free from doubt.

### *Section IV.*

On the twenty-fifth page of Mr. Jeter's book, he says, "Mr. Campbell aspired to the honor of being a *reformer*." And the emphasis laid on the word "reformer" hints, not very remotely, at the truest pledge this clergyman can give of his amiable nature,—a *sneer*. But was it, indeed, under the circumstances, a thing to be sneered at, to aspire to the distinction? We shall see.

"That a reformation was needed by the Christian sects of that time," says Mr. Jeter, "none, who possess a tolerable acquaintance with their condition and the claims of the gospel, will deny. Indeed, what church, or member of a church, does not, in some respects and in some degree, need reformation? There was needed then, as at all times, an increase of religious knowledge in the churches; but, more than this, an increase of piety. The reformation demanded by the times was in spirit and practice rather than doctrine. They were then, as now, far too worldly, formal, and inefficient. Among the Baptist churches there were some sad evils. In parts of the country, the churches were infected with an antinomian spirit, and blighted by a heartless, speculative, hair-splitting orthodoxy. These churches were mostly penurious, opposed to Christian missions and all enlarged plans and self-denying efforts for promoting the cause of Christ. In general, the careful study of the Scriptures, the religious education of children, the proper observance of the Lord's day, a wholesome, scriptural discipline, the reasonable support of pastors, and, in fine, devotion to the Redeemer's cause, were too much neglected."

Well may Mr. Jeter, after this, admit that a "*reformation*" was needed by the "*Christian sects*" of that time; and yet he does not blush to sneer at the man who "aspired to the honor" of effecting it. As to whether the

reformation demanded was a reformation "in spirit and practice rather than doctrine," we shall leave those best acquainted with the wretched state of doctrine at the time to decide.

But Mr. Campbell never proposed a reformation of "*Christian sects*" as such. He proposed that all sincere and pious Christians should abandon these "sects," and, uniting upon the great foundation upon which, as upon a rock, Christ said he would build his church, form themselves into a *church of Christ*, and not into a "sect." A "Christian sect" we pronounce simply an impossible thing. Sects there may be, innumerable; but *Christian*, as *sects*, they can never be. A church of Christ is not a sect, in any legitimate sense of the term. As soon as a body of believers, claiming to be a church of Christ, becomes a sect, it ceases to be a church of Christ. Sect and Christian are terms denoting incompatible ideas. Christians there may be in all the "sects," as we believe there are; but, in them though they may be, yet of them, if Christians, clearly they are not. Mr. Campbell's proposition never looked to the reformation of sects as such. A sect reformed would still be a sect; and sect and Christian are not convertible terms. Sectarianism originates, and necessarily, *in* the church, but has its consummation out of it. Hence Paul, in addressing the church at Corinth, says, "There must be also heresies (*sectarianism*) among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest." But here is something which seems never to have struck the mind of Mr. Jeter. With the apostle, sectarianism originated with the bad, and the good were excluded; but with Mr. Jeter it includes the good, and the bad are excluded. How shall we account for the difference? As soon, however, as the "heretic" (the *sectarian*) is discovered in the church, he is, by the apostle's direction, to be admonished a first and second time, and then, if he repent not, to be rejected. Now, we request to be informed by Mr. Jeter how, according to this rule, a "*Christian sect*" can exclude her "sectarians" and still remain a "sect"? Heresy and sectarianism are identical, being both represented by the same term in the same sense in the original; and that which they represent has its origin in the flesh. Hence the same apostle, in enumerating the works of the flesh, mentions, among other things, strife, sedition, *heresy*, (*sectarianism*.) Heresy or sectarianism, we are taught by the Apostle Peter, is introduced into the church by "*false teachers*," and is "*damnable*;" and yet Mr. Jeter, with true foster-father tenderness, can talk of "Christian sects."

## *Section V.*

Another peculiarity of "Campbellism in its chaos" was, it seems, a most virulent attack on the "kingdom of clergy." Mr. Jeter's defense is eminently characteristic, being affectionate, feeble, and short. There is something mournful and sad in its melancholy air. *Nor* can we wonder at the circumstance. Pew men were ever more feared or more hated by the clergy than Mr. Campbell; and few men were ever more clerical than Mr. Jeter. Young, shallow, and bigoted, the Attic wit and racy humor of the "Christian Baptist" caused him excruciating pain. He learned to sigh in time long gone, and with increasing age and decreasing strength his sigh has grown to a dirge. Our sympathies are moved for the man. And in the length and painful nature of some of his labors there is much to move even a harder heart than ours. Gazing for thirty years intently into the "Third Epistle of Peter," where his port and bearing and all the secret springs and motions of his heart lie mirrored in lines so just and true, is an object to move the pity even of a wretch.

But was there no just ground for the attack on the clergy? We shall let the following picture, drawn by Mr. Jeter himself, of the truth of which he, we presume, is the best judge, answer the question. "They (the clergy) were by no means faultless," he observes. "Some of them were ignorant, conceited, and vain; others were proud, haughty, and imperious; others, still, were hypocritical, mercenary, and base; and not a few were worldly, selfish, and sycophantic." After this, it would be an idle waste of time to defend Mr. Campbell's attack on the reverend gentlemen here so happily and savagely described.

While admitting that Mr. Campbell attacked the clergy, and at times, too, severely, we still insist that his attack was just and discriminating. To that class of them described in the preceding extract he was, we grant, not over-indulgent; nor in this will he be adjudged to have erred. But there were many among them "whom, while he believed them to be in error, he regarded as men of great intellectual and moral worth: men whom he loved sincerely, and against whom he never let fall a shaft but to correct some waywardness in doctrine, and then always in a spirit of real kindness. True, their treatment of him was such as generally entitled them not even to his respect, much less to his esteem; and yet they shared largely of both. When Mr. Jeter acquaints himself with the lying, bitter,

Smithfield spirit with which his clerical brethren of that day set on Mr. Campbell, he will find his stock of charity exhausted, and his time consumed, in providing mantles to cover their shame, and many a reason to shrink from a comparison of their conduct with that of Mr. Campbell.

## *Section VI.*

But "Campbellism in its chaos" was distinguished by another attack of a nature still more offensive, if possible, than the attack on the clergy. Mr. Campbell ventured to question the authority and doctrinal soundness of *Creeds* or *Confessions of Faith*. We admit he did, and maintain he was right. First, he proposed to examine creeds historically, for the purpose of ascertaining whence they had sprung, and what their effects on the church had been. Second, to inquire into their doctrines in order to determine their intrinsic value. Third, to investigate the authority with which they are invested.

On examining into the history of creeds, he felt it to be fully established that they did not originate with Christianity, neither with the primitive churches; and that they are hence without the sanction either of Christ or the apostles. On the contrary, he ascertained that they originated in an age when Christianity is admitted by all to have been greatly corrupted, and that they grew out of these corruptions and embody them, with a slight admixture of truth. And, as to their effects upon the church, he ascertained that these had been to exclude from the church in the days of her corruption, not the corrupting party always, but the feebler one, and that too without the least regard to the soundness of its views.

On inquiring into the doctrines of creeds, it was felt that so far as they embody the doctrines of a party as such, whether a majority or not, they embody not strictly the doctrines of Christianity, but merely the party's opinions, speculations, and metaphysics; that they are intended not so much to define matters on which parties agree, as to guard points on which they differ; and that hence their legitimate tendency is, if not to create, at least to perpetuate, divisions.

And, in regard to the authority of creeds, it appeared that they are intended to be authoritative codes of laws by which the parties respectively adopting them covenant to be governed both in their

doctrine and in their discipline; that parties decide their questions of heresy, not by the Bible, but by the creed; that a person dissenting from the creed is pronounced a heretic, though he declare his belief in the whole Bible in the fair construction of its terms; and finally, that the forms of church policy and rules of discipline contained in creeds, though always binding and frequently tyrannical, are without the semblance of authority from the Holy Scriptures. For these and other weighty reasons, Mr. Campbell felt it to be due the Savior to repudiate creeds altogether.

In regard to the propriety of having a creed, and the kind they should have, if any, Mr. Campbell and his brethren reasoned thus:—If a creed contains less than the Bible then it contains too little, but if it contains more then it contains too much; and if it contains anything different from the Bible it is wrong, but if it contains precisely what the Bible contains then it is not a creed but a Bible. And if, they reasoned further, our views of the Bible are correct, there is no necessity for publishing them to the world in the form of a creed. As they are already more accurately expressed in the Bible than we can possibly express them, we will merely publish the Bible. But if they are not correct, then they should not be published in any form, for the Bible does not sanction the publication of what is wrong.

But even Mr. Campbell, it seems, has a creed. The following is Mr. Jeter's language:—"There is in Christendom a great variety of creeds, from the so-called Apostles' Creed down to the 'Christian System' composed by Mr. Campbell as an exhibition of the principles of the Reformation." But whether Mr. Campbell's brethren have a creed or not does not appear from Mr. Jeter's book. It is presumed, however, from the following language, that they have none:—"Every *intelligent* Christian," he remarks, "has a creed, written or unwritten." Blockheads, then, of course have none! This is certainly the reason why the *Baptists* have creeds, and likely the reason we have none!

When Mr. Jeter penned the assertion that the "Christian System" is a creed, he must have supposed his readers would be of a class too corrupt to receive it if true; otherwise it is difficult to account for its presence in his book. It is an assertion which we have never met with except in the lowest class of attacks that have been made on Mr. Campbell's views. When we chance with a scurrilous little pamphlet, either denuded or garbed in green or blue, clandestinely circulating

over the country against these views, among the first things we expect to meet with on" opening it is the assertion that *Alexander Campbell has a creed*; but certainly we had no right to expect it in the decent work of a pious clergyman.

The term "creed," in its current as well as in its ecclesiastic sense, denotes a *Confession of Faith*. In this sense and in this only does Mr. Campbell use the term when objecting to creeds. Of this fact Mr. Jeter cannot be ignorant. Why then does he apply the term to the "Christian System"? Does he mean to insinuate that the "Christian System" is a creed in this sense? We shall only add that if a good cause requires its advocates to resort to expedients like this, then the opprobrium of trickery should cease.

## *Section VII.*

In the course of his comments on the attack on creeds, Mr. Jeter undertakes to point out what he styles a "*great fallacy*," which, it would seem, "lurks in our boasted purity of speech." As this "fallacy has never, that we know of, occurred as yet to any of our brethren, we beg leave here to call their attention to it. The following is Mr. Jeter's language:—"They" (Mr. Campbell and his brethren) "do, it is true, insist that their members shall speak of Bible things in Bible terms. To restore a pure or scriptural speech is one of the main objects of the Reformation for which Mr. Campbell pleads. But in their boasted purity of speech there lurks another great fallacy. *They do not use Bible terms*. The Bible, with a few slight exceptions, was written in the Hebrew and Greek tongues; and they derive their theological terms from a *translation of the Bible* made by fallible men."

Terms, then, derived from a *translation* of the Bible are *not Bible terms*. From this seedy premise the following conclusions result:—

1. That a translation of the Bible is not a Bible. For, if the single terms of a translation of the Bible are not Bible terms, neither are they collectively. Hence they cannot form a Bible.
2. That Mr. Jeter has not produced, in his entire book, even one Bible argument against any view of Mr. Campbell; for he has used only a *translation* of the Bible.

3. That he has not produced a particle of Bible evidence in defense of his own doctrines; since the evidence he has produced is all cited from a translation of the Bible.
4. That, for aught the world can learn from his book, Mr. Campbell's views constitute the only true and proper exposition of Christianity now extant.

This only proves that he who has resolved that he will never be just has, in the act, resolved that he will be at times extremely foolish.

### *Section VIII.*

Another blunder, of a kind which Mr. Jeter is no less capable of committing than the preceding, occurs on p. 40 of his book, in some strictures he offers on a "discourse" he had somewhere heard Mr. Campbell deliver, which, it seems, was "eloquent, plausible, and sophistical." The subject of the discourse, it appears, was the *unity* of the church of Christ. Mr. Campbell assumed upon the authority of the Bible that there is "*one body*." He then argued that, since the "*one body*" is *the church*, the church is hence a unit. But it was not in this that the "sophism" consisted, in pointing out which Mr. Jeter commits his blunder.

The term "church" is employed in the Bible in two different senses,—one a more, the other a less, comprehensive sense. When used in the former sense, it comprehends the whole body of Christians since the commencement of Christ's reign to the present. But, in the latter, it applies only to a particular congregation composed of a limited number of these Christians meeting at some stated place for worship. Now, the "sophism" consisted in this:—Mr. Campbell left his audience to infer that he and his brethren exhaust the meaning of the term in its largest sense, *i. e.*, that *they alone constitute the body of Christ*. The following is Mr. Jeter's language:—"He" (Mr. Campbell) "did not inform us, however, what body is the body of Christ. He trusted in the intelligence and candor of his hearers to infer that the body of Christ is the body that embraces the 'ancient gospel,' and that has restored the 'ancient order of things.' "

Now, we shall attempt no formal reply to this. We shall simply deny that it is in the memory of man that Mr. Campbell ever offered the

gross insult to his understanding that is here attributed to him.

That he may have denied that the Methodist church, or the Presbyterian church, or even the Baptist church, *as such*, constitutes the church of Christ, either in whole or in part, is what we are ready to believe. The term "church," as already stated, has two, and but two, acceptations in the Bible. In the one, it includes the whole family of the elect since Christ to the present time. In this acceptation it is equivalent to the expression "kingdom of God" in the passage, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." In the other, it denotes a particular congregation, composed of those who have entered this kingdom, meeting at some stated place for worship, as the church at Sardis. But in neither acceptation will the term apply to any one nor even to all the denominations just named. They are neither collectively *the church* in the one sense, nor singly *a church* in the other; nor as *denominations* are they even part of the church of Christ in any sense. Indeed, whether we view them at large as denominations or consider their individual congregations, one thing is certain, they are neither in the one capacity nor the other known in the Bible, nor recognized by it, as belonging to the church of Christ. A *Baptist* church of Christ is as unreal a thing as a Roman Catholic church of Christ, and there is as much authority in the Bible for the one as for the other. By this remark we do not mean to compare Baptists as individuals with Roman Catholics Very far from it.

We speak of the *denomination only*, and of this so far only as it is *Baptist*; but we do mean that *thus far* it has no more sanction from the Bible than the Roman Catholic church.

If the term *Baptist* denotes not something essential to a Christian as a Christian, neither something essential to a church of Christ as such, then it denotes something which is not Christian. It then denotes an attribute, as far as it denotes any, not of a church as a church of Christ, but of a church as distinguished from a church of Christ, and hence something not sanctioned by the Bible. In which case, both what the term denotes and the term itself should be rebated as essential neither to a Christian nor to a church of Christ.

But perhaps Mr. Jeter will say the expression "Baptist church of Christ" means no more than the expression "church of Christ." But how can this be? The expression "church of Christ" is certainly equal to itself.



And if so, then of course the prefix "Baptist" means nothing, and hence should be abandoned. But, if the expression "Baptist church of Christ" means either more or less, or anything else, than the expression "church of Christ," then the expression "church of Christ" means one thing, and the expression "Baptist church of Christ" another thing. And hence it would follow, since the Bible sanctions only a church of Christ, that it does not sanction a *Baptist* church of Christ.

Indeed, as already stated, the term "Baptist," whether applied to the individual or the church, denotes something belonging to neither as Christian, and, therefore, should be disused. But, should it be alleged that it denotes merely the *difference* between one Christian and another, or between one church and another, then we reply that no such difference is sanctioned by the Bible, and hence we are under no obligation to provide a name for it. On the contrary, we are under obligation to seek to cancel all such differences, as well as all terms denoting them. Now, these differences, whether between one individual Christian and another, or between one church and another, and all terms denoting them, are precisely what Mr. Campbell and his brethren propose shall be abolished. They propose that nothing not essential, according to the Bible, to the character of a Christian, shall be made a bond of union or a condition of fellowship, either among individual Christians or churches of Christ. It is thus that they propose to abolish all sects and sectarianism.

But Mr. Campbell does not claim for himself and his brethren that they, as a body, exhaust the meaning of the term *the church*, nor that they are the only persons who are members of the church. Hence, no apology can be pleaded for Mr. Jeter's dishonorable insinuation to the contrary. Mr. Campbell concedes to all, no matter where found, who have been, in the true acceptation of the phrase, "*born again*," that they are members of *the church* or body of Christ. True, he believes many of these members to be in organizations purely sectarian, and hence unsanctioned by the Bible. And to all such members his counsel is, Come out of these organizations.

But Mr. Campbell does maintain that his brethren, *as a denomination, are Christian*; and that hence, so far as the body of Christ has *an earth a denominational* existence, they are that body. And this is what he denies to any other and to all denominations in Christendom besides. This is the great distinction which he believes to exist between his

brethren, as a body, and all other bodies.

Again, he denies that the individual congregations of his brethren, such as are of good moral character, can, except in the language of envy, ignorance, or fable, be denominated sectarian. On the contrary, he insists that each one of them is, according to the Bible, in the strictest sense of the term, *a church of Christ*; and that, consequently, so far as *the church* can be held to have a *congregational* existence, they exhaust its present meaning.

Both such congregations, and the denomination itself as a body, are composed of members who repudiate everything not essentially involved in the Bible view of a Christian; and who maintain the absolute necessity and importance of all that is. As a body and as congregations they refuse to be bound or governed by any code of laws except the New Testament, or to acknowledge any other names except the names which it imposes. How, then, can either be called sectarian? Mr. Jeter is no more at liberty to apply the term to either than he would be to apply it to the church of God which met at Corinth. We do not say he will not do it: indeed, we know he does; nor have we ground to expect aught better from him. It is a peculiarity of the guilty that they always seek to cover their own crimes by imputing the same to others. He will certainly call us sectarians.

### *Section IX.*

But the sorest and most offensive feature of "Campbellism in its chaos" yet remains to be stated. Mr. Campbell ventured to attack the practice of relating a "*Christian experience*." This, together with his "early writings on the subject of experimental religion, gave great pain to the friends of spiritual Christianity." So writes Mr. Jeter. True, Mr. Campbell ventured to attack the practice in question, but on what grounds? Has Mr. Jeter stated them? He has not. Policy dictated to him that what he could not answer it would be better to suppress. Indeed, after what he has written on the subject, there was little necessity to state them; for if we are to believe the subject to be part of Christianity, and to accept his picture of it as true, to deem him its friend and Mr. Campbell its enemy, then truly may it be said that it is not from its enemies, but from its friends, that Christianity suffers its chief disgrace. Let anyone read Mr. Jeter's own account of "Christian experience," bearing in mind that he is defending it against its most powerful

adversary, that he knew when writing his defense that most likely it would have to pass the ordeal of a review by Mr. Campbell; let him then note the things which could not be suppressed and imagine those that are, and he can hardly fail to conclude that, if "Christian experience" is a part of Christianity, then the line which separates the true from the fabulous has never been accurately determined.

We here use the phrase "*Christian experience*" in the only sense in which it is popularly understood.

Mr. Campbell attacked the practice in question for the following reasons:—1. It is not sanctioned by the Bible. 2. The main point in the experience is a fiction. 3. The practice fosters superstition. Upon each of these reasons it may not be amiss to dwell for a moment.

1. The practice is not sanctioned by the Bible. "This, to a man scrupulously exact in matters of the highest moment, and who cherished a deep reverence for the word of God, would be enough. His conscience would instantly spurn the practice. He could no longer consent to impeach the Divine wisdom by affirming that to be necessary upon which that wisdom has seen fit to be silent. He could not consent to cumber the hearts of his brethren with a sense of duty where the Master has left them free. He could never be induced to set aside the word of God to make room for a mere tradition. And yet all this would give great pain and cause great scandal to *the friends of spiritual Christianity!*

2. The main point in the experience is a fiction. This point is the *sense of forgiveness* alleged to be felt by the party at the moment when his sins are supposed to be remitted. In his account of the elements of a "Christian experience," Mr. Jeter thought it wise to suppress this. The meaning of the expression "sense of forgiveness" is concisely this:—that at the instant of regeneration the sinner is *sensibly assured* that his sins are remitted. But this is something which the Bible does not affirm. Peelings may exist, but they prove not remission; impressions may be made, but they teach not forgiveness. In most instances we may hope the unfortunate victim of this delusion to be sincere. But this alters not the nature of the case. Whether he feigns the existence of feelings that have no existence, (which, we fear, is not seldom the case,) or adopts the fictitious construction of others of feelings that do exist, (which is perhaps more frequently the case,) the

result is the same:—the point assumed to be the evidence of remission is a fiction. *No* good man of strong mind, and unwilling to be deceived, ever yet heard related what is popularly called a "Christian experience" without feeling himself deeply moved when that part of the farce was approached which was to elicit a declaration of the sense of forgiveness. It is difficult to say which is the greater,—the pity of such a man for the deluded creature who sits before him on the inquisitorial bench to be plied with every silly question which ignorance or impudence can put, or his disgust for the blind guide who conducts the process of torturing the feelings of a subdued and weeping sinner into every imaginable form that is false.

3. The practice fosters superstition. Of the truth of this there is no more unmistakable evidence than the chary concessions of Mr. Jeter. That dreams, visions, sounds, voices, and specters, were formerly, as they are still, common elements in the experiences related, does not admit of being denied. These things were related in public in the presence of large audiences. Many hearing them believed them real. Hence, in "seeking religion" these persons were naturally led to look for the same marvelous things which others had seen.

With their superstitious feelings thus highly excited, how easy for them to persuade themselves that they had seen or heard what had either no foundation at all, or none beyond their fancy! Hence, if the father had heard a sound, nothing but a sound would satisfy the son; if the mother had dreamed a dream, the daughter was a dreamer too; and thus the weaknesses of parents became the weaknesses of their children, and the superstition of one generation the superstition of the next.

Of these evils Mr. Jeter is content to say, "They were seen, deplored, and opposed by all well-informed Christians long before he" (Mr. Campbell) "commenced his reformation." Not without many a qualification can this be accepted as true. One thing is certain:—that where these "well-informed" Christians are still in the ascendant, no perceptible diminution of the evil has as yet occurred.

But we must not dismiss the subject without noticing Mr. Jeter's attempt to prostitute the Bible to its support. "Philip," he says, "did not baptize the Ethiopian eunuch, who requested baptism, until he had catechized him. True," he continues, "the evangelist propounded but *one question* to the candidate; or, at least, in the concise narrative

furnished by Luke, only one is recorded,—that, under the circumstances, being deemed sufficient."

Well, from Philip's propounding *one* question what does Mr. Jeter infer? His modest conclusion is thus stated:—"This example, so far from restricting pastors or churches to this brief and single question,—a question never, so far as we are informed, proposed to any other applicant for the ordinance, in apostolic times,—fairly authorizes them to make such inquiries as the intelligence, known characters, and circumstances of the candidates may appear to require." That is, *one* question put by an inspired teacher authorizes uninspired "pastors or churches" to put, if they see fit, a *thousand*, or to require a "candidate" for baptism to relate a *Christian experience*.

When the holy word of God can be thus scandalously perverted by its professed friends merely to serve a purpose, for consistency's sake let the clamor of Christians against infidel injustice be hushed forever.

But, gentle reader, will you turn to the eighth chapter of the Acts, and read from the twenty-ninth verse to the close of the chapter? You will observe that, on approaching the eunuch, Philip says to him, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" But this is not the "*one question*" to which Mr. Jeter refers; therefore read on. You are through. Now say whether you have found even *one* question put by Philip to the eunuch before he would baptize him. *No. Such a question is not in the passage.* Philip states the *condition* on which the eunuch might be baptized, but he propounds to him no question. But Mr. Jeter, in his blind zeal to find an example which would justify him in *catechizing candidates for baptism*, confounds a *condition* with a *question*; or, if he has not done this, then he is guilty of inventing for the Bible what it does not contain.

## *Section X.*

But Mr. Jeter is in labor to make it appear that Mr. Campbell and his brethren are a "sect." As we have already alluded to this subject, but little more need be added on it here. His language is, "Mr. Campbell now found himself at the head of a sect,—yes, of a *sect*. The reformers were a sect, according to the definition of Noah Webster:—'SECT: A body or number of persons united in tenets, chiefly in philosophy and religion, but constituting a distinct party by holding sentiments

different from those of other men; a denomination."

According, then, to Mr. Jeter and Mr. Webster, we are a "sect." Now, we shall certainly not attempt to deny that there *is* a sense in which certain men can call us a "sect." Had we lived in the days of the Pharisees, we doubt not they would have called us a "sect." Should we wonder at their doing it now? But it is not Mr. Webster who styles us a sect, but Mr. Jeter, who applies his language to us. Our defense is this:—after the way which *some men* call heresy, so worship we the God of our fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

But let us put the logic of Mr. Jeter to the proof. The following is Mr. Webster's definition of baptism:—"*The application of water to a person, as a sacrament or religious ceremony, by which he is initiated into the visible church of Christ. This is usually performed by sprinkling or immersion.*" Mr. Jeter, your witness is an honorable man. Is the case made out? If he testify truly against your adversary, pray, sir, what is the effect of his testimony against yourself?

But, again, says Mr. Jeter, "It must be added that the reformers were a sect in the sense in which Mr. Campbell so frequently employed the term. They had all the attributes, and, eminently the spirit, of a sect. Their claim to be considered *the church*, and, by eminence, *the Christian church*, was as baseless, and far more preposterous, than the same claim vauntingly set forth by some older and more venerable if not more worthy sects."

We understand Mr. Jeter perfectly, and shall give his paltry insinuation the benefit of a second publication. His meaning is this:—that our claim to be considered *the church*, and, by eminence, *the Christian church*,—a claim which has now been explained,—is as baseless as, and far more preposterous than, the same claim vauntingly set forth by *the church of Rome*, which is, with him, a more *venerable* if not *more worthy sect* than we. Within itself this insinuation is of no consequence whatever. Its sole value consists in this:—that it is the truest index to its author's feelings we have yet seen. Sectarianism, as defined by him, consists, among other things, to use his own language, in "*the lack of tenderness and forbearance toward those who dissent from our views.*" Tried by his own rule, in the light of the foregoing insinuation, and how free from the stain of sectarianism is Mr. Jeter?

## Chapter II.

### MR. JETER'S DOCTRINE OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT IN CONVERSION EXAMINED.

#### Section I.

PASSING over all else Mr. Jeter has to say on "Campbellism" in the first one hundred and thirteen pages of his book, as of no consequence whatever, we shall now proceed to examine what he has to say on the principles of the system. We indulge the hope that we are now entering upon a more pleasing as well as more profitable task. Our interest, consequently, in our future labor is much enhanced. The strength of our cause is now to be tried. Its principles are to be analyzed and their soundness thoroughly tested. Our only regret is that a greater master than Mr. Jeter is not to conduct the process.

How long it took to elaborate these principles, or the precise period when they were digested into a system, are points upon which Mr. Jeter has not seen fit to enlighten us. From what he says, however, we may infer that they were in course of development for a long time, passing through Various transitions from their inception in the fertile brain of Mr. Campbell up to the period of full formation. However, at last they assumed, it seems, the form of a system. Into this system Mr. Jeter boldly dips, and on its capital items dwells at length, among the chief of which is *the influence of the Spirit in conversion*.

On this subject Mr. Jeter states his doctrine thus:—"*There is an influence of the Spirit, internal, mighty, and efficacious, differing from moral suasion, but ordinarily exerted through the inspired word, in the conversion of sinners.*"

Of this proposition, and of the doctrine it enunciates, we have, before proceeding to notice the defense of it, several things to say.

The proposition contains three superfluous terms, to wit: *internal*, *mighty*, and *efficacious*. No one contends for an influence of the Spirit which is merely *external*, neither for one which has no *might*, nor yet for one ' without *efficacy*. Hence, the terms are redundant.

Omitting, then, these three superfluous terms, Mr. Jeter's proposition reads thus:—*There is an influence of the Spirit, differing from moral suasion, but ordinarily exerted through the inspired word, in the conversion of sinners.*

But this is, in reality, a compound proposition, and equivalent to two, of which the first may be expressed thus:—*In conversion there is an influence of the Spirit differing from moral suasion.* The second, thus:—*This influence is exerted ordinarily through the Truth.*

The first of these propositions we may conceive intended to define the *kind* of influence exerted; the second, to state *how* it is exerted. But the first is not successful. It does not define the kind of influence exerted, but merely says of it, *it differs from moral suasion.* But what it is that thus differs we are not informed.

Of course it is not moral suasion, since it and moral suasion differ: but what else it is we are not told; we are merely told that it *differs*. But, unless Mr. Jeter knows what it is, how does he know that it differs? If he knows not what it is, for aught he knows it may not differ. But, if he knows what it is, why did he not tell us? Why merely tell us that it differs, and leave us to suspect that he knows not why he thus affirms?

But, conceding that it differs, what does it differ from? *Moral suasion*, we are told. But what is *moral suasion*? *Suasion* is defined the act of persuading. But Mr. Jeter is not speaking of an act, but of an influence. Let us suppose, then, that he means by suasion, not the act of persuading, but an influence which persuades. Joining to this the word moral, we have *a moral influence which persuades, i.e. the sinner in conversion.* What, now, can this be, but the influence of the Truth as such? If this is not his meaning, his proposition has none. In this sense, therefore, we shall, at all events, venture to understand him.

When, then, Mr. Jeter speaks of an influence differing from moral suasion, he means an influence differing from the Truth as such. That we are correct in understanding him thus will appear from the manner in which he defines this influence elsewhere. It is, he observes, "*an influence distinct from and above the Truth.*" Or still more clearly, perhaps, does he express himself in calling it "*a supernatural agency in the conversion of sinners.*" Jointly, these expressions define with a good deal of precision both the *kind* of influence for which he contends and *what* it differs from. It is a *supernatural* influence, and is



distinct—*i.e.* differs—from *the Truth*.

From this, and from the fact that Mr. Jeter believes in the influence also of the Truth as such, it is clear that he believes in a "*plurality of influences*" in conversion:—one, simply an influence of the Truth as such; the other, an influence *distinct from and above the Truth*.

*Now, it is in regard to this latter influence that we join issue with him.* We utterly deny that such an influence is ever, in any case, present in conversion. And here let us be understood. We do not, if it be made a question of mere power, deny the possibility of such an influence. We merely deny that it *is* exerted, not that it *can* be. Nor will we, even if it be made a question of fact, deny absolutely that it *may be* exerted. We deny that it is exerted, on the ground that we have not one particle of evidence that such is the case. This extent hath our denial, no more. We are the more careful to draw these distinctions because, notwithstanding the great clearness and precision with which Mr. Campbell has expressed himself on this subject, he seems still to be, by some, misunderstood. Hence much of the idle and irrelevant talk with which Mr. Jeter's chapter on spiritual influence abounds.

The second of the preceding propositions, as already remarked, is intended to state *how* this influence is exerted,—namely, "*ordinarily through the Truth*." It is, then, *always* exerted, actually and invariably exerted, in every case of conversion. Only is it variable in the mode of its exertion, being exerted sometimes through the Truth and sometimes without it.

Here now is another point on which we take issue with Mr. Jeter. We deny that in conversion any influence is exerted by the Spirit except such as it exerts *through the Truth*; in other words, such as belongs to *divine Truth* as such.

An issue, therefore, is here fairly formed between him and us. He believes in an influence in conversion "*distinct from and above the Truth*:" we deny it. He believes that this influence is exerted *ordinarily* through the Truth, but sometimes without it: we deny that any influence is ever exerted in conversion except through the Truth. This makes the difference between us.

Now, in order to establish these positions what has Mr. Jeter to do? First, he has to produce from the Bible at least one passage, which

either actually asserts or necessarily implies the existence of an influence distinct from and above the Truth, as *an influence in conversion*. Second, he has to prove, since this influence is *distinct from* and *above* the Truth, that it is ever exerted through the Truth. Third, that it is ever exerted without the Truth. Nor is this requiring of him too much. For unless the existence of the influence, as an influence in conversion, be first shown, its exertion, either through the Truth or without it, is inconceivable. And even then, each mode in which it is said to be exerted must be separately proved. For proving that it is exerted through the Truth would never justify the inference that it is exerted without it, and the reverse.

Nor to all this does Mr. Jeter deem himself unequal. Certainly he undertakes it, or at least what implies it; and how well he performs his task, we shall now proceed to acquaint the reader.

## *Section II.*

The testimony by which Mr. Jeter proposes to establish the "reality" of this influence, he denominates "direct and scriptural." This is the best, certainly, that the nature of the case admits of; and, should he succeed in producing even any such, we shall consider him completely successful. Of this testimony we shall hardly be expected to notice every passage both quoted and referred to; still, we shall notice as much, though we may deem it wholly irrelevant, as our limits will allow, and certainly every passage on which any special emphasis seems to be laid.

But is it not a little strange that Mr. Jeter, after assuring us that his testimony is "direct," should not attempt to establish directly by it the truth of his proposition, but, instead of this, should proceed to state a series of subordinate propositions, intended, it may be, to imply its truth, and to these adduce his testimony?—in other words, that he should attempt to establish *indirectly* the truth of his proposition by *direct* testimony? But Mr. Jeter is a master of logic!

Of these propositions the first is thus expressed:—"*Conversion is, in the New Testament, described as a birth,—a new birth,—a birth of the Spirit.*"

Omitting a few of the redundant clauses with which Mr. Jeter rarely

fails to cumber his assertions, his proposition reads thus:—*Conversion is described in the*

*New Testament as a birth of the Spirit.* Now, we deny that such a description is contained in the Bible; and, if our denial is not true, it can easily be shown to be false. Let the reader examine, by the aid of a concordance, every passage in the Bible in which conversion occurs, and then say whether he has found, even in one, such a description. We repeat, it is not in the Bible. Had Mr. Jeter merely said conversion is equivalent to the new birth, or something to that effect, the assertion might have been allowed to pass as substantially correct or harmless; but he says *conversion is described in the New Testament as a birth of the Spirit.* It is then not merely *described*; it is *described in the New Testament, described as a birth,—nay, more, as a birth of the Spirit.* This reckless proposition teems with falsehood. There is not a truthful feature in it.

But perhaps we should do Mr. Jeter injustice were we not to subjoin the passages on which he seems to rest its truth. They are two, the first of which is the following:—"*That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" But does this passage contain a description of *anything*? especially, does it contain a description of one thing as another? plainly, does it contain a description of *conversion as a birth of the Spirit*? The most vulgar common sense perceives it does not. But perhaps Mr. Jeter will say he cited the passage merely to prove that there is such a thing as being born of the Spirit. If so, we shall only add, he cited it to prove what we at least have never denied.

The second of these passages is the following:—"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." Had this passage been adduced to prove the impeccability of human nature in certain conditions, or that Satan is denied the power to touch a Christian, many, perhaps, might have thought it relevant. But Mr. Jeter adduces it to prove that *conversion is described in the New Testament as a birth of the Spirit*; and full as well might he have adduced it to prove the imponderable nature of heat, or that there is such a place as the fabled Styx. Merely quoting the passage in connection with the proposition it was intended to prove best shows the unwarrantable use he attempts to make of it. We shall therefore dismiss it without an additional remark.

But whether conversion is, in the New Testament, described as a birth of the Spirit or not, is little to Mr. Jeter's purpose. It is freely granted that the New Testament teaches the doctrine of a new birth, but utterly denied that it teaches the figment which he calls the new birth. Nor is it at all material to his conclusion that *conversion* shall be considered a *birth* in any sense. His position is, *that in the new birth the divine nature is conveyed; and that this conveyance is effected by the peculiar spiritual influence for which he contends.* This position made good, we shall frankly grant he has carried his point. But, that we may appear to do him no injustice when we represent him as holding so "strange a position, we shall quote his own language.

"There is," he remarks, "a resemblance between generation, or the natural birth, and conversion. The Spirit of inspiration has employed this resemblance to elucidate the subject of man's moral renovation. In physical generation the nature and qualities of the parent are conveyed to the child. Adam begat a son in his own likeness. That which is born of the flesh is flesh,—that is, not merely corporeal, but depraved, corrupt, partaking of man's fallen nature, as the term 'flesh' frequently means. So, in the new birth, the nature—the moral nature—of the Spirit—of God—is conveyed to his offspring .... The argument, in brief, is this:—that the new or moral birth—implying a communication of the divine nature—is effected not merely by the written word, but is ascribed to a voluntary and efficient agency of the Holy Spirit."

Here now it is deliberately asserted,—first, that in conversion *the divine nature is communicated*; second, that this communication is effected by a voluntary and efficient agency of the Holy Spirit, which, in Mr. Jeter's dialect, means a "*supernatural* agency."

But is the *divine*—is *any* nature communicated in conversion? To propound the ridiculous question is to obtain sentence against it. It is difficult—indeed, impossible—with those who receive such nonsense to succeed in refuting it. Nor, fortunately, is anything of the sort very necessary, since the doctrine is, by its very extravagance, completely refuted. Candidly, does Mr. Jeter himself believe it? Does he suppose others will believe it? Does he think the human mind so ductile, so easily warped, that it can be duped into the belief of a thing so utterly fabulous? Alas for the world if he has not reckoned too far on the pliancy of its credulity, if he so thinks!

Still, as the doctrine is brought forward in a grave argument, intended to settle a great question, we must devote to it a more minute attention. What then does Mr. Jeter mean by "the divine nature"? He means "the moral nature—of the Spirit—of God." But what he means by this latter expression he has furnished us no means of knowing. From the leading text, however—which he cites to prove, it would seem, that this nature is "conveyed" in conversion,—we may infer that he means *spiritual-mindedness* or *spirituality*. This text we have already had occasion slightly to notice, namely:—"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," upon which Mr. Jeter ventures to ring the following changes:—"That which is born of the Spirit is spirit,—resembles the Spirit, partakes of his holiness,—is spiritual." Spirituality, then, or a nature resembling that of the Spirit and partaking of its holiness, is, we conclude, what he means by the expression "moral nature—of the Spirit—of God." But it was not to define the sense in which he employs this expression that he cited the passage, but to prove that the nature of which he speaks is conveyed in conversion. It will then be necessary to look yet a little more closely into the meaning which he attaches to the passage, as well as into its force as evidence of what he cites it to prove.

By what law of language, then, does Mr. Jeter transmute the substantive *Spirit* into the adjective *spiritual*? We utterly deny that he has the right, in violation of the known laws of interpretation, to trifle thus with the word of God merely to serve a purpose. The passage does not say, that which is born of the Spirit is *spiritual*; neither is this its meaning. It says, that which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*, positively and materially, if we may so speak,—*spirit*; not *spiritual*, nor yet *spirituality*, but *spirit*. That which is born of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, is spirit, the human spirit; or, more fully still, that which is born of the Holy Spirit, changed or quickened by it, is the spirit of man, his mind. The passage teaches that in that great, vital, and inconceivably important renovation denoted by the expression "born of the Spirit," it is the spirit of man, his intellectual and moral nature, that is the subject of it. This is its meaning, this its value. We grieve to see a passage which, like this, contains a great truth, fall into the hands of a man who can transmute it into a prop for the tame fantasies of his own brain.

Once more, let the reader closely inspect the passage in hand; let him dissect it, reduce it to its simplest clauses, examine each of these attentively, then each word; then let him reconstruct the passage, and, looking broadly over it a last time, say whether he can discover in it the

doctrine that, *in conversion, the nature, the moral nature, of the Spirit of God is conveyed.* We ask no more.

But we seem to have forgotten the "resemblance" between the natural birth and the new, on which alone, after all, Mr. Jeter's whole argument turns. If, however, the new birth consists (as he maintains it does) in being merely quickened by the Spirit, then we affirm that there is nothing analogous to it known to him in heaven or in earth. There is, we grant, an analogy between the new birth, as defined in the New Testament, and natural birth; but between the new birth, as qualified by Mm, and natural birth, there is no analogy. The new birth, as qualified by him, has no foundation either in revelation or in nature, and hence bears no resemblance to any created or uncreated thing.

But the new birth is not a birth in the sense in which natural birth is a birth. Indeed, what is called the new birth is not a *birth*. It is merely an event analogous to a birth, and is, for that reason, called a birth. Hence, it does not belong to the same class of events with natural birth, and, consequently, we cannot reason from the one to the other as though it did. Yet this is just what Mr. Jeter does. He reasons from the natural birth to the new as if they were both events of the same class; and as if, consequently, he had the right to infer that whatever is true of the one is also true of the other. But this can be done (and then only with probable certainty) where events do certainly belong to the same class, and not where, as in the present instance, they are merely analogous.

It is now easy to see how Mr. Jeter has fallen into his error. He cannot know *d priori* that the divine nature is conveyed in conversion; neither does the Bible teach it. On what ground, then, does he assert it? Simply on the ground of a resemblance between the new birth and the natural, in the latter of which, nature is communicated. But, unless the new birth resembles the natural *in all respects*, (which it does not,) or is known to resemble it in *this*, (which is not known,) this conclusion does not follow,—as it clearly does not.

From all the premises, therefore, now before us, we conclude that Mr. Jeter's doctrine, that in conversion the divine nature is communicated, is a sheer fiction; and his conclusion, that it is effected by an influence of the Spirit distinct from and above the Truth, a gross non-sequitur.

### *Section III.*

Mr. Jeter states his second proposition thus:—"Conversion is termed in the Scriptures a creation, and is described in a variety of language of similar import."

The train of argument *implied* in this proposition is this:—It is first *assumed* that conversion and creation are—not identical events surely, but yet so very similar, that whatever power is necessary to create is necessary to convert; and then inferred, since almighty power alone can create, that it alone can convert. Of course the reader is left to infer (a thing which he can easily do) that almighty power, and the influence of the Spirit, for which Mr. Jeter contends, are the same. Now, clearly, the first thing to be done in order to establish this proposition is to show the near resemblance between conversion and creation which makes them alike dependent on the exertion of the same power. But yet, on this, although the very point on which his whole argument depends, he bestows not so much as a single remark.

But, in attempting to sustain this proposition, Mr. Jeter has certainly committed the error of employing the term "creation," in his proposition and in the discussion of it, in one sense, but in his conclusion in a very different sense. He asserts—in which, however, as usual, he is not correct—that conversion is termed in the Scriptures *a creation*. But, conceding for the present that he is correct, is it termed a creation in the literal acceptance of the term? Mr. Jeter alone will say it is. In a metaphorical sense only can the term creation be applied to conversion. Yet he, as if not in the least aware of this, proceeds to discuss his proposition using the term literally, and then, when he comes to draw his conclusion, erroneously infers, since the term literally implies the exertion of almighty power, that almighty power is exerted in conversion. But a moment's reflection ought to satisfy even him that when he terms conversion a *creation* he is not using the term in the same sense in which it is said, in the Bible, God *created* the heavens and the earth. Here it denotes not merely to modify or renovate,—the only sense in which it can apply to conversion,—but absolutely and literally *to originate*. But in this sense it can never apply to conversion.

But, waiving any thing further on this point, we shall not hesitate to admit that Mr. Jeter has established the conclusion he aims at, provided

he succeeds in showing that the creation of which he speaks is effected by an influence of the Spirit "*distinct from and above the Truth,—a supernatural agency.*"

The first passage which he urges in defense of his proposition is the following from the prophet Ezekiel: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."

On this passage three questions arise. First, is it applicable to the present time? Second, is it applicable to the present question? Third, in what acceptation is its language to be taken? To the first question we reply, the passage was spoken by the prophet to his countrymen during their seventy years' captivity in Babylon, and is by the context strictly limited to the time then present and the times immediately succeeding. To the second we reply, the passage, having no reference whatever to the present time, can have none whatever to the present question, to which it was never intended to apply; and when so used it is scandalously perverted. To the third we respond, the language of the passage is unquestionably figurative. Had the Jews literally hearts of *stone*, and was it the intention of the Lord literally to take these hearts out of them? Did he intend literally to replace these hearts with hearts of flesh, and literally to put within the people other and new spirits besides their own? To ask these questions is to answer them. The stony heart was simply the hard or intractable heart on account of which, and the wickedness to which it had led, the Jews were carried away into captivity. The heart of flesh and the new spirit were simply the subdued spirit and pliant disposition which their hardships while in exile had the effect, in the providence of God, to work out for them.

And yet, of this change, so perfectly natural and so easily accounted for, Mr. Jeter says, it was "a work which neither men nor angels could perform." So thought not the Lord, it seems, when, by the same prophet, he said to the same people, "Make you a *new heart* and a *new spirit*: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" And as to whether angels could have performed the work or not, we dare not say, and feel confident Mr. Jeter does not know, though he blushes not to assert it. But of one thing we feel profoundly convinced:—that the passage does not teach that conversion is effected by a "*supernatural agency*" of the Spirit.



Mr. Jeter's next and last proof that conversion is a creation is the following:—"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

This looks more respectable than any thing we have yet had. The passage contains the word "created," and sinners are converted. Now, the question is, first, in what sense are Christians created? and, second, by what power are sinners converted? As a physical creation is not contended for, but only a "*renovation*," the first question may be disposed of at once. The only remaining question then is, by what power or influence is the sinner converted? Since the effect itself, *a renovation*, is a moral effect,—an effect produced upon the mind of a moral agent,—the power producing it must of course be moral. It must be the power which resides in light, when presented to the mind in sufficient quantity, to influence the judgment, and in the power of motives to determine the will. But in nothing save the gospel does this power reside; *for it is the power of God* (both in respect to light and motives) *for salvation to every one that believes it*.

But Mr. Jeter's language would seem to warrant a different conclusion. "The word employed in this text," he remarks, "to denote this renovation,—created, (*xtizw*,)—is employed to express that exercise of power by "which the universe was brought into existence. (Eph. 3: 9; Col. 1: 16.) No energy short of that which brought order out of chaos can renew the soul of man. That soul is, in its natural state, a moral chaos,—dark, void, formless; and nothing but almighty power and infinite grace can restore it to life, light, and beauty."

At times Mr. Jeter grows exceedingly orthodox; as, for example, in this extract. So straight, indeed, is he at times, that he even appears a little bent; and so very sound, that even the orthodox may well suspect him for a heretic. Clearly, the spirit was on him while writing the foregoing. But on what ground rests his broad conclusion? Obviously, on the ground that the word "created" has but one meaning, and that a literal one. This is essential—absolutely so—to his conclusion; and yet, if he knows anything about the meaning of the term, he knows this to be false. When applied to creation, the term has not the same meaning that it has in the passage in hand, or when applied to conversion. *Creation* is one thing, *conversion* quite another; hence, the same term in the same sense can never express them both.

## Section IV.

Mr. Jeter states his fourth proposition thus:—"Conversion is described as a resurrection from the dead."

And he adopts the same fallacious course of argument to establish it which he employs in the preceding similar instances. He first assumes that conversion is a *resurrection*; and then, because almighty power was exerted in *the resurrection of Christ*, infers that the same is exerted in conversion. But this is not fair. Conversion is not a resurrection, even conceding that it is one at all, in the sense in which Christ was raised from the dead. If it were, then it would be allowable to argue from the one event to the other. But the most that can possibly be said of the two events is, that they are merely analogous; hence, they do not necessarily imply the exertion either of the same kind or the same degree of power.

The first passage quoted by Mr. Jeter, in defense of his present proposition, is the following:—"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace ye are saved.)"

Here it is distinctly said that God made the Ephesians, who had been dead in sins, *alive*: but did he make them alive in the same sense in which he made Christ alive, when he brought him from the dead? If not, on what ground can Mr. Jeter assert that we are converted by the same "energy which raised Christ from the dead"? His error lies in supposing that, because two merely analogous events are described by the same word,—it being used in the one case literally and in the other metaphorically,—they have both resulted from the same power. But this is manifestly erroneous; and yet he persists in affirming that "the Ephesians were quickened by the same power that raised Christ from the dead;" and, without the semblance of authority, asserts it to be "clear from the context." The "context" to which he alludes is the following petition of the apostle for the church at Ephesus:—"That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead." Mr. Jeter takes for granted what everybody except himself knows is not true; namely, that to believe according to the working of God's mighty power is to believe because that power is exerted in us. We believe, it is true,

according to, or in conformity with, the working of God's mighty power. But on *whom* was that power exerted, and *when*? On MS when we *'believed*? Certainly not; but on *Christ* when God raised him from the dead. By that fact was Christ "declared to be the Son of<sup>1</sup> God;" and, when we believe that fact, we believe according to the power which produced it. To a discriminating mind this needs no further illustration.

Mr. Jeter's next "direct, scriptural proof" that the Holy Spirit exerts an influence in conversion, "distinct from and above the Truth," is the following:—"I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase. So, then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase."

The clause "God gave the increase" is that on which Mr. Jeter doubtless relies, as containing his "proof." *But whatever a passage does not actually assert or necessarily imply, it does not teach.* Now, does the passage actually assert that the Corinthians were converted by an "influence distinct from and above the Truth"? or does it even necessarily imply it? Obviously, it does not assert it. Unless, then, it necessarily implies it, it does not teach it. Will Mr. Jeter affirm that the passage necessarily implies it? If so, we demand on what ground? Is it because *God cannot* give the increase in any other way? Mr. Jeter is not ashamed to represent Mr. Campbell as "prescribing" a "limit" to the power of the Spirit: is he now prepared to assume the odious position himself? If not, he will not think us unreasonable when we request him to dispose of the *argumentum ad hominem*.

A passage of Scripture is to be taken not in the whole extent of its *possible*, but only in the whole extent of its *actual* and *necessary*, signification. Whatever falls not legitimately within these limits is not matter of faith, but 111 utter of speculation. Doctrines taught only by possible implication are doctrines untaught, to which class clearly belongs the doctrine of an influence in conversion "distinct from and above the Truth." The most that can possibly be claimed for it in the present instance, if even this much can be claimed, is, that it is not impossible it may be implied. But are we to be called upon to believe a doctrine true, to believe it taught by the holy word of God, merely because it is not impossible some passage may imply it? We cannot think so. And this is our sin. For this we must be proscribed as heretical by such men as Mr. Jeter. But, if mere *possible implication* is the rule which orthodoxy and her votaries prescribe, then we dissent from their

canon, and proudly accept, as the chief distinction which they can bestow, the charge of being heretics.

But "the text teaches," says Mr. Jeter, "that the success of gospel ministers, even the most eminent, whether in the conversion of sinners or the improvement of saints, is of divine influence." That is, their success depends on a "*supernatural agency*" of the Holy Spirit; for this is the only conception he has of divine influence. And, continues he, "the doctrine is according to analogy." "In the vegetable kingdom," he assures us, "God gives the increase;" and even condescends to acquaint us with the astounding fact that "the most skillful husbandman on earth cannot make a blade of grass grow without divine aid. It would be easy to show," he further remarks, "that the same principle pervades the animal kingdom;" and then adds, "we might reasonably infer that this principle extends into the kingdom of grace." That Mr. Jeter might *reasonably* infer it, we dare not deny; but that a "Campbellite" should ever do so, is, we know, the event least likely to happen of any other in the three kingdoms of which Mr. Jeter speaks. A "Campbellite" would be most certain to limit his inferences to what the Scriptures do teach, either by actual assertion or necessary implication, and all beyond, we feel assured, would be left to the speculator and to Mr. Jeter.

But, in regard to the expression "God gave the increase," we wish to say distinctly, we cordially believe it teaches that God crowns the labors of his servants with success. What we deny is, that it teaches that he does so in *the mode* contended for by Mr. Jeter. We believe the *fact* because the word of God asserts it, and all beyond the fact is fiction. Where the all-wise Creator has thought it best to withhold an explanation of the mode in which he executes his will, we think it safest to venture none. But not so Mr. Jeter: he speaks, as if he were the embodiment of light, where angels need be mute.

### ***Section V.***

Mr. Jeter's next "proof" of "*the doctrine of a supernatural agency in the conversion of sinners*" is the following:—"*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren: see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*"

It is here distinctly said that the persons whom the verso addresses had

purified their souls *in obeying* the Truth. Of course, then, Mr. Jeter will admit that purification of the soul, at least, is not dependent on the peculiar influence he advocates. Since, then, this influence is not exerted in order to purify the soul, in order to what else, if at all, is it exerted? In order to *dispose* the heart to *receive* and *be guided* by the Truth, or in order to *produce* obedience, is his conclusion. His language is:—"An influence distinct from and above the Truth is indispensable to the production of this obedience. The Holy Spirit exerts this influence not in revealing new truth or creating new faculties, but in disposing the heart to receive and be guided by the gospel."

*But no passage of Scripture is safely construed, when construed to mean more than its terms will fairly import.* How, in the light of this golden rule, the truth of which is intuitively perceived, do we feel that Mr. Jeter's conclusion is justified by the passage in hand? We cannot feel so. But, he will doubtless urge, they obeyed *through the Spirit*, and this implies the conclusion. Does it, indeed? Even granting the most that he can ask; to wit, that in construing the passage, the clause, *through the Spirit*, is to be construed with the word *obeyed*, and still does the conclusion follow? *Can the clause, "through the Spirit," mean only, through an influence of the Spirit distinct from and above the Truth?* If not, how can Mr. Jeter know that another influence is not meant? Will he answer these questions? Never, we predict. If he affirms that only an influence distinct from and above the Truth is meant, then we deny utterly that the terms of the clause *fairly import the meaning*, and demand other and weightier testimony than his bare word that he affirms truly. The truth is, that in this, as in the preceding instance, the most that he can claim for his doctrine is, that it is not impossible it may be implied. One brief sentence exhausts his logic:—it is not impossible his doctrine may be implied, therefore it is true. But the question between him and us is not a question of *mere possible implication*, but a question of *fact*. *Does the Spirit in conversion exert on the sinner an influence distinct from and above the Truth?* This is the question. And we require that it be made good not by passages of Scripture which may *possibly* imply it, but by passages which either *actually assert* it or *necessarily* imply it. This done, Mr. Jeter has carried his cause: this not done, he has utterly failed' and left the truth with the adverse side. But this as yet he has not done; neither will he do it, unless he produces other stronger and more pertinent evidence than is contained in the preceding passage.

The expression *obeyed through the Spirit*, conceding this, which is not admitted, to be the proper collocation of the words, can be shown safely to import no more than this:—that the Spirit did, through the apostles whom it inspired, present, to the minds of those whom they addressed, *the Truth*, which is ever able to make wise to salvation, and the sufficient motives to induce their obedience to all commands of the gospel. This exposition strikes our common sense as just and natural; it falls within a no strained construction of the clause, and accords with facts; and all beyond this lies far within a region of vague conjecture.

## *Section VI.*

Mr. Jeter closes what we may term the first part of his defense of his theory of spiritual influence with the following passage:—"*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.*"

In this passage the Lord declared by his prophet that during the reign of Christ he would *put his laws into the mind and write them in the hearts of his people*,—a declaration upon which Mr. Jeter relies as sustaining his theory. Now, be it distinctly noticed, that the passage asserts only a *fact*, leaving the *mode* of its occurrence wholly unexplained. But a passage which asserts only a *fact* can never be used in proving *mode*, unless the mode to be proved is itself the fact asserted. And yet Mr. Jeter employs this passage to prove mode and nothing else. He is not attempting to prove the fact that God puts his laws into the mind and writes them in the hearts of his people, but the mode in which he does it,—the mode being the only thing in dispute. In a word, he is attempting to prove that God does this by a "process," to use his own language, "above the power and skill of men or angels." What, now, is this "process"? "The inward and effective agency of the Holy Spirit," says Mr. Jeter. And then, in order to prove this, he cites a passage which, concerning "process" or "the inward and effective agency of the Holy Spirit," says nothing, and is hence wholly irrelevant. True, all facts occur in some specific mode; but then the mode in which a fact occurs is one thing and the fact itself another; and consequently, unless when a passage states a fact it also explains the mode of its occurrence, although it is competent to establish the former, yet it is of no avail in

proving the latter. Hence, it turns out that Mr. Jeter's present "proof" proves nothing, unless it is that his theory is proofless.

In regard to the passage, one thing is certain:—its language is figurative. What, then, is its meaning? Here we must again caution the reader against construing a passage to mean more than its terms will fairly import. The passage, then, can only mean that, during the reign of Christ,

*God would cause his people to understand his laws, and these laws to be impressed on their hearts.* In order to this, two things, and only two, are necessary:—1st, that God cause his laws to be published in an intelligible form; 2d, that he accompany this publication with such sanctions, such tokens of paternal kindness, and such inducements to obedience, as to awaken fear, engage affection, and enlist our self-love. And all this our heavenly Father has done. His laws are intelligible to a degree exactly equaling our accountability; and no terrors are equal to the "terrors of the Lord," no love equal to that with which he "first loved us," and no inducements to obedience equal to "immortality and eternal life."

From all of which we conclude that Mr. Jeter's "process above the power and skill of men or angels," his "inward and effective agency of the Holy Spirit," rests on no foundation better than the fabulous traditions of his church, or the fictions of his own brain.

## *Section VII.*

We have now to notice the second part of Mr. Jeter's defense of a *supernatural agency in the conversion of sinners,*"—a part which seems to have been suggested by the following position of Mr. Campbell, to wit:—*That the Holy Spirit personally dwells in the Christian to help his infirmities while exerting himself to attain to eternal life.* Mr. Jeter's language is, "I go further, and insist that, the influence of the Spirit in sanctification being admitted, it follows, as a logical sequence, that the same influence is exerted in conversion, which is but the commencement of the work of which sanctification is the progress." This is not a new doctrine, but the old, argued on a new ground. The influence of the Spirit contended for is still an influence distinct from and above the truth, and the mode of exerting it is by immediate contact of the Holy Spirit with the human. Mr. Jeter's first

"direct proof," under this head, in defense of his doctrine, is the following:—

"My *first* argument respects the *power of the Holy Spirit*. It is this:—if the Spirit can and does dwell in believers, actually and powerfully assisting them in the mighty struggle for eternal life, then *he can* exert a similar influence in enlightening, quickening, and renewing the ungodly."

Not quite correct, we venture to say. Mr. Jeter's first argument is intended to "*respect*" his *position*, and is *derived* from the power of the Holy Spirit. But his "first argument" is in reality no argument at all. It is merely an instance of the fallacy of shifting the ground in debate. The question between Mr. Campbell and him is not a question respecting what the Spirit *can do*, but a question respecting what it *does*. In regard to what the Spirit *can do*, as an abstract question or a question of power, Mr. Campbell raises no question. We repeat, the question is not as to what the Spirit can do, but as to what it actually does. And, since an argument respecting what the Spirit can do (which is the argument of Mr. Jeter) has no tendency to establish a statement respecting what it *does*, it turns out that Mr. Jeter's "first argument" proves nothing.

Speaking in regard to the foregoing position of Mr. Campbell, Mr. Jeter says, (p. 161,) "I do not, I trust, misunderstand Mr. Campbell on this vital subject. He teaches that all that is done in us before regeneration — which, in the Bethany dialect, means 'born of water,' or immersion—'God our Father,' *not the Holy Spirit*, 'effects by *the word*;' but *after* our new birth, 'the Holy Spirit is shed on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.'" In this extract occur two things, to which we request the attention of the reader.

1. "*Regeneration means, in the Bethany dialect, born of water, or immersion.*"

Once for all, we wish to correct this stale falsehood, which has been repeated by every reviler of Mr. Campbell, from Greatrake down to Mr. Jeter. The satisfaction with which these gentlemen have dealt in this barren tale seems to have been real, heartfelt, complete. They have had exquisite pleasure in repeating it.

Regeneration, *in the Bethany dialect*, is exactly equivalent to the new



birth; and the new birth, in the Bethany dialect, means *to be begotten by the Spirit and to be born of water, or immersed*. But, because birth applies rather to the act of being born—the last act—than to any act preceding it, so, in the Bethany dialect, regeneration applies rather to the act of being born of water—the last act—than to any act preceding it. But, as birth, though applying rather to the last act than to any act preceding it, includes nevertheless all the other acts which precede it, or the whole process of generation, so regeneration, though in the Bethany dialect applying rather to the last act—the act of being born of water—than to any act preceding it, includes also all the other acts preceding it, or the whole process of being born again. In this sense and in this only, and for these reasons, has Mr. Campbell ever employed the word "regeneration" as equivalent to being born of water, or immersion. And if in every instance where he has used the word he has not stopped to qualify it thus, still, he has done so so often elsewhere that no excuse can be pleaded for repeating the preceding vulgar slander, which Mr. Jeter, with all his simulated fairness, is not ashamed to repeat.

A single extract from Mr. Campbell—an extract, too, well known to Mr. Jeter—will set this matter forever at rest. "By the bath of regeneration," says Mr. Campbell, *"is not meant the first, second, or third act, but the last act of regeneration, which completes the whole, and is, therefore, used to denote the new birth. This is the reason why our Lord and his apostles unite this act with water. Being born of water, in the Savior's style, and the bath of regeneration, in the apostles' style, in the judgment of all writers and critics of eminence, refer to one and the same act,—to wit: Christian baptism."* In the light of this well-weighed and cautiously-worded paragraph, in which it is the intention of Mr. Campbell to define his position, what are we to think of the regard for truth and morality, of the regard for the rights and reputation of 'others, of the man who has the front to come forward and say, *Regeneration mean's, in the Bethany dialect, born of water, or immersion?*

2. "All that is done in us before regeneration, God our Father, *not the Holy Spirit*, effects by the word."

Mr. Campbell not only never penned this, but never any thing which implies it. This is what he has said after it has passed through the mind of Mr. Jeter, the dissimilarity between which and a filter is striking. Fluids when passed through a filter come out in their freest form from

impurities; but truth passed through the mind of Mr. Jeter strangely comes out error. Had the alchemists of old possessed such an instrument acting in a reverse manner, long since would all baser metals have passed into gold.

Mr. Campbell has, we grant, said that all that is done in us before regeneration, (by which he means immersion in the sense just explained,) God our Father effects by the word; but he has never said, neither does his language imply it, that all that is thus done in us, God our Father, *not the Holy Spirit*, effects by the word. *Not the Holy Spirit* was not in his thoughts when he penned the sentence. This expression falsifies his sentence; but it is a falsification for which Mr. Jeter, and not Mr. Campbell, is responsible. True, God our Father is conceived of, in the Bethany dialect, as the author, but the remote author, of that of which the Spirit is deemed the more immediate agent; namely, all that is effected in us before immersion. What God, however, thus effects, he effects *by the Spirit*; what the Spirit thus effects, it effects by the Truth. This approaches much nearer both to the Bethany thought and the Bethany dialect.

### ***Section VIII.***

"My *second* proof," says Mr. Jeter, "is derived from the *nature* of *sanctification*. It is progressive holiness. It is beautifully described by the wise man:—"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day:" Prov. 4: 18. Regeneration is the commencement of holiness. Regeneration and sanctification do not denote different processes, but the same process in different stages. They resemble each other as the child resembles the man, or the dawn resembles the day.

. . . Conversion is holiness begun; sanctification is holiness progressing; but in both cases the holiness is of the same nature, tendency, and origin."

1. Holiness and sanctification, in almost every case where they occur, are represented by one and the same word in the original; or, still more to the point, the original word which is rendered sanctification is indifferently rendered either holiness or sanctification. Since, then, the same original word means indifferently either sanctification or holiness, how can sanctification be "progressive holiness"? This is just the same

as saying that sanctification is progressive sanctification, which is as ridiculous as to say a line an inch long is a line an inch long progressing a little. Thus briefly, then, do we dispose of a part, and a chief part, of the "second proof," which turns out to be absurd.

2. But the main point in the "second proof," if it has any, and its chief defect as a "proof," is an assumption. It is assumed that conversion is effected by the same influences by which Christian life is admitted to be in part sustained; and this in part is true, but it is not the part that is true that is assumed. It is assumed that the immediate influence of the Spirit, which we maintain to be necessary to sustain and perfect the Christian life, is also necessary to conversion. Now, this is precisely the thing which we deny, and which, therefore, should not have been assumed but proved. We maintain that the Spirit dwells in the Christian, because the word of God asserts it; and deny that it acts immediately on the sinner, because the word of God does not assert it, neither imply it; and since what we deny does not follow from what we admit, clearly, it should not have been *assumed* to follow, but proved. Admitting that the Spirit affects Christians, in whom it dwells, in a particular way, by no means justifies the inference that it affects sinners, in whom it cannot dwell, in the same way. The admission and the inference have no such connection with one another as to enable us to deduce the one from the other. From knowing that the Spirit acts on the sinner through the Truth only, we should never be able to infer that it dwells in the Christian, neither the reverse. Hence, the main point in the "second proof," which happens to be an assumption, turns out to be naught.

### ***Section IX.***

"My *third* proof," remarks Mr. Jeter, "is drawn from the direct *testimony of revelation*. The Scriptures, I may remark, in general terms, ascribe conversion to divine agency in language as clear, strong, and varied as they do sanctification. The Spirit that nourishes is the Spirit that begets: the power that preserves is the power that creates."

At sight this position seems plausible; but, on a little closer inspection, we detect in it, unfortunately for its plausibility, another instance or two of the fallacy of shifting the ground. The ground in dispute is not whether conversion is effected by *divine* or *some other* agency. We strongly insist that conversion is effected by divine agency. For if the

Spirit be divine so is its agency; and if the Truth be divine so must be its influence; and to these in all cases do we ascribe conversion. But this is not the question. Neither is it whether the Spirit that nourishes is the Spirit that begets. There is one Spirit. The question is, whether the Spirit which is admitted to  *dwell in* Christians, but  *not* in sinners, affects the latter in conversion in precisely the same way in which it affects the former after conversion. This is the question at issue, which Mr. Jeter undertakes to make good, but the merits of which he never touches.

However, in confirmation, we shall suppose, of the real question at issue, he subjoins the following passage:—"Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." In regard to this passage we shall only say, if its meaning is to be regarded as settled, (and we believe it is,) it is clearly against Mr. Jeter; but, if not, then certainly it proves nothing. The "good work" referred to in the passage was a contribution for the spread of the gospel which the Philippians were nobly engaged in raising, and not "the work of grace in the soul," as Mr. Jeter asserts, which God, by some hidden influence, had begun in them at their conversion, and was still carrying on.

But, even granting that by the "good work" is meant their conversion, what then? The passage merely asserts that God had begun this work and was still carrying it on, but by  *what influences* it does not say, and hence does not decide. But, if Mr. Jeter cites the passage merely to prove that the "work" was of God,—that is, that it was begun and carried on by him,—then he cites the passage to prove what we, at least, have never denied.

In regard to the other passage cited by Mr. Jeter,—namely: "for it is God who worketh in you [Philippians] both to will and to do, of his good pleasure,"—we have to say, that as it refers wholly to what God was doing in them as  *Christians* , and not to what he had done for them as sinners, it has, therefore, no relevancy whatever to the question in hand. Since then, from the "direct testimony of revelation," Mr. Jeter derives no "proof" in confirmation of his position, that position must be held as resting on no other than human authority, and hence as false.

## Section X.

"My *last* remark," says Mr. Jeter, in closing his "*direct*" proofs, "concerns the *honor of the Holy Spirit*."

The theory which I am opposing represents the infinite Spirit as condescending to carry on and complete a work which was commenced and passed through its most difficult stage without his influence."

Whose theory it is that represents the Spirit as condescending merely to complete a work which, without its influence, has passed through its most difficult stage, we know not; but of two things we feel profoundly certain:—1st, that it is not Mr. Campbell's theory; 2d, that to effect conversion is not half so difficult a work as to achieve the ultimate safety of the converted. According to Mr. Campbell's theory, conversion is in every case effected by the influence of the Spirit; but then comes the question, what influence is meant? He denies that it is an influence "distinct from and above the Truth," and maintains that the Truth itself is that influence; and, since Mr. Jeter has not proved the thing which he denies nor refuted the thing which he maintains, we shall here let the question rest.

When Mr. Jeter asserts that conversion is a more difficult work than the Christian life, he establishes one, if not more, of three things,—namely: either that he is acting disingenuously in order to create the impression that there is a necessity for his peculiar spiritual influence, or that he is profoundly ignorant of the character of the Christian life, or of that of conversion. We should not be surprised if all three are true of him.

We here close our examination of Mr. Jeter's defense of his proposition that "*there is an influence of the Spirit, internal, mighty, and efficacious, differing from moral suasion, but ordinarily exerted through the inspired word, in the conversion of sinners.*" We now submit the case to the reader with the single remark, that, if competent to form a judgment, and candid, we fear not his decision.

It is proper to state that we have found no little difficulty in collecting out of some seventy-five pages of matter, whose predominant trait is a masterly confusion, the entire material part of Mr. Jeter's defense. Still, we believe we have succeeded in doing so. And while, as we conjecture, he may deem these strictures at times severe, yet in no sense do we feel that he can think them unjust. To misrepresent him for

the worse would be difficult indeed, and to represent him fairly is, with men of thought and acquainted with the Bible, to refute him; hence, we have no interest to present him in any other than in his own light.

## *Chapter III.*

### INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT IN CONVERSION—OUR OWN DOCTRINE STATED AND DEFENDED.

#### *Section I.*

WE now proceed to state our own doctrine respecting the influence of the Spirit in conversion, and to present a brief view of the grounds on which it rests. The work upon which we are now entering is certainly of a nature calculated to impart a far higher pleasure than that in which we have just been engaged. For, however necessary it may be to expose the errors of an opponent, it can never be so pleasing a task as defending our own cause, especially when true. The thing first in order, then, is to state the proposition to be maintained, to wit:—

*The Holy Spirit operates in conversion through the Truth only.*

Before entering upon the defense proper of this proposition, we have a number of preliminaries to submit, which, having the effect to limit and otherwise qualify the proposition, will enable us to enter upon the discussion of it with a more distinct view of what we are undertaking.

First, then, in regard to the Spirit itself, we wish to state distinctly that we conceive it to be a *Person*, in the sublimest sense of the word. We do not conceive it to be a mere influence or impersonal emanation from the Father, or the Son, or from both; but, in the strictest sense of the term, a *person*. As to its nature, it is *spirit*; personally, it is *the Spirit*; officially, *the Holy Spirit*. Personally considered, these expressions may be said to exhaust the sum of human knowledge respecting the Spirit. Assuming these views to be correct, no effort is here made to defend them.

Second, the proposition to be discussed is not a question of *power*. It is not a question as to what the Spirit *can do*, but a question as to what it *does*. Nor is it even a question as to what the Spirit does, except in *conversion*. In regard to what the Spirit can do, as an abstract question, we venture no speculations. We presume to assign no limits to power where we can imagine none. We do, however, presume to think,

without here stopping to assign the reasons for so thinking, that the Spirit does, in order to effect the conversion of the human family, all it can do according to the all-wise plans of the Savior, and in harmony with the perfect freedom of the human will; and that it can, not for physical but for moral reasons, do no more.

And what is here said may be taken as a reply to much irrelevant, if not foolish, talk in which Mr. Jeter indulges about what the Spirit can do, and about expressions of Mr. Campbell to the effect that the Spirit can operate only in this way or cannot act in that. Mr. Campbell has never presumed to pen a line in regard to the absolute power of the Spirit, or the question, as an abstract one, What can it do? And when he makes remarks to the effect that the Spirit cannot operate except thus and *so*, it is because operating otherwise is conceived to contravene some law of the human mind, or to transcend the limits within which salvation is to be effected, and is hence inadmissible. All such remarks of Mr. Campbell are limited, and necessarily so, either by the nature of the subject he is speaking of, or the proposition he is discussing. The slightest attention to a few points like this would have saved Mr. Jeter much simulated anxiety occasionally to understand him.

The question, then, which we are to discuss, is not a question of power, but a question of *fact*, and, hence, is to be decided not by speculation but by *testimony*, and that not human but divine.

Third: we wish to distinguish between what may be called strictly the influence of conversion, and those other influences which, though purely incidental or circumstantial to it, yet in many instances serve greatly to aid it, and which we shall denominate *providential influences*. This distinction is important, and we regret that our limits compel us to treat it so briefly.

Providential influences may be divided into two great classes:—First, such as are purely human; second, such as are either not human or not purely so, the influence of the Truth being excepted.

To the first class belongs the influence of the church as such, or, more properly speaking, the influence of her members as members of the church. When the members of the church are living in the faithful and conscientious discharge of their duty, their influence for good is great. They relieve, for example, the wants of the poor, and thus gain over them an influence, gratefully acknowledged in most cases, by which



they may induce them to frequent the house of God, where, if they receive that considerate attention which, we grieve to say, they seldom receive, their minds soon become enlightened, and their hearts impressed, and as the result many of them become obedient to the Faith.

Again, Christians mingle in the world, and thus form friendships which make them the confidants of those with whom they associate. This confidence may often be availed of to impart much useful information, to correct many a vicious habit, and frequently to induce even an entire reformation of life. In these and various other ways, too numerous to mention, may the members of the church often be of the greatest service in inducing sinners to enter that circle within which the Truth is almost sure to take effect.

To the first class also belongs the influence of the preachers of the gospel, as such. Their duties well performed can, in point of effect, hardly be overestimated. If the Truth is distinctly stated and sufficiently amplified, and kept free from all enfeebling speculations and traditions, and urged home to the heart with tenderness and feeling, its power is just resistible, no more.

To the second class may be referred those sad reverses of life which tend to break the hardness of the heart, and thus prepare it for the reception of the Truth. When bereft by death of those whom he loves, how, like a wounded bird, does the sinner steal away into some lone spot to meditate a reform of life! How prepared now for the reception of the Truth! And even the lighter and less noticeable, but still painful, incidents of life often have much the same effect. How, when away from the endearments of home and with the stranger's heart, does the sinner turn into the house of God to catch the holy accents of Truth, and to muse on a home where the ties of friendship shall be broken nevermore. These reverses often serve, like the frosts of winter, to mellow the soil of the human heart, which the Truth can penetrate all the deeper for the work they have done.

To affirm, as Mr. Jeter does in substance, that these are all so many means through which the Holy Spirit, "infinite in grace and power," accomplishes the conversion of the sinner, is to affirm what he has no evidence to prove. It is to affirm what the Bible does not teach, what reason cannot know, and what, therefore, the intelligent Christian

cannot receive. Indeed, in regard to the whole subject of providential influences, as well as in regard to the influence proper of conversion, Mr. Jeter's mind seems to be in complete confusion. Clearly, he does not understand us, he does not understand the Bible, and we seriously doubt whether he understands himself.

Fourth: the proposition to be discussed limits the discussion strictly to *conversion*. As to how, or to what extent, the Spirit may affect persons not in conversion, it says nothing. All it affirms is, that the Spirit operates in *conversion*. Again, such is its structure that it must be considered, not simply as affirming our own doctrine, but also as denying that of our opponents. It says, in conversion the Spirit operates *through the Truth*. This is in fact all we affirm, and, hence, is all we can in fairness be called upon to prove. We do not *affirm* that the Spirit does not operate except through the Truth, and thus lay ourselves under obligation to prove a negative. We deny that it operates except through the Truth, and thus devolve on the party affirming to the contrary, the responsibility of proving it. This is in reality the force, and we desire it to be so understood, of the word *only*, with which the proposition ends. In our discussions hitherto of this subject we have given our enemies the advantage in the wording of the proposition to be discussed. It is now time (and we trust our brethren will not be heedless of the hint) that we should change our policy. Let us assume the ground which, in strict logical propriety, belongs to us, and hold our enemies firmly to the position which their doctrines assign to them. We affirm, that in conversion the Spirit operates through the Truth, and no more. Our enemies affirm that it operates both through the Truth and without it. Let them now make the position good. We deny it, and here take our stand.

Indeed, the very proposition which Mr. Jeter undertakes to establish is, that the Spirit *does operate otherwise than through the Truth*. Or, at least, this is one of his propositions; for, in reality, he has two,—one defining, or rather attempting to define, but not defining, the *two kinds* of influence for which he contends; the other stating the two modes in which these influences are exerted. Here, now, were we confined to strictly logical grounds, we should be compelled to close the present controversy, and demand judgment against the adverse party. For Mr. Jeter *has not proved* the existence in conversion of an influence of the Spirit *distinct from and above the, Truth*; neither that in conversion the Spirit exerts any influence except through the Truth. Hence the

controversy, so far as he is concerned, is here fairly brought to a close, and in our favor. Indeed he concedes to us the very ground we claim, and the only ground which, in this controversy, it is possible to settle: namely, *that the Spirit does operate through the Truth*. His language is:—"It is freely admitted that the Spirit operates through the word in the conversion and sanctification of men." What then have we to do? Simply nothing. It would be impossible to close a controversy more completely in favor of one of the parties than the present controversy is here closed in our favor. We shall, however, waive all technical advantages and proceed to place the doctrine we advocate on its own proper foundation. We do not ask that it be received as true merely because conceded or because our opponent fails to establish his doctrine. Our doctrine has its own deep, strong basis on which it rests, to which, after the definition of a few terms, the meaning of which it is necessary clearly to state, we shall proceed to call the attention of the reader.

## *Section II.*

First, then, in what acceptance do we employ the term *conversion*? Certainly not in one for which we shall plead the authority of Sacred Writ, and which, for that reason, it is necessary we shall clearly state. We employ it then throughout this chapter to denote strictly a *mental* and therefore a *moral change*, and not as including any outward act of obedience. In other words, we employ it as exactly equivalent to the expressions *born of the Spirit*, *born of God*, assuming these to be identical in sense.

*When then the Spirit produces in the sinner that change of which in every case it is the immediate author, denoted by the expression born of the Spirit, through what instrumentality does it operate? We respond, It operates through the Truth.*

But what do we mean when we say the Spirit operates *through* the Truth? We mean that it operates *by* the Truth; that is, that *divine Truth is itself the vital power by which in all cases* the Spirit effects conversion; in other words, that the Spirit spends on the mind of the sinner in conversion no influence except such as resides in the Truth *as divine, as of the Spirit*. And we shall further add, that neither in quantity nor in force do we conceive that this influence can be increased and the human will be left free. We are now prepared for the

defense of our proposition.

Our first argument is, *that the necessity does not exist for any influence in conversion except such as is exerted through divine Truth, and that hence no other is exerted.*

In the present controversy this argument must be conceived as having great weight. Nothing is done in effecting redemption for which there does not exist a necessity. And in all cases in which, like the present, a peculiar interposition is denied, the necessity for it must be first clearly shown, otherwise such denial stands good against it. Neither can we assume the existence of such necessity, unless we could show one or more actual facts for which we could not account without it, which in conversion cannot be shown. Were it either proved or conceded that in conversion an influence *distinct from and above the Truth* is exerted, then certainly we might infer a necessity for it; and such necessity would become a legitimate ground of argument. But that such an influence is exerted is neither proved nor conceded. Hence the existence of a necessity for it cannot be assumed. Moreover, where a necessity exists for doing a thing, there exists a reason for doing it; but where no such necessity exists, the presumption is, that the thing, if done at all, is done without a reason, which in the case of conversion is not admissible. We hence conclude that in conversion no influence is exerted distinct from and above the Truth.

And what is here said suggests the true theory of the argument usually urged from depravity in defense of an influence above or not in the Truth. It is first assumed that man is *totally*, or, as Mr. Jeter has it, "*utterly,* " *depraved*. It is then urged that this utter depravity, or rather the resistance which is met with from it in conversion, cannot be overcome by any force of divine Truth, however great, and that there is hence a necessity for another and greater influence. But, instead of assuming this, which is the main point in their argument, let the advocates of this peculiar influence come forward and show us, either by indisputable and pertinent facts, or by passages of Holy Writ clear and relevant, that man *is* thus depraved; then, and not till then, will their argument be of any force or entitled to any respect.

### ***Section III.***

Our second argument is, *that any influence more intense than that of*

*divine Truth and above it, such as Mr. Jeter contends for, would, of necessity, infringe the freedom of the human will, and hence cannot be admitted to be present in conversion.*

In order to be responsible man must be left free. To whatever extent we interfere with his perfect freedom, whether in sinning or in obeying, to that extent precisely we destroy the essential nature of his act as a moral agent and degrade him to the level of a mere machine. All we can do for him or with him, as a moral agent, is to present the Truth, proved to be such, distinctly to his mind, and then leave him free as the unfettered wind to accept it or reject it. The instant we restrain him by external force or constrain him by internal influence, that instant he ceases to be a freeman and his act is not his own.

Now, there is but one case we need consider:—that of a man unwilling to receive the Truth. For, if a man is perfectly willing to receive the Truth, it is impossible to conceive the advantage to him of an influence designed to have only the effect to make him willing. But he is, suppose, no matter from what cause, unwilling or disinclined to receive the Truth. But the Spirit interposes with an influence distinct from and above the Truth, and inclines him to do the thing which he himself is inclined not to do. Is this the act of a man acting of his own will, or is it not rather the act of a man acting against his will? Certainly, Mr. Jeter will doubtless tell us, it is the act of a man acting of his own will, for the Spirit gives the man the will. The case then is simply this:—the man is not compelled to act against his will, but compelled to accept a will which is not his own. We shall leave the reader to decide how much this improves the case.

According to this theory, which is the theory of Mr. Jeter and his brethren, conversion is in no sense—not even in part—in the power of the sinner himself, but depends absolutely on the power and will of another. Now, we request him to acquaint the world whether the sinner, so circumstanced, is responsible for not being converted until the Spirit exerts on him that peculiar influence for which he contends; whether, in a word, the sinner is responsible for being what he cannot but be,—a sinner? We feel pressed with the necessity for light on this subject, and trust our reasonable request will not go unheeded.

But why, Mr. Jeter will doubtless ask, leave the sinner so free, and place the Christian, by the indwelling of the Spirit within him, under an

influence affecting the freedom of his will? We reply, that no such thing is done. The Christian has the will, but lacks the power; hence the Spirit only *helps his infirmity* without affecting his will. To aid the Christian to do what he is already more than willing to do, but lacks the power to do, is a very different thing from constraining the sinner to do against his will what he has the power to do. True, God works in the Christian, as we conceive, both will and deed; but then he works the will by motive,—the only thing that can determine the will,—and the deed by lending aid when the power is lacking.

### ***Section IV.***

Our third argument is, *that the Spirit does not exert on the sinner a special influence to induce him to receive the Truth and obey it, when he is perfectly conscious he can and should do both without that influence.*

There are some acts which a man is as conscious he has the power to perform as he is of his own existence. His hand, for example, lies at rest. Now, it cannot be said that he is more conscious of his existence than he is of the power to move that hand. Nor is he simply conscious of the power to move it: he is also conscious that such and such motives would induce him to exert that power; and his consciousness is no less vivid in the latter case than in the former. There is not a sin he commits which he feels not the conscious ability to refrain from committing. He may feel that it is very certain he will not refrain, but still he feels perfectly conscious that he can do so. Nor is this less true in regard to duties, even the highest. A man to whom the proposition is presented and explained is as conscious of the ability to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, as he is of the ability to move his hand when it lies at rest. It is this very consciousness of the ability to do what yet perhaps he neglects to do, not because he cannot do it, but simply because he does not resolve to do it, that constitutes his negligence a crime and makes him feel guilty in the sight of God. Destroy the consciousness of this ability, and that instant you take away not only his sense of guilt, but even the guilt itself; for man never yet sinned where he felt a conscious inability to refrain from sinning. Whether man is thus conscious or not is not a debatable point. Within himself he carries the clear and certain proof that he is so.

That the Holy Spirit should, by special influence, induce men to do

what they are conscious they both can do and ought to do without such influence, is as destitute of countenance from the Bible as it is subversive of every principle of moral government. God aids men to do only what he knows they cannot do without his aid, and not what they know they can do and are conscious they should do without it. And, should it be alleged that men never become thus conscious without a special influence, we reply that then all men have been already the subjects of it; for there is not a man in Christendom to whom the gospel has ever been preached who is not thus conscious. He may pretend to be infidel or atheist and consequently deny that such is the case; but he can never silence the voice within him which asserts the contrary.

Mr. Jeter's doctrine presents the sinner in a strange predicament, truly. He is perfectly conscious he can believe the Truth and obey it; and yet it is perfectly certain that, without an influence distinct from and above the Truth, he can do neither. He resembles a man with an amputated arm, who is perfectly conscious he has the power to move an arm, and yet it is perfectly certain that unless by miracle he receives an arm he cannot move one. And so with the sinner; he is perfectly conscious that he can believe the truth and obey it, and it is perfectly certain that without a peculiar influence from the Spirit he can do neither.

But (may it not be said?) a man is as conscious of the ability to live the Christian life, as he is of the ability to believe the Truth and obey it; and that hence, by the preceding argument, the gift of the Spirit is not necessary to the Christian. But this is not true. Indeed, it is a curious fact that, while men never doubt their ability to believe the Truth and obey it, they ever doubt their ability to live the Christian life. It is precisely in regard to this point that they do doubt their ability. Not only do they distrust themselves in regard to the Christian life, but they seem to feel half-conscious that they are unequal to it; and hence, from this very distrust, many long decline entering on it. We conclude, then, instead of its being true that men are as conscious of the ability to live the Christian life as they are to believe the Truth and obey it, that the very reverse is true.

## *Section V.*

Our fourth argument is, *that the Savior and the apostles always addressed their audiences AS IF their conversion depended alone on the Truth they heard, which is inconsistent with the hypothesis that it*

*depended on the Truth and something else.*

Now, the case admits of but two solutions. Either the conversion of their audiences depended alone on the

Truth which they heard, or the Truth was inadequate to effect it. If we accept the former of these solutions, the preaching of the Savior and the apostles is easily accounted for. We then have reason not simply in *what* they preached, but also for their preaching. At once we see a fitness and propriety in all they said and did, and can account for that inimitable naturalness in their speeches, which carries them so directly to the heart. Their adaptation of the Truth to the mind with such exquisite skill is then easily explained. We then see the reason why their proclamation of the Truth was attended with such peculiar and striking evidences of reality and power. All this is easily understood if we only reflect that conversion depends on the Truth. But, if we accept the latter of these solutions, certainly the preaching of the Savior and the apostles, if not what they preached, becomes a riddle of no ordinary intricacy. They knew that the Truth was inadequate to effect conversion, if such is the case, and yet they preached the Truth. They knew that their audiences, without, in Mr. Jeter's language, "a new and peculiar process," could not receive the Truth; and yet they pressed it on them. They knew that their audiences could not receive the Truth; and yet they denounced condemnation against them for rejecting it. Shall this be charged on the Savior and the apostles? Or shall we say that all whom they addressed were, by this "peculiar process," prepared to receive the Truth? Certainly not; for we know that many, very many, rejected it. Or shall we suppose that "an influence distinct from and above the Truth" *accompanied* it to render it efficacious? Where, we ask, first, is the evidence, and where, second, the advantage? Still, conversion in many cases did not ensue. Or shall we be told that, although without this influence none can receive the Truth, still, with it all are at liberty to reject it? In the one case, then, since the rejection of the Truth is necessary,—*i.e.* results from an inability to receive it,—the rejection is, of course, no sin. And yet if there is any one thing taught in the Bible more clearly than another, it is, that the condemnation of those to whom the gospel is preached dates certainly from the instant in which they reject it, and for that very reason. And, in the other case, since men are still at liberty to reject the Truth, still free to do with it as they will, where is the advantage of the influence? With it men do no more than what they do without it.



Let anyone who is not blinded by a false system of religion attentively study the speeches of the Savior and the apostles, and nothing will strike him more clearly than this:—that they delivered their speeches precisely as other men do, assuming the ability of their audiences to understand and receive what they said, without any thing more than simply saying it, and leaving them to abide the consequences of rejecting it. This is the view which first and chiefly strikes that elemental common sense with which all are endowed; and it is not until that common sense has been completely stultified by some pernicious theory of religion that men abandon this view, and blindly adopt one which neither sense nor revelation sanctions.

### ***Section VI.***

Our fifth argument is, *that in no land or age has there ever yet occurred a single case of conversion without the Truth: a fact which proves that conversion is effected only through the Truth.*

The light of the solar system would seem to depend not more absolutely on the presence of the sun, than does conversion on the presence of the Truth. This fact is of itself enough to settle forever the truth of our position. Indeed, we should find it difficult to establish the connection between cause and effect, if conversion is not here shown to depend on the Truth alone. Where the Truth is, there conversion may occur; but where the Truth is not, there it cannot occur,—at least it is very certain it never does occur.

If an effect were never known to happen except when a particular circumstance was present, yet did happen in thousands of cases when that circumstance was present, though not in every case, no one would for a moment hesitate to pronounce that circumstance the cause of the effect; and the cases in which it did not happen would be accounted for by supposing the presence of some disturbing or countervailing influence. But what is this but the case of conversion stated? Conversion happens, though not in the case of all, where the Truth is; but where it is not, never; and even where the Truth is, the more frequent will conversions be—other things being equal—the more distinctly the Truth is presented to the mind, and the freer it is kept from impurities when transmitted to the heart. And the cases in which conversion does not occur are owing to no want of power or lack of vital force in the Truth, but to its not being perceived or understood to

be the Truth, or to the willful resistance offered to it. But it is not necessary to elaborate this argument; to state it is enough. Indeed, the mere statement of it would seem to establish the truth of the proposition now in hand as conclusively as it is possible to establish any proposition, unless we could produce it in the very words of the Bible. We shall only add, that the fact here stated and the conclusion deduced from it have stood for ages the reproach of the man-invented system of conversion advocated by Mr. Jeter and his brethren.

## *Section VII.*

Our sixth argument is, *that the Apostle James ascribes conversion to the Truth and to that alone, which forbids the belief that it is effected by the Truth and something more.*

The passage on which we base this argument is the following:—"*Of his own (the Father's) will begat he us with the word of Truth.*" The term here translated "*begat,*" we should state, is not the term which is usually in the New Testament rendered *begat*. But its meaning is equally as clear, and its force and extent of signification precisely the same, as the usual term, when the usual term is employed to express the agency of the Spirit in conversion. All, then, that the term "*born*" denotes, or can denote, in the expression "*born of the Spirit,*" is here expressed by the term "*begat.*" Each term alike exhausts the subject, and each alike is complemented by the subject. One has not a shade of meaning which the other has not. They are synonymous.

We shall assume, presuming that the position will not be questioned, that what the passage ascribes to God "as its author is ascribed to him as the remote author, and was in reality effected by the Spirit as the more immediate agent. Hence, of course, we assume that whatever the term "*begat*" denotes was effected by the Spirit.

Whatever, then, is effected by the Spirit in conversion, and all that is effected by it, is, in the passage, comprehended in and expressed by the term "*begat.*" Hence, whatever the influence was, in kind or degree, by which this effect was produced, is the influence, in kind and degree, by which conversion is effected. What now was that influence? To this question the clearest answer is necessary, and to this question the clearest answer is at hand. That influence was "*the word of Truth,*" or simply *the Truth.* "*Of his own will begat he us with the word of Truth.*"

If this passage does not settle the question now at issue, then it would seem that it is never to be settled. It is either an untaught question, and, hence, should not be debated, or it is a mere ground for endless and fruitless wrangling, and, hence, should be abandoned. What, we inquire, is the fact which it is the intention of the passage to assert? what, in other words, is its predication? Is it this:—"Of His own will begat he us"? It is not; and, although this is asserted, yet this is not the whole, nor even the chief feature, of the assertion. That feature is, "Of his own will begat he us *with the word of Truth.*" The passage contains the answers to two questions:—1. Are we begotten by the Father? 2. And if so, by what means? To the first question the passage replies, We are begotten by the Father. To the second it replies, We are begotten *by the Truth.*

Here, then, in the present passage, the truth of our proposition is asserted, actually and unequivocally asserted, in language as clear, strong, and pointed, as human ingenuity can invent, or human speech supply. If its truth is not asserted,—if, in other words, it is not asserted that *conversion is effected by the Truth,*—what form of human speech, we ask, could assert it? The reply is, *none.*

But, Mr. Jeter will doubtless say, I admit that the Spirit "*ordinarily*" effects conversion through the Truth, but maintain that in doing so it exerts through the Truth a peculiar vital influence not inherent in it,—that a *virtue* which is no part of the Truth goes out of the Spirit through the Truth into the soul, converting it. In other words, he will doubtless maintain, that, as a spark of electricity discharged from a point passes through the atmosphere into an attracting object, so an essential, quickening influence, being discharged from the Spirit, passes through the Truth into the soul, converting it.

But where, we ask, in the first place, is the evidence that this is true? Soberly, we ask, where? If Mr. Jeter's prospects for eternity were staked upon making it good, with sadness we should add, he is a doomed man. But this is precisely the point at which the difference between him and us begins to show itself. We maintain—*i.e.* Mr. Campbell and his brethren—that in the Truth as such, that is, in the Truth as *divine, as of the Spirit,* resides the power by which in all cases the Spirit effects conversion: a power which, as we conceive, cannot be intensified and the human will be left free, and which, for that reason, is all the influence that can be admitted to be present in conversion. We

go further, and maintain that it is as much *the law* of conversion that it shall be effected by the Truth, as it is of reproduction that an oak shall spring from an acorn and not from a miracle; and, further, that we are no more at liberty to suppose the Spirit 'absent from the work of conversion from the fact that it is the law of conversion that it shall result from the Truth and not from something else, than we are to suppose the Creator absent from the work of reproduction from the fact that it is the law of reproduction that an oak shall spring from an acorn and not from a miracle.

But, in the second place, we inquire, has not the expression "*the word of Truth*" its own proper, individual signification or value,—a value which belongs to it simply as the expression "*the word of Truth*,"—which can neither be increased nor diminished, and in which the influence for which Mr. Jeter contends is not included? Either it has, or that influence is included in the expression as an integral part of it, as a part of its own individual signification simply as the expression "*the word of Truth*." Now, let Mr. Jeter choose his alternative. If he choose the former, then is he pledged to abide the following conclusion. Of his own will begat he us: how? By the word of Truth? No. But by the word of Truth *and something else*. Hence, when the passage says, "Of his own will begat he us *by the word of Truth*," since the expression *the word of Truth* is not equivalent to the expression *the word of Truth and something else*, it asserts not the whole truth, but suppresses at least half of it, and is hence false. This is the fatal reef on which Mr. Jeter's doctrine drifts him, and no skill or cunning on his part will enable him to escape it. Or does he accept the latter alternative, and say that the influence for which he contends is included in the meaning of the expression *the word of Truth*?—that it belongs to it as part of its own individual signification?—that, in brief, it is part of, or resides in, divine Truth as such? If so, then he and we are agreed, and so the controversy is at an end.

### ***Section VIII.***

Our seventh argument is, *that the Apostle Peter ascribes conversion, or being born again, to the Truth, and to that alone, as the means by which it had been effected; and that, therefore, we are not at liberty to ascribe it even in part to another and unknown cause.*

The passage on which we rest the present argument is the

following:—"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." The original term here rendered "being born again" is the term which is usually, in the New Testament, rendered by the words *begat*, *begotten*, *born*,—with this difference: the term is here combined with a particle which has the force, in the present case, of the word *again*, or the prefix *re*. The term, as employed in the present passage, expresses precisely what is meant by the expression "*born of the Spirit*;" and the effect which it denotes is to-be ascribed to the Spirit as the author of it. Consequently, we have now to determine, not what effect was produced, but by what power it was produced; not what agent was employed, but with what instrument it wrought. In a word, the effect is known, and we have now to seek the instrumental cause from which it resulted. And in all such cases what is the method of procedure? It is briefly this:—

We have an effect A, which is supposed to result from two causes, B and C. We first try to produce the effect with B, and fail. We then try C, and fail. In this case the effect is held to be a joint result from both B and C. Or we try to produce the effect with B, and fail. We then try C, and succeed. In this case the effect is held to result from C alone, and B is excluded.

But, it will no doubt be said, the present is not a question in experimental philosophy. True: but what it lacks of being a question in experimental philosophy it happens to have in being decided by a still less fallible authority; and, hence, the conclusion arrived at has all the certainty of one arrived at by actual experiment.

The effect in hand is denoted by the expression "*being born again*." Mr. Jeter maintains that this effect resulted from the joint influence of two causes,—to wit: *the Truth*, and "*an influence distinct from and above the*

*Truth*." We deny that the latter cause had any hand in producing the effect. Let, now, the difference between us be decided by divine authority. How, then, was the effect produced? The Bible answers, "*by the word of God*." Unless, then, the second cause constitutes an integral part of "the word of God," (which it cannot, since it is "distinct from and above" it,) it was excluded from any share in producing the effect; hence, that effect resulted from the first cause alone,—*the Truth*; and, therefore, our proposition is true. Indeed, we now feel at liberty to say,

it is impossible to establish the truth of any proposition, either by argument or Holy Writ, if the present and preceding arguments do not establish the truth of ours.

We are not at all ignorant, however, of the impotent clamor which Mr. Jeter and a few bigots will raise against these conclusions. This, they will cry in the ears of the multitude deep-mired in the "ditch," is the "*word-alone system*." Many a gracious compliment will be lavished upon the sectarian divinity, Orthodoxy; and her smiles will be deemed more than a compensation for all failures to defend her cause. But we beg to tell these gentlemen that this is not the "word-alone system." The "word-alone system" conceives the Spirit to be ever absent from the work of conversion; this system conceives it to be ever present: the "word-alone system" conceives the Truth to be as destitute of vital force as the words of an obsolete almanac; this system conceives the Truth, since of the Spirit, to teem with an intense quickening power, but ever resident in the Truth as divine: the "word-alone system" is false; this system is time. These are a few, and but a few, of the distinctions between the "word-alone system" and this. But, should Mr. Jeter still clamor, Yet is your system *a* word-alone system, we reply, Then are we the intrepid advocates of *a* word-alone system, and deny that the Bible knows any other.

We shall here take occasion to say, that the word "born," both in the preceding passage and in the one which we shall next cite, is not the word which most accurately expresses the sense of the original; but, as the difference is one which does not in the least affect the arguments respectively based on them, and as we purpose adverting to the matter again elsewhere, we shall for the present give it no further notice.

### ***Section IX.***

Our eighth argument is, *that belief in Christ and being born of God are identical; and that, since belief in Christ depends on the Truth alone, therefore being born of God, or conversion, depends on the Truth alone.*

The passage on which we base this argument is the following:—"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." From this passage it is most clear either 'that *to believe that Jesus is the Christ* and *to be born of God* are identical, or that they are so

inseparably connected that we cannot produce the former without, at the same time and by the same means, producing the latter. This point, being actually asserted, we do not allow to be debatable. Whatever influences, then, will produce belief in Christ will also produce the effect—if belief itself is not that effect—denoted by the expression "*born of God.*" But the meaning of this expression is the acceptance in which we are now taking the term "conversion." With the view, therefore, of ascertaining on what immediate cause conversion depends, we shall now proceed to ascertain on what immediate cause belief or faith depends.

The passage we shall first adduce is the following from the parable of the sower:—"Now, the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are they that hear: then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." The word, then, or the Truth, it seems, can, and actually does, enter the hearts of the wayside men. And if it can penetrate the hearts of these, it will hardly be thought that it lacks the power to penetrate the hearts of any others. But Satan interposes; and for what? There is a result to be prevented: that result is salvation. But, in order to prevent this result, there is another, antecedent, specific result to be prevented, which is belief. To prevent belief, then, immediately, and salvation remotely, is the object for which Satan interposes. And full well does he know how to prevent a result or an effect. He removes whatever the result depends on, or the cause of the effect, and the work is done. Now, what cause does he remove from the hearts of the wayside men in order to prevent belief? and he certainly removes the real cause. Is it *an influence distinct from and above the Truth?* This question ought to silence Mr. Jeter forever. But no; this is not the cause which Satan removes from the hearts of the wayside men. "*He taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe.*" The word, then, or the Truth, is that immediate cause on which belief depends; hence, the word or the Truth is the immediate cause on which conversion depends. If this is not demonstration,—moral, that is,—then there is no meaning in the term.

But we are not quite done with the wayside men. Mr. Jeter says, the influence for which he contends is exerted "*ordinarily*" through the Truth. Is it now exerted on the wayside men, or is it not? Of course it must be one or the other. Suppose, then, it is exerted. Still the Truth is taken away; but, when the Truth is taken away, what becomes of the

influence? Does it remain? If so, where is the advantage in it? for the men are still infidels. But suppose it is not exerted. Still there remains in the word a power fully adequate to produce belief without it; *hence, it is not necessary.*

The passage we shall next quote to show on what immediate cause faith depends is the following:—"*So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" This is one of those fine passages which no sophistry can so pervert as quite to hide its meaning. It is the comprehensive statement of an innumerable number of cases, and, as a brief religious formula, serves the admirable purpose of preventing a tedious enumeration of all the circumstances, remote and near, on which faith as an ultimate result depends. It states a great fact in religion; and, therefore, with great propriety, states it with remarkable perspicuity. It pointedly asserts that faith comes *by hearing, i.e.* by hearing the word of God. And only what it asserts it teaches. Indeed, since it asserts strictly that faith comes by hearing the Truth, the implication is that it comes in no other way. For, the instant we show that faith results from the Truth *and some other cause*, say an "influence distinct from and above the Truth," that instant we cast a doubt over the passage. If, for illustration, it was the avowed purpose of an individual to whom the causes were all known to account for a given effect, and he should say, This effect results from such and such a cause, at the same time suppressing one of them, what should we think of him? Could we conceive of him as speaking but to deceive? When an apostle undertakes to assign the causes of a result, does he suppress one of them?

But, I grant, Mr. Jeter will say, that faith comes by hearing the word of God, but maintain that the Spirit must aid the sinner to hear—that is, to understand and receive—the Truth. But of the truth of this there is no evidence. It is a mere creation of the human fancy, countenanced neither by reason nor the Bible. It grew out of that inveterate form of depravity insisted on by Mr. Jeter, and which is itself a dream. Hence, the dream became parent to the fancy, which is the true account of both.

We conclude, then, since *belief in Christ* and *being born of God* are identical, and since belief in Christ is shown by the preceding premises to depend on the Truth alone, that the Truth alone is that on which depends being born of God, or conversion.



## Section X.

Our ninth argument is, *that the original of John 3: 8 in its most natural sense—that which it yields by the soundest rules of interpretation—teaches that being born of the Spirit (or conversion) is effected by hearing or receiving the Truth.*

The well-known rendering of this verse in the common version is, "*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and, thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*"

In citing this verse as the basis of an argument, we have three objects in view:—1st, to ascertain, if possible, its real meaning; 2d, to show that in its real meaning it teaches the great doctrine for which we are contending; 3d, to show that the popular interpretation of it is false.

In the outset we shall assume that the verse in the original contains an *explanation* of the long-litigated clause, "*born of the Spirit.*" In doing so, we are not unmindful of the fact that a very different view has been thought to be the correct one. For, by very general consent, it has been held that the verse contains an *illustration* of the mysterious manner in which the Spirit quickens the sinner into life. This we conceive to be the radical misconception which has utterly obscured the sense of this fine passage.

Without one solitary verbal mark in the original indicative of an illustration, or the slightest indication in the verse itself or the context that such a thing was either meant or necessary, has the verse been assumed to be illustrative and rendered accordingly. A more unaccountable departure from some of the best-established laws of exegesis than its rendering in some respects exhibits, it has not been our lot to meet with. And long since, we doubt not, the present rendering would have been utterly discarded, had it not, by the mystery in which it wraps the sense of the verse, administered to the well-known species of fanaticism on spiritual influence of which Mr. Jeter sighs to show himself a champion. No man ever yet thoughtfully read the passage in the English Bible and then laid it down feeling satisfied that he understood what he had been reading. This circumstance alone should long since have suggested the suspicion that the sense of the original was not fairly dealt with.

And, believing this to be the case, we propose to retranslate the whole verse. In doing this we expect to discover an apt, germinal explanation of the expression "*born of the Spirit.*" Of course, in a statement brief almost to obscurity, we expect to find nothing elaborated but much suggested. We expect to find the subject explained, touched rather by those single rays of light with which the Savior penciled so matchlessly, than illumined by the whole splendor of his eloquence. We expect to meet rather those hints which, cautiously traced out, lead to the truth, than to meet, at first sight, the truth itself. Still, we expect to find something determinate, something appreciable.

We propose submitting, as we proceed, first, a translation of each single word of most of the verse: we shall then briefly append the reasons for the rendering, and, occasionally, shall distribute these words into appropriate groups for the sake of indicating more clearly their collective sense.

First, then, in regard to the word which, in the common version, is rendered "*wind.*" This word occurs in the Greek New Testament three hundred and eighty-six times. In three, hundred and eighty-four of these it is rendered into English either by the term "spirit" or by its inelegant equivalent "ghost." Once, in the book of Revelation, it is rendered "life," where, with equal propriety and more consistency, it might have been rendered "a spirit." But not in a single case in the New Testament, except in the verse in hand, is it rendered "*wind.*" Now, in translating, one great *rule* to be observed is this:—to translate the same original word *uniformly* by the same equivalent English word, unless the sense forbids it. No translation is deemed good which violates this rule, none very faulty which does not. Now, since the word in hand, out of three hundred and eighty- six instances, is, in three hundred and eighty-four of them, uniformly rendered into English either by the term "spirit" or by a term having precisely the same meaning, the presumption in favor of a similar rendering in the two remaining instances is as three hundred and eighty-four to two. And when it is remembered that the sense interposes no obstacle to such a rendering, this presumption becomes an imperious necessity. For these reasons, therefore, we do not hesitate to render the word in hand "*spirit,*" meaning, thereby, *the Holy Spirit.*

Should the case be thought to require it, we may add, that this rendering has been suggested, if it is not still sanctioned, by names which stand

justly high in learning and sacred criticism. Its claims, however, upon public confidence must rest ultimately on its own merits.

Next, respecting the word translated "*bloweth*." This word is found in the Greek New Testament but seven times; in six of which it is used to express the acts of things, and only in the remaining instance (the present) the act of a person. But, in almost every case where expressive of the act of a person, it is to be rendered into English simply by the word "*breathe*." And this is so obviously the word by which it is to be rendered in the present instance, that we shall attempt no defense of the rendering.

But in what acceptation are we to take the word "breathe"?—a literal or a figurative? To answer this question at once, we inquire, Does that essential, subtle person, whom we denominate the Spirit, perform the act we call breathing? Can we predicate of it such an act in any intelligible sense,—especially in the sense in which we say of a man, he breathes? Certainly not. To do so would be to assert what we believe the very nature of the case forbids; for it does not consist with our notion of spirits that they breathe. They may cause breathing, as the human spirit; but they themselves breathe not. Hence, since the act itself—breathing—is not conceivable, we are not permitted to construe the term as meaning it. We decide, therefore, to construe the term figuratively, and this the nature of the case requires.

But what does the term "breath" signify? what does it express? We reply, it certainly expresses *action*, but in such a way as not to indicate the precise kind of act performed. This we learn, as we shall presently see, and with much certainty, from the attendant circumstances.

The expression "where it listeth" may be slightly improved thus:—*where it sees fit*. So far, then, the verse reads thus:—*The Spirit breathes where it sees fit*.

In the remark next succeeding,—to wit: "and thou hearest the sound thereof,"—we have the clue to the particular act expressed by the word "breath," which, of itself, is indefinite. But, in order to trace out this clue and show to what it leads, we must examine strictly the meaning of the word rendered "*sound*." This word is met with in the Greek New Testament one hundred and forty-one times; in one hundred and thirty-one of which it is rendered "*voice*;" in eight, including the present case, "*sound*;" in one, "*noise*;" and in one case is joined with a verb, and

rendered "*noised*." Generically, the term expresses sound simply; specifically, a particular kind of sound. Hence, before we can, in a given case, correctly render it into English, we must know what particular kind of sound is meant, or from what subject it proceeds. In the case in hand it was clearly the force, and nothing else, of the preceding substantive, wind, which determined it to be rendered sound. But since the original of wind does not mean wind, but Spirit, the presumption is that the original of sound does not mean sound, but something else.

Now, in every other case in the New Testament (a few doubtful ones perhaps to be excepted) where it denotes sound proceeding from a person, without distinction as to whom, that sound is the voice of such person heard in the act of speaking. Hence, since in the present case the term denotes sound proceeding from the Spirit, a person, that sound is, if there be any value in induction, determined to be the voice of the Spirit heard in the act of speaking. We therefore decide that *voice* is the true rendering. But this voice is what IS heard in the act, breathing; hence, breathing and speaking must be only two different names for the same act, with this distinction,—that breathing is figurative, speaking literal.

So far, then, the verse reads as follows:—*The Spirit breathes where it sees fit, and you hear its voice*; the meaning of which is, the Spirit speaks where it sees fit, and you hear its voice, or what it says.

But are we borne out by facts elsewhere to be collected in asserting of the Spirit that it speaks? We certainly are. The Savior says, ""When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not *speak* of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he *speak*." The foregoing conclusion, then, though fully justified by the verse itself, is thus corroborated by facts.

But the Holy Spirit, in an *unembodied* form, never uttered a monosyllable in a human ear or communicated a thought to a human being. Only when in man does it speak to him. As the Word became incarnate to save, so the Spirit becomes embodied to enlighten. But when in man, it then speaks by him to him for him. But it has thus spoken only through the prophets and apostles. Hence, what we hear from the Spirit, and all we hear, is what it has spoken by them. Consequently, in construing the word *speak*, in the clause the Spirit

*speaks*, we are not to limit it to the *mere act* of speaking, but to construe it largely as embracing all the prophets and apostles have said, or the entire word of God. Thus, likewise, are we to construe the word *hear* in the expression "you *hear* its voice."

Since, then, the Spirit speaks, what does it speak? The response is, *The Truth*. Hence it is called "the Spirit of truth." But truth is distributed into truth proper, and facts; and facts again into facts past or history, facts present, and facts future or prophecy. Hence, truth proper, and facts past, present, and future, as far as they involve the question of human salvation, constitute the grand themes on which the Spirit speaks to man. But it was not enough that the Spirit should speak: all it says must be authenticated. Hence its truths are confirmed by its facts; its facts again by the most complex yet simple, strange yet natural, compact yet extended, body of testimony known to or to be conceived by the human mind. It is what the Spirit has thus spoken and authenticated that man hears; and what he thus hears that enlightens him; and what thus enlightens him that he believes; and what he believes that melts him into pity, inspires him with hope, or moves him to action, as the case may be. There is no rescinding this law of nature or modifying this order of things.

Next, concerning the clause "but thou canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth," which we shall alter but slightly, thus:—*but you know not whence it comes and whither it goes*, which is a literal rendering of the original. This clause has been for ages past, and still is, the glory and the shame of the blind guide,—at once his subterfuge, his decisive argument, his joy, and his puzzle. Who, when the mystic doctor has been pressed on his favorite myth,—spiritual influence,—has not seen him close the argument with a triumphant air, thus?—"All, but thou canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." Even Mr. Jeter, like "the silent owl on stealthy wing," floats into the gloom of the passage and there disappears. He merely quotes it, with no attempt to explain it, leaving us in charity to hope he may know something about it, but with many a suspicion that he knows nothing.

The clause occurs, slightly varied, three times, and but three, in the New Testament,—twice in the following extract:—"Jesus answered and said to them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know *whence I came and whither I go*; but *ye cannot tell whence I*

*came and whither I go.*" It is in the form here last occurring, with a slight variation, that the expression is applied to Nicodemus. The Savior, in the extract, applies it first to himself to express something which he alone knew:—"I know whence I came and whither I go." He then applies it adversatively to the audience to indicate that what he knew they did not know:—"but ye cannot tell whence I came and whither I go." Now, the form of the expression applied to the audience, and that applied to Nicodemus, mean precisely the same thing, with this difference:—the Savior applied it to the Jews to express something which they did not know of him, but which they should have known; to Nicodemus he applied it to express something which he did not know of the Spirit, and which at that time perhaps he could not know. But what was the thing which Nicodemus did not know? We reply, precisely what the clause says he did not know. But what was this? Simply, "*whence it (the Spirit) comes and whither it goes.*" The *whence* and the *whither*, then, of the Spirit was all. But this is not the popular belief. The popular belief is, that the thing which Nicodemus did not know was, *how the Spirit operates in regeneration*. But the clause says nothing about how the Spirit operates in regeneration; not even whether it operates at all or not; positively nothing about its exerting any supposed secret influence therein. Hence these are not the things of which the clause says Nicodemus was ignorant. The *whence* and the *whither* of the Spirit, and no more, is what he did not know.

But, because Nicodemus did not then know the whence and the whither of the Spirit, does it follow that we are now ignorant of the manner in which the Spirit operates in conversion? Such conclusion has no dependence on such premise, and hence of course cannot follow from it. The fact that Nicodemus was ignorant of one thing is no reason why we should be supposed ignorant of a very different thing. Yet this is the popular mode of reasoning from the clause.

That what the clause means may be the better understood, let us somewhat expand the whole passage to which it belongs by supposing the following train of thought to be passing through the mind of the Savior. The Spirit, Nicodemus, speaks to men where it sees they will heed its teachings; and you hear its instructions, which you must receive in order to be enlightened by it; but of the Spirit itself in other respects you are ignorant. You know not whence it comes and whither it goes. I have told you what it does, which you may understand; but of the Spirit itself you must remain in other respects ignorant until I am

glorified. Then it will be given; when you will have no difficulty in understanding what it is not proper I should at present make known to you.

The popular interpretation of this clause is worthy of notice. It is this:—You, the human family, cannot comprehend how the Spirit exerts its mysterious influences on the human heart in regeneration. It is as incomprehensible to you as the operations of the wind. But all the Savior says is this:—"Whence it (the Spirit) comes and whither it goes, you, Nicodemus, know not." How singularly does the speculation contrast with the "truth!"

Finally, we come to the concluding clause of the verse:—"so is every one that is born of the Spirit." And first in regard to the particle rendered "*so*." The primary and usual meaning of this particle is "*in this way*." It occurs in the Greek New Testament upwards of two hundred times, and is generally rendered *so*, in the sense of *in this way*. Now, a chief rule in translating is this:—*to render a term invariably by its primary and usual meaning where they agree, unless the sense positively forbids it*. In the present instance, therefore, since the sense does not forbid it, we are compelled to abide by the rule, and hence to render the particle *in this way*. But in rendering it thus, the clause to which it belongs becomes elliptical, as may be perceived thus:—In this way is every one that is born of the Spirit. The sense is here clearly incomplete, hence we involuntarily ask, *how?* In order to complete the sense we must supply the ellipsis. But here we come in contact with another rule, which says, *Avoid an ellipsis where the sense can be as well expressed without it*. Here, then, by the force of one rule, we come in conflict with another; and, as both cannot stand, the question arises, Which must yield? In all such cases the rule which respects *expressing* the sense is held to yield to the one which respects *determining* the sense, the latter being necessary, the former merely discretionary. Hence we must abide by the rule which requires us to render the particle *in this way*, and supply the ellipsis. But in supplying an ellipsis we are not to act arbitrarily. Indeed, we are no more at liberty to act arbitrarily in supplying an ellipsis than we are in creating one. The omitted word must be such as occurs to the mind readily, and, when supplied, such as satisfies it by completing the sense in an easy, natural way.

In the present instance we supply the ellipsis thus:—In this way is

(*born*) every one that is born of the Spirit

Instantly the mind seems to accept this as correct. It gives completeness to the sense, and leaves us asking no questions. It imparts to us a feeling of satisfaction such only as we feel when the truth flashes full on the mind. We conclude, then, that it is correct.

Substituting, then, the word *begotten*, which is required by the sense, for the word *born*, the reasons for which we shall assign elsewhere, and the whole verse reads thus:—*The Spirit breathes where it sees fit, and you hear its voice, but you know not whence it comes and whither it goes: in this way is (begotten) every one that is begotten by the Spirit.* How then is a person *begotten* by the Spirit? *By hearing what it says or being enlightened by its Truth. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of Truth." "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God."* Is not the conclusion overwhelming?

With a few additional remarks we shall dismiss the passage. The clause, "*you know not whence it comes and whither it goes,*" is to be limited to Nicodemus, or rather to the time preceding the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. For, since then, in no sense can it be said of Christians that they know not whence the Spirit comes and whither it goes. We possess information respecting it which Nicodemus did not possess, which enabled the Savior to say of him what cannot be truly said of us.

In the outset of the present argument, we assumed that the verse in hand contains an *explanation* of the expression "*born of the Spirit.*" In further confirmation of this, if further confirmation can be thought necessary, we once more request attention to the closing expression of the verse. This expression does not contain a reference to the new birth generally, but only to so much of it as consists in being *begotten by the Spirit*. Hence it does not say, in this way is every one born *that is born again*; but, in this way is every one begotten that is begotten *by the Spirit*. Being begotten by the Spirit, then, is strictly what it explains. It states *the mode* in which this is done,—to wit, *by hearing or believing what the Spirit says*. And how easily and naturally does the whole verse develop itself into this conclusion! Each step in the investigation rests on the firmest basis; every position is determined by some simple and obvious rule in sacred criticism; and the conclusion accords strictly



with the other conclusions already arrived at in this chapter from other portions of Holy Writ.

## *Section XI.*

Our tenth argument is, *that conviction of the sinner, which is peculiarly the work of the Spirit, and which may be considered as but another name for conversion in the view ice are now taking of it, can be effected in no way known to the human mind except by the Truth.*

As a partial basis for this argument we cite the following scriptures:—"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come to you: but if I depart I will send him to you. *And when he is come he will reprove (convince, it should have been) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*" Again, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, *whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.*"

From these scriptures it is clear, first, that to convince the world is the peculiar work of the Spirit. From this work, we may add, it has never been absent a moment from the day on which it descended to commence it, the day of Pentecost, to the present. Indeed, conviction seems to be as peculiarly the work of the Spirit as expiation was of the Son; nor can we any more conceive of the Spirit as now absent from its work than of the Son as absent when he accomplished his. And further, as the Son, though the author of redemption, effects it through agents and other means appointed by him thereto,—the way which to him seems best,—so the Spirit, though the author of conviction, effects it, not as many ill-taught and superstitious people suppose, by an immediate contact of Spirit with spirit, but through the Truth,—the way which to it seems best.

There are some curious illustrations in the Acts of the Apostles of the fact that conviction is the especial work of the Spirit, and also of that singular sentence, *the Spirit breathes where it sees fit.* We cite the following:—"Then the Spirit said to Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." Again, "The Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." And again, "Now,

when they had gone through Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, *and were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia*, after they were come to Mysia they essayed to go into Bithynia: *but the Spirit suffered them not.*"

From these extracts it seems evident,—1st, that, in carrying on the work of conviction, the Spirit wrought only through the apostles and other ministers of the Word whom it inspired; 2d, that, if it had not the entire control of their labors in this work, it at least had the chief control of them; 3d, that the Spirit breathed, or made known the Truth, not unconditionally everywhere, but only where it saw fit to make it known,—where, in other words, it saw that the Truth would be received.

But it is clear, second, that the world—*i.e.* the unconverted part of it, or sinners—cannot receive the Spirit; that is, that the Spirit cannot enter into sinners; for this is what is meant by receiving the Spirit: and yet it is clear that their conviction is to be effected by the Spirit. Since, then, the Spirit itself cannot enter into the unconverted, it must, in effecting their conviction,—which is a work in the inner man,—effect it by something which does enter within them. And what, we ask, can this be but the Truth?

But what is conviction? *A firm persuasion that something said or conceived of is true.* And this would make conviction in nothing distinguishable from belief. Nor can this be thought incorrect if we only bear in mind that the Apostle Paul, in denying belief in regard to the past or the unseen, defines it to be *conviction*, though unfortunately conviction is not the word we have in the common version. Indeed, when we say we firmly believe a thing to be true,—say that Christ arose from the dead,—and we are convinced that it is true, it is impossible to distinguish, in respect to meaning, between the two forms of speech, or to show that they describe two different mental states. We conclude, then, that our view of conviction is correct.

Now, in order to produce conviction, two things, and only two, are necessary, so far as the mere object and means of conviction are concerned,—to wit: the thing of which, we are to be convinced, which must be expressed intelligibly, or be conceived of, in the form of a proposition; and evidence in amount and kind sufficient to sustain it. These two things being present, and attended to on our part, conviction,

unless deliberately resisted, follows by an immutable law of the human mind. Let, for example, the thing of which we are to be convinced be, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. For this truth, whether in the form of a proposition or merely in conception, we are absolutely indebted to the Spirit. For, however it may have been suggested by the Savior and confessed by the apostles, long since would it have perished from the memory of the world, but for the record of it which we owe to the Spirit. How true it is that none can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Spirit! But men could no more have believed this truth without the evidence on which it rests than have invented both the truth itself and its evidence. For, although within itself an absolute truth, still, to us it is a truth only as it is proved to be such. For this evidence again we are indebted solely to the Spirit. Here, now, the Spirit has furnished us not only the thing of which we are to be convinced, but the evidence in quantity and in kind on which it rests. Now, on our part, this thing and this evidence must be voluntarily attended to; and, if so, conviction will as inevitably follow, unless deliberately resisted, as pain follows vice, or pleasure follows virtue. If conviction is not thus produced, then it is a dream. We care not what the thing may be of which we are to be convinced: conviction is the same. It may be the sublime truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; or the fact that he died for our sins; or that he arose for our justification; or that man by his sins has deeply grieved the Lord before whom he stands all guilty; or it may be some duty, or some relation: in a word, it may be any truth, fact, relation, or duty, and, we repeat, conviction remains the same, and, in all cases, takes place in precisely the same way.

Since, therefore, conviction depends on the Truth, proved to be such, and, as far as the human mind can see, on nothing else, and since conviction (in the view we are now taking of it,) and conversion are the same, it follows that conversion depends on the Truth, and on the Truth alone.

## ***Section XII.***

Our eleventh argument is, *that there is no cause known to have contributed to the conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, except the Truth which they heard; and that it is hence unjust and unfair to infer the presence of any other.*

As a ground for this argument, we shall now proceed to submit a brief analysis of the case of conversion referred to. The Savior had said to the disciples, in speaking of the Comforter, "If I depart I will send him to you; and when he is come he will reprove (*convince*) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." We are now, therefore, to see *how* the Spirit did, when come, convince the world, *by what means it did it*, and, thus, how conversion is effected.

The disciples, to the number of a hundred and twenty, the apostles included, had met in an upper room in the city of Jerusalem. The day was important, being one on which a great national festival was celebrated. The city was crowded with strangers. The Savior had taken his seat at the right hand of the Father, as Lord of all. He had received the Spirit, and on that day sent it forth. It entered the room where the disciples were met, accompanied by a sound as of a rushing mighty wind. It sat upon each of them in the form of separate tongues of flame. The symbol was appropriate. Upon a former occasion, when descending upon the Savior, the Spirit appeared in the form of a dove,—that gentle bird of spring whose melancholy note and quiet manners made it a fit emblem of the Spirit when descending upon the *Prince of peace*. But the apostles were now to go forth on a fiery mission, were now to engage in a fierce conflict, in which the *tongue* was to be the great offensive instrument, and *the Truth the power*. It was in fine taste, therefore, at the outset, to signify all this in *tongues of flame*.

The hundred and twenty were all filled with the Spirit, and began to speak in different tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. This being noised abroad, the people ran together and were greatly perplexed. Some ventured solutions, others wondered, others mocked.

At this juncture the Apostle Peter arose and commenced his speech, speaking as the Spirit moved him. Into the merits of this speech we enter not. Suffice it to say, it is remarkable for its simplicity, the bold individuality of its parts, the brevity and pertinency of its proofs, its regularity and grand conclusion. The apostle closes thus:—"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The effect is thus described:—"Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Let us now note the parties present, together with their relative positions. First, then, the audience was present, *and giving attention*. Will Mr. Jeter inform us why? He maintains that God", by a "gracious, inward, efficacious influence of his Spirit," secures the attention of the sinner. Will he point us either to the passage or the fact, in the present case, which teaches it? Certainly not. The report had brought the people together, and what they heard and saw secured their attention. This explains the matter.

But the Spirit was also present: and where? In the audience? Certainly not; *for the world cannot receive it*. It was present in the apostles, and through them speaking into the hearts of the people, and thus touching them into life. Hence, when the people heard, they were pierced to the heart, or convinced. To what, now, is this conviction attributable? To what the audience heard simply? or to what they heard and to an "influence distinct from and above the Truth"? The latter is Mr. Jeter's position; the former, ours.

The case may be stated thus:—We have an effect—conviction—to account for: and how shall we do it? Shall we ascribe it to the one cause, *the Truth*, known to be present and acting, and which, therefore, need not be proved? or shall we ascribe it to the Truth, and to another cause, whose very existence as a cause is not known, and whose presence it is hence impossible to prove? Surely none can doubt. *When they heard this they were pierced to the heart*. Now, what, we ask, in reason's name, pierced them, save the Truth which they heard?

But Mr. Jeter thinks we should adopt a different conclusion. We dissent from his opinion. We have not been fashioned after that easy model according to which blind credulity takes the place of sense, and superstition the place of faith. We believe the effect was due to the one known cause, the Truth, which God put in requisition to produce it, and all beyond we gladly leave to that pliant credulity which can believe without evidence, and to that enviable penetration which can detect the presence of a cause where no cause exists.

### ***Section XIII.***

Our twelfth argument is, *that the conversion of the eunuch justifies belief in no other influence as the cause of his conversion except the Truth which he heard*.

It is important to observe, that a case of conversion may be examined for two distinct objects, each of which has its own separate value in argument.

1st. We may examine a case for the purpose of ascertaining to what degree of minuteness it corresponds with a conclusion assumed to be already established. In this case the effect is merely corroborative; though even corroboration may be of a nature to be decisive. If the correspondence is exact and minute, the conclusion may become irresistible; it being taken for granted that no exact and very minute correspondence could exist between a false conclusion and a case of facts which must involve the very reverse of that conclusion.

2d. We may examine a case, observing and collecting its facts, for the sake of tracing them to such conclusion as they lead to. In this case, if the conclusion arrived at, and the conclusion assumed to be already established, are the same, the presumption is that the conclusion assumed to be already established is true.

The conclusion which we shall now assume to be established is that in conversion the Spirit operates through the Truth only. Now, what aid, whether we have one or the other of the preceding objects in view, does the case in hand lend to this conclusion? We shall see.

The eunuch, on his way to Ethiopia, was reading the book of Isaiah. This the Spirit inspired the prophet to write; hence it is true. But Philip was passing, to whom the Spirit, which was in him, said, "Go near and join yourself to this chariot." He went, and, on approaching it, said to the eunuch, "Do you understand what you read?" "How can I," was the reply, "except some one should guide me?" Philip was invited to a seat in the chariot, and, on taking it, began at the same scripture and preached to the eunuch, Jesus.

The Spirit, then, was present but in Philip, and not in the eunuch; for the world cannot receive it: it had spoken but to Philip, and not to the eunuch. Now, however, it was speaking to the eunuch, but speaking only through Philip; and so it continued till conviction was effected. All, then, that was said to the eunuch, the Spirit said, but said it through Philip; all that the eunuch learned, he learned from the Spirit, but learned it through Philip; and all that the eunuch felt, the Spirit caused him to feel, but by what it said. And this is a case of conversion.

First, then, to what conclusion does it lead? Clearly to the following:—1. That the Spirit operated on the eunuch. 2. That it operated through the Truth. 3. That it operated in no other way; since no other way is either named or hinted at.

Second—but on inspection the case will be found to correspond exactly with the conclusions heretofore arrived at in this chapter. Hence we conclude that the proposition which rests jointly on the present case and those conclusions must be true.

But where is the evidence that the Spirit exerted on the eunuch an "influence distinct from and above the Truth"? In what fact, hint, or circumstance, in the case itself, shall we look for it? That evidence does not exist. The persuasion that it does is a distempered dream.

### *Section XIV.*

Our thirteenth argument is, *that the Apostle Paul represents himself as having begotten or converted the Corinthians by the gospel; and that, since the gospel in its ordinary acceptation does not include an influence distinct from and above itself, therefore the gospel is the sole influence of conversion.*

The ground on which this argument rests is the following:—"Though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have you not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."

In examining different cases of conversion, since conversion is in all cases the same, the trait with which we should expect to be most struck would be their substantial agreement amidst different circumstances. Accordingly, it is curious to note that in every case of conversion, no matter what the surrounding circumstances may have been, the first thing done was the presentation of the Truth; that this was presented by the Spirit through some inspired teacher and confirmed; that this Truth is then represented as being heard, believed, received, or rejected; and that then conversion ensued or not, just as the Truth was received or rejected. But in no case have we the slightest evidence—not even a hint—that the Spirit was ever at work in any other way or by any other means. Is it not strange that the truth, if truth it is, should never have flashed out in a single case? The circumstance is more than suspicious. Now, what the word spoken was to the people then converted, the word

written is to us of the present age.

As it was then the sole influence of conversion, circumstances providential and incidental excepted, so is it now. As the Spirit was then the author of what was said, and of the evidence thereof, and hence of the effect produced, so is it now the author of what is written, and of the evidence thereof, and hence of the effect which it produces. As the Spirit was then present where it spoke, so is it now present where it has written; and as what it then said was quick and powerful,—in a word, *spirit and life*,—so now what it has written has without abatement the same subtle energy. And as then he who resisted the Truth resisted the Spirit, so is it now; but where is the evidence—in reason we ask where—that any soul either then or now has ever resisted the Spirit by resisting an "influence distinct from and above the Truth"?

Let us suppose the gospel to be the sole, the unaided cause of conversion,—*i.e.* unaided by any influence above itself; and that it was the intention of an apostle, in speaking of a case of conversion which he had been chiefly instrumental in effecting, to represent this fact: in what language, if he were not speaking literally, would he speak? Would it not be in language like this?—Though you have many instructors in Christ, and may claim to have been quickened or converted by many influences, yet have you not many fathers, nor have you been converted by many influences; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you *through the gospel*. The gospel then, or the Truth, we again conclude, is the influence of conversion.

### ***Section XV.***

Our fourteenth and last argument is, *that the only known or determinate cause of Lydia's conversion was the Truth which she heard; and that this is hence the real cause of conversion.*

The case may be resolved into the question, *How did the Lord open Lydia's heart?* This question answered, all else is simple. Now, as a physical opening is not contended for, this subject may be dismissed at once. And as to open the mind means to enlighten, so to open the heart, where it means anything more, means to influence to act. More than this the phrase, which is certainly metaphorical, cannot without violence be made to mean. Hence the phrase, "whose heart the Lord



opened that she attended to the things spoken of Paul," resolves itself into the more literal and more simple expression,—whom the Lord influenced to attend to what Paul said. This is clearly the meaning of the phrase; at least, more than this its terms will not safely import. Now, the question is, by what means did the Lord influence Lydia to attend or to obey? That *he* did it is certain; and equally as certain is it that *he* influenced the Corinthians to obey, and the eunuch to obey; but the question is, *by what means*? Mr. Jeter thinks he influenced Lydia to obey by a "gracious, inward, efficacious influence of his Spirit." Doubtless the influence, whatever it was, was a very gracious one, for we can conceive of no other; quite inward, too, since it affected the woman's heart; very efficacious, also, since it induced her to obey; and very certain that it was of the Spirit, but very uncertain whether it differed from the Truth, or was anything more than the Truth.

But on what ground does Mr. Jeter suppose the influence to have been a special one? for this is clearly the force of his language. Is it because God is *limited* to a special influence? If he so affirm, then we leave him to his whim; and yet other ground he cannot name.

Now, it is clear,—1st, that the Spirit was present speaking to Lydia,—speaking through the apostle; 2d, that she heard what it said; 3d, that there is an immense motive-power in the Truth; 4th, but not one particle of evidence that the Spirit was operating on Lydia in some other way than through the Truth, or exerting more power than is in the Truth. To what conclusion, then, are we forced? To the conclusion simply that the Lord influenced her to obey by the light and motives of the gospel.

The expression "whose heart the Lord opened" can safely mean no more than this:—that the work was of the Lord. Certainly it does not assert the exertion of a special influence, neither does it necessarily imply it; hence, there is no ground on which to infer it. It merely asserts a fact, leaving the mode of its occurrence wholly unexplained; and, in all such cases, it is certainly better to ascribe the fact to the causes known to be present and acting, than to such as are purely imaginary.

Here, now, we close the defense of our proposition, and, from all the facts, premises, and reasonings thereon, now before us, feel it to be overwhelmingly established, that *in conversion the Spirit operates through the Truth only*. If this conclusion is not true, then there is

neither meaning in fact, nor force in argument. In harmony with the consciousness, the volitions, and the instincts of the human heart, asserted and implied in the clearest language of Holy Writ, corroborated by the simplest and most transparent reasonings, *can it yet be false?* It is at variance with no incident in the life of the Savior, with none in the history of the apostles. In order to establish it the capacity of no word has been overtaxed, no clause forced to bear a reluctant testimony, no sentence unnaturally construed, nor any verse interpreted otherwise than in harmony with the long-established and simplest laws of human speech. We therefore commit it to the world, in the profound belief that all who will sincerely and thoroughly examine the grounds on which it rests will pronounce it true, certainly true.

## *Chapter IV.*

### OBJECTIONS OF MR. JETER TO THE PRECEDING DOCTRINE CONSIDERED.

#### *Section I.*

WE now proceed to consider the objections to the doctrine of the preceding chapter. But before doing this we think it important to have the precise point stated against which these objections are urged.

The question of difference between Mr. Jeter and us is strictly a question of fact, but a question involving two facts. We both agree that in conversion the Spirit operates: what, then, is the difference between us? It is the difference between accomplishing a given result by *one* influence of an agent acting uniformly in *one* way, and by *two* influences of the same agent, acting, one uniformly in *one* way, the other indifferently in *two* ways. We maintain that conversion is effected uniformly in one way,—namely, through the Truth. To this limitation Mr. Jeter objects, and maintains that in conversion the Spirit operates not only through the Truth, but without it; and not only by all the power in the Truth, but also by another influence distinct from and above it. When, then, he objects to our doctrine, it is evident that he objects, *not to what we do teach, but in reality to what we do not teach*. For, so far as we do teach, he agrees with us; but he objects to our teaching only so far. In other words, when we deny that the Spirit operates in conversion except through the Truth, or exerts therein any influence above the Truth, he affirms that we deny falsely.

When, then, he urges objections against our teaching, we shall expect him to urge them against the single point now named,—to wit: our limitation. We shall expect him to show that this limitation is wrong,—not directly, certainly, but indirectly,—by showing that the Spirit does, at least in some cases, operate in conversion *without the Truth*; and that in all cases it exerts an influence *distinct from and above it*. With these preliminaries we shall now introduce Mr. Jeter's first objection, which he thus states:—

*Objection 1. "Mr. Campbell's theory of conversion overlooks, or at,*

*least underestimates, the inveteracy of human depravity."*

It does not, then, it seems, overlook *depravity*, but only the *inveteracy* of it. It admits the existence of the thing, but denies that it exists in so intense a form as that for which Mr. Jeter contends. This is precisely the difference between him and us. He contends not merely that *depravity* exists, but that it exists in such a form or to such a degree that the sinner cannot be converted simply by the Truth; but that the Spirit must add to this—or exert without it—an influence distinct from and above it, and acting with immeasurably greater vital force.

Now, as not *depravity*, but *this peculiar degree* of it, is at the very bottom of Mr. Jeter's whole system of spiritual influence, and, as we conceive the sole argument which he can urge in its defense, he should have been at great pains to establish it, *if possible*, even beyond a cavil. But, instead of this, he attempts to establish the existence of *depravity* simply,—a thing which is not in dispute. For the question between him and us is not whether *depravity* exists, but whether it exists *to the degree* contended for by him. The very thing which we utterly deny is, that any degree or form of depravity exists in the human heart which renders the sinner incapable of conversion by the Truth. Why, now, did he not attempt to establish this intense form or peculiar degree of depravity? To such a task he knew himself unequal. But a difficulty of this nature never strands Mr. Jeter. What he felt a conscious inability to prove, he felt a conscious ability to assume; and, accordingly, having assumed the existence of a form or degree of depravity which has no existence, he bases on this assumption an objection to Mr. Campbell's theory of conversion. What, now, does this objection amount to? Simply to this:—that Mr. Campbell's theory overlooks Mr. Jeter's assumption,—a small matter, truly! It is not for Mr. Campbell to offset one assumption by another, but to abide by the Truth, and offset every assumption by a simple denial of its truth, until its truth is proved.

There are two forms of depravity in the existence of which we do not believe:—one, a form which makes it necessary to regenerate infants in order to their salvation; the other, a form which renders an influence distinct from and above the Truth necessary to conversion. And, should it be said that depravity exists in these two forms only, then we are prepared to deny the existence of the whole thing.

We agree to the mournful truth that man is depraved, 1:*e.* that his

reason has been greatly clouded by the fall, that his tastes and feelings have been perverted, and that he no longer reflects the image—the moral image—of his great Original as he once reflected it; that he now reflects it only as a broken mirror reflects the image of the face before it. The three respects in which man has chiefly suffered by the fall, we conceive to be his subjection to mortality, his loss of the moral imago of a kind Creator, and his greater exposedness to temptation and sin. In some of these respects, certainly, his misfortunes may be, in great part, even in this life, repaired by the Remedial System; but the consummation will not be until he is quickened from the dead. But, as to infants, we believe that all they lost in Adam, even every whit, they gain in Christ without one vestige of influence from the Spirit, save quickening them from the grave. Neither in reason nor in revelation is there one trace of evidence that an infant was ever yet, from conception up, the subject of one ray of spiritual influence. The whole conception is a pure delusion.

We agree, further, that all (infants included) are so frail or weak that, after a certain period of life, they not only sin, but that they are even *inclined* to sin. But this inclination we believe to be owing, at first at least, rather to the force of temptation, and the feebleness of the resistance offered by an immature resisting will and untaught judgment, than to any thing in the form of an innate, inherited depravity so inveterate that resistance becomes nearly, if not quite, impossible. True, we all inherit that frail nature which renders us so extremely susceptible of temptation. Nay, we will even grant that we inherit it in an aggravated form, which is the only form in which, we do inherit it. But we inherit no form of depravity so inveterate as to affect the perfect freedom of the will, close the heart against the Truth, or render man insusceptible of being moved by motives; in a word, no form which renders him incapable of being converted by the simple, unaided light and force of divine Truth.

But this frailty or weakness is not sin: it is only a condition without which there had been no sin. Nor is it a consequence of Adam's sin. Adam possessed it before he sinned, else he had not sinned; hence, it is not a *consequence* of his sin. It is, however, a condition of sin, since without it Adam, could not have sinned; but it is only a condition. Nor, perhaps, will facts warrant the conclusion that this frailty is, even in our case, greatly increased. For greater weakness in sinning was never displayed than by Adam. He yielded to the first temptation ever

presented to him, without, so far as we know, offering even the slightest resistance". No one of his descendants ever did more.

But what has Mr. Jeter to urge in defense of this *inveterate form of depravity*? The following extract contains his plea:—

"The Spirit of inspiration has drawn the picture of man's moral corruption in gloomy colors. He is utterly depraved,—fleshly, sensual, and impure. 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh:' John 3: 6. He is without spiritual life, without holiness, without moral worth,—'dead in trespasses and sins:' Eph. 2: 1. He is alienated from God, and opposed to his law, and, consequently, to truth and righteousness. 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be:' Rom. 8: 7. This depravity pervades and controls the whole man,—blinding the mind, perverting the affections, stupefying the conscience, making rebellious and obstinate the will, and prostituting the members of the body as the instruments of sin. And this moral corruption of human nature is universal. 'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God:' Rom. 3: 23."

There is here an obvious effort to overstrain the truth, which within itself is bad enough without any heightening. But all this over-coloring, which is nothing else than a species of falsehood, is designed merely to create the impression that there *is* a necessity for some very peculiar spiritual influence in conversion. But it is proper to descend to particulars.

1st. "He [man] is utterly depraved,—fleshly, sensual, and impure. 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh:' John 3: 6."

Now, we freely grant that that which is born of the flesh is flesh; but that *flesh* and *utter depravity* mean the same thing, or represent the same idea, is something we do not believe. To assume that they do is to assume the very question in dispute. That question is not whether that which is born of the flesh is flesh, nor even whether it is fleshly; but whether flesh means utter depravity, or implies a degree of it so inveterate that the sinner cannot be converted without a "supernatural agency." We repeat, there is no question between Mr. Jeter and us but a question of degree. He asserts not merely that man is depraved, but that he is *utterly depraved*. We deny that the term *utterly* is applicable: he affirms it. How, now, does he undertake to make his affirmation good? By assuming, in the first place, that the word *flesh* means *fleshly*; and,

in the second, that to be *fleshly* is to be *utterly depraved*. But we deny the truth of his assumption in the first place and in the second. The passage does not say, that which is born of the flesh is *fleshly*, neither is this its meaning, but, that which is born of the flesh is *flesh*. Neither does the word "flesh" imply utter depravity.

2d. "He [man] is without spiritual life, without holiness, without moral worth,—'dead in trespasses and sins:' Eph. 2: 1."

Now, we admit that man, unregenerate, is without spiritual life, without holiness, but not quite that he is without moral worth; or, rather, we admit that man is unregenerate. But this is not the question at issue, neither does it imply it. Is a man who is admitted to be without spiritual life to be therefore deemed *utterly depraved*? This is the question. If to be destitute of spiritual life were a consequence of utter depravity, or necessarily implied it, then of course the existence of that would prove the reality of this. But, before such destitution can be so used, it must be shown to be such a consequence or to carry such necessary implication. But this is what Mr. Jeter has not attempted. The absence of one thing can never be used to prove the presence of another, unless the one cannot be absent without the other being present. Hence, the absence of spiritual life can never be used to prove the presence of utter depravity, unless that could not be absent without this being present. Nor would it be sufficient, to establish Mr. Jeter's conclusion, to show that the absence of spiritual life implies the presence of *depravity*. It must be shown that it implies *utter depravity*, or a form of it so inveterate that conversion is impossible without a "*supernatural agency*." For, as before remarked, we admit that the sinner is depraved, but still deny that any power besides the Truth is necessary to his conversion.

The expression "dead in trespasses and sins," with which Mr. Jeter terminates the preceding extract, and upon which he rests its truth, proves nothing in his favor. If an absolute death were meant, then perhaps it might; but such is not the case. A man absolutely dead is as incapable of sinning as he is of being righteous, whether the death be that of the body or that of the spirit. Yet the persons alluded to were dead in *sins*,—that is, the sins which they were actually committing every day.

Indeed, the very power to sin involves a virtual refutation of one of Mr.

Jeter's chief objections to our theory of conversion,—to wit, the impotency of motives on the sinner's will. The power to sin is not the mere physical power to sin, but the moral power. It is the power to sin or not just as we choose. He who cannot choose between sinning and not sinning cannot sin. And the power to choose implies the power to choose for reasons, and this, of course, that he who chooses is susceptible of being determined by motives. This is all we contend for; but, in contending for this, it must be apparent that we contend not merely that the sinner can be determined by motives in some cases, but that he can be in all cases, and hence, of course, in that of conversion.

In the expression "dead in trespasses and sins," the word *dead* is evidently employed not in an absolute, but in a relative, sense. A sinner, though dead in sins, is not absolutely dead, but only dead to righteousness: just as a righteous man, though dead in a sense, is not absolutely dead, but only dead to sin. And as the righteous man, though dead to sin, is not *so far dead* that he cannot be induced, by the force of temptation, to sin again, so the sinner, though dead to righteousness, is not *so far dead* that he cannot be induced, by the force of truth and motives, to mend his life: only there is this difference,—that, being more strongly inclined to sin than to righteousness, we need to be acted upon by more powerful motives in the one case than in the other. What now of utter depravity is deducible from the expression "dead in trespasses and sins"? Clearly none.

3d. "He [man] is alienated from God, and opposed to his law, and, consequently, to truth and righteousness. 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be:' Rom. 8: 7."

The carnal mind—or, emphatically, *the mind of the flesh*, which is here said to be enmity to God—is something which, in this life, is never subject to the will of God; indeed, it cannot be. No power can tame it. Hence it is as lawless in the saint as in the sinner. There is this difference:—the saint, by the Spirit, holds it in *check*; but the sinner is governed by it. Both *can* control it if they will, at least to a great extent; but neither can subdue it completely. The determination to control it, the effort to do so, and the partial success, make the difference between the Christian and the sinner.

But, Mr. Jeter will say, does not this prove that there is a work to be



done in man which cannot be accomplished by the Truth? Certainly not. Indeed, it proves nothing about a work *to be* done in man, but rather that there is a work which cannot be done in him. It rather proves that there is a principle in him which cannot be subdued at all, cannot be subjected to the law of God, either by the Truth or by an influence distinct from and above it. It still leaves the question of his conversion by the Truth intact; for, even after his conversion, this principle remains the same, except that it is kept in abeyance.

Having thus complimented Mr. Jeter's first objection far beyond what any person except himself will think it merits, we shall here dismiss it.

## *Section II.*

*Objection 2. "It [Mr. Campbell's theory of conversion] is oblivious of the chief difficulty in conversion."*

Now, all must admit that the chief difficulty in conversion is a serious one, and that any theory which overlooks it must be extremely defective. But in what consists this chief difficulty? We shall let the following language of Mr. Jeter explain:—

"Mr. Campbell maintains that 'the arguments which are written in the New Testament' must be '*understood,*' in order to exert their influence on the human mind. (Christianity Restored, p. 350.) To understand these arguments requires attention, candor, and spiritual discernment. Men attend readily to what they delight in, and believe easily what is congenial with their tastes; but the 'natural man,' the unrenewed, sinful man, has a deep-rooted aversion to divine Truth. This aversion is an element and a proof of his depravity. He may hear or read the arguments contained in the Scriptures, through curiosity, politeness, or a captious spirit; but to expect of him a candid, serious, docile, and obedient attention to them is to expect to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles."

The "chief difficulty," then, it seems, in conversion, is to understand the "arguments" of the New Testament; and of this "chief difficulty" Mr. Campbell's theory is "oblivious:" at least such is the case if we are to credit the romancing of Mr. Jeter.

Now, three things, and only three, say all sensible and sober-minded

men, (and the Bible says not to the contrary,) are necessary to understand an argument:—1st, that it shall be within itself intelligible; 2d, that we possess the ability to understand it; 3d, that we give it the requisite attention. Mr. Jeter does not pretend that the arguments of the New Testament are not intelligible, nor that we have not the ability to understand them.

What, then, lack we yet? "Attention, candor, and spiritual discernment," it would seem. First, then, it requires *attention*. Granted. Second, it requires *candor*. This is not true. If an argument be intelligible within itself, and a man possess the ability to understand it, and give it the requisite attention, understand it he will though he possess not one particle of candor. Without candor he may not *acknowledge* that he understands it; or, acknowledging it, he may not yield to it: but these are different matters altogether. Third, it requires "*spiritual discernment*." It requires *common sense*, and nothing more. What Mr. Jeter means by "spiritual discernment" he has not informed us; and, as we cannot conjecture, we shall pass the matter without further notice.

But how shall we secure the sinner's attention? For clearly, according to Mr. Jeter, this is the chief difficulty in the way of his understanding the Truth; and, indeed, according to our "scheme," if we are to believe him, it would seem insuperable. In the first place, we shall frankly grant that our "scheme" makes no provision to secure the attention of many of the human family. We mention the following classes:—1. Such as *will not come* to Christ that they might have life. 2. Such as hate the light and *will not come to it*. 3. Such as reject the counsel of God against themselves. 4. Such as judge themselves unworthy of eternal life. 5. Such as close their ears and shut their eyes, lest they should see and hear and be converted. 6. Such as will not attend without a *supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit*. For securing the attention of these classes, we are free to confess, our "scheme" makes little provision; and we shall only add, the gospel makes none. No, gentle reader; *it is Mr. Jeter's "scheme"* that makes provision for securing the attention and achieving the salvation of all these classes! Has it not boundless claims on your charity?

But we have not yet answered the question, How shall we secure the sinner's attention? We reply, Precisely as did Christ and his apostles:—by presenting to his mind, as supremely worthy of his

attention, immortality and eternal life; and by showing him that these lie completely within his reach on condition that he submit to the Savior. If neither these nor the terrors of the Lord move him, the wrath of God rests on him, and he is lost. Neither reason nor revelation sanctions any other mode of securing the sinner's attention.

### *Section III.*

*Objection 3.* "Suppose this great difficulty obviated, the sinner's attention arrested, and Truth brought clearly before his mind: *would knowledge of divine Truth, without the special influence of the Spirit, secure his conversion?*"

To which, of course, the answer is, *it would not.* Now, we reply, if divine Truth, when known or understood, effects not the conversion of the sinner, then his conversion is provided for by no system of religion which is divine. At least, if the Christian religion has made such provision, the fact has never been discovered. Against this position, so strong because so true, no argument worthy of the name has ever yet been made. True, a thousand feeble sallies, such as those we are now considering, have been made against it; but as yet it has sustained no injury. It has its confirmation in the whole history of God's dealings with the human family, and finds its sanction in the silent sense of the human soul.

But, after propounding the preceding objection in the form of an inquiry, Mr. Jeter adds, "If ignorance is the only evil with which the gospel has to contend, then, obviously, the illumination of the mind is all that is necessary for its removal. But ignorance, though it may be in itself criminal, is rather the effect than the cause of man's depravity. There is a corrupt disposition which blinds the understanding. 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil:' John 3: 19. The love of darkness—which signifies ignorance or error—is the very root of man's depravity. This love implies an aversion to light, truth, and holiness, and is the cause of the prevalent ignorance of divine things in the world."

The love of ignorance, then, is the very root of man's depravity,—a love which implies aversion to light, truth, and holiness, and is the cause of the prevalent ignorance of divine things in the world. These

are certainly fearful results. But are they results of man's depravity? We shall concede for the present that they are, and of that inveterate form of it for which Mr. Jeter contends. Now, is man the author of this form of depravity? The present generation at least is not, since it is inherited. Has he the power to modify its intensity or control it as a cause? Of course he has not. Is he, then, responsible for his love of darkness, his aversion to light, truth, and holiness, and his ignorance of divine things? It is impossible. Indeed, concede the existence of this form of depravity, and these results become harmless as the sigh of the wind. And this is a legitimate result from Mr. Jeter's position. Deny it as he will, or explain it as he may, still it follows. Nor, indeed, is this all. The real conclusion from his position is, that man is the mere creature of necessity, with no more power to avoid being what he is, or doing what he does, than a stone at rest has to put itself in motion. We advocate no "scheme" of conversion certainly which provides a remedy for a case like this, alike disgraceful to the Author of man and destructive of human accountability.

But will Mr. Jeter say that these, though results of depravity, are still to be regarded as sins? If so, then they happened by the sanction of the human will. Man might have prevented them, but did not,—not because he could not, but because he would not. All the difficulty this view of the case presents, we accept, and for it (in the view we take of conversion) make as complete provision as can be made.

We admit certainly that, in the presentation of the Truth, other and serious obstacles besides ignorance have to be encountered. Nay, more: we admit that many have to be encountered of a nature so serious that the view we take of conversion makes no provision whatever to overcome them, and that hence many of the human family will be lost. *Does Mr. Jeter's "scheme" make provision to overcome them all?* There is something exceedingly perverse in his mode of treating our view of conversion. He treats it as if faulty because it makes not provision to overcome every conceivable obstacle in the way of conversion; and yet he presents a no more feasible plan. Does the Christian religion, we ask, contemplate the removal of all obstacles to conversion, and hence the conversion of all?

But we do maintain that every removable obstacle in the way of conversion not only may be made to yield, but that it actually does yield, when it yields at all, to the Truth, and to the Truth alone. The

inherent, brilliant light of the Truth, its searching heat and power, no obstacle can withstand, save the voluntary and deliberate resistance of man. And against this resistance no provision can be made.

### ***Section IV.***

*Objection 4. "The theory under discussion is contradicted by numerous well-authenticated facts."*

In proof of which Mr. Jeter presents first this "fact:"—"If all the converting power of the Spirit is in the arguments addressed by him in words to the mind, then it follows that every minister of the word must be successful in converting souls to Christ in proportion to the distinctness with which he presents the arguments of the Spirit to the minds of his hearers. The same measure of power must, under similar circumstances, produce similar results. But does this conclusion agree with the experience and observation of Christian ministers?"

We reply, if the power be uniform, and the circumstances *precisely similar*, then the results will be so too. Now, we maintain that the converting power is in the Truth, and, hence, that the power is uniform. But are the circumstances *precisely similar*? Mr. Jeter knew that they are not, and yet he has the front to put the case as against us. But are the circumstances so far similar as to justify the expectation of even nearly-similar results? They are not. But, on the contrary, they are so very dissimilar as to justify the expectation of the most dissimilar results. This is the conclusion which agrees with the experience and observation of Christian ministers.

Audiences vary in ways which are almost infinite; each one of which will serve to prevent a uniform result from preaching. 'No two can be found commanding precisely the same amount of intellect; and then in point of cultivation they differ most widely. These two circumstances of themselves are enough to account for the most dissimilar results. But, in addition to these, prejudices innumerable, and as various as numerous, have to be encountered. The resistance met with by the Truth from all these sources is such as to cause us rather to wonder that the results are so nearly uniform as they are than to expect them to be completely so.

But, in further proof of his objection, Mr. Jeter presents, second, this

"fact:"—"But I need not appeal in this argument to questionable evidence. Christ was an unrivaled preacher of the gospel. Mark 1: 1: 'Never man spake as he did.' .... But what was the result of his ministry? It was *unsuccessful*:—not wholly so;—but it produced no such results as from his pre-eminent qualifications might have been expected; no great moral revolution, and no extensive revival of true religion."

Christ's ministry, then, was *unsuccessful*; only it was not wholly so. Be it so, then. But was it unsuccessful because of any want of power in the Truth? If so, Mr. Jeter has not shown it. No. It was unsuccessful, as far as it was so at all, *because of the deliberate resistance offered to the Truth by the Jews*. This is the reason why it was unsuccessful.

Upon various occasions and in different language did the Savior account for his lack of success. Now, to what causes did he attribute it? Among others, we mention the following:—

1. "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
2. "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"
3. "How can ye believe, who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"
4. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." But, among all the causes assigned by the Savior, *did he ever once mention a want of power in the Truth?* Whether then is it safer to ascribe his want of success to the causes which he himself mentions, or to such as he never even once alludes to?

But how does Mr. Jeter account for the Savior's want of success? "*The converting power of the Spirit*," is his own language, "*was not present,—was withheld in wisdom and righteous judgment.*" We blush for the pen that drew this libel upon the divine character. In charity let us hope its author penned it in haste, under the influence of some dreadful pressure, without stopping to reflect on his deed. *The*

*converting power of the Spirit was withheld, hence conversion was impossible; and yet the Savior said to the multitude, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life," when he perfectly knew that they came not, not because they would not, but because they could not! The converting power of the Spirit was withheld, hence conversion could not be; and yet the unconverted were, by the high decree of heaven, doomed to perdition for refusing to be what they could not be! What is this but to tender to man a religion which he cannot accept, and then to damn him for rejecting it? And all this is coolly charged to the account of "wisdom and righteous judgment"!*

## **Section V.**

*Objection 5. "Mr. Campbell's theory of the Spirit's influence is incompatible with prayer for the conversion of sinners."*

Has God but *one way* in which he can answer prayer for the conversion of sinners,—to wit, through *an influence of the Spirit distinct from and above the Truth*? If not, then the objection is void. Mr. Campbell's theory is certainly incompatible with prayer for the conversion of sinners through a "*supernatural agency*," but not with prayer for their conversion in any way in which conversion ever happens.

1. Mr. Jeter is profoundly ignorant of the manner in which our heavenly Father answers, where he does so at all, the prayers of his children. We know not what we should pray for as we ought, and surely much less the manner in which these prayers are replied to. It is enough for us to know that "prayer for all men" has been made our duty. Hence we pray for them, not because it happens to be *compatible* with some theory, however wise, but because God has made it our *duty* to do so. All beyond a conscientious discharge of our duty we leave with Him who works all things after the counsel of his will. That he does, in the way which to him seems best, answer or not these prayers as they happen to accord or not with his gracious plans and to be for the good of his erring children, we profoundly believe. When, now, Mr. Jeter undertakes to set Mr. Campbell's "theory of the Spirit's influence" aside, after having so signally failed to do so in other ways, by an *objection* based on his profound ignorance of the manner in which God answers prayer, he compliments neither his head nor his heart.

2. There is no duty upon the propriety and necessity of which Christian

men are more cordially agreed, than that of frequent fervent prayer for the conversion of sinners. Any system of religion which should ignore it would be justly exposed to the derision of all good men. Mr. Jeter knew, and admits, (reluctantly, we fear,) that Mr. Campbell and his brethren believe in and practice this duty. And yet he wished to expose us as a denomination to the odium which he knew could attach to a people only who repudiate the duty; and this he sought to do by an effort to. make it appear that our "theory" of spiritual influence is "*incompatible* " with prayer for the conversion of sinners. There is not a more unmanly thing in his book, numerous as such things are, than the preceding objection. But, in a work written to insult and not to refute, we could expect nothing better.

## *Section VI.*

*Objection 6. "Mr. Campbell's theory of conversion is inconsistent with the introduction of the millennium."*

In support of this objection, Mr. Jeter has written some seven pages; and yet in not one line of the seven has he furnished a particle of evidence that his objection states the truth. It is an objection of a piece with the one immediately preceding it,—strictly, an objection based on his ignorance. It amounts to this:—Mr. Campbell's theory of conversion is inconsistent with something of which little or nothing is known! Mr. Jeter does not know *in what* the millennium will consist, and certainly not *how* it is to be introduced. In regard to the former point, the Scriptures merely state the fact that there will be a millennium, with no full description certainly of what it will consist in; and in regard to the latter, if they are not wholly silent, yet are they silent, it appears to us, in regard to its being introduced by merely moral causes. It will not be thought disrespectful in us to dissent from Mr. Campbell in regard to a matter touching which he does not claim to be exempt from liability to err. We cannot therefore agree that Mr. Jeter has furnished the true view of the millennium in the short extract which he makes from Mr. Campbell's writings to "define what he means" by the term. And still less can we concede to him the right to base an objection to our theory of conversion on a piece of information which he does not happen to possess.

But it is proper to hear Mr. Jeter's account of the manner in which the millennium is to be introduced. "It is," he observes, "most manifest that



the millennium cannot shed its blessings on the world without some new agency or influence, or some great increase of existing influences. We need expect no new revelations for our instruction, no new powers to be imparted to the human mind, and no new means of spreading the gospel and enlisting attention to it. How then is the millennium to be introduced? *By an increased efficiency of the divine word.*"

The millennium, then, is to shed its blessings on the world *by an increased efficiency of the divine word.* Now, a more perfect conceit never haunted the brain of a Chaldean astrologer. But still, conceit as it is, it serves the purpose of a point on which to poise an objection against our view of conversion. Had Mr. Jeter stated that the millennium is to be introduced by magnetism or submarine telegraphs, he would, for any thing he knows, have come quite as near the truth.

When he states that the millennium is to be introduced *by an increased efficiency of the divine word,* he states simply the case of a miracle, and then on this bases an objection to our theory of conversion, because it does not provide for the accomplishment of an event by *ordinary means* which, by his own showing, is to result from a miraculous cause!

Again, the objection obviously assumes that the millennium is to be introduced *by conversion.* But this we deny: hence, since it is not granted, neither proved, no objection can rest on it. If Mr. Jeter would make out his case, let him first show from the Bible that the millennium is to be introduced *by conversion,* and then, from any source, that our theory makes no provision therefor. Then we should have an objection indeed. But until then we are compelled to pronounce his present objection sheer nonsense.

## ***Section VII.***

*Objection 7. "The assumption under consideration"* (that the Spirit operates in conversion through the Truth only) "*is incompatible with the salvation of infants* They enter into the world, as Mr. Campbell admits, with depraved hearts. Dying before they attain to years of intelligence, they must enter heaven with their moral natures unchanged, which is impossible; they must be renovated by death, which is a mere figment; they must be renewed by the Holy Spirit without the word, the possibility of which Mr. Campbell cannot

conceive; or they must be lost. I do not charge him with admitting this consequence; but it appears to be logically deduced from the position which he assumes, and all his ingenuity has not enabled him to escape from it."

As a general rule, there is about as much connection between Mr. Jeter's premises and his conclusions as between a cubic inch and the milky way; but in the present instance he seems to have stumbled upon something a little better. We do not hesitate to pronounce this the best argument, bad as it is, in his book. For that reason we have transcribed it entire.

How, now, must not all mothers be scandalized by the naughty doctrine which leads to such a conclusion! And Mr. Campbell, it seems, with all his ingenuity, is unable to escape it. Alas, poor man! What now must be done? If we admit Mr. Jeter's premises, and if his argument is all valid, then are we forced to accept his conclusion. But—alas for his argument!—a single pass at it proves fatal. *Mr. Campbell does not admit that infants are depraved in any sense which makes it necessary to regenerate them, either with or without the word, in order to their salvation.* We regret to be compelled thus to spoil the best argument in Mr. Jeter's book; but we are not permitted to spare it. When he puts his own false position in Mr. Campbell's mouth, he must not expect to deduce from it conclusions which will render any one ridiculous but himself.

### ***Section VIII.***

*Objection 8. "Mr. Campbell's assumption" (the Spirit's operating through the Truth only) "is wholly at war with the Scripture doctrine of Satanic influence."* Satan and other evil spirits are represented in the Bible as exerting a mighty moral influence for the destruction of men. They tempt, deceive, enslave, and degrade mankind.

Satan is a mighty prince, and at the head of a great, spreading empire. But how do the evil spirits exert an influence over the minds of men? By arguments on motives addressed to them by words oral or written? Certainly not: *but by a direct, internal, and efficient influence."*

1. We deny utterly that Satan exerts any direct influence on the human mind. We do not say he cannot do it, for we know not the limit of his

awful power. We deny that he *does it*. The question is a question of fact, which should not have been assumed, as it has been, but proved, or not made the basis of an objection. It is a sheer fiction invented for a special purpose.

2. But, conceding that Satan does exert a direct influence on the mind, what then? Why, that Mr. Campbell concedes to him and his angels a power which he denies to the Holy Spirit. But Mr. Campbell sets no limits to the power of the Spirit. He denies that it *does* act thus and so, not that it *can*. More than this he has never denied.

But, even granting, as already stated, that Satan does exert a direct influence on the mind, is it possible that Mr. Jeter can make this the ground of an argument as to what the Spirit does? Does he mean to teach, because Satan *can* do a thing, and does it for wicked ends because he can, that we are therefore to conclude that the Holy Spirit does the same thing? This is the pith of his argument; and yet he affects to be jealous for the "*honor of the Holy Spirit.*" How dare he assert, conceding his position to be correct, that the enormity of Satan's sin consists not in this very thing,—that he *does*, because he *can*, exert a direct influence on the mind? For aught he knows, this may make the great trenching difference between the Spirit's intercourse with man and Satan's,—a difference which makes the intercourse of the latter intensely wicked.

Scrappy as Mr. Jeter's book is, we did not expect to meet this stale piece in it. For the last quarter of a century this argument has been kept on hand by none but the lowest class of Mr. Campbell's opponents, until now it turns up in the tidy manual of the Rev. Mr. Jeter.

## ***Section IX.***

*Objection 9.* "The assumption that the Spirit can" (*does*) "operate on the soul of man in conversion only by arguments or words, is not only unphilosophical, but contrary to *divinely-recorded facts*. It is not true that physical power cannot produce a moral effect. . . . Christ was created holy. 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,' said the angel to Mary, 'and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God:' Luke 4: 35. Was not the holiness of the infant Redeemer a moral quality? And was not this effect produced, not by arguments,

persuasion, or words, but by the power—the *physical power*—of the Highest?"

The *holiness*, then, of the infant Redeemer *was created: was it?* Created exactly as a brad or an oyster is created; created, too, by the *physical power* of the Almighty! It was then a mere created thing, and hence, *per se*, of no more value than the color of a goose

Now, in all the ranks of our brethren, where, we ask, is the man who has ever dared to utter even one sentence half so dishonoring to the divine Savior as this worse than Arian piece? And yet the author of even this—who is, too, so very orthodox withal—can cant of Mr. Campbell's views of the divinity of Christ! We shall, however, do him the justice to suppose that he would not again repeat what he has here written. Can even he be capable of the deed? It is certainly a matter of wonder that an "assumption" which he deems to be so false should impel him to extremes so strange.

### *Section X.*

*Objection 10.* "No writer has so bitterly denounced metaphysical speculations and mystic theology as Mr. Campbell. One great object of his reformation was to rescue the Scriptures from the glosses of sectarian theorizers. I must say, that I have met with no writer on the agency of the Spirit in conversion, who has indulged so much in metaphysical disquisition, labored so hard to establish a theory, or drawn such momentous consequences from his own fine-spun speculations."

The charge that Mr. Campbell, while opposing the speculations of others, has himself turned speculatist, and that he has labored to establish a theory, is without foundation. Indeed, the very reverse is true. No author has labored more to keep free from speculation, and none, perhaps, has succeeded better; and, as to a theory on any subject, he has never penned a line to establish one. But sectarians are a peculiar race.

When Mr. Campbell neither eats nor drinks, they say he has a devil; but when he both eats and drinks, they say he is a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. When Mr. Campbell refuses to speculate on the agency of the Spirit in conversion, they

declare he denies that agency; but when, to please them, he consents to explain, then they clamor,—A speculatist! Truly, his taskmasters put him to a hard service. Mr. Campbell asserts that *conviction is the work of the Spirit*, and here would pause. But he is soon hurried from this position. He next asserts that *sinner are quickened by the Truth*; but this is unsatisfactory. He then explains; and now he is either a metaphysician or theorist. It is well that wisdom is justified by her children.

If there is any one singular trait in the teachings of Mr. Campbell,—and the same is true of the teachings of his brethren,—it is their simplicity and freeness from speculation. The facility with which audiences understand him, the delight with which the unbigoted listen to his clear, fine thoughts, the readiness with which they accept his expositions of Scripture,—at once so fair and natural,—is the best refutation of the charge that he is either a speculatist or a theorist. It is, however, not at all strange that Mr. Jeter, whose mind is a mere tissue of flimsy speculations, should, feeling himself rebuked in the presence of a man free from speculation, seek to implicate him in his own follies. Oblique talkers generally excuse their deeds by saying that other people do not always speak the truth.

Here, now, we close our examination of what Mr. Jeter has to urge in the way of *objections* to our view of spiritual agency and influence in conversion. And are these all? If so, till heaven and earth shall pass away will that view stand. We never felt more profoundly penetrated with the conviction of its truth than now. These feeble objections have melted at its base like snow at the foot of the Andes, and still it stands. Mists may gather around it and objections lie on its outskirts; but still it towers far up into a region where mists never gather and objections never collect. Its luster may be obscured for a day; but, like the sun marching behind a pavilion of cloud, it will gleam forth at last all the brighter for the transient obscurity. We commend it, therefore, to the confidence of all good men, and commit it to the safe-keeping of God.

## *Chapter V.*

"THE IDENTITY OF REGENERATION, CONVERSION, AND BAPTISM."

### *Section I.*

SUCH is Mr. Jeter's caption to some twenty-five pages of matter curious and empirical indeed. Here his peculiar genius displays itself to admiration. He sports like a giant with phantoms of his own creating, and plays with the freedom of a boy with Mr. Campbell's views, so "obscure, variable, and contradictory." His great argument, in the mastery of which not even the infidel himself shall dispute the palm with Mr. Jeter, is here employed with its finest effect. Truth and falsehood, vice and virtue, is and is not, are not more contradictory than the views of Mr. Campbell! This has been for ages past, and still is, the chief ground on which the infidel has disputed the truth of Christianity. The Bible, he affirms, is contradictory, therefore it is false. And Mr. Campbell's views are contradictory, affirms Mr. Jeter, and hence must be false. With a single distinction the analogy is complete:—the infidel may err, but not so Mr. Jeter! Of all the arguments which can be urged against any cause, this, we believe, is, in the opinion of the best judges, deemed the feeblest. And yet extract this argument, together with all that rests on it, from Mr. Jeter's book, and the shrunken thing will resemble nothing so much as an Egyptian mummy. Of these *feigned* contradictions we shall take no notice.

Before proceeding to the main subject of this chapter, we have first a few extracts to present from what Mr. Jeter has written under the preceding caption, on which a few remarks may be offered, in order to abbreviate our future labors and to correct some errors into which he—most innocently, no doubt—has fallen.

I. "I do not charge Mr. Campbell with denying the necessity of a moral change preparatory to baptism. He has written equivocally—perhaps it would be better to say obscurely—on the subject. His love of novelty, the immaturity of his views, or the blinding influence of his theory, or all these causes combined, have

impelled him to record many sentences which ingenuity less pregnant than his own finds it difficult to reconcile with my admission."

We regret that we cannot be obliged to Mr. Jeter for his "admission." Had it been made for Mr. Campbell's sake, we might have been so; but such was not the case. It was made, not to do Mr. Campbell justice, but to avoid a somewhat less sore event to Mr. Jeter himself,—that of being convicted of willful falsehood. He knew that the most partial and superficial reader of Mr. Campbell's writings could contradict him without this admission; hence, he made it to save himself,—for nothing else.

But Mr. Campbell "has written *equivocally*—perhaps it would be better to say *obscurely*—*on the necessity of a moral change before baptism.*"

Candidly, we are grieved at this. We are willing to review Mr. Jeter severely,—nay, even bitterly, when he merits it, as he not seldom does,—but neither unjustly nor discourteously. But how, within any of these limits, to describe what he has here said, without the appearance of being rude, we confess we know not. It is to be regretted that an author whose pedigree points to an American origin should still by his speech so often betray a Cretan extraction.

In writing near half a hundred volumes and thousands of pages, it would surely be a miracle had Mr. Campbell never penned an obscure or equivocal sentence. But is an equivocal or obscure sentence here and there only, a just ground on which to prefer a charge of writing equivocally or obscurely on a point which lies nearest the writer's heart? Are *all* Mr. Campbell's writings equivocal or obscure on the necessity of a moral change before baptism? Alas for the weakness and corruption of the human heart! If, it may truly be said, there is any one subject on which Mr. Campbell has shed the whole splendor of his peculiar eloquence, it is the *necessity*—the *absolute necessity*—of a *change*, a *moral change*, a *spiritual change*, a *deep, vital, pervading change of the whole inner man, preparatory to baptism.* Of all the subjects on which he has ever written, this appears to be that on which he is most sensitive, most cautious. He has described it and insisted on the necessity of it times innumerable, and in a style the most varied, pointed, and luminous. Who, then, we ask, that is unwilling to be recreant to the truth, can charge him with writing either equivocally or obscurely on the subject? Is there no moral change implied in belief?

none in repentance? and does not Mr. Campbell insist that these shall precede baptism? On some subjects we may brook a charge which is both false and injurious to us as a people; but Mr. Jeter must learn that this subject is not one of them.

II. "Mr. Campbell has been frequently, but, I think, unfairly, charged with teaching *baptismal regeneration*. As popularly understood, baptismal regeneration denotes a moral change effected through the influence of Christian baptism. Some things which Mr. Campbell has written, as we have seen, seem to imply this doctrine; and he has exposed himself to the suspicion of holding it by quoting its advocates in support of his peculiar views: but certainly he has never formally proclaimed it; he earnestly advocates principles at war with it. *What he certainly maintains is, not that we are regenerated by baptism, but that baptism is itself regeneration, and the only personal regeneration.*"

We presume that Mr. Jeter has, in this extract, come as near doing Mr. Campbell justice as he has ever come doing any opponent justice; and he is far from doing him justice. He certainly, however, does Mr. Campbell the justice to acquit him of holding the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, for which we thank him sincerely and heartily. Baptismal regeneration, as he justly states, denotes, as popularly understood, a *moral change—i.e. a change of the inner man*—effected by baptism. This doctrine Mr. Campbell eschews from his whole heart. He has never penned even one sentence which, except by the most dishonest artifice, can be shown even to look towards the doctrine. He ascribes to baptism no value whatever except as a condition of remission, or (which is hardly a different thing) as a part of the new birth; but neither as a condition of remission nor as a part of the new birth does he ascribe to it any *moral* effect on the heart or the soul. Even as a part of the new birth it is a part to which no *moral effect (effect on the inner man)* can be ascribed. Indeed, all that is *moral*, strictly so called, in the new birth, *precedes* baptism, and necessarily so. True, as a condition of remission or as a part of the new birth, Mr. Campbell ascribes to baptism an immense value; but the value "which he ascribes to it consists in no power which it has to produce any moral effect or change in the heart or the soul, but solely in its being *appointed*, jointly with other conditions, *for remission*."

But, while acquitting Mr. Campbell of holding, or rather teaching, the



doctrine of baptismal regeneration, Mr. Jeter had still to do so in such a manner as to leave the mind half suspicious that he may still be tinctured with the doctrine. "Some things [we repeat what he says] which Mr. 'Campbell has written, as we have seen, *seem to imply this doctrine*; and he has exposed himself to the suspicion of holding it, by quoting its advocates in support of his peculiar views." This is not manly. Why, if Mr. Jeter really wished to acquit Mr. Campbell of the charge fully, did he not do it like a man, in one clear, broad sentence, unaccompanied by any suspicion-breeding qualifications? He acquits him because he knows him to be not guilty, and yet in such a way as to leave the impression that after all he may not be quite innocent.

But "*what he [Mr. Campbell] clearly maintains is, not that we are regenerated by baptism, but that baptism is itself regeneration, and the only personal regeneration.*"

What Mr. Campbell clearly maintains is,—1st, that regeneration and the new birth are identical; 2d, that the new birth consists of two parts,—to wit: being begotten, or quickened, by the Spirit, and being baptized; and 3d, that, therefore, baptism is not itself regeneration, *i.e.* the whole of it. But because baptism, as a part, and especially as the last part, of regeneration, implies the other and preceding part, Mr. Campbell" sometimes calls it regeneration, precisely as faith sometimes stands for the whole gospel, in which, however, it is merely a single item. In this sense, but in no other, does he maintain that *baptism is itself regeneration.*

III. As quoted by Mr. Jeter, Mr. Campbell thus writes:—"The sprinkling of a speechless and faithless babe never moved it one inch in the way to heaven, and never did change its heart, character, or relation to God and the kingdom of heaven. But not so a believer, immersed as a volunteer in obedience of the gospel. He has put on Christ." On which Mr. Jeter comments thus:—"The sprinkling of a speechless and faithless babe *never did change its heart*; but what is true of the sprinkling of an infant is *not true* of the voluntary immersion of a believer. So Mr. Campbell seems to teach."

Plainly, Mr. Jeter means to say, that Mr. Campbell seems to teach *that immersion changes the believer's heart*. Did not his conscience smite him while penning this? If not, he need never fear it in time to come while sinning. He may console himself with the reflection that he

enjoys immunity from the punishment of at least one great foe to injustice and crime. But to an upright mind Mr. Campbell seems to teach no such doctrine as Mr. Jeter ascribes to him. Mr. Campbell certainly means to teach that there is a distinction between the sprinkling of an infant and the immersion of a believer. But what is it? Has he merely implied it and left it to be inferred? No. He distinctly expresses it. His language is, "not so a believer, immersed as a volunteer in obedience of the gospel. *He has put on Christ.*" Sprinkling the babe does it no good, but not so the immersion of the believer. *By it he puts on Christ.* This is the distinction, and the only one, which Mr. Campbell even, seems to teach, except by a construction which converts truth into falsehood, and against which the imperfections of human speech afford no protection.

## *Section II.*

But what is the meaning of the terms *Regeneration* and *Conversion*, and to what extent, or in what sense, if any, are they identical with baptism? To this question the present is not the place to reply fully. This can be better done in the chapter on remission of sins. Indeed, after what has now been said, neither a very full nor a very formal reply can be deemed necessary. For the present, therefore, we shall be content with submitting merely such distinctions and other considerations as the nature of the case seems here to require and as can with propriety be now introduced.

As we promised in a preceding chapter to assign the reasons elsewhere for there substituting the term "begotten" for the term "born," we shall now commence by inquiring what is the only true and proper rendering of the original word rendered "born" in the phrase "born of God." Certainly it is to be rendered either by the term "begotten" or "born," but the question is, by which? Mr. Jeter thinks it may be rendered indifferently by either, according to the taste of the translator. But in this he is unquestionably wrong.

The principle which, in translating, takes precedence of all others, where it can be applied, is this:—where a doubt exists as to what English word we are to translate a term in the original by, select a case in which *no doubt can exist*, and render by the proper word; then, in every other case where this same original word occurs, render by this same English word, unless the sense forbids it. This is perhaps the most

important rule known to the science of interpretation, and, happily for the present question, applies, and consequently settles it forever.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is *born* of God." Now, the question is, shall the word *born* be here retained, or shall it give place to the word *begotten*? In order to settle this question, the rule requires that we shall find a case in which this same original word occurs, but in which no doubt can exist as to what English word it is to be translated by. Let us then try the next clause:—"and every one that loveth him that—*begat*. " Here it is impossible to employ the word *born*; and equally impossible to employ any other word but the word *begat*. This, then, is a case in which no doubt can exist. Hence, in every case where this same original word occurs, it is to be rendered by *begat* or *begotten*, unless the sense forbids it. Let us now, using this term, render, according to the rule, the entire verse from which these clauses are taken. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is *begotten of* God; and every one that loveth him that *begat* loveth him also that is *begotten* of him. Here, now, by the force of the rule, we produce a rendering which is not only correct but uniform,—a circumstance constantly aimed at in every good translation.

It may now be proper to cite a passage or two in which, although the same original word occurs, neither *begat* nor *begotten* can be used, because the sense forbids it. 1. "By faith, Moses when he was *born* was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child." Here it is obvious at a glance that the term *begotten* cannot be used. 2. "Except a man be *born* of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Here again the sense requires *born*; because to say except a man be *begotten of water*, is nonsense.

For these reasons we ventured to substitute the term *begotten* for the term *born*, in John 3: 8, thus:—The Spirit breathes where it sees fit, and you hear its voice; but you know not whence it comes and whither it goes: in this way is (*begotten*) every one that is *begotten* by the Spirit.

But in reply to this it may be asked, why not make a passage in which the original word has to be rendered *born*, as in the two last instances, the basis of our criticism, and compel the other passages to conform to it? We answer, where a term is used in two senses, a wider and a narrower, as is the case with the term now in hand, the rule applies to the term first in its narrower sense; since it is of necessity that the term

must have its narrower sense, though not that it shall have its wider. It is hardly necessary to add that *born* is a term of wider signification than *begat*. For this reason, therefore, the rule must be applied as in the preceding instances.

But now comes the great material question, *Does the phrase begotten by the Spirit or begotten of God*—for they are identical in sense—*express the whole of the new birth? In other words, does the new birth consist in being begotten by the Spirit, and in nothing else, even in part?* Mr. Jeter affirms that it does: we deny it. This constitutes the difference between us.

*The new birth consists in being born of water and of the Spirit.* At least, so taught the Savior:—"Except a man *be born of water and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." That to be born of *water and of the Spirit* is to be born again, no honest man acquainted with the subject ever yet denied. And this is *regeneration*. Hence, regeneration consists not in being born of water alone, nor yet in being begotten by the Spirit alone, but in the two jointly and inseparably,—is complete in neither, but only in them both. This is the doctrine for which we contend.

In the order of events, it is true, being begotten by the Spirit *precedes* being born of water, and never succeeds it. As that does not complete the new birth without this, so this without that is nothing.

So far, then, as regeneration consists in being *born of water*, so far it and baptism are identical; *no further*. So much, then, for the identity of regeneration and baptism.

### ***Section III.***

Next in regard to the word *conversion*. All we have to say on this term shall consist in a few remarks on the following passages:—1. "Wherefore my sentence is, that ye trouble not them who from among the Gentiles *are turned* to God." The word here rendered "*are turned*" is the word which in other places is rendered *convert*, *conversion*, &c. It was here applied to the first Gentile converts to Christianity, and comprehended all that made the difference between the alien and the baptized person, and hence, of course, baptism itself. Since, therefore, it applied to the whole of a process of which baptism is a part,

conversion and baptism must, to a certain extent at least, be identical. Now, the question is, to what extent? Or, putting the question in another form, Did the word *conversion* apply equally to all parts of the process of which baptism is a part, or is there not evidence that it applied more particularly to one part than to any other, and, if so, to which part?

In order to answer this question, we shall now present the second passage, to wit:—"Repent ye, therefore, and *be converted*, that your sins may be blotted out." Now, we shall assume that the persons here addressed were believers,—a thing which need not be done, since Mr. Jeter concedes it. The following is his language, or, rather, view of the passage:—"Repent,' said he, (Peter,) change your minds, 'and be converted, reform your lives, (*and these exercises clearly imply faith,*) 'that your sins may be blotted out.'"

The word *conversion*, then, did not, in this case, denote belief, since it was believers who were commanded to be converted. Neither did it denote repentance, since this is denoted by the appropriate term. What, then, did it denote? After belief and repentance, what remains? *Baptism only*. Baptism, then, we conclude, was that part of the whole process of turning to God, which the word conversion more especially applied to; hence to this extent, and in this sense, but in no other, conversion and baptism are identical.

This, however, we wish distinctly to state, is a point upon which we, as a people, have never laid the slightest stress. Seldom, in a long career, has Mr. Campbell mentioned it; and then never to insist on it as a matter of half the moment his enemies represent it as being. And, considering the offence it has given to certain *weak-minded* people, it would, perhaps, have been better had it never been mentioned at all.

## Chapter VI.

"PRAYER NOT A DUTY OF THE UNBAPTIZED."

### Section I.

UNDER this head Mr. Jeter devotes some five pages of his book to what he conceives a "serious error" of Mr. Campbell and his brethren; and, although not a "chief" nor yet a "prominent" item, still, he thinks it "not an unimportant" one. He seems anxious to create the impression that we have either changed our views respecting it, or abandoned those we formerly held altogether. His language is:—"This was an article of the primitive Campbellism, often and variously expressed. It has not, so far as I have observed, been repeated in the later writings of Mr. Campbell, nor has it been repudiated." Again:—"I do not know that Mr. Campbell would now maintain, or that any of the reformers now embrace, the doctrine clearly inculcated in the above extract; but I must, in justice to the system under examination, briefly expose its fallacy."

Not only in regard to the item now in hand, but in regard to our views generally, Mr. Jeter labors throughout his book to make it appear that, if we have not, as a people, wholly abandoned some of them, we have at least materially changed them. Indeed, according to him, no man would seem to be so fickle as Mr. Campbell, and no people so fickle as his brethren. That we have changed *in a sense*, as a people, we are proud to acknowledge. We have grown *wiser* and *better* and *stronger*; but not even the semblance of a change in any other sense do we admit. And, instead of abandoning any views heretofore held, every year serves only to deepen our conviction of their truth and to cause us to cherish them with a more unwavering faith. We took our earlier, as we have taken our later, lessons from the Bible, and as yet have seen no reason either to alter or abandon them. We therefore plead not guilty to the charge of changing,—not even in regard to the preceding item.

We assert now, as we have ever done, that there is not one passage in the Bible which, during the reign of Christ, makes it the duty of an unbaptized person to pray. Mr. Jeter is greatly mistaken if he supposes that we cherish not this as a capital item. We do not say the sinner may

not pray; and, when he does pray, we do not say it is wrong. Let us be understood. We do say, with singular emphasis, that it is *not the duty* of the sinner, the unbaptized, *to pray for the remission of his sins*; that it is not made his duty to do so by the Bible,—not even by implication. It is against this practice, or rather fiction, that our objection is especially pointed.

The sinner is taught by *orthodox* preachers—blind guides in this case, certainly—to pray for the remission of his sins; nay, more, that God will give him a *feeling sense* of remission when it occurs. Accordingly, with a broken heart and a subdued spirit, day after day, week after week, and often year after year, in blind—but, it is to be hoped, innocent—neglect of his real duties, he repeats the same fruitless prayer. And pray he may; but, unless the Savior contravene the laws of his kingdom, to accept, in a moment of awful extremity, the will for the deed of the sincere but deluded sinner, into the presence of the Lord he may come, but it will not be, we have many a fear, to remain. The sinner's agony of mind and soul during this time, though it may stop short of lunacy or suicide, as fortunately in most cases it does, is always most intense and bitter. The wail we have heard from his heart, his indescribable look of despair, his shriek and smothered groan, strangely mingling with the flippant and, in too many instances, irreverent cant of the preacher, "*Pray on, brother: the Lord will yet have mercy on your soul,*" have never failed, while they have pierced us with inexpressible grief, to create in our mind the most painful apprehensions as to the fate of those who cherish and teach the doctrine. Of all the gross and fatal delusions of Protestants, there are few we can deem worse than this. It is a shame to the Baptist denomination—of which we can truly say, "*With all thy faults, I love thee still*"—that it should hold and teach this error. Were the sinner, in a moment of deep distress, to pray the Lord to forgive his sins, we could not find it in our heart to chide him for the deed; but we should certainly endeavor to teach him the way of the Lord more perfectly. But one thing we should never do:—teach him what the Bible does not teach him,—to expect the remission of his sins merely because he prayed for it. Why pray for a blessing which our heavenly Father has never promised to confer in this way or for this reason, but which he certainly does confer in another way and for a different reason? Where is the advantage of the prayer unless the Lord has promised to heed it?

We shall now present an extract from Mr. Jeter's book, containing a

general summary of his faith on the present subject. "Prayer," he remarks, "has been the duty of man under every dispensation of religion. The obligation to this service springs from the relation between the infinitely-merciful God, and fallen, guilty, and dependent man in a probationary state. It is an essential element in true piety. It is the very breath of spiritual life,—a life which, I have already shown, does not depend on the act of immersion, but, in the evangelical order of things, precedes that act. It implies repentance, faith, and scriptural regeneration. No man can pray acceptably to God without renouncing his sins, believing in Christ, and having a new heart. And no man was ever a proper subject for Christian baptism who had not been taught to pray sincerely and fervently."

It would be difficult to produce, even from this most confused of books, a paragraph indicative of greater confusion of mind than we here have. Some things which it contains are true; but more than half is false. But we shall be confined to a few particulars:—

1. "Prayer has been the duty of man under every dispensation of religion."

This is what is termed, in logical language, *begging the question*. The very point in dispute is, whether it *is* the duty of *man*—*i.e.* *all men*, sinners and saints—to pray under the reign of Christ. This is the very thing which we deny, and which Mr. Jeter, finding himself unable to prove, quietly assumes. It has certainly always been the duty of *men to pray*; but then comes the question, What men? "When he says *all*, this is *apettitio*, and not a meeting of the point in dispute.

2. "The obligation to this service springs from the relation between the infinitely-merciful God, and fallen, guilty, and dependent man in a probationary state."

It is unquestionably true that relation gives rise to obligation; but *what specific duties* a relation obliges us to perform, we learn, not from the relation itself, but from the laws which enact them. Relation creates obligation, but law defines it. Hence, although our relation to our heavenly Father may oblige us, as it certainly and justly does, yet in what precise respect, or to what specific duty, we learn not from the relation itself, but from the law which defines the respect or enacts the duty. The same relation which obliges us to pray would equally oblige us to believe and repent; and yet we learn that these are duties, not from



the relation, but from the precepts which enact them. In precisely the same way must we learn the duty of the sinner,— 1:*e.* not from the relation which he sustains to our heavenly Father, and which obliges him, but from the law which defines in what respect he is obliged, or to what duty. Consequently, since there is *no law* (we state it with emphasis) defining the sinner to be obliged *to pray for the remission of his sins*, we hence conclude that this is not his duty and therefore will avail him nothing.

3. "And no man was ever a proper subject for Christian baptism who had not been taught to pray sincerely and fervently."

This is merely the bald assertion of Mr. Jeter. That he has a strong persuasion of its truth we shall not deny; but had he imbibed his religious convictions from the Bible, and not from tradition, it is something he would never have uttered. It is difficult for a man who has been long steeped in error to persuade himself that his errors are not divine; hence the boldness with which Mr. Jeter asserts the truth of his.

## *Section II.*

But it is now proper to present Mr. Jeter's detente of his doctrine. "What," he inquires, "say the Scriptures on this point?—'And Jesus spake a parable unto them, [the disciples,] to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint.'" On which he comments thus:—"Christ taught that *men*—not baptized men merely, but *men*, irrespective of their character, relations, or professions—*all men*—*ought*, are under obligation, to pray."

Now, waiving all dispute as to the relevancy of this parable to the real question at issue, we shall cheerfully concede that it teaches that *men* ought to pray; but the question is, *What men*? Does it teach that *all men* ought to pray, or only the disciples, or persons named by the Savior in the conclusion he draws from the parable? The former is Mr. Jeter's position, the latter ours. The whole parable" and the conclusion are as follows:—

"And he [Christ] spake a parable unto them, [the disciples,] to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of

mine adversary: and he would not for a while. But afterwards he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest, by her continual coming, she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge *his own elect, which cry day and night unto him*, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."

Now, will this language apply to *sinners*? *Are they God's own elect, who cry day and night to him*? So to assert would be shocking. And yet clearly "*God's own elect*" are *the* persons for whose benefit the parable was spoken, and whom it teaches to pray always and not to faint. It has no reference whatever to sinners.

But the following rendering of Dr. Campbell settles the question:—"He [Christ] also showed them, [the disciples,] by a parable, that *they* ought to persist in prayer without growing weary."

Why, now, did Mr. Jeter cite only the introduction to the parable, and build his argument on it, intentionally suppressing the conclusion, which he knew to be decisive against him? It is surely a pity that a man who affects to oppose nothing but error should yet so often do so with those artifices with which dishonest men alone stoop to oppose the truth.

The next case alluded to by Mr. Jeter is that of the publican who went up to the temple to pray. But this is not a case in point. We have not denied that it was the duty of a Jew, living under the law, to pray. What we deny is that it is the duty of the ungodly, during the reign of Christ, to pray. But even the case of the publican does not determine *who*—*i.e.* whether saint or sinner—is to pray, but only that whoever prays must, if he pray acceptably, *pray with deep, heartfelt humility*. This is what the case determines,—no more.

The third case referred to is that of the thief on the cross. But this case, again, has no reference whatever to the question in dispute. Besides being a case which can never happen again, and intended to teach no general duty, it occurred at a time when baptism was obligatory on no one. We shall, therefore, dismiss it without further notice.

The fourth and last case adduced by Mr. Jeter is that of Saul of Tarsus, of which he thus speaks:—"When Saul of Tarsus was converted, the

Lord directed Ananias to go to him, for, behold, said the Lord, *he prayeth*. (Acts 9: 11.) It is clear from this Scripture, beyond a question, not only that Saul prayed before his baptism, but that his prayer was acceptable to the Lord, and that Ananias was sent to instruct and baptize him in consequence of its acceptableness; and this example of acceptable prayer has all the weight, authority, and efficacy of an explicit command to the unbaptized to pray."

We readily grant that Saul prayed, but deny that he prayed because Christ made it his duty to pray. He prayed precisely as any other Jew, in deep sorrow, would have prayed, and for no other reason.

1. That his prayer was *acceptable* to the Lord is not known. It may or it may not have been, for aught that appears in the narrative. The Lord merely stated the fact that *he prayed*, not that he *accepted* his prayer. To state a fact, as a fact, is one thing; to accept it as an act of worship, another. We must first show that the Lord has made it the *duty* of the sinner to pray, before we can infer that his prayer is acceptable. And as to Ananias being sent to instruct and baptize Saul *in consequence of the acceptableness of his prayer*, it is a sheer fiction. There exists no evidence that it is true.

The most that can be said of the case of Saul (and this much certainly can be said) is, that, when Ananias commanded him to be baptized and wash away his sins, he commanded him to do so *calling on the name of the Lord*. And so we say. Command the sinner, not to pray for the remission of his sins, (for the Lord has not enjoined it on him,) but to be baptized and wash them away calling on the name of the Lord. This form of prayer, and under these circumstances, we approve from our heart.

And are these cases all that Mr. Jeter could urge in defense of his doctrine? and does he ask us to accept it as true on no better grounds? We shall only add, we wonder that even he did not become ashamed of his feeble defense, and abandon the cause he was so ineffectually seeking to establish.

## *Chapter VII.*

### REMISSION OF SINS.

#### *Section I.*

THE subjects heretofore treated of are important certainly, but the present one is peculiarly so. Indeed, those subjects derive their value from this. Hence, no effort should be spared to understand it, nor any method be left untried which is likely to aid us in forming accurate scriptural conceptions of it. The absorbing interest of the subject, and the conflicting opinions which exist respecting it, should make us patient in the collection of such facts as seem most likely to lead to sound decisions concerning it, as well as careful in combining those facts and just in deducing from them no conclusion which they do not warrant. From the mind and from the heart every preference for any view of the subject, which it is not clearly the intention of our heavenly Father we should entertain, should be banished completely and forever. Upon this subject, at least, let the sincere love of the truth direct our thoughts.

In the discussion of this subject Mr. Jeter consumes some sixty-nine pages of his book. Perhaps we should suppose him sincere. It is not impossible he may be so. But, candidly, this part of his book affords no feeble evidence that the love of the truth dwells not in his heart. If, throughout the whole chapter, he was not struggling against the clear convictions of his conscience, he has at least shown that he was struggling against the almost overpowering light of the Truth. We stoop not to do him injustice, but we know not the book, making the slightest pretension to truth, from which can be extracted a more shameful perversion of it than is contained in this inflated performance. Throughout the whole piece he labors to make it appear that he is saying something important; hence its redundancy of silly epithets. It teems with trickery and special pleading, and perks its commonplace sayings in our face on every page. There is something about it so false, haggled, and paltry, as to leave the mind impressed with no feelings but mingled pity and disgust. Upon the ground of merit, whether consisting in defensive arguments or refutatory strength, we should never have

lifted a pen over this wretched chapter. But we shall be expected to notice it, and, accordingly, shall do so. We make it the occasion of restating our own views, which will exhaust its value to the world.

In the present chapter we shall assume that sins during the reign of Christ are remitted according to a uniform plan; or, in other words, that the conditions on which they are remitted are precisely the same in every case. *Now*, the question is, what is that plan, or what those conditions? When we assume that these conditions are the same in every case, let us be understood. We speak not of the innocent babe, the irresponsible idiot, or untaught heathen. We speak of those only who have attained to years of accountability, and to whom the redemption which is in Christ Jesus has been tendered. We are now, in other words, to discuss *the law* of remission, not the question, Are there exceptions to it? to determine the grounds on which God will forgive the responsible, not those on which he saves the irresponsible; to ascertain the plan according to which he will save the enlightened, not that according to which he saves the unenlightened.

Mr. Jeter maintains that *a person's sins are remitted the instant in which he becomes a penitent believer, and, consequently, before and without baptism.* From this we dissent.

We maintain that *the sinner, though a believer, is still required to repent and be baptized in order to the remission of his sins, and, consequently, that they are not remitted before and without baptism,*

We shall now proceed to the defense of this position; after which, we shall notice such of Mr. Jeter's objections to it as may be deemed, on any ground, worthy of notice. We shall then notice his defense of his own position.

The passage on which we base our first argument is the following:—"*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*"

That the salvation here spoken of is that primary salvation which consists in the remission of sins, we hold to be simply certain. The Savior directs the apostles to go and preach the gospel to every creature. This is the salvation which occurs first and immediately after the preaching; hence, there is no salvation which precedes this, nor any

sense in which, previous to it, the term salvation will apply. This is the first, and is so called because it consists in the remission of sin. If any one doubts this, let him attempt to form to himself the conception of some preceding salvation; let him state in what it consists, then in what this consists, if not in the remission of sins; then let him make the effort to establish by the word of God the reality of such preceding salvation, and he will not be long in discovering—if honest—his error.

Nor can it fail to strike any one that this salvation is conditional, and that the conditions are named in the passage. These conditions are not to be regarded in the light of causes, but as conditions strictly. Still, let no one suppose, because they are *conditions*, that they are not essential to whatever is made dependent on them. A condition may be as absolutely essential to whatever is dependent on it as though it were a cause in the highest sense of the word. There is this distinction:—the connection between a cause and its effect is necessary; that is, it exists in the very nature of things; but the connection between a condition and whatever depends on it is not necessary, but arbitrary. It exists at the will, or by the appointment, of him who prescribes the condition. Hence, conditions have no power to produce, or merit to procure, that which depends on them. It is in all cases conferred as a gratuity or favor. Compliance with conditions, on the ground that there is merit in it, can oblige the Savior to confer no blessing. Though he has prescribed the conditions, and they are complied with, still, the blessing conferred is a matter of grace or mercy. But, where he has *promised* to confer such blessing, it will as certainly be conferred, where the prescribed conditions are complied with, as though the conditions were absolute causes and the blessing an effect certain to follow. What is here said presents us with the true view and suggests the real value of the conditions named in the passage.

Two questions here present themselves,—both easily answered, to be sure,—the first respecting the *number* of these conditions, the second, *what* they are. The first of these questions may be deemed by some a matter of no moment. From such a view we differ. Not that we think anything of moment depends on the mere circumstance of these conditions being many or few. There exists a far higher reason than this for determining their number. That reason we shall embody in the form of a rule, thus:—*Where salvation is promised to a person, or affirmed of him, on certain named conditions, though it may depend on more conditions than those named, it can never depend, on less.* To this rule

there is not, we affirm, an exception in the Bible. We boldly challenge Mr. Jeter to produce even one, or to show that the rule in any case affirms falsely and is hence unsound. Unless he can do this, the controversy between him and us in regard to the value of baptism is at an end.

Now, that the passage in hand contains *two*, and *but two*, conditions, is obvious even to the eye. These conditions are *belief* and *baptism*. The Savior promises salvation to, or affirms it of, him who complies with these conditions. This is absolutely certain. He that *believeth* and is *baptized shall be saved*. Hence, unless the foregoing rule can be shown to be unsound, (which we predict will not be shown,) it follows that, although salvation—or, which is the same thing, remission of sins—may depend on more than *belief* and *baptism*, the two named conditions, *it can never depend on less*. And, when we say it can never depend on less, we beg that our previous limitation will be borne in mind. We speak of the *responsible* to whom the gospel is preached, and of them alone. Here now is an argument, which we believe to be true in its premises and correct in its construction, with its conclusion regularly drawn, to which we invite the special attention of Mr. Jeter. We request of him that he will come *manfully* and *fairly* forward and join issue with us over this argument; that he will show that its premises are false, its construction defective, or its conclusion not fairly drawn. This much we have a right to demand, and we do demand it in the name of truth and reason. Should he fail to comply, he confesses his incompetency to the task, and abandons the question at issue in our favor.

Nor can we admit, much as Mr. Jeter is inclined to cavil at it, that salvation depends on one of these conditions more than on the other. The very form of expression which creates the dependence makes salvation depend on the two conditions jointly and on each equally. The present, moreover, is the passage which creates this joint dependence. Hence, no passage spoken previously to it can have the least effect in weakening it, certainly none in showing that it does not exist; and, since none spoken subsequently in the least affects it, it follows that the dependence once established must be considered as established forever.

Under what circumstances, if any, the Savior will void these conditions, or in what cases, if at all, he will void one but not the other, are questions we shall leave the curious to decide.

But, for the sake of those whose convictions rest not so much on argument as on simple, transparent statements, it may be proper to somewhat amplify the passage. Of whom, then, does it say, *he shall be saved*? Clearly, of him who *believes and is baptized*. Of him who believes but is not baptized, it says nothing; neither of him who is baptized but does not believe, does it say anything. Of him alone who *believes and is baptized* does it say anything; but of him it does say *he shall be saved*. The instant he believes and is baptized, all the passage says is true of him, but not an instant before.

The passage directs the apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Out of the whole number preached to, it selects a particular class, of each of whom it says, he shall be saved, rejecting all the rest. What now makes the difference between the class selected and the class rejected? For what especial reason is a preference shown? Each one of the class selected believes and is baptized. This makes the difference. No matter how much, or how little, or what, short of this, the class rejected may do, of its salvation is not affirmed. *The class selected believes and is baptized; therefore it is saved.*

We shall now subjoin, and briefly examine, a passage which is thought to justify a very different conclusion from that now arrived at; to wit:—"*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.*" On this passage Mr. Jeter and all that class of sophists to which he belongs lay great stress. Their argument on it is briefly this:—He that believes on the Son has in him, the instant in which he does so, the principle or germ of eternal life, and is therefore to be considered forgiven. If by this it is meant that belief is the principle or germ of eternal life, we shall grant it to be correct, but still deny that he who simply believes is, on that ground alone, forgiven. But if it is meant that the principle or germ of eternal life is something else besides belief,—which implies remission,—we utterly deny that the passage teaches the doctrine.

But, without being more specific, let us grant that the passage affirms remission, or what implies it, of him who believes; and more than this it certainly does not affirm. Remission of sins, then, according to the rule previously stated, can never depend on less than belief, —the named condition,—though it may depend on more. Now, it will readily be conceded that it can never depend on less; but may it depend on more? Even Mr. Jeter concedes not only that it may depend on more, *but that it actually does,—namely, on repentance.* And, in so doing, he



concedes what proves the utter annihilation of the sole ground on which his doctrine of remission rests. For, if remission may depend on more than belief,—the only condition named in the passage,—the question arises, On how much more? When Mr. Jeter says, on repentance only, *this is an arbitrary limitation*. We cannot admit this to be the answer to the question, How much more? But, according to the rule, remission cannot depend on less than both *belief* and *baptism*,—the conditions named in the previous passage; whereas, both according to the rule and Mr. Jeter's concession, it may depend on more than belief,—the only condition named in the present passage. Now, one thing will be granted,—that the passages are reconcilable. When, then, we concede that remission of sins may depend on more than belief,—the sole condition named in the present passage,—*must we not concede at least as much as is contained within the narrowest limits of the previous passage?* If not, the passages are not reconcilable, since they teach that remission of sins depends not on one and the same set of conditions, but on two different sets; which, again, is contrary to the hypothesis that the conditions are the same in all cases. Hence, since baptism is the only condition contained within these limits which is not named in the present passage, it follows that we are bound to concede baptism to be necessary to salvation or remission.

In order to sustain Mr. Jeter's position that remission of sins depends on belief and repentance alone, one of these passages must be so construed as to imply a condition which it *does not name*; but, in order to oppose our position, the other must be so construed as either to exclude, or render null, a condition which it *does name*. How amiable must that complacency be which blinds a man to nothing so much as his folly, and forbids no blush but that which inconsistency prompts!

But, granting that he who believes is, in the instant in which he does so, saved: what follows? He that believes and is baptized shall be—what? Not saved, surely; for he is *already* saved in the exact sense in which the passage says, he *shall be* saved. Can we say of an event which is past, and which can never happen but once, that it *shall be*? Is this the language of truth? We see not the distinction between avowed infidelity and that system of religion which compels the Bible to falsify itself.

But Mr. Jeter's exposition of the passage on which our first argument is based is worthy to be repeated. It is contained in the following extract:—"The assurance that *he that believeth and is baptized shall be*

*saved* does by no means warrant the conclusion that remission of sins does not precede baptism. There is perfect accordance between this promise and the plain, literal declaration of Jesus that 'he that believeth on the Son is not condemned.' Certainly, if he that believes on the Son is not condemned, he who not only believes in the Son, but, in submission to his authority, is baptized, is not condemned."

If he that believes on the Son is not condemned, certainly he that believes and is baptized is not condemned; or, plainly, he that is not condemned is not condemned! Such is the logic of Mr. Jeter. It may comport with his sense of propriety to trifle thus with solemn things, but in the act he confesses his inability to meet the issue between him and us. No one is deceived into the belief that this is either argument or criticism, or anything more than a shallow artifice adopted to evade the force of an unanswerable position. But "the assurance that he that believes and is baptized *shall be saved* does by no means warrant the conclusion that remission of sins *does not precede* baptism." In other words, a divine *promise* that a person, on compliance with certain named conditions, *shall* receive a stipulated blessing, by no means warrants the conclusion that the reception of the blessing *does not precede the compliance!* Thus foolishly argues our opponent.

But Mr. Jeter, after all, compliments the position he so vainly seeks to refute, by the very disposition he makes of this passage. His evasive and quibbling treatment of it is a virtual acknowledgment that the argument which we, as a people, base upon it, is, by him at least, wholly unanswerable. He shrunk from a manful encounter of that argument, and in the deed confessed it to be invincible. To omit all notice of the passage he knew would be highly impolitic, and yet in treating it he touched it with a delicacy which nothing save his sense of utter incompetency could create. Had Mr. Jeter felt himself able to wrest the passage from our hands, or to show that the use we make of it is illegitimate, he is not the man to let the occasion slip. In that event nothing short of a score of pages could have exhausted his revelry or afforded vent for his exultant feelings. His array of exclamation-points would have exhausted the printer's stock on hand, his ordinals would have mounted rapidly up to *tenthly*, and the *te deum* to Orthodoxy would have been repeated in tones unusually sweet; but, alas, eleven lines scant is all the space Mr. Jeter could afford to devote to the passage!

But what of the passage "*he that believeth on the Son is not condemned*"?

1st. It is to be explained precisely as we have already explained the passage, "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

2d. Since the passage was spoken long before baptism was instituted, and without any reference to it, it can hence have no power to invalidate the design of an institution then future. But, even granting that, when the passage was spoken, remission of sins depended strictly on belief alone, it would only follow that in subsequently prescribing the conditions of remission the Savior determined that it should depend no longer on belief alone, but on belief and something more.

3d. Where two statutes exist,—a former and a latter, both on the same subject,—the latter is always held to be the law; and, if any difference exists between them, the latter stands, setting aside the former precisely to the extent of the difference. And the rule holds true of the divine no less than of the civil law. Suppose, then, "he that believeth on the Son is not condemned" to be the former statute, (which is strictly true,) and "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" to be the latter: which stands as the law of the Savior upon the subject of salvation? None can mistake the correct reply.

## ***Section II.***

The passage on which we found our second argument is the following:—"*Then Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,*"

Without some qualification it is not correct to say of one passage of Scripture that it is more important than another. But it is certainly true of some passages that they are more important than others in the decision of certain questions, their importance in such cases depending on their pertinency to the question in hand and their force in deciding it. Accordingly, in deciding the terms upon which the remission of sins is to be enjoyed, no more important passage can be adduced than the one now in hand. It speaks to the question of remission intentionally, clearly, decisively. Had we not another passage in the Bible upon the subject, we should still insist that this passage alone forever fixes the

value of baptism by the establishment of an inseparable connection between it and remission of sins. We fear not to go before the world and stake the entire issue between Mr. Jeter and us, respecting the design of baptism, upon this single passage. We emphasize its value in the present controversy and solicit for it especial attention.

Now, we affirm that this passage teaches that baptism with repentance is *for*—that is, *is necessary to*—remission of sins; that it makes remission depend on baptism in precisely the same sense in which it makes it depend on repentance; and that a connection is thus established between them of a nature so permanent that remission is in all cases (previous exceptions aside) consequent on baptism and never precedes it.

It will not be denied that the connection here contended for is possible. It is certainly competent for our heavenly Father to make remission depend on baptism in the most absolute sense. Since, then, the connection is not impossible, the question. Does it exist? is fairly open for discussion; and, since it is a question of fact, it is susceptible of proof precisely as is any other question of fact in the Bible.

But let it be determined,—1st, whether the form of speech employed to express this connection, supposing it to exist, is, in the judgment of critics, adequate to that purpose; 2d, whether it is a form of speech well established or of frequent occurrence in the New Testament. The form of speech to which we refer is the use of the Greek particle *eis* (*ise*) to express that an act or acts is performed *for*—*i.e. in order to*—some end or object; and the presence of an accusative case to express what that end or object is. But is this form of speech adequate to this purpose? That it is so, we shall consider established by the following testimonies:—

1. "*Eis*, followed by an accusative, in almost innumerable instances designates the *object* or *end* for which any thing is, or is done."—*Prof. M. Stuart*.

2. "*Eis*, the design intended and the event produced are also expressed by this preposition."—*W. Trollope*, of Pembroke College, Cambridge.

The literal, or, rather, primary, meaning of *eis*, it is proper to state, is *into*, a meaning confined chiefly to verbs of motion,—the motion being

directed *into* something or some place. But the sense of the passage now in hand forbids this meaning. For, first, if the particle be taken literally, the passage is not intelligible, or, at best, has a very uncertain meaning. Second, it belongs to a *class* of passages in which the particle signifies not *into*, but *in order to*, expressing the end or object for which something is done. Evidence for what is here said will be furnished in the course of the present argument.

But is this form of speech of frequent occurrence or well established in the New Testament? That it is so, we shall now proceed to exemplify by actual instances. Of each of those we shall quote no more than will be necessary; and, in order to indicate the exact meaning of the particle, we shall, in each case, translate it, together with a few of the words which immediately follow it. Let the reader bear in mind that what we are now at is, to show that *eis* is employed to express *the design* of an act or that *for which* it is performed.

1. And, behold, the whole city came out (*eis*) *in order to* a meeting with Jesus.
2. Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told (*eis*) *in order to* her being remembered.
3. And they took counsel and bought with them the potters' field, (*eis*) *in order to* [have] a burying-place for strangers.
4. This is my body which is given for you: this do (*eis*) *in order to* my being remembered.
5. By whom we have received grace and apostleship (*eis*) *in order to* [induce] the obedience of faith among all nations.
6. I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift (*eis*) *in order to* your being established.
7. Submit yourselves to governors as to them that are sent by the Lord (*eis*) *in order to* punish evil-doers.
8. This is my blood which is shed (*eis*) *in order to* remission of sins.
9. And John came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching

the baptism of repentance (eis) *in order to* remission of sins.

10. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted (eis) *in order to* the blotting out of your sins.

These, though only a few from a large number of passages all belonging to the same class, are quite sufficient to show that this is a common and well-established form of speech in the New Testament.

*But does the passage now in hand belong to this class? We reply, It does; and that this is shown by a circumstance which renders it absolutely certain. In order to present the most distinct view of this circumstance, and at the same time to exhibit the dependent clauses of the passage in immediate connection with one another, let us omit, first, the clause "in the name of Jesus Christ," when the passage (leaving the particle untranslated) will read thus:—Repent and be baptized, every one of you, eis remission of sins. Next, let us transpose the first two clauses of the passage, when it will stand thus:—Every one of you repent and be baptized eis remission of sins. Last, let us omit the expression "be baptized," which will neither affect the form of speech nor the sense of the particle, when we shall have, Every one of you repent eis; remission of sins; or, translating the particle, Every one of you repent (eis) *in order to* remission of sins. From this there cannot be a dissenting voice. No expression but *in order to*, or the word *for* in the sense of *in order to*, will express the meaning of the particle. Here, now, the *relation* between repentance and remission of sins is clearly seen. Remission of sins is seen to *depend on* repentance, or repentance to be *necessary to* remission. Now, this *relation* is precisely the circumstance which determines to *what class* the passage belongs,—namely, *to that class in which eis signifies "in order to,"—i. e. necessarily, and in which, consequently, it can signify nothing else.**

But does not the presence of the term "be baptized" except the passage from this class? We shall see. The audience were commanded to do two things:—*repent and be baptized*. These two things are related to a third,—remission of sins; and, whatever that relation is, it is of necessity *one*, for there is but *one* particle to express it, which, in the same place, cannot express *two* relations. Consequently, whatever relation *repentance* bears to remission of sins, *baptism* bears to it. Hence, the presence of the term "be baptized" does not except the passage from the class.

Since, therefore, the relation which repentance bears to remission of sins determines the passage to belong to that class in which *eis* signifies *in order to*, and in which it can signify nothing else, and since the presence of the term "be baptized" does not except the passage from that class, it follows that the true intent and meaning of the passage is, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, (*eis*) *in order to* remission of sins.

Finally, we conclude, from the grounds now before us, that the relation of baptism to remission of sins is such that baptism, like repentance, is necessary to remission; or that remission depends on baptism in precisely the same sense in which it depends on repentance. And, if there is either value in criticism or reliance to be placed in argument, the conclusion is indisputable.

But let us suppose this position to be denied, and that it is maintained that baptism sustains to remission the relation of a subsequent to a former act, and what follows? Clearly, that repentance likewise sustains to remission the relation of a subsequent to a former act. But this proves too much, and hence is false. But we wish to exhibit this position, together with its consequences, even to the eye, and, in order to do so, will again have recourse to the passage, from which, after transposing the clauses as before, we will first omit the word "repent," thus:—Everyone of you be baptized (*eis*) *because* your sins are remitted. This is exactly Mr. Jeter's position,—a tough one, truly. But let us grant that it is true, or, rather, that we have at last hit on the true meaning of the particle, and *that it is unalterable*. We will now replace the word "repent:"—Every one of you repent and be baptized *eis* remission of sins Is the meaning of the particle now altered? Of course not. Let us then bring out its meaning:—Every one of you repent and be baptized (*eis*) *because* your sins are remitted; or, transposing the terms, Be baptized and repent (*eis*) *because* your sins are remitted; plainly, *Repent because your sins are remitted*. How absurd! And yet, absurd as it is, this is a strict result from Mr. Jeter's method of construing the passage. This result of false criticism and false reasoning has never yet, been fairly met and honorably disposed of by even one of our opponents. Indeed, it cannot be.

It was formerly stated that if *eis* be taken literally the present passage is either not intelligible or has a very uncertain sense, and that, consequently, a different acceptance of the particle is required. This

becomes apparent by simply inserting its literal meaning, thus:— Repent and be baptized, every one of you, (eis) *into* remission of sins. What can anyone collect from the expression, repent *into* remission? If to English ears it has any meaning at all, it certainly is a most vague and uncertain one. Nor does the expression "be baptized *into* remission" yield a sense in any respect better. Even conceding (what is doubtful) that the sense of the passage might be collected from the primary meaning of the particle, still, this is not the sense in which the Holy Spirit intended it to be taken, and hence is not the sense which is most easily defended.

The present seems a proper place to sum up the result of the two preceding arguments. According, then, to the passage still in hand and the rule formerly stated, remission of sins, though it may depend on more, can never depend on less, than *repentance* and *baptism*, these being the named conditions. In our first argument it was ascertained that remission can never depend on less than *belief* and *baptism*. From the two arguments, therefore, we conclude that, although it may still depend on more, it can never depend on less, than *belief*, *repentance* and *baptism*, these being the sum of all the different conditions named.

But we shall now present Mr. Jeter's exposition, or view, of the passage on which our second argument is based. It is contained in the following extract:—" In Matt. 3: 11 we have these words:—I indeed baptize you with water *unto* (eis) repentance. Here the term cannot, without gross impropriety, be rendered *for* or *in order to*. We know that John did not baptize his disciples in order that they might repent. He demanded of them not only repentance, but fruits meet for repentance, before he admitted them to baptism. He baptized them, not that they might obtain repentance, but as a sign or acknowledgment that they had repented. (Matt. 3: 8, 9.) Now, in the very sense in which the Harbinger baptized his disciples (eis) *unto*, *for*, *into*, repentance, did Peter command his pentecostal hearers to [*let the reader note that the word 'repent' is here suppressed*] be baptized (eis)*for*, *unto*, *into*, remission of sins; that is, not to procure, but as a sign or acknowledgment of, this privilege, which God has graciously and inseparably united with repentance and faith."

1st. What is here said rests on no law of exegesis known to the literary world. It is, as a criticism, false and arbitrary. If Mr. Jeter submitted it in candor, he deserves to be pitied; if not, to be despised. He knew, or



should have known, that the passage in Matthew differs from that in Acts in the only respect which could have required the particle to be rendered alike in both. Render the particle in the former passage as in the latter, and the former passage makes nonsense; render it in the latter passage as in the former, and the latter passage makes nonsense. Thus:—I indeed baptize you with water (eis) *in order to* repentance—nonsense; but, repent and be baptized (eis) *in order to* remission of sins —sense good. Repent and be baptized (eis) *because of* remission of sins—nonsense; but, I indeed baptize you with water (eis) *because of* repentance — sense good. This is enough to satisfy any thinking person that the passages are dissimilar in the very point material to Mr. Jeter's criticism, and, consequently, that it is false. We add, that we accept the view he seems to take of the word "repent," not as correct, but merely to test the soundness of his criticism. The correct view of that term would require a different rendering of the particle. But, as this is not a matter now in hand, we give it no further notice.

2d. Why, in offering his criticism, did Mr. Jeter employ the three English particles *for*, *unto*, and *into*, which are not synonymous, to represent but *one* particle in the Greek? Did he fear to commit himself, and hence seek to render his expression as ambiguous as possible? He knew that to bring his meaning out would prove fatal to his criticism; hence he cunningly masked it under a trio of particles.

3d. But why did Mr. Jeter, when he came to apply his criticism and to develop the meaning of the passage, suppress the word "repent"? We commend him to the charity which thinks no evil. But he knew, first, that Peter commanded his audience *to be baptized for the exact object for which he commanded them to repent*; second, that he commanded them *to repent in order to remission of sins*; and, third, that unless the term "repent" were *suppressed* this fact would become apparent and falsify his criticism. Hence, he deliberately suppressed the term to conceal the weakness of his cause, and in the act betrayed the weakness of himself. Such trickery as this in the work of an infidel would he denominated base, but in the work of a *Christian* we shall mildly phrase it an error. But perhaps Mr. Jeter will have the adroitness to say that this was an unintentional omission, or the skill to transmute the printer into a scape-goat to carry off his sin. Printers certainly err at times, as do other men. But there is another class of men singularly addicted to erring, always most unintentionally it is true, but in all of whose errors there is noticeable this remarkable peculiarity,—*they*

*never err in favor of the adverse party,—accountants (for example) whose books exhibit a great many false entries, but never one against the interest of the merchant!*

### ***Section III.***

As the basis for our third argument, we subjoin the following:—"*And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord.*"

Candidly, it would seem to be useless to do more than merely quote this passage. To misunderstand it may not be impossible; but how its import is to be rendered more obvious by comment, it is difficult to see. And to attempt to defend it against the cavils of those who have resolved to reject its teaching would be an idle consumption of time. Still, the passage is too important to be merely quoted and then dismissed.

There is no diversity of opinion between M<sup>o</sup> and us in regard to the character of the act which Paul was commanded to perform. It is agreed on both sides that his baptism was real, not metaphorical. Nor can there be any doubt that the term "sins" has here its accustomed sense. These points, then, may be dismissed at once. Consequently, the only remaining question to be settled is, what is the meaning of the expression "*wash away?*" or, still more pertinently, what connection, if any, does it express between baptism and remission of sins?

That the expression is metaphorical is granted. Sins are not *washed away*: they are *remitted*. Upon this no controversy can arise. But what is there in the expression to indicate or suggest this? The term rendered *wash away* is, in the original, a strong compound verb which in its simple form denotes *to wash* merely. Here, however, it is compounded with a particle which signifies *from*, denoting the separation of one thing *from* another, and which has its force represented in the expression by the term *away*. Hence, in its compound form the verb signifies, not to wash simply, but to separate one thing from another by washing. It implies a separation, and expresses how it is effected.

First, then, it implies a separation: and this is indeed the radical conception in remission. For not only does the term remit, in its underived or Latin form, as well as in English, signify to send away,

send from, or let go, (in which evidently the conception of separation is essentially involved,) but such, also, is the exact meaning of the Greek word which remit translates. Indeed, how one thing can be washed *away* from another, without being separated from it, is not conceivable. Hence, we conclude that separation—*i.e.* of sins, or remission—is the radical conception in the expression,—the thing for which it stands.

Second: but not only does the expression imply a separation; it expresses how it is effected,—namely, by a washing. Separation is its radical, unfigurative meaning, the thing it denotes; and the metaphor consists in this:—that the separation is represented as effected by, or depending on, a washing, which, it is hardly necessary to add, consisted in being baptized.

But this view, in effect, represents Paul as being commanded to be baptized and thereby to separate himself from his sins. Nor can the view be deemed far from correct when it is remembered that *apolousai* (*apolousai*) is middle, and is hence to be construed as having this force. But how is it that a person can separate himself from his sins, when in reality they are separated from him, or remitted, as an act of mercy, *by our heavenly Father*? Clearly, by complying with the conditions, and in this way alone, on which the separation depends.

Since, therefore, the conception which lies at the very bottom of the expression in hand is separation, and since this is the radical idea in remission, we conclude that the exact and full force of the passage is, Arise, and be baptized, and thereby separate yourself from your sins,—put them away; or, (which is evidently the *sense*;) *Arise and be baptized, and your sins shall be remitted.*

But perhaps a similar expression—similar because metaphorical and of the same signification—may assist us in understanding the language of Ananias. That the expressions *blot out* and *wash away* sins have exactly the same import no scholar or critic will deny. The only distinction between them is, that what is represented by the one as being *blotted out* is represented by the other as being *washed away*. They do not represent different things, but express the same thing differently. Now, when Peter in Solomon's porch said to the people, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," metaphor aside, what did he mean? Obviously, Repent and be converted, that *your sins may be remitted*. Precisely thus, then, must we interpret the expression *wash*

*away thy sins*,—namely, Arise and be baptized, and *your sins shall be remitted*. The two expressions are identical in sense, their interpretation the same.

When we view baptism as a condition on which remission of sins depends, we have no difficulty in understanding the language of Ananias. Paul's sins were not remitted before his baptism. Hence, Ananias commanded him to be baptized and wash them away. But when he complied, then God, for Christ's sake, remitted them; and, because the remission was made dependent on the baptism, the sins remitted are represented as being washed away in it. This, to a person of candor and common sense, can hardly be said to admit of dispute.

When, on a subsequent occasion, Paul said to the Philippian jailer, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved*, Mr. Jeter has no difficulty in discovering the intimate dependence of salvation on *belief*. Nor can he deny the conditional nature of belief. He can see no more natural fitness in it to procure remission than he can in the act of being baptized. And yet when Ananias says to Paul, *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins*, Mr. Jeter can see no dependence of remission on *baptism*, can see in it nothing which renders it necessary, even as a condition, to remission. But an adverse light to Mr. Jeter's creed has a singular effect on his vision.

But let us suppose his theory of remission to be correct. Paul's sins, then, were remitted the instant in which he believed, and consequently before his baptism. At that time, therefore, his sins had no existence whatever. They were simply a nonentity. Indeed, he had *no sins*,—hence, none to be remitted, none to be washed away, none to be disposed of in any sense. And yet Ananias, the Lord's special messenger, is represented as saying to him, *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins!* Did Ananias, we ask in the name of truth, command Paul to be baptized and wash away his *sins* when absolutely he had not one sin remaining? If the theory of Mr. Jeter is correct, it casts over the deed of Ananias a painful suspicion; "but, if the language of Ananias is true, it brands the theory of Mr. Jeter as a human invention and false.

Mr. Jeter has a "*symbolic theory of baptism*," by which, in a very few words, he disposes of the present passage, which will be noticed in another place.

## *Section IV.*

The passage on which we make our fourth argument is the following:—"According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

In regard to the expression *renewing of the Holy Spirit*, there exists, we believe, little or no diversity of opinion.

With one consent, it and the expression *begotten by the Spirit* are allowed to be identical in sense. If they are not, the distinction between them may be said to be this,—that *begotten by the Spirit* expresses the fact simply, while the other is rather descriptive of it, it being a *renewing*.

Of this effect or renewing the Holy Spirit is the author; hence, it is called a renewing *of*—*i.e.* *effected by*—the Spirit. It commences in the enlightenment of the mind, and results in a deep and earnest faith in Jesus Christ. It comprehends all between the entrance of the first ray of heavenly light into the mind of the sinner and his first overt act of obedience. It is a renewing of the sinner in the inner man, the effects of which become apparent in his outward conduct; and, without it, no act which he can perform can be truly styled an act of obedience. Its importance cannot be too weightily emphasized, nor can too much zeal be shown in urging the Truth upon the sinner's attention through which it is effected.

But what is the meaning of the expression *washing of regeneration*? That it refers to baptism, or is another and descriptive name for it, is almost universally conceded. This much, then, we might fairly take for granted. But this is not the question. The question is not, what does it refer to, but what is its *meaning*? On this point nothing is allowed to be taken for granted; but why? Is it because the expression has an uncertain meaning? This is not the reason. Is it because its structure is so involved as to hide its meaning? Not at all. Or is it an unusual form of speech, which refuses to yield its sense by the common laws of language? By no means. *It contains a meaning which is not acceptable.* This is the reason.

The only difficulty in the expression seems to lie in deciding whether the *washing* named in it belongs to regeneration as an integral part of it, and therefore as essential to it, or whether it is not a washing

*subsequent* to regeneration, and hence no part of it,—in a word, the washing of a person already and completely regenerated. Those who adopt the latter view separate the expression, making the term *washing* refer to one thing, and the term *regeneration* to another; while those who adopt the former view, regard the whole expression as only a complex name for baptism, and hence as inseparable; and this view we think to be unquestionably the correct-one. For, if the expression be separated, to what, first, refers the word *washing*? To baptism, respond the talent and learning of Christendom. From this there is hardly a dissenting voice. But to what, second, refers the term *regeneration*? To this absolutely no answer can be given. It cannot refer to being *begotten by the Spirit*, for this is expressed by the clause *renewing of the Holy Spirit*: it cannot refer to baptism, for this is represented by the word *washing*. Indeed, according to this view, it is simply an unmeaning redundancy with neither sense in it nor reason for its presence.

But a little attention to the structure of the expression, especially to its sense, will assure us not only that it is not separable, but that the term "regeneration" is a mere epithet, serving to qualify the preceding word "washing." And this is according to a well-known principle in the Greek language. Nouns in the genitive case (is the principle) are often used in the sense of adjectives to express the qualities of both persons and things. This is clearly the principle according to which the expression is to be resolved or cleared of difficulty. The following instances are subjoined as illustrative of the principle.

1. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of *unbelief*. Here the word "*unbelief*" is, in the original, in the genitive, and is correctly represented in English by an adjective, thus:—an evil *unbelieving* heart. And so of the remaining instances.

*And I say to you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness:—the unrighteous mammon.*

2. For this cause God gave them up to *vile* affections: —affections of *vileness*, in the Greek.

3. When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of *desolation*:—the *desolating* abomination.

4. And the lord commended the *unjust* steward:—in the original, steward of *injustice*.

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer: —in the Greek, a hearer of forgetfulness.*

5. Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and *carnal* ordinances:—in the original, ordinances *of flesh*.

6. The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of *disobedience*,—the *disobedient* children.

But these instances are enough. Now, precisely as the genitive is used in these instances is it used in the expression now in hand, thus:—According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration—or, converting the term "regeneration" into an adjective, a *regenerating* washing—and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

By the phrase "regenerating washing" is not meant a washing which implants any holy principle in the heart, or which, in any other way, morally affects the inner man; but merely a washing which completes the new birth. The epithet "regenerating" is objectionable, we grant, for the reason that it is liable to be misconstrued. It is here, however, employed merely to illustrate the principle and for the want of a better term.

That the conclusion just arrived at is correct may be inferred, further, from the *ambiguity* of the expression "washing of regeneration." This may be invariably set down as decisive against the correctness of a rendering. Not that a rendering can be inferred to be correct from its not being ambiguous; but, from its being ambiguous, its incorrectness may be certainly inferred. That the expression is ambiguous is evident from the uncertain import of the particle—*of*—which it contains. First, it may mean a washing effected by regeneration; or, second, a washing belonging to it as part of it; or, third, a washing performed on it,—*i. e.* the subjects of it. The particle *of* has all these acceptations in the following expressions:—The mark of a pen,—something effected by it; the point of a pen,— something belonging to it as part of it; the mending of a pen,—an act performed on it. This is enough to show that the expression is ambiguous. Hence, we infer the preceding to be the true meaning of the passage.

But to what is reference made in the word "*saved*"? or to what does it properly apply? First, it is clear that it refers to a salvation then past,

then completed. Hence, the apostle could speak of it as a matter of history. Second, that it is the salvation which occurred when Paul ceased to be "foolish, disobedient, deceived, &c." Third, that it is the salvation which depends on the *renewing* of the Holy Spirit, and is the first which happens after it. But what is this but the remission of sins? This, then, we conclude, is the reference in the word, or the thing to which it applies. But this salvation depended not alone on the renewing of the Holy Spirit. For he *saved us by the washing of regeneration*, one thing, *and the renewing of the Holy Spirit*, another. Hence, the washing of regeneration—or baptism—is essential to the remission of sins, or is one of the conditions on which it depends.

But it is proper now to present Mr. Jeter's exposition of the passage, which is contained in the following paragraph:—"The phrase 'washing of regeneration' is found nowhere in the Scriptures but in the text cited from the epistle to Titus. It is generally—not universally—supposed to signify baptism. That it does, cannot be proved. My own opinion is, that it is exegetical of the following words:—'renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Regeneration is called a washing, because it is a moral cleansing; and this washing is precisely equivalent to the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The text may be rendered 'the washing of regeneration, *even (kai)* the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' The Greek particle *kai* is frequently rendered '*even*' in the New Testament: Matt. 8: 27; 25: 29; Mark 6: 12, &c. But, so far as this argument is concerned, I will admit that the words 'washing of regeneration' mean baptism."

In this paragraph occur some two or three matters on which we shall dwell for a moment.

First. "It [the phrase, washing of regeneration] is generally—not universally—supposed to signify baptism. That it does, cannot be proved. My own opinion is, that it is exegetical of the following words:—renewing of the Holy Ghost."

The "general" belief, then, according to Mr. Jeter, is, that the *washing of regeneration* signifies baptism. This, in other words, is the belief of the learned world,—the orthodox belief; and yet he dissents from it. But why? Had this belief and ours differed, would he have dissented? There is something singularly perverse displayed by him in treating this and some other passages. When the orthodox belief and ours differ, he grows clamorous and urgent for the authority of orthodoxy; but when



the orthodox belief and ours agree, then he dissents from both. "We have piped to you and you have not danced, we have mourned and you have not lamented," is a severe description of hypocritical folly.

Second. "Regeneration is called a washing, because it is a moral cleansing; and this washing is precisely equivalent to the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

But regeneration is not called a washing in this or any other passage in the Bible. The assertion is not true. It is merely "*my opinion.*" The passage neither asserts nor implies that regeneration is a washing. On the contrary, it represents the washing as being a washing *of* regeneration, and hence not regeneration itself. It is a washing *of*—*i.e. belonging to*—regeneration as part of it,—something essential to it, without which it is incomplete; but it is not regeneration itself. The part of a thing is not the whole.

Third. "The text may be rendered, the washing of regeneration *even* (*kai*) the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Certainly it *may be* so rendered; and so, *falsely*, may every other passage in the Bible. But it cannot be correctly rendered and be rendered thus. Mr. Jeter's criticism is utterly faulty. It rests on no principle whatever. But what is the meaning of the particle *mi*, on which it turns? Literally and primarily it means *and*. This is universally conceded. Now, in translating, the most sacred rule in use is this:—to translate a word uniformly by its literal and current meaning, unless the sense forbids it. But does not the sense of the present passage forbid the literal and current meaning of *kai*. If so, why did Mr. Jeter not point it out? He knew positively that it did not, and yet he rendered the particle *even*, and in so doing violated the most sacred rule known to the science of interpretation.

True, the particle is rendered *even* in the passages to which he refers; but on what ground? Simply on the ground that *the sense forbids the literal and current meaning*, and hence requires a different one. This becomes evidently merely inserting the literal meaning, thus:—"What manner of man is this, that *and* the winds and the sea obey him?" Matt. 8: 27. Clearly, this is wrong. The sense forbids the use of *and*, and hence requires another word. By inserting *even* we see what word it is, thus:—"What manner of man is this, that *even* the winds and the sea obey him?" and so of the other passages referred to. But we cannot

produce a jar like the preceding by the use of *and* in the passage from Titus. We can read, in harmony with the great rule just stated, "He saved us by the washing of regeneration *and* renewing of the Holy Spirit," and the reading is smooth, the sense good, and the mind profoundly convinced that we read correctly. The very circumstance which requires the particle to be rendered *even* in the passages referred to is wanting in the present one; hence to substitute *even* for *and* in it is wholly unauthorized.

### **Section V.**

Our fifth argument is suggested by the following:— "*Wherein* [the ark] *few, that is eight, souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us,—not the putting away of the filth of the flesh? but the answer of a good conscience towards God.*"

This passage (so exceedingly obscure in the form here cited) is susceptible of a much more intelligible rendering, thus:—*In which* (ark) *a few, that is eight, souls were saved by water, which also now saves us in its antitype, baptism, which consists not in putting away fleshly impurity, but in seeking a good conscience in God.* This rendering is according to the best text of the Greek New Testament extant. A few additional remarks, however, explanatory of it, will not be thought amiss.

According to the common text, antitype is the subject of the verb saves. This, however, is now regarded as incorrect; and the true subject is held to be the relative pronoun *o* 1: Such is the case in the text now before us. With this relative antitype is in apposition, and baptism with antitype; and, although a somewhat unusual apposition, yet it is attended with no ambiguity. The relative is in the neuter gender, agreeing with water as its antecedent,—the only noun in the sentence with which it can agree.

The terms rendered *putting away* and *seeking* are both in the nominative case, and, since no verb is expressed, of course to or after one understood. That this is the verb is, hardly admits of doubt. It is not necessary, however, in order to express the *sense* of the passage, to be so slavishly literal as to indicate these circumstances. Hence, in our rendering, we have not done so.

But on what ground have we substituted the word *seeking* for the word *answer*? We reply, first, there is a necessity for it; for the passage, as it now stands in the common version, conveys no intelligible meaning whatever; indeed, it is simply a jumble of words without meaning. Second, it agrees better with the sense of the original term. The verb from which the original term is derived occurs in the Greek New Testament fifty-nine times; in fifty-five of which it is rendered either by the word *ask* or by some of its forms; in two, demanded; in one, desired; and in one, questioned; and in every single case should have been rendered either by *ask* or by some of its forms. "*To seek after*" is given as one of the meanings of the verb, in the best lexicon to the Greek Testament we have yet seen. Hence, the noun, retaining substantially the same sense, must mean either an asking or a seeking; and, since seeking gives a clearer and better sense, we therefore decide in its favor. Asking is applicable rather to persons than to things; hence it is better to say of baptism it is a *seeking* than an *asking*.

But why substitute *in* for *towards*? We answer, Because it gives a clearer sense and accords better with the usage of the Greek particle. That it gives a clearer sense is obvious at a glance, and hence needs no further illustration. The particle in the Greek is *eis*, which seems to have the sense of (*en*) *in*: not that *eis* is used for *en*; but there appears to be the idea of previous motion combined with a state of rest, in which case *eis* has the force of *en*. The following is an instance of this usage:—"And, leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt (*eis*) *in* Capernaum." In such cases the previous motion is, by the best critics, supposed to have suggested the use of *eis*; the real force of the passage being, And, leaving Nazareth, he came (*eis*) *into* Capernaum, and dwelt there. Again, the passage itself in hand supplies an instance of the usage. Noah *entered into* (previous motion) the ark; hence he is represented as having been saved (*eis*) *in* it. In the same manner, the previous use of baptism seems to have suggested the use of *eis*, which we have rendered *in* instead of *towards*. We are baptized (*eis*) *into* Christ; hence *in* him we are all said to be one. We are baptized (*eis*) *into* the name of the Father; hence we dwell (*en*) *in* him. Consequently, since it is by baptism that we enter *into* him, it would seem highly proper to represent it as consisting in seeking a good conscience (*eis*) *in* him, especially when we have full authority for such a use of the particle.

The preceding view of the passage has at least this advantage,—that it

is "perfectly intelligible, as well as consistent with what we know to be taught elsewhere; and although it is here rather suggested than insisted on, still, we believe it possessed of a high degree of certainty.

But all this has little to do with our argument. The ground on which it rests is asserted in the common version,—namely, "*Baptism doth also now save us.*" From this it is clear that there *is* a sense in which baptism saves us, or a salvation which depends on or is effected in and by baptism. The question is, What is it, or in what does it consist? First, it cannot be salvation in its most comprehensive sense; for it is limited to baptism. Second, it is not, be it what it may, a partial, but a complete, salvation; for baptism "*now saves us.*" Hence, previously to baptism it does not exist; subsequently it does: but without baptism it cannot exist. What, now, is the safest and fairest method of ascertaining in what it consists, or, since the passage asserts *the fact* that baptism *saves us*, how shall we determine in what sense?

Clearly, the best method of obtaining a correct reply to this question is, to ascertain in what sense the word *saved* is used when used in connection with baptism, or what is therein accomplished to which the word is applicable. Happily, this is an easy task:—"He that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be *saved*. " "*Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.*" Jointly, these passages determine, definitely and conclusively, that the word "*saved,*" when used in connection with baptism, is used to denote remission of sins; and whatever meaning it certainly has in these passages it certainly has in every other precisely similar passage, and, consequently, in the present one. Hence, baptism doth also *now save us*, because therein our *sins are remitted*. Of the truth of this, little doubt can remain, when it is remembered that the same apostle on whose language we are now commenting commanded an audience to repent and be baptized *in order to remission of sins*. Hence, it may with great propriety be represented that baptism consists in seeking a good conscience in God, because it consists in seeking a conscience freed from sin.

Of this passage, Mr. Jeter, with characteristic shyness when a passage disfavors him, says, "The text above cited from Peter is one of the most obscure in the apostolic epistles. Commentators have been greatly perplexed and divided concerning its import. As it is not necessary for my purpose, I shall not attempt to expound it."

1. The passage, we grant, is not wholly free from difficulty; but that it is one of the *most obscure* in the apostolic epistles, we cannot admit.

That it should perplex *some men* is not at all to be wondered at. Passages perplex from various causes, some, the more, the less obscure they are.' The present passage asserts that *baptism* now *saves* us; hence, how perplexing!

2. Certainly it was not necessary to Mr. Jeter's purpose that he should attempt to "expound" the passage; but it extremely concerned his purpose that he should let it alone. He has shown his cunning once.

But, as containing a comment generally on the import of the term salvation, but especially, it would seem, on its import, as used in connection with baptism, in the passages from Titus and 1 Peter, we shall extract from Mr. Jeter the following paragraphs:—

"Do these Scriptures [from Titus and 1 Peter] teach that the sins of a believer are remitted in the act of baptism? This is the question under discussion. God *saves* us by *the washing of regeneration (baptism)* and renewing of the Holy Ghost. *Baptism* doth also now *save* us."

"The term *salvation* is of comprehensive import. It denotes the whole process by which we are delivered from sin and fitted for the enjoyment of heaven. It includes a thorough moral renovation, the remission of sins, adoption into the family of God, and perseverance unto death in the way of holiness. It is commenced in repentance, carried forward in sanctification, and will be completed by the resurrection from the dead. The sincere believer in Christ, even before baptism, is in a state of salvation, but his salvation is incomplete. Now, God saves us by all the means which he employs to instruct, impress, purify, and preserve us. The written word, the ministry of the word, meditation, prayer, baptism, the Lord's Supper, afflictions, are all means by which God saves us. We are said to be saved by faith, saved by hope, to save ourselves and others: 1 Tim. 4: 10; to work out our own salvation, Phil. 2: 12. Salvation is promised to him that endureth to the end: Matt. 16: 22. Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him: Heb. 5:9. And we are saved by baptism. All these things have an influence in securing our salvation,—are among the means by which God, in his mercy, carries on and completes the work. Baptism, which symbolizes the regenerating influence of the Spirit of

God, and is a public and solemn acknowledgment of the remission of sins through faith in Christ, is designed and fitted to separate us from the world, impress on us our obligations to Christ, and aid us in the pathway to heaven. It certainly, however, does not follow from this position that the remission of sins is suspended on the act of baptism. This conclusion is drawn from the assumption that whatever promotes our salvation is essential to the forgiveness of sins,—an assumption manifestly false. He that endureth to the end shall be saved; but is the believer unpardoned until he finishes his race? or is he not pardoned at the commencement of it? Christians are exhorted to *work out their own salvation*; but are not their sins forgiven before the completion of the work? We are saved by baptism, not as a condition of obtaining the remission of sins, but as one of the means which God employs to perfect the work of our salvation,—a means not indispensable to that result."

The sole design of this truthless paragraph is to so mystify the word salvation as to render the passages from Titus and Peter in which it occurs of no avail to us. The design of its author was not to develop the meaning of a term, but to confuse and perplex it,—not to render a great point clear, but to exclude a distasteful light. Having transcribed the entire paragraph, we may now request the attention of the reader more particularly to the following points:—

1. "The term *salvation* is of comprehensive import." *Sometimes* it is, but it has not always the same extent of signification. The assertion of Mr. Jeter is true in the same sense in which the testimony of a witness is true who, being sworn to testify to the whole truth, suppresses a part of it. When Paul says the gospel is the power of God to *salvation* to every one that believes, he employs the term in its most comprehensive sense, and certainly in a sense much more comprehensive than when he says, the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to us who *are saved* it is the power of God. In the latter case, it is limited to and its import exhausted by an event then past, a process then completed; but not so in the former case.
2. "It" (the term *salvation*) "denotes the whole process by which we are delivered from sin and fitted for the enjoyment of heaven." Does it, indeed, always? It is charitable to hope that Mr. Jeter believed the assertion when he made it, but it is very certain that no one else who bestows upon it a moment's reflection will believe it. "Baptism doth

also now *save* us." Does the term here denote the whole process by which we are delivered from sin and fitted for heaven?

3. "It" (salvation) "is commenced in repentance, carried forward in sanctification, and will be completed by the resurrection from the dead." *Salvation is commenced in repentance!* No one believes it who understands either the operations of his own mind or the teachings of Christianity. An ignorance in the ranks of his brethren, profound enough to accept as true this and like sentiments, is what has contributed, in no small degree, to give to Mr. Jeter's book the brief inglorious notoriety it has attained. Nothing more clearly shows how much both he and they have yet to learn than the tenacity with which they cling to, and the frequency with which they reaffirm, this absurd dogma. It crops out in his book on more occasions than one. Attention is here called to it, not for the purpose of discussing it, but merely for the sake of giving to it an emphatic denial.

4. "Now, God saves us by all the means which he employs to instruct, impress, purify, and preserve us. The written word, the ministry of the word, meditation, prayer, baptism, the Lord's Supper, afflictions, are all means by which God saves us. We are said to be saved by faith,—saved by hope,—to save ourselves and others, —to work out our own salvation. Salvation is promised to him that endureth to the end. Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him. And we are saved by baptism."

Now, granting that salvation is a *process* to the completion of which faith, hope, baptism, &c. (the items severally enumerated by Mr. Jeter) are necessary, does it still follow that each of these items has not its own specific value in the accomplishment of the general result,—a function to perform not performable by any other?—in a word, that baptism is not for the remission of sins? To assume that it does so follow, is to assume the very point in dispute. We grant that salvation is a process, but still maintain that the exact sense in which baptism is necessary to its completion is, that it is *for* the remission of sins. It is no reply to this position to say that faith and hope are also necessary to salvation. It is freely granted that they are, but not that they are necessary *in the same sense in which baptism is necessary*. To assume that such is the case, is just as erroneous as to assume that, since life is a process to which eating, sleeping, and drinking are necessary, a man lives by sleeping in the same sense in which he lives by eating. And

yet, if there is any argument in the preceding extract, this is what it amounts to.

5. "Baptism, which symbolizes the regenerating influence of the Spirit of God, and is a public and solemn acknowledgment of the remission of sins through faith in Christ, is designed and fitted to separate us from the world, impress on us our obligations to Christ, and aid us in the pathway to heaven."

That baptism symbolizes the regenerating influence of the Spirit of God, is a naked, unsupported assertion. It is wholly false. No evidence exists in the word of God Of its truth. Had such been the case, Mr. Jeter, whose fondness for a pedantic array of texts displays itself even on the most trivial occasions, would have saved us the pains of seeking that evidence. It may be an article in his creed, but it is not a doctrine of the

Bible; and, while fidelity to the former may impel Mm to assert it, fidelity to the latter should impel all honest men to reject it. Nor can less than this be said of the position that baptism is "a public and solemn acknowledgment of the remission of sins through faith in Christ." Three things, and only three, can be said in its defense. It is asserted by Mr. Jeter; it is a tradition, of his church; it is not, in so many words, pronounced by the Bible to be a lie. On these grounds alone it rests.

6. "It certainly, however, does not follow from this position that the remission of sins is suspended on the act of baptism. This conclusion is drawn from the assumption that whatever promotes our salvation is essential to the forgiveness of sins,—an assumption manifestly false."

The assumption is not only manifestly false: it is manifestly foolish, and manifestly the assumption of nobody but Mr. Jeter. This is not the only occasion on which he has constructed a foolish hypothesis for us, and then sought to make the impression that some doctrine which we entertain is deducible from no other ground. It would have been far more honorable in him had he confined himself to positions which we do entertain, and not have feigned for us those which we do not entertain, merely for the sake of deducing from them some conclusion which, after all, renders no one half as ridiculous as himself.



## Section VI.

The passage on which we base our sixth argument is this:—"Verily, verily, I say to you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

This passage we regard as presenting us with a complete view of the new birth,—as informing us in what it consists, or what facts constitute it. And, whenever the subject of regeneration is spoken of, we wish it to be distinctly understood that the present passage contains our conception of it. In declaring that "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," the Savior merely propounds the doctrine of the new birth generally, in a statement of the necessity of it. But in the present passage he states definitively in what the new birth consists, reiterating the necessity of it. The former passage propounds the doctrine, the latter passage explains it. That to be born again is to be born of water and of the Spirit, does not admit of argument.

The passage was intended, when spoken, to have, not a present, but a prospective, bearing. It applied at the instant when the Messiah's kingdom commenced, and ever afterwards, but not a moment before.

We cannot agree that the importance of the passage can be exaggerated. When the Savior shuts the kingdom of heaven against all, except on certain conditions, those conditions become of transcendent interest. Neither flight of fancy nor fertility of imagination can invest them with an unreal importance.

The passage naturally distributes itself into two clauses, each clause comprehending an integral part of the new birth, and the two parts exhausting the subject. These clauses are, respectively, *born of water*, *born of the Spirit*. The meaning of these determined, all must agree that the question, In what does the new birth consist? is settled. As the latter clause has already been explained, only the other remains to be examined. What, then, is the meaning of the expression *born of water*?

In order to decide this question, we must decide, first, the previous question,—In what acceptation must we take the language of the expression?—a literal or a figurative?

This question can be discussed best, perhaps, by resolving the expression into the two simple verbal members which compose it,—to

wit: *born of* and *water*. To some this division may seem unnecessarily minute. We do not think it so. By thus breaking down the expression into these simple members its parts come singly into view, by which means each can be subjected to a severer, because a more distinct, examination.

Upon the acceptation in which we are to take the member *born of*, no diversity of opinion exists. It is universally agreed to be metaphorical. But what its meaning is, is supposed to depend on the acceptation in which the term "water" is taken. Are we then to take this term in its literal and ordinary acceptation, or in a figurative sense? In the latter sense, is responded by many. Let us now examine the hypothesis implied in this response, which, being concisely expressed in the form of a proposition, is this:—*The term "water" is figurative*. This is a tough proposition. It has led its advocates into great extremes. No effort has ever yet been made to defend it, upon which the stain of iniquity does not rest. Conceived at first in a spirit of unbelief, it has since been advocated only in crime. The uncorrupted heart spews it out as a vile conception, and the scorn of reason lies on it. Not until the mind has been robbed of its independence by the tyranny of some human creed, or stricken by some fatal paralysis, will it suffer the noisome thing to lodge within it. But it is proper to subject it to a still further examination.

Where the literal and current acceptation of a term happen to be the same, as is the case with the term "water," the presumption is, that such a term, wherever found, is used in that acceptation. And such, moreover, is the force of this presumption, that nothing can set it aside except the most stringent necessity. Either such must be the nature of the case about which the term is employed, that it cannot be taken literally, or some most obvious circumstance must attend it, indicating that it is employed metaphorically; otherwise it has certainly, in every single instance where used, its current signification.

But is not the nature of the new birth such—the case about which the term "water" is employed—as to forbid the term being taken literally? If not, then it has its literal sense. Now, we must, of course, before we can infer any thing from the nature of the case, know what the case itself is. Here, now, at the very outset, we encounter a serious difficulty. For, Until the import of the term "water" is settled, the meaning of the new birth remains doubtful. This term forms one of a compact

assemblage employed by the Savior to describe the new birth. Until, therefore, we settle its meaning, we remain ignorant, to the full extent of its individual signification, of what it serves jointly to describe. Hence, from the nature of that thing so described we can infer nothing to set aside the literal acceptation of the term. In the literal acceptation, therefore, it stands.

But is not the term attended by some obvious circumstance indicating that it is employed metaphorically? That it is not is evident even to the eye. Clearly, it was not the Savior's intention, in mentioning water, to institute a comparison between it and anything else. Had such been the case, he would have preceded the term by some such particle as like, so, or as. He does not say, Except a man be born *like*, born so, or born as; but, Except a man be born *of* water. Hence, comparison is out of the question.

Nor can the term be employed metaphorically. Of words thus used (and metaphor is limited to single words unattended by any sign of comparison) there are two classes:—1st, such as, on being pronounced, suggest their meaning instantly; 2d, those in which the meaning, even after they are pronounced, remains hid until it is brought out by some added explanation. The following are instances of these two classes:—1st. "Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." Here the word "fox" is applied to Herod metaphorically; yet, on hearing it pronounced, we as instantly collect its meaning as had the Savior said, Go and tell that *cunning monarch*, &c. 2d. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." In this instance the word "temple" is employed metaphorically, and its meaning is completely hid until it is added, "but he spake of the temple of his body." Now, to which of these classes (and there are no others) does the term "water" belong? Not to the former; for, on being pronounced, it suggests, on the hypothesis that it is metaphorical, absolutely no meaning at all; nor yet to the latter, for no explanatory clause is added. Hence, the term is not metaphorical.

But, again, a term is employed metaphorically when applied to a thing which resembles, in one or more respects, what it usually denotes, and because it is desired to suggest that resemblance. Now, to what, supposing the term "water" to be metaphorical, is it applied, in the passage in hand, which resembles the material element we call water.

The human mind can conceive of nothing. Yet there must be *something*; for, even granting the term to be metaphorical, it still has some *real meaning*; but what it is will never be determined.

From all the preceding premises, therefore, we conclude that the acceptation in which the term "water" is to be taken is its literal and current acceptation; that it denotes, in other words, simply the material element we call water.

It is proper to note, however, that the clause "born of water" contains a metaphorical term,—to wit, *born*. Literally, this term, as is well known, denotes the event which brings man into the present life. But here it is employed not literally. It is employed metaphorically; and, hence, must represent an event which, in one or more respects, resembles its literal signification. What, now, is that event? or, without separating the terms, what signifies the expression *born of water*?

1. If there is any confidence to be reposed in the talent and learning of all ages since Christ, this question *is* settled:—*the expression signifies baptism* But it is proper to have before us the precise point to which this testimony is adduced. It is not adduced to settle the *value* or meaning of baptism. It is adduced merely to show *what thing* the expression "born of water" denotes, not what the value or significance of that thing is. These are different questions; hence, testimony fully adequate to settle the one might be very inadequate to settle the other.

2. Water is never present in any act connected with the kingdom of Christ except one. But in that one it is always present, and from it never absent. That act is baptism. But in the expression "'born of water," *water is present*. Hence, it must be in baptism, since water can be present in nothing else. Baptism, therefore, must be the thing denoted by the expression *born of water*.

3. The term *born* is metaphorical; yet it must signify something which, in one or more respects, resembles its literal meaning. This something, moreover, must be connected with water. Now, in all Christianity, what is there which, even in one respect, bears the slightest resemblance to the literal meaning of "born," except baptism? In baptism *we come out of the water*, and that to live a *new life*. Is not this being born of water?

4. If the expression "born of water" does not signify baptism, then its meaning is wholly indeterminate. Hence, no living man can say

whether he is or is not in the kingdom of God. But the Savior never intended to leave man in doubt on so vital a question. We hence infer that the expression is determinate, and signifies baptism.

It is now easy to complete our argument. There are but two kingdoms on earth in which men exist,—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. These two kingdoms are separated from each other by one and the same line. All on this side are saints, all on that sinners; and all are on that side until born of water and of the Spirit: then, all thus born are on this. We can no more conceive of a saint in the kingdom of Satan than we can of a sinner in the kingdom of God; nor can we any more conceive of a saint without his being born of water and of the Spirit than we can of a sinner who is. The instant in which a man's sins are forgiven he passes from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God. But he passes from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God the instant in which he is born of water and of the Spirit. Hence in that instant his sins are forgiven.

But let us suppose a part of this to be denied. Let us suppose it to be maintained that a man, though born of water and of the Spirit, might still be in the kingdom of Satan. What is true of one man in this respect might certainly be true of all. Hence all men, though born again, might still be in the kingdom and under the dominion of Satan. Clearly, this is false.

From all of which we conclude that a man's sins are remitted the instant in which he is born of water and of the Spirit, or, inverting the expressions, the instant in which, being begotten by the Spirit, he is immersed.

Finally, in order to establish, if possible, still more conclusively the identity of baptism and being born of water, and also to exhibit the perfect agreement between what the Savior said to Nicodemus and what he taught in the great commission, we submit the following:—He that believes and is baptized is saved: he is therefore in the kingdom of God. Hence, he that believes and is baptized is born of water and of the Spirit; for otherwise he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. The only way to escape the force of this, is to deny either that he that believes and is baptized is saved, or that he is therefore in the kingdom of God.

It is now proper to examine the main points in what Mr. Jeter has to say on the present passage. Indeed, we regret that the length of his

disquisition forbids our transcribing it entire; for by a sensible and candid man it needs only to be seen to be despised. Even from Mr. Jeter it would be difficult to produce anything more corrupt. Take, for example, the first paragraph:—

"The reformers quote this text [John 3: 5] with great confidence in support of their views. Let us candidly examine it. The phrase *gennhah ez udatos*—born of water—does not elsewhere occur in the Scriptures. Its import must be learned from the language itself, the context, and the current teaching of revelation. What is its meaning? Mr. Campbell maintains that it means baptism, and founds his argument for baptismal remission wholly on this interpretation. Concerning this opinion I have several remarks to offer."

Did Mr. Jeter not know, when he said Mr. Campbell maintains that the phrase, born of water, means baptism, and *founds his argument for baptismal remission wholly on this interpretation*, that he was deliberately uttering in the face of the world what is not true? Whatever he may have known or thought, it matters not: he has done so. It is painful to have to speak thus of him; but we are not at liberty to suppress the truth in order to avoid saying that he has not spoken it. On page 261 of his book he says, "I will now endeavor briefly to show that the passages of Scripture principally relied on by Mr. Campbell for the support of his doctrine utterly fail of establishing it." Now, let the reader note that Mr. Jeter is going to examine *the passages principally relied on* by Mr. Campbell to support his doctrine. He then quotes the following:—1. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. 2. Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 3. Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say to thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 4. Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. Of which Mr. Jeter says, "This text is adduced by Mr. Campbell with great confidence in support of his cherished theory, that sins are remitted in the very act of immersion." 5. According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. 6. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here, now, are no less than six passages on which, it seems, Mr. Campbell

*principally relies* in support of his "cherished theory;" and yet of the single clause *born of water*, Mr. Jeter says, Mr. Campbell maintains that it means baptism, and founds his argument for baptismal remission *wholly* on this interpretation!

Of the "several remarks" offered by Mr. Jeter on Mr. Campbell's interpretation of the clause "born of water," we shall transcribe the chief parts of only two or three.

First. "It [the position that the phrase "born of water" means baptism] makes the answer of Christ to Nicodemus *false*. The *kingdom of God* must mean the church of Christ on earth, or the state of heavenly glory. This position, it is presumed, will not be called in question. Now, it is not true that none enter into the visible church on earth who are not born of the Spirit. In the purest churches there are members who are not regenerated. In the apostolic churches there were some who were not properly of them. 'They went out from us,' said John; 'but they were not of us; for, if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.'"

Now, we profoundly believe the expression "kingdom of God," in John 3: 5, means the church of Christ on earth,—taking the term "church" in its largest sense; and yet we assert, that into that kingdom no man, woman, or child ever yet entered unless born of water and of the Spirit. When the Savior says of a thing it *cannot* be, we pronounce it impossible. And, as to "the purest churches" containing members who are not regenerated,—which may be the case,—it is easily explained on the simple principle, that even the purest churches are not wholly pure. But this is not the point in dispute. The Savior does not say, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into *a* church partly pure and partly not." He is speaking not of *a* church, nor of churches, but of *the* church. A man may be in *a* church, and yet not in *the* church; but in *the* church he cannot be unless born of water and of the Spirit. Nor can he be even in *a* church of *Christ*, except in *appearance only*, unless thus born. Indeed, the very language of John, when, in speaking of certain members, he says, "They went out from us, *but they were not of us*," clearly implies that they had been members *not in reality* but in appearance only.

Second. "Nor is it true, that none enter into the heavenly glory who are not baptized. From this conclusion, though it follows legitimately from his doctrine, Mr. Campbell himself recoils. The Savior's declaration,

then, as interpreted by the reformers and many others, is not true."

Mr. Campbell does not believe that the expression "kingdom of God," in John 3: 5, means the kingdom of ultimate glory; neither does he teach that none will be saved except those who enter the church on earth. On the contrary, he teaches that the following classes will be saved without entering it:—1. All infants. 2. All idiots. 3. Many heathens. 4. Many honest people who are kept in profound ignorance of their duty by the teaching of such men as Mr. Jeter. From what doctrine, then, of Mr. Campbell, does the "conclusion" from which he "recoils" follow so legitimately? The reply is, none. All Mr. Campbell teaches is, that none who are responsible, and to whom the gospel is preached, can, unless born of water and of the Spirit, enter into the church on earth; and that those who, under these circumstances, refuse to enter it, have no assurance that they shall ever enter the kingdom above.

Third. "There is but one method of evading this conclusion. It is sometimes affirmed, for the purpose of avoiding it, that a man cannot *constitutionally* enter into the kingdom of God except he is baptized, and born of the Spirit."

By whom it is so affirmed we know not; but it is not by Mr. Campbell and his brethren. They affirm that a man, unless born of water and of the Spirit, cannot, *in any sense*, enter into the kingdom of God. They neither say *constitutionally* nor *unconstitutionally*; but, *unqualifiedly*, that he cannot enter at all unless thus born.

Fourth. "If the phrase "born of water" means *immersion*, the passage in which it is found *yields no support to the doctrine of baptismal remission*. If the kingdom of God means, as Mr. Campbell understands it to mean, the reign of Messiah on earth,—the visible church,—then the text proves merely that a man cannot enter the church without baptism, and leaves the subject of the remission of sins wholly untouched."

But what is the passage in which the phrase is found? It is this:—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now, this text certainly teaches, not, simply, that a man cannot enter into the kingdom of God without being born of water, but that he cannot enter into it without being born of both water and the Spirit. But does it leave the subject of the remission



of sins wholly untouched? When a man is born of water and of the Spirit, are his sins still unremitted?

Fifth. "So far as this passage teaches us, a man may be pardoned before, or after, as well as in, the act of immersion. It has no relevancy to the subject under discussion."

This is most unfair. So far as the passage teaches a man cannot enter into the kingdom of God without being born of both *water* and *the Spirit*. Now, may he be pardoned *before* being *thus* born, or *after*, as well as *when* thus born? This is the question. If he may be pardoned before being thus born, we ask, how long before—one year or ten—and on what conditions? or, if he may be pardoned after, how long after—ten years or fifty—and on what conditions? Will Mr. Jeter favor the world with an answer to these questions? Mr. Campbell argues that a man is pardoned the instant in which he is born of water and the Spirit,—the instant in which these two events are jointly consummated, and consequently—since to be born of water is to be immersed—the instant in which he is begotten by the Spirit and immersed. And, unless a man can be pardoned before or after the joint happening of these two events, his argument is overwhelming. True, being begotten by the Spirit is precedent to being immersed, but then the value of each depends on the two as *concurrent*, and not as separate, events.

Sixth. "But what does the text under discussion mean? It is not incumbent on me to show its meaning. I have proved that it does not refer to baptism, and that, if it does, it fails to support the doctrine of baptismal remission: this is sufficient for my purpose. I will, however, perform a work of supererogation. I will quote on this subject a passage from a sermon of the Rev. James Saurin, formerly pastor of the French church at the Hague, celebrated alike for his learning, eloquence, and piety. The phrase, says this incomparable writer, to be born of water and of the Spirit, is a Hebraical phraseology, *importing to be born of spiritual water.*"

Whatever Mr. Saurin may have been in learning or in eloquence is a matter of no consequence here. He has offered an insult, in the instance in hand, to the word of God, which no term but shocking will describe. Judging from the present specimen, he stands alone in this respect, the gentlemen excepted who cite and indorse his language. To be born of water and of the Spirit imports to be born of *spiritual water!* Now, let

not the reader conclude from this that Mr. Jeter is impious enough to ridicule the passage or daring enough to assert outright that it is a lie. Such is not the case.

All he means is, that, when the Savior says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," *neither water nor Spirit is meant*. True, the *Savior* says *water* and *Spirit*; but then *Mr. Jeter* knows perfectly that he meant neither. Hence, all the passage means is, Except a man be born of *spiritual water*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God!

## ***Section VII.***

Our seventh argument is suggested by the following:—"Christ also loved the church, and gave' himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

That the phrase *by the word* is, in construing the passage, to be joined with the verb sanctify, is so obviously true that nothing need be urged in its defense,—the proper collocation of the words being, Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that, having cleansed it by the washing of water, he might sanctify it by the word. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." The following rendering of the passage we extract from a recent work exhibiting in many respects the neatest taste and most accurate scholarship:—"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that, having purified it by the water wherein it is washed, he might hallow it by the indwelling of the word of God."

But what signifies the expression *cleansed it by the washing of water*? This question can be best answered, perhaps, by determining separately the signification of the clauses *washing of water*, and *cleansed*.

First, then, what signifies the clause *washing of water*? If, as was urged in the preceding section, there is any confidence to be reposed in the learning and discrimination of the first class of critics, and that, too, in a case in which no interested motives can be presumed to have swayed their judgment, this question is settled. The clause signifies *baptism*. True, Mr. Jeter feigns to think its import doubtful, but why, none can mistake. He is pledged to oppose, right or wrong, whatever favors us; hence, the more irrefragable our proof, the more vehement his denial.

That the term *water*, or, more correctly, *the water*, as it is in the original, has here its hard Saxon meaning, is not a disputable point. Joining to this the word washing, or, better still, *the washing*, thereby making *the washing of or in the water*, or the water in which the church (the members of it) has been washed, can anyone whose soul is not steeped in error be in doubt as to what the apostle means?

There is but one rite under Christ to which water is absolutely in all cases essential, and to which all who: re members of his church have submitted. That rite is baptism. Here, however, water is present,—water in which the church is washed; hence, since the church comes in contact with water in no rite but baptism, baptism is, or, rather, of necessity must be, what the apostle refers to when he says *the washing of water*.

Second. But what signifies the term *cleansed*? We can readily understand why the expression washing of water should have suggested it; but the question is, What does it mean?—a question which we think it not difficult to answer. In the original, both the verb and its derivatives signify to cleanse or purify generally. But the present is not a general but a special cleansing, —a cleansing limited to *persons*, and effected *in the washing of water*. Now, in what special sense are persons cleansed in the washing of water? Clearly, they are not therein cleansed from the leprosy; neither therein is any error corrected or vice reformed. *They are therein cleansed from sin*. Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*. Repent, and be baptized, *in order to the remission of sins*. These passages determine most conclusively in what sense a person is. cleansed in the washing of water. Three times certainly, in the New Testament, is the term *cleansing*, either as a verb or noun, employed to express a cleansing from sin. A cleansing from sin, then, is, we conclude, precisely what is effected in the washing of water.

Of the much that Mr. Jeter has to say on this passage, but little is worthy of notice, and even that little, of but slight notice. In speaking of the word *cleansed*, (p. 270,) he says, "In one place, the word probably refers to the removal of guilt from the conscience by the blood of Christ. (Heb. 9: 14.) In every other passage where it relates to the redemption of man it denotes a moral renovation."

The object of this assertion is to create the impression that the word

*cleansed* is nowhere in the New Testament employed to signify a cleansing from sin, and, consequently, not in the passage in hand. But the following passages, in one of which the word occurs in the form of a noun, in the other in that of a verb, (a circumstance not in the least affecting its application,) will show how much confidence is to be reposed in the assertion,— "The blood of Jesus Christ his son *cleanseth* us from all *sin*." I John 1: 7. "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was *purged* from his old *sins*." 2 Pet. 1: 9. "If," says Mr. Jeter, "the phrase washing of water means baptism, then the text teaches, not the remission of sins in the act of baptism, but rather baptismal regeneration and sanctification. At any rate, it will be the business of those who contend for that meaning of the phrase to free the passage from a consequence which is exceedingly plausible, if it is not legitimate."

First. The "text" does not ascribe sanctification to the washing of water. It is the cleansing alone which is effected in the water. Sanctification is ascribed to the word. And this repels a plebeian allusion of Mr. Jeter to something which he with characteristic grace styles "*the Bethany dialect*."

Second. But suppose the passage does teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration: what then? Shall the passage be rejected because it teaches the doctrine? Or shall we attempt to make it teach another doctrine? If the passage teaches the doctrine, then the doctrine is true. Or does Mr. Jeter set himself up to be judge of what the divine word ought to teach, and then, because it does not teach to his liking, compel it to teach differently? This is not the first instance in which this implication has escaped his pen. He too clearly reveals, on more occasions than one, that the ground of his faith is not the Bible, but the suggestions of his corrupt imagination. His creed contains but a single article:—Where the Bible and his whims agree, the Bible is true: where the Bible and his whims differ, the Bible is false.

But the "text" does not teach—even conceding that the phrase washing of water signifies baptism, as we profoundly believe it does—what Mr. Jeter affects to think so "exceedingly plausible." Even a child can be made to understand that whatever is ascribed to the washing of water or baptism is ascribed to it merely as a condition, on compliance with which, whatever is so ascribed is conferred by our heavenly Father as a matter of grace or mercy. A position so obvious as this needs no further

comment.

### ***Section VIII.***

Our eighth argument is derived from the following:— "*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise.*"

Certainly, the expression "*in Christ*" is not to be taken literally; and yet there can exist little or no doubt as to its import or the relation which it expresses. Now, we maintain that the very fact that we enter into Christ by baptism, or into the relation which this language expresses, involves the connection between baptism and the remission of sins for which we contend.

That the instant in which a person becomes an "*heir according to promise,*" he becomes a Christian, or is forgiven, can hardly be supposed to admit of argument. To suppose a person an "*heir*" and yet not forgiven, or forgiven and yet not an heir, involves a contradiction, if not in words, at least in fact. But when do we become heirs? The reply is, when we become Abraham's children; not according to the flesh certainly, but when we are constituted such. But when do we become Abraham's children? Certainly when we become Christ's; and we become Christ's when *in Mm*, and not before. For, says the apostle, you are all one *in Christ*, and, if Christ's, (which you are if in him,) then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise.

Now, what persons alone are in Christ? As many, is the reply, as have been baptized into Christ, *and not one more*. If, now, none *out* of Christ are forgiven, (and let him who so affirms prove it,) and if all *in* him are, then the very act of entering *into* him makes the difference between the forgiven and the unforgiven person. If there is any value in implication, this is conclusive.

Again, out of Christ alone do the distinctions exist between Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female. Now, not for a moment can it be doubted that the instant in which these distinctions cease to exist is the instant in which we are forgiven. These are worldly distinctions, and cease to exist only when we cease to be of the world, which

happens the instant in which we are forgiven. Now, that the instant in which these distinctions cease to exist is the instant in which we are baptized into Christ, is positively certain. Hence, hardly less certain is it that in that instant we are forgiven.

But doubtless Mr. Jeter will say, are we not all the children of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus? Certainly we are all the children of God by faith in Christ; for it is by faith that we are led to be baptized into him when alone we become his; and it will hardly be said that we become the children of God before we become Christ's.

### ***Section IX.***

As the basis of our ninth and last argument we cite the following:—"*And he said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*"

This passage is cited, not so much to make it the basis of an argument, as to show that it warrants no conclusion at variance with the conclusions now arrived at from the preceding arguments.

The question then to be considered is, Does the passage teach that salvation depends on faith alone? Mr. Jeter is constrained to admit that it does not. He concedes that it implies a condition which it does not name; but on what ground does he maintain that it implies but one? One, certainly, is all it names; but if it implies others, why not ten as well as one? To assert that it implies but one is the language of arbitrariness and not of criticism. Mr. Jeter concedes that it implies repentance; but why? If on the ground that repentance is taught elsewhere, so is baptism; but if on the ground that faith and repentance are necessarily united, we deny the position, and assert that they are necessarily not united. If belief cannot exist without repentance, why does the word of God ever enjoin repentance? In that case belief alone need be enjoined, since, if a man believe, he must of necessity repent. The very fact that the word of God enjoins belief in one command, repentance in a second, and baptism in a third, proves that belief and repentance are as distinct as belief and baptism. Poor, indeed, are his conceptions, as well of the workings of his own mind as of the teachings of Holy Writ, who affirms to the contrary. The truth is, that belief not only precedes repentance, but is the very ground of it. From

repentance we may certainly infer belief, but from belief not certainly repentance.

Mr. Jeter's position that belief implies repentance, but not baptism, rests on no foundation worthy of the name. It is an insult to reason no less than to revelation. Had it suited his purpose to exclude repentance, he would have done so with as little compunction as he excludes baptism.

The obvious reason why the apostle's injunction included only belief is, that the jailer, being ignorant of his duty, needed to be taught the whole of it, which, in all cases, begins with belief. But, being properly taught in this respect, every other duty would be, by a person in his state of mind, promptly complied with as soon as pointed out. We are not, however, to conclude, because baptism was not commanded, that it was therefore not necessary, but simply that it was not necessary to command it; or, rather, that when commanding the first duty it was not necessary, in the same sentence, to command every other. Neither are we to conclude, because the design of baptism is not in every instance stated, that it is not therefore necessary to the remission of sins. The Apostle Peter, in Solomon's porch, did not command his audience to *believe*, not because belief is not necessary, but simply because, under the circumstances, it was not necessary to command it. Neither did Paul, when enjoining upon the jailer his first duty, command him either to repent or be baptized in order to the remission of sins; but how illogical to infer" that therefore neither is necessary to that end!

Whatever an apostle, in any case, commanded for salvation or remission, became by that very fact essential to salvation in every case; and, although it should never have been mentioned again as necessary, its value would not have been in the least affected by that circumstance. One command, never repeated a second time, is enough to establish forever a duty, and a single expression, never again reiterated, enough to define and fix its value; but a thousand omissions to mention these subsequently are insufficient to affect either. The Apostle Peter commanded an audience to repent and be baptized *in order to the remission of sins*, which alone, to say nothing of other corroborative passages, forever fixed the value of both repentance and baptism, and, though neither had ever been mentioned again, this would still be their value.

But, waiving all more exact inquiries, upon what broad basis can we

place the salvation of the jailer which, as a precedent, will leave no doubt in any mind? The facts in his case are these:—he heard the Truth, believed it, and was baptized the same hour of the night. The law in his case was this:—*he that believes and is baptized shall be saved*. Upon this view of the case not a doubt can possibly arise. Why, then, stop short of absolute certainty where the interests of eternity are at stake?

But here we must close our arguments upon the connection between baptism and the remission of sins. And, while we regret that our limits will not allow us to extend them further, we confess we are not sensible, everything considered, that such extension is demanded. Some matters which have been omitted altogether might, perhaps, have been introduced and dwelt upon with profit; and yet even these might have added length to the present chapter without deepening the conviction it is intended to produce. A few points touched upon might have been treated, and with advantage, as we conceive, with greater fullness of detail; but even here we have felt that something of importance might, with propriety, be sacrificed to brevity. "Upon the whole, the subject is submitted to the considerate judgment of the reader, in the firm persuasion that if examined in the light of the preceding passages and arguments based thereon, as well as in the light of his own calm reason, he cannot fail to arrive at the conclusion that the position for which we contend enjoys the clear and certain sanction of Holy Writ.



## Chapter VIII.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE PRECEDING DOCTRINE OF REMISSION CONSIDERED.

#### *Section I.*

OBJECTION FIRST. "Baptism, according to the 'ancient gospel,' is not the figure or formal acknowledgment of the remission of sins, but the indispensable, and, it would seem, the only, condition of obtaining it.

Is this scheme of forgiveness scriptural? Is *baptism*, like repentance and faith, an *indispensable condition of the remission of sins*? Let the reader notice, —*first*, that this scheme of remission flatly contradicts plain and numerous Scripture testimonies. These testimonies, or specimens of them, I have already adduced. Now, it is a sound and admitted principle of Biblical interpretation, that the Scriptures should be construed in harmony with themselves. The obscure must be elucidated by the clear, and the figurative by the literal. It is impossible for words to express more clearly, pointedly, and emphatically, than do the Scriptures, that God has suspended the forgiveness of sins on the exercise of faith. Take, for an illustration, the words of Christ to the Jewish Rabbi: —' He that believeth on him (the Son) *is not condemned*,' and is, consequently, pardoned or justified. *Now*, baptism for the remission of sins—a phrase susceptible of different interpretations—must be construed in harmony with this unambiguous language of the great Teacher. And the remark is true of all the texts under consideration."

In this extract, which contains Mr. Jeter's leading and certainly his most serious objection, occur several things which we think it best to single out and notice separately.

1. "Baptism is the indispensable, *and, it would seem, the only, condition* of obtaining remission."

Candidly, we are not seldom at a loss to know how to characterize some of Mr. Jeter's assertions without transcending the limits which courtesy imposes. To call this assertion a downright falsehood would

be too harsh, and to call it the truth would be a falsehood. Nameless, then, we let it stand. Mr. Campbell maintains (and Mr. Jeter is perfectly acquainted with the fact) that there are three conditions on which remission of sins depends,—to wit: belief, repentance, and baptism. Wherefore, then, the preceding false and slanderous assertion?

2. "Is baptism, like repentance and faith, an indispensable condition of the remission of sins?"

In what cases the Savior will dispense with a condition to which he has required all to whom the gospel is preached to submit, is a question the decision of which we are not bold enough to undertake. The Savior himself has not decided it, neither have the apostles. We should tremble to enter eternity in the gloom of their silence.

3. "This scheme of remission flatly contradicts plain and numerous Scripture testimonies."

This is a grave charge, and, if true, certainly the "scheme" against which it is urged merits universal condemnation. Has Mr. Jeter sustained the charge? We shall now examine what he alleges in its defense.

a) "It is impossible for words to express more clearly, pointedly, and emphatically, than do the Scriptures, that God has suspended the forgiveness of sins on the exercise of faith."

Substituting, for the ridiculous expression "the exercise of faith," simply *faith*, and every word of this is granted. But it is certainly possible for words to express most clearly a very different proposition,—one which the Scriptures do not express, and which is the sole ground on which Mr. Jeter's objection rests,—namely, that God has suspended the forgiveness of sins on faith *alone*. This proposition the Scriptures do not express, for the simple reason that they express nothing which is false; and this is the only proposition which our "scheme" of remission contradicts.

b) "The phrase 'baptism for the remission of sins' is susceptible of different interpretations."

If the phrase, as it stands in Mr. Jeter's assertion, were the whole of the phrase in the word of God, then, *perhaps*, there might be some

foundation for his remark. But such is not the case. The phrase in the word of God is not baptism for the remission of sins, but *repentance and* baptism for the remission of sins. There are no two interpretations of which this phrase is susceptible. Whatever repentance is for, baptism is for; and whatever baptism is for, repentance is for. Consequently, since repentance is for—that is, is necessary to—the remission of sins, remission of sins is what baptism is for, or the thing to which it is necessary. Why, now, we ask, unless to conceal this, was Mr. Jeter guilty of the preceding mutilation of a portion of God's holy word? Alas for a man when he can be moved to render such service as this at the shrine of Orthodoxy, for no higher end than merely to be considered a votary there!

c) "He that believeth on him (the Son) *is not condemned*, and is, consequently, pardoned or justified."

The passage from which this conclusion *does not follow* was spoken by the Savior previously to his prescribing the grounds on which justification, during his reign, is to be enjoyed, and, hence, previously to baptism. Consequently, to infer from it that we are now justified by faith alone without baptism is to confound times which are wholly distinct, and to render null an existing institution by a passage which applied before it had an existence.

But in all such passages faith is to be viewed not so much as a condition of remission (though it certainly is one) as the great principle of action which leads to compliance with all our other duties; and, where it is the faith of a sinner, as standing for—because it leads to compliance with them—the other conditions of remission, precisely as one of a class frequently represents the whole class. There is no passage in the word of God which represents faith as the sole condition of remission during Christ's reign, and hence none which our "scheme" of remission contradicts.

d) But, says Mr. Jeter, the phrase, "baptism for the remission of sins, must be construed in harmony with the unambiguous language of the great Teacher,—He that believeth on him (the Son) is not condemned.

Unquestionably the phrase must be so construed. How now shall this be done? The language of the great Teacher does not say, neither does it imply, that faith is the sole condition of remission; while the language

of the Apostle Peter does say that repentance and baptism are for remission. Hence, since the language of the Apostle expressly includes repentance and baptism as for, or necessary to, remission, and since the language of the Savior does not even by implication exclude them, as not necessary, therefore, since not thus excluded, they must be considered as intended by the Savior to be understood as necessary. Certainly, what one passage does not exclude as not necessary to remission another may include as necessary without involving a contradiction. Thus, therefore, baptism for the remission of sins can be made to harmonize strictly with the language of the great Teacher.

But Mr. Jeter "maintains, in common with evangelical Christians of every name, that the sinner passes from a state of condemnation to a state of justification at the precise moment when he truly *believes* in Christ, or, which is the same thing, *receives* him as a Deliverer."

At the precise moment, then, when a person believes, his sins are remitted. In other words, faith is the sole condition of remission, all others being excluded. But faith precedes and is distinct from both repentance and baptism; hence they are both excluded as conditions of remission. And yet the Apostle Peter says that repentance and baptism are *for*—*i.e. necessary to*—remission. Here now is an irreconcilable contradiction, and that too between Mr. Jeter's own "scheme" of remission and the word of God. Will he, therefore, relieve his own "scheme" of the odium of contradiction before he again attempts to charge it upon the "scheme" of Mr. Campbell?

## ***Section II.***

OBJECTION SECOND. "That the Scriptures manifestly make a distinction between the relation which faith and that which baptism bears to the remission of sins, we read in the Scriptures; and many such passages may be found:—'He that believeth not shall be damned.' 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.' Now, we do not read, nor is it intimated, nor is any thing recorded from which it may be fairly inferred, that if a man is not immersed he is condemned,—doomed to perish and to be anathematized at the coming of our Lord. But if Christ has made, as Mr. Campbell contends, repentance, faith, and immersion *equally necessary* to forgiveness, how can it be accounted for that neither Christ nor his apostles ever uttered a

malediction against the unbaptized."

1. "The Scriptures manifestly make a distinction between the relation which faith and that which baptism bears to the remission of sins."

They manifestly make this distinction,—that faith is the first and baptism the last of the three conditions on which remission depends; but they do not make this distinction,—that faith is essential, but baptism not, to remission.

2. "But if Christ has made, as Mr. Campbell contends, repentance, faith, and immersion *equally necessary* to forgiveness, how can it be accounted for that neither Christ nor his apostles ever uttered a malediction against the unbaptized?"

Mr. Jeter's question amounts to this:—that one thing which the Bible does say is to be rejected because it does not say another. The Bible does say that repentance and baptism are for the remission of sins, and it does not maledict the unbaptized: what then? Shall we reject the thing which it does say because it does not say the other? How foolish some men can make themselves appear! But, if he who "keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point is guilty of all," will Mr. Jeter inform the world whether the word of God must anathematize the unbaptized before his negligence can be considered a crime for which he may be condemned?

### ***Section III.***

OBJECTION THIRD. "There are consequences involved in the theory of baptismal remission which may well make us hesitate to adopt it." The first of which, in Mr. Jeter's own language, is the following:—"That the salvation of men, even of penitent believers, is in the hands of the authorized baptizers. Popish priests have claimed the power of remitting sins; but Protestants have ever considered the claim an arrogant assumption. I freely concede that those who maintain the sentiment which I am opposing may not have examined its bearing and consequences. I speak not of them, but of their doctrine. It is, however, as clear as that two and two make four, that the remission of the believer's sins, according to this theory, depends, not on the will of God, but on the will of men. He cannot baptize himself; and, if the

qualified administrator does not choose, under no matter what plea, to baptize (or regenerate) him, he must either be pardoned without immersion, be saved without pardon, or be lost. No sophistry can evade this consequence."

The Apostle Paul propounds the following questions:— "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" The reply to which is, they cannot believe in him of whom they have not heard, neither can they hear without a preacher. And yet the Savior says, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

Now, there are consequences involved in this theory of salvation which may well make us hesitate to adopt it. We mention the following:—That the salvation of men, even of the best-intentioned, is in the hands of the authorized preachers. Popish priests have claimed the power of remitting sins; but Protestants have ever considered the claim an arrogant assumption. We freely concede that the Savior and the apostles may not have examined the bearing and consequences of the sentiment they have published to the world. We speak not of them, but of their doctrine. It is, however, as clear as that two and two make four, that the salvation of the sinner, according to this theory, depends, not on the will of God, but on the will of men. He cannot save himself, he cannot be saved without belief, and he cannot believe without a preacher. Now, if the qualified preacher does not choose, under no matter what plea, to preach to him, (save him,) he must either be saved without belief, believe without hearing, or be lost. No sophistry can evade this consequence.

But doubtless Mr. Jeter will say the cases are not parallel, since, when the Savior says, he that believeth not shall be damned, he alludes to a person only to whom the gospel has been preached, who consequently has it in his power to believe and yet will not. Exactly so: and so we say that baptism is obligatory upon those only to whom the gospel is preached and who have the power to obey it. Even the laws of God bind no one, when deprived against his will of the power of action; and, to whatever extent the salvation of a sinner depends on the will of another, to that extent precisely, if the other fails to act, the sinner is free.

## *Section IV*

OBJECTION FOURTH. "That salvation may be entirely beyond the reach of the most humble, obedient, and faithful servants of Christ. Let me suppose a case. Fidelis, after a careful examination of the subject, became a convert to Christianity. Deeply conscious of his guilt and unworthiness, he cordially embraced Christ, as his prophet, priest, and king, consecrating to him, in the unfeigned purpose of his heart, his body, soul, and spirit Enraptured with the Savior's charms, he rejoiced in his word and worship from day to day. Having settled his views on the subject of baptism, he designed at the earliest opportunity to take on him the badge of discipleship in baptism. But, by order of Tyrannus, an inveterate enemy of Christ, he was arrested and cast into prison for his ardent zeal and dauntless testimony in the Redeemer's cause. To him baptism is now impossible. And poor Fidelis cannot enjoy the remission of his sins."

1. "That salvation may be entirely beyond the reach of the most humble, obedient, and faithful servants of Christ."

When Mr. Jeter produces a *most obedient* and *faithful* servant of Christ—a *convert to Christianity*—who has never been baptized, then his *petitio principii* will be entitled to notice] but until then it is passed with the contempt which it merits.

2. But what of the case of "poor Fidelis"? First. The case is purely imaginary, and is hence no ground of argument except with a man who prefers the vagaries of his fancy to the word of God.

Second. But did "poor Fidelis" enjoy, while evincing his "ardent zeal" and bearing his "dauntless testimony" and rejoicing in the Savior's worship "from day to day," no opportunity to be baptized. Bather let it be said of him that, by neglecting his duty during this time, he proved himself a disobedient wretch, who, if cast into prison, deserved to suffer the whole consequences of his folly. Clearly, he was not taught by a man who practiced after the apostle's example, else the same hour of the night in which he heard the Truth and believed it he would have been baptized: what then would have signified his imprisonment?

Third. Or did he neglect his duty because taught, as Mr. Jeter teaches, that baptism is not essential to remission? If so, let him be condemned for preferring the counsels of wicked men to the counsels of God, and

hold the presumptuous preacher responsible for the lie which led him astray. But, if he had not the opportunity to be baptized, then it was not his duty. It is no more a man's duty to be baptized, where baptism is impossible, than it is to believe where belief is impossible. It is not what men cannot do, but what they can do and have the opportunity of doing, that God requires at their hands. Where there is no ability there is no responsibility.

## *Section V.*

OBJECTION FIFTH. That the enlightened and tender conscience can never be fully satisfied. Questions as to the validity and sin-cleansing efficacy of baptism must arise. I can easily know when I have passed from Virginia into Ohio, because they are separated by water. I may certainly know that I have been immersed; but whether I have received valid, regenerating baptism, is another matter. Does its efficacy depend on the qualifications of the administrator?—on his piety?—on his baptism?—on his church connection?—on his ordination?—on his intention? Is apostolical succession, either in the line of baptism or of ordination, essential to its validity? Is its sin-pardoning virtue connected with the views entertained of it by the subject?

1. "The enlightened and tender conscience can never be fully satisfied"?

Certainly not. The man of enlightened and tender conscience should "seek religion" a year or two, groan a few weeks over the "mourners' bench," see a few sights, hear a few sounds, obtain a hope, doubt a little, be "catechized," relate a "Christian experience," and then, "at the earliest opportunity," "take on him the badge of discipleship in baptism." A child can understand how this can satisfy the enlightened and tender conscience.

2. "Questions as to the validity and sin-cleansing efficacy of baptism must arise,"—to wit: "Does its efficacy depend on the qualifications of the administrator?—on his piety?—on his baptism?—on his church connection?" &c.

To an upright man, who has been made acquainted with what the Savior and the apostles teach upon the subject of baptism, these questions never occur. These are questions of a corrupt mind, which,



having exerted all its powers to distort and pervert the truth, is seeking by dishonest quibbles to justify its deeds before the world; or of a mind bewildered and confused by the teachings of men who hide the truth from honest hearts and seek to supply its place with myths and dreams. No honest and intelligent man, who has been immersed in the fear of God and in obedience to the authority of Christ, ever yet doubted either the validity Or value to him of his baptism.

## *Section VI.*

OBJECTION SIXTH. "That repentance the most sincere and lasting, faith the most vigorous, love the most self-sacrificing, the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, the atoning blood of Christ, his intercession before the throne, and the abounding grace of the Father, are all, without baptism, unavailing for salvation. I do not affirm that all who adopt the sentiment which I am combating push it to this extent, but I fearlessly aver that this is its plain, legitimate, and inevitable consequence. This gives to baptism an unscriptural prominence in the Christian system. It must tend, as the kindred dogma of transubstantiation has tended among Papists, to engender superstition. At first the water of baptism is deemed of equal moment in the scheme of salvation with the cleansing blood of the Redeemer; and by degrees the sign will come to be substituted for the thing signified,—the ceremonial to be preferred to the vital. What has occurred may occur again. Strange as it may appear, the error which I have been exposing is the root of infant baptism."

Of this extract the first part, so false and so confused, merely revives the old *ad captandum* question, Can a man be saved without baptism? We shall, how over, put the question to Mr. Jeter in a far more pertinent form:—*Are sins remitted without one of the conditions on which remission depends?* If to this he replies that the very question in debate is whether baptism *is* one of these conditions, then we ask why he did not confine himself to this question, which, if we collect his meaning, he has not done? If baptism jointly with faith and repentance is for the remission of sins, as we unwaveringly believe it is, then we still steadily affirm that no unbaptized person has in this life the assurance that his sins are remitted. And if our heavenly Father, notwithstanding the negligence of such persons, will still condescend to save them ultimately, we have only to say, we know not the passage in the Bible

which teaches it.

But it seems that our view of the design of baptism is the "root of infant baptism." Our view of the design of baptism is concisely this:—that baptism when preceded by faith and repentance, but never without them, and then only as a joint condition with them, is for the remission of sins. How, now, can this view lead to the baptism of infants, who can neither believe nor repent, and who have no sins to be remitted? Did Mr. Jeter not know the assertion to be false when he made it? Infant baptism had its origin in a very different cause. It originated in the supposed imputability of Adam's first sin. When men in their speculations had, as they supposed, discovered that Adam's first sin is not only imputable, but actually is imputed, to all his posterity, they at once started the inquiry, What provision, since infants are sinners, and since none can be saved in their sins, has the gospel made for their salvation? In this extremity, fancying that baptism alone is for the remission of sins, (which is utterly false,) they baptized their infants. But this, beyond all doubt, was a perversion of the ordinance. Hence, the practice had its origin in a misconception of the nature of sin, and consisted then, as now, in *an abuse* of baptism. This is the true account of the origin of the practice.

But, even allowing it to be true, (which is not the case,) that infant baptism, which is in every possible view of it a scandalous abuse of the ordinance, sprang from the same view of the design of baptism which we entertain, would this be any argument against that design? Is the abuse of a thing in the midst of the nineteenth century deemed a good argument against it? It may not be unworthy of Mr. Jeter to think so; but schoolchildren nowadays know better. And yet, if there is any point in what he says on the origin of infant baptism, this is the amount of it.

## *Section VII.*

OBJECTION SEVENTH. "What will be the condition of a believer dying without baptism? I have already shown conclusively that the believer is born of God,— that he possesses everlasting life,—and that he is a child of God; and yet, agreeably to the theory under consideration, he is unpardoned, unjustified, unsaved. In this condition he may, unquestionably, die. What would become of him?"

1. If Mr. Jeter has proved what he says he has proved, of course

the man will be saved. But this he has not done. That he is vain enough to believe he has done it, we are fully prepared to admit. But with us his egotistic assertions have long since assumed a value something less than demonstrative.

2. But why is the man supposed to be unbaptized? His being so must result either from uncriminal ignorance, or from some restraint which renders it unavoidable, or it is willful. In the first case, his baptism is morally impossible, and hence not a duty; in the second, it is physically impossible, and therefore none; and in the third case, it is willful, and hence a sin. A simpleton can now answer Mr. Jeter's question.

Last of all, "Mr. Campbell recoils from the consequences of his own doctrine." Mr. Campbell's doctrine is precisely that of the Apostle Peter; but from no consequence legitimately deducible from it has he ever yet recoiled. Mr. Jeter's assertion is wholly false. That not only Mr. Campbell, but all common sense and common honesty, might recoil from many consequences feigned by Mr. Jeter to be deducible from this doctrine, full well we can believe. A man who can tax all his powers of cunning, who blushes at no trick, is ashamed of no quibble, to make an apostle falsify the mind of the Spirit which moved him to speak, is capable of deducing from what that apostle says any consequence, no matter how monstrous, if it should chance to serve a turn. From such consequences it would be Mr. Campbell's shame not to shrink.

# Chapter IX.

## MR. JETER'S DOCTRINE OF REMISSION EXAMINED.

### *Section I.*

WE shall now proceed to examine Mr. Jeter's defense of his own doctrine of remission of sins. He develops his views on this subject in some ten propositions,—four leading, and six subordinate. Several of these may be disposed of with little more than a single remark. Whether he was ashamed to say more of his doctrine, or whether he knew it to be inherently so weak that the less is said of it the better, we shall not say; but certainly he has treated it with a brevity not a little significant. True, there is not one of these propositions which, if we understand them, is not *in itself* true; and yet, in the sense in which it was intended they should be understood, there is not one truth in the ten. They were all constructed with a view to deception. Without an additional qualification not one of them has the least tendency to establish the doctrine they were intended to establish: and yet with that qualification any one of them becomes instantly false. We expect to take the ambiguity out of these propositions, and to exhibit in them a deformity which it was hoped the reader would not detect. The first of them reads thus:—

*Prop. 1. "That throughout the New Testament the remission of sins, or justification, is unequivocally and unconditionally connected with faith or with exercises which imply its existence."*

The terms "unequivocally" and "unconditionally" are inserted in this proposition for no purpose but to confuse and deceive. As the proposition is now worded they add nothing to it either of force or meaning. It was hoped the reader would infer from them what they have no power to express. Deception was the thing intended when they were inserted and the only effect they can have. Omit them altogether and the sense of the proposition remains the same, thus:—Throughout the New Testament the remission of sins, or justification, is connected with faith or with exercises which imply its existence. This is exactly what the proposition asserts, and all it asserts, and in this sense it is

true; hut this is not what Mr. Jeter intended the reader to infer from it. We shall now insert the word *alone* after faith, when the proposition will convey his meaning exactly; or, if it does not, it will convey the only meaning which in the slightest degree differs from our doctrine, thus:— Throughout the New Testament the remission of sins is connected with faith *alone* or with exercises which imply its existence. Now the word "unconditionally" may be inserted with effect, thus:—Throughout the New Testament the remission of sins is unconditionally connected with faith alone or with exercises which imply its existence. With one more improvement the precise meaning of the proposition stands revealed and false. The word "connected" should give place to the word "depends," thus:—Throughout the New Testament the remission of sins depends unconditionally on faith alone or on exercises which imply its existence. But this is far too clear for Mr. Jeter. No deception could lurk in it. Its falsity becomes apparent at sight. In this form the proposition makes remission depend on faith to the exclusion not only of baptism hut of repentance likewise. But this proves a little too much for Mr. Jeter. His intention was to construct a proposition from which his readers would infer that remission depends on faith to the exclusion of baptism only; but this he could not do without at the same time making it appear that remission depends on faith to the exclusion of repentance likewise; hence the intentional ambiguity of his proposition.

But we are not yet done with the proposition. Did Mr. Jeter not perceive that the supplemental clause "or exercises which imply its existence" either rendered his proposition false or virtually asserted the truth of our doctrine? For, if its meaning is that throughout the New Testament the remission of sins depends unconditionally on *faith alone*, then clearly it cannot depend on "*exercises*" of faith, since, by the very terms of the proposition, exercises are excluded. Or, if its meaning is that remission depends unconditionally either on faith but not on faith alone, or on "exercises" which imply its existence, then it may depend unconditionally on baptism, for baptism is an "exercise" which implies faith.

But, the truth is, "unconditionally" does not convey Mr. Jeter's meaning at all. It qualifies the wrong word altogether. As his proposition now stands, all it affirms is, that remission of sins is unconditionally *connected*,— 1:*e.* with faith or with exercises which imply it. And this is certainly true. *Unconditionally* qualifies *connected*. But connected is

not the word which Mr. Jeter wishes to qualify. He does not mean to qualify the *connection* between faith and remission, but the *condition* on which remission depends. He does not mean to assert that remission is unconditionally *connected* with faith, but that faith is the *sole* condition with which it is connected. But the instant his proposition is made to assert this, the supplemental clause falsifies it.

If all Mr. Jeter meant is, that the remission of sins is certainly or unconditionally connected with faith, but not with *faith alone*, his proposition is true; but if this is not his meaning, his proposition is not only false, but falsifies itself. With these remarks we dismiss it.

We shall not stop to dwell on any of the Scriptures adduced by Mr. Jeter in support of his proposition. Some of these have already been noticed, and others may hereafter be. As they neither assert nor necessarily imply—not even one of them—that faith is the *sole condition* of remission, nor any thing akin to it, they may with propriety be passed with this brief allusion to them.

## ***Section II.***

*Prop. 2. "That in many places in the New Testament spiritual blessings, which imply the remission of sins, are positively promised to faith."*

Is it not strange that any man should entertain, as Mr. Jeter does, a doctrine which he clearly fears to state in a simple perspicuous proposition? He parleys around the word *alone*, would have it understood, shrinks from using it, and yet knows that no other term half so well and briefly conveys his meaning. That he believes with his whole heart that faith is the sole condition of remission is certain; and yet he fears to assert it. How easy to have expressed his doctrine thus:—*the remission of sins depends on faith alone*. All men and even children could have understood him then. But his cunning taught him that no such proposition as this could hang together an instant in the hands of Mr. Campbell. Besides, this would have been too clear for even the common people. Even they could have pronounced it false. Hence something far more involved and intricate is preferred; and yet, by this very mode of stating his doctrine, Mr. Jeter furnishes no mean evidence of its falsity.

However, we shall grant his proposition to be true, with the single

qualification that in the New Testament there is not even one blessing promised to *faith alone*. Faith alone is never in the New Testament treated of as the condition of any thing. Wherever spoken of by itself it is always to be conceived either as a principle of action leading immediately to obedience to Christ, or as a condition jointly with other conditions of whatever blessing depends on it.

But in confirmation of his second, as a leading proposition, Mr. Jeter subjoins and discusses three minor propositions, of which it is proper we should now take notice,—the first of which is thus expressed:—

1. *"That salvation is promised to faith."* True, but not to faith alone. Salvation is promised to faith, precisely as baptism is said to save us,—*i.e.* not as the *sole* condition of salvation, but as a joint condition with others, the others being understood.

2. *"Adoption into the family of God is the privilege of believers."* It is the privilege of *believers*, just as the remission of sins is the privilege of a *penitent*. As repentance is not the *sole* condition of remission, so neither is faith the *sole* condition of adoption. Should a man believe simply, but do nothing else, he would never be received into the family of God. Neither does Mr. Jeter believe it, though he intended the reader to infer it from his proposition. His proposition is true in the proper view of it, but he wished a false inference to be drawn from it.

3. *"Eternal life is distinctly promised to faith."* Does Mr. Jeter mean that eternal life is promised to faith as the *sole condition on which it is bestowed*? If so, we shall not attempt to discuss with him a proposition which he knew to be false when he penned it. But in what lies his argument? Certainly in this, if in any thing:—that eternal life is distinctly promised to faith alone, and, since eternal life includes the remission of sins, therefore the remission of sins depends on faith alone. But we deny, first, that eternal life is promised to faith alone; and, second, that eternal life and the remission of sins depend on the same conditions, except *in part* or *accidentally*. When Mr. Jeter makes good these positions he carries his point, but not before.

It is worthy of note that Mr. Jeter seems to be discussing all the time a proposition which is not in dispute. He seems to be discussing the proposition that the sinner is saved by faith. But this we have never denied. What we deny is that the sinner is saved by *faith alone*,—a very

different proposition. Hence, all the Scriptures cited by him are irrelevant, since they establish only the former proposition, but have no tendency to establish the latter.

### ***Section III.***

*Prop. 3. "That privileges which are inseparable from the remission of sins are frequently promised, in the New Testament, to exercises or graces that imply the existence of faith."*

This is a mere repetition of the second proposition with a slight change of verbiage. That relates to *blessings*, *this to privileges*; and yet, under that, Mr. Jeter says, adoption into the family of God is the *privilege* of believers, and under this, the first passage he quotes relates to *blessings*! But this, like that, rests on three minor propositions, namely:—

1. *"The kingdom of heaven is promised to humility."* The line of argument which this and the leading proposition together indicate is this:—the kingdom of heaven is a *privilege*; this privilege implies the remission of sins. Humility is an *exercise* or a *grace*; this exercise or grace implies faith. Now, that privilege is promised to this exercise or grace; therefore the remission of sins depends on *faith alone*, without or to the exclusion of baptism.—Q.E.D.

*To enjoy* the kingdom of heaven is certainly a privilege, but a privilege enjoyed by those alone who are in it. Now, however commendable and necessary a thing humility may be, (and we are far from wishing to underrate it) men do not enter into the kingdom of heaven by it. They enter into the kingdom of heaven *by being born of water and of the Spirit*: at least, so taught the Savior; but, when *in* the kingdom, without humility they will not be allowed to enjoy it. This presents us with the correct view.

2. *"Salvation is promised to prayer."* Salvation, in the case of a *Christian*, certainly depends on prayer, but not on prayer alone. It depends on prayer jointly with the discharge of other duties. But nowhere does the New Testament teach that during the reign of Christ the remission of the sinner's sins—that is, a person who has never been a Christian—depends on prayer. If, therefore, Mr. Jeter's proposition includes Christians only, it is true; but, if it includes aliens with



Christians, it is false.

3. *"Adoption is declared to be the privilege of such persons as follow the guidance of the Spirit."* This proposition presents us with no new matter. Indeed, it is the mere repetition for the sixth time of the sole argument with which, so far, Mr. Jeter has attempted to sustain his cause. But his proof of the proposition should be repeated,—namely, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God (and if those who repent and believe the gospel are not led by the Spirit of God, by what Spirit are they led?) they *are the sons of God.*" This is too bad. Such puerility we cannot stoop to notice. But, as an offset to the nonsense, we subjoin the following:—"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God (and, if those who believe, repent, and are baptized are not led by the

Spirit of God, by what Spirit are they led?) *they are the sons of God.*"

### ***Section IV.***

*Prop. 4. "That the remission of sins was, in various cases, possessed and enjoyed by faith without or before baptism."*

Whether this proposition is to be considered true or false depends altogether on the period of time to which it is applied and the qualifications with which it is attended. It is certainly true that, at a period of time when no such thing as baptism existed, remission of sins was enjoyed in innumerable instances without baptism; but even then it is not so certain that remission depended on faith alone, unless as an exception to the rule. For four thousand years of the world's history—namely, from the creation of man to the commencement of John's ministry—remission of sins was enjoyed without baptism, for the simple reason that there was no such thing as baptism; but it is far from being certain that even during that time remission was enjoyed by faith alone. Indeed, it is very certain that in most cases it was not. But Mr. Jeter attempts to sustain his proposition by three actual instances of its truth, two of which we shall now examine.

The first of these instances is that of the thief on the cross. The argument based on this case against us (an argument which has been refuted a thousand times) is briefly this:—The thief on the cross was saved, and saved without baptism; therefore baptism is not necessary to

salvation. We admit the premises, but deny the conclusion.

During the continuance of John's ministry no Jew could be saved without baptism; for those who rejected it rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and hence could not be saved. Moreover, his baptism was, for the time-being, *for*, that is, *the means of obtaining*, the remission of sins, but, even then, in the case of a Jew only, and not in that of a Gentile. But, when John died, baptism again ceased to be necessary to salvation even in the case of a Jew. John had no successor in office,— left no one to continue his ministry. His baptism ceased with his life. Hence, from the day of his death until the day of Pentecost there was not a man on earth authorized to administer baptism. Indeed, during this period there existed by authority no baptism. Hence, the Savior neither authorized the seventy nor the twelve whom he sent out during this time, to baptize. And, although it is pretty certain that after John's death some of his disciples continued to practice his baptism, still, they did it without authority. Now, it was during this time that the salvation of the thief occurred. It occurred at a time 'when baptism had by authority positively no existence whatever. Hence it was obligatory on no one.

We are now prepared to correct the argument based on the case of the thief, thus:—The thief on the cross was saved,—saved without baptism; therefore baptism *was* not necessary to salvation. This argument is correct. But how illogical to infer that, because baptism *was* not necessary to salvation at a time when it had no authorized existence, it *is* not now necessary! And yet this is exactly what Mr. Jeter does.

But, in speaking of this and a like case, he says, "Possibly it maybe objected (though the objection is, in *my* view, *of no validity*) that these cases occurred before the giving of the apostolic commission." What the objection may be in the view of Mr. Jeter we cannot say, but we venture to assert that, in the view of all candid men who can understand the nature of the connection between a premise and its conclusion, the objection is perfectly overwhelming. To argue that baptism is not now necessary to salvation, because the thief was saved without it at a time when it was no man's duty to be baptized, is knowingly to argue falsely. It is as gross an outrage of reason and truth as to argue that faith in Christ is not now necessary to salvation, because the time was, before Christ came, when it was not necessary. It is a poor reply to the

objection in question to say it is "*of no validity.*" But, wanting as it is in validity, Mr. Jeter would part from the nails on his fingers, could he successfully repel it; and well might he do so, for to repel it would be the triumph of his cause.

But he cites also the case of *Cornelius*, and thinks it a "fair inference" that his sins were remitted before baptism. This inference appears to rest on the supposition that the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit in the case necessarily implied the remission of his sins. But this, in the absence of all evidence, we cannot admit, and, hence, think the inference any thing else than fair. When once the design of an ordinance has been established by divine authority, of what avail is human inference against it? Whatever baptism was for to the three thousand at Pentecost, it was for in the case of *Cornelius*. To him it had all the meaning it has to any one else, and no more. The ordinance has not two designs, but one. We hence conclude that, when Peter commanded *Cornelius* to be baptized, *it was for the remission of sins.*

True, the Spirit was poured out on him before his baptism, but why? Not as an evidence that his sins were remitted, *but as an evidence that the Gentiles as well as the Jews were to be admitted to the privileges of the gospel.* This much we can affirm in the light of revelation, but beyond this all is myth. To infer that *Cornelius* was pardoned before his baptism on no other ground than that of the extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit—unless we knew that such outpouring necessarily implied the remission of his sins, (a thing which we can never know,)—is not to reason, but to speculate. It is here that Mr. Jeter's argument reveals its weakness. He assumes that an extraordinary fact sustaining to remission—he can never say what relation—is to be taken as evidence thereof, and then on this fact bases his inference as to when *Cornelius* was pardoned. But his argument is clearly defective. When it is once established that baptism is, even in one case, for the remission of sins, the presumption is that this is what it is for in every case; and so strong is this presumption, that nothing save an actual assertion of the Bible to the contrary, or some fact wholly irreconcilable therewith, can set it aside. For this reason, we must still insist that baptism even in the case of *Cornelius* was for the remission of sins.

## *Section V.*

Having now examined such arguments as Mr. Jeter has to offer in

defense of his view of remission, we shall next present, in his own language, his strange theory of baptism.

"If," he remarks, (p. 258,) "baptism, as I have endeavored to show, is not a condition or means of obtaining the remission of sin, then it follows that it is *a symbolic declaration* of the remission of sins already obtained through faith in Christ. In support of this conclusion, I remark,—

*"First.* That it is in perfect harmony with the teaching of the Scriptures. This point has been sufficiently elucidated, and the reader must judge of it for himself.

*"Secondly.* That it is according to analogy. There are two New Testament institutions,—baptism and the Lord's Supper. The latter is unquestionably a symbolic ordinance. Bread and wine are used to symbolize the broken body and sin-atoning blood of Jesus. May we not reasonably infer that both ordinances are of the same general nature,—that as one is symbolic so is the other? If we do not literally, but only in a figure, eat the Lord's body and drink his blood in the supper, does it not seem probable that our sins are not literally, *but only in a figure*, washed away in baptism?"

Such is Mr. Jeter's theory of baptism; and greater confusion of thought than it indicates, it would be difficult to imagine. No one not as blind as its author can be mistaken as to the motive which produced it. It is a monstrous effort to evade the plainest teachings of Holy Writ. Pliant, truly, and morbid must be that credulity which staggers not at this and yet rejects baptism for the remission of sins. But we must particularize.

1. "May we not reasonably infer that both ordinances [baptism and the Lord's Supper] are of the same general nature,—that as one is symbolic so is the other?"

Is this humble petition all the evidence Mr. Jeter has to present that the two institutions are of the same symbolic nature? Alas for a cause when it has to beg its way to the confidence of mankind! But let us, in reply to the feeble prayer, grant, for the sake of argument, that both institutions are of the same general nature: what then? What has this to do with the *design* of either? Literally nothing. But the Lord's Supper is symbolic: granted; and baptism is symbolic: granted. In the Lord's Supper we literally eat the loaf and drink the wine, and these

respectively *represent* the body and blood of Christ. And in baptism we are literally immersed; *but what does this represent?* Remission of sins, says Mr. Jeter. *But where is the proof?* We know that the loaf represents the Savior's body, and the wine his blood, for he has told us so. But where has he told us that baptism represents the remission of sins? We repeat, where?

2. "If we do not literally, but only in a figure, eat the Lord's body and drink his blood in the supper, does it not seem probable that our sins are not literally, but only in a figure, washed away in baptism?"

To talk of eating the Lord's body and drinking his blood *in a figure*, of washing away sins *in a figure*, is supremely ridiculous. The truth is, we neither eat the Lord's *body* nor drink his *blood* in any sense. We literally eat the *loaf* and drink the *wine*, and these *represent*, or *stand for*, his body and blood. In like manner, in baptism we are literally immersed, but there is nothing for which our immersion stands, as the loaf stands for the body of Christ. It is just here that Mr. Jeter's farfetched theory betrays its truthlessness. Indeed, the whole thing is a mere figment, unnaturally forced out of his brain to avoid admitting what is as clearly taught in the word of God as the divinity of the Savior:—that baptism, jointly with belief and repentance, is *for* the remission of sins.

# Chapter X.

## THREE MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

### *Section I.*

#### *Our "Arianism."*

UPON this subject of course Mr. Jeter is all himself, and so extremely orthodox that he is well-nigh a heretic. That some traits of his character singularly fit him for writing on it, we at least shall not deny. It is peculiar to small minds that they would always appear to be great by seeming perfectly to comprehend those subjects which even the greatest minds are unable to grasp. Nor is it a less frequent case that those whose soundness in the faith there is the best reason to suspect are most clamorous about the heresies of others. But the following is the manner in which Mr. Jeter discourses of our heresy on this subject:—

*"Unitarianism*, in all its phases, from high Arianism to low Socinianism, is, in the judgment of the Christian world, a far more serious error than Universalism. It divests the gospel of its distinctive glory, and converts it into a lifeless, cold, and inefficient code of ethics. The atonement of Christ, deriving its efficacy from the essential and infinite dignity of his person, is the only foundation of a sinner's hope and consolation. The reformers received Unitarians into their fellowship, and sanctioned their ministrations with a full knowledge of their errors. In the early part of the present century, a party of New Lights, headed by the Rev. Barton W. Stone, in the State of Kentucky, became Arians. In a letter to the Christian Baptist, published in the year 1827, he used this language:—'If these observations be true, will it not follow, undeniably, that the word (*di' hou*) by whom all things were made, was not the only true God, but a person that existed with the only true God before creation began,—not from eternity, (else he must be the only true God,) but long before the reign of Augustus Caesar?'

"Of the extent to which the Arian notions of Mr. Stone did formerly, or do now, prevail among the reformers, I have no means of ascertaining. In the year 1844, I made a tour in the West, of which notes were

published, on my return, in the Religious Herald. From the notes I extract substantially the following paragraph, the statements in which, so far as I have seen, have never been called in question, and which, I presume, cannot be successfully contradicted.

"In the town of Columbia, Missouri, and its vicinity, the Disciples, better known as Campbellite, are somewhat numerous. They were formerly professedly Arians, but some years since they united with the followers of Mr. Alexander Campbell. I took much pains to learn whether their views of the divinity of Christ had undergone a satisfactory change. All with whom I conversed on the subject concurred in testifying that they reject the doctrine of Christ's divinity, and of his substitutional and piacular sufferings. One of the professors of the University of Missouri (situated at this place) informed me that in a conversation which he held with Mr. A., a distinguished preacher of the denomination in this State, he most distinctly repudiated these vital principles of the evangelic system. One thing is certain:—the Disciples are not ignorant of the fact that they are generally believed to be Arians; and under this imputation they patiently lie. Unless there is a strange and prevalent misconception in the community, these Disciples stand in most urgent need of a thorough doctrinal reformation."

Several things in these extracts we believe it necessary to notice.

I. "The reformers received Unitarians into their fellowship, and sanctioned their ministrations with a full knowledge of their errors."

It is true that Mr. Stone and his brethren did, in the State of Kentucky, in the early part of the present effort at reformation, unite with Mr. Campbell and his brethren, neither party claiming superiority over the other in union: *but it is not true that Mr. Stone and his brethren were united with as Arians; nor is it true that we, as a people, have ever sanctioned the ministrations of any man or set of men as Arians, or the preaching of Arian sentiments.* The charge is an errant slander. In the union between Mr. Stone and Mr. Campbell, *the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, in the full and proper sense of its terms, upon all matters both of faith and practice, was the sole basis of the union.* Upon no other basis, nor in any other sense, did Mr. Campbell ever consent to the union; and it is due the memory of Mr. Stone to say, that on no other basis nor in any other sense did he ever demand the union.

But we owe it to ourselves as a people to say, that, on more subsequent occasions than one, Mr. Stone did hold language which we do not indorse, and gave utterance to sentiments (as, for example, that in the extract cited by Mr. Jeter) which we distinctly disavow and repudiate. But in saying this we are merely to be understood as giving utterance to our own real convictions in the case, and not as intending a compliment to the captious spirit of sectarianism, nor yet an unkind reflection on the memory of Mr. Stone. We have long since, we trust, learned to distinguish between the error, though even a grave one, of a good man's head when speculating, and those traits of his heart which mark him as a man of lofty faith and genuine piety. While trying to comprehend those incomprehensible and mysterious relations which subsist between the Father and the Son, to which his finite powers did not fit him, (and of whom can less be said?) Mr. Stone did at times, as we conceive, fall below the merits of the subject; but he never forgot to honor that Son with a veneration and service which should put to the blush the thousand bigots who are still willing to cavil at his error. He never breathed a prayer to the Father of mercies nor uttered the name of the Savior that he poured not forth a depth and warmth of devotion which finds no place in the lip-service of those who can still enact their revels over his grave, and who, while they affect to honor the Savior by words and names, are yet far from him. in their hearts and in their practice.

It is further due the memory of Mr. Stone to say, that he did not himself consider his views to be Arian; that he held the Son to be divine as the Father, but not, like the Father, eternal; and that only in his polemic discussions, or in an occasional fugitive piece, did he ever trouble the public with his sentiments on the subject. In all his other public and private teachings he preached Christ Jesus and him crucified as an all-sufficient Savior of sinners, free from all objectionable peculiarities.

Nor is it less due to Mr. Campbell to state, that no sooner had Mr. Stone published his first illicit line or given utterance to his first vagrant thought on this subject, than he promptly opposed him; and that he continued to do so with a voice kind, but decided and ever dissentient, until the latter was summoned to that bar where all human disputes must receive their ultimate adjustment. While Mr. Campbell is not ashamed to avow his respect for the memory of Mr. Stone, nor his affection for him as a man while living, he is not now willing to be thought the apologist for his error, nor yet to be held responsible for it. He profoundly disapproves the Arian doctrine on the present subject,



no matter in whom found.

II. "One thing is certain:—the disciples are not ignorant of the fact that they are generally believed to be Arians; and under this imputation they patiently lie."

We can inform Mr. Jeter that there is more than *one* thing certain in the premises. It is certain that we are not ignorant of the fact that we are *charged* with being Arians, certain that the truth was never uttered when the charge was made, and certain that it is wholly false that we have lain patiently under the imputation. And there is another thing of which we think we are not quite ignorant. We are not quite ignorant of what kind of spirit and equity it is that can circulate a slanderous charge against a whole body of Christians without the shadow of evidence on which to base it, and then summon them to the bar of public opinion to prove their innocence, before their guilt can even be presumed, and, because they do not choose to obey the summons, no matter when nor by what petty bigot served, set them down as guilty. We think we know something of this spirit, and also of those in whom it resides. But we will once more, for the thousandth time, condescend to contradict the slander, and shall leave Mr. Jeter to acquit himself for its appearance where we saw it last.

Upon the divinity of the Savior, his rank and relations, though we deem them of infinite moment and transcendently sublime, we yet think it neither desirable nor necessary to speculate. We shall therefore be content for the present with the following concise and plain statements:—

1. That Christ, in the state in which he existed as the Word, was as uncreated as the God with whom he existed.
2. That in his uncreated nature he is as perfectly divine, in the most essential sense of the term, as the Father who sent him.
3. "But that he had no existence as *the Son* of God until born of Mary in Bethlehem of Judea.
4. That in his death he has made an expiation for the sins of the world so complete that all may be saved who will, and so full of merit that God can be perfectly just in justifying the sinner who believes in Jesus.

5. That, in virtue of his glorious personal rank and dignity as God manifest in the flesh, and the efficacy of his death in the redemption of sinners, all men should honor him even as the Father himself deserves to be honored.

III. "Of the extent to which the Arian notions of Mr. Stone did formerly, or do now, prevail among the reformers, I have no means of ascertaining."

We shall be at pains, then, to enlighten Mr. Jeter, if he will consent not to slander us for the future, respecting a point upon which, though he is not ashamed to write, he has still to confess his ignorance, by informing him that there is not one known Arian, or Arian sentiment, in all our ranks, from Maine to the shores of the Pacific.

IV. "In the town of Columbia, Missouri, and its vicinity, the Disciples, better known as Campbellite, are somewhat numerous. They were formerly professedly Arians, but some years since they united with the followers of Mr. Alexander Campbell. I took much pains to learn whether their views of the divinity of Christ had undergone a satisfactory change. All with whom I conversed on the subject concurred in testifying that they reject the doctrine of Christ's divinity and of his substitutional and peculiar sufferings."

Now, how extremely to be regretted it is that these brethren did not know that there was a reverend inquisitor among them, who, in the genuine secret spirit of a Jesuit, was inquiring into their faith with a view of pronouncing them all heretics, that they might, low-bowed to the earth, have presented him evidence that their "views had undergone a satisfactory change"! But we are curious to know who and how many constituted the "all" of whom Mr. Jeter was at so "much pains" to seek the information which was the object of his most Christian solicitude. Did he go to these brethren themselves to learn what their views were, or what they had been, or whether in reality their views had ever needed a change? Or did he go to their bigoted religious enemies? Of course a person of Mr. Jeter's divine affection for the Truth would go to the only party from whom in such cases the Truth can be learned.

But the church at Columbia was never Arian, professedly or otherwise, never denied the divinity of Christ, and never rejected his death as an expiation for the sins of the world. The charge cannot be sustained except by the testimony of lying lips.

V. "One of the professors of the University of Missouri (situated at this place) informed me that in a conversation which he held with Mr. A., a distinguished preacher of the denomination in this State, he most distinctly repudiated these vital principles of the evangelic system."

If the professor here alluded to was at the time a member of the Baptist church, and subsequently president of William Jewell College in this State, we have only to say that we do not go about to contradict the fables of an old wife whose feeble mind and small bitter enmity eminently fit him to be the author of the truthless tale here attributed to Mm, and which has owed to him its currency wherever his slow nature has enabled him to circulate it.

But if the professor was any person else, and if the Mr. A. alluded to was Mr. T. M. Allen, of this State, who then was, and still is, living near the University, we have then to state,—

1. That Mr. Allen never did, either in conversation with the professor aforesaid or with anyone else, deny the divinity of Christ; but that, on the contrary, he then was, and now is, a profound believer in that doctrine.
2. That Mr. Allen never did, either expressly or by implication, deny that Christ died to expiate the sins of the world; but that, on the other hand, he cordially believes in and distinctly affirms the doctrine, in the most unequivocal sense of the terms.

While Mr. Jeter saw fit to confine himself to general issues, we thought it proper to join issue with him generally; but, since he has thought it necessary to descend to special cases and particular persons and to implicate honorable men in what he says, we also deem it necessary to descend to particular rejoinders. And we imagine he will find it something easier to quibble over general issues than to acquit himself before the public for making specific charges against good men and innocent churches which he cannot sustain.

## ***Section II.***

### ***Our "growing desire to be accounted orthodox."***

Upon this subject Mr. Jeter delivers himself thus:— "He has been a careless observer of Campbellism who has not perceived its effort to

get rid of the *odium theologicum* by conforming its teachings more and more to the popular views." And again:—"There is manifestly a growing desire among the reformers to be accounted evangelical, orthodox, and regular. A striking proof of this remark was furnished, not long since, in the city of St. Louis, Missouri. There was a Christian association formed in that city. The members of the association were required to be members of some 'evangelical church.' Applicants for admission' from the Christian or Reformed church were rejected, on the ground that they furnished no evidence of being 'evangelical.' To obviate the difficulty, a prominent member of the church, with, it is stated, the concurrence of the pastor and other leading members, drew up and presented a statement of the doctrines held by the church. Here follows the creed."

To be able to appreciate the cool impudence with which the author of these excerpts can falsify our position in a given case, any one must carefully read his book. There is no assertion which he is not ready to make, provided only it can have the effect, in his judgment, to depreciate us in the eyes of the public and to make it appear that we are inconsistent and contradictory. He is not ignorant of the just indifference with which Mr. Campbell has hitherto borne himself towards every doctrine which had no higher claims on his confidence than its being merely orthodox; and yet he now has the hardihood to accuse Mr. Campbell of a desire to be the thing he hates. Had Mr. Campbell ever written a line against polytheism, Mr. Jeter could with as much truth have called him a polytheist as he now accuses him of a desire to be accounted orthodox, and for precisely the same reason. If there is any one thing on account of which Mr. Campbell has reason to feel a just and an honorable pride, and for which he deserves to be crowned with the plaudits of his brethren and the gratitude of the present and future ages, it is the noble independence of mind and firmness with which he has dissented from that dogmatic and tyrannical thing called orthodoxy, and the confidence and success with which he has taken his appeal to the God of truth, the Bible, and to a free and enlightened people. And to accuse him now of a desire to kiss again the fetters which bound him once is to falsify every feeling of his heart and the best acts of his life

But not only is Mr. Campbell "desirous," it seems, "of being accounted orthodox," but in one of his recent debates "*nothing so much annoyed him as the quotation of heterodox sentiments from his early writings.*"

*Perhaps so.* True, Mr. Campbell has not, at times, hesitated to state that his views (where such was the case) were in unison with those held by the self-styled orthodox parties. But why? Was it because he desired to be "accounted orthodox"? or because he conceived that these parties added aught of weight to his views? or that his views were either the better or the nearer right because held by these parties? He knows not Mr. Campbell who so reasons. No. There are certain *very weak-minded men* who are ready to be Mussulman, Jew, or Christian, just as it happens to be the vogue to dub Mussulman, Jew, or Christian orthodox: for their sake Mr. Campbell has at times consented to sound the magic note that on certain points he is orthodox.

But who is it (we have a desire to know) who has constituted Mr. Jeter, and the "Christian sects" with whom he agrees on one thing and dissents on three, the only orthodox people in the world? Or when and where, since Christ ascended, has it been determined what orthodoxy is? In what Council of Nice, Constantinople, or Trent, have these questions been decided? But in what does orthodoxy consist? *Doxa* means an opinion; and *ortho* means correct. Hence orthodoxy must mean a correct opinion. But whose business is it to determine whose opinions are correct? Has Mr. Jeter the right to pronounce on the opinions of the Catholic? If so, who invested him with it? Has not the Catholic an equal right to pronounce on the opinions of Mr. Jeter? Or are the opinions of Mr. Jeter correct merely because he himself pronounces them so? Must we not by the same rule admit the opinions of the Catholic to be correct likewise? Shall the voice of the majority settle the question? Then, alas for "Christian sects"! But Mr. Jeter will doubtless say orthodoxy consists in correct views of the fundamental principles of Christianity. Granted. But whose business is it to determine whose views of these principles are correct and whose not? Who has constituted the Baptist church judge to determine the correctness of our views? or who has been constituted judge to determine the correctness of the views of the Baptist church? The truth is, this whole question of orthodoxy among "Christian sects" resolves itself into the following ridiculous position:—that the Baptists agree to call the Methodists orthodox, and the Methodists consent to return the compliment; they two agree to call the Presbyterians orthodox, and the Presbyterians consent to return the compliment; and what they three agree to call orthodox, that is orthodox. In other words, I will agree to glorify you if you will consent to glorify me; and we two will agree to

glorify someone else if someone else will consent to glorify us; and what we three agree to glorify that let all men glorify, for that is glorious! It can hardly be wondered at that Mr. Campbell should have felt more of contempt than veneration for a coalition for such self-exalting and anti-Christian ends.

But of the fact that "there is manifestly a growing desire among the reformers to be accounted evangelical, orthodox, and regular, a striking proof was furnished, not long since, in the city of St. Louis, Missouri."

The transaction here alluded to was purely a local matter, the work of a few individuals on their own responsibility, and, as such, passed at the time with little notice, and without exciting the slightest interest in our ranks. We confess we never suspected it as being wrong until we saw it smutted with the approbation of Mr. Jeter. Certainly these brethren are far too honorable and high-minded not to feel mortified at the circumstance. Neither would they have pressed their claim to be admitted into the association referred to in the manner in which they did, had they not witnessed efforts to exclude them from it in order to expose to public contempt the cause which lay near their hearts, headed by a man whose passionless nature, Jesuitism, and sour heart, strangely fit him to act the chief part in all transactions where trickery and perfidy are to be enacted. We honor these brethren, but, most of all, the lamented one now dead, for not suffering themselves to be disgraced when the object was that their disgrace should terminate on their holy religion. But he knows them not who cites this act to prove that either they, or we as a people, have a growing desire to be accounted orthodox; and, as for the whim that their doctrinal summary is a *creed*, it excites not even our smile.

### ***Section III.***

#### ***The effect Mr. Jeter's book has had.***

Whatever may be the intentions of an author, or the merits of his book in other respects, if its effects have been bad the book itself cannot be good. Tried by this rule, and too severe a judgment cannot be pronounced on Mr. Jeter's book. Its effects have been bad,—bad to the full extent of its influence, bad without one compensating trait. If such was the result intended by its author, we shall certainly admit that he has, with a skill nothing less than matchless, adapted his work to its

end; but, if such was not the result intended, then surely he is the most unfortunate of blunderers. When we say we are mortified at the appearance of this book at this particular crisis and grieved at the effect it has had, we but feebly express our feelings.

In repelling the attacks of the Baptists in time past, our brethren may not always have been either as wise as serpents or as harmless as doves. But, if for this there is not a justification to be pleaded, there is at least this apology,—that they were feeble and felt it; and the attacks made on them came from a party which was strong, and were made in a manner so unjust and so unkind as almost of necessity to provoke the spirit in which they were met. But what most of all made these attacks painful to us, was the fact that, in making them, the Baptists sought and accepted abetment from their old hereditary foes,—the infant-sprinkling sects,—from whom, in time gone, they had suffered the grossest injuries, and from whom they were still receiving daily insults and contemptuous jeers. We thought it mean in the Baptists to join these half Roman Catholic sects—who had filled the church (so called) with flesh and blood, and, indeed, had well-nigh completed its corruption—in a crusade against a body of people who were conscientiously contending for the supremacy of the Holy Scriptures and the purity of the ordinances of Jesus Christ as defined by him and delivered to the world. But it happened that these sects and the Baptists agreed in three things:—1st, in the use of a cabalistic *Trinity*,—something of which the Bible knows nothing; 2d, in a *supernatural agency* in conversion,—another thing about which the Bible is silent; and 3d, in relating an experience (except in the case of infants) before baptism or sprinkling,—a third thing of which the Bible says nothing. And, agreeing in these three things, they agreed also in a fourth; to wit, *in persecuting us*,—a matter about which the Bible is not silent; for it is still, as it was in time past, peculiar to those who are born after the flesh to persecute those who are born after the Spirit.

But as our brethren grew stronger they became more patient of injuries; and as they grew more able to repel attacks the Baptists grew less inclined to repeat them. Consequently, the parties had, to a very great extent at least, both ceased to attack and to be attacked. Both were tranquil; and, clearly, a more friendly spirit was beginning to prevail among them.

At this juncture the noble purpose to give to the world a corrected

version of the Holy Scriptures began to find emphatic utterance at many a lip and to meet with a grand response in many a heart. The Baptists and our brethren, in the providence of God, were called together to consider of and do the work. The most amiable feelings swayed them both. They had met, not now for war, but for counsel, and, if not in the spirit of brethren, at least in that of friends. The work of conciliation went finely on. We were not willing to affirm that we were so good that we might not grow better, nor the Baptists that they were so wise that they might not grow wiser, by the intercourse. Indeed, many went so far (we confess we were not of the number) as to contemplate a prospect, distant though and dim they deemed it, when an understanding might be come to on the points of difference between the parties, and when the gospel should be pleaded by the united strength and wisdom of both. The view was enchanting.

But at this crisis Mr. Jeter's book appears,—one of the meanest of all the attacks that have been made on us. It was at once indorsed by the great men and the small, the upstarts and doctors, of the denomination, and its merits heralded all over the land. Their spirits rose high, their old bigotry revived, their subsiding ill feelings flowed back, they again chuckled at their imaginary superiority, and thanked God, in true Pharisaic style, that they were not as other men. These are a few of the effects the work has had. It is due, however, to many a noble man in the Baptist ranks, (for there are many there,) to express the belief that the contents of this book do not enjoy the sanction of all who are even Baptists, nor its appearance at this particular time their approbation.

On the other side, the insulting spirit of the book, its paltry contents, but especially the endorsement of the denomination it has received, have only served to excite in our ranks feelings of mingled pity and deep disgust at the whole thing, and to make us wish that in all time to come we may grow less like the Baptists, who have sanctioned the work, than we now are; and to pray that the disastrous event may never happen when we shall be one people, provided its spirit and contents shall be made the basis of the union. These are a few of the effects to be ascribed to Mr. Jeter's book; and with the simple statement of them we now take leave of both him and it, feeling that in the one we part from a misguided man, in the other from a graceless thing.

THE END.



