

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN'S IMPOTENCE

Chapter 3 NATURE

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Transcript

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The doctrine we are now considering is a most solemn and forbidding one. Certainly it is one which could never have been invented by man, for it is far too humbling and distasteful. It is one which is most offensive to human pride, and at complete variance with the modern idea of the progress of the human race. Nevertheless, if we accept the Scriptures as a divine revelation, we have no choice but to uncomplainingly receive this truth. The ruined and helpless state of the sinner is fully attested by the Bible. There fallen man is represented as so utterly carnal and sold under sin as to be not only "without strength" (Rom. 5:6) but lacking the least inclination to move toward God. Very dark indeed is this side of the truth, but its supplement is the glory of God in rich grace, for it furnishes a real but necessary background to the blessed contents of the gospel. CLEAR TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE The Scriptures plainly teach that man is a fallen being, that he is lost (Luke 19:10), that he cannot recover himself from his ruin, that despite the fact of an all-sufficient Saviour presented to him, he cannot come to Him until he is moved upon by the Spirit of God. Thus it is quite evident that if a sinner is saved, he owes his salvation entirely to the free grace and effectual power of God, and not to any good in or from or by himself. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but thy name give glory, for thy mercy" (Ps. 115:1) is the unqualified acknowledgment of all the redeemed. Scripture speaks in no uncertain language on this point. If one man differs from another on this all-important matter of being saved, then it is God who has made him to differ (1 Cor. 4:7) and not himself. Nor is the sinner's salvation to be in any way attributed to either pliability of heart or diligence in the use of means. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy" (Rom. 9:16, 18). The context of John 6:44 indicates that our Lord was thus accounting for the enmity of the murmuring Jews: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." By those words Christ intimated that, considering what fallen human nature is, the conduct of His enemies is not to be wondered at; that they acted in no other way than will all other men when left to themselves; that His own disciples would never have obeyed and followed Him had not a gracious divine influence been exercised on them. MAN'S STRONG OBJECTION But as soon as this flesh-withering truth is pressed upon the unregenerate, they raise an outcry and voice their objections against it. If the spiritual condition of fallen man is one of complete

helplessness, then how can the gospel ask him to turn from his sins and flee to Christ for refuge? If the natural man is unable to repent and believe the gospel, then how can he be justly punished for his impenitence and unbelief? On what ground can man be blamed for not doing what is morally impossible? Notwithstanding these difficulties the point of doctrine which we shall insist upon is that no one is able to comply with the terms of the gospel until he is made the subject of the special and effectual grace of God, that is, until he is divinely quickened, made willing, so that he actually does comply with its terms. Nevertheless, we shall endeavor to show that sinners are not unjustly condemned for their depravity, but that their inability is blameworthy. Great care needs to be taken in stating this doctrine accurately. Otherwise men will be encouraged to put it to wrong use, making it a comfortable resting place for their corrupt hearts. By a misrepresentation of this doctrine more than one preacher has "strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way" (Ezek. 13:22). The truth of man's spiritual impotence has been so distorted that many sinners have been made to feel that they are to be pitied, that they are sincere in desiring a new heart—which has not yet been granted them. Many, while excusing their helplessness, suppose this to be consistent with a genuine longing to be renewed. It is the duty of the minister to make his hearers realize they are under no inability except the excuseless corruption of their own hearts.

NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING THE DOCTRINE There is a real need for us to look closely at the precise nature of man's spiritual inability, as to why he cannot come to Christ unless he be divinely drawn. But first let us notice some of the tenets of others on this point. These fall into two main classes, Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians—Pelagius being the principal opponent of the godly Augustine in the fifth century. A. A. Hodge in his *Outlines of Theology* has succinctly summarized the Pelagian dogmas on the subject of man's ability to fulfill the law of God. Here is the essence of his four points: (1) Moral character can be predicated only of volitions. (2) Ability is always the measure of responsibility. (3) Hence every man has always plenary power to do all that it is his duty to do. (4) Hence the human will alone, to the exclusion of the interference of any internal influence from God, must decide human character and destiny. The only divine influence needed by man or consistent with his character as a self-determining agent is an external, providential and educational one. Semi-Pelagians believe thus: (1) Man's nature has been so far weakened by the fall that it cannot act right in spiritual matters without divine assistance. (2) This weakened moral state which infants inherit from their parents is the cause of sin, but not itself sin in the sense of deserving the wrath of God. (3) Man must strive to do his whole duty, when God meets him with cooperative grace and makes his efforts successful. (4) Man is not responsible for the sins he commits until after he has enjoyed and abused the influences of grace. Arminians are Semi-Pelagians, many of them going the whole length of the error in affirming the freedom of fallen man's will toward good. But their practical contention may fairly be stated thus: Man has certainly suffered considerably from the fall, so much so that sinners are unable to do much, if anything, toward their salvation merely of themselves. Nevertheless sinners are able, by the help of common grace (supposed to be extended by the Spirit to all who hear the gospel) to do those things which are regarded as fulfilling the preliminary conditions of salvation (such as acknowledging their sins and calling on God for help to forsake them and turn to Christ). And if sinners will thus pray, use the means of grace, and put forth what power they do have, then assuredly God will meet them halfway and renew their hearts and pardon their iniquities. We object to this belief. First, far from the Scriptures representing man as being partially disabled by the fall, they declare him to be completely ruined—not merely weakened, but "without strength" (Rom. 5:6). Second, to affirm that the natural man has any aspiration toward God is to deny that he is totally depraved, that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart . . . [is] only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5; cf. 8:21), that "there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11). Third, if it were true that God could not justly condemn sinners for their inability to comply with the terms of the gospel, and that in order

to give every man a "fair chance" to be saved He extends to all the common help of His Spirit, that would not be "grace" but a debt which He owed to His creatures. Fourth, if such a God-insulting principle were granted, the conclusion would inevitably follow that those who improved this "common grace" could lawfully boast that they made themselves to differ from those who did not improve it. But enough of these shifts and subterfuges of the carnal mind. Let us now turn to God's own Word and see what it teaches us concerning the nature of man's spiritual impotence. First, it represents it as being a penal one, a judicial sentence from the righteous Judge of all the earth. Unless this is clearly grasped at the outset we are left without any adequate explanation of this dark mystery. God did not create man as he now is. God made man holy and upright, and by man's own apostasy he became corrupt and wicked. The Creator originally endowed man with certain powers, placed him on probation, and prescribed a rule of conduct for him. Had our first parents preserved their integrity, had they remained in loving and loyal subjection to their Maker and Ruler, all would have been well, not only for themselves but also for their posterity. But they were not willing to remain in the place of subjection. They took the reins into their own hands, rebelling against their Governor. And the outcome was dreadful. The sin of man was extreme and aggravated. It was committed contrary to knowledge and, through the beneficence of the One against whom it was directed, in the face of great advantages. It was committed against divine warning, and against an explicit declaration of the consequence of man's transgression. In Adam's fearful offense there were unbelief, presumption, ingratitude, rebellion against his righteous and gracious Maker. Let the dreadfulness of this first human sin be carefully weighed before we are tempted to murmur against the dire consequences which accompanied it. Those dire consequences may all be summed up in the fearful word "death," for "the wages of sin is death." The full import of that statement can best be ascertained by considering all the evil effects which have since come to man. A just, holy, sin-hating God caused the punishment to fit the crime.

PROBATION OF HUMAN RACE IN ADAM When God placed Adam on probation it pleased Him to place the whole human race on probation, for Adam's posterity were not only in him seminally as their natural head, but they were also in him legally and morally as their legal and moral head. In other words, by divine constitution and covenant Adam stood and acted as the federal representative of the whole human race. Consequently, when he sinned, we sinned; when he fell, we fell. God justly imputed Adam's transgression to all his descendants, whose agent he was: "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom. 5:18). By his sin Adam became not only guilty but corrupt, and that defilement of nature is transmitted to all his children. Thomas Boston said, "Adam's sin corrupted man's nature and leavened the whole lump of mankind. We putrefied in Adam as our root. The root was poisoned, and so the branches were envenomed." "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned" (Rom. 5:12). We repeat that Adam was not only the father but the federal representative of his posterity. Consequently justice required that they should be dealt with as sharing in his guilt, that therefore the same punishment should be inflicted on them, which is exactly what the vitally important passage in Romans 5:12-21 affirms. "By one man [acting on behalf of the many], sin entered [as a foreign element, as a hostile factor] into the world [the whole system over which Adam had been placed as the vicegerent of God: blasting the fair face of nature, bringing a curse upon the earth, ruining all humanity], and death by sin [as its appointed wages]; and so death [as the sentence of the righteous Judge] passed upon all men [because all men were seminally and federally in Adam]." It needs to be carefully borne in mind that in connection with the penal infliction which came upon man at the fall, he lost no moral or spiritual faculty, but rather the power to use them right. In Scripture "death" (as the wages of sin) does not signify annihilation but separation. As physical death is the separation of the soul from the body, so spiritual death is the separation of the soul from its Maker. Ephesians 4:18 expresses it as "being alienated from the life of God." Thus, when the father said of the

prodigal, "This my son was dead" (Luke 15), he meant that his son had been absent from him—away in the "far country." Hence when, as the Substitute of His people, Christ was receiving in their stead the wages due them, He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This is why the lake of fire is called "the second death"—because those cast there are "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:9). We have said that all of Adam's posterity shared in the guilt of the great transgression committed by their federal head, and that therefore the same punishment is inflicted on them as on him. That punishment consisted (so far as its present character is concerned) in his coming under the curse and wrath of God, the corrupting of his nature, and the mortalizing of his body. Clear proof of this is found in that inspired statement "And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image" (Gen. 5:3), which is in direct antithesis to his being created "in the image of God" (Gen. 1:27). That Adam's first son was morally depraved was clearly evidenced by his conduct; and that his second son was also depraved was fully acknowledged by the sacrifice which he brought to God. As a result of the fall man is born into this world so totally depraved in his moral nature as to be entirely unable to do anything spiritually good; furthermore, he is not in the slightest degree disposed to do good. Even under the exciting and persuasive influences of divine grace, the will of man is completely unfit to act right in cooperation with grace until the will itself is by the power of God radically and permanently renewed. The tree itself must be made good before there is the least prospect of any good fruit being borne by it. Even after a man is regenerated, the renewed will always continues dependent on divine grace to energize, direct and enable it for the performance of anything acceptable to God, as the language of Christ clearly shows: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). But let it be clearly understood that though man has by the fall lost all power to do anything pleasing to God, yet his Maker has not lost His authority over him nor forfeited His right to require that which is due Him. As creatures we were bound to serve God and do whatever He commanded; and the fact that we have, by our own folly and sin, thrown away the strength given to us cannot and does not cancel our obligations. Has the creditor no right to demand payment for what is owed him because the debtor has squandered his substance and is unable to pay him? If God can require of us no more than we are now able to give Him, then the more we enslave ourselves by evil habits and still further incapacitate ourselves the less our liabilities; then the deeper we plunge into sin the less wicked we would become. This is a manifest absurdity. Even though by Adam's fall we have become depraved and spiritually helpless creatures, yet the terrible fact that we are enemies to the infinitely glorious God, our Maker, makes us infinitely to blame and without the vestige of a legitimate excuse. Surely it is perfectly obvious that nothing can make it right for a creature to voluntarily rise up at enmity against One who is the sum of all excellence, infinitely worthy of our love, homage and obedience. Thus, for man—whatever the origin of his depravity—to be a rebel against the Governor of this world is infinitely evil and culpable. It is utterly vain for us to seek shelter behind Adam's offense while every sin we commit is voluntary and not compulsory—the free, spontaneous inclination of our hearts. This being the case, every mouth will be stopped, and all the world stand guilty before God (Rom. 3:19). To this it may be objected that the writer of Romans argued that he was not personally and properly to blame for the corruptions of his heart: "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (7:17, 20). But there is no justification for perverting the language in that passage. If the scope of the words is noted, such a misuse of them is at once ruled out. The writer was showing that divine grace and not indwelling sin was the governing principle within him—as he had affirmed previously: "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (6:14). Far from insinuating that he did not feel wholly blamable for his remaining corruption, he declared, "I am carnal, sold under sin" (7:14), and cried as a brokenhearted penitent, "O wretched man that I am!" (v. 24). It is perfectly obvious that he could not have mourned for his remaining corruption as being sinful if he had not felt he was to blame for them. Man's

spiritual impotence is not only penal but moral, by which we mean that he is now unable to meet the requirements of the moral law. We employ this term "moral," first of all, in contrast with "natural," for the spiritual helplessness of fallen man is unnatural, inasmuch as it does not pertain to the nature of man as created by God. Man (in Adam) was endowed with full ability to do whatever was required of him, but he lost that ability by the fall. We employ this term "moral," in the second place, because it accurately defines the character of fallen man's malady. His inability is purely moral, because while he still possesses all moral as well as intellectual faculties requisite for right action, yet the moral state of his faculties is such as to render right action impossible. A. A. Hodge said, "Its essence is in the inability of the soul to know, love, or choose spiritual good; and its ground exists in that moral corruption of soul whereby it is blind, insensible, and totally averse to all that is spiritually good." The affirmation that fallen man is morally impotent presents a serious difficulty for many. They suppose that to assert his inability to will or do anything spiritually good is utterly incompatible with human responsibility or the sinner's guilt. These difficulties are later considered at length. But it is necessary for us to allude to these difficulties at the present stage because the effort to show the reconcilability of fallen man's inability with his responsibility has led not a few defenders of the former truth to make predications which were unwarrantable and untrue. They have felt that there is, there must be, some sense or respect in which even fallen man may be said to be able to will and do what is required of him; and they have labored to show in what sense this ability exists, while at the same time man is, in another sense, unable. Many Calvinists have supposed that in order to avoid the awful error of Antinomian fatalism it was necessary to ascribe some kind of ability to fallen man, and therefore they have resorted to the distinction between natural and moral inability. They have affirmed that though man is now morally unable to do what God requires, yet he has a natural ability to do it, and therefore is responsible for not doing it. In the past we ourselves have made use of this distinction, and we still believe it to be a real and important one, though we are now satisfied that it is expressed faultily. There is a radical difference between a person being in possession of natural or moral faculties, and his possessing or not possessing the power to use those faculties right. And in the accurate stating of these considerations lies the difference between the preservation of the doctrine of man's depravity and moral impotence, and the repudiation or at least the whittling down of it. At this very point many have burdened their writings with a metaphysical discussion of the human will, a discussion so abstruse that comparatively few of their readers possessed the necessary education or mentality to intelligently follow it. We do not propose to discuss such questions as Is the will of fallen man free? If so, in what sense? To introduce such an inquiry here would divert attention too much from the more important query, Can man by any efforts of his own recover himself from the effects of the fall? Suffice it, then, to insist that the sinner's unwillingness to come to Christ is far more than a mere negation or a not putting forth of such a volition. It is a positive thing, an active aversion to Him, a terrible and inveterate enmity against Him.

IMPOSSIBILITY OF MORAL OBEDIENCE The term "ability," or "power," is not easy to define, for it is a relative term, having reference to something to be done or resisted. Thus when we meet with the word, the mind at once asks, Power to do what? Ability to resist what? The particular kind of ability necessary is determined by the particular kind of action to be performed. If it is the lifting of a heavy weight, physical ability is needed; if the working out of a sum in arithmetic, mental power; if the choosing between good and evil, moral power. Man has sufficient physical and intellectual ability to keep many of the precepts of the moral law, yet no possible expenditure of such power could produce moral obedience. It may be that Gabriel has less natural and intellectual power than Satan. Suppose it is so, then what? The conclusion is simply that no amount of ability can go beyond its own kind. Love to God can never proceed from the powers possessed by Satan. Let us now consider what the Scriptures teach concerning the bodily, mental and moral abilities of fallen man. First, they teach that his bodily faculties are in a ruined

state, that his physical powers are enfeebled, and this as a result of sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12). None of our readers is likely to deny that this includes physical death. Now death necessarily implies a failure of the powers of the body. Sickness, feebleness, the wasting of the physical energies and tissues are included. And all of these originate in sin as their moral cause, and are the penal results of it. Every aching joint, every quivering nerve, every pang of pain we experience, is a reminder and mark of God's displeasure on the original misuse of our bodily powers in the garden of Eden. Second, man's intellectual powers have suffered by the fall. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:18). A very definite display of this ignorance was made by our first parents after their apostasy. Their sin consisted in allowing their affections to wander after a forbidden object, seeking their happiness not in the delightful communion of God but in the suggestion presented to them by the tempter. Like their descendants ever since, they loved and served the creature more than the Creator. Their conduct in hiding from God showed an alienation of affections. Had their delight been in the Lord as their chief good, then desire for concealment could not have possessed their minds. That foolish attempt to hide themselves from the searching eye of God betrayed their ignorance as well as their conscious guilt. Had not their foolish hearts been darkened, such an attempt would not have been made. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:22). This mental darkness, this ignorance of mind, is insuperable to man unaided by supernatural grace. Fallen man never would, never could, dispel this darkness, overcome this ignorance. He labors under mental paucity to such a degree as to make it impossible for him to attain to the true knowledge of God and to understand the things of the Spirit. He has an understanding by which he may know natural things: he can reason, investigate truth, and learn much of God's wisdom as it is displayed in the works of creation. He is capable of knowing the moral truths of God's Word as mere abstract propositions; but a true, spiritual, saving apprehension of them is utterly beyond his unaided powers. There is a positive defect and inability in his mind. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). THE NATURAL MAN By the "natural man" is unquestionably meant the unrenewed man, the man in whom the miracle of regeneration and illumination has not been effected. The context makes this clear: "Now we [Christians] have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God" (v. 12). And for what end had the Spirit been given to them? That they might be delivered from their chains of ignorance, that their inability of mind might be removed so that they "might know the things that are freely given to us of God." "Which things [of the Spirit] also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (v. 13). Here is a contrast between man's wisdom and its teachings, and the Spirit's wisdom and His teachings. That the natural man" of verse 14 is unregenerate is further seen from contrasting him with the "spiritual" man in verse 15. A divine explanation is here given as to why the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. It is a most cogent and solemn one: "For they are foolishness unto him." That is, he rejects them because they are absurd to his apprehension. It is contrary to the very nature of the human mind to receive as truth that which it thinks is preposterous. And why do the things of the Spirit of God appear as foolishness to the natural man? Are they not in themselves the consummation of wisdom? Wisdom is not folly; no, yet it may appear as such and be so treated, even by minds which in other matters are of quick and accurate perception. The wisdom of the higher mathematician is foolishness to the illiterate. Why? Because he cannot understand it; he does not have the power of mind to comprehend the mighty thoughts of a Newton. Why are the things of the Spirit of God beyond the comprehension of the natural man? Do not many of the unregenerate possess vigorous and clear-thinking minds? Can they not reason accurately when they have perceived clearly? Have not some of the

unconverted given the most illustrious displays of the powers of the human intellect? Why, then, cannot they know the things of the Spirit? This too is answered by 1 Corinthians 2:14. Those things require a peculiar power of discernment, which the unrenewed have not: "They are spiritually discerned." And the natural man is not spiritual. Until the natural man is taught of God—until the eyes of his understanding are enlightened (Eph. 1:18)—he will never see any beauty in the Christ of God or any wisdom in the Spirit of God. If further proof of the mental inability of the natural man is needed, it is furnished in those passages which speak of the Spirit's illumination. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). Hence, "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" is said to be the gift of the Father (Eph. 1:17). Previous to that gift, "ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8). "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you" (1 John 2:27). From these passages it is evident (1) that the mind of man is in a state of spiritual darkness; (2) that it continues, and will continue so, until the Spirit of God gives it light or knowledge; (3) that this giving of light or knowledge is by divine power, a miracle of grace, as truly a miracle as when at the beginning the Lord said, "Let there be light." Some have objected that man possesses the organ of vision, and therefore he has the ability to see, although he does not have the light. Simply remove the obstructing shutters and the prisoner in his dungeon will see. But let us not be deceived by such sophistry. It is not true that man having a sound eye has the ability to see. It is often contrary to facts, both naturally and spiritually. Without light he cannot see, he has not the ability to do so. Indeed, those with sound eyes and light cannot see all things, even things which are perceptible to others; myopia, or near-sightedness, hinders. A man who may be able to see with the mind's eye a simple proposition cannot see the force of a profound argument. Third, the moral powers of man's soul are paralyzed by the fall. Darkness on the understanding, ignorance in the mind, corruption of the affections, must of necessity radically affect motives and choice. To insist that either the mind or the will has a power to act contrary to motive is a manifest absurdity, for in that case it would not be a moral act at all. The very essence of morality is a capacity to be influenced by considerations of right and wrong. Were a rational mind to act without any motive—a contradiction in terms—it certainly would not be a moral act. Motives are simply the mind's view of things, influencing to action; and since the understanding has been blinded by sin and the affections so corrupted, it is obvious that until man is renewed he will reject the good and choose the evil. **MAN'S BIAS TOWARD EVIL** As we have already pointed out, man is unwilling to choose the good because he is disinclined to it, and he chooses evil because his heart is biased toward it. Men love darkness rather than light. Surely no proof of such assertions is needed; all history too sadly testifies to their verity. It is a waste of breath to ask for evidence that man is inclined to evil as the sparks fly upward. Common observation and our own personal consciousness alike bear witness to this lamentable fact. It is equally plain that it is the derangement of the mind by sin which affects the moral power of perceiving right and wrong enfeebling or destroying the force of moral motives. An unregenerate and a regenerate man may contemplate the same subject matter, view the same objects; but how different their moral perceptions! Therefore their motives and actions will be quite different. The things seen by their minds being different, diverse effects are necessarily produced on them. The one sees a "root out of a dry ground" in which there is "no form nor comeliness," whereas the other sees One who is "altogether lovely." In consequence, our Lord is despised and rejected by the former, whereas He is loved and embraced by the latter. While such are the views (perceptions) of the two individuals, respectively, such must be their choice and conduct. It is impossible to be otherwise. Their moral perception must be changed before it is possible for their volitions to be altered. Such is the ruined condition of the fallen creature. No human power is able to effect any alteration in the moral perceptions of sinful men. "Can the Ethiopian change his

skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23). Nothing short of the sinner, mentally and morally blind to divine light. Here, then, lies the moral inability of the natural man: it consists in the lack of adequate powers of moral perception. His moral sense is prostrated, his mind unable to properly discern between good and evil, truth and falsehood, God and Mammon, Christ and Belial. Not that he can perceive no difference, but that he cannot appreciate in any tolerable degree the excellence of truth or the glory of its Author. He cannot discern the real baseness of falsehood or the degradation of vice. It is a great mistake to suppose that fallen man possesses adequate faculties for such moral perception, and lacks only the necessary moral light. The very opposite is the actual case. Moral light shines all around him, but his powers of vision are gone. He walks in darkness while the midday splendors of the sun of righteousness shine all around him. Fables are regarded as truth, but the truth itself is rejected. Shadows are chased, but the substance is ignored. The gospel is "hid to them that are lost" (2 Cor. 4:3). When the Lord is presented to sinners, they "see in him no beauty that they should desire him." So blind is the natural man that he gropes in the noonday and stumbles over the rock of ages. And unless a sovereign God is pleased to have mercy on him, his moral blindness continues until he passes out into the "blackness of darkness for ever." The deprivation of our nature consists not in the absence of intelligence, but in the ability to use our reason in a wise and fit manner. That which man lost at the fall was not a faculty but a principle. He still retains everything which is requisite to constitute him a rational, moral and responsible being; but he threw away that uprightness which secured the approbation of God. He lost the principle of holiness and, with it, all power to keep the moral law. Nor is this all; a foreign element—an element diametrically opposed to God—entered into man, corrupting his whole being. The principle of holiness was supplanted by the principle of sin, and this has rendered man utterly unable to act in a spiritual manner. True, he may mechanically or imitatively perform spiritual acts (such as praying), yet he cannot perform them in a spiritual manner—from spiritual motives and for spiritual ends. He has no moral ability to do so. True, he can do many things, but none rightly—in a way pleasing to God. Spiritual good is holiness, and holiness consists in supreme love of God and equal love of men. Fallen man, alone and of himself, is utterly unable to love God with all his soul and strength, and his neighbor as himself. This principle of holy love is completely absent from his heart, nor can he by any effort beget such an affection within himself. He is utterly unable to originate within his will any inclination or disposition that is spiritually good; he has not the moral power to do so. Moral power is nothing more nor less than a holy nature with holy dispositions; it is the perception of the beauty of God and the response of the heart to the excellence and glory of God, with the consequent subjection of the will to His royal law of liberty. J. Thornwell said, "Spiritual perceptions, spiritual delight, spiritual choice, these and these alone, constitute ability to good." In our efforts to carefully define and describe the precise character of fallen man's inability to do anything which is pleasing to God, we have shown, first, that the impotence under which he now labors is a penal one, judicially inflicted upon him by the righteous Judge of all the earth, because of his misuse of the faculties with which he was originally endowed in Adam. Second, we noted that his spiritual helplessness is a moral one, having its seat in the soul or moral nature. The principle of holiness was lost by man when he apostatized from his Maker and Governor, and the principle of sin entered his soul, corrupting the whole of his being, so that he is no longer capable of rendering any spiritual obedience to the moral law; that is, he is incapable of obeying it from spiritual motives and with spiritual designs. We pass on now to show, third, that fallen man's inability is voluntary. Some of our readers who have had no difficulty in following us through the first two sections are likely to demur here. We refer to hyper-Calvinists who have such a one-sided conception of man's spiritual helplessness that they have lapsed into serious error. They look upon the condition and case of the sinner much as they do those people who have suffered a stroke which has paralyzed their limbs: as a calamity and not the result

of a crime, as something which necessitates a state of inertia and inactivity, as something which annuls their responsibility. They fail to see that the moral impotence of the natural man is deliberate and therefore highly culpable. Before appealing to the Scriptures for proofs of this third point, we must explain the sense in which we use our term. In affirming that the moral and sinful inability of fallen man is a voluntary one, we mean that he acts freely and spontaneously, unforced either from within or without. This is an essential element of an accountable being, everywhere recognized and acknowledged among men. Human law (much less divine) does not hold a person to be guilty if he has been compelled by others to do wrong against his own will and protests. In all moral action the human will is self-inclined, acting freely according to the dictates of the mind, which are in turn regulated by the inclination of the heart. Though the mind be darkened and the heart corrupted, nevertheless the will acts freely and the individual remains a voluntary agent. Some of the best theologians have drawn a distinction between the liberty and ability of the sinner's will, affirming the former but denying the latter. We believe this distinction to be accurate and helpful. Unless a person is free to exercise volitions as he pleases, he cannot be an accountable being. Nevertheless, fallen man cannot, by any exercise of will, change his nature or make any choice contrary to the governing tendencies of indwelling sin. He totally lacks any disposition to meet the requirements of the moral law, and therefore he cannot make himself willing to do so. The affections of the heart and the perceptions of the mind regulate our volitions, and the will has no inherent power to change our affections; we cannot by any resolution, however strong or prolonged, make ourselves love what we hate or hate what we love. Because the sinner acts without any external compulsion, according to his own inclinations, his mind is free to consider and weigh the various motives which come before it, making its own preferences or choices. By motives we mean those reasons or inducements which are presented to the mind tending to lead to choice and action. The power or force of these inducements lies not in themselves (abstractedly considered), but in the state of the person who is the subject of them; consequently that which would be a powerful motive in the view of one mind would have no weight at all in the view of another. For example, the offer of a bribe would be a sufficient motive to induce one judge to decide a case contrary to law and against the evidence; whereas to another such an offer, far from being a motive to such an evil course, would be highly repulsive. Let this be clearly grasped by the reader: Those external inducements which are presented to the mind affect a person according to the state of his or her heart. The temptation presented by Potiphar's wife, which was firmly refused by Joseph, would have been a motive of sufficient power to ruin many a youth of less purity of heart. External motives can have no influence over the choice and conduct of men except as they make an appeal to desires already existing in the mind. Throw a lighted match into a barrel of gunpowder and there is at once an explosion; but throw that match into a barrel of water and no harm is done. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30) said the holy One of God. None among the children of men can make such a claim.

FREEDOM OF HUMAN WILL All the affections of the human heart are, in their very nature, free. The idea of compelling a man to love or hate any object is manifestly absurd. The same holds good of all his faculties. Conscience may be enlightened and made more sensitive, or it may be resisted and hardened; but no man can be compelled to act contrary to its dictates without depriving him of his freedom, and at the same time of his responsibility. So of his will or volition: two or more alternatives confront a man, conflicting motives are presented to his mind, and his will is quite free in making a preference or choice between them. Nevertheless, it is the very nature of his will to choose that which is preferable, that which is most agreeable to his heart. Consequently, though the will acts freely, it is biased by the corruptions of the heart and therefore is unable to choose spiritual good. The heart must be changed before the will chooses God. Against our assertion that the spiritual impotence of fallen man is a voluntary one, it may be objected that the sinner is so strongly tempted, so powerfully influenced by Satan and so thoroughly under

his control that (in many instances, at least) he cannot help himself, being irresistibly drawn into sinning. That there is some force in this objection is readily granted, but we can by no means allow the length to which it is carried. However subtle the craft, however influential the sophistry, however great the power of the devil, these must not be used to repudiate our personal responsibility and criminality in sinning, nor must we construe ourselves into being his innocent dupes or unwilling victims. Never does Scripture so represent the matter; rather, we are told "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jam. 4:7). And if we seek grace to meet the conditions (specified in 1 Pet. 5:8-9), God will assuredly make good His promise. Satan's power is not physical but moral. He has intimate access to the faculties of our souls, and though he cannot (like the Holy Spirit) work at their roots so as to change and transform their tendencies, he can ply them with representations and delusions which effectually incline them to will and do according to his good pleasure. He can cheat the understanding with appearances of truth, fascinate the fancy with pictures of beauty, and mock the heart with semblances of good. By a secret suggestion he can give an impulse to our thoughts and turn them into channels which serve the purposes of his malignity. But in all of this he does no violence to the laws of our nature. He disturbs neither the spontaneity of the understanding nor the freedom of the will. He cannot make us do a thing without our own consent, thus in consenting to his evil suggestions lies our guilt. That sinners act freely and voluntarily in all their wrongdoing is taught throughout the Scriptures. Take, first of all, the horrible state of the heathen, a dark picture of whom is painted for us in Romans 1. There we see the consummation of human depravity. Heathenism is the full development of the principle of sin in its workings upon the intellectual, moral and religious nature of man. In Romans 1 we are shown that the dreadful condition in which the heathen now lie (and missionaries bear clear witness that what comes before their notice accurately corresponds to what is here stated) is the consequence of their own voluntary choice. "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God" (v. 21). They "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man" (v. 23). They "changed the truth of God into a lie" (v. 25). They "did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (v. 28). Nor was it any different with the favored people of Israel. So averse were they to God and His ways that they hated, persecuted and killed those messengers whom He sent to reclaim them from their wickedness. "They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law" (Ps. 78:10). They said, "I have loved strangers, and after them will I go" (Jer. 2:25). "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken" (Jer. 6:16-17). The Lord called to them, but they "refused." He stretched forth His hand, but "no man regarded." They set at nought all His counsel, and would heed none of His reproofs (Prov. 1:24-25). "The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, till there was no remedy" (2 Chron. 36:15-16). God's blessed Son did not receive any better treatment at their hands. Though He appeared before them in "the form of a servant," He did not appeal to their proud hearts. Though He was "full of grace and truth," they despised and rejected Him. Though He sought only their good, they returned Him nought but evil. Though He proclaimed glad tidings for them, they refused to listen. Though He worked the most wonderful miracles before them, yet they would not believe Him. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). Their retort was "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). It was a voluntary and deliberate refusal of Him. It is this very voluntariness of their sin which shall be charged against them in the day of judgment, for then shall He give order thus: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:27). And from whence did such wicked treatment of the Son of God proceed? From

the vile corruptions of their own hearts. "They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25) declared the incarnate Son of God. There was absolutely nothing whatever either in His character or conduct which merited their wicked contempt and enmity. Did anyone force them to be of such an abominable disposition? Surely not; they were hearty in it. Were they of such bad temper against their wills? No indeed. They were voluntary in their wicked hatred of Christ. They loved darkness. They were infatuated by their corruptions and delighted in gratifying them. They were highly pleased with false prophets, because they preached in their favor, flattering them and gratifying their evil hearts. But they hated whatever was disagreeable to their evil ways.

MISTREATMENT OF CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS It was the same with those who heard the ambassadors of Christ, except for those in whom the sovereign God wrought a miracle of grace. Jews and Gentiles alike willfully opposed and rejected the gospel. In some cases their hatred of the truth was less openly manifested than in others; nevertheless, it was just as real. And the disrelish of and opposition to the gospel was entirely voluntary on the part of its enemies. Did not the Jewish leaders act freely when they threw Peter and John into prison? Did not the murderers of Stephen act freely when they "stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord" (Acts 7:57)? Did not the Philippians act freely when they "rose up together" against Paul and Silas, beat them, and cast them into prison? The same thing obtains everywhere today. If the gospel of Christ is preached in its purity and all its glory, it does not gain the regard of the masses who hear it. Instead, as soon as the sermon is over, like the generality of the Jews in our Lord's day, they make light of it and go their ways, "one to his farm, another to his merchandise" (Matt. 22:5). They are too indifferent to seek after obtaining even a doctrinal knowledge of the truth. There are many who regard this dullness of the unsaved as mere indifference, but it is actually something far worse: it is dislike of the heart for God, deliberate opposition to Him. "They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely" (Ps. 58:4-5). As Paul declared in his day, "The heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted" (Acts 28:27). "They say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways" (Job 21:14). Such is the desperately wicked state of man's heart, diametrically opposite to the divine excellences. Yet when this solemn truth is pressed on the unregenerate, many of them will strongly object, denying that there is any such contrariety in their hearts, saying, "I have never hated God, but have always loved Him." Thus they flatter themselves and seek to make themselves out to be far different from what they are. Nor are they wittingly lying when they make such a claim; rather, they are utterly misled by their deceitful hearts. The scribes and Pharisees truly thought that they loved God and that, had they lived in the days of their forefathers, they would not have put the prophets to death (Matt. 23:29-30). They were altogether insensible to their fearful and inveterate enmity against God; nevertheless it was there, and it later unmistakably displayed itself when they hounded the Son of God to death. Why was it that the scribes and Pharisees were quite unconscious of the opposition of their hearts to the divine nature? It was because they had erroneous notions of the divine Being and loved only that false image which they had framed in their own imaginations; therefore they had false conceptions of the prophets which their fathers hated and murdered, and hence supposed they would have loved them. But when God was manifested in Christ, they hated Him with bitter hatred. In like manner there are multitudes of sinners today, millions in Christendom who persuade themselves that they truly love God, when in reality they hate Him; and the hardest of all tasks confronting the ministers of Christ is to shatter this cherished delusion and bring their unsaved hearers face to face with the horrible reality of their unspeakably vile condition. Loudly as our deluded fellow creatures may boast of their love of the divine nature, as soon as they pass out of time into eternity and discover what God is, their spurious love immediately vanishes and their enmity bursts forth in full force. Sinners today do not perceive their

contrariety to the divine nature because they are utterly ignorant of the true God. It must be so, for a sinful nature and a holy nature are diametrically opposite. Christendom has invented a false "God," a "God" without any sovereign choice, a "God" who loves all mankind, a "God" whose justice is swallowed up in His mercy. Were they acquainted with the God of Holy Writ—who "hatest all workers of iniquity" (Ps. 5:5), who will one day appear "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thess. 1:8-9)—they, if they honestly examined their hearts, would be conscious of the hatred they bear Him. **GUILT OF NATURAL MAN** The spiritual inability of the natural man is a criminal one. This follows inevitably from the fact that his impotence is a moral and voluntary one. It is highly important that we should be brought to see, feel and own that our spiritual helplessness is culpable, for until we do so we shall never truly justify God nor condemn ourselves. To realize oneself to be equally "without strength" and "without excuse" is deeply humiliating, and fallen man will strive with all his might to stifle such a conviction and deny the truth of it. Yet until we place the blame of our sinfulness where it really belongs, we shall not, we cannot, either vindicate the righteousness of the divine law or appreciate the marvelous grace made known in the gospel. To condemn ourselves as God condemns us is the one prerequisite to establish our title to salvation in Christ. John Newton wrote: We cannot ascribe too much to the grace of God; but we should be careful that, under a semblance of exalting His grace, we do not furnish the slothful and unfaithful (Matt. 25: 16) with excuses for their willfulness and wickedness. God is gracious; but let man be justly responsible for his own evil and not presume to state his case so as would, by just consequence, represent the holy God as being the cause of the sin which He hates and forbids.

That was indeed a timely word. Unfortunately, some who claim to be great admirers of Newton's works have sadly failed to uphold the responsibility of the sinner, and have so expressed his spiritual inability as to furnish him with much excuse for his sloth and infidelity. Only by insisting on the criminality of fallen man's impotence can such a deplorable snare be avoided. Inexorably as man's criminality attaches to his free agency in the committing of sin, yet the sinner will strive with might and main to avoid such a conclusion and seek to throw the blame on someone else. He will haughtily ask, "Would any right-minded person blame a man whose arms had been broken because he could no longer perform manual labor, or condemn a blind man because he did not read? Then why should I be held guilty for not performing spiritual duties which are altogether beyond my powers?" To this difficulty several replies may be made: (1) There is no analogy in the cases advanced. Broken arms and sightless eyes are incompetent members; but the intellectual and moral faculties have not been destroyed, and it is because of misuse of these that the sinner is justly held culpable. (2) Not only does he fail to use his moral faculties in the performing of spiritual good, but he employs them in the doing of moral evil; and the excuse that he cannot help himself is an idle one. Apply that principle to the commercial transactions of society, and what would be the result? A man contracts a debt within the compass of his present financial ability to meet. He then perversely and wickedly squanders his money and gambles away his property, so that he is no longer able to pay what he owes. Is he therefore not bound to pay? Has his reckless prodigality freed him from all moral obligation to discharge his debts? Must justice break her scales and no more hold an equal balance because he chooses to be a villain? No indeed; unregenerate men would not allow such reasoning. To this it may be objected, "I did not bring this depravity upon myself, but was born with it. If my heart is altogether evil and I did not make it so, if such a heart was given me without my choice and consent, then how can I be to blame for its inevitable issues and actions?" Such a question betrays the fact that a wicked heart is regarded as a calamity which man did not choose, but which must be endured. It is contemplated as a thing not at all faulty in its own nature; if there is any blame attaching to it, it must be for something previous to it and of quite another kind. A person born diseased is not personally to blame, but if the

disease is the result of his own indiscretion it is a just retribution. But to reason thus about sin is utterly erroneous, as if it were no sin to be a sinner or to commit sin when one has an inclination to do so, but to bring a sinful predisposition upon oneself would be a wicked thing. Stripped of all disguise and ambiguity, the above objection amounts to this: Adam was in reality the only sinner; and we, his miserable offspring, being by nature depraved, are under a necessity of sinning, therefore cannot be to blame for it. The fact that sin itself is sinful is lost sight of. Scripture traces all our evil acts back to a sinful heart, and teaches that this is a blamable thing in itself. A depraved heart is a moral thing, being something quite different from a weak head, a bad memory or a frail constitution. A man is not to blame for these infirmities, providing he has not brought them upon himself. To say that I cannot help hating God and opposing my neighbor, and that therefore I am not to blame for doing so, certainly makes me out to be a vile and insensible scoundrel. In order for a fallen creature to be blameworthy for his evil tendencies, it is not necessary that he should first be virtuous or free from moral corruption. If a person now finds that he is a sinner, and that from the heart he approves and chooses rebellion against God and His law, he is not the less a sinner because he has been of the same disposition for many years and has always sinned from his birth. His having sinned from the beginning, and having done nothing else, cannot be a legitimate excuse for sinning now. Nor is man's guilt the less because sin is so deeply and so thoroughly fixed in his heart. The stronger the enmity against God, the greater its heinousness. Disinclination Godward is the very essence of depravity. When we rightly define the nature of man's inability to do good—namely, a moral and a voluntary inability (not the absence of faculties, but the misuse of them) —then this excuse of blamelessness is at once exposed. But the carnal mind will still object. We are natively no other way than God has made us; therefore if we are born sinful and God has created us thus, then He, not ourselves, is the Author of sin. To such awful lengths is the enmity of the carnal mind capable of going: shifting the onus from his own guilty shoulders and throwing the blame upon the thrice holy God. But this objection was earlier obviated. God made man upright, but he apostatized. Man ruined himself. God endowed each of us with rationality, with a conscience, with a will to refuse the evil and choose the good. It is by the free exercise of our faculties that we sin, and we have no more justification for transferring the guilt from ourselves to someone else than Adam had to blame Eve or Eve the serpent. But is it consistent with the divine perfections to bring mankind into the world under such handicapped and wretched circumstances? "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom. 9:20). It is blasphemous to say that it is not consistent with the divine perfections for God to do what in fact He does. It is a matter of fact that we are born into the world destitute of the moral image of God, ignorant of Him, insensible of His infinite glory. It is a plain matter of fact that in consequence of this deprivation we are disposed to love ourselves supremely, live to ourselves ultimately, and wholly delight in what is not of God. And it is clearly evident that this tendency is in direct contrariety to God's holy law and is exceedingly sinful. Whether or not we can see the justice and wisdom of this divine providence, we must remember that God is "holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works." But how can the sinner possibly be to blame for his evil inclination when it was Adam who corrupted human nature? The sinner is an enemy to the infinitely glorious God, and that voluntarily; therefore he is infinitely to blame and without excuse, for nothing can make it right for a creature to be deliberately hostile to his Creator. Nothing can possibly extenuate such a crime. Such hostility is in its own nature infinitely wrong, and therefore the sinner stands guilty before God. The very fact that in the day of judgment every mouth will be stopped (Rom. 3:19) shows there is no validity or force to this objection. It is for the acting out of his nature—instead of its mortifying—that the sinner is held accountable. The fact that we are born traitors to God cannot cancel our obligation to give Him allegiance. No man can escape from the righteous requirements of law by a voluntary opposition to it. The fact that man's sinful nature is the

direct consequence of Adam's transgression does not in the slightest degree make it any less his own sin or render him any less blameworthy. This is clear not only from the justice of the principle of representation (Adam's acting as our federal head), but also from the fact that each of us approves of Adam's transgression by emulating his example, joining ourselves with him in rebellion against God. That we go on to break the covenant of works and disobey the divine law demonstrates that we are righteously condemned with Adam. Because each descendant of Adam voluntarily prolongs and perpetuates in himself the evil inclination originated by his first parents, he is doubly guilty. If not, why do we not repudiate Adam and refuse to sin—stand out in opposition to him, and be holy? If we resent our being corrupted through Adam, why not break the involvement of sin? But let us turn from these objections to the positive side of our subject. The Scriptures uniformly teach that fallen man's moral and voluntary inability is a criminal one, that God justly holds him guilty both for his depraved state and for all his sinful actions. So plain is this, so abundantly evidenced, that there is little need for us to labor the point. The first three chapters of Romans are expressly devoted to this solemn theme. There it is declared, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (1:18). The reason for this is given in verses 19-20, ending with the inexorable sentence "They are without excuse." Chapter 2 opens with "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man," and in 3:19 the apostle shows that the ruling of the divine law is such that, in the day to come, "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." The criminality of the sinner's depravity and moral impotence is clearly brought out in Matthew 25:14-30. The general design of that parable is easily perceived. The "lord" of the servants signifies the Creator as the Owner and Governor of this world. The "servants" represent mankind in general. The different "talents" depict the faculties and powers with which God has endowed us, the privileges and advantages by which He distinguishes one person from another. The two servants who faithfully improved their talents picture the righteous who serve God with fidelity. The slothful and unfaithful servant portrays the sinner, who entirely neglects the service of God and blames Him rather than himself for his negligence. His grievance in verses 24-25 expresses the feelings of every impenitent sinner, who complains that God requires from him (holiness) what He has not given to him (a holy heart). This servant's condemnation was on the ground that he did not improve what he did have (v. 27)—his rational faculties and moral powers. "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness" (v. 30) shows the justice of his condemnation. EXCUSES OF NATURAL MAN The excuse that we cannot help being so perverse is further ruled out of court by Christ's declarations to the scribes and Pharisees. They had no heart either for Christ or His doctrine. He told them plainly, "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word" (John 8:43). But their inability was no excuse for them in His accounting, for He affirmed that all their impotence rose from their evil hearts, their lack of a holy makeup: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will [desire to] do" (v. 44). Though they had no more power to help themselves than we have, and were no more able to transform their hearts than we are, nevertheless our Lord judged them to be wholly to blame and altogether inexcusable, saying of them, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have . . . [no excuse] for their sin (John 15:22). Let it be specifically pointed out that when Scripture affirms the inability of a man to do good, it never does so by way of excuse. Thus, when Jehovah asked Israel, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23), it was not for the purpose of mitigating their guilt, but with the object of showing how it aggravated their obstinacy of heart and to evince that no external means could effect their recovery. Just as likely was an Ethiopian to be moved by exhortation to change the color of his skin as were rebels against God to be moved by appeals to renounce their iniquities. "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not

believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:45-47). Those cutting interrogations of our Lord proceeded on the supposition that His listeners could have received the teaching of Christ if it had been agreeable to their corrupt nature; it being otherwise, they could not understand or receive it. In like manner, when He affirmed, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," Christ did not intimate that any natural man honestly desired to come to Him, but was deterred from doing so against his will; rather, He meant that man is incapable of freely doing that which is inconsistent with his corruptions. They were averse to come to the holy Redeemer because they were in love with sin. The excuse that I cannot help doing wrong is worthless. To plead my inability to do good simply because I lack the heart to do it would be laughed out of court even among men. Does anyone suppose that only the lack of a will to earn his living excuses a man from doing so, just as bodily

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