nion that free will, by its own natural force and efficacy, though it could not complete, could at least commence, Christian or religious works, without the assistance of grace.

To such of our readers as are acquainted with ecclesias­tical history, it is unnecessary to remark, that this was one of the leading tenets of the Semipelagians. But Melanc- thon did not stop here. It is true, that, in order to keep well with the reformers, he was obliged, in those public in­struments which he drew up, to insinuate rather than avow his partiality for the doctrine of free will, the exercise of which, we see, he confined, in the Confession of Augsburg, to such actions merely as regarded civil life and our duties to society. In the Saxon Confession of Faith, however, he proceeds a step farther, and says, “ that the will is free ; that God neither wishes for, nor approves, nor co-operates in the production of sin ; but that the free will of man and of the devils is the true cause of their sin and of their fall.” Many, no doubt, will be of opinion, that Melancthon merits praise for having thus corrected Luther, and for having more clearly expressed his own opinion, than he had done in the Confession of Augsburg. He even proceeds farther, and extends the exercise of free will to religious or Chris­tian works. For after having explained in the Saxon Con­fession of Faith the nature of free will, and the manner in which it makes a choice, and having also shown that it is not of itself sufficient in those works, or actions, which re­gard a future life, he affirms twice “ that the will, even after having received the influence of the Holy Spirit, does not remain idle that is to say, it is not merely passive under the influence of grace, but can reject it, or co-operate with it, at pleasure. Necessity, it is true, obliged him to ex­press his opinion rather obscurely. But what he insinuates only in these last-quoted words, is clearly and fully express­ed in one of his letters to Calvin. “ 1 had,” says he, “ a friend who, in reasoning upon predestination, believed equally the two following things ; namely, that every thing happens among men as it is ordained by Providence, but that there is, nevertheless, a contingency in actions or in events. He confessed, however, that he was unable to reconcile these two things. For my part,” continues Melancthon, “ who am of opinion that God neither wishes for nor is the cause of sin, I acknowledge this contingcncy in the feebleness of our judgment, in order that the ignorant may confess that David fell of himself, and voluntarily, into sin ; that he had it in his power to preserve the grace of the Holy Spirit which he had within him ; and that in this com­bat or trial it is necessary to acknowledge some exercise or action of the will.”@@1 This opinion he confirms and illus­trates by a passage from St Basil, where he says, “ Have but the will or the inclination, and God is with you.” By these words Melancthon seems to insinuate, that the will is not only active in the works of religion, but even begins them without grace. This, however, was not the meaning of St Basil, as is evident from several other parts of his writings; but tl∣3t it was the opinion of Melancthon, ap­pears fully from this passage, as well as from that which we have cited from the Confession of Augsburg, in which he insinuates that the error is not in saying that the will can of itself commence, but in thinking that it can, without grace, finish or complete religious or Christian works. Thus it appears, that he considered the will as capable of reject- mg the influence of grace, since he declares, that David could preserve the Holy Spirit when he lost it, as well as he could lose it when he kept it within him. But although this was his decided opinion, he durst not avow it fully in the Saxon Confession of Faith, but was obliged to content himself with insinuating it gently in these\* words : “The will, even after receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit, is

not idle or without action.” All this precaution, however, was insufficient to save Melancthon from censure. Fran- cowitz, better known by the name of Illyricus, being jea­lous of him, and his enemy, by his influence with his party procured the condemnation of these words of the Saxon Confession, and of the passage from St Basil, at two synods held by the reformers. At the same time that one party of the Lutherans were unwilling to adopt Melancthon’s opi­nion, “ that the will is not passive when under the influence of grace,” we are at a loss to think how\* they could deny it, since they almost unanimously confess, that a person under the influence of grace may reject and lose it. This opinion is avowed in the Confession of Augsburg and in Melanc­thon’s Apology. It was even, long after that, decided upon anew, inculcated strongly in their book of Concord, and brought frequently against them by their opponents as a proof of inconsistency and contradiction.

These are not the only instances in which the Luthe­rans were charged with Semipelagian principles. One of the ablest and the most learned of their opponents, we can­not help thinking, had in more than one instance made good the charge against them. To prove this we need only refer to the remarks that have been made on the eight celebrated propositions in the third book of Concord, relative to the co-operation of the will with grace. Accord­ing to the first seven of these propositions, an attentive lis­tening to the preaching of the word of God produces grace; and according to the fifth, any man, even a libertine or an infidel, is free, or has it in his power, to listen attentively to the preaching of the word of God. He has it then in his power to give to himself that which to him is produc­tive of grace, and may thus be the sole author of his own conversion or regeneration. In the eighth proposition it is affirmed, that we are not permitted to doubt that the grace of the Holy Spirit, even though it may not be felt, does ac­company an attentive hearing of the word of God; and, to do away every doubt about the species of attention which they mean, we must observe, that they speak of attention inasmuch as it precedes the grace of the Holy Spirit, and of that attention which, in consequence of its dependence on free will, we have it in our power to bestow upon the word or not, just as we please. It is the exercise of this free attention which they say operates grace. But here it would seem that they were in extremes ; for, as they said, upon the one hand, that when the Holy Spirit begins to move us we act not nt all, so they maintained, on the other, that this operation of the Holy Spirit, which converts us without any co-operation on our part, is necessarily attend­ant upon an act of our wills, in which the Holy Spirit has no share, and in which our liberty acts purely by its natural force or power. Such of our readers as are anxious to ex­amine the progress of the Pelagian and Semipclagian prin­ciples after the dawn of the Reformation, we must refer to the works of the principal reformers and to those of their adversaries, as well as to the different writers upon eccle­siastical history.

SEMIRAMIS, queen of Assyria, reigned about five ge­nerations before Nitocris, and constructed some wonderful works to restrain the waters of the Euphrates within its banks. Diodorus gives a more detailed account of her, which is copied principally from Ctesias. Omitting the fa­bulous statements respecting her youth, we there find that she had a son, Ninyas, from Ninus ; and that after her hus­band’s death she thought herself capable of governing the empire. She founded the city of Babylon, which she sur­rounded by walls of immense strength, and adorned by very wonderful buildings. On the top of the temple of Belus she placed three statues of massive gold, and from

@@@1 See Calvin's Letters.