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ARTICLE I.

THEOLOGY OF THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.

God's Way of Peace. By the Rev. H. BONAR. Richmond:
Presbyterian Committee of Publication. 1870.

Muller's Life of Trust. Edited by WAYLAND. Boston: 1870.

Notes on Genesis. By C. H. M., of Dublin. Inglis & Colles:
New York.

Scripture Testimony. Edited by CHARLES CAMPBELL. James
Inglis & Co.: New York.

A Word to Young Believers. By W. DER. B. Dublin Tract
Society.

The Return of the Lord Jesus. By J. G. BELLET. Dublin
Tract Society.

Waymarks in the Wilderness. Inglis & Colles: New York.
8 vols., 12mo.

The Witness. James Inglis & Co.: New York.

Who are the Plymouth Brethren? Mrs. H. GRATTAN GUINNESS.
Philadelphia: 1861.

Attentive observers have not failed to note, that for the last
twenty years a modified phase of the "Doctrines of Grace" has
been presented in the Calvinistic Churches of Great Britain and
America; and this movement is easily traced to the sect (if that
may be called a sect which has no recognised bond) named at
the head of this article. The reader will readily grant that no

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great uniformity or consistency is to be expected in a company of Christians whose fundamental principles repudiate the divine authority for any catholic visible Church, the existence of a regular order of ordained ministers, and the use of all authoritative creeds. Their common traits can amount to no more than a species of prevalent complexion. Nobody among them is responsible for anything, unless he has been found doing or saying it himself. Hence there arises an unavoidable difficulty in dealing with their system; and description or conviction can only approximate a correct application to individuals. There is also a large number of religious teachers in the other Evangelical Churches, who, without actual separation, have adopted the chief doctrinal views of the Plymouth Brethren, and are in sympathy with their spirit. Still, the features of the common family resemblance can be drawn with general accuracy.

To return to the sect itself, it is said to have originated with the eccentric movements of the Rev. John Darby, an excellent minister of the Anglican Church, about forty years ago. This zealous man having been constrained to repudiate the prelatial figment of an apostolic succession, went to the extreme of discarding all regular ordination and visible church order. Forsaking the English Establishment, he began to preach as a missionary in England, and in time, with the converts and evangelists whom he gathered around him, spread his opinions from that country to Ireland, France, Switzerland, and America. The name given by the outside world to the sect is derived from Plymouth, England, where their strongest and one of their earliest meetings existed. If they can be said to have any form of church government, it can only be termed a rudimental independency. For Darby and his brethren supposed that the Scriptures recognised no such government, no regular power of ordination in any human hand, and no authority in any church court. But it is proper that believers meet for worship only, in congregations, to prepare for Christ's second advent, which they supposed to be near at hand. Their usual characteristics are the preaching of the doctrines of grace with what they claim to be unusual faithfulness and freeness, adult baptism, absolutely

unrestricted lay preaching, and lay administration of sacraments, weekly communions in the Lord's Supper, the denial of all human creeds, and a passionate attachment to the doctrine of Christ's premillennial advent. The sagacious reader will hardly need to be told that these principles have, as was to be anticipated, produced a fruitful harvest of divisions and schisms among the brethren themselves. The Rev. Mr. Darby himself has ostracised and been ostracised by the larger part of his followers in England, who could not endure the stringent, autocratic rule of this reformer, who denied all ecclesiastical rule; and he has some time ago shaken off the dust from his feet against his rebellious native land, and confined his labors chiefly to the Continent. The Bethesda congregation of Bristol, famous for the presidency of the pious George Müller, has separated itself both from Darby and his adversary-brother, Newton. The Rev. James Inglis, of New York, their chief doctrinal representative in the United States, who was, we believe, first a Calvinistic Immersionist, and then a Plymouth Brother, seems to have been discarded by a part of the Brotherhood. The sect has been, perhaps, most favorably represented in this country by the amiable and pious lay-preacher, H. Grattan Guinness, Esq., whose accomplished wife has given to the American world a friendly view of the Brotherhood. But the periodicals and books by which their opinions are most known are those which proceed from the press of Inglis & Co., of New York. These have obtained such currency that they are frequently spoken of as "The Inglis Literature," and the views of doctrine as "the Inglis Theology."

The better part of this sect, among whom we willingly include the names mentioned above, may be said to be characterised by many admirable and by some mischievous qualities. To the former we wish to do full justice. They profess to hold forth the doctrines of grace with peculiar simplicity, scripturalness, and freeness; and in many cases we can gladly accord that praise to them, and thank them for the clear light in which they set the sufficiency of Christ, the simplicity of faith, and the privileges of the believer's adoption, and for the fidelity with which they expose the covert self-righteousness of a half-gospel.

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Many of them also deserve all praise for the strength of their faith, the holiness of their lives, their alms-givings, and the disinterestedness of their missionary zeal. But, as we shall aim to evince, these excellent virtues are marred by a denunciatory spirit towards those who do not utter their 'shibboleth,' and by a one-sidedness and exaggeration of doctrinal statement, which has resulted in not a few positive errors. Not seldom are they found condemning the Reformed denominations for forsaking the true doctrines of faith and justification, when they themselves give us, in their better moments, the very same views of these truths which we hold and preach. In many cases they contradict themselves and the Scriptures by the extravagance with which a favorite point is pushed. But we especially desire to caution the reader against their tendencies in the following directions: Their wresting of the doctrine of faith and assurance, and entire depreciation of all subjective marks of a state of grace; their denial of the imputation of Christ's active obedience; their disavowal (in some places) of progressive sanctification, confusion of justification and sanctification, and assertion of a dual nature in the regenerate, suggesting to the incautious the worst results of Antinomianism; their partial adoption of a fanatical theory of the warrant for prayer; and their ultraism upon the pre-advent theory, resulting in a depreciation of the being, duties, and hopes of the visible Church, and of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost.

In the discussion of these charges, the traits of exaggeration and inconsistency which have been imputed to them will be abundantly evinced.

As disconnected specimens, the reader may, by anticipation, take the following: "Notes on Genesis," page 39, pervert the words that Adam and Eve knew good and evil after they transgressed, as teaching that then only they acquired a *conscience!* The argument is, that they could not have had a judgment of the moral distinction until they had *experience* of both kinds of acts. How, then, can God have a conscience? Or, if it be said he is omniscient, have the elect angels a conscience? Again, the Scripture tells us that "God made man upright, and he

sought out many inventions." A curious uprightness this, without a conscience!

On pages 69 and 74, we seem to be taught that Christians ought not to improve or ameliorate the state of this earth, which God has been pleased to put under his curse. Such lives as those of Jethro Tull, Sir Jno. Sinclair, Jesse Buel, of Albany, etc., are then unchristian!

On page 271, Jacob is greatly condemned, because, having prayed for deliverance from his angry brother, he used prudent precautions to protect his family. The author thinks "prayer and planning" very inconsistent. Bible Christians expect God to answer through means. Their maxim is: "Trust in providence, and keep your powder dry."

On page 153, the author denies all vicarious worth to all Christ's sufferings and works, save his pangs on the cross. His aim seems to be to show a valid reason why the sufferings of believers, in imitation of their Head, are not propitiatory. To us this seems a very bungling way of reaching that conclusion at the expense of contradicting the Scriptures, when reasons so much more valid might have been presented, in the fact that a believer's nature and person lack all those properties which fitted Christ to be a substitute and sacrifice.

I. In the "*Waymarks in the Wilderness*," Vol. VIII., pp. 1-26, is a narrative of the labors of Dr. Cæsar Malan, of Geneva, founded on his biography by his son. The peculiarities of that excellent man are defended throughout; and his son is rebuked for not defending them all. The well known tracts, in which Malan's peculiar views of the nature of saving faith were taught, are commended without reserve. Indeed, we believe that these treatises, and especially the one entitled "*Little Foxes*," have always been favorites with those who sympathise with the doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren. The source of this error is no doubt that doctrine concerning faith, which the first Reformers, as Luther and Calvin, were led to adopt, from their opposition to the hateful and tyrannical teachings of Rome. This mother of abominations denies to Christians all true assurance of hope, teaching that it is neither edifying nor attainable. Her purpose

is clear ; the soul justified by free grace, and assured of its union to Christ, would no longer be a practicable subject for priest-craft and spiritual despotism. These noble Reformers seeing the bondage and misery imposed by this teaching upon sincere souls, flew to the opposite extreme, and (to use the language of theology) asserted that the assurance of hope is of the essence of saving faith. Thus says Calvin in his Commentary on Romans: "My faith is a divine and spiritual belief that God has pardoned and accepted *me*." According to these divines, it is not enough for a penitent soul to embrace with all its powers the gracious truth: "Whosoever believeth shall be saved," while yet its consciousness of exercising a full faith is confused, and remaining anxieties about its own salvation mar its peace. Such an act of soul is not admitted by them to be even a true yet weak faith; they hold that until the believer is assured that *Christ has saved HIM*, there is no exercise of saving faith at all. This old error is evidently the source of Dr. Malan's view of faith, which, as visitors to Geneva twenty years ago remember, he was so sure to obtrude upon all comers. Now our Plymouth Brethren and their sympathisers have a contempt and mistrust for great ecclesiastical names and church authorities, which prevents their employing the recognised nomenclature of historical theology on this and many other subjects. Hence they prefer to express their peculiarities in terms of their own, less discriminating than the old. We do not find them indeed deciding that "the assurance of hope is of the essence of a true saving faith;" but we find them in substance reviving this extravagance of the first Reformers, and pressing its corollaries. Thus, if such is the nature of the assurance of hope, it is grounded in no rational inference, but it must be a primitive act of consciousness. Again, if this assurance is of the essence of faith in its first and its every acting, then all means employed by the believer on himself for its increment, all self-examination to discover whether "Christ is in us, or whether we be reprobates," all subjective marks of a true work of grace in us, are worthless, and indeed absurd. We accordingly find Dr. Malan applauded, (*Waymarks in the Wilderness*, Vol. VIII., p. 3), when he asked Dr. Osten-

tag, "Are you one of the elect?" "and pressed him not to rest his assurance of salvation on the sandy foundation of his own feelings and sentiments, or on anything in himself." Although the Rev. H. Bonar is a Scotch Presbyterian, yet his ardent sympathy with these religionists in the matter of pre-adventism, leads even him in his little work, "*God's Way of Peace*," to some most one-sided and ill-judged statements. Thus, pp. 23, 24: "The peace or confidence which comes from summing up the good points of our character, and thinking of our good feelings and doings, or about our faith, love, and repentance, must be made up of pride." . . . "It does not mend the matter to say, that we look at these good feelings in us as the Spirit's work, not our own." "Peace does not arise from *thinking about* the change wrought in us; but *unconsciously and involuntarily* from the change itself." On p. 34, the inquirer is rebuked for thinking "that unbelief is some evil principle requiring to be uprooted before the gospel will be of any use to him." We then have these most inadequate and misleading definitions of unbelief and faith; that the former is "a good opinion of one's self, and a bad opinion of God;" and the latter *vice versa*, a bad opinion of self, and a good opinion of God. On p. 39, the object of the Spirit's work is . . . "not to produce in us certain feelings, the consciousness of which will make us think better of ourselves, and give us confidence towards God." Here we have first a denial of the truth, and then a caricature of it. In "*Waymarks, etc.*," Vol. III., pp. 245-263, is found a treatise on "Assurance of Faith," (by which the writer means *assurance of hope*). In this article, Jonathan Edwards's "Treatise on the Religious Affections" is scouted as not only useless, but mischievous; and the drift of the writer is to ignore all self-examination and cultivation of spiritual discernment as means of strengthening faith and hope. On p. 258, we find the following astonishing travesty of the truth: "The *object* and *cause* of faith is the testimony of God and demonstration of the Spirit; but if we appropriate the mercy of God in Christ upon evidences in ourselves, faith and the testimony of God on which it rests are made void. For the marks so used must be such as, we

our Reformed pulpits, and set down in our symbols, save that theirs' have not the symmetry and scriptural accuracy of statements which our church teachers have given to our statements; and save that this Witness theology is continually contradicting itself and the Scripture by its exaggerations and perversions. We are told that the ministers who have imbibed these opinions are much in the habit of saying that the gospel has not been preached in its purity in our time, except by them; and that it is another gospel which is usually heard in our pulpits. This is a type of modesty which church history teaches us is a pretty sure sign of doctrinal defection. Another characteristic of the Witness theology is, to disparage all church teachers and church authorities who have reputation or influence, and to represent their human learning, pious writings, and fame, as simply a corrupting bane. These writers take great pleasure in admonishing us of this fact, and cautioning us, that if we would get at the real truth, we must roundly discard and condemn all the writers whom the Church has revered, (except their set!) and go direct to the Bible. Now all this species of talk is set in a sufficiently ridiculous light by one word. What are *they* aspiring to be, when they print these books, save to become human church teachers, to acquire influence over believers' minds, to have authority with them? Do they go to all this trouble, designing to have everybody neglect or reject their "witness"? We trow not. Or will they say they write only to teach believers the true meaning of the Bible? Well; no Reformed divine ever professed anything else. And by what patent of sincerity shall these late writers claim that they alone are honest in such professions? The fact is, that no uninspired church teacher is infallible; but yet they have their use; which use (in the case of these writers, and the wiser fathers of the Reformation who have preceded them,) is proportioned to their honesty, modesty, learning, and correspondence with the infallible word. But there is another fact, that the tone of consciousness we note is a symptom of an unhealthy mind; and that sensible people will not be very forward to adopt the writers who betray it as their special guides.

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As we wish wholly to avoid the exaggerations which we lament in the "Plymouth theology," we begin our exposition of the true doctrine of faith and assurance by repeating the admission already made. The overweening attempt to ground our hope on introspection may involve self-righteous illusions; and if it does not, to the truly humble, it is likely to bring little comfort. "The view to be urged upon the weak and doubting believer is, that he has the same grounds as the strong assured Christian, for all his glorious hopes, if he only exercised that believer's faith. *He* does not ground his assurance primarily upon his gifts, his sanctity, his zeal, his abundant labors for Christ. He does not trust in himself, but in the simple word of his Saviour; and he has fuller comfort than this weak Christian, not because he claims the credit of more works and graces, but simply because he exercises a stronger faith. St. Paul usually makes the abundance of his labors for Christ, not the *cause*, but the *result* of the assurance of hope. Perhaps some one may object that this is virtually to urge an Antinomian dependence; for he who does not find the fruits of holy living in himself has no right to an assurance of his interest in Christ. True. To conclude that you have hitherto been in Christ, while lacking the fruits of holiness which result from union to him, is Antinomianism. But to make this past absence of fruits a reason for projecting your mistrust into the future, this is legalism and unbelief. You weak Christian would say to an unbeliever, paralysed by his mistrust from taking Christ's yoke, that his lack of comfort and other regenerate experiences might be very good proof that he *had been hitherto* an unrenewed sinner; but that it was sheer unbelief and sin to make his miserable past experience a ground for doubting and rejecting Christ's full and free salvation offered to faith. You, our weak brother, would require him to believe *in order to* experience the Christian graces. You did not indeed encourage him to believe that he was already reconciled while disobedient; but you told him that he might assuredly be reconciled and obedient in believing. So we reply to your discouragements, 'be not afraid, only believe,' and your joys and graces shall assuredly, in God's good time, follow as the *fruits*, and not as

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the roots of faith." The above we read from a practical sermon of one of our ordinary Presbyterian pastors, penned by him before he ever read a line of the Plymouth theology.

But now, on the other hand, it is sheer exaggeration to say, as we have seen Dr. Bonar, and the "Waymarks," write, that assurance of hope cannot derive any of its comfort from the discovery of gracious principles and acts in ourselves, without forsaking faith and building on self-righteousness. Let the reader review our citations above. They *contradict Scripture, experience, and precepts*. And we take great pleasure in staking our issue on this test; because these writers cry so loudly, "To the Bible alone!" Thus, then, we find the apostle expressly *commanding* Christians to seek their assurance of being in Christ, partly in that very way, which these writers condemn as legalism and the very antithesis of faith. 1 Cor. ii. 28: "But let a man *examine himself*, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Why? Because "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, (the very point to be settled by the examination,) eateth and drinketh judgment to himself." 2 Cor. xiii. 5: "Examine yourselves, *whether ye be in the faith*; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Pet. i. 10: "Give diligence to assure yourselves of your calling and election." Rom. v. 4: "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed." Again we find the Bible saints testing the nature of their faith, and their title to a union with Christ, by their subjective affections and principles. Ps. cxix. 6: "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments." 1 John iii. 14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." 1 John v. 2: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." 1 John 3. 19: "And hereby" (viz., by the fact that we love in deed and in truth—*i. e.* by our works!) "we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." So, 1 John ii. 3. And, chiefly, 1 John iii. 22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we

keep his commandments," etc. Once more: we find the Scriptures full of marks or tests of a gracious state; such as that of our Saviour in John xv. 14: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you;" or of James ii. 20: Faith without works is dead." The laying down of these marks evidently implies that believers are to apply them to themselves; and by that means, rationally, scripturally and spiritually ascertain the spuriousness or genuineness of their union to Christ.

Now does it not seem strange that readers of the Bible should impinge so rashly against scriptures so familiar and plain as these? The explanation is to be found in one-sidedness of temper; the overweening desire to push a pet idea (the immediate peace emerging out of the vigorous acting of simple faith) has made them blind to the fact that they had pushed it out of "the proportion of the faith," and the limits of truth. The truth is, that not only faith, but love, filial obedience, true repentance, Christian patience, forgiveness, (see Galatians v. 22, 23,) etc., are fruits, and so, *marks*, of God's sovereign new birth in the soul. The only difference as to the matter in hand, is, that faith is related to the rest as a seminal grace. The truth is, that the same God who has told us that true faith saves us, has also told us that these subjective graces are signs of a saved state. Here appears strongly the extravagance of the assertion, that the Christian has forsaken faith when he tries to ascertain by such *criteria* that he is a favorite of God. (*Waymarks*, Vol. III., p. 258). How on earth can a modest believer be justly charged with forsaking the testimony of God, *because he believes God* testifying that such or such a mark is a sure sign of spiritual life? It is as much a part of the divine testimony as this, "that the life is in his Son." But the "*Waymarks*" object: unless the *criteria* are infallible, the whole process is vicious. We reply, very true. But to the believing soul whom God endows (by his union to Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost) with *spiritual discernment*, the scriptural *criteria* are infallible. And it is a most inconsistent thing in writers who profess to exalt the doctrines of grace, thus to ignore the grace of spiritual discernment, as though it had no place in the regene-

rate soul, unless possibly as to the single grace of faith. It is objected: self-deceivers self-righteously fancy that they find in themselves these subjective marks in their frames and works. We reply, so they do; *and so most notoriously do they often fancy that they taste the immediate peace of believing.* Where is the genuine believer's safeguard? The Scriptures reply: in that grace of spiritual discernment which the Holy Ghost graciously gives to them, enabling them to distinguish *their faith*, and all their other graces and works from the counterfeits. Dr. Bonar would have the whole matter decided by simple consciousness. "When we move, we are conscious of moving. So when we believe, we must be conscious of believing." And so, accepting the testimony of God, that he that believeth is safe; *that*, according to him, is the end of the matter, and the whole of it. This short view is solved by a very simple remark. There is a spurious, as well as a genuine faith. *Every man, when he thinks he believes, is conscious of exercising what he thinks is faith.* Such is the correct statement of these facts of consciousness. Now suppose the faith, of which the man is conscious, turns out a spurious faith, must not his be a spurious consciousness? And he, being without the illumination of the Spirit, will be in the dark as to its hollowness. But if Dr. Bonar's ideas are to be judged by his other declarations on the same subject, it is vain for us to hope that any rational light of scriptural truth, applied by the Holy Ghost, can avail here to save anybody from the cheat; for he tells us that the peace "does not arise from the change wrought in us; but *unconsciously and involuntarily from the change itself.*" In fact, these writers, after warning us very properly against mixing human philosophy with the theology of redemption, turn around and give us a philosophy of their own, to which plain Scriptures must be wrested. The only difference between them and other philosophic theologians is, that theirs is a false psychology, unscriptural, and so unphilosophical. For the psychology of common sense always agrees with the Scripture. Dr. Bonar evidently regards *consciousness* as a *supra-rational* (if not a non-rational) faculty. The truth is, that consciousness, just as much as the logical understanding, is a

rational faculty. The only difference is, that its acts are *primary* acts of the reason; while the logical deduction is a *secondary* or derived act of the reason. These writers will have the Christian's peace built, in no degree, upon any derived or deductive rational act of soul from subjective *criteria* however scriptural. They cannot away with it. Why? Their psychology virtually replies: Because the peace comes directly from the consciousness of faith going out of self to Christ; and consciousness (like "the animal sense of departed pain and present ease," Dr. Bonar's own most vicious and false analogy,) is supra-rational. Digest their philosophy of the matter, and it comes to this. How short and plain is this refutation, in which both common sense and Scripture concur, viz.: Our whole salvation is instrumentally by the Truth. But truth only acts on man's rationality. Hence, the whole process of salvation, however spiritual, must also be truly rational. The quickest consciousness which the soul has of its own faith (or other gracious acts) is yet truly rational, only it is an immediate primary act of reason. Hence there is no absurdity whatever, but the most perfect consistency in the Scriptures representing such consciousnesses as cohering with, and strengthened by, the deductions of the reason, as guided by the Spirit's illumination from subjective marks and scriptural premises.

But let us return to the other branch of the objection: that to draw any confidence of hope from graces which we perceive wrought in us, is self-confidence, in other words, self-righteousness. Now to a plain mind it does seem a most astonishing and perverse argument, when the whole encouragement of hope which the believer infers hence is inferred from this premise, viz., that he could never work those graces in himself; but, if they are in him, they were wrought by sovereign and gratuitous power. The question to be rationally, scripturally, and spiritually argued is this: Is Christ my friend? The sober believer reasons thus: "Yes, Christ is my friend," (conclusion,) "because I find in myself changes which he alone can work," (premise,) "and changes which only his unbought love prompted him to work." How this is self-confidence, or self-righteousness, or

how it leads to boasting, passes the comprehension of a plain man. But as Dr. Malan insinuates, to place any of our confidence of hope thus, is building it on a sandy foundation. Why? The Papist would answer, (very logically for him,) "Because these subjective graces are all mutable as well as imperfect." We ask, Do the Witness theologians believe in *the perseverance of the saints*? They loudly declare, yes! Then these subjective marks, if truly distinguished by the believer's spiritual discernment, through the witnessing of the Holy Ghost, are not a "foundation of sand," but of rock; for they are *God's peculiar work*, and the believer is arguing precisely as Paul does (Phil. i. 6), "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

The sum of this matter then is this: That we cannot object to the believer's "examining himself whether he is in the faith" by his subjective marks, on the pretext that many have abused the process to self-righteousness or despair; for God has commanded it and laid down the marks. And it is by this self-examination, coupled with contrition, confessing and forsaking of the defects detected, renewed acts of faith (thus strengthening itself by exercise) and watchfulness and holy living, that the true though weak faith of the beginner grows to the assured faith of the mature Christian. Yet faith also is a characteristic Christian grace—it is thus itself a mark of a gracious state—it is a grace of prime importance, bearing a seminal relation to all the others, so that if it be present they cannot be wholly absent. Hence we are glad to recognise this further truth, that the weakest babe in Christ, not yet conscious of any decisive action of the other graces, does derive, through his own consciousness of faith, some peace and hope, preserving him from absolute despair even in his most anxious moments. (See Conf. of Faith, Ch. XVIII., § 4.) But we do not describe this first reflex act of faith as Bonar's inconsistent monster, an "unconscious" consciousness, or a non-rational action of soul upon revealed truth—truth, the supreme object of sanctified reason. And once more: we fully admit that, just so far as self-examination awakens the believer's anxiety concerning his own state by revealing to his

repentance his indwelling defects, the proper remedy is to repeat our simple acts of faith, going out of sinful self to embrace a perfect Saviour and find rest in him. And this is doubtless one of the results which our Father designs in commanding self-examination. But, finally, the Bible also teaches us that in the maturer experience of God's saints they do find comfort of hope by recognising in themselves the sure marks of God's work of grace, which comfort is neither unbelieving nor legal, but gracious and believing, and a true fruit of faith and holiness, yielding glory to God and excluding boasting.

It is very obvious to the attentive reader that these views of faith and assurance which we have examined, ground themselves in the faulty definitions of saving faith which we received from the first Reformers. They, as we saw, defined saving faith as a belief that "Christ has saved *me*:" making the assurance of hope of its necessary essence. Now the later Reformers, and those learned, holy, and modest teachers of the Reformed Churches, whose influence the Plymouth Brethren regard as so unhealthy for true religion, have subjected this view to searching examination, and rejected it (as does the Westminster Assembly) on scriptural grounds. We merely recite the common-places of theology in arraying their unanswerable objections. First, God's word gives us, as the real object of our faith, in its first or direct acting, only this proposition: "Whosoever believeth shall be saved." But this overweening faith would substitute a different proposition, and one not in the Bible, as the object of faith, viz., "Christ has saved *me*, A. B." Second, inasmuch as the name of A. B. is not in the Bible, and the only proposition there offered him is the general one, "Whosoever believeth shall be saved," he can only come to the proposition, "I, A. B., am saved," indirectly through the general one, by means of this minor premise, "I am a believer, therefore I am saved." On the view of Calvin and Luther, faith, as a rational act of soul, is impossible; for the soul would be required to accept the proposition, "I am saved," in order to become saved. This is not only a logical contradiction, but is contrary to Scripture and experience; for every sinner comes to Christ by faith, as a per-

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son lost, and not saved. Such a faith is as unreasonable as requiring that a person shall bring himself into existence in order to exist; whereas he must be in existence beforehand in order to bring anything or effect any act. Calvin would doubtless attempt to answer this fatal objection by saying that true faith is not a rational, but a gracious, spiritual, and supernatural act of soul. The latter we grant, but not the former. It is a supernatural, spiritual, and *rational act* of soul—all the more truly rational because it is spiritual. The Bible tells us that God quickens the soul by his word. The word is the proper object of the rectified reason; the renewed actings of the soul are all the more rational, because it is now begotten again to a nobler life by the *Spirit of truth* and *through the truth*. Hence we return to the charge, and urge that unless there is a special, immediate revelation to A. B. of God's purpose to save *him*, by name, there cannot be a rational belief that God has saved him, save as inferential from the gospel proposition, that God certainly saves whosoever believe. Third, the experience of God's people in the Bible ages and since refute the scheme. See Ps. lxxiii. 13; xxxi. 22; lxxvii. 2; ix. 10. Fourth, were assurance of hope of the essence of a more saving faith, God would not have commanded *believers* (addressed as such) to perfect their faith by going on to assurance, nor would he have assigned them the further means for doing so. Last, it does not appear how God could justly punish the non-elect (as he will) for refusing to believe. For they would be still punished for not believing that God *had saved them*, when their dire experience in hell was proving that had they adopted that proposition they would have adopted a glaring falsehood. The direct act of saving faith then is the embracing of the general gospel proposition, "Whosoever believeth shall be saved;" and the moment the soul performs that act truly, it is justified. The comforting hope, "I am in a state of safety," is the reflex consequence of this saving act, mediated by the rational self-consciousness, as enlightened by the Holy Ghost through the word. But, as experience shows, all our acts of soul are not accompanied at the time by an intelligent and remembered act of consciousness. Rapidity of the mental acts,

or confusion and excitement of mind, may prevent it. And more important still, if the soul knows that there is a counterfeit faith as well as a true one, and if any uncertainty of view prevails in it as to what distinguishes them, its consciousness of its own actings cannot be more discriminating than those actings are. Hence the direct act of faith may have been really performed, and the soul may be by it in a saved state, and yet a clear consciousness of the act and full certainty of its result may be wanting. This is just the analysis of the state of the true but weak believer. The maturing of his faith up to a full assurance, must be the work of self-examination, time, and experience, especially in repeated direct actings of faith itself.

In dismissing this part of our discussion, we wish to utter a caution. We meet with many attempts in these books at novel and simpler definitions of faith. Let us assure the authors that there is no uninspired definition so safe and discriminating as that of the Shorter Cat., Q. 86: "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel." Many of these novelties of definition and illustration run a great risk of suggesting fatal error. Thus, Dr. Bonar says, "Unbelief is simply our having a good *opinion* of ourselves, and a bad *opinion* of God;" and faith is the reversed state of *opinion*. He seems, in another place cited, to make the assurance of hope as merely a *natural consequence* of faith, as consciousness of motion is of moving, or consciousness of seeing is of looking. Now we suppose that none will be more prompt to assert the spiritual and gracious source of both faith and hope, as consequent on the almighty quickening of the soul and the illumination of the mind, than he is. We forewarn him that he may very probably find some of his admirers adopting these novelties of explanation as authority for that false and soul-destroying Pelagian view of faith advanced by the followers of Alexander Campbell. He describes faith and unbelief as two antithetic states of *opinion*; it will be easy for his followers to misquote him as saying they are states of opinion merely. He seems to represent assurance as a merely natural and unavoidable result of consciousness, thus

appearing to ignore the necessity for the gift of spiritual discernment, and making the believer's whole joy in Christ a mere matter of natural knowledge. Again, we find the "Waymarks" speaking currently of faith as a "*means of regeneration!*" Vol. III., p. 331; II., p. 73. Now, in the order of production, the means precede the result; so that this language suggests that faith begins before the sinner is born again. Then, it is a natural exercise of the soul as carnal, and we reach the same Pelagian conclusion; whereas the Scriptures teach us that in the order of production the new birth precedes faith, and that none but the quickened soul exercises this gracious act of believing. Once more: we notice a most dangerous passage where the question is raised, what shall be said to the soul who anxiously desires to come to Christ for pardon, but is embarrassed by knowing that his desire for pardon is simply carnal and selfish. The answer given is, in substance, that he shall be encouraged to come to Christ, without analysing his motive for coming, because the Redeemer is so kind that he will meet the sinner sincerely coming to him, no matter how prompted. And then the same false view is insinuated, that this coming will, through grace, become the "*means of regeneration;*" and of the implantation of new evangelical motives. So that this alarmed transgressor, who came to Christ at first (and was accepted!) only to gratify selfish fear, will remain to embrace him from filial gratitude and desire for holiness. All this is inexpressibly mischievous and unscriptural. True, "Christ receiveth *sinner*." True, God "justifieth the *ungodly* who believe in Jesus." It is practically true that no man is regenerated apart from Christ, and that God's word (not a dead soul's dead faith) is "*the means of regeneration.*" But it is not true that Christ has promised to bless a faith merely carnal and selfish. And the right answer to the convicted sinner, whose case is supposed, would be, that the pure selfishness of his prayer and of his longing for pardon was the crowning proof of his utter death in sin, helplessness, and lost estate—that it behoved him to embrace Christ indeed, and at once, as an almighty Saviour, but to embrace him as much as a deliverer from this selfish desire and fear as a deliverer from wrath.

There is a certain *gospel paradox* here: that the sinner who is *dead*, is bidden to come to Christ for *life*; and yet the life which enables him to come must be from Christ. The true solution is in the great truth of sovereign, quickening grace, "blowing where it listeth." Where God designs to save, he gives the precept, "Come," to the helpless soul, and also gives the secret inward strength to obey and to come, not carnally, but spiritually; and the elect sinner is quickened, believing, justified . . . all at the same time, yet all out of sovereign grace; and yet justified because he savingly believes, savingly believing because he is quickened. Let not the teacher of anxious souls attempt to solve that paradox by the expedients of Pelagian speculation; but let him utter the appointed promise and precept; and then "stand still and see the salvation of God."

In one particular the view of faith presented by this "*Witness theology*," while professing a high Calvinism, lapses distinctly into Arminianism. The "*Waymarks*," Vol. VIII., p. 272, 273, distinctly denies the imputation of Christ's active obedience to believers as the meritorious ground of their title to the adoption of life. "It may be necessary, however," says this writer, "here to advert to the distinction which has been made between pardon and justification, in accordance with the use of these words in earthly relations, and to the consequent division of the work of Christ into his *active* and *passive* obedience; the one for our pardon, and the other for our justification." "We have already stated our objections to the notion of a vicarious keeping of the law, as well as to the distinction which it makes between pardon and justification, and the grounds upon which either of them rests. The opponents of it may very well challenge its advocates to give a scriptural statement of it, or to produce a single passage which intimates that, while we have forgiveness in his blood, we have justification through his keeping the law perfectly in our stead," etc.

We can scarcely persuade ourselves that intelligent Presbyterians need a detailed discussion to enable them to repel this stale Arminian view; or that they will have any difficulty in answering the above challenge by "giving a scriptural state-

ment" of our view. Such passages as these are at hand and too familiar: Zech. iii. 4, 5; Acts xxvi. 18; Rom. v. 1, 2; v. 19; Gal. iv. 5; John i. 12; Matt. iii. 15; v. 17; Rom. viii. 3, 4. Here we are taught that justification by faith was not only a stripping off of filthy garments; but the putting on of a fair mitre, and clean linen; that it is not only forgiveness of sin, but inheritance among all them that are sanctified; that one of the results of faith is title to be sons of God; "that Christ was made of a woman, *made under the law* (not under its penalty only, but under *the law*,) to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons;" that when justified by faith, we have not only peace with God, but access to a state of hope, joy, and glory; that we are "made righteous *by the obedience* of one," (Christ); that Christ does for us that which the law could not do in us, being weak through the flesh, namely, fulfil a complete obedience; for surely the law is very adequate to exact of man, in spite of his carnality, the due penalty. The souls in hell find it so to their cost.

But the confusion of language in the above scrap of Arminianizing is such as almost to compel us to believe that the author has no distinct knowledge of the doctrine which he imputes to Calvinists. He represents us as seeking justification one way, and pardon another way. Was ever a Calvinist heard of who did not hold that pardon is an essential element of justification? It would have been well for this writer to advert to the Westminster Catechism: "Justification is an act of God's free grace, *wherein* he pardoneth all our sins, and *accepteth us as righteous in his sight*, only for," etc. Justification includes both pardon and acceptance; these are its two inseparable elements. Without the latter element the sinner's salvation would be fragmentary; for to remit penalty is not the same thing as enduing with the title to the positive blessedness promised to obedience. He who has sinned, and (vicariously) paid the penal debt therefor, does not stand on the same footing of justice with him who, by not sinning, and, on the contrary, by actually keeping the law, has earned the franchise of reward. Unless the sinner's Substitute does the *latter* for him, as well as the former, he is not saved.

He certainly cannot do it for himself. This Arminian view of justification betrays a most inadequate conception of the relation between the covenants of works and grace, and the believer's connexion with the first Adam, and the Second Adam. When the first Adam entered under the covenant of works, he was guiltless; but not therefore justified. He was obnoxious as yet to no penalty; but he had no title to the adoption of life. *This* he was to earn by obedience. The Second Adam promises to place his believing seed, not in the state from which the first Adam fell, but in that state to which he should have raised himself and his seed, had he fulfilled the covenant of works. To accomplish this, Christ both pays the penalty, and completes the obedience due under the covenant of works.

No intelligent believer, then, speaks of being *pardoned* by Christ's passive, and *justified* by Christ's active obedience. Pardon is a part of justification. The whole, complete, inseparable change, from condemnation to sonship, is made by the imputed merit of a whole imputed righteousness, which righteousness includes all Christ's acts in his estate of humiliation, by which he "fulfilled the law," penal and preceptive.

II. It is the aim of the "Plymouth theology" to foster a certain type of religious experience, from which all doubt and anxiety are eliminated. To this end is pressed their peculiar view of faith and assurance. Hence also is the *animus* which has betrayed them into the second group of errors, on which we are constrained to animadvert as more dangerous than the first. The Bible theology teaches that there is a dead and fruitless faith which neither justifies nor sanctifies, and whose usefulness is to be practically tested by its fruitlessness. The Bible distinguishes justification, a purely forensic change of legal *status*, from sanctification, a subjective or personal change of moral state. As the former act passes in the *forum* of heaven, a tribunal not now accessible to our view, it must be practically known, according to the Scriptures, by the fruitful or sanctifying quality of the faith which the believer professes. Others can test it only thus; the man himself must test it chiefly thus. Hence, obviously, his comfort of hope is connected with his pro-

gressive sanctification, through his faith working by love. Such is the scriptural system. But the new system condemns this as covert legalism and unbelief. It insists that hope must exist before "experience worketh" it. For the anxious babe in Christ to say, "I doubt my own faith," is, according to them, a criminal doubting of Christ. Faith must bear its fruit of assurance directly and immediately. Hence it is obvious some new view must be presented, modifying the old gospel view of the relations of faith, acceptance, sanctification, and hope; for if the old doctrine stands, the old inference from it is unavoidable. Such we are convinced is the *motive* of the startling innovations which the Plymouth theology proposes in the doctrine of progressive sanctification. They shall state it in their own words. In "A Word to Young Believers," by W. De R. B., p. 52, we read: "'Ye are complete,' is a divine testimony. To add to this, to add to completeness, is to make a deformity; and this is what many are seeking to do. Men seek to persuade us that there is 'a progressive holiness,' to fit us for glory," etc. P. 74: "The walk of a believer in relation to God, is in the same character as that of a child to his father, whether it be good or bad. What I mean is, that it is independent of his standing. A son ill-behaved or well-behaved, is equally a son. So, a Christian walking right or walking wrong is a Christian still; and that is the very reason it is of such consequence," etc. The deadly error of these views is unfortunately plain, notwithstanding its barbarously bungling style; and the error is that of Antinomianism. It cannot be better unmasked than by exposing the false analogy of the author's illustration. In natural parentage, if a man has a son, he is equally *his son* , whether reprobate or docile. Very true; because in our fallen nature *depravity descends by birth* . But, in the spiritual birth, the glorious characteristic is, that it is always a *birth unto holiness* . What is it but simple impiety, to imply, as this illustration does, that the Holy Ghost begets seed unto depravity? If he has begotten any soul anew, he has begotten him to holiness. Hence, if any pretended son is unholy in his walk, it shows him a "bastard, and not a son."

But take the following from the "Notes on Genesis," p. 200: "Regeneration is not a change of the old nature, but the introduction of a new. . . . Nor does the introduction of this new nature, alter in the slightest degree, the true, essential character of old. This latter continues what it was, and is made in no respect better; yea, rather, there is a full display of its evil character in opposition of the new element," etc. It is not hard to see how terribly all this may be carried out to a God-defying carnal security. "The notion of progressive sanctification is false, and the work not to be expected. The evil nature in me is not at all weakened by grace, but rather inflamed. If I have faith, I have the '*standing*;' and I am not to doubt my faith because of a supposed deficiency of fruits; because to conclude it a true faith by any frames in myself, or works of self, is sheer legalism." What more does any Antinomian negro desire, to encourage him in his foulest hypocrisy, and most fanatical joys?

But see "Waymarks," Vol. I., p. 70: "The impression seems to be, that, after his justification, the believer must undergo a process of sanctification, and that for this reason he is left for a time amidst the trials and conflicts of a hostile world." This impression is then argued against. Again, Vol. III., p. 75: "It is remarkable that those who teach that sanctification is a great work to be accomplished subsequent to justification—a second conversion—a perfection to be attained in the flesh—when they attempt to sustain themselves by Scripture, almost invariably lay hold upon some unhappy rendering or ambiguous expression in the English version of the Scriptures." On p. 332, the writer complains against those believers who "speak of regeneration as a change wrought in the old nature—a mighty change indeed, which can be effected only by the influence of the Spirit of God. Perhaps it would be more correct to say, that they regard regeneration as the commencement of a change, the progress of which they style sanctification, by which the old nature is gradually transformed into a holy nature." P. 342, 343: "We conclude at present with a comprehensive statement of the truth regarding regeneration itself, with which some of our readers are already familiar. It is a new birth, the imparting of a

new life, the implantation of a new nature, the formation of a new man. The old nature remains in all its distinctness; and the new nature is introduced in all its distinctness. This new nature has its own desires, its own habits, its own tendencies, its own affections. All these are spiritual, heavenly, divine. Its aspirations are all upward. It is ever breathing after the heavenly source from which it emanated. Regeneration is to the soul what the birth of Isaac was to the household of Abraham. Ishmael remained the same Ishmael; but Isaac was introduced," etc. Let the reader note the last sentences. On p. 80, we find these dangerous words: "Be warned that the old nature is unchanged. The hope of transforming that into holiness is vain as the dream of a philosopher's stone, which was to change the dross of earth into gold. . . . On the other hand, never be discouraged by any new proof that *that* which is born of the flesh is flesh. It is there; but it is condemned and crucified with its affections and lusts. Reckon it so, and that therefore you are no longer to serve it. It is just as true that *that* which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and remains uncontaminated by *that* with which it maintains a ceaseless conflict." Similar assertions are made in Waymarks, Vol. V., pp. 29, 37, etc., and 302. In the last of these we find these remarkable words: "Thus two men there are in the Christian: so hath he evil; and so he hath not evil. If therefore he purge out the evil, it is his new man purging out his old man. Now these two men, within the control of the personality of the Christian, are real men, having each his own will, his own energy, and his own enjoyment. No one can read the 7th chapter of Romans, and not see that this is true," etc. One is strongly reminded here, of that which M. Bungener relates of Louis XIV., that this licentious and despotic king was wont to console himself for living a life of open adultery and cruelty, while devoutly practicing all the popish rites, by singing, with great unction, a Romish hymn beginning—

"J'ai deux hommes en moi," etc.

And one might ask, at least plausibly, if the Christian contains two men, and the evil one lives in full force until death, is he

very sure that *he* will come off safely when God proceeds to destroy the old man? A story is told of an emperor of Germany, who bitterly rebuked a great episcopal feudatory for his violences, so inconsistent with his sacred character. The lord bishop answered, that he represented two men in one, being both clergyman and baron; and that the military acts complained of were done in his secular character as a feudal baron. "Well, then," replied the Emperor, "bethink thee how the clergyman will fare, when the devil is roasting the baron for his rapine and murder." The application is fair. But more seriously, we remark: 1st. That these professed *literalists* should at least have been brought to a stand by the fact, that their favorite language concerning the nature of regeneration is no where found in the New Testament. This is especially just against them; because they boast so much in their consistent literalism, and taunt us with abusing the words of Scripture. Well, we challenge them to produce a text from the New Testament, where it is said that regeneration is the implantation of a "new *nature*" beside the old; or that the renewed man has two hostile "*natures*," or any such language. Does St. Paul say, Rom. vii. 23: "But I see another *law* in my members, warring against the law of my mind"? And in Gal. v. 17: "For the *flesh* lusteth against the *Spirit*, and the *Spirit* against the *flesh*"? Very true. He teaches that the renewed man (one man and one nature still) is imperfect; having two principles of volition mixed in the motives even of the same acts; but he does not teach that he has become "two men," or has "two natures" in him. Paul's idea is, that man's one nature, originally wholly sinful, is by regeneration made imperfectly holy, but progressively so. And what is that *Spirit* which in Gal. v. 17, lusteth against the flesh? Suppose we say it is the *Holy Ghost*? So interprets Calvin; and so reads Paul's context, verses 16 and 18. Where now is the argument? And it is a mischievous perversion to represent the apostle as holding forth the fruits of the Spirit and the works of the flesh (verses 19 to 23) as permanently combined during life in one Christian; when it is the very purpose of the apostle to point to these contrasted works and fruits as tests to distinguish Christians from

reprobates. See verse 24th for indisputable proof of this scope. And let us bring to the test of Scripture the doctrine which the Plymouth theologians intend by the proposition, "The old nature is unchanged" in regeneration and sanctification. For our part, we have to confess, in the simplicity of our minds, that if this is not what is changed, we know not what it can be. We, in all our reading of the Bible, thought that this was precisely what God intended to teach us; that the very object of these graces was to renew the old, carnal nature. When we read, Col. i. 21, 22: "You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled . . . to present you holy," etc.; it seemed very plain to us that the nature that was alienated, etc., was the old nature. But this is what is made holy. So in Eph. iv. 23, in the midst of the very passage they pervert: "And be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind." See also Eph. ii. 1 or 5. What is it that is quickened? That which was dead in sins. So in verses 10 and 11: "*We*" (like the Gentiles in the flesh) "are created in Christ Jesus unto good works," etc. 1 Cor. vi. 11: "Such were some of you; but *ye* are washed, but *ye* are sanctified," etc. But why multiply texts so familiar? Will they return to the charge with the plea, that these texts say, indeed, the sinful *man* is renewed; but that they do not say the *old nature* is renewed? Very true; for the Bible-language is always more accurate. But note: the Bible is still farther from saying that the renewed man has two "*natures*." For then he would be two men, unless every conversion is a miracle of hypostatic union, like Christ's incarnation. But the Bible clearly teaches that the carnal man is renewed *as to his moral nature*, if the word may be used in the unbiblical sense of the Plymouth writers. But of this more anon.

2. This theory flies flatly in the face of the Scriptures, both when it denies the idea of progressive sanctification, and when it rebukes the believer for finding comfort of hope in the evidences of such progress. On both points the Bible speaks exactly the opposite. We will not swell our pages by writing out all these passages, but beg the reader to examine such familiar passages as Heb. vi. 1; Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13, 15, 16; 2 Peter i. 5-10; 1

Peter ii. 2; 2 Peter iii. 18; 2 Thess. i. 3; Phil. iii. 14; 2 Cor. iii. 18; vii. 1; 1 Thess. v. 23; Acts xx. 32, ("The word of his grace . . . able to *build you up*"); Eph. i. 13, 14; 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5. Shall it be said that all these are misunderstood by us ordinary Christians, and that the seeming support of progressive sanctification is due only to a various reading or a mistranslation? Here may be added all those images of Scripture by which the saint is compared to living and growing things—as a vine, a fruit tree, a plant of corn, a living body, an infant. Is not the rhetoric of the Scripture just? Then we must suppose that these images are selected as instructive, partly because of this very trait that growth is their attribute.

3. The best symbols of the Reformed churches expressly contradict this Plymouth theology. Westminster Confession, Ch. XIII.: "They who are effectually called are regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are *farther sanctified*, really and personally, through the virtues of Christ's resurrection, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them: the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are *more and more weakened and mortified*, and they *more and more quickened and strengthened*, in all saving graces," etc. Ch. XVIII.: Assurance is "founded upon the *inward evidences of those graces* unto which the promises are made," etc., etc. And this assurance, section 4, may be "shaken, diminished, and *intermitted*, . . . by *falling into some special sin*," etc.

Thirty-nine Articles (Anglican Ch.), 12th: "Good works are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch that by them a true and lively" (living) "faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit."

4. This feature of the Plymouth theology is formed on a false psychology, equally at war with the Scriptures and common sense, and as dangerous as it is erroneous. It discards the idea of progressive sanctification, teaching that the "new nature," being the work of a perfect God, is as perfect from conversion as its author, only its action outwards is obscured by the counter-action of the incurable old nature, somewhat as a lamp burning

perfectly well might seem dim, because enclosed in a lantern of foul or besmeared glass. Now, on this we remark, that a newborn infant is the handiwork of a perfect Creator; but for all that, its body is not that of a perfect man, but is constructed to grow to perfection. Again, it is contrary to common sense to say that human holiness does not really grow; because all qualities of man, the mutable creature, must grow. Depravity grows (2 Tim. iii. 13) in sinners. So we must expect holiness to grow in saints. (Prov. iv. 18.) The laws of human nature, as ordained by the same God who sanctifies us, explain and necessitate the fact. Habits grow by exercise. Faculties strengthen by use. Affections become more dominant by their own action. Even the pagan Horace understood this. (*Crescentem sequitur cura pecuniam, majorumque fames.*) Hence, if sanctification is not usually progressive, the man in a state of grace must have ceased to be a reasonable creature, with affections, understanding and will developing according to the law of habit in his rational nature.

But worse than this, the theory we combat is a vicious *dualism*, as full of danger as the Gnosticism of the second century, from which indeed it might very well have been borrowed. We have read this "Witness" theology, saying expressly, that "these two men within the control of the personality of the Christian, are real men, having each his own will, his own energy, and his own enjoyment." Did not this writer indulge too much contempt for the philosophy accepted among sound divines, to know the real drift of the language he was using, he would at least be aware that they must understand him as giving to this old or fleshly "man" in the Christian full personality. He makes him a separate, individual agent. For how is distinct personality defined, if not by separate will and energy? But this is too gross; it contradicts every consciousness of every Christian, even the most unlearned; for just so surely as he has one consciousness, he knows that he is one indivisible personality, and that he is one agent and has *only one will*, swayed indeed by mixed and diverse motives. But even in its mildest form this doctrine is *realistic*, and gives actual entity (not to say personality) to the carnal and the renewed natures, as distinguished from each and

every person whom these natures may qualify. Now what is this but the exploded philosophy of the schoolmen? Thus we have these most righteous and zealous denouncers of philosophy reinventing a merely human philosophy, and the falsest of all for the purpose of bending Scripture to their theories. What is a "nature?" Common sense answers, with sound philosophy, it is that aggregate of permanent characteristic attributes (that *essentia*) with which the man was *natus*. Now, in strictest speech, man's *nature* is never changed, either by the fall or by redemption; for if it were he would no longer be a *man*—he would become another animal, with a different *essentia* from that which made him a man. But there is a popular use (not found in the Bible use of the word *φύσις*) of the word "*nature*," and more frequently of the phrase "*moral nature*," which is neither a strict nor a philosophical use. But let that pass. Men mean by it the moral *habitus* or *disposition* which permanently qualifies the active powers of the soul for good or evil. Now this *habitus* is not a personality, it is not a separate entity, as abstracted from each person whom it qualifies, it is but an abstraction. Except it be a *quality of a person*, it is a mere idea. How far wrong, then, are they who assert that in an imperfect and mixed character the "two natures are two real men"?

Further. While the power which regenerates and sanctifies must ever be partly incomprehensible to us, the comprehension of the effect is so far easy, that the new birth *reverses* the moral *habitus* of the believer's will, prevalently, but not at first absolutely; and that the work of progressive sanctification carries on this change, thus omnipotently begun, towards that absolute completeness which we must possess on entering heaven. In the carnal state, the *habitus* of the sinner's will is absolutely and exclusively godless. In the regenerate state, it is prevalently but not completely godly. In the glorified state, it is absolutely and exclusively godly. This statement implies that the believer's motives, in the militant state, are complex; and that while the subjective motives usually dominant are godly, yet there is a mixture of carnal motives, no longer dominant but not annihilated, which carnal motives enter as part cause even into the

renewed soul's holy volitions. And this complex of subjective motives, of which one part may be morally diverse from another, may result in a single act of volition—the volition strictly *one*, while the motives prompting it are mingled. Thus it is that an act may be (as Calvinism and the Bible teach) formally right in shape and prevalently right in intention, and yet not perfectly holy before God. And here is the explanation of that strife between the “law of the mind and the law in our members,” of which every Christian is conscious, and which the apostle points in the 7th of Romans. Now in this prevalently sanctified, but imperfect character, there is a sense in which we may say the carnality and the godliness are complementary the one to the other. As sanctification eliminates the former, the latter extends. Or to speak more accurately, the extension of the principles of godliness is the corresponding exclusion of the principles of carnality, just as spreading light is the gradual removal of darkness, its opposite. A safe Bible similitude. Acts xxvi. 18.

Hence the reader may see how false and dangerous, both practically and scripturally, is the view given by this “Witness” theology of indwelling sin, and of the influence it ought to have on the Christian's hope and comfort. To us it seems clear that this new doctrine virtually represents matters thus: Neither regeneration nor sanctification change or weaken the carnal “nature” at all. It cannot be modified or improved. The believer must make his account to have it act in him to the end with undiminished force, or even to have it enhanced in activity by collision with the “new nature.” Hence the presence, and even flagrancy of indwelling sin, need suggest no doubts whatever whether his faith is a living one. Who can fail to see that there is terrible danger here of carnal security in sin? The darker danger, only less probable than this other, is, that the professed believer shall be taught to deny his responsibility wholly for the sins committed by this “old man,” who is “*a real man*,” with a “separate will and energy” from the “new man.” We know nothing in the Antinomianism of the “Fifth Monarchy Men” more alarming than this. The doctrine is positively false. The “old man” cannot continue unmodified in the

presence of the "new man;" because the one principle is the opposite and is exclusive of the other. To die unto sin *is* to live unto righteousness. The increment of light *is* the diminution of darkness. The waxing of the "new man" is the waning of the "old man." Hence, (and this is the Bible view,) if any professed believer has the "old man" as strong and lively as ever, it is proof positive that the "new man" has never entered at all; his faith is vain; he is yet in his sins. James ii. 22, etc. And if any professed believer finds the old carnal principle reviving, it is proof positive that his spiritual life is proportionally going backward at that time; just to the extent the recession goes, has he scriptural ground to fear that his faith is (and always was) dead.

We find in the "Waymarks" this sophistical plea against the necessity of progressive sanctification: that some Christians, dying very soon after conversion, must, according to our own showing, have gone to heaven without this gradual process of preparation. The fact we of course grant. God, by his distinguishing favor, perfects in an hour in their souls that purification which in others he carries gradually towards completion by the experiences, trials, and efforts of years. It is certainly as true of those who die young, as of any, "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." But there is another reason why, for those who do not die immediately after conversion, progressive sanctification is still imperative. The principle of holiness, if genuine, is incapable of tolerating indwelling sin in peace. The struggle is inevitable in a true Christian; and as "He that is with us is more than he that is against us," gradual conquests at least over indwelling sin are the general rule of every genuine Christian life. Among the texts which seem to favor this dualistic view, none is claimed with more confidence than Eph. iv. 22-24, which speaks of "putting off the old man," and "putting on the new man." We note this as a specimen of the manner in which Scripture is overstrained, and an example of the way in which it may be cleared of these extravagances. One can hardly deny that, in this well known passage, it is the most natural interpretation to regard the putting off of the old as *in*

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*order to the putting on of the new; then the two are not coëxistent, but successive. But more decisively: Who is the old man; and who is the new? The obvious parallel in 1 Cor. xv. 22, and 45 to 49, shows that the "old man" is Adam, and the new man is Christ. The statement which we have to expound is then substantially this: that believers have "put off" Adam in order to "put on" Christ. That is, they have severed their connexion with the first federal head, in order to enter into a connexion with the second federal head. True, the moral, rather than the forensic, effects of the two covenants are here in view of the apostle's mind. We forsake Adam's "conversation, corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," and adopt Christ's conversation, who was "created after God in righteousness and true holiness," thus sharing the same new creation. But, says the apostle, (1 Cor. xv.,) "Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural: *and afterwards that which is spiritual.*" How very far is all this from teaching us, that depravity remains after the new birth a "*real man,*" unchanged, coëxistent with a new, holy nature superadded thereto, which is also a "*real man*"?*

We may group under this head several errors and conceits touching the believer's practical life which require exposure. In the Notes on Genesis, p. 17, etc., a doctrine is taught against the authority of the Christian Sabbath, which seems to be virtually the same with that which has plagued and blighted the Lutheran, and some of the Reformed communions of Europe. The anonymous writer there asserts, on grounds largely allegorical and fanciful, that the Sabbath is forever abolished by the new dispensation; that the nature of this dispensation is such, it is impossible that a Sabbath could longer be binding on believers; that therefore the Lord's-day, the first day of the week, should never be termed the Christian Sabbath;" and that it should be observed as a Lord's-day, not from any preceptive obligation of the moral law, but on grounds of appropriateness and thankfulness only, as the commemoration of the joyful resurrection. The suitable mode of observance of the Lord's-day of course is not Sabbatical, and not strict. Christians are only

bound to celebrate worship, and make it a day of praise and religious joy. We direct attention to this error, not for the purpose of opening up this extensive discussion, but of remarking the tendencies of this revived heresy. We see not how any Presbyterian can countenance it, in the face of the 21st Chap., Sec. 7, 8, of his Confession, Chap. I. of his Directory, and the 116th Qu. of his Larger Catechism. In these places, we are expressly taught that the Sabbatical obligation of the Decalogue is perpetual under all dispensations; that the Lord's-day has become, by divine appointment, "the Christian Sabbath," and that it is to be sanctified as such.

Another conceit of this system is, to teach us that believers ought not to pray for the Holy Ghost, because, if they are believers, he dwells in them already; and that they ought not to pray for the pardon of sins, because, if they are believers, their sins are already pardoned. Thus, Waymarks, Vol. VI., p. 78, 79: "Prayers for a pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit may indeed only be a mistaken and unhappy form of words into which men may have fallen from imitation, while they mean nothing so unscriptural as their words imply; and the same may be said of other forms of expression which are painfully current. But making all allowance for this, it is not conceivable that a man should plead with God that he would send the Spirit, or entreat the Spirit to come, or that he should complain of the withdrawal of the Spirit, if he were consciously worshipping God in the Spirit, if he were believingly praying in the Spirit, and if in all service and testimony he were actually waiting upon the Spirit of God for guidance and power." See also, Tract, "*The Abiding Comforter*," J. Inglis & Co.

The first suggestion which comes into the mind in reply to these astonishing sentences is, What will the writer do with these texts, in which the Bible represents believers as praying for the Spirit and for forgiveness? Psalm li. 11, 12: "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit." Eph. i. 17, Paul prays God to give the believing Ephesians "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation."

2 Cor. xiii. 14: "The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." Psalm xxv. 11: "For thy name's sake pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." Matt. vi. 12: "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." But as to the sophism by which these anti-scriptural rules are supported we would ask: Did the "Witness" theologians never hear of that principle enunciated by the Saviour? "He that hath, to him shall be given, that he may have more abundantly." And can they not understand that the new-born soul is so actuated by grace, as to respond in its breathings to this principle? Surely they have forgotten, that faith not only begins, but continues the new life; and that the practical union of the believer with his Head, is maintained by continually reënacting those applications to Christ in which the life began. It is Christ himself who tells us to "do our first works." Nor do we find in the Scriptures, that the assurance God designed to bestow a gift repressed the Spirit of prayer—it rather stimulated it. Thus Daniel tells us, (ix. 2 and 3,) that when he understood from Jeremiah's books, that seventy years were appointed to accomplish the desolations of Jerusalem, "he set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications" the very restoration predicted. The petitions of God's people are not an attempt to get what is contrary to his purpose; they are the responses of faith leaping forth to meet that purpose in its gracious bestowals upon them.

In conclusion of this head, the reader may see a curious evidence of the extreme to which these teachers are willing to follow their crotchets, in the "Waymarks," Vol. V., p. 37, etc. Such is their zeal to dissociate faith from its scriptural fruits, they there gravely argue that Simon Magus was a regenerate and saved man, because it is said he "believed" and "was baptized." What if he immediately betrayed the mercenary nature of his principles by endeavoring to make merchandise of the Holy Ghost? What if the Apostle Peter devoted him and his money to "perish" together? What if he declared Simon yet "in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity?" All this overwhelming evidence must be explained away; and Simon must be held a redeemed man, rather than accept the obvious explana-

tions of the statement, "Simon also believed," which have satisfied all sober students of the Bible either that a temporary faith is imputed to him, or that the historian only intends to be understood as stating what he professed. What is the motive of such an exegetical freak? We can imagine none but this—a desire to sustain their exaggerated and one-sided doctrine of assurance, by a Bible instance of a true saving faith without any fruits. But this is the very thing which the Apostle James condemns.

III. The theory of prayer advocated by the Rev. Geo. Müller, of Bristol, England, connects itself with the theories of the Plymouth Brethren by at least a few points. This German minister was, if we mistake not, once in full sympathy with them, and continues to hold most of their peculiarities. In the "Waymarks," Vol. I., p. 3, 35, etc., we find an unqualified commendation of his work, and the theory upon which it is built; and the only objection made against the American editions of his "Life of Trust," which is hinted, is, that they suppress the ardent attachment to the Pre-Adventist doctrine, which it is said was the chief stimulus of Müller's zeal in his orphan-work. And in the "Word to Young Believers," p. 67, the same overweening theory of trust seems to be expressly inculcated. The author is commenting on a special revelation which God made to Samuel, in the course of his peculiar prophetic privilege, by which he was made to recognise Saul as the intended king. And as though all Christians might aspire to be literal prophets, he concludes: "Beloved, if we walked in communion with God, waiting on him for guidance, we should always know when to act, and never would we make mistakes." But it should be said, in justice, that these writers in other places dissent from a part of the objectionable theory of our warrant for trust; and especially would we mention in the "Waymarks," etc., Vol. I., p. 42, a paper entitled, "The Prayer which God is Pledged to Answer," which contains many things very praiseworthy.

There have long been Christians who, on the apparent absoluteness of such promises as Matt. vii. 7; Mark xi. 24, found the following theory of prayer: That the only reason any prayer

of a believer, actuated in the main by pious motives, is not specifically and infallibly answered, is, that it is not offered in faith; and that wherever such a one *fully believes* that he will receive what he asks, he shall literally receive it without fail. Such prayer it was the fashion to dignify with the title of "Prayer of Faith." Müller's Life of Trust discloses a theory which involves the seminal error of this. He tells us in his surprising narrative, that he resolved to form an orphan house (among other enterprises of piety), which he subsequently enlarged, until it contains two thousand orphans, and has expended largely over a million of dollars. According to his express determination, it has never had a penny of endowment; nor has any human means been employed, according to him, for collecting donations to it. He has not even permitted the wants of the institution to be made known outside of its doors, when they were most urgent. The sole means has been prayer; he has simply asked God in secret for the money which his projects required. He tells us that the result has been, that while the enterprise was often in sore straits, and reduced to its last shilling, especially in its earlier years, it never actually suffered for money. And the motive which he professes was, that the success of this great charity might be to all men an ocular evidence that "God is a Living God," who does truly watch over his people and sustain them. He has also refused to employ any human means for providing a salary for himself as minister, and to lay by any provision whatever for his own wants or his family's; yet God has always sent him enough for subsistence. Many Christian readers evidently regard the remarkable success of Müller's enterprises as demonstration of his theory of trust. They argue: He has used absolutely no agency, invoked no causation whatever to influence any creature or second cause; whence it must follow that the whole work is God's direct answer to his prayers.

Now, in dissenting from this theory of trust, we wish to make cordially all the admissions which are his due. If the statements made of this wonderful charity are correct, (and we know of no testimony to refute them,) then no one can refuse his admiration to the founder's philanthropy, disinterestedness, and

executive talent. Nor would we intimate that he is in his religious character a mere fanatic. We have no doubt that he is a man of great Christian excellence, sincerity, faith, and devotion. We can go farther and say, that it would be a happy thing for the Church, and for individual believers, if they had more of the simple trust in God's faithfulness which seems to inspire him. If, like him, they were readier to "devise liberal things" from truly godly motives, they would more often find that "by liberal things they should stand." God would no doubt often honor such zeal and confidence, for his own glory, and in love to his children. Nor do we for a moment suppose that this enterprise of Müller has reached its present state without the permission, favor, and superintendence of a particular providence.

But when it is argued that the result proves God's approval of the founder's theology in every particular, because no second cause has been employed by him, nothing but secret prayer to God for what the project required, we beg leave to demur. Müller did not employ the usual machinery of collecting agents, charity sermons, and newspaper appeals; but he has employed a set of means most adroitly adapted to the temper of British Christians, and (whether with intentional cunning or not) better calculated to influence the *natural principles* of such a people than all the machinery above mentioned. He tells us that he did not make known to the public his wants, and was so scrupulous that, even when without a shilling, he declined to answer questions as to the wants of the orphan cause. *But he usually published an annual report*, which was circulated over England, and even in the Continent, mentioning every donation in such a way as to satisfy the interest of the anonymous donor at least; detailing with great particularity what had been done, and his purposes for the future; as well as publishing very carefully the remarkable and exciting features of his plan. Let the reader realise how he would be interested by the sight of such an institution, and of a great company of tidy orphans thus provided for; by the appearance of the strange, saintly founder, and the display of rare, of almost miraculous faith; and by the eager *encomiums* of the admiring widows, who as nurses and teachers,

had profited by Mr. Müller's success. We may be sure, that if the reverend man refrains from uttering his own praises, *these* do not fail to trumpet them to the multitudes of good sight-seers, whom curiosity or philanthropy draws to the Asylum. When the appearance of self-abnegation, and the romance of all this are considered, it is very plain that it has more wordly wisdom, as a means for drawing money, in Müller's unique case, than all the drummers who could be hired. It must be remembered that Mr. M. has this field to himself as yet. Let us suppose that it had become the ordinary plan of all the religious agencies in Great Britain, does any sensible person suppose that it would succeed thus with all? Obviously, with the loss of its singularity, the larger part of the romance would be lost, and with it the most of its efficiency.

It is doubtless true also (to Mr. Müller's credit), that his success may be, to a certain extent, accounted for by his own executive talent and purity of character. He is evidently, with all his enthusiasm, a very shrewd and practical person, a capital economist of time and money, a sharp judge of human nature, an indomitable worker, and endowed highly with the talent of command. His enthusiasm is itself a power. And many a ten-pound note has been drawn from the thrifty British Dissenters by the snug, commercial consideration, that Mr. Müller was *the man* to make it go the farthest in the subsistence of an orphan. His success is, therefore, not wholly unaccountable on natural principles, however dependent on Providence.

We now proceed to analyse the overweening theory of the warrant for prayer above described, without imputing to Mr. Müller, or to the Plymouth Brethren, all its errors. We do so, because we shall thus see best how their peculiar error is connected with the truth. We hold, then, that there is of course an implied limitation in the seemingly general promise of answer to prayer. This limitation is stated with perfect accuracy in 1 John v. 14: "If we ask anything according to God's will, he heareth us." To the question, How we may determine which are the things according to his will? We reply: *It is known*, if at all, *by the Scriptures alone*. We distinctly repudiate the

theory, that these things may also be certainly determined by our own frames in praying, or by any anticipative speculations on providences. (Events actually effected are of course revelations of God's providential will, so far as they themselves or their uniform and necessary effects go.) Now the Scriptures divide the objects for which a good man may pray into two great classes: temporal good things, ordinarily desirable, but not universally declared to be for man's ultimate, highest good; and the spiritual good things pertaining to redemption. To the former class belong such objects as health of body, restoration out of sickness, competent subsistence, fruitful seasons, prosperity, peace, etc. To the latter class belong the pardon of sin, adoption, sanctification, strength for duty obligatory on us, and such like. Now, of the latter class the Scriptures speak expressly, that it is according to God's will always to bestow them on believing petitioners. Let the reader see, for instance, such declarations as John vi. 37; 1 Thess. iv. 3; Luke xi. 13; Psalm lxxxiv. 11; James i. 5. There may be what we suppose delay; or the channels of the blessings may be unexpected; but with these exceptions, we believe that the soul which seeks this class of gifts in Christ is warranted to expect his answer with all the literal certainty claimed by the strongest advocate of the "prayer of faith." But as to the other class, we have no such guarantee. God has not expressly informed us that it is "according to his will" to give them in each specific case; nor does he intend that we shall, by any other sign, always know it. For while these secular objects are innocent in themselves, and naturally desirable, (and therefore properly asked and sought,) God has not informed us when they may become, on the whole, practical evils to the soul. He reserves to his superior wisdom the power of refusing them in such cases, even to the truest saint. Does the opponent reply: "Then there is a class of objects for which we are to pray in uncertainty? How can this consist with *faith*, which is the soul of true prayer?" We reply: Exactly so. In our view, the Scriptures are full of just such prayers. It is only to these extremists that there appears any solecism in praying in an uncertainty of a specific answer. For

the sober believer knows, that in any event he has this specific promise, that, whether the petition be granted or withheld, all shall "work together for his good." And this is enough for a submissive faith.

To proceed now to direct refutation, our first objection to the theory before us, is, that it calls its unwarranted petitions "prayers of faith;" but unless there is a warrant, there is no basis for faith. Have we a warrant *set down in the Scriptures*, for demanding of God explicitly the raising up of a valued ministerial comrade off a dying bed—as Luther is said to have done in the case of Melancthon? For explicitly claiming of God, that he shall make his people put their hands in their pockets and give us all the money for rescuing two thousand little negroes from the temporal and eternal ruin to which Yankee philanthropy (?) has consigned them? For curing us of the rheumatism or the fever? We trow not! But if we unwarrantably work ourselves into a persuasion that we have such a pledge, this is not faith—it is . . . *presumption!* It is in its nature not honorable to God, but dishonorable. It is not amiably and humbly pious, but wilful and arrogant. God is very forbearing with his wayward children. He may even answer such improper petitions, sometimes passing over their arrogance to bless their zeal and disinterestedness for the sake of his dear Son. But this is far from proving that he sanctions the theory.

2. The actual experience of the best believers in our day refutes the theory; for they often and earnestly deprecate temporal evils, or seek innocent goods, which are not warded off or bestowed according to their prayers. Shall all the Christian widows and parents who interceded in agony, yet in submission, beside the bed-sides of sick husbands and children, be told that those prayers were graceless, because their loved ones died? Away with the cruel arrogance!

3. We have a surer proof in the actual experience of Bible saints, whom we know to have prayed graciously. Of David (2 Samuel xii. 16–19) praying for the life of his infant, which did not live; of Paul (2 Cor. xii. 8–10) praying for the removal of his thorn in the flesh, which was not removed; and, above

all, the venerable and hallowed instance of our Redeemer, who prayed, "being in an agony," "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," and yet drank it to the dregs. Truly, it is "enough for the servant to be as his Lord"!

4. The Bible doctrine of affliction refutes this theory. "God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Surely he does not always do this by tearing away *sinful* objects claimed by the saints; it is not the characteristic of saints to demand sinful joys of their God. No, he usually chastises by taking away legitimate joys. But unless the privation were felt by the victim, it would not be chastisement. The rod which does not *smart* gives no correction to the child. But in the approach of this privation the Christian is an active free agent. The possession being legitimate and dear, he will of course exercise his Christian privilege of interceding for it. Hence, were this theory true, God's hand holding the rod would be uniformly arrested; the true believer could never meet chastisement.

5. We may know, *a priori*, that God would not commit himself to any such theory of prayer, because the effect of it would be to deprive his children of the benefit of his own omniscience. Whenever a Christian came to him, in a filial and trusting spirit, asking for a thing not positively illegitimate, God's hands would be tied. He would be compelled by his engagement to give it, though he saw it was on the whole injurious. For the reader must note, the possession of a filial, trusting spirit does not by any means make all good people infallible in judgment. Witness the vagaries of the good brethren under discussion! Now, do prudent human parents make such rash promises to even amiable children? Still less will our heavenly Father.

But from this conclusive demonstration our brethren have an evasion. They refer us to such Scriptures as Rom. viii. 26, 27, teaching us that believing, pious, filial petitions, are such as are suggested by the Holy Ghost. But this Holy Ghost has the same omniscience and covenant love with the Father and Son. So that the contingency supposed can never happen—namely, that of a desire, filial, believing, and pious, and yet mischievous. They argue, moreover, that the believer may know infallibly

when he has an object before his heart which the Holy Spirit prompts him to seek, by the character of his emotions. If, say they, the desire is very strong and abiding, returning after many postponements—if the conscious motives are godly, when tried by a faithful search of the heart—if the temper of the soul, while thus exercised, is amiable and filial towards God—it is supposed that by these signs the saint may know that the omniscient Spirit, whose will is in absolute harmony with the Father's, has set him upon this petition; and so, he is sure to get it.

Now, it is at this place that the theory of prayer prevalent with the Plymouth Brethren connects itself with the scheme under discussion. Just such are their speculations. We shall not of course deny that accepted prayer is prompted by the infallible Spirit. Nor shall we deny, that such experiences in praying, as are above described, give comfortable evidence of a gracious state. (This is just the theory of the grounds of assurance which we assert, and the "Witness" theology impugns!) Nor that they even raise some probable grounds of hope as to the specific answer. But from these premises the desired result does not follow. First, because no Christian can certainly discriminate in his consciousness, in advance of the event, those desires or affections which a nature *generally* sanctified prompts of itself, and those which the Holy Spirit himself prompts. That this is so, every honest Christian must admit from his own experience. That it must be so, is certain from this law, that the Holy Spirit, as our Paraclete, does not act *across*, but *with*, our normal faculties of right feeling and judgment. He does not supersede, but rectifies, enlightens, and employs the natural faculties of understanding, will, and affection. Hence the most distinctly gracious action of soul must wear a perfect *naturalness* to the saint's own consciousness, as to its normal rise and exercise, as *his action*. Only "by their fruits shall ye know them." For instance: this *persistence of desire*, which is advanced as proof that the Holy Ghost is suggesting the object, how is the good man to know infallibly that it is not the mere result of the natural trait, a determined will which grace has not destroyed, but only curbed? This conscious *disinterestedness of motive* may not infallibly be

from the present, specific acting of the Spirit; for carnal men have done disinterested things. This *amiability* of frame may be as much from human love, as from divine. And *what degree* of these indefinite measures of desire or feeling shall amount to proof? But second, it does not follow from such gracious frames that God intends to give the specific gift, because in the Bible his Spirit has several times *given the frames and withheld the gifts*. Paul doubtless prayed for the removal of his "thorn," with just such frames; but it was not removed. We have a more sacred instance in the prayer of Gethsemane. Does one ask, how can God consistently communicate such frames to the petitioner, when he does not intend to grant the petition? We answer, it may very well be that *he communicates them to prepare his saint to profit by the refusal*. Vide 2 Cor. xii. 10. And these are the grounds which sustain us in saying, that so far as the believer can certainly know what petitions are "according to God's will," he learns it from the written Scriptures alone, and from no anticipative surmises about the "leadings of providence," or the frames of pious feeling observed in himself.

IV. But the *Locus Palmarius* of the Plymouth theology is the pre-millennial advent of Christ. Pre-adventists, though claiming a *literal* scheme of interpretation for the unfulfilled prophecies, differ much among themselves. But the Plymouth theologians in America appear to agree in the doctrine of two resurrections, separated by the *millennium*: the first of the elect dead, with the change of saints then living; the second coming of Christ (as in Acts i. 2), at the former date; the destruction at that date also of all unbelievers, save elect Israel, who will be converted by the Advent; the personal reign of Christ in Jerusalem, with the risen saints in glorified bodies; the resurrection of the non-elect and general judgment at the end of that reign; and especially the belief that all the prophecies preliminary to Christ's return are now fulfilled, or nearly so, insomuch that every saint should expect to see that Advent in his day, rather than bodily death. This present expectation seems to be made by them the test of a vigorous faith and pious "love for the Lord's appearing."

We do not design, in the end of a discussion already too long, to go into a full refutation, or to establish an opposite scheme of explanation for unfulfilled prophecy. Our remaining purpose is, rather to leave a declaration and dissent in the form of a few statements.

In our view, the Pre-Adventist scheme of exposition is in reality no more *literal* than ours, and it solves no difficulties in the understanding of unfulfilled prophecies, while it raises some insoluble ones. The effects claimed for it, as to edification and experimental faith, are wholly illusory. And it involves some consequences inconsistent with Scripture, and injurious to God's cause. We claim that if the old scheme be completed by this proposition, that this earth regenerated will be, *after the final consummation*, the everlasting home of the Church and her Messiah, (according to 2 Peter iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1 to 3,) then that plan will have every advantage in reconciling the prophecies claimed for Pre-Adventism, without its difficulties. But,

1. It requires us to do violence to many predictions of events yet to be fulfilled before Christ's return. And it cannot be necessary to the highest edification and "love of the Lord's appearing," for us, in our day, to expect the Advent rather than our death, because Paul, Augustine, Calvin, could not have done so. Had they cherished that hope, time has now stubbornly proved that they would have erred. Was *delusion* then a desirable means of Christian edification?

2. It is unfavorable to a faithful performance of ecclesiastical duties, as witness the disorganising tendencies of the Plymouth Brethren. If no visible Church, however orthodox, is to be Christ's instrument for overthrowing Satan's kingdom here—if Christ is to sweep the best of them away as so much rubbish, along with all "world-powers," at his Advent—if it is our duty to expect and desire this catastrophe daily, who does not see that we shall feel very slight value for ecclesiastical ties and duties? And should we differ unpleasantly from our Church courts, we shall be tempted to feel that it is pious to spurn them. Are we not daily praying for an event which will render them useless lumber? See how the "Waymarks" almost argue this con-

clusion, and confess the lamentable influences upon the usefulness of such men as Malan and the Haldanes, Vol. VIII., p. 7, 8. But has not Christ ordained a visible Church with its officers and duties? How else can it be constituted, than by denominations, misnamed "sects"? If all of ours are too bad to be retained and reformed (even), let the Plymouth Brethren organise a better one and stick to it, as Christ commands.

3. The Pre-Advent scheme disparages the present, the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and the means committed to the Church for the conversion of sinners. It thus tends to discourage faith and missionary effort. See how, in the Waymarks, Vol. VI., pp. 252, 253, our hopes of further prosperity for the Church are travestied, as though they were mere carnal expectations. Whereas Christ represents the presence of the Holy Ghost, and this his dispensation, as so desirable, that it was expedient for him to go away that the Paraclete might come. John xvi. 7. Pre-Adventism represents it as so undesirable that every saint ought to pray for its immediate abrogation. Incredulity as to the conversion of the world by the "means of grace" is hotly, and even scornfully, inferred from visible results and experiences, in a temper which we confess appears to us the same with that of unbelievers in 2 Peter iii. 4: "Where is the promise of his coming?" etc. They seem to us to "judge the Lord by feeble sense," instead of "trusting him for his grace." It is an essential and cherished idea with them, that to the end the elect are to be a "little flock" among men. The only object they profess for missionary exertions, is to gather out this elect seed from the mass, so as to clear the way for Christ's coming to destroy it. Such expectations are unfavorable to missionary spirit. No man can use the means of grace which he habitually disparages as means for the world's conversion, as heartily as he should. In order to be as zealous where his best expectation is to be to fellow men "a savour of death unto death," the evangelist must be more or less than a man.

4. This scheme is unfavorable to the promise of Israel's ingathering, so clearly stated in prophecy. True, it teaches that Israel will be saved after (immediately after) and by means of

the Advent; but most inconsistently. For first, St. Paul says, they are to come in "with the fulness of the Gentiles; "but Pre-Adventism expects no such fulness. Second, he says they shall be regrafted into "their own olive tree," which is the visible Church. But Pre-Adventism holds that Christ's coming will abolish the visible Church. Third, where shall unbelieving Israel be put during the terrors of the first resurrection and universal fires which are to destroy all other unbelievers? Last, the scheme is unscriptural in expecting Jews to be savingly impressed by outward catastrophes, whom the truth of the word cannot impress. "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they believe though one went unto them from the dead." Christ's first advent could not convert Israel; why should his second?

The Pre-Advent theory tends to two errors: a sensuous or animal happiness in the millennial state, and a disparagement of the blessedness of Christian souls in their disembodied state. According to that scheme, the latter state is less desirable or blessed than the millennial; for Pre-Adventists insist that we shall hope and pray for an entrance into the *millennium*, far rather than into the disembodied state of the blessed dead. Again, they must admit that the millennial grade is lower than the heavenly state which follows the final judgment; for then the Bride enters into the marriage supper of the Lamb. The millennial state, then, is lower than the heavenly; and the disembodied state lower than the millennial. This last must then be quite low indeed. Thus is explained the tendency seen in many millennarians, as Bickersteth, and the Waymarks, Vol. VIII., p. 152, etc., to depreciate the blessedness of the departed. Some tend to make it an unconscious, or at most, a semi-conscious state. Again, in the heavenly, or highest state, saints are "equal unto the angels, neither marrying nor giving in marriage." But the millennial is an inferior state to this. Therefore it may be surmised that, in it, the saints will marry! The reader should know, that many British Pre-Adventists, at least, boldly avow this, and other sensuous features, to a degree worthy only of an ancient Chiliast.

6. Pre-Adventists usually claim that their expectation of the Lord's coming is peculiarly promotive of spiritual-mindedness, strong faith, and close walking with God. A Christian who had not adopted their scheme, is represented as exclaiming, when it was unfolded, "If I believed so, I must live near my Saviour indeed!" If he did, he exclaimed foolishly. For first, did not God give one and the same system of sanctification to us and to primitive Christians? But these could not have cherished the expectation of seeing the "personal advent" before death; for stubborn facts have proved that it was not less than 1800 years distant. Second, every Christian, even if he is a Pre-Adventist, must know that it is far more probable his body will die before the "advent," than that he will live to see it. All admit that in a few years the body must die. Then the season of repentance will be done; the spiritual state of our souls decided forever, and our spirits reunited to a glorified Redeemer in a better world than this. Now, if there is faith, these certainties contain more wholesome *stimulus* for it, than can possibly be presented in the surmises of any Pre-Adventist theory. The only reason the latter is to any persons more exciting, is the romance attaching to it; the same reason which enabled the false prophet, Miller, to drive multitudes into wild alarm by the dream of approaching judgment, who were unmoved by the sober certainty of approaching death. The hope of us common Christians is to meet our glorified Lord very certainly and very soon (when our bodies die) in the other world. It passes our wits to see how a less certain hope of meeting him in this world (a worse one) can evince more "love for his appearing."

7. We close with the remark, that Pre-Adventism is directly against our Standards. So far as we can now remember, the word *millennium* does not occur in them; and, on the question, whether the whole race of man will be converted in the latter day, they observe a wise silence. But they distinctly teach one resurrection, and the only remaining advent of our Lord at the judgment-day. They utterly ignore the Pre-Adventist's "personal reign of Christ" on earth. See Shorter Catechism, Q. 28th; Confession, Chapter VIII., Sec. 4, ("shall return to judge

men and angels at the end of the world.") Chapter XXXII., Sec. 2; Larger Catechism, Q. 53, 56.

We would humbly submit, then, that the Presbyterian who desires to be a Pre-Adventist, is bound in candor to move for a revision of our Standards on these points.

ARTICLE II.

OUR EDUCATIONAL POLICY.*

A Convention, called under the recommendation of the General Assembly of 1870, met in the city of Huntsville, Alabama, in last May, and spent several days in considering "the whole subject of the educational policy of our Presbyterian Church." There were able men in that body, and the results to which they arrived in their deliberations are worthy of the earnest attention of the entire Church. They are embodied in a report which was adopted, with certain amendments, by the Assembly as its own deliverance on the subject. That report has been issued in the form of a circular letter, and is now before all the churches for their consideration.

That paper does not purport to be a final settlement of the question of the educational policy of our Church. The question is still open for discussion. The report only claims to set forth "certain well established principles which were reached with entire harmony." It was characterised by the Rev. Dr. Wills, the able chairman of the Committee that brought in the report, "as a complete compromise, and as not representing fully the views of a single member of the body." The compromise did not consist in blending together, by mutual concessions, the disharmonious views of different parties, but in the agreement of

*This Review being an open journal upon sundry questions, we cheerfully admit this communication without committing ourselves to the sentiments expressed by the esteemed writer.—EDS. S. P. R.