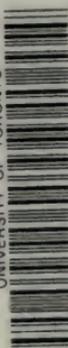


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PLYMOUTH BRETHRENISM

UNVEILED AND REFUTED.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM REID, D.D.,

LOTHIAN ROAD UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, EDINBURGH.

SECOND EDITION.

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PREFACE.



THE rapid sale of the first edition of this work, indicates the interest which is abroad respecting the subject of which it treats. To meet still further this interest, a new, cheaper, and revised edition is now issued. The chief alterations in the present issue, consist in the exclusion of such extracts from Brethren writings, as do not seem essential to a fair representation of the views therein propounded; and the addition of two new chapters—one on the “Attractions of Brethrenism,” and another on “Perfectionism,” which constitutes, I apprehend, its chief attraction. This chapter also may be called *new*; for although I had in the former edition adverted to the subject, subsequent study of it, has enabled me to present it with a fulness, more in accordance with its importance.

The issue of the first edition, has brought me many communications from those who have suffered through the *doings* of the Brethren—chiefly from ministers of the Irish and English Episcopal Churches—several of them accompanied by valuable suggestions, which I have readily

adopted. Nor have I been without communications from Brethren themselves—some of an abusive and others of a perfectly respectful character. In several instances, the writers of these have promised me reviews of the work; but although I have invariably replied, that I would give their criticisms a fair consideration, none of the promised reviews have been forthcoming. The Rev. Wm. Reid, however, a namesake of mine—formerly of the English Presbyterian Church, but who has now gone over to the Brethren, to whom he regularly ministers in Edinburgh—fearing apparently lest the book might be regarded by some as a recantation of views he was suspected of holding, published a disclaimer, and an apology for Brethrenism, which has been circulated gratuitously far and wide. A special reply to this tractate is not here required, as almost every page which follows, furnishes extracts from the writings of its leaders, which refute the most of Mr Reid's assertions; and as for those which they do not refute, it is sufficient to remark, I have never called them in question.

MERCHISTON PARK, NORTH MERCHISTON PLACE,
EDINBURGH, *4th May* 1876.



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Part First.



BRETHRENISM DESCRIBED.

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“The departures from truth are temporary and local ; the foundations are permanent and eternal. Fluctuations there may be ; and error there may be, but men's minds come round again to the truth. The ambitious founder of a new sect dies, and his name is forgotten, or remembered only to warn a subsequent age against the same kind of error ; the causes which gave a temporary popularity or triumph to the erroneous doctrine cease to influence mankind ; the book that was written in defence of error, and that seemed so ingenious and unanswerable, is forgotten, and scarcely finds a place in that time-honoured list of books, which no gentleman's library can be without ; and the world settles down into forgetfulness of the temporary error, and the belief of the permanent truth.”

Albert Barnes.



I.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE BRETHREN.

IN the year 1828, certain devout Christians, resident in Dublin, chiefly members of the Episcopal Church, who were dissatisfied with its cold and lifeless condition, sought in each other's fellowship, the communion which they longed for. Prominent among these was Mr A. N. Groves, who was then prosecuting his studies at the university. Their first step was simply to meet for prayer, reading the Scriptures, and religious conference. A guarantee for the excellence of the object aimed at, and the purity of motive in those who sought it, may be found in the character of the originator of the movement. The history of Mr Groves, presents us with one of the finest instances upon record, of unreserved devotion to the cause of Christ. It is to him we are indebted for the rescue of John Kitto from obscure life, and for the development of those rare gifts with which God had endowed him. While in the practice of a lucrative profession as a dentist in Plymouth, Mr Groves resolved upon devoting himself to the Foreign Mission service in connection with the Church of England. In course of prosecuting his studies with this view, difficulties presented themselves to his subscribing the Thirty-nine Articles. This seemed at first sight fatal to his purpose; but on examining the New Testament, he came to the conclusion, that to the preaching of the Gospel,

ordination was not required. It also appeared to him from Scripture, that believers, meeting together as disciples of Christ, were free to break bread, as their Lord had admonished them; and that, in as far as the apostles could be a guide, every Lord's Day should be set apart for remembering the Lord's death, and obeying His parting command. This suggestion of Mr Groves was immediately carried out by himself and his friends in Dublin. In 1829 he left for Persia. On his return in 1836 he found that "the brethren" had abandoned their original ground, and constituted themselves a distinct religious party. In a letter to Mr Darby, he deeply deploras this, and predicts that "a step or two more in advance" was all that was needed to "see all the evils" among themselves, of the systems which they denounced.

Soon after the meeting which was commenced at Dublin, a similar meeting was originated at Plymouth, and among those who took part in it were ministers still connected with the Church. Contemporaneous with the start of this new sect, the cholera, devastating the entire south coast of England, begot a state of feeling, peculiarly favourable to religious pretensions, of more than ordinary sanctity; and, as in times of subsequent revival, the leaders of the new movement were wise enough to avail themselves of it. To this fact, may be attributed in a large measure, the popularity which attended the inauguration of Plymouthism. The two names most intimately identified with the movement at this early stage, are those of Mr J. N. Darby and Mr B. W. Newton—the former, in the first instance, confining his labours to Dublin, and the latter to Plymouth. Both having been educated for the ministry in connection with the Church of England, and being men of superior ability, they speedily attained the prominence of leaders. In course of time an attempt was made at Plymouth to establish something like church order, in the form of modified Presbyterianism, Mr Newton acting as presiding elder, and taking the oversight of the ministry, for the purpose of preventing what was unprofitable and unedifying. For some years this attempt was successful, "so that there

was at Plymouth the definite recognition of the ministry." Overtures having been made with the view of securing the sanction of the Irish brethren, to what was doubtless an innovation, those residing in Cork replied—"We will not be overruled by *the Plymouth brethren*;" and from this time, the phrase thus employed, became their distinctive appellation.

The Brethren, however, repudiate the designation. "Who are these 'Plymouth Brethren?'" asks Dr Davis of Aberdeen, in replying to an opponent. "I do not own the name. I am a brother of every believer in the Lord Jesus, and, if I lived in Plymouth, the Elder might call me a 'Plymouth Brother;' but I do not live there, hence I do not own the name." This is nothing new. Neither Arminians nor Antinomians of former times, would own the designation by which they were called. Nor is this wonderful. Surely parents have the best right to name their own offspring. Still the designation, like that of Quakers, Methodists, and Puritans, has come to acquire a definite import, and as its use serves an important purpose, it is not likely now-a-days to be got rid of. Nor should offence be taken by its use, when no offence is intended.

In 1845, Mr Darby, having differed with Mr Newton as to certain views of prophecy, issued a circular letter, cutting off from his communion all who were not prepared to submit to his judgment of Mr Newton, and condemn him as a heretic. The Brethren at Bristol, under the ministry of Messrs Müller and Craik, and many similar gatherings throughout the country, demurring to doings so alien to the genius of Brethrenism, were cut off by Mr Darby's decree; and henceforth, all wishing to join his following, were required to "judge the evil," or in other words, pronounce Mr Newton a heretic, and denounce his writings.

From this time the movement became known as "the Open Brethren," and "the Exclusive Brethren," Mr Darby becoming the unrivalled leader of the latter, by far the most numerous, and most heretical section of the Plymouthists. By far, too, the largest number of Brethren writers are to be found among the Darbyites. The "Open

Brethren" have never been prolific in publications. The late Mr Craik, Mr Müller, Lord Congleton, Mr Henry Groves, and Mr J. E. Howard, comprise nearly all the list. It is common for "the Exclusives" to charge "the Open Brethren" with lax communion and Broad Church tendencies. We confess, however, we have been unable to discover the grounds of these charges. Certainly they act upon the principle of free communion—a principle not likely to isolate them still further from their fellow Christians in these days of increasing charity. The "Exclusives," on the other hand, not only refuse fellowship to all save those of their own following, but forbid any of their party the privilege of "occasional hearing," and taking part with other religious bodies in any act of worship, public or private. The "Open Brethren" are not constituted into a distinct body as the Darbyites are, so that they have no corporate action. Their gatherings are independent one of another. Nor have they any recognised doctrinal system. Darbyite writings circulate freely amongst them; and in many of their meetings Darbyite doctrines are taught.

About the year 1847, Mr Newton renounced all connection with the Brethren, and is now the pastor of a Baptist church in London; and has published exposures of many of their errors. He still, however, holds their views as to sanctification—a fact to which we shall yet have occasion to advert somewhat fully.

To trace Brethren divisions further would serve no good purpose. If we may judge of a cause by its pretensions and attainments, the failure of Brethrenism is obvious. This is indeed admitted by its friends.

Mr Lewis Wright, apologising for it, says—"Wishing to be candid as far as lies in me, I fear I must confess that while since that sad end of a once promising movement, 'Brethrenism' has lain in ruins, it has become chiefly known—especially in and round London—as a *disturbing* element in other churches. There are many of whom this could not be said; but too often have the Brethren entered some peaceful community, to entice away by the spirituality of their 'views' some of the best among its members; and

then, building up nothing, left them to their fate" (*The Christian World*, April 16, 1875).

Even Mr Darby says—"When Brethren began, the full clear Gospel did come out through their means from the Word of God: it started with persons who had entirely given up the world. But the world is a much more treacherous thing than we are aware, and comes in by little bits" ("Lectures and Addresses, delivered at Manchester, June 1873").

"Our spiritual tone, both in private life and in our public reunions, is sorrowfully low," says Mr Mackintosh. "There is a sad lack of depth and power in our assemblies. There is excessive feebleness in worship and ministry. I believe the vast increase in our numbers within the last twenty years is by no means an index of an increase of power. Quite the reverse" ("Things New and Old," 1875, p. 327).

It would be interesting to know the present strength of this new sect; but on this point they maintain an ominous silence. While professing to be in possession of the desired information, they carefully withhold it from public view: others may publish their denominational statistics, but not so the Brethren. Now this must be either from motives of humility, or from the conviction that they can better gain their ends in silence and darkness. We leave our readers to determine which. This, however, is known, that they number adherents in all the principal towns of England, Scotland, and Ireland; in France, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy; in India, America, and the Colonies.

II.

THE THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS OF THE BRETHREN.

WITHOUT at present attempting a refutation of the heresies of the Brethren, we may, for the sake of better comprehending the character of the movement, give a summary of the points on which they differ from orthodox Christianity. We by no means affirm that they hold no Christian doctrine. On some points of belief, they are at one with the great body of their fellow professors; but the witty remark of Sheridan is peculiarly applicable to their case: They hold much that is both true and new; but the new is not true, and the true is not new.

Mr Lewis Wright, an apologist for them, says—"The very rejection by 'Brethren' of formal system and external authority, causes more variety of opinion amongst them, than in most other bodies, and that no special theology can be justly charged against them as a whole."

While this is so far true, they have acknowledged leaders, to whom a deference is paid, surpassing even the deference rendered to any church confession or creed; and those who thus recognise such as their religious teachers, cannot escape the responsibility of opinions, which they themselves may not have formally avowed. It is only necessary to refer to our table of contents for proof, that they deny or qualify almost every doctrine of the Christian system.

It is not wonderful, that with such extravagance of theological opinion, there should be a disparagement of Scripture, when it does not answer their purpose.

Dr Tregelles says—"The attempt was made by various individuals to draw as great a contrast as possible between 'the Church' and all things *Jewish*: thus the gospel of Matthew was said to present a *Jewish* aspect (though the only one of the four gospels in which the name of *Church* occurs); then the first three gospels were spoken of as *Jewish*; then all that our Lord did on earth was so spoken of. The precepts and principles in the four gospels were thus lightly regarded by some" ("Three Letters," p. 29).

Their views and practice respecting the sacraments are equally faulty. As to the ordinance of baptism, Mr Whitfield informs us, that "while all of them (with few exceptions) repudiate infant baptism, and affirm that it is not baptism at all, they have, by far the greater portion of them, never been baptized. They hold that baptism is a Divine institution; that God has enjoined it on all believers; and yet, strange to say, more than half of their number have never been baptized." Mr Holden, in his "Letters to a Mother," says (page 28)—"Baptism is nowhere in the Word made a thing to be done in or by the Assembly, as of its authority, but is always a matter between the evangelist and his convert."

The Brethren are equally at variance with the generality of their fellow professors, as to the observance of the Lord's Supper. According to their view, it ought to be the grand object of Christians, in assembling on the first day of the week.

Now, the errors enumerated in our table of contents, strange and startling as they may seem, are but the reproduction of heresies long since refuted. Any one acquainted with the literature of the Brethren, must observe that the most striking feature of its theology, is its Antinomian character. Theirs, however, is not the Antinomianism of Crisp and his followers. That is far too gross for the intelligence and refinement of the present day, yet they have so many points in common as to suggest a common origin. There is the same eternal justification and imputed sanctification—the same disparagement of good works, and identification of the believer with the perfection of Christ—the same

abrogation of the law and entire deliverance from sin—the same denial of prayer for pardon, and depreciation of the work of the Holy Spirit—the same ignoring of sins in believers of which they may be guilty. Mr Mackintosh doubtless derived his notion of Christ's heavenly humanity from the Eutychians of the sixth century; while for their other notions, the Brethren are chiefly indebted to the Rev. John Walker of Dublin, Edward Irving, and other equally erratic theologians. Mr Walker propounded the idea of the Church as the Assembly of God. Milton, in his treatise on "Christian Doctrine," supplied the notion of the moral law not being a rule of life to the believer, and the Lord's Day not being the Sabbath; while Edwards in his "Gangræna," provided them with the notions of what they call no man-made ministers, and perfect sanctification through union with Christ; for their notion of "the one body" they are indebted to the Donatists, who held that the Church in its visible form is identical with the Church which the Lord knoweth and not man; while Edward Irving contributed the notion of the presidency of the Holy Spirit, justification in a risen Saviour, the pre-millennial advent, and the secret rapture of the saints.

Nor have we to complain merely of what the Brethren teach; we have to complain equally of what they do not teach. Death will as certainly ensue from the withholding of food, as from the administration of poison. Theirs is pre-eminently negative theology. In our perusal of their multitudinous literature, we have, with a single exception, failed to meet with a separate and full exhibition of the evil of sin or the necessity of repentance. Regeneration, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the progressive holiness of the saint, are never insisted on. No wonder we search in vain through their hymn-books for a single expression of contrite feeling. When I turn to the hymn-books of other denominations, I find that while they consist chiefly, of hymns exhibiting the majesty and love, incarnation and work of Christ, there are also many in praise of God the Father, and God the Spirit—hymns expressive of the contrition of the saint, and his longings for increased holiness—hymns,

in a word, having respect to the entire circle of Christian doctrine and religious experience. Now why the absence of all this in Brethren hymnology? Does it not make plain the fact, that their theology is partial, defective, negative; and that there is a suppression of those aspirations and longings of the new-born soul, which not only indicate the fact of spiritual life, but which, if nurtured, become the means of its still fuller development?

At the first blush, the notions of Brethren should excite suspicion. Is it reasonable to suppose, that truths of such vast and essential moment—for so they represent their notions—should have remained undiscovered under the eye of minds as penetrating and holy as the Church is ever likely to be favoured with?—undiscovered not only amid ages of prevailing darkness, but in an age such as the present, when Scripture is being subjected to a scrutiny never before equalled, or if recognised and exhibited by certain theorists, only exhibited to be met with protest and dismissal. Yet, in the face of this fact, we are asked to accept these notions, in exchange for the views which the Church has ever prized as her richest boon, and to which she ascribes all the piety and practical godliness, with which she has so long blessed the world.

III.

THE PROSELYTISM OF THE BRETHREN.

PROSELYTISM is a recognised principle with the Brethren—a principle openly avowed. The Church, according to their view, is in ruins, and their mission is to gather together its scattered members under the banner of Brethrenism. Nor are they at all scrupulous in the accomplishment of their object. The principle that the end sanctifies the means, was never more fully recognised. Mrs Gilbert, the gifted sister of Jane and Isaac Taylor, in one of her letters says—"I forgot whether you have heard that —— became a Plymouth brother? But his mind, or at least his judgment, have so much of the pendulum in them, that I should never confide in their permanence for either wrong or right. The singular artfulness of the votaries of that system is almost Popish. On being convinced that the Brethren were right, he at once said he must avow the change. 'No,' was their reply; 'do not avow it, and you will the more easily instil your sentiments. Return to your people, and do so and so.' Protestant Jesuits!" (Autobiography, vol ii., p. 265.)

Congregations in a dull, languid state, are beneath their attention; but give them access to a congregation in a high state of spiritual life, and they will forthwith mark out the richest and most earnest of its members for their efforts. The female members of congregations are specially selected—feminine sensibility and impulse being regarded as favourable to their beguilements. It is still as it was in the first temptation—secure the woman, and the man is more easily ensnared. Those thus favourably impressed are invited to

both public and private tea-parties—tickets and invitations being freely circulated—and also to meetings for prayer and conference. Nor is it difficult to see how that all this, under the patronage of those in good social position, is fitted to exert a powerful influence on minds of a susceptible and unsuspecting cast. Brethren have even been known to connect themselves with particular churches, that they might, in meetings for prayer and conference, exercise upon their intended victims the influence of church membership. In railway carriages, on steam-boat piers, on the top of tramway cars, on the Queen's highway, in the drawing-rooms of hydropathic institutions, and at the doors of evangelistic meetings,—wherever, in fact, they can gain auditors,—they circulate their tracts and preach their doctrines. Indeed, their course might be traced by their leaflets, found on country roads, and in the parlours of country inns. Especially when a work of grace is in progress are they busy, and may be found even insinuating themselves into the room for anxious inquirers, and in the susceptible minds of the awakened, finding a soil peculiarly favourable to their views.

As many of the Brethren are persons in good social position,—majors, captains, even lords, retired merchants, men who, although independent, long for something to do,—and as itineracy provides them with congenial work, they may be found travelling from village to village, convening meetings for prayer and Gospel addresses, and thus scattering among Christian people, dissatisfaction with their present church connection, or attracting the unwary by the novelty of their principles. The respectability of their appearance, the suavity of their manners, and their earnest professions of a simple desire to be useful, easily gain the confidence of ministers who are longing for Christian co-operation, and secure the use of their places of worship, where meeting after meeting is held before the discovery is made, that dissension has been sown among their people, and their influence is destroyed. Not a few ministers by means such as these, have been driven from the scene of their labours, and the gathering of the Brethren has taken the place of a properly constituted dispensation of Divine ordinances.

Here I may give an instance or two in proof. Some time ago a deputation of this kind appeared in a certain town, and having secured the confidence of the justly esteemed minister of the parish, they were invited to make their quarters good at the manse. Calling on a neighbouring minister to solicit the use of his church, he was prudent enough to ask, "To what denomination do you belong?" The answer given being evasive, suspicion was awakened, and the use of the church was refused. The Free and United Presbyterian ministers being, however, less cautious, and assuming that all was right, the applicants being guests at the parish manse, their churches were granted. Bit by bit the true character of the strangers became apparent; but not before several hundreds in the district, had been unsettled in their religious belief and church connection. Presbyteries and pulpits now denounced the errors these evangelists had been propagating; and soon most of those who had been alienated, returned to their first love. The churches distracted for some six or seven weeks with the ministries of these emissaries of Plymouthism, will not, however, soon forget their professed superior sanctity, much at variance with their sayings and doings.

"We in Kemnay have suffered sadly in this way," says Mr Burnett, a landed proprietor in that place. "It is all fudge to talk as they do about the conversion of sinners. What they want, and aim at professedly, is *proselytism*. They are not like the apostle Paul, who trembled at interfering with another man's 'line of things.' Having pursued this devilish work in Britain for a long time, they are now proceeding to do the same on the continent of Europe. In one city in France (St Etienne), where for some time there has been a most blessed Protestant movement, and of a very genuine description (I speak as an eye-witness), they have introduced themselves within the last two or three years, and committed most fearful havoc" ("Plymouth Brethrenism is Antichrist," by Alexander G. Burnett of Kemnay, p. 12).

We readily accord to Brethren, the right to hold their own views and preach them. But no man has a right to

come before the public professing one thing, while he is really aiming at another, and which other, could not be gained, were the desire to gain it openly avowed. Let the emissaries of this new sect, frankly avow their principles and design; and if they in consequence secure fewer places of meeting, and gather smaller audiences within them, they will at least sustain the character of straightforward men, and that is nobler, than even the conversion of church members to Brethrenism. When a man becomes a Christian, he surely does not cease to be guided by those rules of courtesy which are essential to all well-constituted society. We believe there are few who, however well assured of the scripturalness of their own opinions, would either by public or private means, seek to proselytise the members of other denominations. Those who do so, forfeit all claim to the character of genuine evangelists.

Most bitterly do the Brethren complain, that we do not quietly permit them to perform their own work, on the principle of live and let live. They shrink from controversy, and rely more for success on persistent assertion, addressed to those who are ever longing for some new thing, and who are too ignorant to detect the error and confront it with the truth. Our apology is, that we thus assail them, because we are convinced that the errors which they hold are detrimental to souls, and dishonouring to God; and that because deep and deadly as their views are, they tend to notions yet more anti-scriptural. Such may not be the design of their leaders, but such undoubtedly is the tendency of their teaching.

IV.

THE LITERATURE OF THE BRETHERN.

THE Brethren, in disseminating their principles, have freely availed themselves of the Press. Not only have they tracts and pamphlets without number, on all their special articles of belief, but a large proportion of volumes of goodly size, the productions of their more fertile writers. Of periodicals, I have before me a list of not fewer than eleven, thousands of which are circulated monthly. While the literary merits of many of these publications are very low, and the views exhibited in them crude and misty, others of them are written with average ability; and while many of them treat of their peculiar opinions, a large proportion of the tracts, at least, are pervaded by sound Christian feeling and evangelical sentiment—this, however, only investing them as a whole, with greater power of evil.

It is worthy of note in this connection that, during the forty years in which the Brethren have existed as a party, they have not produced a single work of a practical or theological kind, which any ordinary bookseller has thought worth introducing to his stock, or which has found a circulation beyond the sphere which gave it existence, or a place amid our standard literature. From this fact we may draw our own conclusions, as to the mental calibre and literary attainments of those whom the Brethren recognise as their approved teachers. But still, the fact of such a literature, is a matter of grave import. Literature of the most flimsy character, when pervaded by erroneous sentiment, may, by its wide circulation among those disposed to receive it with

favour, act most powerfully, and through those thus immediately affected, influence the entire Christian community amid which they are placed.

Their principal writers are Mr C. H. Mackintosh, formerly a teacher in Bristol, now stationed at Scarborough, who has written commentaries on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, besides numerous tracts upon the whole circle of Brethren doctrine;—Mr Charles Stanley, who has written on the Sabbath Question, Justification in the Risen Christ, on Christ's Second Coming, and numerous tracts, many of which are admirably adapted to arouse the careless and direct young converts;—Mr William Kelly, educated for the ministry in the Church of England, and who is the author of expository lectures on Philippians, Colossians, and Revelation, lectures on the Holy Spirit, the Church of God, and of other publications of a miscellaneous character;—and Mr John Nelson Darby, who may be said to hold the foremost place among the Brethren, as a writer and leader. This gentleman was also educated for the ministry, and for some years held a charge in County Wicklow. He is undoubtedly a man of no ordinary ability and force of character. His style, however, is about the most uncouth, irrelevant, obscure, of any author. But when dealing with an opponent, "those obscure, uncouth, ungrammatical, tortuous sentences, which only excite our contempt," as another expresses it, "enter into the very bones of the victims, and paralyse them in their inner man." And yet this is the accepted leader of a large section of the Brethren!

Perhaps the men of most distinguished ability, who have at any time been identified with the Brethren, are Mr Benjamin W. Newton, a Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford; the late Dr Tregelles; and Mr George V. Wigram, author of the "Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance." The first named of these, has taken high rank as a Christian writer, and the other two as distinguished Biblical scholars.

The labours of Mr Darby in this department, may be estimated by the fact that, besides translating the Bible from the original, into the German, French, Italian, and

English, he has written a commentary on the whole of it, and issued some sixteen large volumes, comprising treatises upon such topics as Church Principles, Prophecy, Scripture Doctrine, and Rationalism; besides numerous tracts and pamphlets on the various articles of Plymouth belief.

Perhaps the most noticeable of all his writings, is his translation of the New Testament into English; but of all his endeavours, this surely was the most superfluous, and, we think, the least successful. We have interpretations substituted for translations, and that in parts of Scripture which treat of vital and saving doctrine. For instance, he renders ἐκ πίστεως, not as in our translation, "by faith," but "on the principle of faith;" thus poisoning truth at its very fountain head. Take the following as examples: Rom. v. 1.—"Therefore having been justified on the principle of faith, we have peace toward God," etc. Rom. ix. 30-32.—"What then shall we say? That they of the nations who did not follow after righteousness, have attained righteousness, but the righteousness that is on the principle of faith. But Israel pursuing after a law of righteousness has not attained to that law. Wherefore? Because it was not on the principle of faith, but as of works." Gal. ii. 16.—"We also have believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified on the principle of the faith of Christ, and not of works of law; because on the principle of works of law no flesh shall be justified." Gal. iii. 7-9.—"Know then that they that are on the principle of faith, these are Abraham's sons; and the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the nations on the principle of faith, announced beforehand the glad tidings to Abraham," etc., etc. "So that they who are on the principle of faith are blessed with believing Abraham." Gal. iii. 11, 12.—"But that by law no one is justified with God is evident, because the just shall live on the principle of faith, but the law is not on the principle of faith." Gal. iii. 22.—"But the Scripture has shut up all things under sin, that the promise on the principle of faith of Jesus Christ, should be given to those that believe." Gal. iii. 24.—"So that the law has been our tutor up to Christ, that we might be justified on the principle of faith." As we find Mr Darby's version

generally quoted by Brethren writers, we infer that it has among them supplanted that of King James.

Thus the Brethren have outstripped even the Baptists of America, who, in making a new translation of the Bible, contented themselves with the substitution of "immersion" for "baptism;" but who by that simple act, reared between themselves and other denominations, a wall of separation more fatal to their progress, than anything which a change of mere words of this kind, could possibly gain to them. A party translation of Scripture, can never be regarded with confidence, but by the most blinded followers of those on whose behalf it is made. The sect which adopts it, necessarily isolates itself from all other religious bodies. A more suicidal step, then, could not have been adopted by the Brethren. The translation of Scripture which Mr Darby and his followers have thus attempted to set aside, instead of being the work of one man, and that of a translator biassed by peculiar ecclesiastical and theological views, was the work of several, chosen with no party object—men of great scholarship, and performing their task, in an age singularly free from denominational jealousy.

BRETHREN DESCRIBED BY THEMSELVES.

 S no other sect was, perhaps, ever so fruitful of divisions, and as the novel doctrines propounded by some of its leaders have startled the more sober and reflective in their communion,—replies, remonstrances, and protests have been abundant ; hence we are in a position to study their views, aided by the opinions of those who were placed in the best possible circumstances, for truly apprehending and duly estimating them. Availing myself of this advantage, I have culled a few extracts, from such publications, which may be found both interesting and instructive.

The Rev. Frederick Whitfield, B.A., incumbent of Kirby-Ravensworth, Yorkshire, says—“My lot was cast among them during a long space of nearly twelve years. I am therefore in a position to speak about them. . . . I have omitted altogether touching on one point—the flagrant *immoralities* among ‘the Plymouth Brethren.’ My personal knowledge, and information from those among them, supply me with some of the most shocking cases, so shocking that I cannot bring myself to give them publicity” (“Letter to Rev. O. Dobree, B.A., by Rev. Frederick Whitfield, B.A.,” pp. 3, 4, 25, 43).

Mr J. E. Howard, a gentleman who has been connected with the Brethren from their origin, says—“All those who join the Darbyites are unknowingly and unintentionally making themselves parties to the condoning an amount of evil of which they have no conception. . . . I do not

condemn them as a lifeless mass. I do not say they are possessed by a seducing spirit; but I do say that the course of conduct which would merely stamp a political party as devoid of principle, is intolerable in a sect making such professions as I have referred to" ("A Caution against the Darbyites").

Mr B. W. Newton, who was so long one of their leaders, says—"I desire to produce in the minds of the dear Brethren everywhere the same strong sense that pervades my own of the evil of this system—and this is one object of my labour everywhere. At the same time, my hostility is against a system, not against individuals."

Lord Congleton, the associate of Mr Groves in the earlier part of his missionary labours, and now adhering to the Open Brethren, asks—"Have you tried these Brethren—the Darbyites? I have tried them (try the spirits whether they are of God), and found them false prophets—in every sense of the word, false. They are false in what they say of their brethren, they are false in doctrine, and they are false in their walk."

Mr Stewart, who was made to feel the wrath of the Assembly, says—"No pen could describe how, for fourteen years, the poor saints of God have been worried and perplexed in Jersey. . . . Whenever a dishonourable action is to be done, one has not far to go to find an agent. . . . Is it come to this pass, that injustice, banished from the slaveholders of America, has found an asylum in the bosom of the Brethren? . . . I do not believe that any religious body could be found—unless it be the Mormons—where such a wanton outrage could be offered with impunity to *truthfulness* and *honour*" ("Appeal," pp. 14, 34).

Dr Carson, in his able and racy book on Plymouth heresies, gives the following extract from the letter of an excommunicated member: "On entering the meeting one Saturday night, I was seized by my throat by Mr —, and nearly strangled; and I bore for several days the marks of this old gentleman's talons in my neck; and yet this old gentleman is allowed still to teach. This

account you will find recorded in Mr Culverhouse's pamphlet, for he was there and examined my neck. . . . Several sisters rushed out in great fear and alarm ; one said, 'It was like a menagerie of wild beasts.' . . . I am extremely glad that I have been delivered from the worst sect that a Christian man can meet with under the canopy of heaven. . . . They pretend to be wholly led by the Holy Spirit, whereas all things are arranged beforehand—who shall lecture, who shall pray, who shall give out hymns" ("The Heresies of the Plymouth Brethren," thirteenth thousand, pp. 127, 128).

Dr Tregelles gives the following specimen of their unscrupulous conduct: "Not only have bad and heterodox tracts been written, but there have emanated from Dublin, professed extracts from the writings of the Reformers and others, in which the liberty has been taken of altering their words and doctrines, so as to suit the taste and theology of the reviser. There is no intimation given of such changes having been made; all appears under some known and venerable name; so that the doctrines are ascribed to some ancient writer, which really are those of some modern Brethrenite. I am informed that such tracts have been circulated by thousands. In one case, a tract of a then living writer was appropriated, unsound doctrines were introduced; and, to the astonishment of the author, who had not been consulted, this was published as though it had been the genuine writing. When I remonstrated against such use having been made of the names of Reformers, I was told that it had been done 'for the honour of God'" ("Five Letters," pp. 28, 29).

The writer of the pamphlet entitled "Divers and Strange Doctrines" says—"Alas, for the swift and sad decay of that once happy fellowship, which has indeed, through God's rich grace, borne many a pleasant fruit that He has garnered, but which is now become little better than a burden of well-merited reproach! The Lord has indeed cast down with the hand the crown of pride; and for beauty there is baldness; and for the attractive loveliness of Christ, which once drew after it so many of His wandering sheep, there

has been too generally substituted the repulsive pretentiousness of a self-satisfied purism. The mere sympathy of party threatens to supplant the charity of God ; yet while the new commandment seems among us virtually a dead letter, we are like those of old who stayed themselves amiss upon the God of Israel. For assuredly the climax of our sin is the attempt to charge upon the *Holy Ghost* the responsibility of all that is credited as orthodox and orderly within this model 'Church' ("Divers and Strange Doctrines," by Tertius, pp. 28, 29).

Mr Henry Groves says—"While grace was declining, dogmatism on both sides was on the increase, and, as a necessary result, that forbearance which can alone enable saints—encompassed with infirmity on all sides—long to walk together, grew less and less. . . . Many dreamed of a loving fellowship of saints on earth that would lead calmly and joyfully heavenward ; they came into church fellowship, and found to their dismay that church fellowship meant that they were called to bear and to forbear ; it was not like Christ's own fellowship, not like His holy faithful love, so that instead of finding rest, they found a heavy burden laid upon them" ("Darbyism : its Rise and Development," pp. 10, 13, 89).

Mr Craik of Bristol, colleague to Mr Müller, says—"Oh, what a terrible thing is party spirit ! Am I not justified in discarding and avoiding it ? The truth is, Brethrenism as such, is broken to pieces. By pretending to be wiser, holier, more spiritual, more enlightened, than all other Christians ; by rash and unprofitable intrusions into things not revealed ; by making mysticism and eccentricity the test of spiritual life and depth ; by preferring a dreamy and imaginative theology to the solid food of the Word of God ; by the adoption of a strange and repulsive phraseology ; by the undervaluing of practical godliness ; by submission of the understanding to leading teachers ; by overstraining some truths and perverting others ; by encouraging the forwardness of self-conceit ; by the disparagement of useful learning ; by grossly offensive familiarity of speaking of such sacred matters as the presence and teaching of the Holy Ghost ; and by a sectarianism all the more inexcus-

able, that it was in the avoidance of sectarianism that Brethrenism originated; by these and similar errors, the great scriptural principles of church communion have been marred and disfigured."

Mr Anthony Groves, the founder of the sect, as early as 1836, said—"Your union will daily become one of doctrines and opinions, more than of life and love; your government, unseen perhaps and unexpressed, will soon become *one wherein is overwhelmingly felt the authority of men*; you will be known more by what you witness against, than by what you witness for; and practically this will prove that you witness against all but yourselves. The position which this occupying of the seat of judgment will place you in, will be this: *the most narrow-minded and bigoted will rule*, because his conscience cannot and will not give way, and therefore *the more enlarged heart must yield*. Light, not life, will then be the measure of communion; and being '*one of us*' will become a stronger band than oneness in the power of the life of God in the soul."

After this, what need have we of any further witness!

VI.

BRETHREN PIETY.



THEOLOGICAL and ecclesiastical system, is to be in some measure judged, by the peculiar form of piety which it generates. If it tends to give just proportions to Christian character—if it aids the Church in accomplishing its grand design in the world, then it is to be recognised, as the fruit of the Spirit of God; but if on the other hand, it produces a spiritual life at variance with Christian character as delineated in Scripture, if it fails in gaining the world in some measure to Christ, it is to be condemned. Now Brethrenism when tried by this test does not appear to advantage.

The first thing which strikes us on marking the piety of Brethrenism, is its exclusiveness. The theory of those composing it is, that all the churches are wrong—that all sects are unscriptural—that Christendom is in ruins. Were it so, the natural conclusion would be, to set to work and build up what has fallen, and reunite what is scattered. But no. To end sectarianism, as Dr John Duncan used to say, the Brethren begin by making a new sect, and that sect, of all sects, the most sectarian. They are the one Assembly of God—they are the body of Christ—they are the Brethren. “Are they ignorant?” asks Mr Kelly. “Where will they learn, but where we ourselves did, anything we know? In God’s Assembly, where alone the truth is to be found and learned.” “There is only one cup in this city,” said a Belfast Brother, “and we have it.” “The worldly systems of men are crumbling to pieces,” says Mr Stanley, “and God the Holy Ghost is gathering the sheep of Christ to the one

Shepherd, that died for the flock." "I do freely confess to you," says the author of a publication popular among the Brethren, "that with the full acknowledgment that there are beloved children of God in all the denominations around, and with every desire to keep my heart open to them all, I could no more have fellowship with any body of professing Christians who substitute clerisy in any of its forms for the sovereign guidance of the Holy Ghost, than, as an Israelite, I could have had fellowship with the setting up of a golden calf in the place of the living God" ("Five Letters on Worship and Ministry," p. 6).

Who among us, we ask, "substitute clerisy in any of its forms for the sovereign guidance of the Holy Ghost?" The statement really means, that none but Brethren are good enough for the fellowship of Brethren. But why should they think so?

"I was born of woman, and drew milk
As sweet as charity from human breasts,
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
And exercise all functions of a man.
Pierce my veins,
Take of the crimson stream meand'ring there,
And catechise it well; apply the glass,
Search it, and know now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own; and if it be,
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind?"

Papists and Brethren stand alone, in arrogating to themselves the exclusive right to be regarded as the Church of God. "In fact, should matters proceed much further," writes a friend in the south of England, "it is doubtful if heaven itself will be thought good enough for them."

Nor is this all; they have not only created divisions in churches and refused all fellowship with their members, they have literally "set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law," and made "a man's foes

those of his own house." They not only refuse to join in any act of public worship, with those who are not Brethren, and prefer where they have no "assembly" to remain at home, but servants will not join in family prayers with their masters, nor wives with their husbands, nor children with their parents, although, in instances known to us, those prayers be offered by the most godly masters, husbands, and fathers.

Here, then, is a new sect, starting up at the very time, when Christians are beginning to co-operate sincerely and earnestly without compromise of peculiar beliefs, and which demands of others as its terms of fellowship, the sacrifice of distinctive peculiarities, and the acceptance of dogmas, which have at different times, been refuted, by the most accomplished theologians of Christendom.

It is easy to see, how this exclusiveness must act prejudicially upon those who practise it. A limited Christian fellowship will generate a narrow and contracted piety—the more limited, the more narrow. The soul in such a case, instead of enlarging to the accumulated worth of the Church, will dwarf and shrivel to the limits of its own peculiarities. Even in the case of those, whose views and practices as to Christian communion, are the most liberal, the tendency is strong to exaggerate, not only the supposed defects of others, but in an equal ratio, to exalt their own supposed excellences. This is strikingly seen in the case of the Brethren. One of its most offensive results, is the conceit of spiritual superiority. There is not only a pride of caste, of family and rank—a pride of riches and beauty, but a pride of supposed superiority of theological views and religious attainments. No one can make the acquaintance of the Brethren, or peruse their literature, without being offended with this spirit; whereas on acquaintance becoming more intimate, it is discovered that as respects practical holiness, they really possess no superiority to others. Brethren piety, however beautiful and fragrant when distant, loses the charm on closer acquaintance. It were well did all ponder the weighty saying of Coleridge—"I never knew a man good because he was religious, but I have known one religious because he was good."

Another feature of piety as developed among the Brethren, is its fanatical and ascetic character. A very slight acquaintance with them is sufficient to discover, that they consist, to a large extent, of persons in whose temperament the emotional predominates. All men, no doubt, more or less possess both the emotional and intellectual; but in many, one or other predominates. Some are sensitive and impulsive; others are calm, reflective, logical. While the former long for sympathy, and haste to burn under the eloquence of emotion or the conceptions of fancy, the latter are apt ever to be on their guard against the seductions of feeling, and would dread the involuntary tear, as good men dread bad thoughts, and in all religious matters, would maintain the attitude of equable passivity and frigid reason. It is the duty of those, then, who are jealous for the cause of Christ, to guard its professors from excess on either side. Our danger is, that in those cases where either the intellectual or emotional predominates, our religion will be modified in a proportionate degree, in its form and colour. Now, it cannot be doubted by those personally acquainted with the Brethren, or familiar with their literature, that their piety is thus affected. Although we do not go so far as Dr Carson, and assert that "the nearer a man approaches to idiocy, the better is he adapted for the reception of Darbyism," we believe that those in whom the ascetic or emotional predominates, are more liable to become its adherents.

The religion of Brethrenism is the religion of sentiment. Just as music is said to have arisen from the statue of Memnon on being touched by the rays of the sun, the Brethren have under the influence of Scripture, no doubt, but in accordance with their own peculiar constitutional temperament, formed a religion for themselves.

"It has been remarkable to notice," says Dr Tregelles, "how the sentimental expectation of the Lord's coming *has led away from the close and reverential study of Holy Scripture*. Indeed, it has been painful to hear earnest and real desire definitely to study the Word of God regarded and termed by some, as being 'occupied with the *letter* of Scrip-

ture.' . . . 'Oh!' they say, 'this *head* knowledge, this intellectual study of truth! how it leads our minds away from Christ.' Of course, with this tone of feeling, all *critical* study of Scripture is decried; it is deemed a waste of time" ("The Hope of Christ's Second Coming," by S. P. Tregelles, LL.D., pp. 68, 69).

Now, nothing is more to be reprobated, than the rejection of the only means by which the true import of Scripture can be ascertained. Whatever of religious thought or feeling is not based upon its sound interpretation, is false, and liable to fall before the first blast of unbelief. Only substitute fancy for exact scholarship, and soon superstition will hatch a numerous progeny, which, although designated "precious truths," will be the offspring of superstition notwithstanding. What are the Heavenly humanity, Justification in the risen Saviour, Imputed sanctification, the Non-atoning sufferings of Christ, and the Secret rapture of the saints, but the products of ill-regulated minds. While it is no doubt true, that Christ can only be fully apprehended by the affections, for "he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love," it is equally true, that just conceptions of Him can only be got by a rigid interpretation of Scripture. To speak disparagingly of its "letter" is to condemn the very means by which its "spirit" can be ascertained. The truth of God reaches the heart through the understanding. "The fundamental process of all mysticism," says Morell, "is to reverse the true order of nature, and give the precedence to the emotional instead of the intellectual element of the human mind." Nor must we think lightly of errors, when even conscientiously held. Errors which grow out of a wilful ignorance of truth, are as amenable to Divine judgment, as are those in which truth and duty are knowingly set at naught.

But the morbid character of Brethren piety is equally apparent. These two things—sentimentalism and asceticism—may seem wide apart, but nevertheless in Brethrenism they are closely allied. Civil government, the office of the magistracy, military and naval service, worldly callings, and human enjoyments of every kind, are put under its ban.

According to Mr Kelly, the holding of any public office, or the performance of any political or judicial functions, are contrary to the profession of the Gospel and alien to its spirit. "Another danger to which the children of God are exposed," he remarks, "is to take all the comfort they can in Christ, while at the same time holding fast all they wish of the world's ease, sharing its pursuits and pleasures, entering into its assemblies, taking part in its senates, sitting on the judicial bench, and exercising authority in every conceivable sphere. These things do the Gentiles seek after. 'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world'" ("Ten Papers on the Holy Spirit").

Nor is this opinion held merely in theory, it has been actually put in practice. Captain Francis Hall has on this ground renounced his naval rank and pay. "The fountain of authority whence I derive mine," he says, "as holding a commission in the navy, is 'the world,' which is the enemy of God as declared in His Son Jesus. . . . How, then, can I retain it? How can any who say they are His, retain any authority conferred on them by the world?" ("Discipleship; or, Reasons for Resigning his Naval Rank," by Percy F. Hall, pp. 16, 20, 27.)

Captain Hall equally regards the office of the magistracy as incompatible with the Christian profession. "For what is a Christian magistrate to do," he asks, "when a broken-hearted man pleads for his wife and starving family, acknowledges the sinfulness of his heart, tells him of the temptations of the world to all, but specially to the poor, and the power of Satan, and prays for pardon? Will he say, 'No, you are guilty, and I am not the minister of mercy, but of law; you must go to the hulk, or the jail, or it may be to death?' Would Jesus have done so? will He do so now? is this grace? and is such a person a servant of the Lord Jesus *in the act*? is he doing all things for His glory, glorifying his Lord in his body and spirit, which are His" (pp. 25, 26).

Lord Radstock, a leading man among the Plymouthists,

seems to hold similar opinions. A correspondent of the *New York Observer* says—in reference to a meeting of the Evangelical Alliance held at Bath—“Dinner was served in a large hall, where two or three hundred ladies and gentlemen were seated at table. Speeches followed the feast, and when I was called on for a sentiment and a few words, I spoke of the respect and regard entertained in my country for the Queen of England, whose character as a wife, a mother, a widow, and a queen, commanded the admiration of the good in all parts of the world. And proposing her health, I resumed my chair ‘amid cheers,’ as the papers say. As soon as the applause which patriotism, not eloquence, excited, had subsided, up arose my Lord Radstock, and entered his protest against any homage being paid to an earthly monarch when we were met to honour King Jesus only. Having defended this notion in a few words, he sat down; but he had said enough to rouse the British lion, and one after another denounced his doctrine as unchristian as well as unpatriotic, and told him that it was the duty of Protestant Evangelical Christians to assure her Majesty of their sympathy and prayers.”

These extraordinary opinions of public life, are surely peculiar to the Brethren, or if held by religionists of other denominations, they must be limited to those of their peculiar constitutional temperament. It is no doubt true, that Jesus took no part in the administration of the then existing government. But does it follow, that His people should equally eschew political and civil functions? Had He so intended, He would doubtless have said so. Instead of repudiating civil government, He recognised it. “Render unto Cæsar,” said He, “the things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. xxii. 21). Cæsar’s things are to be respected, not scouted. Government, says the apostle, is a benevolent institution, and as Divine as it is benevolent; hence it is to be honoured and obeyed. The magistrate bears even the sword, by God’s appointment. To slay, is the use of the sword, and to slay, is not in itself sinful. Fear of punishment, then, and conscientious regard to Divine authority, urge obedience. Such

is the argument of Paul. Was not Moses a legislator, and a legislator by God's appointment? Were not Joshua and Saul and David warriors, and warriors by God's appointment? Is not the office of the magistracy a Divine ordinance? but has God appointed any office which His people may not consistently hold? Legislators, magistrates, military and naval officers, are the guardians of sacred rights, and the executioners of eternal justice; and to lightly esteem their office, or to resist their authority, is to connive at wrong and to dishonour God.

Indeed, human enjoyments of any kind are equally condemned by the Brethren. "If a person says there is no harm in going to a flower show," declares Mr Stoney, "I say you are not holding the head. Is that the place for a member of Christ? You are not mindful of the gravity of your position" ("Lectures at Manchester, June 1873"). This reminds us of one of the latest decrees of a sect called the *Dunkards*, which has recently arisen in America — "that the *ungodly piano*, or any other musical instrument, should not be kept by any member of the Church."

Mr Groves, for whose character we have a sincere admiration, seems to have felt, as if even to behold beautiful scenery was sinful. This appears frequently in the course of his most touching biography. "The mere physical beauty, or barrenness, of any country have little interest to my own mind," he says, "because they have ceased to be, and perhaps never were, expressive of the degree of His favour or displeasure, or the means of converting souls to Himself. The Jews, however, in their dispensation, which was casual, temporal, and typical, might derive pleasure from the contemplation; but in the Christian dispensation we cannot, for none of *these things* are promised as our portion" ("Memoir of A. N. Groves," 2d edit., p. 57). Most extraordinary doctrine surely! No sin for Jews to enjoy fine scenery, but sin unpardonable for Christians!

He must have been one of the Brethren, who, being one Sabbath on the Righi, and whose conscience having smote him for the delight he felt in the majestic and beautiful in nature, exclaimed, "What would I say, were God to come

to me, and demand, What doest thou here, Elijah?" "Say?" replied another, "I would say to such a question, We have heard, O Lord, of the grandeur of Thy handiworks in these parts, and are come hither to give Thee, the tribute of admiration they are fitted to inspire." Was Jesus, we might add, not in all these scenes when He made the world, and may we not still discover there, the impress of His power, and hear His voice in the bleak winds of winter, and in the summer gladness? What nobler office, than that of the Christian philosopher? Christianity, so far from destroying our natural instincts, purifies and elevates them. Apart from all that is vicious and sensual, there is that which is perfectly innocent. We may be sinful, but all that God has made, save man, is sinless. Shall we refuse to mark the beauties and enjoy the fragrance of the meadow flower, because, perchance, a reptile may hide beneath it? God has prepared for us, as certainly as for our first parents, a garden of pure delight. "Of every tree," He says again, "thou mayest freely eat;" and there is no more sin in complying, than there is in the enjoyment of food, or in the sensations of health. Much sympathy must such religionists have for cowed monks, and solitary vigils, and monastic cells; but if they would know what true piety is, let them look to Jesus and learn.

Another natural effect of the views held by this new party of religionists, is impaired usefulness. Let any earnest worker for God and man, come under its influence, and his usefulness is ended. Union with Brethrenism means severance from all Christian effort of a general kind, however catholic in character. Co-operation with Bible, tract, temperance, and missionary societies—home missions and evangelistic endeavours, are all regarded as alliance with evil, and to be shunned. When did ever the contributions of a "brother" appear on the subscription list of any of these institutions? What great movement for the amelioration of human wretchedness do they befriend?

A pious officer called on Dr Judson, when he was very ill; but he could not forego the opportunity of being useful. "'You know Major ——,' he said; 'I loved him like a

brother, but—poor fellow—many are the tears I have shed for him of late.’ ‘Indeed!’ exclaimed the visitor. ‘I suppose you know,’ continued the Doctor, ‘he has taken to certain wild courses.’ ‘Impossible!’ ‘Both possible and true. You know something of the Plymouth Brethren, of course.’ The visitor flushed. ‘Well, they got hold of poor Major ——,’ he continued, ‘and have utterly ruined him—that is, his usefulness in this world. I believe his eternal salvation is secure.’ ‘Then you have no very high opinion of the doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren?’ ‘Most assuredly not. They do not believe the promises of God to His people; and their influence goes to discourage and paralyse all missionary enterprise. They do not believe in church organisation—and so the poor, ignorant soldiery and Protestant half-castes, coming under their influence, are scattered as sheep without a shepherd.’ ‘But there seems to me to be many good, spiritually-minded Christians among them.’ ‘Have you never observed that when seekers after sanctification attain to a certain degree of spirituality, they are peculiarly liable to fall into errors of form? Why, it is in this way that the wildest impostors have sometimes gained their most deluded and unquestioning followers. Men long for what they have not; and instead of sitting down at the Saviour’s feet and drinking in His words, they go away to furnish themselves with swimming bladders, the work of their own invention.’ ‘This cannot, however, be said of Plymouth Brethren. They are especially opposed to forms.’ ‘That is, they throw away the forms of every other sect, and adopt a new set peculiar to themselves.’ ‘I see,’ said the visitor, good-humouredly, ‘that you have no mercy.’ Dr Judson smiled. ‘Shall I tell you, my dear ——, at the risk of being written down a bigot, what my real, candid opinion is in the matter? When the arch enemy of souls finds a Christian so weaned from the world as to be inaccessible to all the grosser modes of temptation, he just dons the sheep’s clothing of Plymouth Brethrenism, and in despair of getting this particular soul, puts a veto on the man’s usefulness, to the serious detriment of hundreds and thousands of others.’

“Do you know,” inquired his wife, as soon as the visitor had withdrawn, “that —— is said to have a strong bias towards Plymouth Brethrenism; so much so that his best friends are trembling for his stability?” “Of course I know it,” came a faint voice up from his pillow where the tired invalid had sunk down in utter exhaustion. “You do not fancy me so overburdened with strength as to throw away any in warning men who are not in danger?” (“The Life of Dr A. Judson of Burmah,” by Horatius Bonar, D.D., pp. 347-349).

We account for this impaired usefulness by two things. There is first of all the conceit of spiritual superiority. To co-operation we must be disposed to meet on a common platform of religious equality. Millenarian views tend to the same result. What efforts for the conversion of the world can be expected of those whose spoken and published discourses abound with sentiments such as the following: “I daily feel more and more that till the Lord come, our service will be chiefly to gather out the few grapes that belong to the Lord’s vine, and publish His testimony in all nations; there may be here and there a fruitful field on some pleasant hill, but, as a whole, the cry will be, ‘Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?’” (“Memoir of A. N. Groves,” 2d edit., p. 89.) Mr George Müller of Bristol withdrew from co-operation with all missionary associations, as he believed that, while “a hearty desire for the conversion of sinners, and earnest prayer for it to the Lord, is quite *scriptural*, it is *unscriptural* to expect the conversion of the whole world. *Such an end* we could not propose to ourselves in the service of the Lord” (“Narrative,” first part, 7th edit., p. 106).

Now it is because the Brethren fail to present a well-developed and well-proportioned piety, we advert to this peculiarity of their religious life.

VII.

THE ATTRACTIONS OF BRETHERNISM.

THE question is both interesting and important, how a movement so destitute of a scriptural basis should have attained so great a magnitude, and continue to attract to it many of unquestionable piety in the educated classes? It might be answered in general terms, that it is in the religious world, as in the realm of nature, certain conditions periodically return, which have hitherto baffled all investigation, but are nevertheless the causes of flagrant evils. We have fever, cholera, and plague coming and going, and little as yet known respecting them, but the ravages which they accomplish. And so it is with fanaticism. Popery, in defiance of Gospel truth and general education, threatens to reassert its supremacy. Infidelity, under the guise of liberal views, and alleged scientific teaching, flaunts its speculations not only in the world, but within the Church itself; hence it is not wonderful if we should have a revival of mysticism, under the guise of a more primitive and spiritual piety—a fanaticism more to be dreaded perhaps than either of the two preceding, because, doubtless, originating in a spirit of true devotion. That Plymouthism partakes largely of mysticism, will become more apparent, on becoming better acquainted with its principles.

Another fact of a general kind might be adverted to. Doubtless the want of a systematic knowledge of Divine truth exposes to peril in such a season. While the truths of Scripture, like the various objects in the animal, mineral, and vegetable world, are promiscuously scattered over the

Word, they are as certainly capable of being systematically arranged, as are the diversified objects in any of these; indeed, they can only be truly apprehended in their full force and majesty—in their natural relations and mutual dependence, when subjected to systematic arrangement. Now it cannot be denied that, notwithstanding all the preaching and religious literature with which we are favoured, comparatively few study Scripture truth systematically; and hence the danger of being carried about with every wind of doctrine.

Nor can we overlook political and social influences, in connection with this movement. It is well known that at the outset its adherents, to a large extent, consisted of the *élite* of society, and of those who are opposed to what is called Radicalism; indeed, as has been said, “they were long ridiculed at first as a knot of high Tory gentlemen and ladies, unable to endure either the corruptions of Anglicanism or the vulgarity of Dissent, and so establishing a sort of Madeira climate for their delicate lungs;” and there is ground for this *ridicule*. What mean such expressions as the following in Mr Kelly’s “Papers on the Holy Spirit?” “How nauseous to sink into a voluntary society—a sect framed and governed according to rules of man’s device! . . . Clericalism and religious radicalism are both opposed to Scripture and the action of the Holy Spirit.” The genteel and select character of any religious party possesses a powerful attraction for minds of a certain class.

The success of Plymouthism is further to be explained, by the constitution of Episcopacy. As it makes no allowance for lay agency, in the preaching of the Gospel, it is easy to see that, in the event of a spiritual revival, the first impulse will be, to make known to others the blessing which has been received, that they too may share in it. Thus it will appear that, Plymouthism must of necessity almost immediately free itself from the trammels which Episcopacy imposes. Nor can it be doubted, that the jealousy with which Church authorities regard all such movements, tends only to widen the breach which has thus been created. What took place in the case of Rowland Hill and John Wesley’s spiritual quickening and evangelistic efforts, has

been repeated in the case of the Brethren. It is not to be expected that a Church, proud of its numbers, rank, and political power, is to accommodate its arrangements to such a movement, and hence bitterness is engendered.

The same is even true, to some extent, of Presbyterianism. Although more democratic in its constitution than Episcopacy, it cannot be denied that, lay agency, is by many Presbyterians, looked upon with little favour, hence new converts, naturally seek a sphere in which their efforts will not only be tolerated but approved. Nor can it be doubted that, the sudden discovery of the ability to speak and pray in public assemblies, forms a strong inducement to many, to gratify their love of personal distinction, by setting at defiance, the approved order of public worship, and in the assemblies of Brethrenism, or on public thoroughfares, to exhibit those newly discovered gifts, so long as others will tolerate their exercise.

Simplicity of worship is undoubtedly an attraction. While Ritualism has an attraction for some, there are those of an opposite extreme, who delight in the absence of everything savouring of rites and order. Dr Wallace of Parsonstown tells us, that he was led to identify himself with the Brethren thus: Dr Carlile of Dublin had "pointed out to him that there is no warrant in Scripture for the universally received opinion, that the presence of an 'ordained minister' is essential to the due observance of the Lord's Supper. It is evident that this was to cut at the root of every religious system; for if the exclusive right of presiding at the Lord's Table were taken away, the prestige of the ministry would be gone. The reader cannot but ask where the 'ordinary, regular, prescribed way' of ordination, is to be found described in Scripture, and where the right of 'administering the sacraments' is, connected with such ordination" ("Brought Out," by A. W. Wallace, M.D., pp. 4, 7).

Thus an aversion to the *order* adopted by all recognised churches—the result of long experience—led him to join those, where, to use his own words, he could have "deliverance from clericalism, and liberty for the laity to carry things their own way" (p. 15). We admit that were a

church so situated as to be destitute of regularly appointed office-bearers, the observance of worship and the administration of sacraments might be validly performed by others; but seeing that the Church has, from both Scripture and experience, learned that these are, in ordinary circumstances, more acceptably performed by those who have been regularly appointed to office, prudence and edification forbid, that we should deny ourselves the advantages which they afford. And if Dr Wallace has not yet learned this much, he may, like others, live long enough among the Brethren, to learn that on the whole, order can be better observed by according with the general practice of the Church.

Nor can it be overlooked that, Plymouthism professes to offer a Christianity more in accordance with apostolic simplicity and spirituality; and to devout minds nothing can be more attractive. With all the advantages of government, discipline, and public worship, conducted by regularly trained and duly appointed ministers, there is a danger of the formality thus created being accepted as religion itself. With the abandonment then of all this, and with the promise of worship solely directed by the Divine Spirit, there is presented a powerful attraction for the truly spiritual. In the assemblies of the Brethren the truth spoken, is the direct dictate of the Holy One, and the prayers offered, the spontaneous expression of hearts which He has moved. Such at least is the allegation, and it is not wonderful that, among the multitudes longing for greater spirituality in religion, there should be those who believe it. What more attractive than perfection?—the goal towards which all noble minds are pressing. This, then, is what Brethrenism promises. Not merely a perfection which *may* be attained, but which is actually attained; not the highest ideal of human perfection, but a divine perfection, even the perfection of Christ. To attain to this, and attain to it without a struggle,—what a privilege!

That novelty has a peculiar fascination, is a truism. Let any one present a religious notion, however fantastic, and baptize it with a Christian name, and there are those who will accept it as the very Gospel of Christ. The old

Athenians, who were ever craving after some new thing, are by no means extinct. "We never saw it before!" will be the exclamation. Barnum, the American showman, well understood this fact. No pretence can be too extravagant for the credulity of some. And leaders among the Brethren have been equally forward to take advantage of it. The promise of "superior piety," "deeper spiritual insight," "unknown experience," "precious truths," are a sufficient lure for such. It is easy to see that when all this is conveyed with great apparent fervour, the genuine but simple inquirer, longing for some loftier discovery, will readily accept, as a new revelation from God, what more guarded hearers would test by Scripture truth, and the natural judgment concerning it of the most thoughtful students of the Word in bygone times. But well-established truths have little charm for those, who are ever on the chase for novelty. The novelty stimulates, while the old truth does not; hence the teachers of the established doctrine, are denounced as hirelings, as unconverted, and as wolves in sheep's clothing; while the upstart apostles of the new doctrine, who substitute for a systematic knowledge of Divine truth, bold assertion and sentimental theorising, gain for a time a ready ear, and are hailed as the very messengers of God.

We have these pretensions thus set forth in a recent publication. "What is 'Brethrenism' in our day but the Divine protest against the present defection, corruption, and latitudinarianism in the professing Church? They are the pioneers of this nineteenth century, who are thrusting the Scriptures afresh on the churches, and who, on the Word of God being bound and denied free course, are forced into an outside position by the lack of doctrine, discipline, and worship, in the ecclesiastical Laodiceanism of the period." . . . "When you can point to a set of Christians living amongst us, who, at the cost of all that flesh holds dear, have dared to stand up for apostolic Christianity, pure and simple, in doctrine, worship, and practice, you point to the real successors of the primitive Christians, who are the hope, not only of retaining true and vital Christianity in the midst of us, but perhaps of preserving for a

while the country from decadence and destruction, should the dispensation continue; for such saints are not only the evangelists of the world's heathenism, but 'the salt of *the earth*'" ("The Literature and Mission of the Plymouth Brethren," pp. 21, 35).

Well were it for those whom these pretensions have beguiled, did they ponder the weighty words of one who had trod this dangerous path. Mr Benjamin W. Newton, in reviewing Pearsall Smith's "Holiness through Faith," says—"In the course of a somewhat lengthened life I have had, through circumstances, more opportunity than has fallen to the lot of most persons, of observing the course and the end of many who have (unconsciously perhaps at first) abandoned the Scripture as their alone rule, in the hope of treading a higher and better way. I have watched the course of such. I have witnessed not unfrequently its end. I have seen it delusion, darkness, and sorrow."

But there is more than this to account for the success of Brethrenism. Like Popery and Mohammedanism, it presents attractions of a totally different kind. It exempts the believer from all obligation to work out his own salvation. While we can in no sense merit salvation, all needed in that respect having been done for us by Christ, yet God has imposed upon us a most arduous service in respect to it. Instead of perfection being at once attained, there is the gradual discovery and correction of mistakes, evil propensities, and shortcomings; the gradual waking up to the full extent of our moral ruin, and in the light of this better self-knowledge, the crucifixion and extirpation of what is wrong, and the engrafting and culture of what is pure, beautiful, and true; the mastery of old habits and the formation of new ones; the crucifixion of cherished lusts and the nurture of pure affections are imposed upon us—in a word, a continued effort after assimilation to Christ; all this implying many an hour of sorrowful confession and bitter penitence—many a longing too deep for utterance—the whole constituting a ceaseless agonising before God, fitly symbolised in His Word, as a race, a fight, a crucifixion. But all this Plymouthism dispenses with. According to its teaching, there

need be no mortifying of the flesh, no crucifying of sinful lusts, no struggling after a higher and nobler life. Good works indeed, have no place in Plymouth theology. Christ so completely does everything for us, that within its embrace, we may sleep as soundly as in the Church of Rome itself. While there is a satisfaction to many in getting to heaven by their own doings, there are others, to whom it is equally a satisfaction, to have nothing whatever to do, to float into heaven on a tide of dreamy sentimentalism.

Nay, it proclaims freedom from law, and this spirit of independence, has been the curse of our race from the first temptation down till now. There is, first of all, the liberty to believe whatever you please. The Word, they say, is the only standard—so say both Romanist and Sociinian. But is the liberty thus secured worth what it costs? What are confessions and creeds? but the bulwarks and fences, set up around well-established truths—truths which have been patiently elucidated, and unanimously recognised by the purest churches in Christendom. To transgress these limits, may have a fascination for the lawless and daring, but only such will pay the price.

Then there is the liberty to do as you list. "It is evident," says Mr Stanley, "that the law is not the rule of the believer's life." "In the new man," says Mr Darby, "I am not under the law." "Brethren hold," says Mr Kelly, in his reply to Dr Moody Stuart, "as many did at the Reformation and since, that the law is abrogated, but that we, Christians, have died with Christ and are risen with Him, and are hence on a ground to which the law never did and never can apply."

Thus in the sphere of Brethrenism, there is liberty to do as you list: no law, every man being a law unto himself—a doctrine more congenial to depraved nature could not be conceived, giving such a licence to sin, or such an easy escape from its consequences, as to allay all fear. Indeed, the doctrine amounts to this, that what is sin in an unconverted man, is no sin in a believer. No wonder, certainly, that Plymouthism has special attractions for the large class, who are ready to accept all the comforts of Christianity, on

being permitted to continue the gratification of their cherished lusts.

The impulsive demonstrative cast of those attracted to Brethrenism, furnishes another fascination for young converts. A religion which abounds in the expression of feeling and experience, which overflows with professions of love and terms of endearment, cannot but be favourably regarded by those flushed with the dawn of Christian life. Such earnestly crave the sympathy of others; and in the event of not finding what they long for, in their friends or fellow church members, readily betake themselves to the fellowship of the Brethren, where there is found a glow of religious fervour and cordiality, peculiarly congenial to the feelings of new converts. The fact is admonitory. It is only in the bosom of a warm-hearted church, that youthful piety can be expected to thrive. Persons of extreme susceptibility, deceived by the profession of fervent piety, presented to them with singular devoutness of manner and affectionate persuasiveness, and assured of some loftier and more Divine views of truth than what the generality of religious teachers are accustomed to present, feel as if lifted to sublimer heights of faith; and panting with the desire to penetrate mysteries which have been hid from all beside, are speedily beguiled, and straightway are found emulating their teachers, in luring others to their fellowship, and compensating by the fulness of their new-born zeal, for the superior attainments of their masters in the faith.

Nor can we overlook the proselytism, to which we have already adverted. The more recent the origin, and the more limited in extent is any religious party, the better instructed are its adherents in its peculiar tenets, and this allied with the zeal of youth, gives special power to its propagandism. We have confirmation of this fact, in the efforts of primitive Christians to make known the Gospel, in the reformation from Popery, in the origin of Methodism, in the first days of the temperance enterprise—in a word, in the early history of every religious or moral movement. It is with Brethrenism as it is with Good Templarism; each adherent holds place, on condition that he loses no oppor-

tunity of making converts. The marvellous success of the latter, is largely due to this fact. And the fact is admonitory. What might we not all do for Christ, did each in his own sphere, like Jesus at Jacob's well, make the truth to bear upon the consciences of fellow-workmen and companions, with all the influence of direct, personal appeal. This is what the Brethren do for Brethrenism ; hence its success.

The opinion has, however, been expressed by those competent to judge in the matter, that Brethrenism is already on the decline. We do not profess to be in possession of results sufficient to determine such a question ; but judging from the nature of the case, we regard the opinion as in the highest degree probable. We base our concurrence, not so much on the doctrines of Brethrenism, as on its lack of organisation. What has happened to Unitarianism in America is likely to happen to Brethrenism everywhere. The Transatlantic Unitarian movement set at defiance all organisation ; talked of missions, but did not institute them ; prided itself on its superior intelligence and superiority to popular prejudices ; and thus it has drifted out on a shoreless ocean, no better than a wreck from the very first. And now, instead of celebrating its centenary in jubilant strains, it has all but ceased to be regarded as of any account. And just so with Brethrenism. Despising all organisation, under the plea that ecclesiastical combinations are sinful, it has become the most sectarian of sects. Repudiating a regular ministry, it has become the prey of whoever may chance to be the popular favourite. Rejecting all regularly constituted authority, the weak are compelled to bend to the tyranny of the strong. Refraining from all true evangelistic efforts, it has contented itself with the fruits of other men's labour. Indeed, it has so isolated itself from sympathy both with the Church and the world, that it must necessarily perish, through lack of those accessions, which every denomination feels to be essential to its subsistence and progress.

Part Second.



CHURCH PRINCIPLES.

“Six words, ‘Puseyism a carcass, Plymouthism a ghost,’ graphically describing both in their essential characters and their extreme forms, the one as wanting a soul, and the other as wanting a body, give the results of long and deep thought on these two religionisms, their characteristic contrast, their inward types, and inevitable developments.”

Stuart's “Recollections of John Duncan, LL.D.”

“The Plymouth Brethren are so far in the right. That system of theirs which sets aside official distinctions, were it only practicable, would be the *beau-ideal*, the perfection of Christian association and organisation. ‘I would that all the Lord's people were prophets,’ must be the longing of every earnest heart, as it was the longing of the heart of Moses. But the Lord, as we believe, has not judged it safe to rely altogether on such a general and spontaneous alacrity, as that arrangement would imply; and we admire His wisdom as well as His grace and condescension in the setting apart of special functionaries, that so these necessary works may be laid as a special charge on parties specially responsible.”

Candlish.



I.

DID THE CHURCH EXIST BEFORE
PENTECOST ?



FUNDAMENTAL dogma of the Brethren is, that the Church had no existence till Pentecost, and consequently that Old Testament saints had no Church standing.

Mr J. N. Darby says—"There never was a Jewish Church. The Church, even in its outward profession, stands by faith—is never composed of natural branches. The Jews were natural branches. They did not in their divinely-ordained place as Jews, stand by faith. A Jewish Church is an unscriptural fallacy. . . . The Church is composed, according to Scripture, only of the saints from Pentecost till the Lord comes to receive it to Himself. . . . The first time it is mentioned in Scripture is when the confession of Christ's being the Son of the living God is made by Simon, and the Lord declares that on this rock, now first thus revealed, He *will* build His Church; a thing yet future" ("The Law," p. 15; "Brethren and their Reviewers," pp. 51-53).

Mr Charles Stanley and Mr Wm. Kelly write to the same effect.

Such, then, are the views of the Brethren on this point. They found them chiefly on the single phrase, "I will build my Church" (Matt. xvi. 18). Because Christ declares that

He would establish His Church upon Peter, or Peter's confession, or, more truly, upon the two combined, it is concluded, that the Church had no previous existence. But broad as this foundation is, it has no standing place for this theory. When Christ uttered these words, He simply expressed the basis upon which He would organise the *Christian* Church. In doing this, there is surely no denial of the *Jewish* Church. The New Testament, equally with the Old, employs *ἐκκλησια* to designate an assembly, without reference to its character. It is not then to the term itself we must look for a settlement of this question. We are not, however, without abundant materials for its settlement.

What, we ask, constitutes the Church of God?

1st, We reply, covenant relation to Him. The Church doubtless was formally constituted in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. xii.-xviii.). This covenant pledged God to be a God to His people—that in Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed, or, in other words, that Christ should be in the line of His posterity; it conferred the right to partake of the passover, which was undoubtedly a religious ordinance, inasmuch as it was symbolical of Christ; it conferred the right of admission to the sanctuary, the place specially dedicated to the worship of God; while, on the other hand, even an uncircumcised Israelite was to be denied this privilege. Circumcision, the seal of the covenant, is distinctly designated “a seal of the righteousness of faith;” and Paul affirms that God “preached before the Gospel unto Abraham,” speaks of “the blessing of Abraham coming on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ,” and declares “that the covenant was confirmed before of God in Christ.” Thus the grand stipulation of the covenant was the promise of a Saviour, and of gratuitous justification through His righteousness. Justification was sealed by it to all believers, of whom Abraham is the common father; and sanctification was equally signified and sealed by means of it, for God promised to circumcise the hearts of His ancient people. We can thus trace the Church in its visible form, back to the covenant made with Abraham, but no further. Previous to this there were people of God

upon earth, sacrifices and worship, but no visible Church, with its Divinely appointed officers, government, sacrament, and worship, embodied in visible unity, and recognised by God as standing to Him in covenant relation. But from this time such was the Church. All receiving the mark of circumcision were its members.

2d, The relation of Christ to the Church has been ever the same. There has never been a time He has not been its Head, Lord, and Protector. He it was, who gave the law from Sinai (Heb. xii. 25, 26). He it was, who marched before His people in the wilderness, and who watched over them in all their wanderings. The pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, was the ever visible symbol of His presence. He it was, who appointed their ordinances (*see* Exodus and Leviticus), and inspired their prophets (1 Peter i. 11). He it was, whose glory Isaiah beheld in the Temple, and whose praises he there heard sung (Isa. vi. 1-4; John xii. 41). Is it the presence of God in the midst of His people, that chief of all constitutes His Church? Then He was present in the midst of His people, as He has been present with none other. The Brethren make much of being *gathered* to Christ. Were the Jews of old not gathered to Christ as none other have ever been? When were the Brethren favoured with the blazing Shekinah, to assure them of the presence of the Lord?

But there are other relations He ever sustains to His Church. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation" (Isa. xxviii. 16). When was this foundation laid? In time? no, but in eternity. This foundation then pertained to the Church from the very first. The Church, too, is represented in the Old Testament as the spouse of Christ, as the mother of His children (Isa. liv. 1-6, lxii. 1-4; Hosea ii. 14-23), the very emblem under which His relationship to the Church is set forth in the Apocalypse (Rev. xxi. 2-9, xxii. 17).

What is it that introduces to the Church? Is it not the enjoyment of salvation through the blood of Jesus? Are we not told that "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it?" Are we, then, to believe that while Old

Testament saints are redeemed by the blood of Christ as certainly as are New Testament ones, they have no Church connection? The author of "Plain Papers" (p. 83) says, in reference to the ancient patriarchs—"All these are presented to us in God's Word, as individual servants of His—not as members of a body. They were men of faith. Their devotion and obedience shine brightly on the pages of the inspired record. But there is not such a thought suggested by all that is said of them, as that they were members of the body, the Church. They were quickened by the Spirit, beyond all doubt. By virtue of the foreseen sacrifice of Christ, they were forgiven and saved. They will all have part in the first resurrection, and partake of heavenly glory. There can be no question as to any of these things. But no one of these things, no, nor all of them together, constitute the Church. The Church shares these things, life, justification, resurrection, and heavenly glory, with the saints of Old Testament times; but what constitutes the Church is something distinct from, and beyond all these things. *It is the actual living unity with Christ and with each other of those who, since Christ's resurrection, are formed into this unity by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven.* Was there anything like this in Old Testament times?" So, according to this theory, the Church is a thing of the Spirit, and not of Christ; and while ancient believers are part of that one family which is in heaven and on earth, they have no part whatever in the Church!

3d, The prophets regarded the Church under both dispensations as one and the same. They uniformly represent the Gentiles as gathered into the original Church, and the Jews as restored to the Church from which they had been cut off (Isa. xlv. 1, 2, xlix. 20-22, liv. 2, 3, lx. 22, lxvi. 12; Amos ix. 11, 12; Acts xv. 14-17). Observe in Isa. xlix. 20-22, the Church is comforted with the prospect of a great increase of children from among the Gentiles, in New Testament times; but how could Gentile converts under the New Testament be promised as children to this mother, unless the Church were one and the same under both dispensations? Nowhere is it hinted that on the introduction

of Christianity the ancient Church was abolished. The Mosaic ritual was abolished, but not the Church. No more does the boy lose his identity in his transition to manhood, than did the Church lose its identity, on attaining the plenitude of light and privilege.

4th, The identity of the Church under both dispensations is evident from various texts in the New Testament. It is represented under the figure of an olive-tree (Rom. xi. 17-24), the natural branches of which—that is, the Jews—are broken off, because of unbelief, and the branches of a wild olive—that is, the Gentiles—are grafted in their place; but the stock and root remain unchanged; while the recovery of the Jews is described as a “grafting them in again into their own olive-tree.” Such is the doctrine taught by prophets, and by Christ and His apostles.

Mr Darby, however, maintains that “the Jews were natural branches. They did not in their Divinely ordained place stand by faith. A Jewish Church is an unscriptural fallacy.” The text in question refutes the assertion. As well deny to the Gentiles a Church standing, because they are represented as “the branches of a wild olive,” as deny to the Jews a Church standing because they were “natural branches.” Nor was it *faith*, but circumcision which introduced them to this relationship. We can be part of Christ’s mystical body only by faith; but any one may be part of God’s Church on earth, by compliance with its terms of membership.

James, in the council of Jerusalem, represents the Christian Church under the figure of a tabernacle: it had fallen, but was now restored. “After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up” (Acts xv. 16). Could anything be more to the point than the following?—“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of

men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of THE SAME BODY, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel" (Eph. iii. 2-6).

Here we have *the body of Christ*, the very thing on which the Brethren found their theory, and yet it is so introduced as to prove that the Gentiles were but "fellow-heirs." Fellow-heirs with whom, we ask? With the Jews; and fellow-heirs to what? To all the benefits of the covenant. They are *σύσσωμα*, "of the same body;" that is, they are as much related to Christ, and as certainly partakers of His life, as were the Jews. They are "partakers of His promise;" that is, of the promise made to our first parents, and renewed in the covenant made with Abraham. Not a single element essential to a Church is wanting to the Jews. Is it covenant or Divine charter? "To whom pertaineth . . . the covenants, . . . and the service of God, and the promises." Is it ordinances? What Church had ever a system of observances so elaborate, every particular of which was given by direct revelation? Is it office-bearers? Its various orders of priests were all of Divine appointment. Is it worship? When was worship so imposing, rendered to the Most High? Is it piety? Purer, loftier, more devout piety has never been found in any age.

The Abrahamic covenant, we repeat, is the charter of the Church; and "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iii. 29). Union with Christ and covenant with God are never separated. Those who are united to Christ are in covenant with God, and those who are in covenant with God are united to Christ. If not one with Christ, then we ask—How were they saved? Is there salvation under the New Testament dispensation by one means, and under the Old by another? If those enumerated were saved at all, they were saved by Christ. Although the "mystery" of redemption was not known to them as it is now revealed to us, the fact of their union to Christ was not less real.

II.

ARE THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE CHURCH IDENTICAL?

THE Brethren hold that the Church of God consists solely of believers, and that as respects it, there is no ground for the distinction between *visible* and *invisible*. "What people think and talk about as the 'invisible Church,'" says Mr Kelly—"though Scripture never uses the expression—was substantially in existence before 'the Church;' and, in fact, *this invisible state of things is what the Lord was putting an end to, when He formed the Church*" ("Lectures on the Church").

We are also told by Mr Darby that "*a member of a church is a thing unknown to Scripture*. All Christians are members of Christ, and there can be no other membership" ("What the Christian has amid the ruin of the Church").

Now, all this is a simple play upon words. If we do not find in Scripture the phrase "*a member of a church*," we find there, that which the phrase designates. If any of the churches mentioned in Scripture did not consist of "members," of what did they consist? Of men and women who professed to be believers. That, then, is just what we mean by "members of a church." To whom were the words addressed, "Now ye are the body of Christ," but to the church of Corinth? and yet we learn that it comprised many whose regeneration may be charitably suspected. Were there not in that church, those guilty of fornication (1 Cor. v. 1), those who held erroneous doctrine (1 Cor. xi. 19), those who denied the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. xv. 12), and those who knew not God? (1 Cor. xv. 34.) Even Mr Groves says—"What a strange picture the Second Epistle to the Corinthians gives us of the state even of apostolic

churches ; surely, if in the early ages of the Church, allowed by all to be the purest, it was so defiled, what ground have we to expect greater power and greater purity?" . . . "Consider the church at Jerusalem, consider the church at Corinth, how much to be questioned, how much to be condemned, yet the apostles *bore* with and reprov'd, but separated not. Indeed, the more my soul searches into this matter, the more I feel I cannot *formally* separate from, or *openly denounce* those, whom I do not feel are *separated* from Christ, and denounced by Him as His enemies" (Memoir, pp. 244, 340). And yet in the face of all this, we are expected to believe that the visible and invisible Church are identical! Of course the Brethren will deny to existing organisations, called churches, any right to be so recognised. The Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Church of Scotland, Free, United Presbyterian, Baptists, and Independents, have no claim to the designation, because they are all more or less of a mixed character. How, then, had the Corinthians any claim to be regarded as a church? Paul was equally jealous of the church of the Galatians. "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you" (Gal. iv. 11, 20). Christ himself, places the point beyond dispute when He says, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John xv. 2, 6). Could we have the fact more clearly announced, and that on the highest authority of all, that there are in the Church, those who have no vital union with its Head? Besides, to discern the heart is solely God's prerogative. "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins" (Jer. xvii. 10). As the Church's office-bearers are not omniscient, a profession of Christ, and knowledge and conduct in accordance with that profession, are all they can require, for they are all they are capable of judging of. Hence it is obvious, that the Church on earth can never be pronounced to be identical with the saved, and none but the saved.

III.

THE ONE ASSEMBLY OF GOD.

THE origin of this notion is somewhat involved in obscurity. "*The one Assembly of God* is an expression," says Mr Henry Groves, "made use of in 1861 as the term whereby to designate those federal gatherings acting in unison with Mr Darby.

It is not an expression used once accidentally, it occurs reiteratedly in the ecclesiastical documents of the party. It does not appear with whom this presumptuous title originated, . . . and which may henceforth be ranked with *The one Holy and Catholic Church* of Rome, or *The Catholic and Apostolic Church* of the Irvingites. Mr Darby, however, endorses the expression" ("Darbyism: its Rise and Development," by Henry Groves, pp. 61, 62).

Mr Kelly says—"There might be many questions raised as to the meaning of 'Church:' it is hardly possible to create difficulties as to the word 'Assembly.' Now the fact is that the Church is the Assembly. Assembly is the proper English word, rather than 'Church,' which has become Anglicised, no doubt, but it frequently conveys notions not only vague, but even opposite to different minds" ("Lectures on the Church," by W. Kelly, new edition, p. 76).

Mr Darby in his version of the New Testament invariably renders *ἐκκλησια* *assembly*, as for instance in Acts ix. 31: "The assemblies then throughout the whole of Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, had peace, being edified;" Acts xx. 28: "Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, wherein the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers, to shepherd the assembly of God, which he has purchased with the blood

of his own ;” Rom. xvi. 16: “All the assemblies of Christ salute you ;” 1 Tim. iii. 15: “That thou mayest know how one ought to conduct oneself in God’s house, which is (the) assembly of (the) living God, (the) pillar and base of the truth ;” Heb. xii. 22, 23: “But ye have come to Mount Zion ; and to (the) city of (the) living God, heavenly Jerusalem ; and to myriads of angels, the universal gathering ; and to the assembly of the first-born (who are) enregistered in heaven.”

Now, in view of the texts thus transformed, we ask if Mr Kelly’s words are not the very opposite of true? We should rather say, that while there might be many questions raised as to the meaning of “Assembly,” it is hardly possible to create difficulties as to the word “Church.” The fact is, that *Church* has an understood ecclesiastical and theological import, while *Assembly* has not: the latter may denote a gathering of any kind ; and we can characterise this transposition of words, as nothing short of trifling with our most sacred associations, if it is not something worse. The rendering given above of Acts xx. 28, savours strongly of Socinian predilections.

Mr Mackintosh thus felicitates himself on what he considers a great discovery: “And, in the first place, we may be asked, ‘Where are we to find this thing that you call “The Assembly of God,” from the days of the apostles up to the nineteenth century? And where are we to find it now?’ Our answer is simply this: ‘Both then and now we find “The Assembly of God” in the pages of the New Testament.’ It is not on the records of historians that we build, but on the infallible truth of God’s Word, and therefore, although it could be proved that, for eighteen hundred years, there were not even ‘two or three gathered in the Name of Jesus,’ it would not in the smallest degree affect the question. The word is not, ‘What saith the ecclesiastical historian?’ but ‘What saith the Scripture?’ The vast gold fields of Australia and California lay concealed from man’s view for thousands of years. Does this fact render the gold less precious to those who have now discovered it?” (“The Assembly of God,” pp. 46, 47.) What

was the joy of Archimedes rushing through the streets of Syracuse crying, "I have found it! I have found it!" compared with the joy of Mr Mackintosh when this notable discovery dawned upon his vision! The discovery of the gold of Australia was nothing to it. Let Christians everywhere know, that for eighteen hundred years the Church has been lost sight of; and that the thing which they have loved, and for which they have suffered and bled, has been a thing of man's own creation. If we are to believe the Brethren, the real thing has been unknown in the world, till that patient and devout study to which they alone were adequate, discovered it.

But perhaps the most preposterous assumption of all remains to be noticed: "We must now very briefly glance," says Mr Mackintosh, "at what is the power by which the assembly is gathered. Here, again, man and his doings are set aside. It is not man's will, choosing; nor man's reason, discovering; nor man's judgment, dictating; nor man's conscience, demanding; it is the Holy Ghost gathering souls to Jesus. As Jesus is the only centre, so the Holy Ghost is the only gathering power. The one is as independent of man as the other. It is 'where two or three are gathered.' It does not say 'where two or three are met.' Persons may meet together round any centre, on any ground, by any influence, and merely form a club, a society, an association, a community. But the Holy Ghost gathers souls to Jesus, on the ground of salvation; and this, wherever convened, is the principle of the Assembly of God. It may not embrace all the saints of God in the locality, but it is really on the ground of the Assembly of God, and nothing else is. It may consist of but 'two or three,' and there may be hundreds of Christians in the various religious systems around; yet would the 'two or three' be on the ground of the Assembly of God" ("The Assembly of God," pp. 35, 36).

Here is another of the Brethren's fancies. *Gathered*, not *met*, is the characteristic of the true Church of God! While all other good Christian people have their time for worship understood, and depend upon the calendar for the day, and upon their watches for the hour, this privileged people are

gathered by the Spirit! Now, do they really believe this? or if they do so, do they think that other people are simple enough to believe it?

As they make much of a word, we must turn up the text in the original and look at it. The word is *συνηγμένοι*—“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. xviii. 20). Was the *gathering* of the Pharisees to watch Jesus, was the *gathering* of eagles to the carcass, the *gathering* of the chief priests to conspire against His life, the *gathering* of the crowd who cried, “Not this man but Barabbas,” a *gathering* by Divine impulse? (Matt. xxii. 41, xxiv. 28, xxvi. 3, xxvii. 17.) Now *συνηγμένοι* is the word used in all these instances, all of which occur in Matthew, who records the saying of Christ upon which this singular notion is founded. And yet we are to have based on this word, the lofty pretension of the assembly of the Brethren, being convened by Divine impulse! The text in question does not even refer to a church gathering at all, but to two or three who may be met for social prayer. The promised blessing depends not on their being *Divinely gathered*, but on their being gathered in Christ’s name, and to pray for a common object.

IV.

THE PRESIDENCY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A POINT much insisted on by the Brethren, is the presidency of the Holy Spirit in the Assembly of God. "The fact is," says the author of "Five Letters on Worship and Ministry," "that as really as Christ was present with His disciples on the earth, *so really is the Holy Ghost now present in the assemblies of the saints.*" The italics are the author's own. Again: "'*There am I in their midst.*' This is enough," says Mr Mackintosh. "It is not, 'There is a pope, a priest, a parson, or a president in their midst, at their head, in the chair, or in the pulpit.' No thought of such a thing, from cover to cover of the New Testament. Even in the assembly at Corinth, where there was most grievous confusion and disorder, the inspired apostle never hints at such a thing as a human president, under any name whatsoever. '*God is the author of peace in all the assemblies of the saints*' (1 Cor. xiv. 33). God was there to keep order. They were to look to Him, not to a man, under any name. To set up man to keep order in God's assembly, is sheer unbelief, and an open insult to the Divine presence" ("The Assembly of God," p. 30).

There is evidently a reference in the first text, quoted by Mr Mackintosh, to a promise given to the Old Testament Church—"In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" (Exod. xx. 24). Accordingly, at the dedication of the Temple, Solomon in remembrance of this promise, designated the Temple, the place of which God had said, "My name shall be there"

(1 Kings viii. 29), for nowhere else had God appointed to meet and bless His people. Now, great as was this privilege, the Saviour confers a higher. Before, there was but one place favoured with the Divine presence and blessing; now in all places where even "two or three" meet in believing recognition of Christ's divine nature, and in dependence on His grace, He is with them. He is their altar, their sacrifice, their incense. *Place* was formerly identified with the promise; now *wherever* disciples are met for prayer, God is with them. But what advantage over others the Brethren have in this promise, we fail to discover. Nay, they would claim for themselves the exclusiveness of a dispensation which has for ever passed away, and that while the very text which they quote in support of their pretensions, proclaims that no one place, and no one party, are in this respect more peculiarly privileged than any other.

Nor is the second text quoted by Mr Mackintosh a whit more to the purpose—"For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." We ask, if there was in the assembly at Corinth a Divine presidency, how was there need for the admonition which the apostle thus tenders? Are we to believe that confusion is possible where God presides? The idea of Divine presidency may seem a harmless notion. Let us then look at the pretensions to which it gives rise. Mr Darby asks—"If God is there, is He not to make His presence known? If He do, it is a manifestation of the Spirit in the *individual who acts*; it is a gift, and, if you please, an *impulse*. It is God *acting*, that is the great point. . . . We meet on the principle that God the Holy Ghost (who dwells in believers individually, and in the body collectively) *alone has a right to speak in the meeting*, and He has a right to speak by whom He will. . . . Instead of looking immediately to one man, the Spirit should be waited upon to minister to whom He pleased" ("Presence and Operation of the Spirit," p. 21).

The author of "Five Letters on Worship and Ministry" says—"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God," says the apostle Peter. This does not mean let him

speak according to the Scriptures, though this be of course true. It means, or rather says, that they who speak, are to speak *as oracles of God.*"

Now, is this not something very like a claim to inspiration? If "the Holy Ghost alone speaks in the meeting," if "it is God that is acting" there, if "they who speak, speak *as oracles of God,*"—then it follows, as a logical sequence, whatever is there said, is to be regarded as an expression of the Divine mind, and whatever is done as done by Divine direction.

Further, if Brethren can so unfalteringly depend upon the direction of the Spirit, as respects both preaching and praying, we have to ask them, Why should they not equally depend on Him as respects praising? If so privileged, why hymn-books? Why do they not, like Miriam and David, give forth Divinely-prompted songs? Is not the use of hymn-books a tacit admission that they have no faith in their own notions of the Divine presidency? What a gift to the Church would Divinely-inspired songs be in these days of hymnal controversy! And if the Spirit directs all, how is it that in their assemblies, as in other open meetings, two or three should start to their feet simultaneously? Is He, after all, the author of confusion?

Let us take an actual case, to show even more strikingly what this notion leads to. Viscountess Powerscourt, in counselling a young lady friend as to the evil consequences of marrying a gentleman who was unconverted, among other things says—"I could mention one who spoke at all the Dublin meetings, so zealous was he for the truth; yet when the prize was obtained, he opposed and put a stop to her visiting the poor, or having schools—put an extinguisher over the Lord's bright light. I could mention another, whose prayers deceived even the very elect, now contending for balls, plays, reading novels" ("Letters of the late Viscountess Powerscourt," 9th edit., p. 110).

And yet we are expected to believe, that this hypocrisy is practised under the presidency and direction of the Spirit of God! If any notion were fitted to bring religion into contempt, this one surely is. Brethren admit as much.

“Alas! alas!” says Mr Mackintosh, “we often see men on their feet in the midst of our assemblies whom common sense, to say nothing of spirituality, would keep in their seats. We have often thought that the assembly has been looked upon by a certain class of ignorant men, fond of hearing themselves talk, as a sphere in which they might easily figure, without the pains of school and college work. All this is most terrible and most humiliating” (“The Assembly of God,” p. 29).

Now, were there really enjoyed in the assembly of the Brethren, the presidency of the Holy Spirit, how could there be the evil thus complained of? Can Brethren themselves believe in the presidency of the Holy Spirit? If they do, is this not very like a charging Him with negligence? Would that Brethren pondered the consequences to which their principles lead!

These lofty pretensions remind me of an incident which happened in a neighbouring village. An evangelist had announced a meeting in this place, and as my informant desired to learn the character of his ministrations, he attended it simply as an auditor. There were the usual prayer, praise, and preaching. At the close, the evangelist came to my friend and said—“Well, what do you think of the service?” He to whom the inquiry was addressed, being a plain, acute, outspoken man, replied thus—“As you have been frank enough to ask the question, I will be frank enough to answer it. First of all, then, I charge you with presumption. You stood up there, and told the people you had received no special training for the work of the ministry, and that you had made no preparation for addressing them. Why, sir, I have studied hard for some ten or twelve years—been at both College and Divinity Hall, with the view of preparing myself for the work of the ministry, and I am yet far from considering myself adequate for so responsible a work, and never appear before my people without much patient study; what then must be the measure of your presumption, to stand up there and attempt to preach without any preparation whatever? Second, I charge you with uncharitableness. You said you did not

believe, that one out of ten of the professing Christians in this place were converted to God. Now, sir, I have been a year in this place, and ought to know the people better than a mere stranger can; and I am not prepared to say who is converted and who is not. Finally, I charge you with blasphemy. You told God in your opening prayer that you had made no preparation for addressing those assembled, and that you depended solely on Him for what to speak. So we are to ascribe to God, I suppose, all the nonsense you have been pleased to utter." The upshot of this rejoinder was, that the conversion of my friend, and that of the parish minister, were prayed for in a meeting held at Edinburgh a few days after.

Do we then deny the right of God's people to expect His presence in their assemblies for worship? By no means. We admit most fully the right of believers to expect in every duty—especially in those which pertain to piety—the blessed guidance of the Spirit of God. But this is all very different from preaching by inspiration without study.

It was indeed promised to the apostles, "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. x. 16-20).

However assured of the excellence of their cause, how were they, poor, illiterate men, to answer before judicial assemblies, or before Cæsar himself? Hence our Lord tells them they need give themselves no concern about the matter, for when the hour of trial came, there would be afforded them special inspiration, such as would direct them both *how* and *what* to say; and not only their experience, but that of many a martyr has proved that Jesus has been mindful of His promise. "To us poor and infirm successors of the apostles," says Stier, "it is not only conceded that we may meditate and even commit to memory our ordinary discourses, but this is our incumbent duty according to the manner of our infirmity. But when that which is predicted of the apostles shall befall us also, then

may we, too, lay claim to an interest in the promise—*It shall be given to you in that same hour.*” “How bravely,” says Trapp, “did Anne Askew, Alice Driver, and other poor women, answer the doctors and put them to a non-plus! Was not that the Spirit of the Father speaking in them?” But how different is all this from the circumstances of the Brethren, when they essay to edify one another, without premeditation.

V.

THE MINISTRY.

MOST earnestly do Brethren protest, that while they deny a one-man ministry, or a man-made ministry, they respect the office, and those whom God appoints to it. They hold that, while all have a right to minister, there are some specially endowed and entitled to special recognition ; but they deny that such ought either to be chosen or ordained by men, and that if paid, it ought not to be in the form of stipulated salary.

I. *As to open ministry, or the liberty of all to teach.*

From a tract entitled "The Brethren," attributed to the pen of Mr Kelly, we read : " All believers are, it is affirmed, true spiritual priests, capacitated for worship (Heb. x. 19-25), and any who possess the qualifications from the Lord are authorised to evangelise the world or instruct the Church : and such have not alone the liberty, but also an obligation to employ whatever gift may be entrusted to their keeping. Hence, in their assemblies Brethren have no pre-appointed person to conduct their proceedings : all is open to the guidance of the Holy Ghost at the time, so that he who believes himself to be so led of the Spirit may address the meeting," etc.

We equally readily admit that "all believers are true spiritual priests." But we deny the inference, that this entitles all believers to assume the ministerial office. The priesthood of believers has no bearing upon the question

before us. "Are all teachers?" asks the apostle (1 Cor. xii. 29), a question that need not to have been asked, if all were. "Stop, stop," says Mr Kelly, "only those who possess the qualifications from the Lord, are authorised to evangelise the world or instruct the Church." But, pray, who is to be judge of these qualifications? The party possessing them or the Church? The Church undoubtedly, even according to the practice of the Brethren, as we shall yet have occasion to show. The simple fact, then, of all believers being priests, is no ground for what is called "open ministry," and that according to the Brethren's own showing.

But it is not true, that the Brethren have in their assemblies "no pre-appointed person to conduct their proceedings." They as certainly choose their ministers, although in a much more loose manner, as do other denominations. Indeed, we are acquainted with no Church, in which the one-man ministry, obtains greater prominence than in the assemblies of the Brethren. The educated and the able, necessarily exercise an influence denied to the mass. Nor are they backward to accept the homage thus proffered. Let some unqualified brother, offer his ministrations to the assembly, and he will be made to feel, that even among the Brethren, only those duly recognised as qualified, can enjoy that liberty.

That the Church, in apostolic days, enjoyed the privilege of a duly authorised ministry, is obvious; and that it was generally a one-man ministry, is equally so. We infer, then, from this fact, and the necessities of the case, that it is right and proper for the Church now to have such a ministry.

(a.) Pastors or teachers were among Christ's ascension gifts (Eph. iv. 11-13). Nothing precisely like this office had ever before existed in the Church. It was no essential part of the priestly office to oversee or teach. Doubtless the priests did at times expound the law, but teaching was properly no part of their office. Prophets, in like manner, occasionally not only predicted future events, but proclaimed God's will. But neither office resembled that of the pastor

—one selected, on account of his aptness, to teach, and to preside over a particular congregation.

How long, then, is this office to continue? “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” And when shall that be? When Christ comes the second time, to present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle.

(b.) The fact of there being paid ministers in the apostolic churches, quite accords with the foregoing remarks. There were in each church a body of elders; but while all ruled, there were those who, in addition to ruling, laboured “in word and doctrine.” It is to this latter class the apostle undoubtedly referred when he said—“Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.” The right to ministerial support is based on the right of the Levitical priesthood. Now, we have to ask, Had the Lord not *ordained* the office of the ministry, would He have *ordained* the method of its maintenance?

(c.) The necessities of the case. Even could there not be adduced a single proof from Scripture, on behalf of the Christian ministry being a Divine appointment, the necessities of the case, would fully justify the present practice of the Church. We have no evidence in Scripture that the synagogue system was of Divine appointment. It appears to have grown up out of the necessities of Jewish piety. If, then, Christ and His apostles, so recognised that system, as to incorporate much of it into the practice of the Christian Church, may we not, under a more liberal dispensation, adapt the arrangements of the Church to its necessities? The Church *needs* ministers fully qualified. The times we live in demand a ministry fully equipped. Why, then, should we not have it? Mere spiritual gifts will not suffice. A man may have superior natural ability, undoubted piety, and even superior education, and yet not be qualified for the ministry. To these must be added *special* training.

Education for the bar, will not qualify for the pulpit, any more than education for the pulpit, will qualify for the bar. There must be not only a knowledge of the original languages, but a knowledge of systematic theology, sacred hermeneutics, apologetics, and the various forms of scepticism. But how is the Church to secure all this, save by the training of those of good natural gifts and acknowledged piety for the office of the ministry? The experience of older religious bodies than the Brethren—bodies which originally held the very principles as to ministry maintained by the Brethren—has taught them, that if they are to maintain an existence in these days when culture is so generally diffused, it is only by means of a specially trained ministry. Methodists, Independents, and Baptists have all been obliged to adopt the practice of those who have from the first recognised a duly trained ministry as essential to the Church's welfare.

II. *As to the election of ministers.*

We admit that, in the brief annals of the apostolic Church, we have neither full nor definite instructions as to the election of ministers. Nor were such needed. So long as the apostles remained, no higher authority could be found ; but even by them there was the recognition of the Church in official appointments, and when they were gone, the duty naturally fell to be discharged by the Church itself. The Scriptures indicate the Church's duty in the matter with sufficient clearness. We have, in the first instance, the election of Matthias to the apostleship (Acts i. 15-26).

Here it appears that Peter having represented to the Church the necessity of appointing a successor to Judas, the Church prepared a list of two (verse 23). Doubtless these were referred to God by lot, and the lot fell on Matthias, but the Church at least *selected* two from their number as candidates for the office. "Peter did not appoint him ; it was the act of all," says Chrysostom. And while we choose our ministers, we do so, as did the apostles in the case adduced, under Divine direction. We, too,

say, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all, show whether of these Thou hast chosen."

In the sixth chapter of Acts, we have an account of the election of six deacons in the church at Jerusalem (Acts vi. 1-7). It will be observed that, at the suggestion of the apostles, the disciples elected seven to serve as deacons. In the instructions given it is specially mentioned that they were to be men "of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." Here, then, we have *choice* and *Divine gifts* allied. Those elected were Divinely qualified, but that did not preclude their election, and that by the Church.

In 2 Cor. viii. 19, Paul commends Titus to the brethren at Corinth as one "chosen of the churches" to accompany him in his travels. The word *chosen*, literally rendered, and as it is given in the margin, is "with the lifting up of hands." Such then being the practice of the Church, so far as we have any information concerning it, it is reasonable to conclude that, it was observed even in those instances, in which there is simply reference to ordination and not election. There is one fact which appears to be decisive of the question. We have a careful specification of the qualifications of church office-bearers (1 Tim. iii. 2-12; Titus i. 5-9). Now why should we have this, if it is not the Church's part to choose them? We repudiate as earnestly as do the Brethren, a man-made ministry. But what advantage have they in this respect, over the great body of Evangelical churches? Is there one of these churches, which does not exercise solicitude as to the piety of those who present themselves as candidates for the ministry? And those who so present themselves are surely not less the gifts of the great Head of the Church, because of special training for the office to which they aspire. A good wife is, as certainly as a good minister, a gift from the Lord (Prov. xviii. 22, xix. 14), but is she less so because of the use of proper means for securing her?

The fact is, the Brethren, while discarding the principle of choosing ministers, as certainly choose those who shall minister to them in spiritual things, as do those whom they condemn. According to Mr Darby, ere Christ's gift of a

pastor be of avail, saints are "bound to own its use." According to Mr Kelly, ere a brother's teaching be accepted, it must "commend itself to the conscience of the saints." According to Mr Mackintosh, he must be *recognised* by the Assembly; and, according to another, no brother is entitled to regard himself as *called* to minister, unless he is acceptable to the Brethren generally. So the Brethren really choose their ministers after all; and that very much by the same means, as is employed by "Dissent," for which they seem to have a supreme contempt.

III. *It is maintained by the Brethren that we have no scriptural authority for the ordination of ministers.*

"We believe," says Mr Mackintosh, "that the laying on of hands as expressing ordination, if there be not the power to impart a gift, is worth nothing, if indeed it be not mere assumption; but if it be merely adopted as the expression of full fellowship in any special work or mission, we should quite rejoice in it" ("A Scriptural Inquiry," p. 21).

It is interesting to notice in connection with these views of ordination, that we find something like their origin in the memoir of Mr Groves, the founder of Plymouth Brethrenism. "'One day,' says he, 'the thought was brought to my mind that ordination of any kind to preach the Gospel is no requirement of Scripture. To me it was the removal of a mountain. . . . From that moment I have myself never had a doubt of my own liberty in Christ to minister the Word.'"

The first instance recorded of ordination in the primitive Church is that of the seven deacons at Jerusalem (Acts vi. 1-7), and is sufficient to disprove Brethren views upon the subject. The Church elected them, and the apostles "laid their hands on them." This was no mere instance of Christian fellowship, but of investiture with office, and that, too, by the imposition of hands. In verse 3, we read, "Whom we may appoint over this business;" and when the disciples had done what the apostles required, "they laid their hands on them" (verse 6). The laying on of hands was expres-

sive of appointment; indeed the word *καταστήσωμεν* (*appoint*) signifies to set over or to invest one with authority.

It is also alleged by the Brethren that it was the apostles alone who ordained, and that as they have passed away, the rite has ceased. Even were it true that apostles alone ordained, the argument would not hold. On the same ground it might be alleged that baptism has ceased, as we have no longer inspired men to administer it. It is not, however, true that the apostles alone ordained. Paul and Barnabas were ordained by "prophets and teachers;" but the latter were not inspired. Nor could the conferring of spiritual gifts be essential to ordination. Paul and Barnabas already possessed these. Did the *presbytery* not lay hands on Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 14), and who constituted the presbytery? Not inspired men alone surely. Were all elders inspired? Scripture nowhere says they were. Further: not only have we ordination in the New Testament in all essentials, identical with ordination as at present practised in all Evangelical churches, but we have the historical fact, that there has never been a time, since apostolic days, in which it has been otherwise; and so it has been left to the Brethren to make the discovery, that for eighteen hundred years, the Church has in this matter been entirely wrong.

When the significance of the rite is exhibited, its reasonableness is so apparent as to disarm all objection. We have no such views of it as the ritual of the Church of England implies; that special grace is conferred in the very act of ordination, is generally believed by Episcopalians. On the contrary, we hold that no blessing is then necessarily conferred, but believe, that blessing *may* then be conferred, and that whatever blessing is thus bestowed upon the ordained, is bestowed in answer to prayers offered—prayers in which not only presbyters, but the entire assembled congregation unite. While, then, there is no express precept enjoining ordination, we have the example of the apostles on behalf of its continuance. If there was propriety in it in their day, there is none the less in ours.

IV. *The Brethren are equally opposed to the pecuniary support of the ministry.*

“I do not know,” says the late Dr Davis, in his “Christian Ministry,” p. 46, “one example in all the New Testament to support the practice of a paid ministry; but, as regards itinerant pastors, evangelists, and teachers, the principle is plain enough, that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel (1 Cor. ix. 14).”

The temporal support of the Gospel ministry, we hold, is about as clearly revealed as aught else which the New Testament discovers to us. What it says may seem little; but that is to be accounted for, by what had gone before. To those who make a complete severance between the Old Testament and the New Testament Churches, or rather who deny the existence of the former altogether, it may seem limited. But to those who recognise in the latter, only the full development of what of a permanent character is found in the former, there is no such difficulty. When we view Christianity as not a new system of religion; when we view the Church as not a new thing on the earth; when we accept the moral principles of a former dispensation, as designed for fuller development under more favourable influences, we not only find in the New Testament the duty of contributing to the pecuniary support of the ministers of religion, but the principle for which we contend, rooted in the Church by ages of training, and enforced by the higher sanctions of the Word of God.

With this great fact full in view, what significance do we discover in the words of our Lord: “The labourer is worthy of his hire” (Luke x. 7). *Hire* is an understood stipulated sum for work done. To a Jew familiar with the Levitical law, which provided a tenth of the produce of the land for the support of the priesthood, this announcement would be regarded as a transference in spirit, if not literally, of the law of tithes to the new dispensation. The Gospel preacher was by this decree as effectually separated from secular engagements, as were the sons of Levi, and his support as certainly devolved upon the people of God.

But this is not all. We have the transference announced in express terms. "Do ye not know," says Paul, "that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14). The language implies that the minister of religion is separated from ordinary callings to "holy things;" that sacred things are his profession, and that on a simple principle of justice he is entitled to adequate support. The appointment, moreover, is invested with all the sacredness of a Divine ordinance: "So hath the Lord ordained." Further, were these words not addressed to a Christian Church? and does the apostle not enforce them by a reproof which finds no equal for its severity in the writings of the most self-denying and gentle of all the apostles? "I have preached to you the Gospel of God freely. I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied; and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself" (2 Cor. xi. 7-9). Here is the matter placed in the strongest possible light. "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them;"—*wages*, that which was stipulated for and earned.

Yet we are called upon to believe, that there is not "one example in all the New Testament to support the practice of a paid ministry!" And as to the distinction attempted to be established between the payment of evangelists and pastors, it has no foundation but in the imaginations of those who conceived it. Did Paul not as certainly minister to churches, as to those beyond them? He intimates no such distinction. Nay, he asserts his claim upon those to whom he ministered, and that for the spiritual benefit he had conferred on them. What mean these words: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. ix. 11.) "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto

him that teacheth in all good things?" (Gal. vi. 6.) If this latter text does not teach that Christian ministers should be supported by those to whom they minister, I know not what it means.

This fancy, we apprehend, had its origin in the notion that all believers have liberty to teach ; but as the payment of all might be embarrassing, it has been concluded that none but evangelists have a claim on the Church for pecuniary support. It is marvellous with what facility our opinions adapt themselves to circumstances, when we have abandoned the Word as our rule in faith and practice.

VI.

A CHURCH WITHOUT A GOVERNMENT.

WE believe the Brethren are unique in this respect. Their theory is, that as they meet "in the name of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Ghost, Jesus is sufficient to keep order in His own house." But Jesus works by instrumentality. Even in heaven there was beheld a "great white throne," which is evidently the symbol of government. The late Dr Duncan aptly described Ritualism as a carcass, and Plymouthism as a ghost. The one has got a body without a soul, and the other has got a soul without a body. But let us hear what the advocates of no Church government have to say for themselves.

"*We cannot appoint elders; because we have no authority to do it,*" says Dr Davis. "*The Church has no authority to do it. The appointment was apostolical; and, as I said before, we have no apostles now.*" 'But why did the Lord at the first, order such appointments, if they were not to continue?' It shows His wisdom and love. He foresaw the *divisions*, and wisely forebore perpetuating an appointment, which would practically be null and void, through the wilfulness of men more intent on the success of 'a cause,' than careful for His glory" ("Help for Enquirers," 2d edit., pp. 54-56).

A writer in the *Bible Treasury* explains the position of the Brethren on this point thus: "To impose a verdict which cannot be debated, is the most monstrous thing that ever was heard of. It is pure, unmasked Popery—the clergy dictating to the conscience of the Church, which can only register

and give their weight to its decrees. Is the conscience of the Church to be disposed of thus by others, be they ever so wise?" This may be applicable to government by prelatial bishops, but has no bearing whatever on the practice of Nonconformist or Presbyterian Churches. Let us hear what the writer says of these: "The principle of dissent, I believe, should be utterly and entirely rejected for the same reason that I reject the clerical one—namely, that the presence of the Spirit in the body is not owned by it. Among the Dissenters they vote, and though there may be happy unanimity, and the Lord guide them, as I doubt not He often may, yet they do vote on the questions, and a majority determines the matter. Now it is quite evident a minority *may* be the most spiritual. In the case of Corinth, all, as far as appears in public, were gone wrong, and allowed, and were puffed up, about evil. A majority, judging *as such*, cannot be said to have the Holy Ghost guiding them because they are a majority. This is quite manifest. It is a mere human principle, such as the world is obliged to act on, because it has no other way of getting out of its difficulties. That is, it entirely denies *the guidance of the body by the Holy Ghost—His presence there*—the very point as to this, which the 'Brethren' were called out of God to bear witness to, alike against the dissenting and Popish principles" (*The Bible Treasury*, vol. ii., p. 351).

Now it were easy to reply to this by simply asking, If it be not a fact that "Brethren" in their assemblies not only deliberate but vote? We know they do. Either they must in transacting their business, be guided by the opinion of the majority, or by that of the minority. One or other must determine. So in what respect are they better off than are their Episcopalian brethren on the one hand, or the Dissenters on the other? But we prefer to show how the theory works when reduced to practice. As scandals, heresies, and disorderly conduct, will arise even among the Brethren, how are they dealt with?

The Rev. Frederick Whitfield says—"The fact is, no deacons in a Dissenting chapel are more exclusive or harder to please than the few ruling Brethren over some of your

meetings. It is well known they have to be pleased; and the weaker ones have to carry out the views of this *secret* hierarchy. Liberty to minister! Yes, if the *ruling Brethren* have no personal pique or other objections. Far rather give *me* the Church that plainly and avowedly places its supervision in the hands of bishops and ministers than this *secret consistory* that does *the same thing*, only in a much more arbitrary and dogmatic manner" ("Letter to the Rev. Mr Dobree," p. 33).

Mr W. H. Dorman, who was for twenty-eight years associated with Mr Darby, says—"That which obtains amongst them in this character is at best the expressed judgment of one or other of their leaders, which is carried out by others in the spirit of blind subjection, without so much as an appeal to Scripture as the ground of authority, though their action is professed to be the rule of the Spirit" ("High Church Claims," pp. 22, 23).

Now, without any such testimonies to the failure of the Brethren's no-government theory, we might presume that the great Head of the Church, would not leave it unprovided in this respect. God gave very full instructions as to the government of the Jewish Church; hence a presumption arises that He would not act differently towards the Church in its new form. Nor is this supposition at variance with fact. We readily admit, that the form of Church government, is not taught in the New Testament, with that minuteness of detail, which we have in all its doctrinal announcements. We find a striking contrast between the directions given respecting Old Testament and New Testament Church polity. This difference is owing to two things. Under the former dispensation the Church was in a state of pupilage, and hence the particularity of the instructions given to it. When a father sends his boy a message, he not only tells him what he is to get, but how he is to get it. When, however, the boy has grown up to manhood, there is no longer need for such particularity. The second thing accounting for this apparent paucity of instruction as to Church government is, that the Church already had the very thing in question.

According to Dr Davis, we are not to appoint elders, because we have no apostolic authority to do it! As well tell us that we ought neither to eat nor drink, because we have no permission recorded in Scripture for either. The government of the New Testament Church, is obviously modelled on that of the synagogue. The origin of the synagogue is involved in great obscurity. No trace of it can be discovered earlier than the Babylonish captivity. It was adopted evidently to meet the felt wants of the more pious of the Jewish people. Their ritual could be observed only in the Temple; but their visits there, were too seldom and far between, to satisfy the longings of such. As each Sabbath returned, there was the opportunity for public religious services, and the associations of the day calling to devout reflection and worship. The longings of David for the courts of the Lord's house, show how the happiness of the true Israelite, was identified with the worship of God; hence the devout, residing at a distance from Jerusalem, might first of all meet in their own dwellings for conference and prayer, and gradually accommodate their practices to their felt necessities, till the synagogue system of worship and form of government was fully developed. So admirably was this system found to meet felt wants, that ultimately, there was not a town or village in the land of Israel without its synagogue. The order of service adopted was to read and explain at each meeting a portion of the Old Testament Scriptures, to offer prayer, and deliver a sermon or lecture. The service was usually conducted by one of the rulers; but it would appear that it was customary to afford any one present an opportunity of addressing the assembly—hence it was that our Lord, and also Paul and Barnabas, are represented as taking part in the synagogue services.

But not only did the more pious of the Jews thus assemble for worship on the Sabbath, something like Church membership and discipline were established; and that discipline of a very rigorous character. We read of "putting out of the synagogue." To whom, then, was the discipline committed? It would appear that each synagogue was provided with a body, sometimes called "rulers" and sometimes "elders,"

or "overseers" (Mark v. 22; Luke iv. 20, vii. 3, viii. 49, xiii. 14; Acts xiii. 15, xviii. 8).

Such, then, was the state of things existing in Judea at the time of Christ, and hence the apostles, in planting churches, did not introduce a form of government altogether new; but simply appropriated a form with which the people were already familiar.

At first the apostles seem to have discharged every official duty; both Peter and John speak of themselves as elders (1 Peter v. 1; 2 John 1); but as emergencies arose, and as the Church extended, suitable persons were appointed to take the authoritative charge of it. We read of elders being ordained in "every church"—of "the apostles and elders"—of "the elders of the church"—of "the elders who rule well"—of "he that ruleth"—of "helps, governments" (Acts xiv. 23, xv. 4, 6, xx. 17-28; James v. 14; 1 Peter v. 1-3; Titus i. 5; Heb. xiii. 17; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 1 Tim. v. 17; Heb. xiii. 6-8; 1 Cor. xii. 28). The duties of these officers are clearly indicated. They are "overseers" or superintendents of the Church—they are to "feed the flock," that is, do the duty of a shepherd to its members—they are to rule, for those under them are exhorted to "obey"—they are to visit the sick, and "pray over them."

Could we, then, have more satisfactory evidence that there was a government in the Christian Church from the very first; that it took cognisance of the doctrine and practice of the whole body of believers; and that it was essentially Presbyterian in its character?

And yet we are told, "*We* cannot appoint elders; because we have no authority to do it. The appointment was apostolical; and we have no apostles now." And that "the appointment could not take place, even were there the requisite power, till all the present sad divisions had ceased, and the saints had come together again, owning their common union by the Holy Spirit, as members of one body" ("Help for Enquirers," by Dr Davis, pp. 55, 56).

Here we have two objections. As to the first, I remark, there was evidently government in the Church before the days of the apostles. Why, then, should it pass away with

them? Nay, government instituted not by Divine direction, as in the case of the Temple service, but wrought out and established by human wisdom and experience. The apostles found it in the synagogue, and although of human device, they did not discard it, but on the contrary, approved of it. Why, then, should we discard it, when, owing to their absence, we more than ever stand in need of rules to direct, and authority to execute? What satisfied the apostles may satisfy us, more especially as apostolic example, in so far as it can be imitated, has ever been regarded as possessing all the authority of Divine precept; indeed, what higher evidence could we have, that the adaptation of the government of the Church to its necessities has the approval of God? Even had the apostles left the Church destitute of a form of government, it is obvious she would, in that case, be perfectly justified in constructing one. If uninspired Jewish believers did so, and the apostles transferred to the Christian Church the form of their creating, the Church has evidently the right to adapt its government to its necessities; and yet we are told—"We cannot appoint elders because the appointment was apostolical, and we have no apostles now." These ancient Jewish believers had no apostles, and yet they did the very thing which the Brethren say ought not to be done, and instead of their conduct being condemned by the apostles, it is most emphatically approved. We have, then, surely the fullest authority for perpetuating that which they thus sanctioned.

The second objection, that even were there the authority to appoint government, the divided state of the Church forbids it, is about the most extraordinary statement we have ever met with. If it be the fact that, the Church is as distracted as is represented, government of some kind would seem all the more necessary. Or if it be true that unity, purity, and spirituality are essential to its existence, then the Brethren, at least, might surely have it. According to their own theory, they, above all, should have the government which is alone consistent with apostolic vitality.

Part Third.



HERESIES OF THE BRETHREN.

"And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting, to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple: who ever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing."

Milton.

"Concave mirrors magnify the features nearest to them into undue and monstrous proportions; and in common mirrors that are ill cast, and of uneven surface, the most beautiful face is distorted into deformity. So there are many minds of this description, they distort and magnify, diminish or discolour, almost every Gospel truth which they reflect."

Dr Guthrie.



I.

CHRIST'S HEAVENLY HUMANITY.

ALTHOUGH the doctrine of Christ's heavenly humanity is not so broadly exhibited in the literature of the Brethren, as are other erroneous tenets, it is sufficiently prominent even there, and is so popular a theme in their meetings, as to call for special notice.

Mr Mackintosh, who is the principal advocate of this notion, calls Christ "a Divine man," "a heavenly man," and says—"Such was the *humanity* of Christ, that He could at any moment, as far as He was personally concerned, have returned to heaven, from whence He had come and to which He belonged." . . . "Let me observe, that between humanity seen in the Lord Jesus, and humanity as seen in us, there could be no union. That which is pure could never coalesce with that which is impure. That which is incorruptible could never unite with that which is corruptible. The spiritual and the carnal, the heavenly and the earthly, could never combine" ("Notes on Genesis and Leviticus").

On these sentiments being called in question, Mr Mackintosh, in subsequent editions of his "Notes," withdrew the expression "a Divine man—a heavenly man;" but in doing so, he gives no intimation of having renounced the objectionable doctrine; on the contrary, he so expresses his dissent from the generally received doctrine of Christ's humanity as

to excite the suspicion that his opinions on the subject remain unchanged. Mr Kelly holds the same view. He tells us "it is a blunder to suppose that the reality of the Incarnation involves the condition of either Adam fallen or Adam unfallen. His humanity was totally different from Adam, either in integrity or in ruin" (Kelly's fifth Paper). Surely all this is different from the doctrine of Scripture. The Christ of the New Testament, stands as thoroughly identified with the race as was John, His forerunner, or Joseph the carpenter; but this Christ, as Mr Darby expresses it, "abode alone"—a being in the form of humanity, but altogether apart from it.

That the doctrine of Christ's heavenly humanity, although partially suppressed, has not been renounced by the Brethren, is only too evident. Dr Tregelles says—"The real and full relation of Christ to man and to Israel was questioned by some and denied by others. I will give you a few instances, expressions which I *know* to have been used: it was said that 'the Lord was *man*, but not the son of Adam, and that the name "*Son of Man*" was simply a title;' that 'His humanity was *something divine*;' that 'it was a *spiritual humanity*;' that 'He did not become man *by birth*, but in some other way;' that '*made of a woman* (Gal. iv.) does not mean born of a woman;' that 'He was not man of the substance of His mother, but that He was of the substance of God His Father;' that 'the expression in Heb. vii., *without father, without mother, without descent*, related to our Lord as man, and that the genealogies BOTH in Matthew and Luke were those of Joseph, his *reputed* father, and not of Mary; so that the Scriptures have designedly cut Him off from the family of man, and from that of Israel." . . . "This doctrine of the 'heavenly humanity' led, of course, to the denial of His real human nature, His real obedience to the law for us, and thus the result has been the definite rejection of the imputation of His righteousness to us, and the denial of the relation of God's holy law eternally to human actions. The Brethren adopted their doctrine of the non-imputation of Christ's righteousness, through their previous rejection of His possessing true humanity wherein to obey

the law" ("Three Letters;" "Christ the End of the Law for Righteousness").

That the doctrine continues to be taught is well known. Dr Carson narrates an instance in which it was "stoutly maintained by a poor member of Mr Mackintosh's congregation in Coleraine, that the Virgin had no more to do with Christ than the pump has with the water which runs through it." Now, where could those in this man's rank of life obtain this notion, but in the meetings in which it was taught?

Those familiar with the history of Christian doctrine will, on reading these extracts, be reminded of the old Valentinian and Apollinarian heresy, which affirmed that Christ received not His body from the Virgin Mary, but brought it with Him from heaven.

The question, then, is, What evidence have we that Christ was in all respects a man, having a true body and a reasonable soul?

I. *Christ is frequently designated in Scripture a man.*

Isaiah calls Him "a man of sorrows;" Paul designates Him "That man whom He hath ordained," and declares, "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead" (Isa. liii. 3; Acts xvii. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 21). So truly human was He, that He delighted to call Himself "the Son of Man." More than sixty instances are to be found in the New Testament, in which He thus designates Himself.

II. *He was constituted as a man.*

He was born of a woman, and possessed all the attributes of a man. Although supernaturally begotten, the Son of Mary was as really a man as was the son of Elisabeth. It is no valid objection to His true and proper humanity, that He was born out of the ordinary course of human generation. If Adam was a man, without either father or mother, why deny the humanity of Jesus? His true and proper humanity is thus expressed—"A spirit hath not flesh and

bones, as ye see me have;" "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came;" "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones;" "Was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man;" "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren" (Luke xxiv. 39; John i. 14; Rom. ix. 5; Eph. v. 30; Phil. ii. 7, 8; Heb. ii. 16, 17). But how could all this be true, if He was not really and truly a man? His was a "heavenly humanity." Is ours, I ask, a heavenly humanity? But what ours is, His also is, for He himself likewise took part of THE SAME.

In accordance with these declarations, we learn that His bodily organs were as those of an ordinary man; and those associated with Him regarded Him as a man. He saw, spoke, breathed, heard, hungered, thirsted, ate, drank, as do other men; was exhausted with labour, and refreshed with rest; He grew as other men grew, and passed through the various stages of childhood, youth, and manhood, on to death.

That He had a human soul, is equally apparent. A soul is as essential as a body to true and proper humanity. Express mention is made of His soul (Isa. liii. 10, 11; Matt. xxvi. 38; Luke xxiii. 46). A human body without a human soul, could have given Him no claim to be regarded as man. He evidently possessed the ordinary mental faculties and moral dispositions of a man, such as will, imagination, memory, judgment. Although as God, He was omniscient, His mental growth, like His bodily growth, was according to what is seen in other men. All was true of Him which is necessarily true of a merely human being. As a man, His knowledge was limited—He did not know as to the time of the final judgment. We behold in Him the same affections as in other men. As a man, He loved Mary and her sister and Lazarus, wept over Jerusalem, "rejoiced in spirit," loved all and craved their love in return, was sorrowful and very heavy,—all of which are exercises of a human soul.

III. *Jesus sustained all the relations of a man.*

As a son, He recognised His obligations to Mary and Joseph, loved and obeyed them. As a friend, He was true and affectionate. As a member of civil society, He paid tribute to Cæsar. As a Jew, He observed all the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law. As a moral being, He was accountable to God like other men; and as a dependent creature, He prayed to God for direction and support. His frequent prayers are most expressive of His dependence, and His dependence was a demonstration of His real humanity.

Now if He had been "a heavenly man," how was He subject to the ordinary infirmities of our nature? how was He so dependent on His Father? or if His manhood existed prior to His birth, how was He so truly human? Doubtless He had pre-existence. He said, "Before Abraham was, I am;" "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was;" "And He is 'before all things'" (John viii. 58, vi. 62, xvii. 5; Col. i. 17). But while all this is true of a Divine nature, it is not true of a pre-existent humanity, for the attributes ascribed to Him in this state, are only such as are true of God. If, then, the Babe at Bethlehem had both a human body and a human soul, it is absurd to suppose, that a pre-existent celestial manhood pertained to Him—that He had both a human and a celestial manhood.

The true and proper humanity of Christ is a vital question, for if He was not truly man, how can He sympathise with us? He who sympathises with me, must be of my nature: an angel could not sympathise with me. If He was not truly man, He could not be our substitute, so as to do and *die* for us: how otherwise, could He have obeyed in our stead, and suffered as we ought to have done? Nor could He be our example. "If Christ be not truly man," says Liddon, "the chasm which parted earth and heaven has not been bridged over. God, as before the Incarnation, is still awful, remote, inaccessible."

II.

CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS DENIED.

PERHAPS the gravest charge we have to bring against the Brethren is that of exhibiting a mutilated or defective Atonement. They deny that Christ obeyed the law in our stead, or that His righteousness was in any sense vicarious ; substituting, as we shall yet have occasion to show, in the justification of the sinner, the resurrection of Christ for His active obedience ; thereby limiting His atonement to His sufferings on the cross, and consequently the justification of the sinner to the pardon of sins ; and thus defrauding the Saviour of His glory, and imperilling the salvation of souls.

“Does Scripture ever say that Christ kept the law for us for justifying righteousness?” asks Mr Stanley. “I am not aware of a single text” (“Justification in the Risen Christ”). “Do not speak so rashly of the Word of God,” he says in his reply to the Rev. T. S. Treanor. “Where does it teach ‘that Christ stood in our stead from the cradle to the grave?’ This is utterly untrue in statement, and heretical in doctrine. When our adorable Jesus stood in our stead, He was made sin for us. If He stood in our stead from the cradle to the grave, then He was made sin during that period. And if made sin, then you make God look down upon Him, with delight, when made sin ; for He said, ‘This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.’ But when He was made sin on the cross, then the full storm of Divine wrath due to us broke upon Him ; and oh, ponder the solemn fact, He was then forsaken of

God. Until then the sinless One was separate from sinners; the grain of wheat of John xii. 24; the holy One."

So we are to believe that what Christ did for us, is limited to the six hours He was on the cross, and that during the three-and-thirty preceding years, He was in no sense our substitute! We, on the contrary, affirm that all that He did and suffered, during those years, was done and suffered in the character of a Saviour, and for this reason—He lived, suffered, obeyed, and died, not for Himself, but for His people.

Mr Stanley also says—"I must confess I do not see how God could be righteous in reckoning the breaker of the law righteous, because another kept it; nor do I see this taught in Scripture. Far from it" ("Justification in the Risen Christ," p. 11). Does this not strike at the root of all substitution and imputation? in that case—what of Christ as enduring the penalty in our stead? If He can be treated as if our sins were His, may we not be treated as if His obedience were ours?

What, then, do the Brethren understand by the righteousness of God? Mr Darby says—"We have gained an immense point in understanding that God's righteousness is the quality or character that is in God himself." "The evident scope of the righteousness of God," says Mr Kelly, "is, that He himself is righteous in justifying the believer by virtue of Christ's work in all its extent and blessedness" ("The Righteousness of God").

"It is very remarkable," observes Mr C. Stanley, "that the Scriptures never use the expression, 'the righteousness of Christ,' but always, as in Rom. iii. 19, 26, 'the righteousness of God.' The Holy Ghost must have an object in this; and surely it is to direct our attention, first of all to God himself, to show His own *character* and *attributes* in perfect consistency and harmony, that *He is just in justifying the sinner*. . . . It is of the first importance that God should be seen to be perfectly consistent with Himself, in the *relation* in which He stands to all created beings, and *this is righteousness*" ("Imputed Righteousness," pp. 1-3).

So let it be observed, according to Messrs Darby, Kelly, and Stanley, the righteousness of God, of which we read so much in Scripture in connection with a sinner's justification, is not Christ's obedience to law on the sinner's behalf, but the Divine attribute of justice, or as Mr Bell, another of the Brethren advocates, expresses it, "the righteousness of the Godhead, that essential attribute."

That the phrase *the righteousness of God*, when used in connection with justification, does not mean the Divine attribute of righteousness, but the obedience of Christ to law on the sinner's behalf, is obvious from a variety of considerations.

I. *Scripture represents Christ as our substitute, but to effective substitution, the precept of the law must be obeyed, as well as the penalty of the law endured.*

It is reasonable to suppose, that if the work of Christ was of this double character, we shall find evidence of the fact, not only in the doctrinal statements of Scripture, but in the history of our Lord. We find, then, the object of His advent announced, as *the doing of the will of God*. "Lo, I come: *I delight to do Thy will*, O my God." That this doing of God's will, means obeying the law, is evident, for it is immediately added, "*Thy law is within my heart*." When twelve years of age, He declared, "I must be about *my Father's business*;" and what could that be? Not, surely, the endurance of the curse, but obedience; subjection to His heavenly Father is evidently put in contrast to subjection to His earthly parents. Again He says, "My meat is to *do the will of Him that sent me*, and to finish His work;" "I must work *the works of Him that sent me*, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." And what could these works be, but works of obedience to His Father's will? In His intercessory prayer He says, "*I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do*." It cannot be His death to which He refers; as yet the shadows of neither Gethsemane nor Calvary had fallen upon Him. He "took upon Him," we are told, "the form of a servant."

The reference in all this, is evidently to His work of obedience. (Ps. xl. 7, 8 ; Luke ii. 49 ; John iv. 34, ix. 4, xvii. 4 ; Phil. ii. 7.)

But how different are the terms in which He speaks of His death. "I have a baptism to be baptized with ; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished !" "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat : this is my body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them : and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This He said, signifying what death He should die." (Luke xii. 50 ; Mark xiv. 22-24 ; John xii. 32, 33.)

Now, could we have the double aspect of Christ's work more distinctly presented to us than in these different classes of texts? And this view is further confirmed by the objects of His obedience, as intimated by the apostle (Gal. iv. 4, 5), namely, to redeem from the curse of the law, and to bestow the adoption of sons. He accomplished both, the one by suffering and the other by obeying. Not that we can separate His obedience from His death, and ascribe one kind of efficacy to the one, and another kind of efficacy to the other—the two things are invariably combined in Scripture ; still they are nevertheless so distinct, that both pardon and acceptance, must each have had its own proper and suitable ground, and in treating of the subject, it is necessary for clearness of apprehension to view them apart.

Two things were to be met by God in dealing with us in our fallen estate. These were sin and want of righteousness ; that which subjects to punishment, and the absence of that which entitles to reward : so that when the first is met and provided for, there still remains the absence of that which entitles to reward. The sufferings of Christ could reach no further than deliverance from the curse, unless reward follows the mere absence of transgression, without positive and complete righteousness, which none

surely will affirm. Hence both Christ's death and obedience were essential; and each has its own influence upon our justification, not separately but jointly; neither justifies without the other. What Adam failed in, it behoved the last Adam to accomplish. Why is Christ so designated? (1 Cor. xv. 45-47.) Not surely because He bore the penalty of the law,—that constitutes no resemblance to the federal office of our great progenitor, but rather because He perfectly obeyed it.

Were the sinner, then, accepted without obedience, there would be a relaxation of the law, and a bestowal of reward without the merit of reward; or what is worse, God would be represented as inexorable in the infliction of penalty, but indifferent as to the holiness which He has enjoined. Indeed, we could more easily conceive of Him remitting the penalty, than we can conceive of Him passing over the sinner's disobedience.

II. *We find in Scripture certain figurative representations of the righteousness of God, which accord with the doctrine of Christ's obedience on the sinner's behalf, but which do not accord with the idea of the Divine attribute of righteousness.*

As it was righteousness the sinner felt from the first he needed, so we find that righteousness was early announced; but although presented in a light too dim to be fully recognised, yet in language which implied that it was what would meet the sinner's case. Isaiah declared, "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Daniel announces that "Seventy weeks are determined, to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." (Isa. lxi. 10; Dan. ix. 24.) Now we have to ask, if the righteousness thus predicted is the Divine attribute of justice? These promises, be it observed, are for the comfort of God's people; but what comfort or what congruity would there be in the fact of being *covered* with Divine justice? or of Divine justice being *brought in*, when reconciliation is being made for iniquity?

Does not such phraseology intimate that the *righteousness* spoken of, is something different from a Divine attribute, that it is something bestowed or conferred?

We find in the New Testament a similar class of figurative expressions. We read of "the fine linen, which is the righteousness of saints;" that "even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe;" "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ;" and of Noah becoming "heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Rev. xix. 8; Rom. iii. 22, v. 17; Heb. xi. 7). But this is surely something different from "the righteousness of the Godhead—that essential attribute." In what respect does it resemble *fine linen*? how can it be *unto all and upon all who believe*? in what sense can it be *a gift*, or how can any human being become *heir* to it? We can understand how all this is true of a righteousness wrought out by Jesus Christ, and which may be imputed to us, but fail to perceive how it can be true of a personal quality, inherent in the Divine being, and therefore untransferable.

III. *Righteousness in relation to justification was evidently understood by Paul as having respect to law, and as consisting in obedience to law.*

"Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law," says Paul, "shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?" "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have

not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them." "Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. ii. 26, vi. 16, viii. 3, 4, x. 3-5; Phil. iii. 6; Titus iii. 5.)

Now, can any one glance at these passages, and fail to perceive that Paul used the term when speaking of justification, in the sense of obedience to law? The obedience which the law demands is called righteousness; and those who render that obedience are called righteous. Christ, then, being made under the law, obeyed it perfectly; that is, He in so obeying worked out a complete—a Divine righteousness; and hence His people have this righteousness through faith in Him (Phil. iii. 9).

It might be shown by a wider survey of Scripture, that by righteousness it means *doing*. Peter said to Cornelius, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and *worketh* righteousness, is accepted with Him." Old Testament saints are represented as those, "who through faith subdued kingdoms and *wrought* righteousness." John declares, "He that *doeth* righteousness is righteous." (Acts x. 34, 35; Heb. xi. 33; 1 John iii. 7.) But according to the Brethren, righteousness means something totally different. In the very nature of the case, however, another sense is inadmissible. The term implies the claim of one who is *right*. A righteous man, is more than a pardoned criminal, or one who is innocent; he is not only one against whom the law has no charge, but one who has fulfilled its requirements. Self-righteousness is a claim not to pardon, but to award. If, then, we are righteous through Christ, it must be on the ground of what He has done. "He himself is righteous," says Mr Kelly, "in justifying the believer in virtue of

Christ's work." But how can God justify, that is, pardon and accept the sinner, and not only set him free from punishment, but receive him to favour and fellowship, on the ground of Christ's work, save inasmuch as there is ground in Christ's work, not only for the bestowal of pardon, but for acceptance and favour? In Christ's obedience to law we can see ground for this, but not certainly in either Divine justice, or in His endurance of its penalty.

IV. *Righteousness is in Scripture so identified with the work of Christ, as to make it evident that, it is on the ground of His obedience to law, we are accepted and restored to God's favour.*

Mr Stanley declares—"The Scriptures never use the expression, 'the righteousness of Christ,' but always 'the righteousness of God'" ("Imputed Righteousness," p. 1). We, however, demur to this representation. Isaiah says, "The Lord is well pleased for His (*i.e.*, Messiah's) righteousness' sake, He will magnify the law, and make it honourable." Does not Peter speak of "the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ?" And does not Paul say, "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," and who can be meant by that "one" but Christ? (Isa. xlii. 21; 2 Peter i. 1; Rom. v. 18.) And yet we are to be told that "Scripture never uses the expression, '*the righteousness of Christ!*'" So completely does it identify Him with this righteousness that, we find Him predicted as "the Lord our righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 6.) Even were the assertion true, it would avail our opponents nothing, inasmuch as righteousness is in Scripture so identified with the work of Christ, as to make it evident that, it is on the ground of His obedience to law we are accepted by God, and restored to His favour. The quotation of a few texts will be sufficient to show this.

(a.) "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience, many were

made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 18, 19).

Here the work of Christ, by which believers are justified, is designated *righteousness* and *obedience*. Surely no one will question that the meaning is, these are Christ's. The only inquiry then is, What do they imply? Let it be observed, we have "righteousness" placed in contrast to "offence," and "obedience" to "disobedience," which shows that, as by *offence* and *disobedience* we must understand Adam's failure to keep the law, so by *righteousness* and *obedience* we must understand Christ's fulfilment of the law, or Christ's doing for us what Adam had failed to do. And yet we are told "that nowhere is our justification or righteousness referred to the life, but always to the precious death of the Lord!" ("The Scripture View of Justification," by F. W. G., p. 15.) But if that which procures our justification consists in death alone, it is certainly strange that the apostle should designate it "obedience." Doubtless Christ's death is included in this obedience or righteousness. We read of Him being "obedient unto death," because His submission to death was the highest act of obedience. It would seem, then, as if the apostle designed to guard against the possibility of any supposing that he here meant Christ's essential righteousness, for he defines the righteousness through which we are justified as "obedience."

(b.) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 1-4).

Can any one who reads these words with an unprejudiced mind fail to perceive, that *Christ's atonement has to do with the fulfilment of the law in us?* How can the law be *fulfilled in us?* Not by our own obedience certainly. The connection between the third and fourth verses shows, that the

atonement had to do with this fulfilment of the law in us. It is as if the apostle had said—All our sins being covered by Christ's righteousness, and all the defects of our disobedience by the merits of His obedience, it is, as respects the law, as if the righteousness of the law had been actually fulfilled in us. There is such an intercommunity of relation between Christ and those who believe in Him, as forms a just reason for regarding them as one in a federal and legal sense. We can easily understand that Christ in obeying, is so identified with His people, that they may say, "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us." But by what process of argument can it be made to appear that God's attribute of righteousness accomplishes this?

(c.) "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4).

What can "*end of the law*" mean, but that obedience which the law required, and which it could not but require, till its demands were complied with? Jesus, then, is declared to be this, or, in other words, He has rendered this, so that every believer may be reckoned righteous, as if he himself had fully obeyed the law. The Jews knew they needed a righteousness, they knew they could only be justified by a "perfect righteousness." Here, then, was the righteousness which they required.

(d.) "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21.)

It is common to read this text, "For He hath made Him to be a *sin-offering* for us." So to render it, however, is greatly to lessen its force. *Ἀμαρτίαν* must not be rendered first *sin* and then *sin-offering*, in the same clause of a sentence; to do so would destroy the antithesis. He was made sin just as we are made *righteousness*. Not that Christ was literally made a sinner, any more than that the believer is literally made righteous. Christ was treated as if He were the one, and the believer is treated as if he were the other. Sin is thus reckoned to Christ, and righteousness is reckoned to us; but as God's attribute of righteousness can in no sense be reckoned to us, personal qualities being untransfer-

able, the righteousness spoken of must be Christ's. Righteousness is here set over against sin; but as sin is disobedience, righteousness must be obedience.

(e.) "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. iii. 8, 9).

Here we have two righteousnesses presented to view. The one was Paul's own; the other is of God. "Not having mine own righteousness," that is, not having confidence in it, not relying upon it as a ground of justification. What, then, can be plainer than that he had renounced dependence on his own righteousness, and that because he had come to know and appreciate a more perfect righteousness? Was it, then, the Divine attribute of righteousness he depended on? Why, it was that which condemned him. That demands fulfilment of the law and sees to the infliction of punishment in the event of failure, but makes no provision for its fulfilment. It is a righteousness which suffices for what man has failed to do, and what can that be but the righteousness of Christ? Unless the one righteousness had sufficed for the imperfections of the other, there would be no propriety in setting the one over against the other.

These texts are adduced to show that righteousness is, in Scripture, so identified with the work of Christ, as to make it evident, that it is on the ground of His obedience to law we are accepted and restored to the favour of God. And now we have to ask, if the righteousness spoken of in these passages be not Christ's, how is it that it is so spoken of in connection with His work? Doubtless the words *righteousness* and *righteous* are used as expressive of the Divine attribute of justice; and the phrase, *the righteousness of God*, in this sense, is used in connection with the subject of justification, as in Rom. iii. 25, 26. This we can readily concede to Mr Kelly, and others of the same school. Who

will deny that God is righteous in justifying? but more uniformly is the obedience of Christ so designated, not, as it is asserted by the Brethren, to lead our thoughts directly to God, but to distinguish it from man's righteousness, because it was appointed, wrought out, and approved by His Divine Son. Man has failed to meet the requirements of the law, and God's righteousness is presented as accomplishing that wherein man has failed. The doctrine of the Brethren, contradicts the entire argument of Paul as to the justification of the sinner.

V. The doctrine for which we contend, namely, that believers are justified on the ground of Christ's righteousness, or His lifelong obedience to law, accords with a consciousness of our spiritual necessities.

It may seem apart from our purpose to adduce human experience in proof of a Scripture doctrine, but as the Gospel professes to meet all our spiritual necessities, the argument is legitimate.

One of the first discoveries of the awakened sinner, is the spirituality, holiness, and extent of the Divine law. It is righteous, but he is unrighteous. True, he may have seen that Christ has died, and that may meet his fears as to wrath; but he feels that he needs more than escape from hell; he feels that to be happy he must have communion with God; but how can he approach a Being of immaculate rectitude? It is righteousness which he needs, and he has none. It is the demands of a law that is "holy, just, and good," that alarm me. To tell me that God will be righteous in justifying me is not enough. That is not obedience to law, and it is obedience, perfect obedience, which both the law and my conscience demand. You might as well tell me that Christ did not bear the penalty of the law for me, as that He did not for me obey its precepts; for "not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. ii. 13). Never is the believing sinner's peace more abundant, than when not only he is assured of the fact that God forgives, but when he sees how

it is, that while justifying the ungodly, He is the just God. In saving sinners, He has not only had respect to the satisfying of His law and justice, He has had respect likewise to the satisfying of the sinner. We do not affirm that those who deny this doctrine cannot be saved, but we believe they divest the Gospel of one of its mightiest and most satisfying elements.

VI. *The doctrine of the Brethren upon this point dishonours the Saviour, by virtually denying His mediation.*

According to this theory, the only blessing we obtain through Christ is pardon. Nor do Brethren writers shrink from maintaining that pardon is the sole result of Christ's death ("Justification in the Risen Christ," pp. 3-6). It is the logical result of a denial of Christ's righteousness, for if He has no righteousness for us, it is evident He has no acceptance for us, and none of those blessings which are bestowed in consequence of acceptance. It, in fact, sets aside Christ's mediation, and sends us direct to God for all the other blessings of salvation, as if we had obeyed the law for ourselves. But such is not the doctrine of Scripture. Christ is there uniformly presented as a complete Saviour, leaving nothing undone on behalf of those who believe. We are as certainly accepted through Him, as we are pardoned through Him (Eph. i. 6). Nor is this any mere half-finished justification. The meritorious obedience of Christ covers all. No subsequent completion of justification is conceivable.

One other fact shows the misconception of the theory which we condemn. Every blessing of salvation is declared in the plainest terms to be *in* and *through* and *by* Christ. A few texts may suffice as to this: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places *in Christ*." "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation *by our Lord Jesus Christ*." "The gift of God is eternal life *through Jesus Christ our Lord*." "God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live *through*

Him. "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." "But my God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory, by *Christ Jesus.*" (Eph. i. 3; 1 Thess. v. 9; Rom. vi. 23; 1 John iv. 9; 1 Cor. i. 30; Phil. iv. 19.)

Nor are we simply taught that all blessings come through Christ; so important is this fact; that we are also taught to ask for every blessing *in the name* of Christ. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do; if ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." "I have chosen you, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you." (John xiv. 13, 14, xv. 16.) What is it to ask for any blessing in the name of Christ, but that the blessing may be bestowed for His sake, or in respect of His merit? Now who, conscious of his own defects and transgressions, will not daily betake himself to Christ, that he may find in His righteousness a substitute for his own?

If Brethrenism is true, Paul's declaration must be false, "My God shall supply all your need by *Christ Jesus.*" To know that we are indebted to Him for everything, endears Him to our hearts; but in proportion as His work is dwarfed, limited, or curtailed, our dependence, our faith, and gratitude must all be proportionately modified, and we derogate from the merit and efficacy of His death. Rather than this, let me cleave to the old faith which ascribes to Him a complete salvation, and regards Him as "all and in all."

But it is objected, that to be justified by law-keeping is contrary to Scripture. "Justification is not on the principle of law at all," says Mr Stanley. "'The righteousness of God without law is manifested.' 'Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.' (Read Rom. iii. 19-26.) . . . To take thee back to law *for righteousness* is the work of Satan" ("Justification in the Risen Christ," pp. 2, 4, 5, 15).

Now we meet this objection by simply saying, that any ordinary reader of his Bible, would regard the texts quoted as simply teaching, that it is *our own* works that are ex-

cluded by God's method of justification. If it be true that *all* works are excluded, and that we are in no sense saved by works, then, the works of Christ himself are excluded. His death, to say nothing of His life, was obedience to law. "He became *obedient* unto death." Hence if this argument be sound, the very death of Christ must be set aside as a ground of justification.

That only Messrs Darby, Stanley, and Kelly, and those who see by the light which they shed on Scripture, are able to discover there such notions as the Jewish remnant, the non-atoning sufferings of Christ, justification through Christ's resurrection, and the secret rapture of the saints— notions, not a trace of which is discoverable to any but themselves; and that such a doctrine as Christ's obedience to law in our stead—a doctrine which has been recognised by every Protestant Church in Christendom, and by every theologian of note from Augustine to Hodge,—they are utterly blind to, is certainly a most marvellous instance of the influence of prejudice or the perversion of intellect.

III.

NON-IMPUTATION.

HAVING got rid, they think, of the righteousness of Christ, it behoves the Brethren to rid themselves in like manner of the doctrine of Imputation. They have been charged with teaching the Popish doctrine of the infusion of righteousness. This charge, however, I apprehend, is groundless. In the course of my perusal of Brethren literature, I have nowhere met with the advocacy of this opinion, but on the contrary, its emphatic repudiation. Mr Kelly, in his reply to Dr Moody Stuart, says—"None of the 'Brethren' accept the notion of inherent or infused righteousness." What they understand by imputation is, God accounting the person something at the moment the act of the mind takes place, or holding a person to be a righteous man, *i.e.*, reckoning or accounting him such. "No attribute of God is imputed," they say; "but a man who is a sinner is accounted righteous, according to that attribute."

Now, that *to impute* means not what Mr Darby or Mr Stanley asserts, "*the act of the mind* accounting the person something at the moment the act of the mind takes place," or "considered to be;" *i.e.*, the *act of God's mind* when justifying; but the *reckoning* or *accounting* the righteousness of Christ to the person to whom imputation is made, will be apparent by a reference to Scripture. Is not a heave offering something? It is said, then, to be reckoned or imputed. Is not iniquity something? The man is declared blessed to whom it is not imputed. Is not executing judgment and staying a plague something? These, then, were counted or

imputed to Phinehas for righteousness. Is not misconduct something? Paul, then, prays Philemon, that as he had been the means of his conversion, he was to reckon to him wherein Onesimus had wronged him. (Num. xviii. 27; 2 Sam. xix. 19; Ps. xxxii. 2, cvi. 30, 31; Phile. 17-19.)

Mr Darby says, the Scriptures "never speak of imputed righteousness, but of imputing righteousness." But surely if there is imputing righteousness, there must be righteousness to impute. The texts quoted prove that when there is imputation, there is that which is imputed: hence we believe when the Scriptures speak of imputing righteousness, it is Christ's righteousness that is imputed.

But the import of the word *impute* will be found more conclusively established in opposition to the views of Messrs Darby and Stanley, by looking at the following texts in which the word is used in connection with justification: "Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted (or *imputed*) for circumcision?" "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned (or *imputed*) of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted (or *imputed*) for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." "And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath

committed unto us the word of reconciliation." "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted (or *imputed*) to him for righteousness." (Rom. ii. 26, iv. 4-8, 11, 22-25; 2 Cor. v. 19; Gal. iii. 6.)

Whatever, then, be the meaning of the word *impute*, in other instances, it is evident from these texts—texts bearing directly on the subject in hand—that the interpretations of Messrs Darby and Stanley are at variance with Scripture. In each and all of these instances, there is not merely the act of the mind in imputing, but there is *that* which is imputed.

What, then, we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness is, that what Christ *did* and *suffered*, is in the moment of believing accepted by God for us, instead of that personal obedience and personal suffering we owed to the law. The fact is, a denial of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, involves a denial of the imputation of Adam's sin to us; but what is more serious, it involves a denial of the imputation of our sin to Christ.

While saying all this, we are careful to define the sense in which Christ's righteousness becomes ours. His righteousness is not imparted to us, or infused or transfused into us, but *imputed*: it does not so become ours, that we can have complacency in it, as if it were personally or meritoriously our own. As the imputation of sin to Christ did not make Him cease to be holy, but only caused Him to be treated as guilty; so the imputation of His righteousness to us does not make us cease to be depraved, but only causes us to be treated as righteous. We are not the less sinners, though treated as righteous. Sin and righteousness are moral and personal qualities, and therefore cannot be transferred. The imputation does not qualify us for heaven, but entitles us to it: it is not Christ's work in us, but Christ's work for us, and so made ours, that we are as much entitled to God's favour, as if the law in all its manifold requirements, had been personally and sinlessly obeyed by us.

IV.

JUSTIFICATION IN THE RISEN CHRIST.

WE have no more striking instance of the love of novelty, than in the Brethren's substitution of Christ's resurrection, for Christ's obedience, in the justification of the sinner. While they explain away with marvellous facility all those texts on which the doctrine of His righteousness is based, and which present us with a broad and tangible ground of acceptance before God, they are never done speaking of justification in the risen Christ, and flaunting before us some dreamy, mystical notions of Christ's risen life, and of our participation in that life—notions for which there is not the slightest ground in Scripture. That the resurrection of Christ is a most blessed fact, no believer will deny; but in the economy of grace it has its own place, and to attempt to assign it another, is not only to introduce disorder into our conceptions of the scheme of redemption, but to injure the soul, by presenting to it, a distorted view of the truth. In the scheme of redemption, neither Jesus nor the apostles ever present His resurrection as the ground of our salvation, but as the evidence that a foundation of our hope has been laid in Zion, steadfast and sure, and as the pledge that as He is risen, His people shall rise with Him. How very different from all this, is the place assigned to the resurrection of Christ in the theology of the Brethren, will appear from the following extracts:

“How does Scripture, then, deal with this amazing question—the justification of the sinner; and *God's righteousness in thus justifying him?*” asks Mr Stanley. “*I*

answer, through Jesus, the resurrection from among the dead—Jesus and the resurrection—Jesus ‘bearing our sins in His own body on the tree’—the Just dying for the unjust. Yes, Jesus crucified and Jesus risen was what the Holy Ghost did set before lost sinners: His death for atonement—His resurrection for righteousness or justification. ‘Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification’ (Rom. iv. 25). Thus, whilst His precious blood clears from all sin, His resurrection brings me into a state of absolute righteousness in Him risen, and therefore complete justification. . . . Thus, as our fall in the first Adam not only brought condemnation, but the actual death-state of sin, much more resurrection in Christ not only brings acquittal from condemnation, but an everlasting state of life and actual righteousness—absolutely perfect and sinless, the righteousness of GOD IN CHRIST. . . . In fact, this ancient doctrine of justification in the risen Christ, has been well-nigh lost; and in its place, the modern notion of Christ’s legal righteousness under law, has been put in its place. It is on this blessed principle of resurrection I am justified, and have a justified life. My old self could not be justified; my new self in Christ cannot be condemned. Either Christ risen or nothing. . . . Baptism did, then, strikingly illustrate the doctrine of justification in the risen Christ. Believers were buried in the likeness of His death. (Read Rom. vi. 3-7.) The old life buried, raised in Christ to walk in newness of life—not old life or old self justified, that could not be; but condemned to death and buried with Christ. God’s sentence executed to the utmost on the old nature in the substitute dying on the tree. But what is this new life but life in Christ risen from the dead, and therefore a justified life” (“Justification in the Risen Christ,” pp. 7-14).

The foregoing extracts seem to show that the notion of the Brethren is, that in justification we so become identified with Christ’s risen life, that as He was perfectly justified by His resurrection, so are those who believe in Him. That this is their meaning is further evident from what Mr Darby says—“This carries us further than blood-shedding. That

lays the ground on which we are cleared. This puts us in the cleared place and standing before God, which is an entirely new one." "He has taken the place of the first Adam down here for us: He has died in it, and there is a total end of the whole state for those that believe. Now I reckon myself dead to sin, because Christ has died. He was treated as *being in that place*, and He *died*, and the whole thing is ended—ended for me, under judgment of another's bearing. As a believer I shall still feel the workings of the old nature, and have to judge it; but I see Christ taking *it* for me, and judgment executed upon *it* in His person on the cross, and now He is out of *it all*, alive again for evermore. That life is *wholly gone*, in which He laid *it* down, and the old nature to which sin and judgment applied is gone. Just as a man who may be in prison, awaiting there the punishment of his crime, and he dies; the *life* to which the *punishment is attached* is gone. It is impossible that there can be any longer a question of punishment for the sin; the life is gone to which the sin and its punishment attached. *Just so was it with Christ*" ("The Righteousness of God;" "Notes and Expositions").

Nor is Mr Darby alone in this view. Mr Mackintosh says—"In giving up His life, He gave up also the *sin attached thereto*, so that it is effectually put away, having been left in the grave, from which He arose triumphant in the power of a *new life*, to which righteousness as distinctly attaches itself as did sin to that life which He gave up on the cross." "This will help us to an understanding of an expression used by our blessed Lord after His resurrection, 'A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.' He did not say, 'flesh and blood,' because in resurrection He had not assumed into His sacred Person the blood that He had shed out upon the cross as an atonement for sin. 'The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls, etc.'" ("Notes on Genesis").

A writer in the *Present Testimony*, 1863, in speaking of the death of Christ, says—"He died so as to make a final and judicial separation of *Divine life* from the whole *first*

Adam condition, because there was nothing but sin there, in will; and transfer, so to speak, *the Divine life that was in Him* to a new and heavenly sphere."

Surely this is darkening counsel by words without knowledge. What is the meaning of "*the Adam condition?*" of there being "*a total end of the whole state for those who believe?*" of "*that life being wholly gone in which He (i.e., Christ) laid it down, and the old nature to which sin and judgment applied gone?*" of *sin being attached* to one kind of life and *righteousness* to another? of "*the Divine life which was in Him*" being transferred "*to a new and heavenly sphere, where flesh or sin could not come—the resurrection state?*" In distinction from this mystical, confused, and unprofitable style of language, how very different is the language of Scripture. There we rather read—"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." (1 Cor. xv. 22; John x. 18; Gal. ii. 20; Acts ii. 29-32.) And yet in the face of such an announcement we are asked to believe that our Lord left the life to which sin attached in the grave, and that he rose without blood! What, on the contrary, is more obvious than the identity of Christ's risen life, with that which He surrendered? He tells us, that He has power to lay down His life ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) and power to take it again (John x. 18), but if blood pertain to it before resurrection, how comes it, that He has been divested of it? When He said, "Handle me and see for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have"

(Luke xxiv. 39), He evidently meant by flesh, what is commonly understood—the word always implies blood. Indeed, the maintenance of perfect identity was essential to the validity of His substitution and mediatorship. We have the hope of going to heaven, because He who died on the cross in our stead is there. What did John behold in the midst of the throne? A Lamb as it had been slain (Rev. v. 6), and what was that, but the glorified humanity of Jesus, bearing still the scars of nails and spear? Now, what is the grand lesson of this vision? That He mediates in heaven, by the continuous presentation of the soul and body in which He made atonement. If, then, He presents in heaven the very body in which He suffered, the very life which He surrendered, He in His true and proper humanity must have been raised from the dead. The fact is, to speak of life in any sense being “left in the grave,” is nonsense. The life of Christ was gone, ere His body was removed from the tree.

Nor are we a whit more able to comprehend, as Mr Darby expresses it, what is meant by “our offences being buried in Christ’s grave,” or, as Mr Mackintosh puts it, “The old man being buried in the sepulchre of Christ” (“Perfection: Where is It?” p. 36). We had always thought that it was on the cross our offences were put away, when He proclaimed “It is finished.” Do we not read that “He poured out His soul unto *death*?” that He laid down *His life* for the sheep? that He purchased the Church with His own *blood*? that it is by “His *stripes* we are healed?” that it is by His *death* we are reconciled? (Isa. liii. 12; John x. 15; Acts xx. 28; Isa. liii. 5; Rom. v. 10.) Indeed, it would appear that not only was it a different Christ who rose from the grave, from what was buried there, but, according to Mr Stanley, that sinners on believing, lose their personal identity, and become totally different persons. “If Adam, then, was the beginning of a race of sinners,” he says, “condemned to death, Christ, having died for His own, is the beginning of a new race. So that, as a believer, the life I have is not *my* life spared or restored, but the very life of the risen Christ, and therefore a justified life” (“Imputed Righteousness,” p. 14).

While it is right that the resurrection of Christ should have its own place in our regard, its glory must never be permitted to eclipse the greater glory of the cross, or be regarded as carrying us "further than the thought of bloodshedding;" and yet this is the error in the teaching referred to. Nor are the writers quoted alone in this belief; it is the doctrine generally held among the Brethren. A friend in the ministry having attended one of their meetings, was invited to take a part in the service to the extent of giving out a hymn to be sung. Even this, for Brethren, was a marvellous stretch of liberality. Wishing to avoid all occasion of offence, he announced "Rock of Ages," and had read as far as "Simply to Thy cross I cling," when one sitting beside him laid his hand upon his arm, saying, "Stop, stop; we have got quite beyond that." This is certainly what Mr. Darby calls "further than the thought of bloodshedding," or as Mr. Stanley expresses it, "not stopping at Christ's death!"

It may now suffice, should we look for a little, at the principal texts of Scripture claimed by the Brethren on behalf of the notion of justification by the risen Christ.

(a.) Rom. iv. 25: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

That this text is not free from difficulty will be readily admitted. Two interpretations suggest themselves—that *justification* here has reference either to Christ's vindication as the Messiah, or to the believer's pardon and acceptance. To us it appears to have chiefly reference to the latter. It is expressly said He "was raised again for *our* justification." That Christ was justified by His resurrection is unquestionably true. And yet, we apprehend, it is the justification of the believer the apostle has chiefly in view. His object, however, is not to show that Christ's resurrection is the *procuring* cause of our justification, but rather that it is the evidence that a sure ground for it has been laid. The import of the text is, doubtless, mainly to be determined by the sense of *διὰ*, the preposition used in both clauses of the verse. That it cannot have the sense of *procure*, is obvious. Its import must be the same in both clauses. If the mean-

ing in the second clause were, He was raised to *procure* our justification, then we must read the first clause, He was delivered to *procure* our offences, which is inadmissible. When, however, we take the preposition in its ordinary sense, the text is relieved of much of its difficulty. He was delivered to death *on account* of our offences, and He was raised *on account* of our justification. That He died to procure our justification, all will admit. If so, His death, and not His resurrection, is the procuring cause. His resurrection is the means rather than the ground of our justification. It not only becomes the means in the Divine economy whereby believers are justified, but it becomes to such, the full security for the accomplishment of all the ends for which the atonement was made. Had the atonement not been complete, God would never have sent an angel to roll the stone from the door of the sepulchre, or a cloudy chariot to carry His Son back to glory. Instead, then, of Christ's resurrection being the ground of our justification, it is rather the means of its accomplishment, and the evidence that a sure ground has been laid for it.

(*b.*) 1 Cor. xv. 17 is also claimed on behalf of the doctrine. "If we would enjoy this blessed peace," says Mr Stanley, "we must not stop at Christ's death. This alone would not help us in the least. 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins.' But He is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept! Now if God could not spare our substitute and be righteous in doing so, how can He be righteous and condemn us, since our substitute has made atonement to the full for all our sins? and *much more*, since God has raised Him, as our justified surety from the dead" ("Imputed Righteousness," p. 12).

The text has evidently a broader reference than mere justification, and as evidently no reference at all to justification by Christ's resurrection: the reference is to Christianity in its most comprehensive aspect. If Christ be not risen, says the apostle, your faith and hope are all a delusion;—the Messiah has not come, atonement has not been made, justice is unappeased, the power of sin is unbroken,

the Spirit is unspent, death is still the pathway to perdition, and not one ray of hope rests upon the grave.

(c.) There are also advanced in the extracts which we have made from the publications of the Brethren, three texts in proof of justification by Christ's resurrection, which are not proofs of justification at all, but of the kindred doctrine of sanctification. A glance at them will be sufficient to show this.

The first of these texts is Rom. vi. 3-11. That it is sanctification of which the apostle is speaking, is obvious from what he says in the first and second verses of the chapter: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" These questions of the apostle are equivalent to this—Shall we who have been justified, that is, delivered from the condemnation in which sin held us, continue to live in its practice? Having made this assertion, he proceeds to enforce it by an exhibition of the privileges of our justified state. The believer is so united to Christ, that he is elsewhere said to be "crucified" with Him, "dead with Christ," "buried with Him," and "quickened together with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20; Col. ii. 20; Rom. vi. 4; Eph. ii. 5), or, as in Rom. vi. 3, 4, "raised up from the dead," "in the likeness of His resurrection." The practical import of all this is, that "even so we also should walk in newness of life," "that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."

Another text equally misapplied, is Phil. iii. 10: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." Surely the Brethren are singularly unfortunate in relying in such an instance, on these words. How could Paul pray that he might know the power of Christ's resurrection with a view to his justification? Was he not a justified man? The idea in the apostle's mind, is evidently the influence of Christ's resurrection on the believer's sanctification. He had been justified through faith in Christ's righteousness, and he desires to feel the full force of His resurrection on the sanctification of his nature.

Nor are the Brethren more successful in the appropriation of Col. iii. 1, 2: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." We too believe in the fact of the believer participating with Christ in His risen life; but to speak of Christ's "resurrection righteousness," or "justification on the ground of it," has no countenance in either this or any other text of Scripture. Righteousness when used in relation to a sinner's justification, has respect to moral law, and the performance of what moral law requires; but that there is aught in Christ's resurrection equivalent to this, we fail to discover. The truth rather is this—In believing we become identified with Christ in His resurrection, so that we emerge from spiritual death into spiritual life. That this is the thought in the apostle's mind is obvious. If ye be risen with Christ, he says, let your thoughts like His be heavenward. What was Christ's resurrection life? A life of separation from the world, and communion with heaven. What kind of life, then, best becomes those who are risen with Christ? A life in which the passions are mortified, the affections are purified, and heaven is ever kept in view (ver. 5-10).

That the apostle chiefly looks to our sanctification in relation to Christ's resurrection, and not, as do the Brethren, to justification, is evident from another passage: Eph. ii. 4-6—"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Thus it is evident that the doctrine of justification by the resurrection of Christ, when fairly investigated, fails utterly in all claim to a scriptural basis; and yet the Brethren declare, not "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," but "God forbid that we should glory *save in the resurrection* of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

V.

CHRIST'S NON-ATONING SUFFERINGS.

IT is held by Brethren that Christ in dying had the experience of a penitent sinner, or of a saint under the conviction of sin ; that He was treated by God as if He were personally guilty ; and that this experience was undergone for the benefit of the people of Israel—especially for the benefit of a certain Jewish remnant who, it is supposed, shall be on the earth at Christ's second advent. The publications in which these views are advocated are—"Synopsis of the Books of the Bible," by J. N. Darby ; "The Sufferings of Christ," by the same writer ; *The Present Testimony*, a periodical issued occasionally, and devoted to the discussion of theological questions ; and *The Bible Treasury*, a monthly magazine of the same character.

So heretical have these views been regarded by many among the Brethren, as to lead to much internal strife, and serious secession from Mr Darby and those who think with him. Prominent among the seceders are Mr W. H. Dorman and Captain P. F. Hall, both of whom have published able exposures of the heresy.

It may be proper to look at these points in detail.

I. As to Christ in dying having the experience of a penitent sinner.

Mr Darby declares that Christ experienced "the sense of guilt under a broken law." "Man may be looked at morally as suffering, though awakened, quickened, and upright in desire, under the exercises of a soul learning

when a sinner, the difference of good and evil, under Divine government in the presence of God, not fully known in grace and redemption, whose judgment of sin is before his eyes, exposed to all the advantage that Satan can take of him in such a state ; such suffering, for example, as is seen in the case of Job. *Christ has passed through all these kinds of suffering*, only the last, of course, as Himself, a perfect being to learn it for others. . . . In Psalm lxix. we have the cross also, and not merely the wickedness of man, though that is fully entered into ; *but the trusting of God and distress under the sense of sins*. How is this to be distinguished from the atoning work of Christ? Here the difficulty presents itself fully, but if we wait patiently on the Lord, all difficulties of Scripture are inlets to light and blessing" ("Sufferings of Christ," by J. N. D., new edit., pp. 31, 62, 73).

Again, in commenting upon the 5th verse of this psalm (69th), "O God, Thou knowest my foolishness ; and my sins are not hid from Thee," Mr Darby says—"It does not appear to me that bearing the sins of His people in expiation is the meaning here, but rather the manner in which identifying Himself with the remnant, *He confesses sin as a righteous man in Israel ought to confess it*" ("Synopsis").

Once more, Mr Darby says—"There is a double character of suffering besides atoning work, which Christ has entered into, and which others can feel. The sufferings arising from active love in the world, and *the sorrow arising from the sense of chastenings in respect of sin*, and these mixed with the pressure of Satan's power on the soul, and the terror of foreseen wrath. In the former we suffer with Christ as privilege ; in the latter we suffer for our folly and under God's hand, *but Christ has entered into it*. He sympathises with us. But all this is distinct from suffering *instead of us*, so as to save us from the suffering, undergoing God's wrath that we might not. In atonement He suffers for us ; in service we suffer with Him ; *in our distresses about sin and agony of mind He felt with us*" (*Bible Treasury*, vol. ii., p. 160).

Now mark : We are told "*Christ had the sense of guilt*,

under a broken law ;" " Christ has *passed through* all these kinds of suffering," that is, He has had the experience of souls finding out something of the depth and extent of their sin ; He has "*entered into*," that is, feels as another feels ; that He has had "*distress under the sense of sins* ;" that "*in distresses about sin and agony of mind He felt with us*,"—and this too, be it observed, is "to be distinguished from the atoning work of Christ !" But as *sense* of sin can pertain only to those who are personally guilty, He must, if this be true, have suffered as a sinner. Indeed, we are told that "*He confesses sin as a righteous man in Israel ought to confess it*." It matters not a whit to tell us that He so suffered, not as a sinner, but as a quickened person ; as a saint, for a saint while here, is a sinner still ; or as Job suffered, such being the example adduced by Mr Darby. For one truly to sympathise with me, he must have trod the same path, borne the same burden, and felt as I feel. How then, did Job feel ? how shall this Jewish remnant, if such there be, feel ? As sinners, we reply. Are we, then, to believe, that Christ felt as sinners do, in order to sympathise with them ? On the contrary, He was morally incapable of knowing experimentally what sin is. "The prince of this world cometh," said He, "and hath nothing in me" (John xiv. 30). He was tempted ; we may even say He was powerfully affected by sin, but never tainted by it. Each assault of the adversary fell like a shaft from the breast of a well-panoplied warrior. He prays, but among all His petitions there is not one for pardon ; He weeps, but among all His tears there is not one of contrition. How can even a holy man have a sense of sin, save in so far as he is conscious of it as a matter of personal demerit ? Viewing sin in others, may be to him a matter of abhorrence, but this is very different from having a sense of it. To have a sense of sin, the sin must be our own. Could we with propriety speak of holy angels having a sense of sin ? Certainly not. No more, then, can we speak of the holy Jesus having a sense of sin. The language is not only unguarded ; it discovers a radical misconception of our Lord's relation to us as our substitute.

II. *Let us now look at the views of the Brethren which represent God treating Christ as if He had been personally guilty.*

Mr Darby, in commenting on the 69th Psalm, says, "We read, verse 26, 'They persecute *Him whom Thou hast smitten*, and speak to the grief of those whom Thou hast wounded.' Here we have evidently more than man's persecutions. They take advantage of God's hand upon the sorrowing One to add to His burden and grief. *This is not atonement, but there is sorrow and smiting from God.* Hence we find *the sense of sin* (ver. 5), though of course in the case of Christ they were not His own personally, but the nation's (in a certain sense we may say ours, but specially the nation's sin). But *we have the clear proof that they are not atoning sufferings*, because, instead of suffering in the place of others, so that they should not have one drop of that cup of wrath to drink, others are associated with the Lord here in them. 'They persecute *Him whom Thou hast smitten*, and speak to the grief of *those* whom Thou hast wounded.' When men are wounded, too, when Christ is the companion with them—not a substitute for them—then the atonement is not wrought, nor the wrath of condemnation endured. Yet God has smitten and wounded." "Though government and atonement for sin are two distinct things, *yet that government, and the wrath borne in atonement, would coalesce necessarily*, if atonement were not already made; for what can finally the government of God as to a sinner and his sins be?" ("The Sufferings of Christ," new edit., pp. 107, 108, 74.)

So we are asked to believe that Christ suffered wrath at the hand of God not atoningly, not as the sin-offering, and wrath of such a nature, that if it had not been for atonement, He must have perished! This was wrath specially endured for His people Israel, and for the supposed Jewish remnant. These different kinds of wrath coalesce on the cross, and but for the second—that is, the wrath of atonement—He must have perished under the first! The first is wrath at the hand of God, but not atoning wrath; the second is

atoning wrath. So, according to this doctrine, Christ had the actual experience of a sinner under the infliction of Divine wrath!

Now, the idea of Christ's suffering personally as a sinner at the hand of God, or having in death the experience of a sinner, is an outrage on all our feelings of reverence for our adorable Redeemer. It is the old Antinomian blasphemy, "God hated and abhorred Christ as the greatest sinner on earth." Instead of Jesus being treated by God as a sinner, He was never more truly the object of His Father's complacency than when hanging on the cross. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." Neither in His life nor in His death was the relation of Christ to His Father one of personal guilt. If He had not been on the cross an object of Divine complacency, how could His "offering and sacrifice to God be a sweet smelling savour?"

III. *It is alleged that Jesus had this experience, and thus suffered at the hand of God, for the benefit of a certain Jewish remnant, who, it is supposed, shall be on the earth at Christ's second advent.*

"The position of this remnant," says Mr Darby, "will, in the last days, be as follows: They will see before them the anger of God and will be in anguish, feeling how much they have deserved it; the power of Satan will be there in an entirely special manner; the mass of the people will be upraised against this remnant. Christ has passed through these troubles, although He did not deserve to do so, but He has felt how much His beloved people have merited these troubles. He has accomplished atonement for Israel in such a manner that, finally, the wrath of God will not burst forth against the remnant of this people, this remnant will enjoy blessing. But He *has* passed through the troubles above mentioned" ("The Non-Atoning Sufferings of Christ," pp. 4, 5).

According to Mr Darby, Jesus held a relation to the Jews totally different from His relation to mankind generally.

"He took up man's cause as born of a woman," he says. "He took up the remnant of Israel as born under the law. He was made sin to reconcile the one, and bore the curse of the law to redeem the other from it, and will never bring the lawless under it. As a living man, sinners had no part in or with Him—He abode alone. As a dying man He met their case" ("The Righteousness of God," p. 33).

Now, we have to ask where is it we find in Scripture the slightest trace of this third class, non-atoning sufferings of Christ? We read that He suffered at the hand of men and devils, and that in atonement, He suffered at the hand of His Father. But never is it intimated, that He suffered in a special or peculiar manner, for the benefit of the people of Israel, or of a supposed Jewish remnant. What He suffered was for the world—for Jews and Gentiles alike. In His conversation with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, He said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv. 26, 27). But if this third class of sufferings were foreshadowed in the Psalms, as is alleged, He must have spoken of them; not a hint, however, does Luke give that He referred to any such sufferings. Nor has Paul or any of the apostles, in all they have said of Christ's death, ever intimated that Christ's sufferings were to be so classified. Paul, Peter, and John had surely the Psalms, and understood them as well as does Mr Darby, but they never say a word of such sufferings. Indeed, he admits that these views have no ground in the New Testament. Believers in general have nothing to do with them. "If you expect to find the details as to the remnant of Israel in the New Testament," he says, "you will be disappointed."

IV. *It is alleged that Christ's atonement was accomplished apart from His death.*

"I am told," says Mr Dorman, who protests against the

notion, "that there were three hours on the cross during which our Lord was bearing sufferings *not atoning*. There were also three hours in which He was enduring *atoning* sufferings, viz., from the sixth to the ninth hour. He then emerged from these sufferings, and dismissed His soul in peace" ("Close of Twenty-eight Years' Association with J. N. D.," p. 40).

In accordance with this representation of Brethren views, we read—"Having accomplished this ineffable work (of atonement), His soul having drunk the cup unmixed—*atonement having been made*—He comes forth as heard; and *the act of death* is just His own giving up His spirit to His Father," etc. (*Bible Treasury*, August 1847).

So we are asked to believe that atonement consisted in *drinking the cup*, and that this took place during three of the six hours on the cross, and that it was actually accomplished apart from His death! "Atonement having been made—He comes forth as heard; and the act of death is just His own giving up His spirit to His Father;" hence the act of death "was no part of atonement!" Surely this is not the doctrine of Scripture. Do we not read there, "The Good Shepherd giveth *His life* for the sheep;" "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give *His life* a ransom for many;" "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;" "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me. This He said signifying what death He should die?" That is, our Lord ascribes the drawing of all men to Him to the efficacy of the death He should die; and yet we are told that "the act of death" was apart from the atonement!

Not only have we no authority for thus classifying Christ's sufferings on the cross, we have no authority for separating even His life sufferings, from His death sufferings, as to atonement. They are different parts of one great whole. Our *healing* is ascribed to more than to His death. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," says the prophet: "yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our

peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” (Isa. liii. 4, 5).

Well were it for the Brethren did they give heed to the wise words of Mr Groves, the originator of their movement. “I always feel,” he says, “the very attempt to subject the one adorable Christ to a process of mental analysis is, in its very operation, desecrating. It has engendered the worst divisions in the Church, and will, I believe, ever do so” (“Memoir of A. N. Groves,” 2d edit., p. 464).

Strange is it, that when Mr Darby’s error was thus faithfully and lovingly set before him, by those who were only actuated towards him by true Christian regard, he did not confess it, and withdraw it from view; but to have done so, as Mr H. Groves expresses it, “would be at once to come down from the high pinnacle of infallibility on which he had stood so long—the key-stone of the arch of the system he had reared.”

VI.

DENIAL OF THE MORAL LAW AS A RULE OF LIFE.

ANTINOMIANISM is no new thing in the history of Christianity. John Agricola was its chief advocate in the days of Luther ; and what Agricola and Münzer did for it then, Saltmarsh and Crisp did for it in the days of the Commonwealth. It was the sad drawback in the revival of religion under Whitfield and Wesley. Nor is English nonconformity exempt from its blighting influence to this day, as the published works of Robert Hall and Andrew Fuller bear witness. It is not wonderful, then, that in alliance with a system so levelling as Brethrenism, and which makes common havoc of Christian doctrine and ecclesiastical organisation, the law of God itself should be doomed to condemnation. It is proper, however, to admit that its Antinomianism is not of the coarse and licentious character of the days of Wesley and Whitfield ; but rather akin to that propounded by Milton in his treatise on Christian doctrine. Although the Brethren consider the whole of the Mosaic law abolished, both as a covenant and a rule of life, they admit not the smallest relaxation of the obligations and the motives to religious obedience. But let the Brethren on this, as on other subjects, speak for themselves.

“ I do not find the law ever presented as the rule of life or walk to the risen child of God,” says Mr Stanley. “ The law was perfect for the purpose for which it was given. But the new commandment goes much further, ‘ That ye love one another, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU ’ ” (“ Justification in the

Risen Christ," p. 8). "In a word, then," says Mr Mackintosh, "it is evident that a sinner cannot be justified by the works of the law; and it is equally evident that the law is not the rule of the believer's life. 'For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse,' Gal. iii. 10" ("A Scriptural Inquiry"). "Speaking of the 'new estate,' into which the Christian is brought in Christ," Mr Kelly in his work on the Holy Spirit, says, "it is perfect liberty, as far as regards the soul; not merely deliverance from what I have done, but from what I am. *So that I am no longer as a Christian man, having to do with the responsibility that attaches to mortal men, but am passed now into a new state, even while I am in the world.*"

Now, we on the contrary hold that, the moral law is still a rule to direct us, whether it be revealed in the Ten Commandments, the writings of the prophets, or in the life and precepts of our Lord.

In dealing with this point, we shall notice first the arguments adduced to prove that the believer is delivered from the law as a rule of life; and then adduce the proof that as a rule of life it is still in force.

I. *The arguments adduced to prove that the believer is delivered from the law as a rule of life are four-fold.*

(a.) It is alleged by Dr Davis that our Lord in the sermon on the mount "puts in contrast what was given by Moses, with the grace which He himself now brings in" ("Help for Enquirers"). Such we hold was not His object: it rather was to rescue the law from the false glosses put upon it by the Rabbis. It would appear these false glosses had passed into proverbs, which were generally accepted—such as, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy;" "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Read the entire chapter which contains this sermon (Matt. v.), and it will be found that from beginning to end, it does not contain a word in opposition to the moral law. The object of the Saviour rather is, to point out its spiritual and comprehensive character, its taking to do with the very springs of

conduct, its condemning the evil thought as certainly as the evil act; and also to bring our hearts under the influence of the Christian spirit and motive. So far from abrogating the law, it would seem as if in view of the very teaching of the Brethren and others of the same class, He had uttered the memorable words—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 17-20). The language implies, not abrogation, but continuance and completion. Not that the law was imperfect, but that it should be expanded, and its spirituality and extent more clearly unfolded.

(b.) Then there is the assertion of Dr Davis that the law was not given till Sinai, and that consequently as it is Jewish, it has passed away with that dispensation ("Help for Enquirers").

We are not indeed informed that the moral law was given to our first parents, but of the fact that it was given to them, we can have no doubt, as its existence is implied in the very first command and threatening. What is the boasted morality of heathen philosophers, but a gathering up of the shattered fragments of a law written on man's heart, long ere the finger of God had traced it upon tables of stone? and hence to abolish the law, would be to annihilate our moral nature. Man has never for a moment been without law. Paul argues that from the fall of Adam, till the giving of the law, a period of more than two thousand years, sin was in the world, and consequently man was under law, for sin is the transgression of the law (Rom. v. 13, 14). The first murderer felt and acknowledged that he was under law. He felt that he deserved to die, and he knew that others felt

it too, and hence his alarm (Gen. iv. 13, 14). The moral law, then, was from the first written upon the hearts of men. But while man was never without law, he stood in need of a more perfect rule to direct him, hence the law from Sinai. Dr Davis and others of the same school, hold that it was intended for the Jews alone, and this opinion is founded upon the declaration, "I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt." There were doubtless circumstances in the history of the Hebrew people which laid them under special obligations to obedience, but we do not see how this can in the least detract from its universal and permanent application. All whom God specially favours are laid under special obligations to obey Him, and what nation has ever been so favoured as were the Jews? Take a single instance in illustration. Among the civil laws of the Jews was this command—"Thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exod. xxiii. 9). Now, it is in no degree less our duty to refrain from oppressing a foreigner, although there were circumstances which specially made it their duty; and so it is as respects the Ten Commandments. One great fact is overlooked in all this reasoning—that the Jews were chosen, and their peculiar system established for the sake of the whole race; and hence the Ten Commandments were given, as certainly to the world through the hands of Moses, as they could have been through the ministry of Christ himself.

(c.) A favourite proof with the Brethren in support of the notion that the law has been abrogated as a rule of life, is Rom. vii. 1-7. Here, as in other instances, we have texts quoted by the Brethren apart from their connection, and interpreted with more regard to their sound than to their import. A glance at the context is sufficient to show, that it is the believer's freedom from law as a principle of justification and sanctification, to which the apostle is advertising. To be justified and sanctified by the law, is the hope of the self-righteous. To be justified and sanctified by Christ, is the hope of the believer; and as a woman on the death of her husband is delivered from the law of marriage,

and may be married to another, so the believer by the death of Christ, is delivered from the law as a means of salvation, and is married to Christ, that he may bring forth fruit to God. But although the believer is said to be dead to the law, it is not said the law is dead to us. The death of Christ sets us free from the law as a means of salvation, and that is all. Deliverance from law is a very different thing from abolition of law. We believe as truly as do the Brethren, that "we are not under law, but under grace." To contend for the continued obligation of law, is not to contend for it as a means of salvation.

We no more trust to works for salvation, than do the Brethren; but although not to works, we esteem both them and the law too. The apostle, while proclaiming deliverance to the believer from the law as a covenant of works, is at the same time careful to maintain its excellence. It is the means of conviction of sin (verses 7-23), and what it has been at conversion, it may be often after. As the believer is ever sinning, he ever needs repentance, and the law is the means of begetting it. The law is an exhibition of the Divine holiness, and we may as soon speak disparagingly of the one as of the other.

(*d.*) Mr Mackintosh argues thus—"Would the Ten Commandments without the New Testament be a sufficient rule of life for the believer? Would the New Testament be a sufficient rule without the Ten Commandments?" ("A Scriptural Inquiry," p. 9.) He might as well ask, Would the Old Testament without the New be a sufficient revelation for the believer? Would the New Testament be a sufficient revelation without the Old? No man is called upon to decide such a question. God has given us both, and we are responsible for the use we make of them. The law has more than once been adapted to man's altered circumstances. The fall placed us in a new relation to God, and hence the Ten Commandments. "Thou shalt not," implies a proneness to transgress. The advent of Christ further altered our relation to God, and hence duties are enjoined which rise out of this new relation. In a state of innocence neither faith nor repentance are requisite, but under a dis-

pensation of grace they are primary duties. The reason assigned by the Brethren for their denial of the law as a rule of life, is that to be under law is legalism, and that Christ has wholly delivered us from law. "He has left us an example that we should follow His steps.' He is life, motive, and example too," says Mr Darby; "He lives in us, and the life which we live in the flesh we live by the faith of Him. He has trod the path before us. He is all, and *in* all" ("Law," pp. 12, 13).

One thing overlooked by the Brethren is, that Christ's life and precepts are as certainly law as are the Ten Commandments; hence it might as well be asserted that to be under law to Christ, is legalism. Nay, what is the fact? the very Ten Commandments which the Brethren would so unceremoniously discard, are the words of Christ as certainly as is the sermon on the mount. He it was who proclaimed both. Stephen, in his dying testimony, declares concerning Him, "This is He, that was in the Church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him (*i.e.*, Moses) in the Mount Sinai" (Acts vii. 38).

The New Testament, then, has its law as well as has the Old; and on the same ground it might be affirmed that we are bound by no law whatever. While, however, the New Testament has its law, it is the old law adapted to new circumstances.

II. *Look at the direct proof that the moral law is still in force as a rule of life.*

(a.) There is the fact that the moral law was written by God's own finger on two tables of stone, while the ceremonial and civil laws of the Jews were given through the ministry of Moses, and that it was given amid most expressive manifestations of Divine majesty, and laid up for safe keeping in the ark of the covenant. The delivery of the Ten Commandments constitutes not only one of the most remarkable events in the history of the Jews, but in the history of the world (see Exodus xix., xx.).

(b.) In its very nature it is of perpetual obligation. As

well may it be affirmed that the world has outgrown Euclid's Elements of Geometry, as that it has outgrown the moral law, whereas the progress of society and the advancement of science have only given to it a wider application. The judicial and ceremonial laws of the Jews have lapsed. They were designed for the Hebrew people, and no other. But not so the moral law. The sins which it forbids, and the duties which it enjoins, are not peculiar to the Jews, but pertain to all people. That which is required by it is, in the very nature of things, antecedent to its formal promulgation, binding upon all moral beings. The moral law was made for man as man.

(c.) Scripture teaches that the moral law is still in force as a rule of life to the believer. "Think not," says the Saviour, in the passage already quoted, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 17-19). Is this like an abrogation of the law as a rule of life? Equally explicit is the teaching of Paul: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. iii. 31). That it is the moral law of which the apostle here speaks, is obvious. The "law of works" is the moral law, and Paul declares that so far from Christ having abrogated it, He has established it. Again he says—"The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with

the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. vii. 12, 21-25). So, according to the Brethren, the law which Paul *served*, and which he declared to be "holy, and just, and good," all other believers are delivered from! Again: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Rom. xiii. 8, 9). Again: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Eph. vi. 1-3).

Nor is this the teaching of Paul only. James says—"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well" (James ii. 8); and John declares, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John iii. 4). The truth is, a more perfect law was impossible. "And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these" (Mark xii. 28-31). Surely this is Scripture proof enough that the law is still binding upon the people of God.

◀ (d.) We may ask from which of the Ten Commandments have we been relieved? Is it the first, and may we have other gods beside the God of the Bible? Is it the second, and may we sinlessly make to ourselves graven images, and

worship God with these? Is it the third, and may we blaspheme our Maker with impunity? Is it the fourth, and may we forget the Sabbath, and appropriate it to secular purposes? Is it the fifth, and may we disobey our parents, although even an apostle has taught us the contrary? Is it the sixth, and has murder become lawful under the benign influence of the Gospel? Is it the seventh, and has that Gospel which teaches us to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts" really given us licence to commit the worst sin of all? It cannot surely be the eighth, when Paul says, "Let him that stole steal no more." Nor can it be the ninth, which forbids us to bear false witness against our neighbour; nor the tenth, which enjoins us not to covet, when the whole Gospel is designed to deliver us chief of all from selfishness, one of the greatest of all sins. "Surely," says Andrew Fuller, "the things which are required by all these precepts must approve themselves to every man's conscience, unless it be perverted, and seared as with a hot iron." >

(c.) The experience of the believer accords with the perpetual obligation of the law. The believer feels his obligation to law all the more because he has believed in Christ. At no moment has he a deeper sense of the spirituality, comprehensiveness, and obligations of the law, than in the moment of believing. The righteousness, excellence, and binding obligation of the law, are acknowledged by such an one, altogether apart from its fearful sanctions. In that bloody cross, he reads his obligation to all its precepts, all the more impressively that Jesus has there met its claims. Indeed, it is the Christian alone whose conscience approves the law as "holy, and just, and good," and yet we are asked to believe that he is relieved from that to which his own conscience binds him! As soon divest him of conscience itself, as divest him of a sense of his obligation to the moral law.

The subject we have thus discussed is of more than ordinary interest at the present time. With our ever-extending mercantile transactions, our competition, speculation, adulteration, and hasting to be rich, no greater evil could befall us, than to give currency to the notion that the law

has been abolished as a rule of life. I am quite aware that the Brethren maintain that while believers are delivered from it, it remains in force to condemn the unbelieving. But are we not also aware, how that many who have least ground to conclude that they are in a state of grace, are the most ready so to conclude? In these days of spiritual revival, then, we care nothing for that revival, which leaves to its subjects the slightest ground for the secret conviction, that they may lie and cheat, and "work all uncleanness with greediness," without having violated the law of God.

VII.

THE LORD'S DAY NOT THE SABBATH.

THE Brethren having discarded the Ten Commandments, consistently deny the perpetual obligation of the fourth. The Lord's Day, they affirm, is not the Sabbath. "The *seventh* day is the Sabbath," says Dr Davis. "The first day of the week is another matter. As a matter of history, we know that the early disciples never confounded the two days" ("Help for Enquirers," p. 24).

"Everything in the past," says Mr Stanley, "is on the principle of obedience to a carnal commandment. Everything in the present springs from the power of a risen life. The one was strictly commanded, and legal obedience enforced on pain of death, to those who had engaged to keep the covenant of works. But to believers, as sons, there is no command at all to observe a Sabbath. Obedience in them is that of sonship" ("What is the First Day of the Week?" p. 18).

"Having said thus much as to the question of the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's Day," says Mr Mackintosh, "we shall suggest the following questions to the reader—namely, Where in the Word of God is the Sabbath said to be changed to the first day of the week? Where is there any repeal of the law as to the Sabbath? Where is the authority for altering the day or the mode of observing it? Where, in Scripture, have we such an expression as 'the Christian Sabbath?' Where is the Lord's Day ever called the Sabbath?" ("A Scriptural Inquiry," p. 8.)

"No one," says Mr Darby, "can find in the writings of

the New Testament a word that insists upon the moral obligation of the Sabbath. When the question arose between Jew and Gentile Christians as to what was to be maintained as obligatory, the Sabbath was not one of the things insisted upon" ("Brethren and their Reviewers," by J. N. D., 2d edit., p. 56).

It will be our object, then, to prove that the Lord's Day is the Sabbath.

I. The institution of the Sabbath was contemporaneous with the creation.

Could we have a plainer announcement than, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made?" (Gen. ii. 1-3.) The Passover was celebrated from the night in which the first-born were slain in Egypt; and the Lord's Supper was celebrated from the night in which our Lord was betrayed. Is it not reasonable to suppose, then, that the observance of the Sabbath commenced with the work which it celebrates? In the verses quoted, we have the institution of the Sabbath recorded in the very first chapter, not of the Jews' history, but of man's history. The theory that the Sabbath was a mere Jewish institution does not accord with the reason given, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth" (Exod. xx. 11); but the theory that it was an institution designed for the race perfectly accords with it, and therefore we accept of it as the more consistent and satisfactory. The mere fact that there is little trace of it previous to the formation of the Hebrew commonwealth, is by no means opposed to this view. What historian of the present day, would think it necessary, to dwell upon the fact of our weekly observance of the Lord's Day? From the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan down to the days of Jeremiah, we have no mention

of circumcision. Are we to infer from this fact, that the Jews had, during that period, abandoned their cherished rite? There is even no mention of the Sabbath in either the books of Joshua or Judges. Are we, then, to infer that for four hundred years after the giving of the law it was not observed?

But there are facts which show that the Sabbath, although imposed upon the Jews, did not originate with their polity. Why was there twice as much manna gathered upon the sixth day as upon any of the preceding, while none was to be found upon the seventh (Exod. xvi. 22-28)? Now this was previous to the giving of the law. "To-morrow," says Moses, "is the rest of the holy Sabbath." The Sabbath, then, did not originate with the giving of the law. And when it was imposed upon the Jews with new sanctions, it was enjoined, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Exod. xx. 8-11); that word *Remember* points to the past. We can only remember that of which we have previous knowledge. The form of expression is inconsistent with the idea that the ordinance was then instituted. The fact that the Jews' deliverance from Egypt is adduced as a motive to compliance, no more proves that they were the first to whom the Sabbath law was delivered, than that they were the first commanded to worship the true God and honour their parents, because that these duties were for the first time embodied in statutory law. The deliverance from Egypt was, doubtless, a reason for their observance of the Sabbath, but the creation of the world is assigned as another. Is it credible that nearly three thousand years should have passed away before its celebration? When, then, we find it so associated with the creation, we conclude that it was intended not for one, but for all people.

II. *The circumstances in which the Ten Commandments were delivered, prove that these are still binding.*

It is, however, with the fourth we have at present to do. Now, it occurs in a series of precepts, which are acknowledged by all to be moral in their nature, and hence of per-

petual obligation. We find it preceded by the command which forbids blasphemy, and followed by the command which enjoins filial piety. Is it consistent, then, with just ideas of the wisdom of God, to suppose that in such an epitome of moral duties, He should have inserted a command respecting an institution of a merely temporal and ceremonial nature? Its place indicates its moral character.

III. *Often as Christ speaks of the Sabbath, He never hints that it was to be abolished, but indicates, it was to continue.*

He announces that the Temple and its peculiar privileges were to be abolished (John iv. 21-23), but never hints that the Sabbath was to be abolished. On the contrary, He intimates that it was to continue. He exhorts His disciples to pray that their flight from Jerusalem might not be on the Sabbath. "The Sabbath," says He, "was made for man." Not for the Jews only, or for any one age or nation, but for man. How intimately associated was it with his creation! Man was made on the sixth day, and the day following was the first Sabbath. Now, if this be the law, when was it repealed? Did not Jesus declare, "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath," but how can He be lord of that which has ceased?

The objections brought against this view are untenable. It has been adduced as a proof that the Sabbath was a Jewish institution, that it was constituted a sign between God and His chosen people (Exod. xxxi. 13; Neh. ix. 13, 14). The rainbow, it may be replied, was also appointed by God for a sign between Him and man; but does that prove that it had no existence till it was so appointed? The fact, then, that the Sabbath was so appropriated, is as little proof that it only then began to be observed.

It has also been argued, that the manner in which Sabbaths and holidays are spoken of, shows that they are of obligation no longer (Gal. iv. 9, 10; Col. ii. 16). To cease from observing the Sabbath according to Jewish form must have been a hard task for a Jew; and to a convert from

heathenism it could have no charm: Paul therefore informs both that they were under no obligation in the matter. The seventh-day Sabbath was no longer binding. Passages such as Rom. xiv. 1-6, have solely reference to Jewish feast-days, which were, of course, no longer binding.

IV. At the resurrection of Christ, the Sabbath rest passed from the seventh to the first day of the week.

An institution may undergo certain modifications, and yet remain intact. There may be development without severance; hence the Sabbath may, river-like, glide through the dispensations, increasing in majesty while it remains organically the same. We find our Lord in an especial manner honouring the first day of the week, and special mention is made of the assemblies of the early Christians on this day (John xx. 19-26; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2). Nor can we fail to see a singular appropriateness in the sacred observance of the first day of the week. It was upon this day that Jesus by His resurrection fully attested His mission—gave proof that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father, and furnished the pledge of His people's redemption from the power of the grave. It was on the first day, and not on the seventh, all this was done. On the seventh day Jesus was in the grave. The first and not the seventh day, is therefore the day henceforth, appropriate as the day of the Church's gladness.

V. Notice objections to the change of the day.

(a.) Some say we have no express command for such a change. To have given a formal and absolute command on the subject would have been to rear a formidable barrier to the progress of the truth. Owing to the then existing state of society where the Gospel was preached, such a command could not have been enforced. But while there was no command, there was the example of our Lord and of His apostles, which must have been equally influential in directing the conduct of Christians.

(b.) Others say, how can the first day of the week be the Sabbath, seeing that it is the seventh and not the first which the fourth commandment enjoins to be kept sacred? While contending for the perpetual obligation of the fourth commandment, we by no means affirm that it claims the identical twenty-four hours, each succeeding week, down to the end of time. Even according to the fourth commandment, the Sabbath could not in all parts of the world be observed at the identical time. What is the seventh day in one part of the world, is not the seventh day in another. In view of this fact, there is left no room for debate as to the change of the day.

(c.) But why maintain the perpetual obligation of the fourth commandment, seeing that the Lord's Day is enforced by sanctions sufficiently influential to secure the obedience of His people? We reply, The fourth commandment has not been abolished, and Christ's people are still bound by the law as a rule of life. These are facts, which in our estimation are not to be lightly made of.

Now, on a review of what we have advanced, the argument seems complete for regarding the first day of the week as the Sabbath. If its institution was identical with the creation of man, and declared to be made for man, it was no mere Jewish institution. If it has its place in a code of laws, all strictly moral, and was declared by Christ to be an institution of which He is Lord, then it must continue throughout a dispensation in which He is made head over all things to His Church.

VIII.

PERFECTIONISM.

THE notion of the present perfection of saints is no novelty. The views of the Brethren, however, so far as we know, are peculiar to themselves; and no little difficulty will be encountered in learning what they really are, inasmuch as no one writer presents them in any degree of completeness. Only by a tedious perusal of a somewhat extensive literature, can the various parts of this notion be gathered up into a connected whole. It is the result of such a perusal I now present.

I. We shall first of all sketch the doctrine of Perfection, as exhibited in the writings of recognised leaders of the Brethren.

Dr Davis, of Aberdeen, in replying to an opponent, says —“ He confounds ‘sanctification in Christ,’ which is complete, with sanctification through the application of the Word of God, by the Spirit, which is progressive; a very common but ruinous mistake. Now, what is sanctification? . . . I read somewhere that sanctification means meetness for heaven, and that it must be a progressive work, if a man would see God; meaning that man’s nature has to be improved before he gets to heaven! All this is absolutely contradictory to God’s Word. ‘In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.’ ‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh.’ ‘They that are in the flesh cannot please God.’ ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.’ It

cannot be improved, it is always as bad as ever" ("Help for Enquirers," 2d edit., p. 27).

Mr Kelly, in his "Notes on Revelation" (p. 19), says—"He has washed us with His own blood once for all, and does not require so to wash us again. There is, however, the practical cleansing day by day—the washing of water by the Word."

"Strange how theologians muddle grace," says Mr Cheyne Brady. "Col. i. 12, they say, does not mean *hath MADE us meet for the inheritance*, but *is making us meet*, by progressive growth; and so the poor weak ones are thrown in on self to dissect their bowels of feeling, and see whether they are gradually becoming more fit in character and improvement for heaven, and when they cannot find the old heart in its fountain any purer, they are told, 'Oh, it will be cleansed somehow when you come to die, and at death you will be fitted for glory.' Away with such rubbish! See Neh. iv. 10, 'There is much rubbish, so that we are not able to build the wall.' Give thanks to the Father, who hath *now* made us meet *once for all*. It is not the Spirit's work that is here referred to, but the Father's estimate of the blood in placing us at once, and *once for all*, in a new creation. All believers, babes, young men, fathers, weak or strong, are alike *MADE MEET* by the Father in Jesus, sanctified by God the Father (1 Cor. i. 30; Jude 1), and as such are as meet for heaven now as ever they will be, even if they lived the most holy lives for fifty years after their spiritual birth" (*British Evangelist*, March 16, 1874).

Mr Mackintosh says—"Sanctification is not merely a progressive work wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, but that it is one result of our being linked to Christ, by faith, whereby we become partakers of all that He is. This is an immediate, a complete, and an eternal work." . . . "The Divine nature, the new man, the life of Christ in the believer cannot possibly sin; and it is the privilege of every believer so to walk as that nothing but the life of Christ may be seen. . . . People sometimes ask the question, 'Is it possible for a Christian to live without committing sin?' We reply, in the language of the inspired apostle, 'My little children,

these things write I unto you that ye sin not' (1 John ii. 1). And again, quoting the language of another inspired apostle, 'How shall we, that are dead to sin, *live* any longer therein?' (Rom. vi.)" ("Sanctification: What is It?" p. 10; "The Three Appearings," pp. 28, 29).

Mr Darby says—"There is no cleansing of the old nature, no mending of old Adam; *we have got the new nature that cannot sin*, the flesh is there; but *the new nature is a sinless nature.*" . . . "True it is that Christ is our life, and that *we have received a nature which in itself is sinless*, and that, looked at as born of God, we cannot sin, because we are born of God. It is a life holy in itself, as born of Him." . . . "Being crucified with Christ, condemnation is gone and the death has come. If I apply it practically, and honestly say I am dead, *how can Satan tempt a dead man?* And how can you say a dead man has lusts and a bad will? It is not true" ("Notes on 1 John," p. 49; "Addresses at Manchester," June 1873; "Righteousness of God," p. 23).

Dr Davis, however, speaks of "sanctification through the Word of God, by the Spirit, which is progressive;" and Mr Mackintosh says—"I should be more advanced in personal holiness in the year 1861 than I was in the year 1860. I should, through grace, be advancing, day by day, in practical holiness. But what, let me ask, is this? What, but the working out in me of that which was true of me in Christ, the very moment I believed? The basis on which the Holy Ghost carries on the *subjective* work in the believer, is the *objective* truth of his eternal completeness in Christ" ("Sanctification: What is It?" 2d edit., p. 19).

These latter statements have a very orthodox look about them. When Plymouthists are charged with holding perfectionism, they are in the custom of replying, "Why, we hold progressive sanctification as certainly as do any." What then does such language mean? Not the subduing of depravity—that, according to Brethrenism, cannot be. It can only then mean, the gradual assimilation of the believer to Christ, or such progress in holiness as pertains to saints in heaven itself.

The foregoing extracts may suffice for the present ; but, in dealing with the doctrine, we shall have immediate occasion to present its true character more fully to view, in the words of its advocates.

The doctrine of perfection then, as held by the Brethren, seems to be something like this: *1st*, They distinguish between sanctification by blood and sanctification by water. The former they ascribe to Christ, and the latter to the Word and Holy Spirit. *2d*, It is evident that they regard the former of these as sanctification proper—the only sanctification the believer need concern himself about, as it is that, in their estimation, which constitutes his meetness for heaven, and to which God has respect. *3d*, They hold that from the first moment of believing we are as perfect, respecting both kinds of sanctification, as we ever can be. Faith, they say, having united us to a perfect Saviour, we are in virtue of this union all that He is ; and the Holy Spirit having bestowed upon us a Divine nature, we are necessarily sinless. *4th*, That as Christ on the cross dealt not only with our sins but with our sin, *i.e.*, our depravity, and that as we were there crucified with Christ, we obtain on the first moment of believing, perfect deliverance not only from sins but from sin. *5th*, That the old man is incorrigibly bad, and cannot be improved ; but that it is the new man, or our Divine nature, which constitutes the Christian, and that this may, aided by the Word and Spirit, ever prosecute a course of spiritual advancement.

It will thus be seen that the Brethren differ from the great body of orthodox Christians in regarding sanctification as a vicarious or representative work, and not as a personal renewal of our nature, wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. They differ even from all those religious parties, who hold its perfect attainability in the present state. Theirs is not the perfection of the Methodists, who repudiate the possibility of perfectly obeying the law, and contend for perfection according to the requirements of the Gospel, which has been modified, as they allege, to meet man's altered circumstances, and at which we may arrive by repeated acts of piety and by a true and living faith. Nor is it the perfection of *the Oberlin*

School, the advocates of which contend for a perfection which implies a full and perfect discharge of our entire duty, or loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. Nor is it that phase of perfection, which is at the present time the subject of special interest, and which has for its exponent and advocate, Mr Pearsall Smith. That is nearly akin to the doctrine as propounded by the Methodists, Moravians, Quakers, and the Oberlin divines, Messrs Finney and Mahan—a phase of perfection, which has been controverted by Messrs Darby, Newton, and Kelly. So far as we know, the doctrine as held by the Brethren is peculiar to themselves—a perfection attended by sin, a nondescript perfection, a perfection which Scripture nowhere recognises or enjoins us to aim at; indeed, in the nature of things, it cannot be aimed at, if Brethrenism be true, inasmuch as it is attained in the first moment of believing—all that is left to us to do concerning it, being to discover that it is ours.

II. *Notice the consequences of this doctrine.*

It is only when the foregoing representations are viewed in connection with their sad results, that the real character of the doctrine can be fully apprehended.

(a.) The doctrine of perfection, as held by the Brethren, leads to non-confession of sin, and the exhibition of it, is accompanied by exhortations to non-praying for the pardon of sin, on the part of believers. "You never hear (or rarely ever) confession of sin in one of them," says Mr Whitfield, when speaking of the Brethren. "I myself have heard hundreds of them pray, hundreds and hundreds of times over, and yet I cannot recollect one single instance in which I ever heard confession of sin form any part of their prayers" ("Letter to Rev. Osmond Dobree, B.A.," p. 40). The reason of this is given by Dr Davis in his "Help for Enquirers." "Is confession of sins a thing for the public congregation?" he asks. "It is not." Mr Mackintosh says—"There is an immense moral distance between praying for forgiveness and confession of sin. Confession involves self-judgment; asking forgiveness may not, and in itself does

not. Confession is the mode in which conscience is to be kept free. The apostle, in 1 John i. 9, does not say if we pray for pardon, He is gracious and just to forgive us, but if we confess, He is faithful and just to forgive. Confession, therefore, is the Divine mode. A Christian, having erred in thought, word, or deed, might pray for pardon for days and months together, and not have any assurance from 1 John i. 9 that he was forgiven, whereas the moment he truly confesses his sin before God, it is a simple matter of faith to know that he is perfectly forgiven and perfectly cleansed" ("Notes on Leviticus," p. 78). If we are *perfectly forgiven*, that must have taken place in justification, so that our sins, whether past, present, or future, were then all pardoned; and that on renewed transgression, we have only to believe that it is so, to enjoy anew the peace of forgiveness.

No wonder, then, that in Brethren hymn-books we should find no confession of sin, or expression of contrite feeling; but, on the contrary, those hymns which express a sound theology and true Christian experience, sadly mutilated, in adaptation to these peculiar notions. Take the following as a specimen :

AUTHOR'S VERSION.

1 Just as I am—without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for
me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to
Thee—
O Lamb of God, I come!

4 Just as I am—poor, wretched,
blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the
mind,
Yea, all I need in Thee to find—
O Lamb of God, I come!

6 Just as I am—Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down,
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine
alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!

BRETHREN'S VERSION.

Just as I was—without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for
me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to
Thee—
O Lamb of God, *I came!*

Just as I was—poor, wretched,
blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the
mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, *I came!*

Just as I am—Thy love I own
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine
alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!

<p>7 Just as I am—of that free love, The breadth, length, depth, and height to prove, Here for a season, then above— O Lamb of God, I come!</p>	<p>Just as I am—of that free love, The breadth, depth, height, and length, to prove, Here for a season, then above— O Lamb of God, I come! —“<i>Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Little Flock.</i>”</p>
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Any one acquainted with Miss Elliot's justly-prized and beautiful hymn, will observe how the Brethren utterly *ignore* the second, third, and fifth stanzas. Nor is this wonderful. How could a *sinless* one sing of ridding the “soul of one dark blot?” or of “fightings and fears, within, without?” or say, “Thou *wilt* me pardon, cleanse, relieve?” Such language does not befit the lofty pretensions of Brethrenism!

In a little tiny tract, designed for gratuitous circulation, and therefore all the more dangerous, as likely to fall into the hands of persons, whose want of previous religious education unfits them for the detection of its most palatable but most pernicious error, Mr Mackintosh says—“One is frequently amazed at the language made use of in prayer, by those who really seem to have the root of the matter in them. To judge by their words you would naturally suppose they had never believed in the value of the blood of Christ. For instance, take such language as the following—‘We present our guilty, sin-stricken souls to Thee, O God, that Thou mayest wash them in the blood of Jesus.’ Is this the utterance of a purged worshipper? Surely not. A guilty sinner is not a purged worshipper. It may sound like humility, but it is the very opposite. True humility can only flow from our being in our right position before God” (“Once Purged,” pp. 1, 2).

Now why so reluctant to pray for pardon? Does it not indicate the opinion that sin in a believer, is something different from sin in an unbeliever, or no sin at all? But is it so? The fact is, that sin in a believer is in some of its aspects, more heinous than is sin, in the case of the un-renewed. It is sin in the light—it is sin in the knowledge of the awful holiness of God—it is sin in view of what Christ suffered for sin—it is sin against open profession,

against knowledge and experience, against an enlightened conscience—it is a crucifying of the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame ; and yet the pardon of it is not to be sought ! You may confess it—that pleases God ! but you may not pray for its pardon !

What a revolution must one undergo on passing within the sphere of Brethrenism. From offering the worship of a partially sanctified creature, he suddenly finds himself in the position of angelic purity. For although the Brethren pray, it is the adoration of perfected beings, needing no pardon, no cleansing. The entire devotional nomenclature of such an one must be changed. What comes to us more spontaneously when on our knees, than the language of humiliation, confession, and prayer for pardon ? but now these all pertain to the past—simple adoration becomes us !

Nor is this all. How apt are many to conclude prematurely, that they have believed in Christ and accepted Him as their Saviour. This notion then, in such cases, precludes the likelihood of discovering the fatal error. They at least surely need pardon, but this notion forbids them seeking it ; and hence they are denied the only means by which pardon can be obtained. If confession of sin, and prayer for its pardon, be the appointed means for securing remission, on what ground can pardon be expected in the neglect of these ? Such being the case, those who give heed to the doctrine in question, are placed in the most imminent jeopardy.

(*b.*) The tendency of this teaching, is also to turn away the mind from the work of practical sanctification. I do not mean to say, that personal holiness is altogether ignored by Brethren writers, but it is denied the prominence to which its importance entitles it ; and when noticed or admitted, it appears as if this was done with the view of getting rid of the difficulty which its denial would occasion, rather than to enforce it as a duty. Mr Mackintosh, speaking of the believer in his tract entitled “*Sanctification: What is It?*” says—“He can no more subdue a single lust than he could cancel the entire catalogue of his sins, work out a perfect righteousness, or raise the dead. ‘Christ is all and in all.’ What an immense relief it would be to thousands of ear-

nest, anxious, struggling souls to get a proper hold of Christ as their sanctification! How many are vainly endeavouring to work out a sanctification for themselves! They have come to Christ for righteousness after many fruitless efforts to get a righteousness of their own; but they are seeking after sanctification in a different way altogether. They have gotten 'righteousness without works,' but they imagine that they must get sanctification with works. They have gotten righteousness by faith, but they imagine they must get sanctification by effort. *God never does anything by halves. There is no such thing as a half justification. Neither is there such a thing as a half sanctification.* The idea of a member of the family of God, or of the body of Christ, wholly justified, but only half sanctified, is at once opposed to Scripture, and revolting to all the sensibilities of the Divine nature. . . . He was as completely sanctified, in God's view, the moment he became linked to Christ by faith, as he will be when he comes to bask in the sunlight of the Divine presence, and reflect back the concentrated beams of glory emanating from the throne of God and of the Lamb."

Here we have an entire misrepresentation of the nature of sanctification, and erroneous directions as to how we may obtain the relief which its possession affords. What distresses the believer is conscious depravity, and Mr Mackintosh says to one thus distressed—Look to Christ, He is your sanctification as certainly as He is your justification. "God never does anything by halves. There is no such thing as a half justification. Neither is there such a thing as a half sanctification. You are as completely sanctified in God's view the moment you became linked to Christ by faith as you will be when you come to bask in the sunlight of the Divine presence." In other words, to obtain necessary relief under the consciousness of depravity, you have but to be assured of the fact, that in the moment of believing, you became linked to a perfect Saviour.

Now, a grosser misrepresentation of the truth respecting sanctification, and a more fatal misdirection to a distressed inquirer, we could not conceive. While it is a blessed truth that God sees us in Christ, and accepts us in the Be-

loved, it is equally true that our personal character is naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do; and that as none but the holy can dwell with Him, our unholiness must distress us, so long as it remains. Sanctification is conformity to the will of God; it is a personal, inherent thing; and no assurance, that perfection is in Christ, and that on believing we become all that He is, can possibly give us the relief longed for. The truth is, the believer can never have perfect peace so long as evil affections maintain their sway. He may have comfort in the knowledge of the fact that sin can no more have dominion over him—that its power is broken. But perfect peace is incompatible with a sinful state. Enumerate the causes of your disquietude; what are they? Pride, hate, envy, lust, uncharitableness. Till these are driven out of the soul, there can be no such experience as that represented; and it is only by personal sanctification they are expelled. Our happiness depends on personal holiness more than it depends on heaven. We may be happy without getting to heaven, but we cannot be happy without being holy.

Sanctification in Scripture is presented under two distinct aspects: *first*, as a work wrought in us by the Holy Spirit; and, *second*, as a duty. And if, in speaking of the Divine purposes, we be warranted in regarding one object contemplated by God, as superior to another, we hesitate not to say it is personal holiness. Pardon is not salvation; deliverance from hell is not salvation; admission to heaven is not salvation; but the restored image of God is salvation. This is the only true perfection. The sum of Christian duty is to be holy—that is, to be like God in the possession of moral excellence. The greatest marvel of the first creation, was the making of man in the image of God, and the greatest marvel of the second creation, is the renewal of the soul in the image of Him that created him. Why has the grace of God appeared? That we might deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Why did Christ give Himself for us? That He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Why are there given unto us exceeding great and precious promises?

That we might be partakers of the Divine nature. Why is it that God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless us? To turn away every one from his iniquities.

But this work is progressively accomplished. "God never does anything by halves," says Mr Mackintosh. "There is no such thing as a half justification, neither is there such a thing as a half sanctification." Quite true. But He has different ways of accomplishing both. Justification is necessarily perfect at once—we cannot be both justified and condemned at one and the same time—there must be a moment when we pass from the one state to the other. It is different, however, with sanctification. Although there is a moment when a new heart is implanted in this depraved nature of ours, its full power is not developed at once; for reasons which God has not revealed, He is pleased to sanctify us progressively. Why God has so ordered it, we may not be able satisfactorily to determine. It may be that we have thus a better knowledge of the exceeding evil of sin—the inward conflict, teaching us more impressively its vileness; and a consequently higher appreciation of the exceeding mercy of God in providing deliverance from a state so deplorable. Now it is here, we fear, we detect the indifference with which the entire system of Brethrenism regards sin. In the view of its adherents, it need give us no concern; it was so dealt with by Christ, and believers are so united to Him that they are all that He is. How different from this was the experience of Paul—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Ah, say the Brethren, while he was no doubt in a Christian state, he had not yet attained to liberty; he had not yet learned all that Christ had done for him! Thus it is that the purpose of God is thwarted, and sin, instead of being viewed with abhorrence, is regarded as a far-off thing—long ago cancelled, blotted out, and no more either to come into God's remembrance or our own.

Nothing, surely, is better fitted to render the teaching of Scripture on the subject of sanctification of non-effect than the views with which we are dealing. Notwithstanding what Mr Mackintosh asserts as to the believer's inability

to "subdue a single lust," Scripture teaches that the cultivation of Christian character, is as certainly in our own hands as is the culture of the mind. No man becomes holier without making that his object; and no man becomes holier without the use of the appointed means. The Word of God is the grand instrumentality; and it is ours to use it. Here it is we learn what is to be hated, and what sought after. Do we not read?—"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren." "That ye put off the old man and put on the new man." "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "Let us lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us." "Labour (*Εργαξέσθε*, literally *work*) for the meat which endureth to everlasting life." (1 Pet. i. 22; Eph. iv. 22, 24; Phil. ii. 12; Rom. viii. 13; Heb. xii. 1; John vi. 27.) Now, we could not have asserted in stronger terms the doctrine of human, equally with Divine, agency, in the work of practical sanctification, than we have it asserted in these passages. The work of spiritual improvement is as certainly our own, as it is God's. To tell us, then, that the believer is as completely sanctified, in God's view, the moment he becomes linked to Christ by faith, as he will be when he comes to bask in the sunlight of the Divine presence, or that we are only to look for conformity to Christ when He appears the second time, is fitted greatly to mislead, and minister to the spiritual sloth, to which we are all so prone.

Mr Darby, in an address on *Perfection*, delivered at Manchester in 1873, says, "I know of no perfection presented to the Christian in Scripture but being like Christ; but it is Christ in glory. . . . We have borne the image of the earthly, and we shall have the image of the heavenly. But where? Is it down here? No. *Desiring conformity to Christ sounds and is very nice.* The renewed heart cannot but desire it, but He had no sin in Him. Have you no sin in you? You have, and therefore there is not the likeness to Christ in that condition; and *the*

only perfection that Scripture presents is conformity to Christ in the glory when He shall appear and we shall be like Him." So there can be no conformity to Christ "down here," as Mr Darby expresses it. Such conformity can only be found in glory! Because we have sin while in the body, we can have here no likeness to Him; and yet the Brethren contend for present perfection! That perfection which does not give present conformity to Christ, is surely of little esteem. Who but Christ realises the ideal of perfect human holiness? Higher than this we cannot attain to; lower than this ought never to satisfy us; and yet, according to Brethrenism, it is to be to us no pattern! How was it, then, that the Sanhedrim took knowledge of the disciples "that they had been with Jesus?" Was it not by their resemblance to Him? And are we not admonished, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you;" "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus;" "Be ye followers (*imitators*) of God, as dear children?" We had thought that admonitions such as these, were intended for our guidance in the present life.

We subscribe most cordially to the acute and discriminating observations of the late Dr John Duncan. "Arminianism and Antinomianism," says he, "have a common *πρῶτον ψεῦδος*. Antinomianism says that we (to use the words of Towne) are Christ-ed and God-ed. Arminianism says that half of the work is God's, and half is man's. Calvinism asserts that the whole is God's, and the whole is man's also. The second scheme robs God; the first fanaticises man; the third is the *juste milieu*, and stands midway between two ultras" (*Colloquia Peripatetica*).

(c.) A natural result of this depreciation of practical sanctification, is to deprive believers of the evidence which sanctification affords of their conversion.

What can be of greater moment to one alive to his spiritual condition, than to be able to determine the question of his saintship? Scripture plainly indicates the means of deciding this. Sanctification is presented in Scripture as the evidence of justification. "He that believeth on the

Son of God hath the witness in himself." "By faith, Abel obtained witness that he was righteous." It is they who "walk in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless," whom Scripture pronounces, righteous. "Follow me" is Christ's incessant command. How shall we know that we are possessed of the Spirit, but by the possession and exhibition of His fruits? "By their fruits ye shall know them." "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; and they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (1 John v. 10; Heb. xi. 4; Matt. iv. 19; Matt. vii. 20; Gal. v. 22-24.) All devout aspirations after God—all consciousness of the hatefulness of sin—all readiness to crucify the flesh, and perform Christian duty, must be from God. But if there be no mortifying of the flesh—no working out our salvation with fear and trembling—no conflict of faith—then both ourselves and others must be denied the evidence that our conversation is in heaven, and Christ denied the glory which may result from both.

(d.) It is easy to see how that views such as the foregoing, should lead to a depreciation of the Holy Spirit, and a consequent withholding of His gracious agency.

If it be the fact, that we are as perfectly prepared for heaven the moment we believe, as when we shall bask in the sunlight of the Divine presence—that we must await Christ's second coming to be like Him—what need is there for the Holy Spirit's work? Indeed, according to the representations of Brethren writers, there is, in the work of our sanctification, little or no place for His agency. "Scripture," says Mr Darby, in his 'Review of Smith's Holiness through Faith,' p. 19, "never speaks of cleansing the fountain, the very source of evil thoughts. It speaks of purifying the Gentile hearts by faith, in a practical sense, putting no difference between Jews and others; but never of cleansing the very source." Does David not pray, "Create in me a clean heart?" And did not God promise, "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh?" The Brethren actually teach there ought to be no

prayer *to* or *for* the Holy Spirit. Mr Kelly says—"In Ephesians, chapter vi., we read, 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit'—never *to* the Spirit. Prayer *to God* includes the Spirit with the Father and the Son. Praying *to the Spirit* would be unconsciously not to believe in the Spirit as dwelling in the Church and in the Christian—characteristic of those who confound the Church's estate with the Jewish position" ("Tenth Paper on the Holy Spirit").

Marvellous is it, that any one could have presented such a sentiment for the acceptance of the Brethren—a people reputed to be given to the study of the Word! Has God not promised?—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." In accordance with this promise, Peter, on the day of Pentecost, declared—"This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God), I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." Yea, the Spirit of God was already with the infant Church, or how could they pray as they did in that upper room? Was there not *there* praying for the Spirit as well as in the Spirit? But had it been a Plymouth Brethren assembly, there would have been no such prayer, and no such answer. Yet although the promise was then gloriously verified, it was not fully fulfilled. A more copious blessing from on high is still in reserve. For saith Jehovah: "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Now, so long as God's promises remain unfulfilled, it is

the duty of the Church to pray for what she has been taught to expect. The history of revivals animates us to persist in supplication for this the best of all blessings. Those remarkable seasons have been invariably preceded by persistent prayer for the Holy Spirit. "Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons ; and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them."

Then if we turn to the New Testament, how different do we find its teaching from that of the Brethren. Our Lord says—"If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" I suppose the Ephesian church possessed the Spirit in as large measure as ever did the Brethren, and yet Paul prayed on their behalf, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." Again: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." So much is the Spirit promised, that He is called "The Holy Spirit of promise," "The promise of the Father." (Isa. xlv. 3-5; Acts ii. 16, 17; Isa. lv. 10, 11, xlv. 11; Ezek. xxxvi. 37; Luke xi. 13; Eph. iii. 16; Rom. xv. 13.)

Now, as we are warranted to convert every promise of the Word into an argument in prayer, surely we may convert this promise specially into such an argument. We admit that the Spirit is now present on earth—that He is now in the Church, and in the hearts of God's people; but instead of this being a dissuasive to prayer for the Spirit, the effect is that the more we have of the Spirit, we shall ask the more.

The entire admonitions and promises of Scripture are a warrant to prayer for the Spirit. There is not a vile affection which we may not ask Him to mortify, not a need pertaining to our souls which we may not ask Him to supply. Are our hearts cold, and may we not seek that they be lit up with celestial fire? Is our faith weak, and may

we not pray Him to increase it? There is not a work ascribed to Him, or which He has promised to perform, but what is a legitimate subject of prayer. He it is who teaches us how to pray, helps our infirmities, makes supplications within us, takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us, sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, seals us as heirs of heaven, and becomes to us the earnest of our inheritance there. Nor is there a step taken in the path of spiritual progress, save by the strength which the Holy Spirit imparts; and if we are to pray for aught, it is surely for our daily needs. In reference to all these, each believer may say, "I will cry unto God most high, unto God who performeth all things for me." Brethren may exclude prayer to the Spirit from their hymn-books, and teach that prayer to Him is no part of Christian duty; but no power on earth can ever repress those earnest, anxious desires for the Spirit of God, which are ever ascending unbidden from the renewed heart, and all the more earnest and anxious, in proportion to the measure in which the Spirit is already possessed.

But more than this: Trinitarians are logically required to worship the Spirit equally with the Father and the Son. To abstain from worshipping the Spirit, by withholding from Him either prayer or praise, is to treat Him as inferior to both. Indeed, we are tempted to believe that the Brethren are not Trinitarians at all, but Dualists. What are we to understand by sentences such as the following, and the habitual ignoring of the Spirit as an object of worship?

"Christian worship always has for its central object, the Son of God revealing the Father, and necessarily supposes the special gift of the Holy Spirit, as the power in us of enjoying God, and of praising Him adequately." . . .

"There are occasions when the Holy Spirit directs the worship especially towards the Son, and there are occasions when the Father is more prominently before the assembly" (Kelly, "Papers on the Holy Spirit").

Here we are reminded of the worship of Father and Son, and of the agency of the Spirit in directing this worship; but never a word, be it observed, of worship of the Spirit!

A denominational hymn-book may be regarded as the devout expression of the belief and religious experience of those who use it. We have, then, before us, four hymn-books specially compiled for the use of the Brethren, but out of the eight hundred and thirteen hymns of which they consist, there is not one which expresses a sense of the need of the Spirit for the soul's purification—not one addressed to the Spirit in worship; indeed the Holy Spirit is only occasionally or incidentally alluded to. Nay, we find His work disparaged in terms like these:

*“Not water then, nor water now,
Has ever saved a soul;
Not Jewish rites, but Jesus' stripes,
Can make the wounded whole.”*

By *water*, we understand the Spirit's agency. Now, while it is true that the great work on which our salvation is based, was accomplished by Christ—and in our praises we ought ever to remember this fact—the work of the Spirit is equally essential to the actual accomplishment of our salvation. We cannot estimate His work too highly. It was great condescension in God the Father to approach the sinner, and say, “Come now, let us reason together;” it was great condescension in God the Son to assume our nature, and, in that nature, obey, suffer, and die; but neither exceeds the condescension of the Spirit in entering the polluted den of the sinner's heart. Again may we ejaculate: “Great is the mystery of godliness—God was manifest in the flesh.” We had almost said, what was Christ's incarnation to this? God the Son entered, it is true, a human body; but though human it was sinless; while God the Spirit enters a body corrupt and polluted! We speak of the love of the Father, and of the love of the Son; and we cannot speak or think of them more than we ought; but why forget the love of the Spirit? It was said by a poet, “I have written my heart in my book.” What then are all these subtle and gentle influences, by which the Word leads us captive, but the heart of the Spirit in contact with our own? and what is that loving temper and

disposition, which distinguishes every believer, but the Spirit's impression of His own loving nature? and what is the peace, joy, and comfort of the Christian, but the impartation of His own divine bliss? Now, in the literature of the Brethren, we fail to meet an adequate recognition of an agency so benign: and that religious movement justly chargeable with this neglect, even although it spring from a desire to exalt more highly the Redeemer himself, is to be condemned. As the Reformation from Popery was achieved chiefly by giving Christ His own place in the sinner's justification, so the reformation which the Church most of all needs in these days, is to be achieved by giving the Spirit His own place, in the work of the sinner's sanctification.

(*e.*) Nay, this notion not only depreciates the work of the Spirit, but the work of Christ himself. According to this theology, there is no seeking and saving the lost—no renewing of the soul in the image of Him that created him. If our old nature be irreclaimably bad, I ask for what was it Christ died? Not for the new nature surely—that requires neither pardon nor purity. What is the old nature but our unregenerated selves? And if He did not die that He might renew that, for what did He die? Whose sins are pardoned? Those of the old man or those of the new? Would that Brethren pondered the conclusions to which their views lead.

Nor is this all. The notion that after being justified there is to be no renewed application to the blood of Christ, treats it as a thing with which from this time henceforth we have no more to do. This is strikingly seen in the Brethren version of Toplady's famous hymn, "Rock of Ages." Let us look at the two versions when placed alongside of each other:

AUTHOR'S VERSION.

1 Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which
flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,—
Cleanse me from its guilt and
power.

BRETHREN'S VERSION.

1 Rock of Ages! cleft for me,
Grace hath hid me safe in Thee!
Where the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which
flowed,
Are of sin the double cure;
Cleansing from its guilt and
power.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>2 Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands.
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.</p> | <p>2 Not the labour of my hands
Could fulfil the Law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
Nought for sin could e'er atone—
But Thy blood, and Thine alone!</p> |
| <p>3 Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Vile, I to the Fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.</p> | <p>3 Found by Thee, before I sought,
Unto Thee, in mercy brought;
I have Thee for righteousness,—
From Thy fulness, grace for
grace:
Thou hast washed me in Thy
blood,
Made me live and live to God.</p> |
| <p>4 While I draw this fleeting
breath,
When mine eyes shall close in
death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment-
throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.</p> | <p>4 While I draw this fleeting
breath,
If mine eye-strings break in
death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
Still of Thee I'll sing alone:—
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
All my boast and joy's in Thee.</p> |

—“*Hymns for the Little Flock.*”

The whole hymn, it will be observed, in the author's version, expresses the *present* feeling of the believer; indeed, in Toplady's collected works it is designated, “A Prayer, Living and Dying;” hence the universality with which it is sung; but Brethren never sing the first or the third verses as the author penned them. These verses express the believer's *present* and *continued* dependence on the blood of Jesus, and this is what Brethren do not believe.

(*f.*) Another tendency of this doctrine is licentiousness. We regard the Brethren's notion of perfection as more dangerous in its tendency, than either that of the Methodists or of the Oberlin school. These still insist on the necessity of personal holiness, and the obligations of the moral law. Not so the Brethren. What is more in accordance with the love of sin, than to be taught not to look for holiness in ourselves—not to think of cleansing ourselves—never to expect the mortification of lust or the destruction of the old man—

that the old man is not the believer—that the believer, as Mr Paterson affirms, in his “Essay on the New Birth,” is “entitled to recognise the new nature only as *himself*?” Under the shade of such a notion, what is the corruption that will not luxuriate? Is it not fitted to beget indifference to those efforts with the view of subduing depravity which the Word of God enjoins, and to relieve the conscience of a sense of responsibility? The fact is, the old man as certainly as the new man, is essential to constitute our personality.

We do not affirm that the opinions in question will readily ensnare men really good. Men are often better than their principles, because other and better motives have the supremacy; but how soothing to the fears, and how flattering to ignorance and corruption, must be the influence of such teaching upon many? How many are there of the least established in religion, ready to be allured by every novelty, especially if it liberates from restraint. Tell such that all their sins are forgiven—past, present, and future—tell them that the law is no longer binding—tell them that no iniquity of which a believer is capable shall ever be charged against him, and get them to believe it—tell them that he is so united to Christ that His holiness has either actually or putatively become his own, and you have destroyed the safeguards of virtue, and set open the flood-gates of iniquity; for if the law be not binding, what has he to fear from sin? and what temptation to shrink from serving God, when assured that whatever may be our conduct, it will all be the same at last. Why, Tetzels Indulgences could scarcely tend to greater licentiousness than this. But let a man regard himself as simply *treated* as a righteous man because of the righteousness of Christ, believe that Christ’s inherent or active righteousness can alone pertain to himself, and that he, the believer, can only be blessed with its glorious fruits, that the only path to heaven is that of holy obedience; and then, but not till then, will he prosecute his pilgrimage safely and well.

That this is no exaggerated representation ‘is only too evident. The Rev. William Macloy of Ballymena, writing in the *Christian Banner* for August 1875, says—“One of

the most intelligent and respectable of the Plymouth Brethren in this neighbourhood went into a room a short time ago, where he found a Protestant engaged in drinking, and he began to lecture him upon the sin of drunkenness, but receiving an invitation to sit down and have a glass, he readily obeyed. And while the two friends were getting drunk together, the Plymouth Brother continued to lecture his companion on the sin he (the Protestant) was committing. The latter at length inquired if it was not as great a sin for his friend as it was for him. And the answer of the Plymouth Brother was, that it was no sin for him (the Plymouth Brother), because he was converted. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' A Protestant recently found a neighbour of his, who is a Plymouthist, cutting grass in a field on the Sabbath, and he began to upbraid him for his sin, but the answer he got was—It is no sin for me to do this on the Lord's Day, for I am a converted man; but it would be a sin for you to do it, because you are unconverted. We could give scores of well-authenticated instances of a similar kind, but these will suffice to show the practical workings of the doctrines of Plymouthism." This is surely anything but the perfection of saintship.

It will no doubt be objected, that there are inconsistent professors in all denominations. We, however, by no means charge the Brethren with inconsistency in this matter. The cases adduced are in perfect accordance with their teaching. In this respect, then, they have the advantage, if advantage it can be called.

(g.) Another tendency of this doctrine is the affectation of superior sanctity. We find in the most interesting letters of Lady Powerscourt, sad proofs of the effect of Brethrenism in leading us to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. Previous to her joining the Brethren, we meet such expressions as these—"I almost envy any one a strong feeling of sin." "I am quite weary of this heart—Satan's workshop—always going on, hammer, hammer, hammer, stealing every grace given, to manufacture into some adornment for the idol Self." "While trampling works under foot, should we not live as though to be saved by

works—boasting in our liberty, yet under law to Christ?" But when joined with the Brethren, instead of such expressions, we find the following—"The most wonderful thing to me in this town is one, I fear, too stale to you for me to indulge myself in dwelling on; namely, that I am of God, while most around are in the arms of the wicked one."

How different from all this is the piety begotten of Scripture truth. Job, David, Isaiah, Paul, Peter, and John, with all other Bible believers, esteemed themselves less than the least of all saints. No kind of affectation could be more offensive to Christian feeling, or good taste, than that which such views are fitted to gender—especially when thus embodied in sacred song—

" 'No condemnation!'—Oh, my soul,
 'Tis God that speaks the word—
 Perfect in comeliness art thou
 In Christ thy risen Lord."

III. *We proceed to notice more specifically, the erroneous interpretations of Scripture, on which these views are based.*

(a.) The Brethren maintain that, through the blood of Christ, we are in the first moment of believing, forgiven all our sins, once for all.

Mr Mackintosh, in his tract entitled "Once Purged," says, at p. 2—"What is the believer's right position? It is that of a perfectly purged worshipper—one having '*no more conscience of sins*'—one who is free from every charge of guilt and every breath of condemnation. Such is the true position of the believer." "If, therefore, I am 'once purged,' I have no need to be purged a second time. This is the plain doctrine of Hebrews x. 2. So also in John xiii. 10, we read, 'He that *is washed* needeth not, save to wash his feet, but *is clean* every whit.' 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from *all sin*.' If I am 'clean every whit' and 'cleansed from all sin,' do I need to be cleansed over again? Does God's work need to be repeated? Is the blood of Christ to be brought down to the level of the blood of bulls and goats? Is the believer never to know

what it is to have a perfectly purged conscience? Must he be ever asking to have his sins put away? God declares, in the most absolute manner, 'Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.' Should the believer, then, be perpetually asking God to forget what He says He will never remember?"

Again Mr Mackintosh says—"If I want a fresh sprinkling of blood, I am on Jewish ground; and not on the for-ever-perfected ground of the one offering of the body of Jesus Christ." And Mr Darby declares—"A continuous cleansing is absurd and unchristian. It is self-contradictory. Of repeated application of blood Scripture knows nothing" ("Cleansing by Water," p. 31).

The fact of which the apostle is treating (Heb. x. 2), and on the ground of which the writer of the first of these extracts bases his notion, is the perfection of the Christian atonement. The effect described being the effect of sacrifice, it is evident that a purged conscience has reference solely to conscious *guilt*, and not to conscious *pollution* of sin. When the apostle affirms, that had the sacrifices under the former dispensation been perfect, those who presented them, "should have no more conscience of sins," he by no means affirms, that they should have no more consciousness of sinning, no more need for repentance, confession of sin, and prayer for mercy; but that they would not again be burdened with a load of guilt, from which they could not obtain deliverance. A glance at the context makes the meaning obvious—If the Levitical sacrifices had been perfect, they would not have required repetition. "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year." They did not satisfy the conscience, because they were incapable of blotting out sin, hence their repetition. When, however, we are assured an atonement has been made which fully satisfies law and justice, the conscience is at rest.

The idea that *once purged*, means that there is to be no subsequent application to Christ for pardon, is refuted by the very texts quoted on its behalf, and also by others. What do these words mean—"The blood of Jesus Christ,

His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," but that there is to be application to the blood, as often as there is consciousness of sin? That the words refer to believers, is evident from the fact, that they are addressed to those who *walk in the light*. What, then, are we to understand by *cleanseth*? The reference is evidently to the effect of sacrifice. We read—"On that day [the day of atonement] shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." "And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him *clean*." (Lev. xvi. 30, xiv. 7.) The person thus sprinkled was clean, and free to enter the house of the Lord. The import of *cleanseth*, then, in the text before us, is to free from the imputation of moral defilement in the sight of God, and consequently from the guilt of sin. On looking to the Lamb of God, my legal relation to God is changed—my conscience is purged—it no more terrifies me with guilty fears, for I am assured that sin is expiated, and that for ever. Still, although assured of our justification, on the commission of new sin, distress is the result, from which we are only relieved by renewed application to the blood which first gave us peace. Such is evidently the doctrine of the text. Mark how the writer of this tract, transforms Scripture to suit his own purpose—"If I am cleansed from all sin," he says, "do I need to be cleansed over again?" The apostle does not say *cleansed*, but *cleanseth*. Nor is this an isolated instance of tampering with Scripture. In a tract recently published by R. M. Cameron, Edinburgh, the writer interpolates the passage thus—"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth (not is *cleansing*) from all sin." Now, this is not the import of the word *καθαρίζει*, for it is in the present tense, the force of which expresses an action in process of being performed. The text, then, most explicitly teaches a continued application to the blood of Jesus, upon the part of a believer. Be it Jewish or be it Christian ground, it is the only ground on which we can hope for mercy. The representation of the apostle perfectly accords with Christian experience—

“ Every moment, Lord, I need
The merits of Thy death.”

If this writer of tracts cannot read Greek, he might, at least, understand English.

The same fact is implied in that other text of John—“ If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ” (1 John ii. 1). Saints sin, and here is the refuge—Jesus Christ the righteous. There is not one way of pardon for the saint and another for the sinner. The hope of both is in the righteousness of Christ, the consummating act of which was His death. In the very next verse we read, “ And He is the propitiation of our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” In every instance, then, in which the believer betakes himself to Christ for pardon, his hope is founded solely on the blood of the cross. Although it is true our Advocate does not intercede for believers as if they had not been sprinkled with His blood, but rather intercedes for them as having been sprinkled and atoned for, that intercession derives all its efficacy from His blood. The tendency of such teaching, then, is not the clear presentation of this fact, but rather to produce the impression that after justification, there can be no more reference to, or dependence on, the blood of Jesus ; while the truth is, it is only by keeping our eye ever on the cross, and realising its true significance, we can really maintain a sense of pardon and communion with God. Why is the Lord’s Supper so frequently observed ? “ Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” These are the daily food on which the soul must subsist.

The other text quoted is equally fatal to the theory—“ He that is washed (*ὁ λελουμένος*) needeth not, save to wash (*νίψασθαι*) his feet ” (John xiii. 10). The quotation of this text, in such a connection, is surely a confounding of sanctification by blood with sanctification by water ! It is one of a class of texts in John’s gospel, in which Jesus speaks of spiritual and personal sanctification, accomplished by Divine agency, through the truth. A glance at them in their connection is sufficient to show this. In a verse immediately pre-

ceding that quoted, Jesus tells Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John xiii. 8). That Christ here refers to personal spiritual purification, and not to sacrificial cleansing, is obvious. The word *ὁ λελουμένος* is used only once in a sacrificial sense (Rev. i. 5), but often to express simple *washing* or *bathing*, and has reference to the whole body, while *νίψασθαι* (verse 10th) simply indicates partial washing, and is used to express the ceremonial ablutions of the Jews, which were symbolical of spiritual cleansing. The washing, then, of which Christ speaks in this passage, has no reference whatever to the relief afforded a *purged* conscience. He simply declares that the believer from the first is so sanctified, that he is "clean every whit," for when God justifies sinners He "puts His law in their inward parts, and writes it on their hearts"—the entire man is renewed. The second birth brings forth no monstrosities. The newborn soul is complete in all its parts. The change wrought does not resemble the process of sculpturing, now an eye and next an ear, now a little and then a little: every member is there, although only partially developed; conscience is purified, and is at peace—the will is purified and sweetly coincides with the will of God—the understanding is purified, and readily apprehends the truth—the affections are purified, and spontaneously go out to heavenly and holy objects. Hence it is, the Saviour declares concerning him of whom all this true, he is "clean every whit." Still, as in a country like Palestine, an invited guest, before setting out, having washed his whole body, on arrival at the place of entertainment, would require to wash his feet, so while the sinner is on believing put in possession of a new nature, there is such daily defilement by contact with evil, as to require renewed purification. That it was personal and spiritual sanctification Jesus referred to, is further evident from the words immediately added, "For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean" (verse 11th). Surely He did not mean to say that Judas had not been sacrificially sanctified, but that he was morally depraved. The text in question then, is altogether inappropriate to the point on behalf of which it is quoted; but it is not apart

from the subject. It disproves most effectually Brethren views of personal sanctification. Were it true that personal and practical sanctification, consists simply in advancement from one degree of excellence to another, the *washing of water* would be altogether inappropriate as an emblem of this fact. *Washing* implies the removal of defilement, but according to Brethren notions, cleansing from defilement is impossible.

In addition to these texts, we find in Scripture, instances of saints praying for pardon and obtaining it, and assurances that saints on repentance and confession shall be forgiven. David prayed, "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord." But more than this, he declares, "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Our Lord taught His disciples, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Paul prayed on behalf of his friend Onesiphorus, "The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day." What is mercy but pardon, and that on the Day of the Lord. In reference to believers, James declares, "If he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him;" and John says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." To like effect we have these remarkable words in the Old Testament, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Yea, Paul himself declares, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." What is mercy, but the pardon of sin; and yet the apostle teaches, that just as there will be times of need for grace, so will there be times of need, for mercy. Let it be observed that these words occur in an epistle addressed to believers, the very epistle in which Brethren writers find the text on which they chiefly found this notion. (Psalms xxv. 11, xxxii. 5; Matt. vi. 14; 2 Tim. i. 18; James v. 15; 1 John i. 9; 2 Chron. vii. 14; Heb. iv. 16.)

Now, if saints thus pray for the pardon of sin and obtain it, they can only present their plea and obtain the blessing asked, on the ground of Christ's shed blood; and yet we are forbidden by Brethren teachers to pray for forgiveness, and taught that no amount of iniquity committed subsequent to justification requires remission!

We are aware that it is common for theologians to affirm that, in justification, all sin—past, present, and future—is forgiven. It seems, however, a solecism to say that sins are forgiven before they are committed, forgiveness involving the remission of a penalty; but how can a penalty be remitted before it is incurred? As well speak of punishing a sin, as of pardoning it, before it is committed. Doubtless, it is a blessed truth, we are justified once for all, but it is a different thing to be forgiven once for all. God then brought us into a state of acceptance, but He did not then so pardon, that subsequent sins should be regarded as no sins, or as already forgiven.

There is, however, it may be observed, a marked difference between the prayers of a believer and of an unbeliever for pardon. The two stand to God in widely different relations. The former is an offending child; the latter is an unsubdued rebel. The believer's position, as respects future sins, is stated thus. Paul, when treating of justification, says—"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. iv. 6-8). That is, blessed is the man who, although a sinner, is regarded and treated as righteous. This then is all that is meant by the pardon of such sins; believers being delivered from condemnation, shall never have them imputed to them. Past sins are pardoned, and future sins shall not be imputed.

Such then being the position of the believer, there is ground on the commission of each new sin, not only to confess it, but to pray for its pardon. Both Scripture and the renewed conscience testify to this fact. When we sin, it is not possible, in the very nature of things, that we can main-

tain fellowship with God without a sense of pardon, and the only means of this, is confession and prayer. Even Brethren admit that confession is essential to restored fellowship, but why confession of the sin, and not prayer for its forgiveness? After all then, the language of confession and prayer for pardon, so freely condemned, is most becoming.

Saints, instead of doing as the writer of this tract recommends, continue to mourn their sinfulness to the last. Legh Richmond, in dying, said—"It is only by coming to Christ as a little child, and as for the first time, that I can get peace." Dr Bogue, in dying, said—"I am looking to that compassionate Saviour whose blood cleanseth from all sin." The Rev. Mr Sandeman, missionary to China, was asked, when dying, if he had any pain, to which he replied—"Since I knew Christ I have felt no pain but sin." The Rev. John Duncan, LL.D., said, when dying—"Pray for me; pray for pardon, and pray for purity, for I am still in the body." Was there ever a holier man than Samuel Rutherford? and yet he says—"I wish for no other heaven on this side of the last sea I must cross, than this service of Christ, to make my blackness, beauty—my deadness, life—my guiltiness, sanctification. I long much for that day when I will be holy. Oh, what spots are yet unwashed!" And yet, according to the writer of this tract, we are to be "amazed at the language made use of," and are told by Dr Davis and Mr Mackintosh, that while saints may confess their sins, they may not ask the forgiveness of them! But who save Brethren would not subscribe to these utterances as both natural and well grounded?

(*b.*) Brethren also maintain that through sanctification by the blood of Christ, we are as perfectly meet for heaven, in the first moment of believing, as we can ever be.

By far the ablest advocate of this view is Mr Benjamin W. Newton. He was connected with the early stages of the Brethren movement, but saw cause to withdraw from it; and although he has written some of the ablest exposures of Brethren heresy, he continues to hold the notion of immediate and perfect sanctification by the blood of the cross. A few sentences, from three papers from his pen on the subject, will

afford a view of the ground on which he bases this notion : “ ‘Sanctified,’ says the apostle, ‘by the offering of the body of Jesus once.’ This is the *tenth* verse of the *tenth* of Hebrews. In close connection therewith follows the *fourteenth* verse, ‘By one offering He hath perfected for ever (or in perpetuity, *εις το διηνεκες*) them that are sanctified,’ that is, them that are *so* sanctified—sanctified in the manner that the *tenth* verse had defined. And again, ‘Jesus, that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered without the gate.’ . . . On this ground we have a title to say, that although the uncleanness that is in us, and which still spreads more or less its defiling influence over our most holy things, does in itself merit wrath, yet, because of the blood once offered, it is not imputed unto us. As to this, we are ‘perfected in perpetuity (*εις το διηνεκες*), whereof,’ says the apostle, ‘the Holy Ghost, speaking in Jeremiah, is a witness to us, for after that He had said before.’ He also saith, ‘Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.’ . . . At present I will only observe on the error of the doctrine of those who teach that whilst our judicial title to heaven is founded on the work of Christ for us, yet that our *meetness* for heaven depends on our growth in grace, and in practical conformity to His will through the work of the Holy Ghost in us” (“Occasional Papers”).

What are we to understand by this? Either the infusion or the imputation of Christ’s holiness. The former is impossible—personal qualities being incommunicable. But if imputation be meant, then it is held that heaven may be entered without personal holiness. And that this is what is intended, would appear from the illustrations employed. In the papers already quoted, he says—“When we read of ‘the Temple sanctifying the gold,’ and ‘the altar sanctifying the gift,’ it is evident that sanctified thus used, expresses no mere negative condition, but *implies the positive ascription to the thing hallowed of a holiness corresponding to the holiness of that by which and unto which it was hallowed.* More, therefore, is expressed by ‘sanctified’ or ‘hallowed’ than is implied either by separation, purification, or dedication. . . . No one who beheld the priest of old encompassed

and covered over by a cloud of incense, would doubt that *the qualities and characteristics of that incense were regarded as ascribed to him*. If the incense was holy, and it was 'most holy,' the priest was regarded as being hallowed according to its holiness. How then can it be otherwise with those who are sanctified by the once offered sacrifice of Immanuel? As being cleansed and as being holy (*ἅγιοι*, Col. i.), they have a title to draw nigh even into the holiest of all. Christ hath become to them 'both righteousness and sanctification as well as redemption.' "

Mr Newton here concludes by quoting a favourite text (1 Cor. i. 30) with the Brethren, when advocating this notion. A little reflection on this text alone, might have shown him that his notion is unscriptural. That Christ is made unto us *sanctification* cannot be denied. He is so made, when the truth concerning Him is rendered effectual to that end. Holiness is a personal thing—a thing that must of necessity be in ourselves, although not produced by ourselves. Personal qualities are incommunicable, and hence Christ's holiness can in no way be imputed to us. We might as well contend that, because Christ is said to be made unto us *wisdom*, His wisdom is imputed to us. He is made unto us wisdom, when we are through Him made wise unto salvation. Or because He is said to be made unto us *redemption*, are we to understand, that even now, we have in Him complete redemption, although not yet fully delivered from our spiritual enemies, and the power of the grave? In the present life, our sanctification is no more perfect, than is our *wisdom*, or our *redemption*. All, then, that the apostle affirms in this text is, those who are in Christ possess these privileges. We obtain them through and by Him; but we can no more be holy by imputation, than we can be wise or redeemed by imputation.

Nor do the verses quoted by Mr Newton give countenance to his notion (Heb. x. 10, 14): "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The word *sanctified* is used in the Hebrews in a peculiar sense. It

signifies, to do that which is essential to a sinner's obtaining access to God. It was so under the law. A Jew who required atonement for any offence, was regarded as unholy, till the prescribed sacrifice had been made; but when this was done, his impurity was regarded as purged; hence to *atone* or *sanctify* are expressed by the same word. Sin is always regarded by God, as defilement, in both its aspects of guilt and pollution; and deliverance from sin is always regarded as cleansing. Now, with this principle in view, we are at no loss to determine the import which *ἀγιαζομένους* (*sanctified*) has in the passage before us. That the word has reference to sacrificial cleansing or purging from sin—that is, to pardon and acceptance, which was the grand design of sacrifice, and not to personal inherent purification—is evident from the fact that the apostle, in immediate connection, quotes the words: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." It may be further noticed that the parallel words *κεκαθαρμένους* (*purged*) in verse 2d of this chapter, and *καθαριεῖ* in verse 14th of the preceding chapter, are evidently used in the same sense as is *ἁγιασμένοι*. All these words we find used in the Septuagint, as equivalent to the Hebrew word *כִּפֶּה*, which signifies to *expiate* or *make atonement*—indeed, the perfect expiation of sin is throughout, the *Τελεείωσις* of the Hebrews. This will be apparent by reference to chapters vii. 11, 19, ix. 9, 13, 14, x. 1, 2. The sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual failed fully to expiate sin, but not so with the Gospel sacrifice. They were imperfect in themselves, and therefore imperfect in their effects. They left the conscience still oppressed with a sense of guilt; but the sacrifice of Christ so "purges" the conscience, as to give it perfect peace. But all this refers to our judicial standing before God, and not to personal sanctification. A perfected conscience, is a very different thing, from that holiness without which no man can see God. Now when it is said, "He hath perfected for ever (*Τετελείωκεν*) them that are sanctified," we are simply to understand, that He has fully expiated their sins, and brought them into a position of eternal security. What the Jewish sacrifices failed in, was not in

inability to confer personal holiness, but to deliver from guilt, save in those instances in which the offerer recognised them as the type of the better sacrifice. Here, then, is the superiority of Christ's sacrifice apparent. Grant that under the former dispensation, the offerer was sanctified, so, that he was permitted to join in public worship—for sin unexpiated excluded from fellowship with the covenant people—there was, nevertheless, no personal holiness thereby imparted—neither does Christ's sacrifice immediately or *per se* confer the sanctification we need. Undoubtedly it gives us the standing of worshippers. But to worship in heaven, and to worship on earth, are very different things. Here we may worship, while only partially sanctified. Even now, believers with all their imperfections, “are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

Neither Mr Newton nor Mr Mackintosh, we are aware, contend that Christ's sacrifice, gives us directly personal sanctification; but it is personal sanctification which is the great end of redemption, and without which we cannot enter heaven. Do we not read—“Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” How, then, can we have meetness for heaven by the simple offering of Christ's sacrifice for us? “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” By “the earnest of the Spirit,” we understand personal holiness; and so much does this partake of the nature of heaven, that it is designated “the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.” What did Adam lose when he sinned? Personal holiness. The possession of that enabled him to walk with God. Now, it is this which is requisite to Divine fellowship. A soul could no more enter heaven, without personal holiness, than it could enter heaven without personal existence. A perfection of state is one thing; a perfection of character is another. The former is attained at once; the latter is gradual. The former is the perfection

of the Hebrews ; but it is not meetness for heaven. Meetness for heaven is an adaptation and congruity in us, to heavenly things and heavenly exercises and enjoyments ; but this is not the perfection of the Hebrews. Sacrificial cleansing is not the meetness requisite for heaven. Sanctification by the Spirit alone removes the pollution of sin ; and this we know, nothing that defileth enters there. Is it then denied, that those of whom the apostle speaks as having been perfected for ever by Christ's one offering, are meet for heaven? Certainly not ; but their meetness arises not from the sanctification of Christ's sacrifice alone, but from that, in alliance with the personal holiness that is then conferred, and which is advanced from one degree to another, till at length the possessor arrives perfect before God in Sion.

But further, if the perfection alleged be attained on believing in Christ, how is it, that neither He nor His apostles have ever said so, especially as they frequently exhorted their hearers to aim at perfection? Paul commends "perfecting holiness in the fear of God;" but this we are to do by "cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." And in addressing believers, he declares that the grand object of his ministry was, that he might "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." (2 Cor. vii. 1; Col. i. 28.) If, then, the teaching of the Brethren be true, that every man, on believing, is perfect, how is it that Paul spoke of perfection as a thing yet to be attained?

More to the point still, our Lord himself enjoins perfection, but He never speaks so as to imply, that it was to be found in Him, in the way Brethren writers teach. "If thou wilt be perfect," He says, "go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow me." "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. xix. 21, v. 44, 45, 48). Throughout the Gospel of John, there are recorded numerous texts in

which He is represented as speaking of sanctification (John xiii. 1-11, xv. 1-3, xvii. 17), and this just before He was about to present His offering; but it is not sacrificial sanctification on which He insists. The sanctification which He taught is personal and spiritual.

Thus it is obvious that the perfection which our Lord and His apostles enjoin, is not a vicarious or imputed perfection, but a perfection of right feeling and right acting—a *personal* perfection, *inherent* in us, and yet derived from Him, and dependent on Him. God does not when He pardons us, make us what He abhors, whited sepulchres, fair without, but within full of all uncleanness. When He justifies, He makes us holy, by a holiness not our own, for it is the work of His Spirit, and yet our own, for it is wrought in us, by the agency of our own moral and intellectual faculties.

(c.) The Brethren also maintain, that our depravity, equally with our guilt, was so dealt with by Christ on the cross, that on being united to Him by faith, we are as perfectly sanctified as we are justified. Mr Kelly, in his seventh and tenth papers on the Holy Spirit, says—"There is another thing that troubles the awakened soul, and that is not his *sins* but his *sin*; not what he has done, but what he *is* before God. And it is here that the Christianity of the day stops short of the revealed truth of God, leaving people but half saved, without any clear understanding of what it is to be 'in Christ.' Not only has Jesus died for my sins and risen again for my justification, but *my old nature has been judged and condemned in Christ's death*. Supposing all my sins blotted out and forgiven, I am still in a state of things that is a misery to myself and a deep dishonour to God. With Christ crucified, I am entitled to account myself dead to sin (Rom. vi. 11). I am not called upon to die to sin. Indeed I could not do it."

The author of "Six Tracts for Believers," whose style is strongly suggestive of Mr Darby, says in the first of these, entitled "Dead with Christ"—"Have you ever paid attention to the truth contained in Rom. vi. 1-14? Justification through faith in the *blood* of Christ (Rom. iii. 19-26) is unspeakably important; but you find in these verses some-

thing even more than this, namely, that not only the sins of the believer are washed away through the blood of Christ, but that the whole 'body of sin,' the entire 'old man' (v. 6), 'the flesh' in which we 'were' (vii. 5), 'the body [of the sins] of the flesh' (Col. ii. 11), the 'I' as a child of Adam (Gal. ii. 20), the entire old nature in which we were as children of Adam, is 'crucified,' 'dead,' and 'buried' in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we have been by God buried together with Him—baptism being God's figure to us of the fact. It is more than Christ bearing our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. ii. 24); but He, being made *sin* (2 Cor. v. 21), and dealt with by God as that, put sin itself away from the believer, and 'destroyed the body of it;' so that the whole thing has met its curse, its judgment, its end, on the cross—and we are dead as belonging to the first Adam—and now alive in Christ risen from the dead. Can there be anything of sin, or of flesh, or of Adam, in the body of Christ? Our 'old man' having been crucified with Him, we have died to sin."

Mr Stanley, in his tract entitled "Perfection: Where is It? and What is It?" (pp. 38-40) says—"I now see clearly how there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus; for all has been condemned on the cross; both sins and sin. And if all has been condemned in Him, there is nothing to condemn that has not been so already. Oh, the deliverance this gives to the soul. As to the standing of the man in Christ it is absolutely perfect, there is nothing to condemn. What, not my sins? No, they have been perfectly judged, on the holy substitute, the Son of God. What, not sin in the flesh? No, it is judged too. Dead with Christ; risen with Christ; no condemnation in Christ. This is Christian perfection. So our sins and sin having been judged in Christ, God does not impute them to us."

Another of their writers says—"But seeing that Christ has been crucified *for* me is not the same thing as seeing that I have been crucified *with* Christ. The one aspect of the cross puts away what I have done. The other puts me, myself, away. Where the one only is seen, though sins are known to be gone, self remains, and remains to be the

plague of the Christian's life, and the more godly the person is, and the more lively the conscience, the more intolerable the company of 'self,' 'horrid self,' is felt to be. How often we hear dear believers in the Lord Jesus exclaim with agonised intensity, 'Oh! if I *could* only get rid of *myself*, how happy I should be.' 'It is not my sins that trouble me,' they add, 'they are all, I know, washed away out of God's sight, in the precious blood of Jesus, but it is this wretched "self" that I can't get rid of, and which makes me long to be in heaven where there will be no "self." Yes, 'self' is, some time or other, the trouble with most of us, and it was with the apostle Paul till he got to this, 'I myself through the law died unto the law that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me' (Gal. ii., Alford's Translation). . . . The Lord in His goodness give to all His people, to say, in simple faith, 'I have been crucified with Christ,' and they will find that, practically, 'horrid self' will not trouble them any more than the sins which they know are washed away in the precious blood of Christ" ("Crucified with Christ," by C. W.).

The texts, it will be observed, on which the Brethren chiefly rely for support to this notion are—"He hath made Him to be sin for us." "And for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." "I am crucified with Christ." What, then, do they understand by these texts? How is it, that they are not explicit upon this point? The texts are quoted, and their conclusion from them is appended, but generally no interpretation of them is given, as a ground for such conclusion. Now this reticence is to be regretted, and all the more, that Antinomians have been accustomed to base upon such texts, the most blasphemous notions respecting Christ. "Hast thou been an idolater," says Dr Crisp, "a blasphemer, a despiser of God's Word, a profaner of His name and ordinances, a thief, a liar, a drunkard? If thou hast part in Christ, all these transgressions of thine become actually the transgressions of Christ, and so cease to be thine, and thou ceasest to be a transgressor from the time that they were laid upon Christ to the last hour of thy life; so that now

thou art not an idolater, a persecutor, a thief, a liar, etc. ; thou art not a sinful person. Reckon whatever sin you commit when, as you have part in Christ, you are all that Christ was, and Christ is all that you were, as His" (Crisp's "Sermons," p. 270). Now, whatever we may think of these sentiments of the old Antinomians, there is a refreshing explicitness about the expression of them, compared with the *reticence* of their modern followers. Do Brethren, then, believe, that Christ was actually and personally a sinner? We have been informed, on what we consider good authority, that they do, although an explicit avowal of the belief would be too gross for even Brethren writers. Our suspicions upon the point are increased, we confess, by the peculiar teaching of Mr Darby respecting the non-atoning suffering of Christ, and to which we have already had occasion to refer.

Now, the Scripture writers most carefully guard against such a supposition. In immediate connection with the statement that He was made sin, it is declared, "who knew no sin." Again we are told He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." "He did no sin." And although it is said "He was numbered with transgressors," it is never said that "He was a transgressor." The texts quoted in support of this Brethren notion in no way give it countenance. Jesus was no doubt made sin, but He was made sin, in the same way that we were made righteous. The whole text runs thus: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him," *i.e.*, our sin was imputed to Him, or reckoned to His account, and He became answerable for it, that His righteousness might be imputed to us, or reckoned to our account, so that we might be dealt with as righteous.

We, too, hold as firmly as do the Brethren that sin, *i.e.*, depravity, equally with sins, was dealt with by Christ on the cross; but we deny that it was so dealt with, that by an act of faith we might have instant deliverance from its power. The supposition of the Brethren implies, that our unholy thoughts, feelings, words, acts, so became Christ's, that He had like experience to our own, and was guilty of like iniquity. The thought is abhorrent. No more can our sin

or depravity literally become Christ's, than can His inherent moral excellence, literally become ours. In the very nature of things, it is impossible. As our depravity is our own personal attribute, it is impossible it should ever become the personal attribute of another. To say that our sin, *i.e.*, our depravity, is imputed to Christ, or that our sinfulness is transferred to Him, so that He himself becomes personally sinful, is blasphemous and absurd.

How, then, has our sin, that is, our depravity, been dealt with on the cross? It has been dealt with in two ways. Its demerit has been atoned for. So far as there is demerit in sin (and a polluted nature is sin, and has demerit in it), Christ atoned for it. That there is such demerit in it apart from actual transgression, as to entail God's wrath and curse, is further evident from the fact, that infants die who have done neither good nor evil. If infants at their death go to heaven, it must be in virtue of Christ's atonement; but if they go there through Christ, would they not have gone to hell without Him? If so, not for actual sin, but for the demerit of sinfulness; hence the demerit of sinfulness must be atoned for, if we are to be saved; but this does not convey the conclusion which Brethren deduce from the fact that Christ has borne it; for while He atoned for the demerit of depravity, that was for justification. Again, sin itself has been so dealt with, that its power is broken; it is condemned or judged. In the death of Christ, God manifested His unconquerable aversion to it; and not only so, but dealt the stroke which destroyed its power. Its evil was made manifest, and the means provided for its complete destruction. Through the death of Christ, the way has been opened up for the Word and Spirit, so dealing with sin, that it shall no more have dominion over us. But the perfection of this destruction of sin, is not attained at once; it is a gradual process.

Again, as to the words of Paul, "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20), we remark: Crucifixion, with Paul is a favourite figure, used by him to express different truths; and it becomes us to determine by the context the sense in which it is used. Now the context, leaves no room for doubt, as to the sense in which it is used in this passage.

In the verse preceding, he says—"For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God," by which he means—The law has made its demand upon me, and I have met it in Christ on the cross, and now I am a dead man, so far as it is concerned. Crucifixion, then, in this verse has simple reference to Christ's atonement as a ground of justification, and has no reference to a like destruction of depravity in the soul. Legal demands were met on the cross, but personal depravity was not there destroyed, so as to relieve the believer of all concern respecting it. The sense in which it was there destroyed is given in Rom. vi. 6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." It was there destroyed, so that the law could no longer hold us in bondage to its power, and while providing the means for its ultimate extirpation, supplied the motive for an earnest use of those means. Thus the apostle speaks of it in both passages, as the great Gospel argument for "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." The love, incarnation, and death of the Son of God, had changed the whole current of his life. In the one text, he represents Christ as in him the source of spiritual life, so intimate was his union with the Saviour; and in the other, as the grand motive to holiness. How different, then, is Paul's way of looking at the fact of Christ's crucifixion, from that of the Brethren. He regarded this fact as a reason for the perpetual subjugation of indwelling depravity, that the body of sin might be destroyed, "that henceforth we should not serve sin;" while Brethren regard it as a means of getting rid of all concern respecting it, or putting "me myself away," "horrid self," as this writer expresses it! If, in the 7th chapter of the Romans, he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" in 1 Cor. ix. 27 he declares, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." How different Paul's method of dealing with "horrid self" from that of the Brethren. He does not say he got rid of himself. On the contrary, he

knew that his life work was to stand on his guard against self, for not only were there foes without, but a dangerous foe within. Had there been such an easy method of deliverance from "horrid self," Paul was as likely to know of it as either Mr Mackintosh or Dr Wallace.

In both these texts (Gal. ii. 20, Rom. vi. 6) literal death is not intended. One literally dead could not speak as in the first; nor could the language of the second be appropriately addressed to such. But in the case of one who has only representatively died, the language is not inappropriate in either instance. *Living* and *servng*, are inconsistent with the idea of death. Ah, says the writer, the old man is dead, and the new man lives and serves. Now Brethren should be the very last to contend for literal death pertaining to the old man. They contend, as we shall immediately see, that he is alive, and incorrigibly bad right on to the end. If he is, all this talk about "half salvation," "sin itself put away from the believer," "deliverance thus given to the soul," "getting rid of horrid self," is gross absurdity and palpable contradiction.

Let us now look at the manner in which the Brethren deal with this fact.

(*d.*) The doctrine of the "old man" and "the new." Brethren speak of depravity and grace in the believer, as if they were two distinct personalities—the latter of which alone constitutes the Christian. They also represent the *old nature* as irreclaimably bad, all through life to its close; and the *new nature* incapable of sin because it is Divine. Mr Mackintosh says—"The Word of God never teaches us that the Holy Ghost has for His object the improvement, either gradual or otherwise, of our old nature, which is always treated as a hopelessly ruined thing. In Christians, the old nature is as bad as ever, and will be the same till the end; the more we study the entire Scriptures, the more clearly shall we see that the flesh is unmendable, and the precept 'put off the old man,' would never have been delivered to us, if the object of the Holy Ghost was the sanctification of the old man" ("What is Sanctification?" pp. 1, 11). Again, in his tract on "Regeneration" (p. 5), he says—"The

fact is, the more closely we examine the Word of God, the more we shall see that it is not the Divine method to improve a fallen, ruined thing, but to bring in something entirely new. It is precisely thus in reference to man's natural condition. God is not seeking to improve it. The Gospel does not propose as its object, to better man's nature, but to give him a new one. It seeks not to put a new piece upon an old garment, but to impart a new garment altogether."

Mr Paterson, in his work on "The New Birth" (p. 28), says—"God does not change or remove or ameliorate the old nature in any degree in imparting a new, and this new nature is quite distinct from the old, never amalgamates with it, never improves it, and never sets it aside; both natures remain to the very end, until the Christian is changed at the Lord's coming, or till death. Yet he is entitled to recognise only the new nature as *himself*, and the old as an enemy to be overcome."

Mr Darby says—"There is no cleansing of the old nature, no mending of old Adam; we have got the new nature that cannot sin; the flesh is there, but the new nature is a sinless nature" ("Notes on 1 John," p. 49). Is there then to be no release here from the captivity of sin? Must we make every avenue of life doleful with the lamentation, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Like Sinbad's old man, there he clings to us day by day, tyrannising over us, on to the end of our weary journey. Sad prospect this for the believer! We had thought "Sin shall not have dominion over you," was rather his privileged condition.

Now, while we believe that there can be "no improvement," "no cleansing of the old nature," "no mending of old Adam," as moral evil must ever remain essentially the same, and ask as earnestly as did Dr John Duncan, "Will the *σάρξ* lie down and be slaughtered like a lamb? no, it will resist to the very last; it will only yield when grace has conquered it," still in view of such admission, we hold that the entire process of sanctification, carried on by the joint agency of the Word, Spirit, and believer, is a changing or removing, an ameliorating or setting aside of the

old nature, and that in the end grace will conquer it. What is crucifying the flesh, what is mortifying the deeds of the body, what is cutting off the right hand, and plucking out the right eye, but the accomplishment of this? So it is not true, as Mr Paterson expresses it, that, "God does not change or remove or ameliorate the old nature, and never sets it aside."

How different from all this is Paul's doctrine. In Rom. vi. 6 we read—"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." The apostle designates the desires and propensities which pertain to us in our unrenewed state, *the old man*, in contradistinction to the *new man*, *the new creation*, or our regenerated selves, and tells us our old man *is crucified*, because the effect of Christ's death, is the death of our evil affections. That this is what is meant, is evident from the context, "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin;" or as Doddridge expresses it, "made void, debilitated, enervated, disannulled, or deposed." Yet according to Brethrenism this is impossible—it is ever the same, and continues in full vigour to the end. Now if this be true, he that is a drunkard or a blasphemer, or a thief, or a murderer, before believing, continues a drunkard, a blasphemer, a thief, or a murderer, to the end, his faith and regeneration notwithstanding. According to this view, the very opposite of perfect saintship is attained here, for as growth pertains to depravity as certainly as to grace, the believer would at the end of his course, be less fit for heaven than at any previous part of it. But Scripture representations of evangelical sanctification, are directly in opposition to this. It uniformly represents the destruction of sin in the soul—the diminution of its power, and the growth of holiness, as inseparable and simultaneous.

Brethren in fact represent the two natures of depravity and grace, as not two opposing principles, but as two distinct personalities. The new man, according to their view, is sinless, for it is Divine, and the old man is irreclaimably bad; hence when sin is committed in such a case, it is the doing of the old man, for which the believer is in no way respon-

sible, the new man alone being *himself*, as Mr Paterson expresses it. Suppose then that the old man in a Plymouthist, should be guilty of any or all of the crimes in the calendar, and should be hung for his misdeeds, what in that case would become of the Plymouthist? The believer, although having in him the new man and the old man, remains one person, and to him as a person, responsibility still attaches. Every believer feels and knows, that he is responsible for what he does ; and to think otherwise, is to be possessed of a hallucination, which cannot abide the test of either Scripture or common sense. Regeneration consists not in the bestowal of any new faculty or affection, but in the giving of a holy bias to those faculties and affections which sin had perverted. Though the regenerated man is a new creature, he is the same man he was before ; in no sense does he lose his identity. It is the same man who now delights in holiness, who before hated it.

Equally misleading are the other statements of Mr Darby and Mr Mackintosh. "The new nature is a sinless nature," says Mr Darby, while Mr Mackintosh asserts, "The Divine nature, the new man, the life of Christ in the believer, cannot possibly sin." We ask, however, is he sinless in whom the new nature or the life of Christ dwells? does he commit no sin? If the reply be in the affirmative, it directly contradicts an apostle, and we accept the opinion of such an one, in preference to that of either or both. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." Both, however, are too modest and too well instructed, to insinuate that John speaks as a heretic, and they as apostles. Nevertheless, this continued ringing of the changes on the *old man* and the *new*, and telling us, that "the new nature cannot sin," is nothing but a mystifying of a vital doctrine, unworthy of any professed teacher of Christian truth. After all this, we have Mr Mackintosh contradicting both himself and Mr Paterson, by recognising the personal responsibility of the sinner, and admitting that he *may* sin. In a little tractate, "Sin in the Flesh and Sin on the Conscience," we find him making a distinction between them. Sin on the conscience has been so purged by Christ's blood that it can no more

trouble us, but sin in the flesh *may*. "The same word which tells us we have no sin *on* us, tells us, with equal force and clearness, that we have sin *in* us. 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' Every one who has 'truth' in him, will know that he has '*sin*' in him, likewise; for truth reveals everything as it is. What, then, are we to do? It is our privilege so to walk in the power of the new nature (*i.e.*, the Holy Ghost), that the '*sin*' which dwells in us may not manifest itself in the form of '*sins*.' The Christian's position is one of victory and liberty." Is it not marvellous how lightly indwelling sin is thus spoken of? Doubtless, under such teaching, there are those who flatter themselves, that they are so walking, that indwelling sin has in them no manifestation in the form of sins.

(*c.*) Union with Christ. How, then, do the Brethren reconcile the foregoing palpable contradiction, that we are so dead with Christ that sin need no more trouble us, and that our old man is alive and incorrigibly bad? We fail, we confess, to discover how both can be true. Their error is further supported by wrong views of union with Christ. When they make the former of these statements, they are looking solely at the believer in Christ, and this they hold, is the only aspect in which he appears before God. Depravity still cleaves to him, but God only sees him in Christ, and deals with him in Christ. Mr Mackintosh thus expresses himself—"We are more disposed to be occupied in telling God what we are in ourselves, than to allow Him to tell us what we are in Christ. In other words, we are more taken up with our own self-consciousness, than with God's revelation of Himself. . . . Sin is there in all its native vileness, but the believer is *dead* to it. How? He died in Christ. By nature he was dead *in* sin. By grace he is dead *to* it. What claim can anything or any one have upon a dead man? None whatever. Christ 'died unto sin once,' and the believer died in Him" ("Sin in the Flesh and Sin on the Conscience").

In another of his publications, Mr Mackintosh says—"Being linked with Christ, we become partakers of all that He is," and "this is an immediate, a complete, and an eternal work." Now, while union with Christ is a precious

fact, we must not misinterpret it to His dishonour, and the detriment of our own souls. Although He is perfect to whom we are united, that in no sense confers on us the perfection of moral excellence. However intimate, we must remember that it is not a union of essence, nor a personal, but a legal and spiritual union. Legally we are by faith so united to Christ, that we are treated as righteous on the ground of His righteousness; but that we are in the same way regarded as sinless, or undepraved, as we have already shown, is not true. Viewed spiritually, our union with Him is such, that we become partakers of His grace. Not that in either case there is such oneness as implies a transference of moral character, such a transference being in the nature of things impossible; or such a union as to identify us with the excellence of Him to whom we are united. Take even the most expressive of all the figures employed to express this union—that of the human body and the relation of its several parts to the head (1 Cor. xii. 27; Eph. v. 30); and what does it mean, but that as they derive from it their vitality, so believers derive from Christ, grace in all its variety, plenitude, and suitableness? “Of His fulness have all we received” (John i. 16).

No perfection in Christ, can vouchsafe the comfort requisite, in the absence of personal holiness. There is, however, in the writings of the Brethren, a confounding of what we are in Christ representatively, with what we are personally. Representatively, the believer is perfect in Christ. This is his glorious privilege; but personally he is sinful; and what we have to complain of is, that the fact of this union is constantly represented by Brethren writers, as if we could have all the complacency in it, which can only accompany personal holiness. To shake off the sense of humiliation, the dissatisfaction consequent on the consciousness of depravity, by a simple recognition of the fact of our union with a perfect Saviour, is vain. In proportion to the imperfection of our personal sanctification, must be the believer's dissatisfaction, and it is the prospect of only getting rid of this remaining depravity at death, which more than ought else reconciles him to its approach.

IX.

THE SECRET RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS.

WHILE the Brethren are generally, if not universally, premillennialists, they must be peculiar even in this belief, and hence their notion of the secret rapture of the saints (see "The Rapture of the Saints," by J. N. Darby; "Papers on the Lord's Coming," by C. H. Mackintosh; "What God hath said of the Second Coming of Christ," by C. Stanley).

Rather than occupy space with quotations from the publications of the Brethren on the subject, I prefer to give a few sentences from a small work by Dr Tregelles—one who had the best means of knowing their views, owing to his many years' association with them, and intimacy with their leaders, and who expresses himself with a clearness which is quite refreshing, after having pursued the most hazy labyrinth which it has ever been our lot to pass through.

"The doctrine held and taught by many is," says Dr Tregelles, "that believers are concerned not with a public and manifested coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory—not with His appearing when every eye shall see Him, and when He shall sever the wicked from among the just, but with a secret or private coming, when the dead saints shall be secretly raised, the living changed, and both caught up to meet the Lord in the air; that the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, do not indicate anything of publicity, for the ear of faith alone shall hear them; that the Church shall meet the Lord, not at His visible coming, but in order to remain with Him, at least for years, before His manifested advent;

that after *this* secret coming there shall be in the earth a full power of evil put forth amongst both Jews and Gentiles ; that there shall be a time of unequalled tribulation and great spiritual perils (with which the Church has nothing to do), and that this condition of things shall end by the *manifest* coming of the Lord. . . . In 1863 I heard it publicly and definitely maintained that the secret coming is the *second* coming promised in Scripture, and that the manifest appearing of our Lord is His *third* coming. Many seem to think this who do not say so in definite words. But a third coming is something very different from His coming again. . . . When proofs have been asked for the doctrine of the secret advent and secret removal of the Church, certain supposed analogies have been sometimes presented instead, which were thought to bear on the subject. But as analogy is a resemblance of relations, it is needful that the facts should be first known and demonstrated, instead of their being merely supposed. It has been asked if the crossing of Jordan by the children of Israel was not a thing known to them only at the time and not heard of by the Canaanites till afterwards? Whether Elijah is not to be taken as a type of the Church, and Elisha as that of 'the Jewish remnant?' Whether the ascension of the Lord from the Mount of Olives, seen by the disciples only, does not intimate a second advent only to be known by the Church? . . . Some, indeed, ask, 'Have you not overlooked how plainly the secret rapture of the Church is set forth in the Canticles?' But is it intended that we should interpret the New Testament by the Canticles? Should we not rather let the full light of the Christian revelation shine on the ancient Scriptures? Of one thing we may be certain, that nothing in the Canticles *can* contradict our Lord's words, and His promise that His elect shall be gathered unto Him by His angels, at His manifest coming with power and great glory. Whatever may be the import of passages in the Canticles which speak of secrecy ('the secret places of the stairs,' etc.), or of the withdrawal of the bride from any particular scene ('Come with me from Lebanon,' etc.), we ought to be so established

in New Testament truth, as not to imagine that these can set forth a secret rapture, unless such a rapture had been definitely taught in the Word, instead of its being contradicted. To learn the distinct hope of the Lord's coming is a far simpler thing than it is to interpret the Canticles" ("The Hope of Christ's Second Coming," by S. P. Tregelles, LL.D., pp. 25, 26, 27, 30, 54, 55).

Now, it is very singular, if anything like this awaits saints, that the Scriptures should maintain total silence upon the subject. There is, perhaps, no event yet future, so clearly and fully revealed as Christ's second coming. Prophecy, in this instance, discards its usual obscurity, and assumes the definiteness of historical narrative. We find in Scripture not merely incidental allusion made to it, but the fact announced in language singularly free from ambiguity. It is therefore all the more remarkable that any devout students of Scripture, should fail to apprehend the nature and significance of the event, and also, all the more easy to detect and expose their error.

I. *Advert to the various arguments and proofs adduced on behalf of the secret rapture of the saints.*

(a.) The Scripture text on which the Brethren seem chiefly to rely is 1 Thess. iv. 16-18. In this, however, we deem them singularly unfortunate. Let us look at the passage. Is a *shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God*, consistent with the idea of secrecy? Observe, too, the region in which this glorious manifestation is made. It is in "the air,"—that is, in the atmosphere immediately overhead. In the very nature of things, this event cannot be secret. What does it comprehend? The resurrection of saints from the days of Abel, down to the last who had died in the Lord, the transformation of all the saints who shall then be living on the earth, and their ascension to meet Him. The idea of an event so stupendous, being in any sense secret, is absurd. Even were it possible to call dead saints unobserved from their graves, how is it possible to call living saints, to meet the Lord in the air unobserved?

Shall saints and sinners not be interlinked then as now, in all the various occupations and relationships of life? husbands united with ungodly wives, and sainted parents mourning the unrenewal of their children;—masters and servants, although associated in worldly business, wide as the poles asunder in their relation to God? Are we to believe, then, the possibility of His people being transformed into His image, and caught up into the air, and those left behind knowing nothing at all about it? The credulity of the Brethren may be adequate to such a consummation, but in this respect they stand alone.

(b.) Rev. xx. 4-6, is another text adduced on its behalf. Mr Mackintosh quotes it in proof that a thousand years shall intervene between the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked ("Papers on the Lord's Coming," p. 52). We hold that it has no reference to the resurrection of the dead at all. They are not saints in general, but martyrs, of whom it speaks, or those "who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus." And then it is the *souls*, not the bodies, of the martyrs, which are seen alive. Doubtless, *soul* does sometimes in Scripture mean the whole person; but there is no instance in which it is so used in relation to the departed. It is the *souls of them that were beheaded* whom John saw, clearly intimating that he refers to their spiritual and not to their corporeal nature. What, then, is the import of the passage? It is evidently highly figurative, and foretells, we conceive, not a literal resurrection of the martyrs, but a period of religious revival—a period in which believers shall be remarkably endowed with the spirit of the martyrs. Nor is this a forced interpretation. We have a spiritual resurrection, or revival of the house of Israel predicted in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones; and it was predicted of John that he would appear "in the spirit and power of Elias" (Ezek. xxxvii. 11-14; Luke i. 17). "The heretics Huss and Jerome," said Pope Adrian, "are now alive in the person of Martin Luther." It is declared of the martyrs that "they lived and reigned with Christ." That is, saints who are so distinguished in that privileged period, shall share with Christ its glory. Then, as to "the rest of the

dead not living till the thousand years are finished," we understand, that at the close of the millennium, men possessed of an opposite spirit shall arise. Interpreting, then, Scripture by Scripture, we regard the text quoted, as affording no proof whatever, that saints will be raised from their graves a thousand years before the resurrection of the wicked.

(c.) Brethren attempt to establish a distinction between Christ's *coming* (παρουσία) and His *appearing* (ἐπιφάνεια). According to them, we are to *wait, watch, and look* for His *coming*, but not for His *appearing*, which is a Jewish hope. Mr Newton, who was associated with the Brethren for many years, and who may be regarded as well acquainted with their views, says—"It is asserted that the Scripture marks as two distinct events, the coming (παρουσία—*parousia*) of the Lord, and His Epiphany or manifestation. The Scripture, it is said, recognises believers as remaining on the earth until 'the coming' (παρουσία) of the Lord, and we are commanded to wait for 'His coming;' but for His Epiphany (say they) we are not to wait, because we are to be removed at His coming, which is long to precede His Epiphany. Such is the statement. It is a very intelligible statement. But is it true?" ("The Second Advent of our Lord," by B. W. Newton, pp. 4, 5.)

Now, will an examination of Scripture, warrant the distinction which Brethren attempt to establish, between the *coming* of Christ, and His *revelation*, His *appearing*, the *manifestation* of His presence, or the *day* of the Lord? It will not. When the disciples asked, "What shall be the sign of Thy *coming*, and of the end of the world?" He replied, "For as the *lightning* cometh out of the east, and *shineth* even unto the west, so shall also *the coming* of the Son of Man be" (Matt. xxiv. 3, 27). Here *coming* and *appearing*, *revelation*, or *manifestation*, are identified, and are represented as the very opposite of secret. Again, in 1 Cor. i. 7, we find the Corinthians represented as "waiting for the *revelation* (ἀποκάλυψιν) of our Lord Jesus Christ," while, in 2 Tim. iv. 8, Titus ii. 13, and 1 Pet. i. 3-7, believers are represented as *loving* Christ's *appearing*, *looking* and *hoping*

for it. Paul, too, thus exhorts believers: "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing (*ἐπιφάνειας*) of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. vi. 14, 15). It cannot, then, be true that, previous to *His appearing*, He has caught away all His saints to be with Him. If He had done so, how could they be *loving* His appearing, *waiting*, *looking*, and *hoping* for it, or *keeping* the apostolic commandment in the prospect of it? Hence it is not the fact that His *coming* is distinct from His *appearing*, and precedes it; or that saints are caught away to be with Him at some secret advent, previous to His open manifestation, or *day* of the Lord.

(d.) It is asserted that the chief object of this secret coming, is the removal of the Church from evils, which are to come upon the earth in the last days. That there shall be in those days unequalled tribulations is fully admitted. Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, comforts them with the assurance, that God would in the last days give rest from trouble, by the coming of Christ to judgment (2 Thess. i. 1-10). Evil days are foretold, and relief promised. When, then, is this relief to be vouchsafed? Is it to be granted *before* the Lord comes, or before He is *manifested*? No. It is "WHEN the Lord *shall be revealed* from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance." The evil predicted is to be actually endured, and that before His *revelation*. Nor is this at variance with Christ's ordinary dealings with His Church: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33); and did not apostles teach, "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God?" (Acts xiv. 22.) Instead, then, of Christ removing His people by a secret coming, that they may escape tribulation, it more accords with His purpose of grace that they should so far suffer, before deliverance is afforded. Still He is mindful of them, "for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened."

II. *We now proceed to prove, that the second advent of Christ, shall be the final consummation of this world's affairs; that till then, righteous and wicked shall be associated on the earth; that the coming, appearing, revelation, and day of the Lord are identical; that it shall be public, and not secret; and that He shall raise from their graves righteous and wicked, and pronounce judgment upon both, simultaneously or in immediate succession.*

(a.) It is declared, "And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts iii. 20, 21). This was announced a few days after Christ's ascension. What was it, then, which the prophets foretold? The universal triumph of the Gospel, and the overthrow of the nations opposed to it; and Peter declares, that the heavens must retain Christ till this is accomplished. Not a moment sooner can He come. But were Antichrist to arise with new power after the secret removal of the Church, and Israel for a period to be subjected to unequalled tribulation, the coming of Christ and the restitution of all things could not be identical, for what resemblance is there in the reign of Antichrist to the state of things predicted?

(b.) The wicked are represented as associated on earth with the righteous, *till* Christ's second advent (Matt. xiii. 24-30, 36-43). But were the secret rapture of the saints a fact, how could Christ have spoken of the wheat and tares "growing together until the harvest?" Were the wheat previously removed, there could only be tares found in the field at the harvest.

(c.) The resurrection of the righteous and that also of the wicked are represented as simultaneous. Daniel says—"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2). And to like effect are the words of our Lord—"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear

His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 28, 29). But if the resurrection of righteous and wicked be simultaneous, or in immediate succession, it cannot be true, that the righteous are secretly caught away to abide with their Lord, till the time appointed for the destruction of the wicked. The Brethren have felt this difficulty, and their success in meeting it may be judged from their interpretation of the term "hour." Mr Mackintosh holds that the twenty-fifth verse of this chapter, has reference to a spiritual resurrection, or the quickening of dead souls. "Here," he says, "we have a work which has been going on for nearly nineteen long centuries. During all that time, here spoken of as an *hour*, the voice of Jesus, the Son of God, has been heard calling precious souls from death to life. If, therefore, in the very same discourse our Lord used the word *hour* when speaking of a period which has already extended to well nigh two thousand years, what difficulty can there be in applying the word to a period of one thousand years?" ("Papers on the Lord's Coming," p. 31.)

Now, we emphatically dissent from the interpretation here given of the twenty-fifth verse. It is generally accepted as a canon of exegesis, that we are never to adopt the spiritual interpretation of a text, when a literal affords a consistent meaning. The literal, and not the spiritual, is the only consistent interpretation of this verse. Our Lord, in His own vindication, had claimed equality with God. To have appealed then to a spiritual quickening of the dead, would only have provoked the scorn of His foes. Any one might have made such an appeal, for it is a species of evidence not immediately discernible, and only to be appreciated by spiritual men ; while to assert the possession of omnipotence, was a claim which could be immediately put to the test. Hence He declares—"The hour is coming, *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live ;" and the raising of Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus, was the fulfilment of the announcement. What He means is, that the period

had even now come when some, as the period should yet come when all the dead, should be raised. Such we take to be the import of *hour* in the twenty-eighth verse. The idea, however, of this being a period so extended as to comprehend an age of earthly tribulation, is at variance with all sound interpretation of the language.

(*d.*) Once more: The judgment of the righteous and of the wicked, is represented as simultaneous, or in immediate connection. Mr Kelly would have us to believe, that the judgment of believers, precedes that of the ungodly by an indefinite period: "When the believers are caught up to be with Christ," he says, "they will be manifested before His judgment seat; they will give to the Lord an account of everything done by the body. The Lord accordingly will vindicate His own ways with them. Hence, therefore, when the Lord Jesus appears in glory, the saints that are already with Him—the glorified saints—will be displayed according to either their service rendered or their faithfulness" ("The Coming and the Day of the Lord," p. 26).

We, however, prefer the Scripture representation. Read, first of all, Matt. xxv. 31-40: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and *He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.*" Observe specially verses 34 and 41: "*Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand,*" and "*Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand.*" But how can this be, *then*, if a thousand years are to intervene between the glorification of the one and the destruction of the other? "I charge thee," says Paul, "therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom" (2 Tim. iv. 1). The expression *quick and dead* is definite and unambiguous, and evidently comprehends the entire race—as *quick* means all those then living, so *dead* means all those then dead, and intimates that both are to be judged at Christ's coming. The scoffers of the last day, according to Peter, shall say,

“Where is the promise of His coming?” The reply of the apostle would intimate, that the grand objects of His coming are the *judgment* and *destruction* of the world: “The heavens and the earth which are now, are,” says he, “reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up” (2 Pet. iii. 4-12). Observe, *when* the Son of Man comes, *then* shall be gathered before Him all *tribes* or nations; *then* shall He set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on the left; the quick and the dead are judged at His *appearing*; the day of the Lord’s coming, is the day *in which* the heavens shall pass away, and the earth shall be burned up. If so, the wicked cannot be reserved for future judgment; for all this is to take place at *His coming*.

Mr Kelly, in attempting to establish a distinction between Christ’s *coming* and the *day* of the Lord, says—“The *coming* of the Lord, is the display of perfect grace. The *day* of the Lord is the execution of righteousness. . . . The object of the day of the Lord is not the saints at all, but to judge the evil that is in the world, the lawlessness which is already at work secretly, and which is going to issue in the most open and appalling opposition to God. When that development has reached its height, then the day of the Lord will come upon it, the brightness or appearing of His coming” (“The Coming of the Day of the Lord viewed Morally,” by William Kelly, p. 25).

Now, we have simply to quote a few texts to show, that *judgment* is as certainly as *grace*, associated with *His coming*; and thus the attempt to establish the distinction in question fails. 2 Thess. i. 3-10, already quoted, is a passage in point. There Christ is represented as coming to give to His persecuted people *rest from trouble*, and also *to take vengeance on them that know not God*. 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8, 9, is to like effect: “Now we beseech you, brethren, *by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and by our gathering together unto Him.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with *the brightness of His coming*: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders."

Again, in 1 John ii. 28, we read—"Now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." Here *appearance* and *coming* are used interchangeably, showing that they refer to the same event. The passage also implies that some shall be ashamed when Christ comes.

In Matt. xxiv. 36-39, the *coming* of Christ (*ἡ παρουσία*) is expressly associated with judgment upon the ungodly: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the *coming* (*ἡ παρουσία*) of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, . . . and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the *coming* (*ἡ παρουσία*) of the Son of Man be."

The parable of the ten virgins teaches the same fact: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say

unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore ; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh" (Matt. xxv. 1-13). What does Mr Kelly say in attempting to evade the force of this parable? He asks—"What is its character morally? Is it the display of righteousness? Certainly not, but of grace. Thus it is no question at all of faithfulness being manifested to the world ; it is merely the intimate privilege of being with the Bridegroom. It is not the virgins appearing with Him ; for they are not so shown. It is an inner scene. They go forth to meet the Bridegroom ; the Bridegroom comes ; and they go in with Him to the marriage" ("The Coming viewed Morally," p. 29).

Now, would any one who had not a preconceived theory to sustain, so view the parable? Nothing could be more obvious than that its great design is to exhibit judgment upon the formalist, grace simply coming in, to present judgment in darker colours. The very opposite of what Mr Kelly asserts is true. If the parable be intended solely as a display of grace, how is it that when the door was shut, we hear no more of the wise virgins, but that although the foolish ones are left in midnight darkness, there rings in our ears the piteous wail, "Lord, Lord, open to us?" Nothing could make it more obvious, that it was our Lord's chief design to fix our thoughts on the doom and folly of these disappointed suppliants at the door of heaven. Throughout the entire history of God's dealings with man, judgment and grace, instead of being separated, are remarkably associated. It was so at the destruction of Sodom—while Lot escaped, his wife and the guilty inhabitants of the city perished ; it was so when the flood came—while Noah and his family were rescued from its waters, all besides were drowned : it was so in the wilderness—while He delivered His people, He slew His enemies ; it was so in the cleansing of Naaman—while he was blessed, Gehazi was cursed ; it was so in the destruction of Jerusalem—while the Christians found refuge in the place of God's providing, slaughter and untold horrors overtook the murderers of our Lord ; and from the texts adduced, we infer that it shall be also so, in the Greatest Judgment of all.

The distinction, then, attempted to be established between Christ's *coming* and His *appearing*, or, as Mr Kelly styles it, between His *coming* and "the *day of the Lord*," has no foundation in Scripture.

(e.) All controversy on the point ought to be set at rest by the fact, that the coming of Christ, is represented in Scripture, as public and not secret.

Let us cite a few texts in proof. When the high priest said to our Lord, "I adjure Thee, by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ the Son of God, Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said; nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter *shall ye see* the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and *coming in the clouds of heaven*" (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64). Is a *coming* in the clouds that is *seen*, a secret coming? "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). That is, as He ascended visibly, so shall He come again. To like effect was the announcement made to John in Patmos: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. i. 7). Is that secret which is seen by "every eye?"

Paul, too, frequently speaks of "the glorious *appearing*" of Christ, of "the *brightness* of His coming," and of His being "*revealed* from heaven;" Christ himself speaks of *knocking* when He comes" (Titus ii. 13; 2 Thess. ii. 8, i. 7; Luke xii. 35-40). Now, we ask, are *appearance*, *brightness*, *revelation*, and *knocking*, consistent with the idea of secrecy? Then we are exhorted to *wait*, *watch*, and *look* for Christ's coming (1 Thess. i. 10; 1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Thess. iii. 5; 1 Pet. iv. 7; Luke xii. 37; Titus ii. 13; Phil. iii. 20; Heb. ix. 28; 2 Pet. iii. 12; Jude 21), all of which expressions, imply the foregoing of portents, by which His coming may be distinguished.

"Oh, we admit," reply the Brethren, "that His *manifestation* shall be public,—in the very nature of the case, it must be so; but while it is so, as respects His *manifestation*, it is not so, as respects His *coming*." Now, any one by referring

to the texts which announce His *coming*, will at once perceive that *coming* (*παρουσία*), and *appearing* or *manifestation* (*ἐπιφάνεια*), are terms used synonymously, and that the one as certainly as the other indicates *publicity*. Take the following in which generally the former of these terms, and occasionally both, occur to express Christ's *coming*—Matt. xxiv. 3, 27; 2 Thess. ii. 8; James v. 7, 8; 2 Pet. iii. 4, 12; 1 John ii. 28,—all of which intimate that it shall be public. We have also already proved that saints regard with expectation and desire His *appearing*, equally with His *coming*; hence *coming* and *appearing*, must be identical, for not only are they similarly regarded, but how can they *wait*, *look*, and *hope* for His *appearing*, if they have been already long with Him? Then there are the corroborating facts, of the righteous and the wicked, being found associated on earth, till the final consummation of all things; and the facts of the resurrection and judgment of both, being simultaneous or in immediate succession. Were Brethren views of Christ's coming true, for aught we know, He may have already come, and we now be living under the reign of Antichrist. Thus the notion of a secret advent, is fitted to paralyse the grandest motive of the Christian life.

"So little," says Dr Tregelles, "had I heard of this argument on the words *ἐπιφάνεια* and *παρουσία* for many years (ever since 1839, when it seemed to be abandoned for other theories), that I should scarcely have thought it needful to notice it, had I not found that it was again revived. I well remember how some used to press it, and how unspiritual they thought the endeavour to show how these words are really used in the New Testament. It is one of the cases in which the attempt has been made to misrepresent the *facts* of Scripture, and in which the uninstructed and unwary have been misled" ("The Hope of Christ's Second Coming," pp. 43, 44).

The theory involves a third advent of Christ; indeed, the Brethren, as Dr Tregelles informs us, maintain that "the manifest appearing of our Lord is His *third* coming." The assertion is a sad instance of the length to which theorists will go, when they shut their eyes to the obvious disclosures

of Scripture, that they may palm off upon their adherents mere fancies, instead of solemn facts. Such a mode of interpretation may suffice for those who constitute the limited class of sentimental religionists, but is likely to find small favour generally, in an age, when everything is subjected to the test of rigid criticism.

Such then is Brethrenism, and we are disposed to ask in view of what we have presented in the entire book—What claim, has a system so negative in its character, and so fraught with positive errors, to the designation, *Christian*? But while proving that Brethrenism is not Christianity, we by no means assert that the Brethren are not Christians. Like certain philosophers of old, their practice may be better than their principles; although as respects both, there is evidently room for amendment. “Men may be really saved,” says Owen, “by that grace which they doctrinally deny.”

THE END.



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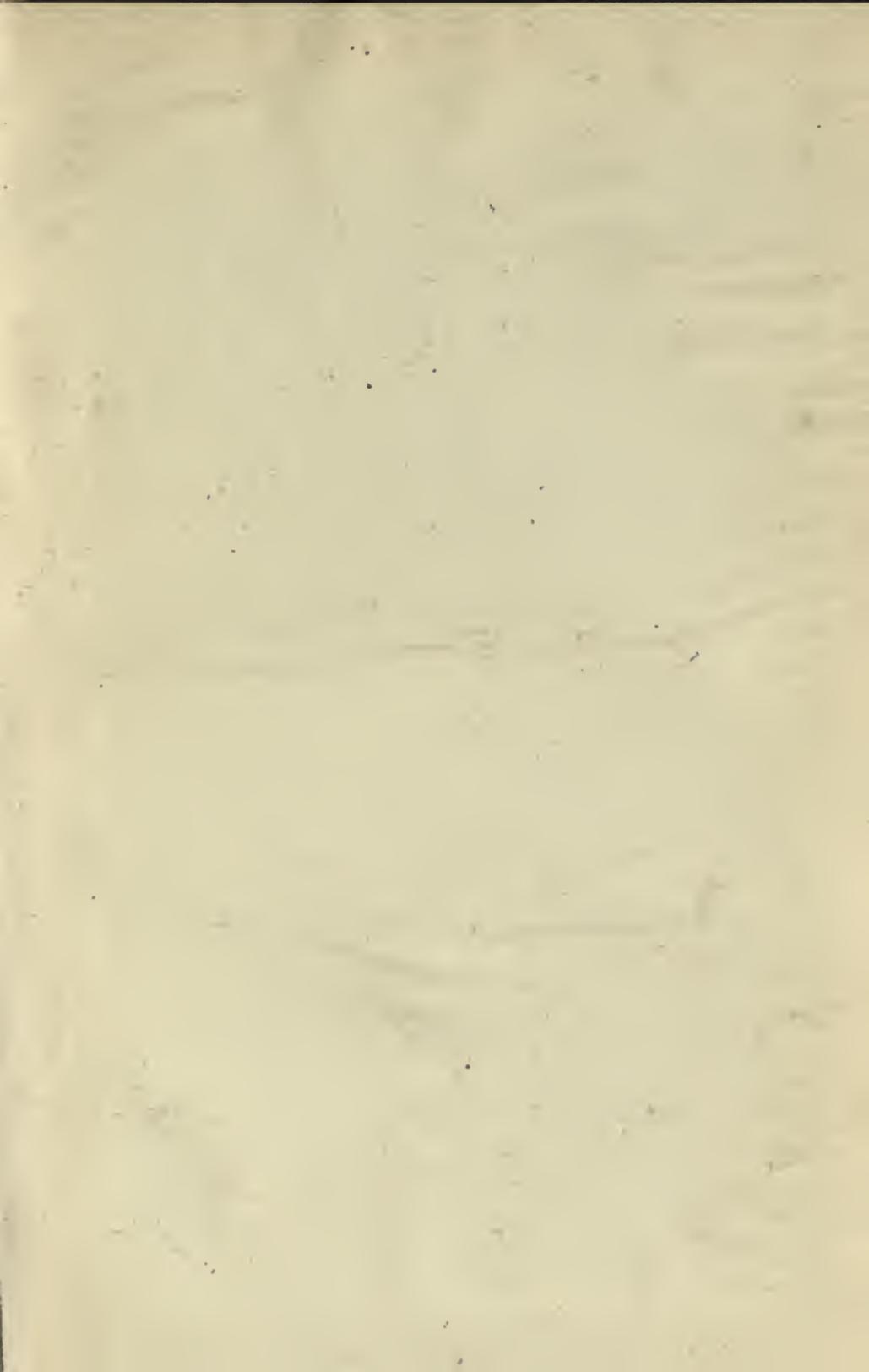
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