

# PLYMOUTHISM & REVIVALISM:

OR,

## The Duty of Contending for the Faith

IN OPPOSITION TO PREVAILING ERRORS AND  
CORRUPTIONS.

BY

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## P R E F A T O R Y    N O T E .

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THE matter of this pamphlet consists of the outline of a Discourse preached on Sabbath evening, in the House of worship, Knockbracken, for the purpose of exposing certain Plymouthist errors and corruptions of ordinances by Lay Preachers, which had been industriously spread throughout the neighbourhood.

The Author being importuned by esteemed friends of various sections of the Church, to publish the several discourses which he preached on the subject, he has so far yielded, as to give a meagre sketch of the first discourse, and an exhibition of errors and perversions, as exposed in the first and second. This may suffice at present for holding out solemn warning against the misleading and unscriptural ways of Separatists, and for exciting those who seek genuine revival, to contend earnestly for all Scriptural truth.

It will depend, in part, on the extent of the circulation of this Pamphlet, whether the substance of the other discourses which were preached, on the important subjects of *Regeneration, Justification and Sanctification*, will hereafter be published.

# PLYMOUTHISM, &c.

“YE SHOULD EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS.”—*Jude*—ver. 3.

THE Apostle Jude, after the salutation contained in the opening words of the epistle, in this third verse, addresses the Church—sanctified, preserved and called,—in terms of Christian affection and great earnestness. Such a spirit should ministers of the Gospel, when called to contend for the truth, ever manifest towards all men. While exposing and condemning grievous errors, they should pity and love the persons who hold them: and they should especially manifest tender concern towards any of the Lord's people who are in danger of being misled from the simplicity of the Gospel. Love to the brotherhood of faith—disinterested, fervent and complacential, will always be a distinctive mark of the genuine disciples of Christ.

Our duty in maintaining and defending the truth and opposing error is clearly indicated in the Apostle's spirit and manner. Like him, we should “give all diligence” in speaking and writing. We should utter nothing at random, or without due consideration. We should apply the mind, solemnly reflect, and seek to bring forth the fruit of careful and sustained study. The reasons for manifesting strong affection, and for giving this diligence are on account of the grand subject discussed, and because of the peculiar dangers to which the persons addressed are exposed. The subject concerning which the Apostle wrote was eminently—“THE COMMON SALVATION.” This is unquestionably the salvation of sinners, purchased by Christ and revealed in the Gospel. It is termed “*common*,” not as being provided for all men, or because all will be saved. There is “one faith,” as there is “one Lord,” and “one Baptism.” All true Christians of whatever class partake of it, as they wait and look for it, in the same way. Through union to Christ, they have a personal interest in this salvation, as Christ within them is “the hope of glory.” The earnest, and the final issue are the same to all believers. Even now, they “receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.” The heavenly bliss which the ransomed will ultimately enjoy is the glorious perfection of the common salvation.

It is in full view of this great object, and in this spirit that the Apostle writes, and exhorts to “contend earnestly for the

faith which was once delivered unto the saints." This impressive exhortation is spoken by the Spirit to the church and to each one of us, equally as to those to whom this epistle was first addressed. We should regard it as God's special message directed to us at the present time, with reference to precious truths to be embraced, and held firmly, and to errors to be condemned and rejected. It deeply concerns us, in the same loving and earnest spirit, to speak and hear the word. The theme is of transcendent importance. It relates to the great salvation, which is of common and unspeakable interest alike to the speaker and to the hearers. May the Holy Spirit work savingly in the hearts of all to whom this message comes, so that the word shall be with power—and God *Himself* have all the glory! We consider in order

#### I.—THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS.

This Faith is *the doctrine of faith*—the truth to be believed unto salvation. The term *faith* is variously applied in the Scriptures—to belief in a testimony, Divine or human—to a grace of the Spirit wrought in the heart—and to doctrine revealed in the Word. It is evidently in this last sense that the Apostle uses it in this passage. The word as designating revealed doctrine is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament. In the first triumphs of the Gospel, "a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith" (Acts vi., 7). When Paul reasoned before Felix and Drusilla, they heard him "concerning the faith in Christ" (Acts xxiv., 24). Under the light of the Gospel, "after the faith is come," we are no longer "under the school-master" of Jewish types and ordinances (Gal. iii., 25). The faith once delivered to the saints, comprises especially all that is revealed in the word concerning the plan of human salvation—the person and work of the Saviour, and the way of a saving interest in Him. It is the truth as it is in Jesus—the faith respecting Christ of which He is "the Author and the Finisher."

This faith may be farther taken as a *full, clear profession, defined and held by the Church*. The Church is founded on the truth revealed in the Word, and is organised for the purpose of confessing and diffusing it. It is emphatically designated "*The pillar and the ground of the truth*" (1 Tim. iii., 15). While the truth considered in itself supports itself and needs no pillar, yet as confessed in the world, the church is its appointed human upholder and preserver. Because of this important and fundamental function, the church's Scriptural profession is often called *the faith*. The profession of the church in Rome was the faith spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. i., 8). The primitive Christians were of "one mind, striving together

for the faith of the Gospel" (Phil. i., 27). A full Scriptural profession is the church's standard lifted up against "the enemy coming in like a flood,"—it is the Banner given "to be displayed because of the truth" (Is. lix., 19, Ps. lx., 4). This profession is best exhibited in the creeds and doctrinal confessions of the primitive and Reformed Churches. These are full, clear, and sharply pointed against prevailing errors and corruptions. There is a remarkable and delightful harmony in the various confessions of all the reformed churches; but by far the fullest and most comprehensive exhibition of the system of revealed truth is contained in the *Westminster Confession and Catechisms*. The same doctrines are held forth in these Standards, as in the creeds of all the primitive and Reformed Churches—but in point of clearness, compact arrangement, and force of expression, they will ever occupy the highest place among the church's doctrinal symbols. It is a marked symptom of fundamental error when doctrinal creeds are spoken against and rejected. What Unitarians have ever done, in declaring against what they term "human creeds," and what Rationalists and Infidels do in denouncing dogma, the Plymouth Brethren, and other modern revivalists attempt, in seeking to advance their own doctrinal views, and to draw disciples after them. While they impose their own dogmas upon their followers, and bitterly denounce those who dissent from them, they have one thing in common—they oppose and hate the church's received Confession and Catechisms. The real ground of this is enmity against the doctrines contained in them. As the church's doctrinal profession is the most effectual safeguard against error—feeling unable to refute its statements, they find it more convenient to declaim loudly against all human creeds, under the plausible pretence that their faith is founded only on the Scriptures.

The faith exhibited in the word and in the church's Scriptural Confessions is *sure* and *infallible*, and is the *instrument of working saving faith in the heart*. The Author of it—God that cannot lie, is holy and faithful. The sacred writers were infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter i., 21). The matter of revelation is "truth without any mixture of error." The church's creeds are valuable, as arranging in systematic order fundamental doctrines and clearly expressing the sense of Holy Scripture. The doctrines delivered to the church are the Spirit's selected instrument for working saving faith in the heart. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i., 16). The word is profitable when it is mixed with faith in the hearers (Heb. iv., 9).

This faith is delivered as a solemn trust to ministers and to the people of God. The original term has the meaning of a deposit

entrusted to be kept and faithfully accounted for (Mat. xi., 27, 2 Tim. i., 12). Ministers are appointed as “stewards of the mysteries of salvation.” They are called, qualified and set apart for an important office. They have been entrusted with the true and faithful word, and are under the most solemn responsibility to “hold fast what they have,” and at the same time to “hold forth the word of life.” To the people, too, is committed the same trust. They are required to “search the Scriptures,” and to receive, believe and obey the word—the doctrine of faith. It is “*to the saints*”—those who are visibly such by profession, that the faith is delivered, while, to some, as real saints, it is given by the grace of the Spirit. Thus are they themselves “delivered into the mould of the truth” (Rom. vi., 17)\*. The most satisfactory evidence that persons are saints is seen in their holding firmly and contending earnestly for the faith. If we depart from it, it shows that we never had it in the effectual love and power of it. The faith is delivered to us as the grand means of our sanctification—as the whole rule of our life—and the source of all holy consolation and hope.

The faith given to the saints, is, by way of special emphasis, said to be “*once delivered.*” It is *the* faith—one—complete—without deficiency, or cessation. It is delivered irrevocably, and once for all. No other faith is to supersede it; no new revelations are to be added. It is the eternal word which endures for ever. In matter it never changes. Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. The blessed gospel of salvation is everlasting; it remains unaltered in all ages; and the law as “the rule of life in the hand of the Mediator” is the same Divine guide to all the saved of the Lord. This trust, too, is once delivered in the *way of administration*—to the ministry by preaching, by the sacraments and other means of grace. Thus delivered to the saints, it is every way befitting that it should be preserved and maintained, amid all difficulties and dangers; in opposition to all seducers, it should be transmitted unimpaired to posterity. We are solemnly commanded to “Buy the truth at whatever cost,” and “not to sell it,” for the greatest outward gain or advantage.

## II.—THE DUTY OF EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH.

The original word, rendered “*contend earnestly,*” which may be borrowed from the ancient athletic games, is singularly expressive. It implies concentrated thought, and fixed purpose—vigorous resolution and will—with earnest, sustained outward effort.

Our obligation thus to contend arises from the faith being of unspeakable *value and importance.* The first Christians, who

\* Such is the import of the original phrase.



received the truth in its love and power, are characterized as standing fast in the faith—and continuing steadfastly in the “Apostle’s doctrine.” This faith is precious from its Author—the Spirit of truth, and from its costly price—the blood of Christ, ratifying the promise, and giving the highest sanction to every precept. It is, moreover, of unspeakable benefit to us, as inseparable from it are our light and life—all our comfort, and peace and joy.

The special duty to maintain and defend the faith arises from there being powerful *adversaries* of different kinds. The conflict with the powers of darkness is of long continuance. Satan often comes and takes away the good seed, so soon as it is sown. Errorists and false teachers lie in wait to deceive. There are various and strong temptations at times to abandon the faith, both in principle and practice. The enemy sows tares while men sleep. The dangers of one time differ from those of another; yet still we should be aware that men are ever prone to be corrupted from “the simplicity that is in Christ.” The truth is constantly to be maintained by conflict, and its advancement to be accomplished by victory.

This earnest contending must be with *spiritual strength* concentrated and exerted. Weak in ourselves for the good fight, we should draw strength from the Captain of salvation. We are bid to “be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. ii., 1). The Holy Spirit imparts life and gives fresh supplies of spiritual vigour, sustaining and increasing it. He “strengthens with all might in the inner man.” Waiting on the Lord, we “renew our strength.”

This earnest contending is equally *required of ministers and people*. The ministry having the solemn charge specially laid upon them should contend for the faith by faithfully preaching the word. They should give themselves “to prayer and the ministry of the word.” They should compare Scripture with Scripture, and aim to bring out of the treasury things new and old. They should ever seek the teaching of the Spirit, that they may know the mysteries of the faith. Their public work is to declare the whole counsel of God—to confute gainsayers and errorists, and to seek to bring men to the knowledge of the truth, and to the obedience of faith. Ministers should not be content to be mere onlookers, while others are fighting the battles of truth. Above others, they should take to themselves “the whole armour of God,” and aim to “withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.” By *prayer* and a consistent holy *example*, they overcome the adversaries of the truth, and hasten forward its universal triumph. A faithful devoted ministry has ever been of eminent value, as the principal appointed means of maintaining the faith—of successfully

resisting them that oppose it—and of promoting its sanctifying and saving influence.

The duty of earnest contending for the faith belongs to *the Christian people* too. They should pray much for the success of the cause of truth, in its conflict with error. Like Aaron and Hur co-operating with Moses, they should hold up the hands of those who are publicly engaged in the spiritual warfare. They should seek in earnest prayer that the Lord would send forth labourers—that He would give “a door of utterance” to His servants—and that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified. A first duty of those who enjoy the ministrations of the Gospel is to animate and encourage ministers, and to “esteem them very highly in love for their works’ sake.” The power and success of the word, and the restraint and overthrow of error lie greatly here. Prayer has ever won more victories than mere disputation—and without it, as a chief element in the conflict, victory itself is doubtful. By the force of holy *example*, people are required to contend everywhere for the faith. Error is often most effectually confuted by the power of holy living. Not only by professing the faith, but likewise by suffering for it, when called to do so, are we to promote its final triumph. “To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, to believe on His name, and to suffer for His sake.” “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives to the death” (Phil. i., 29, Revelation xii., 11).

This earnest contention for the faith should not be in wrath or vain-glory, or chiefly for victory. We can never contend in a lazy lukewarm spirit, but with holy resolution and vigour. With love and zeal inspired by the Holy Spirit, we should contend unanimously, impartially, constantly—and with prudence and judgment. We should be ready to oppose even saints, while they abet or countenance error. We are enjoined to “withdraw from a brother when he “walks disorderly.” If an angel from heaven, preach any other than the gospel of the grace of God, he is to “be accursed.” While we contend earnestly, we should do it soberly, and not passionately. “The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” We can only effectually contend for the truth, and against error, when we arm ourselves with the mind of Christ—when, in fervent love to Him and His cause—and not in our own wisdom and strength, we engage in the conflict. Our *encouragements* are great and numerous. The cause is righteous—our Leader is wise and powerful. The gracious supplies which He gives are great and seasonable. The friends of truth assist us by their prayers. There are more for us than all that are against us. The victory is sure, and will be glorious. “Great is the truth, and it must prevail.”

“No weapon formed against Zion, or her cause, shall prosper—every tongue that riseth against them in judgment Thou wilt condemn.” (Is. liv., 17.)

### III.—SOME OF THE ERRORS IN DOCTRINE, AND PERNICIOUS PRACTICES AGAINST WHICH WE SHOULD CONTEND AT THE PRESENT TIME.

The particular errors and practices to which we refer are those which are avowed and practised by religious parties, commonly designated *Plymouthists*, or *Plymouth Brethren*. With these must be classed certain Revivalist Lay Preachers, who while, it may be, not fully professing all the peculiar tenets of the “Brethren”—yet evidently hold and act upon their leading principles, manifest to a large extent their spirit—and adopt their practices in relation to separation from existing churches, and to ordinances of worship. It is somewhat difficult to describe correctly the position and doctrinal principles of these errorists, as they refuse to be designated Plymouthists, and say “they call themselves Brethren—they belong to no Ecclesiastical system or denomination—they are Christians.” Their whole history however—and their present position entitle them, in the fullest sense, to be called SEPARATISTS. Complete separation from all church organizations is their avowed principle of action and mutual fellowship, as they do not hesitate to proclaim it to be “God’s principle of unity.”

The Origin of this party dates back till near the commencement of the present century—though it was considerably later that it spread, and began to be known by its more common designation. The *Rev. Mr. Walker*, a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, having relinquished his connexion with the Established church, and resigned his Fellowship in the University, set himself to found a new sect. Though he preached to such as assembled to hear him, he did not conduct prayer or praise in public worship, but retired into a separate room to engage in these exercises with those whom he took to be believers. His followers practised the holy kiss in connexion with their religious services; and so far did they carry out their principle of separation, that family relations were in many cases renounced, if relatives held religious intercourse with others who were out of the pale of the party. This new sect some time afterwards found adherents in Cork, and in Plymouth in England. In the last-named place, a definite order of pastorship was attempted to be formed by Newton, Harris and others, which their Irish friends refused to agree to—using the designation “Plymouth Brethren,” in stating their disagreement. This came afterwards to be the name by which the party has been generally known.

In 1845, one of their teachers, *Mr. J. N. Darby*, who is a fertile writer and principal advocate and defender of their prin-



ciples, separated himself and his followers from Mr. Newton and his party, and excommunicated those who declined to own his authority. Various other sects, bitterly hostile to one another, have been formed from these parties ; and these divisions seem likely in time to come to be still more increased. A Plymouthist writer, some time since, stated that the original Darbyites number upwards of thirty different sects ! Agreeing on the one fundamental principle that separation from evil is faithfulness—they declare that all existing churches are men's confusions—and they say that those are to be blamed who call themselves of any party beyond that of Christians. Within the last twelve or fifteen years, Plymouthism has spread extensively in America. That the objects of their "special and distinctive mission" may be clearly seen, they declare them in *The Christian Quarterly*—a periodical which was started in 1869, to advocate their views. They are such as these—"1. *Suppression of all unscriptural terms.* 2. *Destruction of theological terms and sophistical questions.* 3. *Elimination of unscriptural and sinful designations—as Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church, Methodist and Baptist Church.* 4. *Destruction of Sporadic Sects.* 5. *Abolition of Creeds.* 6. *Dissolution of Centralized Ecclesiastical Government.*"

In recent movements throughout the church for awakening, and Revival, the Plymouth Brethren, and those who adopt their mode of procedure, have strenuously laboured to win to their peculiar views and party, persons who are recently awakened, or those who are piously disposed throughout the churches. By zealously labouring to make known some parts of Gospel truth, and by insisting on devotedness to Christ and loving communion, they attract to them some serious persons of different names. These they set themselves to withdraw from a settled ministry, decrying all Confessions of Faith, Catechisms and Church creeds, and setting aside Inspired songs of praise in Worship. They insist on adult Baptism, by immersion, and administer the Lord's Supper in private houses, by persons who have no call to the ministry in the Church. They themselves have not hesitated to avow that their great work is—not with the ignorant and ungodly masses of the community,—but with the pious and best members of the Christian churches, that they may be wholly separated from what they term "human organizations," and become identified with them in principle and practice. The means by which the "Brethren" seek to effect their purpose, are, in many respects, to be strongly disapproved of and condemned. The testimony of one of themselves—*Lord Congleton*—might be considered harsh and uncharitable were it to come from any other quarter—"I have," says he, "tried these Brethren—the Darbyites—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.”

We notice briefly, under **THREE HEADS**—

I.—Some of the Leading Doctrines of the Plymouthists and their followers.

II.—The Spirit which they manifest.

III.—The Dispensation by them of ordinances of Worship, especially of the sealing ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism.

#### I.—THEIR DOCTRINES.

Passing over for the present some other Plymouthist errors, we notice—

##### 1. Their views respecting THE CHURCH—and THE MINISTRY.

As far as can be gathered from their writings, the “Brethren” teach that the Church of the Old Testament was not a part of Christ's mystical Body. The Church as such had no existence till the day of Pentecost. They characterize it as a Body inhabited by the Spirit of God Himself—“the entire complement of the saints from the day of Pentecost till the moment when all are in heaven.” They represent the membership of the church as consisting of believers only; and hence they deny altogether the distinction between the visible and invisible Church; and in this they are one with the Church of Rome, as in some other points they speak much more favourably of it than they do of the Protestant Churches. All Church organisations they speak of as unchristian, sinful and ruinous. Any alliance with them, even though based on essential truth, they denounce as sin against the Holy Ghost—and hence they loudly proclaim entire separation from them as a positive and paramount duty. In these views a large number of Lay revivalist preachers generally concur, while they carefully instruct their deluded followers in the sinfulness of continuing in their former church connexions.

The whole of this view of the church is plainly opposed to the frequent representations of the Divine word—to the faith which was once delivered to the Saints. The proto-martyr Stephen, filled with the Holy Ghost, expressly declares that Christ was with “the Church in the wilderness.” The Apostle Paul repeatedly speaks of the Church of God under the Old Testament as continued in the new economy—as enlarged and diffusive, like the one “olive tree,” with its natural and engrafted branches. Believing Jews and Gentiles are gathered into the same Body; and “the middle wall of partition” is broken down, both being one in Christ. Throughout the Apostolic writings, the Church is never spoken of as a new superstructure—but as that which had existed before, enlarged and extended. According to our

Westminster Confession (chap. vii. 5), the Church is the same under both Dispensations, having the same charter of salvation in the covenant of grace, though differently administered.

The distinction of the *visible* and *invisible* church is clearly taught in the Divine Word; and the membership of the New Testament Church obviously consists of others than believers. The Church is represented as a field in which the tares and wheat grow together till the harvest,—as the corn floor in which the chaff and wheat are intermingled—as the drag-net in which fishes good and bad are collected—as the kingdom out of which at length will be gathered all that offend, and that do iniquity. The church in Corinth had persons connected with it who were “fornicators, covetous and extortioners;” and the churches referred to in the opening chapters of the Book of Revelation, had, within their pale, some who had forsaken their first love—who had a name to live, while they were dead—and others who were “lukewarm,” and about to be wholly rejected. The passages in 1 Cor. vi. 17, and Rev. xviii. 4, when taken by Plymouthists as Divine commands, to separate from Christian churches, are plainly misunderstood and perverted. The former is an inspired direction to the Corinthian Christians to stand aloof from all heathen practices, and from in any wise countenancing superstition and idolatry—and the latter is a Divine call to those of God’s people who are in fellowship with the Romish Babylon to come out of her, prior to her downfall. Our Westminster Confession, in a noble spirit of catholic truth and charity—in marked contrast to that of the “Brethren,”—represents particular churches, which are members of the one Catholic Church of Christ, as more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the Gospel is taught and embraced, and as ordinances are dispensed, and public worship observed more or less purely in them: and it moreover declares that “the purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error.”

Equally unscriptural and intolerant is the doctrine of the “Brethren” and of the Lay Preachers, who embrace their views respecting the *Ministry of the Church*. They maintain that the Scriptures recognise no class of persons who are separated and set apart as a stated ministry in the church. They speak of all Christians as having the right to minister in holy things; and they represent their meetings, conducted by laymen and sometimes by women, as held “under the presidency of the Holy Ghost.” They deny the perpetual existence of the eldership in the church; and represent the ecclesiastical offices mentioned in the Book of Acts and in the Apostolic writings as having ceased and passed away. Not unfrequently, they designate the stated ministry of the Church as man-made—as “the one-man ministry.” They commonly speak of ministers, even the most

devoted and honoured in the Church as *unconverted*; and they teach those who are under their influence that attendance upon their ministrations is sinful. To any attentive reader all this must appear to be wholly unscriptural. While *extraordinary* offices were designed to cease after the planting of the New Testament church, it is clearly the will of its Divine founder that the *ordinary* offices should remain perpetually. The distinction between them and the members of the Church is strongly marked. Their qualifications are prescribed—and numerous precepts and promises of the word, plainly declare that the living ministry is Christ's settled ordinance for the conversion of sinners and the edification of the church till the end of time. It exists by Divine prescription; it is rightly assumed only by a Divine call; and there is a prescribed channel of conveying ministerial power and authority. God has promised to give to his church "pastors according to His heart." (Jer. iii. 15.) A chief effect of the Saviour's ascension to heaven is to give "some evangelists, some pastors and teachers," "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Ephs. iv. 11, 12.) These are appointed to feed—rule, and watch over the church—and their work is ever represented as necessary and most important. Whatever would set aside the ministry which Christ has provided in his church must be regarded as rebellion against His authority; and whoever attempts to dishonour ministers and weaken their influence, inflicts the most serious injury on the church. While it is admitted that godly members of the church may and ought to do much to teach others the way of salvation, without intruding into the functions of the sacred office, Plymouthist teachers, who denounce the ministry, incur the "woe" of those who "run unsent," of whom it is said—"they shall not profit this people at all." (Jer. xxiii. 21—32.) In no proper sense, have these teachers a due call to the office of the ministry—as they are destitute of all proper qualifications for its performance. The ignorance which they betray in interpreting the Scriptures, equals their presumption in intruding into an office to which they were not called. The consequences to those who receive their instructions, cannot but be disastrous.

## 2. Plymouthists views on Doctrines respecting the MORAL LAW and SALVATION.

(1.) *The Obligation of the Moral Law.*—The Plymouth Brethren and those who adopt their leading views, and follow their practices, generally teach that believers are not under the Moral Law as a rule of life. They abuse the doctrine of Christian liberty, maintaining that we are now wholly freed from the law as an authoritative rule—and plausibly seem-



ing to put honour upon the Saviour, and to make love to Him the regulating principle of obedience, they declare that Christ alone is the rule of the Christian life, and that love alone is the fulfilling of the law. The statements of some of the writers of this school are, on this head, sufficiently explicit. One says—"Men before Moses, Gentiles since—and Christians now, are not under law."\* Another asserts—"The law is not the rule of the believer's life—Christ is our rule of life."† While these teachers strongly maintain this exemption of Christians from obedience to the law, they deny, at the same time, that Christ obeyed the law for them. They thus aim to free believers from all obligation to obey the law in any way—either by the Surety—or in their own persons. The passages of Scripture which they adduce in support of these views are misunderstood, and wholly misapplied and perverted. When the Apostle declares of Christians—"ye are not under the law, but under grace"—(Rom. vi. 14) this plainly means—as the context shows—that believers are not under the law in the sense of obeying it as a condition of salvation—but under grace, as the foundation of pardon and acceptance. Plymouthists say—"It is obvious that the law is neither the ground of life to the sinner nor the rule of life to the Christian." Again, because it is declared—they "that are under the law, are under the curse," it is inferred that Christians are in no sense obliged to conform themselves to the law. The law, it is added, "can do nothing but curse"—Christ has redeemed us from the law—freedom from obligation to it is therefore the only way of salvation. In these statements, things that are essentially different are confounded. Christ has obeyed in our stead the law—as a broken covenant, and borne its penalty. He has thus released His people from the law's condemning power, and freed them from it, as the procuring cause of their justification. But this by no means implies that they are free from it as a rule, for the guidance of their life and conduct. It is surely quite a different matter to be placed under the law so as to procure life by it, and to be under it as a rule of character and conduct. Then the sweeping assertion—"the law does nothing but curse" is clearly opposed to the frequent representations of Holy Scripture. The Saviour Himself declares (Ps. xi. 8.) "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within my heart." When the law was "weak" and unable to justify—not in itself, but "through the flesh"—in consequence of our fallen condition—God sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." The design of this blessed provision was not to free us from the law as a rule of life—but "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 3, 4.)

\* Darby.

† MacIntosh.

The whole meaning of the Apostles shows plainly that they regarded God's law as the unalterable rule of Christian life and conduct. We are expressly said to be "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. (1 Cor. ix. 21.) When the Apostle sums up his argument against justification by "the deeds of the law," he strongly asserts that by the faith that justifies, full provision is made for a life of holy obedience to God's law. "Do we then make void the law by faith? God forbid, yea, we establish the law." (Rom. iii. 31.) Again, when, in Rom. xiii. 8, Christians are enjoined to "Owe no man anything but to love one another;" this is enforced on the ground of its being commanded by the moral law, for the Apostle directly refers to the precepts respecting relative duties. So the Apostle James (c. ii. 12), virtually declares that "the law of liberty" and "the royal law" are one and the same, for he quotes precepts from the law of Moses, and applies them to the case in hand. Nothing could more plainly show that the law of the Ten Commandments is still binding under the Gospel. Of Christians, it is directly declared—"If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (Jas. ii. 9, 10.)

Christ is not—as say these teachers—a *law* to believers—but He is a bright and perfect *example*; and the excellence of His example lies in the spotless obedience that He offered to the holy law of God, which He had within His heart. Christ is our living and glorious Model. His whole life was law-fulfilling—and we best imitate Him when we walk as He did, in entire conformity to the Father's will. Then love—which is said to be "the fulfilling of the law," is the *principle* of all moral obedience—and is not a rule. The Psalmist represents the most fervent love of the believer as being toward God's law—Ps. cxix. 97—"O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day." And the Apostle (in Rom. xiii. 8, 9), plainly teaches that the law of love and liberty includes the moral law.

The error of teaching that Christians are not under the Moral Law of God, as the whole rule of their life, is fundamental, and most dangerous. Antinomianism has, in all ages, and in every circumstance, sapped the foundations of all morality, and led men, even under the mask of religion, into the commission of the worst sins. The Scripture plainly declares, and that in the most extensive sense—"Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John iii. 4.) According to the Plymouthist doctrine, men are not under law, and they do not therefore commit sin. Mr. Darby positively states that "the Apostle," in the 6th of the Romans, "declares there, as to *practice or to sinning*, we are not

under law."\* Who would not recoil with horror from a principle which teaches that we may "continue in sin that grace may abound," which would open the flood-gates of immorality, by inculcating that persons may commit the greatest crimes, and indulge in the grossest sins, without violating any law of God?

In the Revivalist Hymns, which are used to supplant the songs of Inspiration, and which are often insipid and extravagant in expression, the error of rejecting the Law, as the rule of Christian life, occupies a prominent place. Thus in "*Hymns for Evangelistic Services*," No. 7—

"Till to Jesus Christ you cling,  
By a simple faith,  
"Doing" is a deadly thing—  
"Doing" ends in death.  
"Cast your deadly "doing" down,  
Down at Jesus' feet,  
Stand in Him, in Him alone,  
Gloriously complete."

And again in No. 23—

"Jesus died and paid it all—  
All to Him I owe;  
And something either great or small,  
From love to Him I'll do.  
"Now to Jesus Christ I'll cling,  
By a simple faith;  
Doing was a "deadly" thing,  
It would have been my death."

(2.) *Justification*.—There is no question of more solemn import than this—"How should man be just with God"—(Job ix. 2)—and none to which the awakened consciences of men in all ages have more anxiously sought an answer. On no subject do the sacred Scriptures, in all parts, speak with greater fullness and clearness. Yet the corruptions of this fundamental doctrine, even in our day, are manifold, and most deceptive and misleading—whether in the errors of Romanism—the perversions of Protestant Churches—or the philosophizing speculations of many modern critics and expositors. The doctrine of the Plymouth Brethren and of their coadjutors, on the subject of Justification, is one of the most destructive of this precious article of the faith delivered to the saints; and viewed in its different aspects, it amounts to a complete denial of the Scripture-testimony on this most momentous subject.

They teach error respecting the *time* of a sinner's justification, holding that believers were justified from eternity, or, according to some of the party, from the time of Christ's death. The only office of faith in the matter of justification is to reveal the fact to the mind. They speak of all our sins, past, present, and

\* Darby—"Righteousness and Law," p. 21.

future, being atoned for—borne away and fully forgiven in the eternal purpose of God, or when Christ died. Some of the Plymouth Brethren and Lay Preachers go so far as to maintain that the unconverted should not say the Lord's Prayer, because they cannot call God their Father—and that converted persons should not use it, because they have no trespasses to be forgiven, as these were all pardoned from eternity or from Christ's death. If these views be admitted, then the Saviour's Model Prayer should no longer be used by any person, in approaching God as suppliants. Hence numbers of them refuse to use for themselves the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer, because they have now no trespasses to be forgiven. This view evidently confounds the atonement of Christ with the pardon of sin—the *cause* with the *effect*. One must be actually guilty before he is pardoned; and the Scriptures constantly represent believing and effectual calling as preceding justification. "He that believeth not is condemned already." (John iii. 18.) "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 39.) "Whom He called, them He also justified." (Rom. viii. 29.)

They fatally err, likewise, concerning the *ground* of a sinner's justification. The Plymouthist doctrine, on this point, is grossly unscriptural. The proper *humanity* of our Lord is strenuously denied by some of these parties. They teach that He was not conceived by the virgin but by the Holy Ghost—that He was not, as to His human nature, the "seed of the woman"—but that "He was, *as to his humanity*, the Lord from heaven." Hence they term Him the "*Divine man*," "*the heavenly man*." If words have any meaning, this is taking away the proper and perfect humanity of the Redeemer, and deifying His humanity. This is akin to some of the early heresies, which maintained that there was only one nature in the person of Christ—which the Church Catholic condemned. It removes the root and foundation of our redemption—since the Saviour could not be a Kinsman-Redeemer, or Mediator in the covenant, if He were not perfect God and perfect man; and if his obedience and death were not those of one that was "in all things made like unto His brethren." He could not be our blessed Substitute, if He was not "chosen from among the folk"; and if His human nature in body and soul, were not, in the fullest sense, made an offering for sin. Again, these errorists deny, in the plainest terms that the righteousness of Christ imputed is the ground of a sinner's justification. They refuse to admit that imputed righteousness is Scriptural, maintaining that while Christ suffered in some sense as a substitute, He did not obey the law in our stead. They say it is not the righteousness of Christ that is laid to our account for pardon, but the righteousness of God, considered as a Divine attribute. This they hold, upon the ground,



that the phrase "righteousness of Christ" is not mentioned in Scripture, but always "the righteousness of God," in connexion with the pardon of sin. This bold assertion is completely opposed to Scripture representation. The righteousness of Christ, consisting of His surety, obedience, and vicarious suffering, is itself styled "the righteousness of God"—as being that which God the Father provided, as the ground on which reconciliation would be effected between Him and sinners, and on which the guilty are fully forgiven; that which a Divine person wrought out; and that which the Spirit of God savingly applies. But the incarnate Redeemer is significantly called "The Lord our Righteousness." (Jer. xxiii. 5.) He was foretold as making an end of sin—finishing the transgression—and "bringing in *everlasting righteousness*." (Dan. ix. 24.) All the sinner's righteousness for pardon and acceptance is in Him; and the believer triumphs in Him, as the whole ground of his justification. "Surely shall one say—In the Lord have I righteousness and strength; in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory." (Is. xlv. 24, 25.) In the New Testament, the doctrine of Christ's righteousness wrought out for and imputed to the believer is taught with uncommon clearness. "The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ is *unto* all and *upon* all them that believe." (Rom. iii. 22.) "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.) The believer's fullest, strongest desire is ever here—to "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. 9.) It is plain, from these explicit Scripture testimonies, that the Divine method of a sinner's pardon and reconciliation to God is through the perfect righteousness of the God-man—that His obedience and sufferings, which were throughout vicarious, are reckoned to the sinner's account.

The Plymouth Brethren, in their writings, when denying that the imputed righteousness of Christ is Scriptural, teach that the fact of justification is grounded mainly on the resurrection of Christ; and they are accustomed too to speak of justification as consisting only in the pardon of sin, and not as including acceptance. "Scripture," they say, "sets forth His resurrection for righteousness or justification." They refer for proof to Romans iv. 25—"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." This interpretation is grounded upon a mistranslation and perversion of the Apostle's words. Literally rendered, they are "who was delivered *on account of* our offences, and raised *on account of* our justification;"

they teach, first, that Christ suffered for the expiation of our

sins; and secondly, that His resurrection was the proof that His death on our behalf had been accepted, so that there is for us now no condemnation. He rose, moreover, to secure the continued application of the merits of His sacrifice. The Apostle's reasoning, in the fifth of the Romans, makes it very plain, that the ground of our justification is the obedience unto death of Christ, and not His resurrection. "Being now justified by His blood." (v. 9.) "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." (v. 19.) The office of faith in the matter of a sinner's justification is, by the Brethren, wholly misstated, when they say that it "only brings the fact of our justification to our knowledge," the act itself having been from eternity or from the death of Christ. It would be difficult, in any heterodox system, to find combined so many perversions of Scripture and fundamental errors, as are contained in the Plymouthist doctrine of justification. It plainly undermines and subverts what Luther appositely terms—"The grand article of a standing or falling Church" and brings in "another Gospel," essentially opposed to "the like precious faith, which is through the righteousness of God even our Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter i. 1.)

(3.) *Faith and Repentance*.—Saving faith, according to the Plymouthists and modern Revivalists, is "only believing what God has said about Jesus Christ." They thus make it a mere intellectual act, and a natural gift. Theirs is only the historical faith, such as devils have, when "they believe and tremble," or such as thousands possess, who live unconverted, and die in their sins. In pressing upon persons the call of the Gospel, it is common for Lay-preachers, especially from America, to insist that all they have to do is to take Jesus by the hand, and they will at once be saved—to believe on Him, and they may be sure of heaven before dinner, &c. This style of addresses leaves it altogether out of view that faith is the gift of sovereign grace. (Eph. ii. 8, Phil. ii. 29, 2 Peter i. 1.) If saving faith is a natural gift, and the mere belief of a testimony, we are justified and saved by works, and salvation by grace is rejected. It is, furthermore, taught by Plymouthists and their co-adjutors that personal faith lies in "believing that Christ died for me," and that, in so believing, the individual is made sure of final salvation. They quote in this connexion the expression (John iii. 36)—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." But this is plainly a confounding of the *subject* with the *object* of faith. All true faith is a heartfelt belief in a Divine testimony, but it cannot be shown that there is any testimony in the word that Christ died for any one in particular. The statement of a person that he is a believer, should neither be rested on by himself nor by others as being in any way equivalent to a Divine testimony to that effect. These teachers are in the habit of

maintaining that Christ by His death paid the debt of all sinners, and this is strongly put forward in Revivalists hymns and tracts. It is only required that we believe this, and then we are actually saved and sure of heaven. On this principle, none can finally perish, since the full ransom was paid and accepted for all. And if the sinner's debt was all paid before he was born, then is he saved, whether he believes or not; and whether or not, he has the word, by the hearing of which faith comes. The distinction between *weak* and *strong* faith is altogether overlooked on this system; and yet we are told in the Scriptures of some that were "strong in faith, giving glory to God," and of others who were "of little faith" and "doubting." The disciples prayed, "Lord, Increase our faith," and we are expressly commanded to "add to our faith virtue," and other graces of the Spirit, and to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter i. 5, 8; iii. 18.)

There is no more common error among Plymouthists, and a large number of the active agents in modern revivals than that of making the personal *assurance of salvation* to be of the *essence of faith*. It is taught that one cannot be a believer if he in the least doubts of his interest in Christ or final salvation; that all doubting is condemned in the word; and that all that is required is to look to Christ, and not to inquire about the evidence in ourselves of faith or personal union to Christ. On this ground too, these parties say, that "Holy works are not necessary to evidence faith." All such views are palpably opposed to the teaching of the word. It is commanded—"Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works" (Jas. ii. 18), implying that there is no other way of evidencing the existence of faith but by holy works. Of Abraham it is declared—"Faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect;" and in terms most explicit, it is said, "faith without works is dead." (James ii. 22, 26.) The uniform Scripture representation of saving faith is, that it is a grace of the Holy Spirit, by which the truth of the word is believed as a Divine testimony—the promise is embraced with the heart, and Christ Jesus, the Lord, is appropriated and trusted in for salvation, as He is offered fully and freely in the Gospel. Assurance of an interest in Christ and of eternal life is not of the essence of saving faith, but a precious fruit of it. Believers are themselves represented as "walking in darkness and having no light." They may stand in doubt respecting their own spiritual state and frame; while, at the same time, it is sinful to doubt either of the ability or willingness of Christ to save. It is the duty of those who have believed to grow up to a joyful assurance; and this they may attain, through the work of the Spirit, in the diligent use  
 † Divinely appointed means. If assurance were a part of faith,

or inseparably connected with it, there would be no propriety in exhorting believers—"every one of them"—as in Hebrews vi. 11, "to show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end." The assurance inculcated by Separatists on awakened persons, whose views of the Gospel are very imperfect, cannot but be regarded, in many cases, as vain and presumptuous confidence, leading them to indulge in sin, or to fall into carelessness and despair; while such teaching often proves most discouraging and stumbling to the children of God. Our Westminster Divines judiciously declare that "true believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted." And again, they teach—"This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he is a partaker of it; yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto."\*

*Repentance.*—Equally unscriptural, with the views of the Brethren and the Lay Preachers about Faith, are their sentiments respecting Repentance. While frequently urging those whom they address to confess their sins and to flee from the wrath to come, they teach that believing is all that is required, in order to be saved. *Luther* and the other Reformers were accustomed to declare that "we are justified by faith *only*, but not by faith that *remains alone*." Repentance and good works must follow, as the fruits of faith, to prove it to be genuine. As pointedly opposed to this, these teachers assert that sinners need only to come to Christ—and that repentance, instead of helping, only hinders their coming. They denounce it, in the strongest terms—calling it "trash"—"legalism"—"salvation by works." In their view, Repentance does not consist in contrition of heart, and godly sorrow for sin—but it is simply a change of mind with respect to the Gospel. The person who once thought that God was angry with him, should believe that that was a mistake. God always loved him, and now loves him just as he is; the belief of this will effectually alter the sinner's mind toward God. Believers, according to the doctrine of these teachers, have no sins to confess—and they do not need to ask pardon, inasmuch as their sins are forgiven in the death or resurrection of Christ, more than eighteen hundred years ago. More unscriptural or delusive teaching than this could hardly be imagined. John, the forerunner of our Lord, preached "the Baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins," as a preparation for the coming of the Saviour's kingdom. Our Lord, in His personal ministry, called upon men to "repent, for the kingdom

\* Westminster Confession—ch. xviii. § 3, 4.



of God was at hand," And the Apostles—Divinely commissioned, went everywhere, preaching that men should "repent and believe the Gospel." Paul, in addressing the Elders of Ephesus, gives the sum of his public and private instructions, when he says he "testified both to the Jews and also to the Greeks—repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts xx. 21.) The most eminent saints mentioned in the Bible—as David, Job, Isaiah, Daniel, and Paul—make the most solemn confessions of sin, and appear themselves as humble penitents. Faith and true repentance are ever exhibited as inseparable—both being not merely acts, but habits of the soul. Evangelical repentance is "the tear that flows from faith's eye." A sense of God's goodness "leads to repentance." (Rom. ii. 9.) Believers when they look to the Crucified One, behold Him as pierced by their sins, and they "mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and are in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." (Zech. xii. 10.) The way of confession and repentance is emphatically declared to be the Divinely appointed way of pardon and acceptance; while the want of due contrition and confession shuts us out from the hope of forgiveness. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us; if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (John ii. 8, 9.)

(4.) *Sanctification*.—Next to the method of a sinner's pardon and acceptance, there is nothing of greater moment than the way of his sanctification. In justification, we obtain a *title* to heaven; in sanctification, we gain a *meetness* for the heavenly inheritance. As without holiness, no man can see the Lord, so as to have fellowship with Him here, or communion with Him in glory, it is of the utmost importance to know how our moral nature is changed and assimilated to the image of God. The doctrine of the Plymouth Brethren, and of some Revivalist preachers on this subject, is not only unscriptural, but in some points absurd and self-contradictory. They teach that sanctification is *imputed*, as well as justification; that persons are completely sanctified as soon as they believe, and that there is no such thing as *progressive* sanctification. The phrases "imputed sanctification" and "imputed justification," are absurd. Properly speaking, in justification it is the work of Christ that is imputed to us, and not the act of pardon; and sanctification, being a spiritual, subjective work, is strictly personal, and in no sense imputed. When it is said—"By one offering, He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"—(Heb. x. 14)—this in no wise proves the doctrine of immediate sanctification. The Apostle says nothing of perfecting their sanctification. Christ's sacrifice effects what the Jewish offerings could not do—it takes away sin, and perfects those

to whom it is applied, by purifying their conscience. The term "sanctified" is used here, as elsewhere, for *consecrated* to God. It is by confounding this sense with that of being made actually holy that these teachers arrive at the conclusion, that persons become completely holy on their believing—and, as the consequence, that believers are without sin. A more pernicious dogma cannot be propounded. Speculating still farther on the subject, the same parties are wont to teach that the "new man" which the believer puts on is created by the Holy Ghost, and put within him, while the "old man" remains within unchanged, and is no better at the end of his course than at the beginning. There is thus no room left for progressive sanctification. The flesh, with the affections and lusts, is therefore not mortified. The Spirit's sanctifying work in the believer is altogether denied, for the new man is sinless, and the old is unchangeable. The "inward man" cannot be renewed day by day. Nor is the believer, "beholding the glory of Christ, changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iv. 16—iii. 18.) The exhortations to "grow in grace," "go on to perfection," &c., are out of place and improper on this scheme. The doctrine of immediate sanctification, or of "sinless perfection" in this life is eversive of the cause of vital godliness; and by taking away a proper sense of sin and accountability, it inevitably leads to immorality.

There are several other doctrinal errors which are commonly taught by Plymouthists and their followers, which are opposed to the faith once delivered to the saints. To these we can only make the briefest reference. They generally deny the Divine authority, and perpetual morality of the *Christian Sabbath*. According to them, all days of the week are alike sacred. This contradicts the original institution of the Sabbath, denies the obligation of the Decalogue, and contradicts the plain teaching and example of our Lord and His apostles. The Sabbath rest has ever been "the best boon of heaven" to the human family; and Sabbath-breaking, whether by individuals, or families, or communities, has constantly been followed by evident tokens of Divine displeasure. A system which, under the pretence of high saintship, attempts to weaken and set aside the moral obligation of the Christian Sabbath, is deserving only of the most marked reprobation of all who love the best interests of the nation, and who value the cause of true religion.

Again, numbers of these teachers are Arminian in principle, denying vehemently the doctrine of *Eternal Election*, and maintaining that of *universal atonement* or purchase. Against the former, modern Revivalists generally declaim; and in times of religious excitement, it is not unusual to hear it stated that to make mention of Divine Sovereignty or of an electing

purpose, would mar the work of revival. It is a sufficient answer to such statements, that sovereign Predestination is clearly taught in the Scriptures—that the Apostolic epistles frequently open with special thanksgivings to God for having chosen sinners in Christ before the foundation of the world—and they clearly trace the whole salvation of lost sinners to an eternal purpose of grace, and to God's electing love, as its origin and foundation. It is, moreover, worthy to be noted, that in the most powerful revivals of true religion that have already taken place—as at Pentecost—at the era of the Reformation—under the ministry of Livingstone, and Jonathan Edwards, and Whitfield, and Toplady; and in later times, in connexion with the labours of M'Cheyne and W. C. Burns, the doctrine of sovereign grace was prominently preached, and joyfully embraced. To keep out of view, much more to ignore and deny any precious doctrine of revelation, to say the least, cannot be taken as the right way to promote a work, which is wholly dependent upon the agency of the Spirit of truth. Many of the appeals of Lay revivalist preachers address persons of all classes with the assurance, most positively made, that Christ died for every one of them; and Revivalist hymns are full of this sentiment. This is assumed as the basis of the most awakening warnings and invitations, and earnest exhortations; and without such a ground of appeal, it is conceived and sometimes declared that calls to the unconverted would be ineffectual. Teaching of such a kind is destitute of any warrant from the word of God. It is founded upon a palpable falsehood. There is not a single instance of the Apostles thus addressing sinners in their preaching. Whatever excitement may take place, in connexion with such addresses, or the use of such hymns, we should beware of ascribing to the Spirit what originates in error and mere human feelings.

We may only add, that many Plymouthists, and numbers of Lay Revivalist preachers, seek to impress and excite their hearers and converts by teaching Millenarian doctrines—Christ's personal coming *on earth*—the resurrection of the bodies of the saints, and their reign with the Redeemer on earth. It may suffice to say that Christ's personal reign on earth is nowhere taught in the Scriptures—that His second coming is ever connected with the general resurrection and final Judgment; and that Milennarian views, however they may foster morbid fancy and enthusiasm, tend to carnalize the minds of Christians, damp the scriptural hope of heaven, and prevent vigorous and sustained exertions for the world's conversion.

## II. THE SPIRIT MANIFESTED BY THE SEPARATISTS.

We have a Scriptural warrant to judge men and parties by a spirit which they manifest in their tempers and actions.

The Christian spirit is the fruit of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart, and powerfully influencing the life and conduct. It is "the mind which was in Christ" ever actuating the believer, and the armour which he is constantly required to take, for all work and conflict. This is the spirit of humility, meekness, self-denial, and abounding charity. Charity is declared to be "the bond of perfection." We are forbidden "to judge, lest we be judged;" and commanded to "judge nothing before the time;" and we are required to have no respect of persons, in relation to those of our party, but to receive as brethren all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

The spirit of the Separatists is, in many respects, the reverse of Scripture precepts and approved Scriptural examples. It is *the spirit of censoriousness and harsh judging*. They denounce faithful evangelical ministers as unconverted, and represent attendance on their ministrations as sinful. They thus weaken the hands of servants of Christ and mar them in their work. Like the impetuous disciples, whom Jesus reprov'd, they would rebuke those who follow not with them. It behoves them to call to mind the Master's sayings—"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." "He that is not against me is for me." In the same spirit of harsh judging, they speak of those who are not awakened after their manner, and who do not embrace their doctrinal views, as unconverted; and they do not hesitate at times, to speak of deceased relatives, who were evangelical in their profession and who lived godly lives, as it being doubtful whether at death they were admitted to glory. Such a spirit is surely alien from the truth of the Gospel—it is alike condemned by the commands of our Saviour, and by the example of His most distinguished servants. The spirit of uncharitable censure and harsh judging by the Separatists is seen in its intensest aspect, when these write and speak of one another, and in the opposing parties and hostile camps in which they are ranged. While they all claim to be under *the "presidency of the Spirit"* in their meetings, and to speak by His direct and immediate impulse, they do not hesitate to denounce one another as liars, blasphemers—as actuated by the spirit of evil—and at times, they charge leading parties with literary dishonesty, in mutilating and perverting the writings of Reformers, to make them favour their religious views. Yet we are to believe, if we admit the principle of these Separatists that those who thus bitterly oppose and denounce each other, are equally speaking according to the Spirit's immediate dictation! Could despite to the Holy Ghost and blasphemy against Him go farther?

Again—The spirit manifested by these Separatists is that of *self-seeking and proud boasting*. They call themselves "Christians," and "the Brethren," as if those designations exclusively be-



longed to them. They say they are of no sect, and of no church—claiming that they alone are the church of Christ. Those awakened through their teaching, they style converts and believers; and they boast of how many of these they have made; while they speak of this as a certain evidence of Divine approval, regarding those who are not awakened in their way as not being converted, and ministers as not approved of God in their ministry, because they cannot show numbers of converts. All such boasting is impious and vain. The Spirit condemned in the Apostles days false teachers who sought their own glory, and depreciated faithful ministers, as well as those who proclaimed they were of Paul or of Apollos. The work of a sinner's conversion is the exclusive work of the Spirit of God; and in it the instrumentality is accounted as nothing, and is to claim none of the glory. The work of regeneration is the “kingdom that is within” and comes not by observation. Only by the fruits that appear afterwards do the quickening and saving operations of the Spirit become manifest. Those who have been most successful in winning souls have been ever jealous of their Master's glory. Many, on the other hand, who have boasted loudly of numerous converts, have given evidence themselves of having run uncalled and unsent; while multitudes of those whom they took to be believers, have clearly shown that they are not purged from their old sins, and that they remain strangers to the power of godliness.

The intense hostility of these Separatists against *Ministers* and all *Church organisations* shows further the evil spirit by which they are actuated. Ministers, the most devoted, they contemptuously style “man-made,” and they blame them as usurping the place of the Holy Spirit in the church. Organized churches they term human inventions and “synagogues of Satan;” and they openly declare one of their chief objects to be to “disturb their peace,” and to “draw disciples out of them.” The evil and malignity of such a spirit, it would be difficult to describe. Considered in relation to ministers themselves, who are appointed by Christ, are His ascension gifts to the church, and many of whom are earnestly labouring to bring sinners to Him, and to edify and comfort believers, it is every way to be condemned. Every Christian, when actuated by a right spirit, will be thankful that, in the different sections of the church, there are so many ministers labouring in the Master's work, will pray for a blessing upon their labours, and will unfeignedly rejoice in the evidence that they have been in any measure successful. The hostility of Separatists against ministers is to be regarded, as directed against Christ and His cause. He Himself has said, ‘he that refuseth you, refuseth me, and Him that sent me.’ The existence, order, and government of

the Church, are by the appointment of her glorious Head. He guarantees her stability, as He loves her peace. His servants are commanded to pray for her peace, and to seek her good alway. How opposed is all this to the *spirit of* Separatists ! While this is over to be disapproved of and condemned, the assurance of the church's exalted Head fully guarantees her safety and ultimate triumph. "No weapon that is found against thee shall prosper ; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." (Is. liv. 17.)

The spirit in which these parties *oppose and denounce Creeds and Catechisms*, betrays at once their ignorance and enmity against the truth. The creeds of the Reformed churches express the meaning of Holy Scripture, and have subordinate authority—they are only binding on the judgment and conscience, in as far as they are in accordance with the Divine word. This is the explicit declaration of the fullest and clearest of the church's doctrinal Standards. The Westminster Confession (ch. i. § 10), expressly states—"The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other, but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture." The systematic arrangement of a creed is valuable and important, as it brings into view great doctrines placed under distinct heads, and thus shows clearly the meaning of sacred Scripture on each article. The objection against Creeds, however plausibly put, with a seeming regard for the honour of the Bible, is, in reality, against the doctrine which they contain. By under-valuing Creeds, or getting them out of the way, errorists hope to open an inlet for the introduction of delusive and dangerous errors. Our safety is to grasp firmly and display openly a Banner of the truth ; and holding fast all Scriptural attainments, to walk by the same rule. The design of Plymouthists and Lay Revivalists in our days, is the same as that shown by parties in former or later times—by banishing Scriptural creeds to pervert the faith of the church, and bring in, as a flood, fundamental error. While showing that we are not ignorant of such devices, we should resist the attempt by holding fast the truth, and taking all pains that the young be carefully instructed in "the form of sound words ;" and that the church's Scriptural Confession should be intelligently maintained and widely diffused.

### III. UNSCRIPTURAL AND PERVERTING ADMINISTRATION OF THE ORDINANCES OF WORSHIP.

Errors in doctrine are very generally associated with corruptions in worship. The Scriptural model of Inspired Psalmody

was universally followed in the Primitive Christian church, till Paul of Samosata, in the third century, sought to bring in heresy, by introducing hymns that taught fundamental error and that glorified himself in the worship of the church. The countless errors of Romanism are most effectively taught by numerous rites of sensual worship ; and the fantastic and gorgeous modes of worship, practised by modern Ritualists, are by them professedly valued, because they are symbolical of their distinctive doctrines.

The chief ordinances of gospel worship, as they are observed by the Plymouth Brethren, and by those who generally adopt their doctrinal views, are corrupted by departure from Scripture precedent, and by human inventions—and with them such observances are intimately connected with doctrinal errors, concerning the nature and ends of the ordinances themselves. We notice—

(1.) *The Ordinances of Praise and Prayer.*—The object of the Church's praise is to set forth the superlative excellence of the Divine nature and character ; and its matter is the ascription to Him of the glory due to His name. Man is incompetent of himself to order praise aright. Divinely inspired songs are therefore indispensably needed, and such are provided with the stamp of supreme authority in the Psalms of David. These were ordinarily used in the worship of the Old Testament Church, down to the latest period of its history, They were exclusively employed by our Lord and His Apostles ; and can thus plead an infallible sanction for their use in the church's worship. Throughout the New Testament, there is neither precept, promise, nor example for the use of other than inspired songs in the worship of the Sanctuary. Uninspired hymns were first brought in when the Church began to depart from the faith once delivered to the saints, and with the express design of inculcating novel opinions and heretical sentiments. The use of modern hymns is resorted to for a like purpose in our day. It serves effectually to prevent the church's unity ; for while all Christians may agree in using the unerring utterances of the Spirit in their praises, they are kept hopelessly apart, by the use of human hymns, which set forth sectarian differences, and contain human errors and imperfections. There has never been a more insidious and powerful means of corrupting the faith of the church, than mixing up with the devotional exercises of the people, the poison of false doctrine, insinuated by the charms of music, and by excitement of feeling. The usual way of modern Revivalists is to supplant the inspired Psalms, by hymns of mere human composition, which are, in many cases, vapid in sentiment, turgid in expression, and more or less marked by imperfection and error. Sometimes the Psalms of Scripture are spoken of with contempt, and as unfit for Gospel worship ; while the use of

Revival hymns is belauded as “singing the Gospel,” and as the powerful means of conversion to multitudes. Comparing the most favourite hymns with the Inspired songs, either as to their matter, or enduring effects, we may well use the prophet’s expostulation—“What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord ; is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces :” (Jer. xxiii. 28, 29.) It certainly concerns those who seek earnestly the Spirit’s powerful presence<sup>a</sup> for the revival of the church, to guard with holy jealousy against all will-worship, and all that would dishonour God, by substituting human inventions for His own revealed order, and human error and imperfection for His precious truth.

*Prayer.*—Not less is the Spirit and His work discredited and condemned by the Plymouthist Brethren, and Lay Revivalists, in the matter of the great ordinance of Prayer. They generally teach that the Spirit was not in the Church till the day of Pentecost—that it is needless and wrong for believers to pray for the Spirit, as He has been already given them ; and that, as unconverted persons have not the Spirit, they should not pray even for mercy—seeing that prayer which is not of the Spirit, is not heard and accepted by God. The first and only duty of the unconverted is, they teach, to take salvation, without praying for it. All these statements are to be regarded as mere dictatorial assertions, without the least warrant from the word of God, or from the principles of sound reason. The Spirit was plainly in the church before Christ’s coming in the flesh, and His effusion at Pentecost. He moved Holy men of old to write the word by inspiration. He rested on ancient prophets when they spoke beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and His subsequent glory. He called, enlightened, and sanctified believers under the law—and He dictated the prayers and praises of the faithful, recorded in the devotional parts of the Bible. The Spirit without measure rested on Christ, the Head of the Church, and witnessed to Him in His words, miracles, death and resurrection. Unconverted persons are commanded to pray ; their moral inability does not lessen their obligation ; and their neglect of prayer is charged as sinful. Simon Magus, who was still “in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity,” is directed to pray to God for forgiveness. And the Scriptures contain instances of wicked men praying to God, and of their prayers being heard and answered—as in the case of Manasseh (2 Chr. xxvi. 5) ; and of the heathen mariners in the ship with Jonah (Jonah iii. 4) ; and of the Publican and the dying malefactor in the New Testament. The possession of the Spirit by any affords no ground for not praying for His farther manifestation, and for an increase of His gifts and graces, to themselves and others. Rather is He given, “as the



Spirit of grace and supplication" to the convinced, to enable them to believe—and to believers, to help their infirmities, so that they may prevail in prayer for a blessing to themselves and others. David, as a penitent believer, prays that God would not take His Spirit away, and that He would restore to him the joys of His salvation, and stay him with His free Spirit. (Ps. li. 11 12.) The writings of the Apostle Paul abound in prayer for himself, for larger measures of the graces of the Spirit and for the churches to whom he writes—that God would make them to know the mighty power of the Spirit, and give them "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him." (Eph. i. 17.) He enjoins Christians likewise to "walk in the Spirit," and to be "filled with the Spirit." (Gal. v. 25—Eph. v. 18.) "Taking salvation" is absurdly said to be the immediate duty, instead of "praying for it." How is it possible, it may be asked, to take salvation, without desiring it? The desire of the heart, whether expressed in words or not, is of the essence of prayer. Prayer is the appropriate expression of faith; and there are more acts of saving faith put forth in prayer than in any other exercise. The office and work of the Spirit, and the duty and nature of prayer are alike misunderstood and misrepresented by those who depart from the plain teaching of the word, for the purpose of bringing in novelties in religion, and promoting a spurious religious excitement.

#### DISPENSING SEALING ORDINANCES.

(2.) *The Lord's Supper.*—The Plymouth Brethren claim to dispense the Lord's Supper, not only by self-appointed Teachers, but even by other laymen; and in some cases, as in Italy of late years, by women. This they do on the ground that there is now no particular class of men to be recognised as stated ministers; and that all Christians, whether male or female, have the right, as called and qualified by the Spirit, to perform the functions of the ministry. Numbers of the Lay Revivalists hold the same principles, and follow the same practice. Pretending to conform strictly to Apostolic practice, they dispense the ordinance in private houses, and generally on each first day of the week. We cannot but regard this as unwarrantable, and a profanation of one of the most sacred and solemn ordinances of our holy religion; and the consequences cannot fail to be in the utmost degree injurious. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament and seal of the covenant of grace. It was instituted, as a special ordinance of fellowship for the church in its associated and collective capacity; and was not designed to be privately administered. The grounds of admission to it in God's sight are faith in the atonement of Christ, and other holy graces in exercise. Considered as an

ordinance of the visible church, a credible profession of faith, in Christ, with a conversation becoming the Gospel, entitles to a seat at the Lord's table. Its dispensation is committed by the Saviour to His ministers; and there is no evidence in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in the records of the Primitive church of its being administered by the private members of the church. It is distinctly recorded that when "the disciples came together to break bread," the Apostles as they journeyed "preached unto them" (Acts xx. 7); and not a single case is related of the ordinance being dispensed, without the presence of an authorized minister and the preaching of the word. The practice of dispensing this Sacrament from house to house, by self-called teachers, is with the avowed design to withdraw those whom they term disciples from the communion of the church. Its administration, without due preparation, to persons who are in a great measure ignorant, and not distinguished for holy living, amounts to the prostitution of a sacred ordinance. The obvious tendency is to mar the solemnity of the observance—harden those who receive it in this way—and incur the fearful danger threatened against those who do not "discern the Lord's body," and who are said to "eat and drink condemnation to themselves."

*Baptism.*—The Plymouth Brethren and Lay Evangelists generally deny Infant Baptism, and baptize their converts by dipping or plunging. In denying the right of infants to be baptized, these parties openly separate themselves from the Church universal, which has practised it, from the Apostolic age down to the present day. Infant dedication was appointed as a seal of the covenant for the Old Testament church. There is no account in the Scriptures of the repeal of the institution; its continuance under the New Economy is therefore to be firmly maintained. An express command for its observance is not to be expected in relation to an ordinance which had been long established, and the ends of which were of perpetual moral obligation. When in the days of our Lord and His Apostles, a profession of faith was required as the condition of baptism—this was in the case of adults—just as still, such a profession is demanded at the baptism of Heathens, Jews, and Mussulmans, who are converted to Christianity. Not a single instance can be adduced from the records of the New Testament of the child of a Christian parent being allowed to grow up to adult age unbaptized.

If infants are not to be baptized, because they are incapable of faith, on the same ground, they cannot be saved, since faith is required as indispensable to salvation. By grace alone, condescending and sovereign, infants as well as adults, are saved. The principles of faith may be implanted in the heart, where it cannot be brought into exercise. Some are called and sancti-

fied from their mother's womb, and if they are in the bond of the covenant, they may not be denied the seal. The exclusion of infants from the privileges of the church, on the ground of their incapacity to act faith, would exclude vast numbers of the infant seed of believers who die in infancy from heaven and would subvert the dearest hopes of godly parents. By denying the right of infant baptism, the children of Christian parents are reckoned as heathens, till they become capable of making a profession of faith; and in some cases, Plymouthists refuse to pray in families, when unconverted children and servants are present. There are instances too, in which decent religious parents have been so far misled by enthusiastic Lay preachers, as to refuse to send their children to the Sabbath School for instruction, alleging that they will depend on their being wholly taught by the Spirit, in matters religious and secular.

The baptism of adult converts by the Plymouth Brethren and their coadjutors is the most emphatic public declaration that they regard none others as Christians. They thus exclude from the pale of Christianity the most eminent Christians, who have died in the faith and hope of the gospel, and saints who are yet living—even all, save their own few adherents. Greater bigotry and intolerance than this it would be impossible to mention. The practice of baptizing adults—males and females—by immersion, generally in the open air, is liable to serious objection on the ground of decency, conveniency and health; besides, the plea that baptism requires indispensably the plunging of the whole body in water, betrays palpable ignorance of the nature and import of symbolical actions. The Lay preachers, when plunging their converts, speak of *burying* the person with Christ—alluding to the passage in Romans vi. 4—they thus betray the utmost ignorance relative to the *mode* of baptism. If the figure is to be taken as referring to baptism as a burial, it would require the person who submits to the rite to be not only dipped or plunged in the water, but drowned in it, that he might afterwards come out of it “to walk in newness of life.”

When those who adopt the practice of dipping their converts, plead that theirs alone is “*Believers’ Baptism*,” this assumes that they certainly know that these converts are real believers. Yet distinguished Baptist writers have the candour to admit that, in their churches, as many adults as they have baptized, afterwards give clear evidence of being unbelievers, as do those in Paedobaptist churches who were baptized in infancy. The presumption and rashness of these teachers is not unfrequently seen in their publicly dipping some, who, a short time before, were leading scandalously immoral lives, when they cannot possibly know that they have become the subjects of a real spiritual  
 la e of heart and life. The terms of the “Great Commis-

sion" do not exclude infants, since they form a part of "all nations." Our Lord did not command His ministers to "Disciple all nations," *and* baptize them, but to disciple them, "baptizing and teaching them." The primitive practice too is plainly opposed to exclusive "Believers' baptism." Philip baptized Simon Magus, who, was yet afterwards declared to be an unbeliever—"in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." And those who forsook the Apostles, and went no longer with them, had doubtless been baptized—yet they are declared not to have been "*of them*." This glaring abuse and perversion of the two sealing ordinances of Christianity, by ignorant and unauthorized Lay teachers, ought to be sufficient to show Christian men, of whatever name, the false doctrine and deceiving spirit of these parties, and to lead them to withhold from them all countenance, in their infatuated and destructive courses. It behoves those, too, who have been misled by them, sincerely to consider their danger; for the exalted Head of the Church will never suffer ordinances which are instituted by His authority and which reflect His glory, to be perverted and profaned, without manifesting His holy displeasure against those who take His name in vain, and propagate error and delusion.

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NOTE.—The Author of this Pamphlet acknowledges his obligation to the logical and very able refutation of "*The Heresies of the Plymouth Brethren*," by JAMES C. L. CARSON, M.D., Coleraine; and to the "*Catechism of the Doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren*," by the Rev. THOMAS CROSKERY, Londonderry. A caustic exposure of some doctrines and practices of the Plymouthists—entitled "*What Scotch Folk Think; or, The Brethren in the Keelhowes*,"—contains much important truth presented in a lively and interesting style.



# PLYMOUTHISM & REVIVALISM:

PART SECOND,

ON

Regeneration, Justification, & Sanctification,

SCRIPTURALLY STATED,

IN OPPOSITION TO PLYMOUTHIST AND  
REVIVALIST ERRORS.

BY

THOMAS HOUSTON, D.D.,

KNOCKBRACKEN.

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## P R E F A T O R Y   N O T E .

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THIS Second Part of "*Plymouthism and Revivalism*" contains the outlines of Three Discourses which were preached at Knockbracken on Sabbath evenings, with the object of presenting to the large numbers who assembled a Scriptural view of the fundamental doctrines of *Regeneration, Justification, and Sanctification*, and of exposing and refuting certain errors in relation to these doctrines, which are maintained and propagated by Plymouthists and certain Lay Preachers and their adherents

The publication of this Pamphlet was delayed longer than was intended, partly because a Second Edition of Part First had to be issued to supply the demand, and in part because of a family bereavement of the Author. Whatever references there may appear to be to the recent religious awakening, it may suffice to state that at the time the Discourses were delivered this awakening had not commenced, and, therefore, no specific allusion could be made to it. The brief remarks in the Appendix on certain doctrines taught—on modes resorted to for converting sinners—and especially on the corruption of the Church's praise, have been judged needful for the vindication of precious truth, and for guarding against great danger a movement which, if conducted aright, might be productive of extensive and lasting benefit.

 A few copies of both parts of "*Plymouthism and Revivalism*," stitched together, price 6d. each, may be obtained at MESSRS. W. & G. BAIRD'S, Arthur Street, Belfast, or at the Booksellers.

# REGENERATION OR CONVERSION.

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“Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.”—*John* iii. 7.

“Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.”—*2 Corinthians* v. 17.

THESE two passages are selected and combined together as the subject of this discourse, because the one emphatically teaches, in the words of the Saviour Himself, the *necessity* of a great saving change to every human being, and the other declares its *nature* and *effects*.

The discourse with Nicodemus, spoken in the early part of our Lord's personal ministry on earth, is full of doctrine, and exhibits clearly the whole way of a sinner's salvation. The Jewish Ruler, impressed with the Saviour's wondrous deeds, came to Him by night, and addressed Him in terms of candour and respect. Yet did he only regard Him as a human Prophet sent of God. Though a minister of religion, and in high repute among the people, he was profoundly ignorant of the spiritual import of the services in which he was employed—a stranger to the new birth, and unacquainted with the necessity and nature of true holiness. Our Lord—instead of seeming to regard the testimony of Nicodemus concerning Himself—addressed to him abruptly the most weighty practical instruction. Three times, in the course of a few verses (v. 3, 5, 7), He proclaimed, with the utmost solemnity, the *necessity* of a great saving change. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” In the original, it is not “a man”—but *any one*—whether Jew or Gentile—whatever his previous character—whatever his time of life—or profession—he is included in this indispensable requirement. All, without exception, must experience an internal spiritual change, bearing some resemblance to the natural birth. They must be wholly renewed, or “born from above.” This radical change is explained, when Nicodemus misunderstood and misapplied the Saviour's declaration. The renewed are “born of water and of the Spirit.” Whatever allusion the birth by water may have to the cleansing of the leper, or to the sprinkling of the water that was mixed with the ashes of the red heifer, or to baptismal washing, the reference is chiefly to the cleansing efficacy of Christ's blood, as applied by the Spirit. The Agent of the great change is the Holy Spirit, without whom the water is naught. We must be born of water,



even of the Spirit,\* which the water baptism symbolizes. The "kingdom of God", which cannot be *seen spiritually, nor entered practically*, without the new birth, is the church invisible here, and heaven hereafter. Then the Saviour reiterates the solemn declaration of the indispensable need of this momentous change. "*Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.*" We need not wonder at the matter. It is wholly impossible to have a part in the true kingdom of Christ without being the subject of the new spiritual birth. Depending on the Spirit to enlighten and direct, we consider

### I.—THE NECESSITY OF CONVERSION.

1. The Great Change is variously designated by terms the most significant and expressive. It is styled *Regeneration*, or being born again. This implies a previous natural birth—that through sinful parents and after their image, is fleshly and depraved. This is a *new birth*, of a wholly different kind—as it is the renewal of the Spirit—the new man made in righteousness and true holiness; and it is heavenly, as we are born from above. It is a *new creation*, and a *spiritual resurrection*. Those who were "dead in trespasses and sins," are "created anew unto good works," and "raised together with Christ." In regeneration, the work is wholly of God, and the sinner is altogether passive. This change is an *effectual calling*—internal, the peculiar work of the Spirit; and it is a high, holy, and heavenly vocation. It is commonly termed *conversion*. This which denotes a "turning with God," is the immediate fruit of regeneration. The regenerate subject actually concurs with the Divine call. He turns voluntarily *with* God and *to* God. Constrained by Almighty grace, he obeys the Divine command—Ezek. xviii. 31—"Cast away from you all your transgressions, and make you a new heart and a new spirit:" Acts iii. 19—"Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," &c.

2. The *Necessity* of Conversion appears from various considerations—(1.) The *Saviour has explicitly declared it*. He speaks with all authority. The kingdom is exclusively His. He has settled unalterably the laws of it, and He has the sole right to declare the conditions of enjoying its privileges. The law of the new birth is fundamental—"Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii. 3.) (2.) *Because of the Fall, and of our consequent sinful condition*. "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners." All are under the curse, alienated from the life of God, and lost.

\* So has the original expression been rendered.

Our moral inability is total. We are wholly depraved and unlike God. We are dead in trespasses and sins, without strength and helpless. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. viii. 7.) Remaining in this state, an entrance to the kingdom of God is impossible, and the happiness which is inseparable from moral purity cannot be attained. This change is *universally necessary*. It is not said he *may not enter*, but he "*shall not*." He is authoritatively excluded. The exclusion effects Jew and Gentile—those of decent religious profession, equally with the ignorant and ungodly—the moral, virtuous, and benevolent as well as the depraved and vicious. All without exception must undergo this spiritual change before they can be admitted into the kingdom of God.

(3.) The new birth is *indispensable to the whole Gospel state*. Regeneration is the "strait gate," by which men enter the way of life. This change is absolutely required in order to the exercise of every grace of the Spirit—the *principle* must be implanted previously to its manifestation in special *acts*. Faith, which is "the gift of God," is the first act of the New Creature; repentance, wrought by the Spirit, is the fruit of saving faith; and the habitual exercise of both constitutes the main element of sanctification. The new birth is as needful to the enjoyment of all the *privileges* of the Gospel as to the exercise of spiritual graces. Nor is it less required for the right performance of all Gospel *duties*. Though it is clearly the duty of the unregenerate to pray, yet as religious worship is the expression of spiritual affections of the soul, prayer can only be devoutly offered by such as are born again. The testimony about Saul of Tarsus, when he was converted—"Behold, he prayeth," declared his altered state and whole character. The new birth is necessary to the right discharge of all the duties which we owe to God—to ourselves and others. Without experiencing it, there can be no supreme love to God, nor charity to our neighbour. Even if the outward form of the duty is observed, it will be performed insincerely, and without a right spirit and ends.

(4.) Conversion to God is *indispensable to the enjoyment of heavenly felicity*. As all happiness lies in a due accordance between our state and our disposition of mind, and consists in being in one's proper element, it is evident that we can possess no meetness for heaven till we are born again. Holiness complete is the grand prerequisite of heavenly felicity. Perpetual, delighted attendance on God's service—communion with God, joyful and uninterrupted—and perfect likeness to Him—these form the chief ingredients of the happiness of heaven. The fellowship of glorified saints and holy angels constitutes a part of the bliss of the redeemed in glory. Heaven is an eternal

Sabbath, and the feast of spiritual communion with all holy beings that will never end. Without a renewed and sanctified character, nothing of all these can be spiritually understood or realized. Heaven to the unrenewed would only be splendid misery. Let us seriously consider for ourselves the absolute necessity of regeneration.

## II.—THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF CONVERSION.

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” To be *in Christ* is to be united to Him by the Spirit, and to abide in Him by faith. As the living branch is connected with the growing tree, and the head and members form one organized body, so Christ and His people stand in a union, vital, close, and indissoluble. All who are true Christians—no matter what they were before—experience such a change that they become new creatures. This change is real, and common to all the children of God.

1. It is a *complete, spiritual change*. It is a new creation of heart and life. The “new man,” created unto righteousness and true holiness, is put on. (Ephes. iv. 24.) It is no mere physical or moral change; it is *spiritual*—the Holy Spirit imparting new life, and dwelling within, as the agent and source of all holy principles and actions. (Ezekiel xxxvi. 26; John vii. 37.)

2. It is *instantaneous and universal*. There is no third state or middle condition between death and life. Whatever preparatory work of reflection and conviction there may be, the passage from death to life takes place at once. When “the Spirit and breath” blows upon “the dry bones,” they are quickened in a moment, and the results are seen afterwards. The spiritual change affects the whole man. It is not one power or faculty that is wrought upon by the Spirit. The whole soul—heart, will, and conscience, are renewed. It is a thorough change of *principle*—displacing enmity by love, and pride by humility—implanting faith and hope, and rendering spiritually-minded. It is a change of *end*—enthroning God, instead of self, as the great end of life. (1 Cor. x. 30; Ps. lxxiii. 25.) The works, conflicts, and joys of life become altogether diverse in character from what formerly distinguished the individual.

3. The *Author* of conversion is *God alone*. This is the clear and reiterated testimony of the Word. Three times in one verse (Ezek. xi. 19), God claims this as His peculiar work. “Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John i. 13.) As implying that the great change is the effect of Divine power, it is styled

a creation, a resurrection from the dead—the *giving of a new life*. It is the work of God's sovereign will—of His grace—of Almighty power. In the Scriptures, it is ascribed to all the persons of the Godhead—they all concur in the call and conversion of the sinner, while each operates a distinct and appropriate part. It is beyond the power of man and angel to convert a soul lying in sin. It requires a greater exertion of Almighty power to quicken a dead human soul, than to create the universe. Of this change, God is the exclusive Agent as He will have of it the sole and undivided glory.

4. The change in conversion consists in *a new life and likeness to God*. The Holy Spirit communicates a new life. In the time of love, the Lord passes by, and says, Live. We pass from death to life—to a new state of activity, in which spiritual functions are performed, easily, pleasantly, powerfully. This is “the life of God in the soul”—a life derived from Christ, of which He is the ruling principle and joy, and its great end is His glory. This new life is manifest in moral likeness to Christ, which is permanent and increasing. “We shall bear the image of the Heavenly.” “Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (1 Cor xv. 49 : 2 Cor. iii. 18.) This likeness to Christ—reproduced and increased continually by the Spirit, is seen in the intellect enlightened, the affections purified, and in devoted actions. It is displayed in holiness of heart and life. It is ever *abiding*, as union to the Head cannot be dissolved. The “incorruptible seed” remaineth. The regenerate are “kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.” The new creature, under the law of perpetual increase, grows up to “the stature of a perfect man in Christ.”

### III.—THE EVIDENCES OF TRUE CONVERSION.

(1.) The Saviour in His discourse with Nicodemus declares the only right way of judging of this great spiritual change—John iii. 8—“The wind bloweth where it listeth,” &c. It is very observable that, neither here nor in any other part of the Word, does He lay any stress on knowing the time and circumstances of conversion. In every instance, we are to judge of the presence and gracious operation of the Spirit by the effects; and as we are weak and imperfect, it seems obvious that, in judging of a spiritual work in ourselves or others, we are unable to come to a right conclusion hastily. We require time to witness the manifestation of the internal principles in the spirit and conduct. Though the change in conversion is instantaneous, yet, as its reality can only be ascertained by its fruits, time is required that these may be



brought forth and matured. 1. The Apostle summarily declares the evidences of regeneration, when he says of the new creature—“*Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*” This plainly means that the “old things” which characterized the unrenewed state are laid aside and forsaken, never to be resumed. The “hard and stony heart”—cold, lifeless, and incapable of spiritual impression—is exchanged for “a heart of flesh,” which is living, feels, and receives and retains impressions of good. The old man, which is “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,” is laid aside. Old views, affections, and habits are relinquished. The supreme love of self, the indulgence of sin, conformity to the world, carnality of mind, and neglect of duty, are no longer distinguishing characteristics. The enmity of the heart against God is slain. A radical and permanent change takes place at the new birth. Though the subject of it may be unable to explain its nature, and will shrink from boasting of his attainments, he can yet say—“Whereas I was once blind; now I see.” “By the grace of God I am what I am.”

2. “*All things are become new.*” This is expressed as matter of wonder and astonishment—“Behold, all things.” &c. A “new heart and spirit” are given. The understanding is spiritually enlightened—the will is renewed—the affections become centred on spiritual objects—and the conscience is “cleansed from dead works,” that we may serve the living God. New objects henceforth occupy the thoughts; the heart forms new attachments; the life is regulated by a new rule, and is diverted to a new and higher end. The regenerated individual is distinguished by *new views* and corresponding *new affections* about everything—about God, Christ, the Spirit—about religion, the world, life, death, and eternity. *All things* become new. They appear in an entirely different aspect. The whole face of nature is changed. All the objects with which we have intercourse present a renewed aspect; and ever after we learn to walk in “newness of life.”

3. The Holy Spirit *produces these fruits and evidences* them. He works arbitrarily, and as a free agent. His operations are secret and mysterious, and yet powerful, so as to make the effects manifest. They are effected not by sudden impulses and impressions, but are like “the wind”—which discovers its presence and power in vivifying, purifying, and refreshing the world of nature. The Spirit’s presence is evidenced by effects which are in accordance with His nature. He implants and excites spiritual desires. He is the Spirit of grace and supplication. Prayer in the Holy Ghost becomes the clearest out and breath of the new creature. The Spirit effectually

“helps our infirmity” in prayer.\* Dwelling within, He sheds abroad in the heart the love of God, and, at the same time, constrains to love the brethren. He enables to live by faith, to walk in love, and to do the works of the new creature. We become *spiritually-minded*, which is “life and peace.” We are “sealed by the Spirit to the day of redemption,” and have “an unction from the Holy One, and understand all things.” The “fruits of the Spirit” are “fruits into holiness, and the end everlasting life.” At times the Spirit shines on His own work in the soul, and “witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God.” To the regenerate, He is the pledge and *earnest* of the heavenly inheritance.

#### IV.—ERRONEOUS REPRESENTATIONS AND PERVERSIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE NEW BIRTH.

We freely admit that *personal dealing* on the subject of conversion is important, and that it is a primary duty to stir up persons to solemn inquiry on this momentous matter. Ministers and others should be ready at all pains to explain the nature of regeneration; they should frequently insist on its necessity, and point out its fruits and evidences. It should be shown to be a matter of the deepest personal interest; and forsaking sin and turning to the Lord should be pressed upon the attention as a duty most urgent and as brooking no delay.

The method taken by numbers of modern Revivalists to show the need of conversion, and to exhibit its evidences, is, in various respects, unscriptural and misleading. Revivalist preachers address persons with whom they had no previous intercourse; and at once, and sometimes in a light, irreverent manner, demand of them whether they are converted, or have found Christ. In case they answer affirmatively and with confidence, and give some plausible account of the state of their feelings, they readily give them credit for being true Christians. If they answer with hesitation, and only venture to express a hope that they may be saved, these preachers at once pronounce them to be unbelievers, and denounce against them eternal woe. Such a mode of dealing on the subject of conversion is wholly unwarrantable. It may be at once demanded—Who gave authority to these persons to propose such an inquiry, and what sufficient evidence have we of their conversion? We find nothing in the example of Christ or His Apostles to sanction this. On the day of Pentecost, and in the case of the Philippian Jailor, the awakened themselves first inquire about the way of salvation, and they are at once directed to exercise

\* Romans, viii. 26. The most ancient and best manuscripts have the word “infirmity” for “infirmities,” as is the rendering in the Authorised Version.

faith in Christ, as the way of life. The question respecting conversion put by Revivalists who are often themselves ignorant, and incompetent to state clearly the Scripture doctrine of conversion, is often proposed, without explanation, to persons who have no right views either of the necessity or the nature of regeneration. Those who are thus addressed should at once refuse to be made accountable to such self-appointed judges or inquisitors.

2. It is utterly wrong, in most cases, to come to an immediate conclusion respecting men's spiritual condition and final prospects, whether of happiness or misery. This Revivalist teachers generally do without hesitation. They have been known to assert with confidence that they can tell whether a person is converted or not by looking into his face ! Without hesitation, they pronounce an absolute sentence in relation to men's character and future eternal state. If their inquiry is answered hesitatingly, or in the way of expressing a hope—as true believers themselves may do, through weakness of faith or a sense of indwelling sin—the Revivalists declare that those who thus answer are straightway going to hell. The faith that does not bring immediately with it the assurance of final salvation they pronounce not to be saving, and the person who professes it to be still “in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.” All this is in the highest degree presumptuous. God alone can judge the spiritual state of men with absolute certainty. It is His sole prerogative to search the heart. To every self-appointed inquisitor the Scriptural rebuke may be addressed—“Who art thou, that judgest another ?” Imperfect and fallible, as we are, we can only form an estimate of the moral state and character by the outward evidence and effects ; and it requires time for the clearing and development of these, before we can come to a safe and right conclusion. We are commanded to “Judge nothing before the time.” In any case, it is fearful presumption to usurp God's prerogative ; and, in the instances to which we refer, it must follow that greatly mistaken and delusive judgments are frequently formed, tending to spiritual pride and self-deception, and sometimes even to gross immorality and to unnecessary scandal to religion.

3. These Revivalists adopt *improper ways of producing convictions*, and very generally they *confound conviction with conversion*. They commonly appeal to the natural feelings, and labour, above all, to excite dread of the wrath to come. When these are strongly moved, it is considered as certain evidence of a spiritual change ; while the indispensable agency of the Spirit is undervalued or ignored. All true conviction of sin is the special work of the Spirit. He works by the instrumentality of the truth, addressed to the understanding and commended to the conscience, as in the sight of God. While the law con-

vinces of sin, it is the Gospel of the love of God that melts the proud heart, and subdues the sinner to the obedience of faith. The "goodness of God leads to repentance." (Rom. ii. 4.) Whatever awakening there may be through terror, we are only drawn savingly with "cords of a man and bands of love." (Hos. xi. 4.) The distinction between *legal* and *evangelical* repentance lies, in a great measure, here. The one is excited by presenting the terrors of the law; the other by the display of the rich, grand, amazing love of God, seen through the sufferings of Christ in the room of guilty sinners. In the various instances of genuine and powerful revivals in past times, the gracious effects resulted from the very full and frequent preaching of the Gospel of sovereign grace. Thus was it at Pentecost—at the era of the Reformation—and under the preaching of Livingstone and the Conventicle ministers—of Whitfield, Venn, Jonathan Edwards, and, in later times, in the ministry of Burns and M'Cheyne. It is still by the faithful preaching of the Gospel, and not by pretty anecdotes and disjointed statements of the Word, and appeals to the emotions, however striking and pointed, that sinners will be awakened and souls lying in sin will be converted. Natural feelings may be strongly stirred, and terror or gladness excited, where no real spiritual change follows. Conviction, however powerful, should never be confounded with conversion. Transient convictions, even though deep and pungent, leave their subjects in a worse state than before. The cases of Israel at Sinai—of the Hebrew people in the time of the Judges; and of Judas, Simon Magus, and the Galatians; and of multitudes who have had deep impressions in seasons of religious excitement, show the danger of confounding conviction of sin with true conversion.

A number of the ways adopted by Revivalists for the purpose of awakening, which are often spoken of as effectual in producing conversion, are, to say the least, doubtful, if not also most objectionable. Such are the presenting of partial views of the Gospel—the frequent retailing of illustrative anecdotes, and bringing in visions, dreams, cases of supposed remarkable answers of prayer, and of sudden conversion, in which a principal part was acted by the Revivalist preacher himself. This is too like the practices which the Apostle condemns—Preaching "ourselves, and not Christ Jesus, the Lord;" and "measuring ourselves by ourselves." In the best cases the tendency is to undervalue the full preaching of the Gospel, and to lay undue stress on mere human expedients. Such methods encourage fancy and superstition in religion. The truth of many of the illustrative cases, and of the inferences deduced from them, may be properly called in question. To expect gracious effects from



recounting them is to labour to produce saving faith by a human testimony, instead of depending on Divine testimony, without which no act of true faith can ever be put forth.

Another method recently invented, and much resorted to of late in America and in these countries for effecting conversion, is the *use of hymns* of mere human composition, accompanied, if possible, with *instrumental music*. Services for the conversion of children not unfrequently consist of this alone. When children commit to memory emotional hymns, and learn to sing them with apparent earnestness, this is boasted of by fond parents and others as a certain proof of their early conversion. In large assemblies of adults, the singing of hymns and solos, which are utterly destitute of worship, with the accompaniment of an organ, is bepraised as "*singing the Gospel*." To the singing of certain worthless hymns is directly ascribed, as a chief instrument, the conversion of numbers. This forms a large part of the exercises in the meetings which are expressly convened for united devotions ; yet, strange to say, the practice of hymn and solo singing is vindicated by declaring that it is not intended for worship ! It is, forsooth, to be regarded in the light of an entertainment, gratifying the natural taste for music ; and yet it is a means of conversion, and is avowedly depended on as a principal means for keeping up the interest in the Revival meetings ! This is unquestionably a wide departure from the methods which were formerly followed in promoting genuine revivals. It is a novelty, without countenance and support in the Divine Word, and is calculated to foster dangerous delusion on the whole subject. The direct effect of the hymn and solo singing is to exclude the inspired psalmsody sanctioned by our Lord and His Apostles from the worship of the church, and to introduce will-worship, which is expressly condemned in the Bible and in the standards of the Reformed churches. Many of the hymns and solos which are employed have nothing in them of the nature of worship—are deficient in poetical expression—and merely sentimental and naturalistic. One can only wonder how it comes to pass that Presbyterian ministers and Christian people can be led to prefer this trash to the songs of inspiration. To present these in worship, and to speak of them as an eminent means of conversion, can scarcely be regarded as less than blasphemy against the Spirit, and as "an offering of the lame and the blind for sacrifice." Our comfort is that which sustained our fathers in their days of trial—that *human insertions in the worship of God will yet be rejected*. Soon as the effervescence of feeling shall have subsided, serious persons, concerned for the progress and power of Divine truth,

will return to the use of songs of praise, indicted by the Holy Spirit, and will abandon compositions, many of which are devoid alike of poetical expression and Gospel sentiment. It may be added that the music to which some of the Revival hymns are played or sung is often wholly wanting in "the grave, sweet melody" which is suitable for Gospel worship.\*

(3.) The mode adopted by Revivalists of numbering and exhibiting their converts is strongly objectionable. In large assemblies, persons "who are Christians" are required to stand up separately; others are invited to occupy *anxious seats*, or to go into the *Inquiry Room*, to be conversed with and specially prayed for; and special prayers are requested and offered for those who are required to stand apart as being unconverted. If persons are impressed by such novel and exciting appliances, and, after expressing anxiety about their souls' salvation, speak of having obtained peace, they are regarded as believers, and are told that they may entertain or should possess the assurance of eternal life. A very short intercourse with a Revivalist preacher, or with ministers and laymen who co-operate in this work under his direction, is reckoned sufficient to effect conversion, and impart spiritual peace to an individual, who, up till this time, was ignorant of the Scriptures and the way of salvation, and was living in carelessness and ungodliness. Then the number of such converts is proclaimed at the public meetings; and this is avowedly employed as a chief means of awakening and converting others. We regard such proceedings as being destitute of Scriptural authority, and as, in many respects, of evil influence. While it may be admitted that persons may be awakened by the Spirit, and brought to the saving knowledge of the truth in a short time, we hold that it is most delusive and dangerous to pronounce those convinced of sin and converted who may only have natural feelings excited by fervid appeals, or by the power of sympathy, and who continue ignorant of Gospel truth, or hold erroneous views on the scheme of salvation by grace. This way of reckoning and proclaiming converts we regard as injurious to the Revivalists themselves, as it tends to foster pride and self-seeking, and leads men to arrogate to themselves the glory that belongs to Christ alone. It is detrimental to the awakened, as it tends to exalt them in their own esteem, and exposes them to the assaults of the Tempter. And it is of evil influence to the Church, as it sets aside, in a great measure, God's appointed means of awakening and conversion—bringing in fervid appeals to natural principles and feelings—keeping back a full exhibition of Gospel truth, and leaving out of view

\* See Appendix.

the influence of sovereign grace in this momentous matter. The evidence is strong against not a few who declare that they were awakened and converted by these means, that they are utterly unacquainted with the saving work of the Spirit. After the temporary excitement has subsided, they have speedily turned aside, and relapsed into former evil practices. Their last end has been worse than the first. Then the *ensorious spirit and harsh judging* by Revivalists and their adherents of those who stood aloof from such modes of procedure, and their opposition to the Scriptural order of the church, show clearly that they are without the humility and meekness, which are the fruit of the Spirit. The testimony of the late Dr. Morgan respecting the religious excitement of 1859, is, that while there was a work of the Spirit in the movement, a large number of those who were under the influence of bodily prostration, and who were spoken of at the time as remarkable converts, turned out badly.

The *Lessons* to be learned from all this are that, in seeking the awakening and conversion of sinners, we should place our whole dependence for the desired result upon the agency of the Spirit, operating through the clear and full exhibition of the truth, and the earnest preaching of the Gospel—that satisfactory evidences of real conversion can only be given by the sanctification of the spirit and life, and cannot, therefore, in ordinary cases, be furnished immediately after the supposed change; and—That in all cases, the proclamation of the numbers convicted, and awakened or converted, by such means as we have stated, tends to foster delusion, and to promote a work which cannot produce salutary effects in the church. While it is our duty fervently to pray for and labour to promote genuine revival, this can only be looked for through the power and prevalence of “the truth as it is in Jesus;” and most jealously are we to guard against all corruption in worship, and all glorying in man in the matter. Only evil can result from distrusting the power of the Gospel to produce saving conversion; when the means directly appointed are set aside to make way for others of human contrivance, the effect cannot but be injurious. A venerable experienced minister in America, who had taken much part in promoting revivals in his own congregation and elsewhere, declared, as the result of an extensive experience, that, in the course of ten or twelve years after the revival movement had passed over, in all cases the spiritual state of congregations was worse than it was before it had commenced. This holds out a solemn warning to us—certainly not to undervalue or depreciate true revival; but to be aware of the danger of having recourse to novel expedients, and of resting on extraordinary excitement, instead of looking

for the work of grace in connection with the faithful preaching of the Gospel, and the regular and pure administration of Scriptural ordinances.

#### CONCLUSION.

This subject calls us, first of all, to make *searching inquiry* respecting ourselves personally, *whether we are the subjects of regeneration*. No matter of self-examination is more solemn and momentous than this. We should go to God in secret; seek the aid of the Holy Spirit; and sit in judgment on ourselves. We are enjoined to examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, and to know ourselves; and we are solemnly warned that to us belong the character and doom of reprobates, if Christ is not in us. (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) This self-judging is the appointed way of escaping that judgment which is to final condemnation. (1 Cor. xi. 31.) It should be close, searching, and frequent; and, even when we have earnestly essayed it, feeling how weak and imperfect is our trial, and dreading all self-deception, we should put the case into the Divine hand, and earnestly plead—“*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in Thy way everlasting.*” (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.)

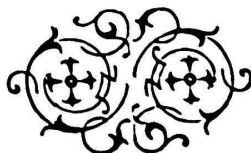
Again, sinners should lay to heart *the incumbent necessity of conversion for themselves*. It is certainly not our province to pronounce the doom of those to whom the Gospel message is addressed; but the call to the unconverted is urgent, and their danger is imminent. By every affecting motive, they are called to “flee from the wrath to come.” Jehovah, while He swears by Himself that He has “no pleasure in the sinner’s death,” presents the urgent, earnest call—“Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?” (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) The “accepted time” is now, and the present is “the day of salvation.” The only alternative is turning to the Lord, or inevitable death. Believing in the Lord, we have everlasting life; while our unbelief brings with it certain destruction. “He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” This, the Saviour’s declaration of the indispensable necessity of the New Birth, demands that we should make this a primary personal concern. We should dread any delay, and, earnestly seeking the Spirit, who can alone quicken the dead, we should yield ourselves to God as “those who are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”

(3.) It is required that we should make conspicuous *the evidence, and bring forth the blessed fruits of regeneration*. We should dread delusion on a subject so momentous. It behoves



us to beware of laying stress on outward profession or excited feeling, and temporary religious impressions. We should fear to follow false and unknown guides on this subject, and should guard against resting on doubtful and deceptive evidences. Growing humility—the spirit of prayer cherished—love to the brethren—devotedness to Christ, in all holy living—these are distinctive characteristics of regeneration. Advancement in holiness will render the evidence of the New Birth clearer and more distinct. We are “delivered out of the hand of our enemies that we might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness, before Him all the days of our life.”

Finally, let us *ever rejoice in the great change*, and give to *God all the glory*. It is wholly of rich sovereign grace that we have been rescued from death, and freed from condemnation. We have been adopted into God’s family, and the seed of complete sanctification has been implanted. We are risen to newness of life, and constituted heirs of glory. Ever should we aim to walk worthy of Him, who has called us “out of darkness into His marvellous light.” The old man must be laid aside, and the new man put on completely. We should live as regenerated ones—a holy nation—a peculiar people. We should manifest the daily renewal of the Spirit, shining as lights in the world ; and, aiming constantly at the maturity of the new nature, we are to put on the meetness for the heavenly inheritance.



# JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

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ROMANS iii. 24.—“Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

It was justly declared by Luther—the illustrious German Reformer—that “Justification by faith is the grand article of a standing or falling church.” And again—“The article of justification being lost, all Christian doctrine perishes with it.” We need hardly say in the commencement, that this subject is of unspeakable importance—not only to all churches, but likewise to every individual of Adam’s race, and especially to those to whom the offers of the Gospel are addressed. Through the breach of the covenant of works, by man’s first transgression, the whole human family has become *a race of criminals*, under the curse and a righteous sentence of condemnation. All are dealt with as such in this life, at death, and in the world to come, save those who believe on Christ, are united to His person, and covered with “the Best robe”—“the wedding garment” of His imputed righteousness. Destitute of this, we are “condemned already;” and if we remain in this state, we must perish for ever.

The Apostle, in the preceding part of the Epistle, and throughout this chapter to verse 20, has proved Jew and Gentile, by nature and in themselves—“all under sin”—the “whole world having become guilty before God.” He then declares that “by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in His sight”<sup>\*</sup>—meaning chiefly the moral law, by which is “the knowledge of sin.” In solemn and weighty terms, he then exhibits the full and blessed provision made for the sinner’s justification. “Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, *unto all* and *upon all* them that believe: for there is no difference” (v. 21, 22). This is the Redeemer’s spotless, perfect law-magnifying righteousness. It is *unto all*, as it extends to all who believe of whatever class or character; and it is *upon all*, so as to wrap up in its ample fold and cover over all who believe. All have sinned, and so indispensably need a better righteousness than their own, or than that of any crea-

<sup>\*</sup> In the original it is “by deeds of law,” without the article—meaning law of any kind, ceremonial or moral—law in the widest sense.

ture, however holy and exalted. Then, in the text and the words that follow, there is declared the *Divine plan of the sinner's justification, and the glory that redounds to God through it*. Christ Jesus in the provision of the Covenant is set forth to be a Propitiation. His finished righteousness is brought in, and is accepted in behalf of the guilty sinner. God is thus seen to be "just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." We shall consider

### I.—WHAT IT IS TO BE JUSTIFIED.

Our *Westminster Shorter Catechism* well defines Justification to be "*An Act of God's free Grace, wherein He pardons all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.*" The Lutheran doctrine, as stated by *Hase*, is to the same effect—"Justification is a forensic act, by which God, moved by grace alone, on account of the merit of Christ, apprehended by faith, imputes the righteousness of Christ, remits sins, and reconciles the sinner to Himself." Justification is not an internal *change of nature*, but a *change of state*—it is not the making of a man just or righteous, but the pronouncing of a person acquitted from all judicial charges. It is opposed to guilt and condemnation. It is a forensic act, or the act of God as a Sovereign Judge, by which the sinner is fully forgiven—the criminal is pronounced righteous in the eye of the law, and can never again be brought in guilty.

It is the *act* of God, done completely *at once*. It is in no sense a series of acts, or progressive, as sanctification. The person is wholly justified at the time of believing. His sins are fully and for ever forgiven, and he is brought into favour and friendship with God. God acts in the matter as a Sovereign Judge. "It is God that justifieth." (Rom. viii. 34.) As the sinner has violated the Divine law, God alone can decide in relation to his condemnation or acquittal. "Who can forgive sins but God?" In the words of one of Homilies of the Church of England—"Justification is the affair of God only. It is not a thing which we *render to Him*, but which *we receive of Him*." It is the sole prerogative of God to pardon and accept the sinner. All the persons of the Godhead are concerned in it. With the blessed Trinity concurring and co-operating in the complete forgiveness of every saved sinner, none can reverse the deed of acquittal. When God has pardoned, none can condemn.

Justification is wholly a *free gift*. This is emphatically declared in the text. Grace means free favour; and when we are pardoned, the stress lies upon the gratuitous character of the act "Justified freely by His grace." Man is a sinner, con-

demned by the law, and in danger of eternal woe. "By deeds of law, no flesh living is justified" in God's sight. Christ and eternal life are God's free gift. If pardon is not perfectly gratuitous, it is not possible for the guilty sinner. "Grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. v. 21 ; Eph. ii. 8.) The state of those on whom the blessing is conferred, shows it to be altogether of sovereign grace. It is "sinners" and the "ungodly" who are justified. They can therefore have no claim on the footing of character or works which they have done. They are viewed in themselves as ungodly, up to the time of their being pardoned and accepted. The justification of every saved sinner redounds solely to the "glory of free grace."

Justification includes the *full forgiveness of all sin*. The most universal terms are employed to set forth the way of Divine forgiveness. Of God who justifieth it is declared—"Who forgiveth all their iniquity." All sin is "blotted out"—cast "behind God's back"—cast "into the depths of the sea"—and "remembered no more." When "the iniquity of Israel is sought for, there is none; and the sins of Judah, they shall not be found; for I will pardon, saith the Lord, them whom I reserve." (Jer. l. 20.) If a single sin remains unpardoned, this would condemn and destroy for ever; but to show the completeness of the act—in a variety of expressions all sin is declared to be forever taken away. The guilt of the sinner is completely cancelled, and neither enemies nor sins afterwards committed can bring him again under condemnation.

Justification is more than pardon, however full and irrevocable. The justified person is pronounced and esteemed righteous, on the ground of the righteousness of the Surety. Pardon results from the non-imputation of sin. Justification is more, as it is the imputation of Christ's meritorious righteousness: and all the reward of the Saviour's obedience unto death is conferred upon them that are justified. Justification must take place in time, as none can be acquitted without being before guilty. And it cannot flow from mere mercy—as the person justified can only be freed from condemnation on the footing of ample satisfaction rendered to the law and justice of God. The individual justified, is, at the same time, "*accepted in the Beloved*." God is not "ashamed to be called His God." He is a son, and in consequence "an heir of God through Christ." By faith, He has "access into the grace wherein He stands." This Divine acceptance extends first to the *persons*, and then to *all the services* of the justified. They are admitted to the most intimate fellowship. This they never lose—as they are never cast out of the state of friendship with God. By sovereign grace in justification, they obtain a title to the heavenly inheritance,



which they can never afterwards forfeit. Those who are justified are at length without exception glorified.

## II.—THE GROUND OF THE SINNER'S JUSTIFICATION.

1. The ground of our justification is, in no sense, aught that we have done or can do. Through no previous preparation on our part are we received into Divine favour ; and neither in whole nor in part are works done by us taken into account in the matter of our justification. There has ever been a strong tendency to rely on human works as a ground of acceptance with God. This was the sin of the Jews in the days of our Lord's personal ministry ; it was the grand error of the Judaizers in the primitive Christian church. It is the damning error of the Romish church, as declared by the Council of Trent ; and it misleads from the simplicity of the Gospel thousands in the Protestant churches. Scripture-testimony against the least dependence on human works, as the ground of justification is abundant and most explicit—"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." (Gal. ii. 6.) "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." (Titus iii. 5.) - The best of human works—even those performed by the grace of the Spirit within, are imperfect ; and cannot therefore form the least ground of pardon and acceptance with God. In the language of Augustine—"works not rooted in God are splendid sins." In Art. XIII., Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, it is appositely declared—"works done before the grace of Christ are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ ; yea, rather, for that they are not done, as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but that they have the nature of sin." Good works done after justification are the *effect*, and can in no case be the *cause* of our justification. Justification is not a *subjective change*. God accepts us as righteous, on account of something done for us—not for what we do or experience. A person is condemned for what he is, and for what he has done ; he is justified solely for what Christ has done for him.

2. We are justified only through *the perfect meritorious righteousness of the Saviour*. Christ Jesus is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." In the text we are said to be "justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Redemption means deliverance through the payment of a ransom. This ransom is "the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without blemish or spot." In the fullest sense, He "gave Himself a ransom for many"—not as a pecuniary equivalent—but as life, sinless and perfect, for life forfeited and guilty. Christ's righteousness consists of His spotless

surety-obedience in life, and of His vicarious death. Rendered by a Divine Person, it is infinitely meritorious, and such as God can honourably accept in the room of the guilty. Through it, the Divine perfections and government are glorified, while the most guilty and rebellious are fully pardoned. It is "the righteousness of God," as it is a Divine provision; and as it was wrought out and brought in by Him who is "Jehovah our righteousness." "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." (Is. liv. 17.) It is thus Divine, all-perfect and everlasting. The attire of the ancient priests was pure linen garments. So the church, invested with Christ's righteousness—"all glorious within"—has "her clothing of wrought gold;" and every believer can say, "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory." (Is. xlv. 24, 25.)

3. This righteousness *is imputed to us for our justification*, and thus becomes in the fullest sense ours. The term *Imputation* means, both in the Hebrew and Greek, to attribute or place something to the account of another, which of himself he did not originally possess. Paul, pleading with Philemon, on behalf of Onesimus, says—"If he hath wronged, or oweth thee ought, put that to my account, *i.e.*, let it be reckoned or imputed to me." (Philemon 18.) Thus, God in justifying, imputes Christ's righteousness to the sinner. He reckons it as theirs, and accounts them righteous for it, as though they had performed it in their own persons. "Unto whom God imputes righteousness without works." (Rom. iv. 16.) "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." (Rom. v. 19.) "He hath made Him who knew no sin, to be made sin for us, who knew no righteousness, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.)\* Our sins, with all their demerit, became Christ's by imputation; and in consequence, His perfect righteousness with all its blessed fruits is made over to us, and becomes in the strictest sense ours. Hence the one perfect obedience of the God-man is accepted for us. The "righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us." The "Best robe" is put upon us to cover our nakedness, and we are clothed with the "wedding garment" of acceptance. Ours is a spotless, law-magnifying and everlasting righteousness. From the time of our justification, ever after we are "found in Christ, not having on our 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. 9.)

\*This rendering is most in accordance with the order of the words in the original, and with a received rule in expounding antithetical clauses.

### III.—JUSTIFICATION CONNECTED WITH FAITH, AND THE EFFECTS.

By a variety of phrases, the Apostle sets forth the fundamental article of justification, in relation to its origin, procuring cause, and the mode in which the privilege becomes ours. We are said to be “justified freely by His grace,” as the blessing is God’s gift. We are “justified by His blood,” as the Saviour’s obedience unto death is *the ground* of our pardon and acceptance. And believers are repeatedly declared to be “justified by faith”—(Rom. iv. 3; v. 1)—as the merits of Christ are appropriated by faith, and His righteousness is “unto all and upon all that believe.”

The faith that justifies is *wrought in the heart by the Divine Spirit*. It is not like belief in a human testimony, a natural gift, nor is it the mere assent of the mind to the truth declared in the Word. The faith that justifies is “the gift of God.” (Eph. ii. 8.) Implanted in the soul by the Holy Spirit, it is wholly supernatural. “To you it is given in the behalf of Christ to believe on His name, and to suffer for His sake.” (Phil. i. 23.) The Spirit working faith, reveals Christ to the soul—leads the sinner to feel his need of salvation, and to accept the gracious offer. All true faith is appropriating. Discovering the suitableness and excellency of Christ, and convinced of his indispensable *need of such a Saviour*, the sinner cordially embraces Christ, in His Person, finished work, and offices, and rests on Him alone for salvation. Thus the Spirit “glorifies” Christ, and takes the things which are His and reveals them to the soul.

This faith *unites* to Christ—the whole person of the believer to the whole person of the Saviour. The Holy Spirit is the bond of union on God’s part, and a living faith wrought in the heart, the bond on ours. We are thus brought to near and indissoluble oneness with Christ—the Head of living influence and glory to His people. His righteousness becomes theirs, and they partake of all its gracious effects. Faith *accepts* Christ and all His work, as most suitable for forgiveness and full salvation. By His merits, we are freed from condemnation. Taking hold of the skirt of the robe of His righteousness, we are made perfectly whole. Believing on His name, He becomes ours, and we become His wholly and for ever. “Behold God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and song; He also is become my salvation.” (Is. xii. 2.) Faith appropriates Christ as our Life—and relying on His meritorious obedience, receives all its fruits. It was not Abraham’s faith in the word that united him to the Redeemer promised, and this was not the ground of his justification. It was the object, held forth in the promise, on which the Patriarch’s faith rested, that was the ground of his acceptance, and

that was "reckoned to him for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 9.) Christ is the Ransom offered to God in our stead, and accepted; and embracing it, we are "delivered from going down to the pit," and freed from future condemnation. He is presented as clothing; and we put on "white raiment," and the "shame of our nakedness" no longer appears. We are justified by faith as the instrument, and as the act of receiving Christ, and the promised salvation. Even weak faith, embracing the promise, may take hold of the hem of the robe of Christ's righteousness, and may thus appropriate the pardon and acceptance promised.

The faith which justifies is *cordial trust*, and wherever it exists produces *gracious effects*. It is not merely *assent* to a testimony however true—it is the trust and confidence of the heart in the Object of the testimony. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (Rom. x. 10.) "Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." (Is. xxvi. 4.) The *fruits* of saving faith are manifold, and most precious. It *purifies* the heart. Christ is formed within, "the hope of glory." Beholding Him as the Crucified One, we mourn for sin; and with the bright eye of hope upon the future, we purify ourselves as He is pure. It *works by love*—the objects of faith become enthroned in the affections. Its chief expression is spiritual desire and fervent prayer. True faith is *conquering and transforming*. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." (1 John v. 5.) Even weak faith is overcoming. Our faith must be the same in kind as Abraham's—hoping in things not seen as yet, obeying without hesitation the Divine command, and trusting to God's power and faithfulness for the fulfilment of the promise. "So, then, they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." (Gal iii. 9.) Like the poor woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment, and was made instantly whole, so faith, laying hold of Christ's righteousness, makes us conscious that living influence from Him has flowed out to us—working a spiritual cure—in its nature, perfect and instantaneous.

#### IV.—PLYMOUTHIST ERRORS AND PERVERSIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

No doctrine of the Gospel has been more misunderstood and perverted than that of Justification. Even to our own day, vast numbers throughout Christendom, like the Jews in the Apostolic age, "go about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting to the righteousness of faith." Romanists confound justification and sanctification, and bring in a system of salvation by human works. Arminians, denying the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner, hold out a *sincere obedience* to the Gospel, as accepted of God in the room of



perfect obedience, and ascribe the sinner's pardon solely to the mercy, instead of the righteousness of God. But by far the worst errors of modern times, on the capital article of Justification, are those of Plymouthists, and of certain Revivalist preachers, who agree with them in part, and adopt their method of awakening, and of imparting religious instruction. These form a collection and complication of false and erroneous teaching, that darken the whole subject, and remove altogether the Scriptural doctrine of the sinner's pardon and acceptance with God.

These errors concern the *Nature* and *Ground* of Justification—the *office of faith* in the matter—and the *time* and *immediate* effects of this great change. Having adverted to some of these errors in the former part of this pamphlet, we shall now more particularly notice the views of Plymouthists and Revivalists, as to the *Nature* and *Ground* of a sinner's justification.

Some Plymouthist writers teach that Justification consists only in the pardon of sin, and does not embrace acceptance. All, according to them, that is meant by a person being justified, is, that his sins are forgiven. This is evidently opposed to the Scriptural representation of the subject. Pardon removes the guilt of the sinner, but does not constitute him an heir of eternal life. The blood of Christ shed for a ransom, is sufficient to procure forgiveness; but this alone cannot make the sinner righteous. To be righteous, is to be perfectly innocent in the eye of the law. By His sufferings on the Cross, Christ endured the whole punishment for the sins of His people; they are thus an essential ingredient in the righteousness of the saints, for nothing could make them righteous, till the penalty of the broken law was paid on their behalf. But to render them righteous or innocent, it was absolutely required that Christ, their Surety, should keep the law in their room and stead. The perfect obedience of the Saviour's life is as needful for His people's justification, as His atoning death. This is plainly and explicitly declared in the word—"As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." "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." (Rom. v. 18, 19.) Believers are certainly accepted at the time of justification; pardon and acceptance which are closely conjoined in the believer's privileges according to the testimony of the word, are both required to render him righteous. "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. i. 6, 7.)

The most fatal error of Plymouthists and of those who co-operate with them, relates to the *Ground* of the sinner's justification. While some of them admit, at least, in turns, the imputation of righteousness, they plainly and pointedly deny that the Divine Word holds forth anywhere the righteousness of Christ as laid to the sinner's account. One Plymouthist writer\* says—"It is very remarkable that the Scriptures never use the expression, 'the imputed righteousness of Christ,' or even 'the righteousness of Christ,' but always 'the righteousness of God'—the words, 'the righteousness of God,' do not mean the righteousness of Christ." Another declares†—"I would observe in speaking of the imputation of righteousness, I by no means desire to be understood as giving any countenance to the prevailing theory of the 'imputed righteousness of Christ'—of this expression so much in use in the theology of the present day, it would be sufficient to say that it is nowhere to be found in the oracles of God." "I read," he adds, "of 'the righteousness of God,' and moreover, of the *imputation* of righteousness, but *never* of the righteousness of Christ." Explaining what the phrase, "the righteousness of God" means—they say that "it is the *quality* or character that is in God himself"—God's righteousness is His perfect consistency with His own perfect and blessed nature." Again—"That in the Old Testament, the Lord's righteousness means a *quality* in the *character* of God is beyond all question or controversy. Is it different wholly in the New? *I do not believe it.*" Then, as these teachers say, "the righteousness of God is imputed to us," they must mean that a Divine attribute of the Godhead is imputed to the sinner! One of them actually asserts "God's *own essential righteousness* is communicated to us."\* The blasphemy and absurdity of such doctrine require no comment. That the Redeemer's Mediatorial righteousness was wrought out in the room of the sinner, and is accounted to him for pardon and acceptance, is taught with uncommon plainness in many parts of the Divine Word is undeniable. "This is the name whereby He shall be called the Lord our righteousness—to bring in everlasting righteousness." "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation—He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Who is made unto us righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." (Jer. xxiii. 6; Dan. xv. 24; Is. lxi. 10; 1 Cor. i. 30.) These and many other passages plainly teach the imputation of Christ's righteousness to His people. This is significantly styled "the righteousness of God," as being that which God provided, as the ground of the sinner's reconciliation—as it was wrought out by Immanuel,

\*C. Stanley—"Imputed Righteousness"—pp. 1, 6. †Mackintosh—"Tribe of Levi"—pp. 88.

\*Darby—"The Pauline Doctrine"—pp. 16. \* Harrison on Justification—pp. 81.

God in our nature—and as it is applied by the Third Person of the Godhead. The most fervent desire of the believer's heart is, that he "may be found in Christ, not having on his own righteousness, but that which is through faith in Jesus Christ—the righteousness which is of God by faith." (Phil. iii. 9.)

At times, Plymouthist teachers deny that the obedience of Christ to the law in life is, in any sense, laid to the account of the sinner. They say that His sufferings during His life were not actually with or for His people—but were merely *sympathetic*; and while apparently admitting that righteousness is, in some sense imputed, they plainly deny all proper imputation. "Righteousness", says Darby—"being imputed to a man, simply means the man being accounted righteous. It does not mean a question of formal righteousness outside us, imputed to us, but our being accounted righteous." All this representation is in violent conflict with the plain testimony of the Word—and takes away from the guilty sinner the hope of salvation. The Saviour's obedience to the law, which was throughout vicarious, is uniformly represented as one—and as offered to death, even the death of the Cross. The person whom God accounts righteous through the merits of Christ, is really and truly so—standing in the Surety as if he had never sinned—and to be hereafter presented faultless before the Throne of God. When it never can be shown how an attribute of Deity can be accounted to a man for his pardon, the law-magnifying righteousness of the Redeemer, with which Jehovah is well pleased, is amply sufficient to clear from all charges of guilt, and to fill the heart with the rejoicing hope of salvation.

Other Plymouthists' errors on the subject of Justification—such as those which teach that sinners are justified from eternity, or from the death of Christ—that we owe justification rather to the Saviour's resurrection than to His surety-obedience, and death, and that the whole office of faith in our justification is simply to believe the testimony that we are pardoned from eternity, or from the time of the Saviour's death, have been sufficiently exposed and refuted in the former Pamphlet, and in what is advanced in this on the nature of the act of faith by which a sinner is justified. In common with all other errorists, who oppose the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner for justification, Plymouthists lay stress on *the consequences* of righteousness being reckoned to us, rather than on the merits of the Saviour Himself. This, as Dr. Owen has ably shown in his work on Justification, is "really to overturn all imputation." "The effects of the righteousness of Christ cannot be said properly to be imputed to us—and if His righteousness itself be not so, imputation has no place herein." To represent internal peace and assurance of final salvation as the immediate and cer-

tain effect of justification, as is done generally by Revivalists, is unscriptural and deluding, and of dangerous consequences. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, as to our *state*, which can never after be altered; but internal tranquillity or peace of conscience arises from the sense of our justification, and is only realized as we advance in holiness. The assurance of God's love and of final salvation, is a precious fruit of faith, and not of its essence—it is only to be attained through the renewal of the Spirit, and in the way of holy obedience. A system of erroneous teaching which is so palpably opposed to the Scriptural cardinal doctrine of the Reformation—Justification by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ—demands the decided condemnation of all who value the truth as it is in Jesus, and who would promote the purity and stability of the Church.

#### CONCLUSION.

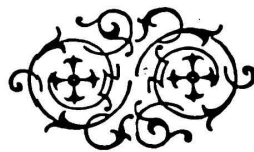
This subject should lead us to the *most solemn and earnest self-inquiry*. Are we justified—pardoned and accepted with God? This can only be by faith embracing the righteousness of Christ, as presented to us in the Gospel. Do we now believe? Have we put on this “Best Robe?” Then, all our own righteousnesses appear as filthy rags, and we wholly and for ever deny and renounce them. If unjustified, we remain under condemnation, and are continually exposed to the wrath to come. On the other hand, being justified through the redemption that is in Christ, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. God is no longer our Almighty foe; and reconciled to Him by the death of His Son, we are partakers of friendship with Him, unbroken and everlasting.

The precious gift of Justification should ever constrain us to the *liveliest gratitude*, and should excite in us the *fullest confidence*—as we should seek to make manifest the possession of it to ourselves and others. One of our distinguished Presbyterian forefathers thus speaks of the blessing—“There is such a privilege vouchsafed upon sinners who have fled in to Christ by faith, as Justification, whereby they get their iniquities and transgressions pardoned, only because of the propitiation which Christ made by His blood and sacrifice; so as they are accepted of as righteous—not for any thing in themselves, or done by them, but merely by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and accepted by faith.”\* The declaration of the excellent *Tholuck* is to the same effect—“By the believing appropriation of that which Jesus Christ, during the whole course of His blessed life, until it terminated in His bloody death, was and did, for the human race, men are made partakers of justification before God.”

\* Brown of Wamphray on the Romans.



It, finally, concerns us in a special manner, to watch and pray against all errors respecting this great doctrine—whether they relate to the mode of the sinner's justification, the *import* of the term righteousness, or the office of faith in the matter. Large numbers of modern expositors and critics are erroneous and misleading on these topics. The purity and stability of the church of Christ, as well as the comforts and dearest hopes of believers, are involved in the firm maintenance of the Scriptural doctrine of Justification by faith. We may attain to the knowledge of the two things which Luther speaks of as most desirable—the pardon of sin, and a sense of pardon. Fixing the mind and heart on the righteousness of the Redeemer, as the only ground of pardon and acceptance, may we not exclaim with the pious *Hawker*—"PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! be Thou my Propitiation, my High Priest, my Altar, the Lord my Righteousness; and sure I am, Thou wilt be my everlasting glory."



# SANCTIFICATION.

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1 THESSALONIANS v. 23.—“And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly.”

THE Apostle Paul, in the two epistles to the Church in Thessalonica—the first which he penned by the inspiration of the Spirit—and in all the rest of his writings, manifests the most intense concern about the possession and increase of holiness in himself and others. He represents it as a principal end why the saints were chosen to eternal life from before the foundation of the world—(Ephes. i. 4 ; 2 Thess. ii. 13)—the primary design of the death of Christ (Titus ii. 11)—the great work of the Spirit in the hearts and lives of God’s people—the end of afflictions to God’s people (Heb. xii. 10)—and he solemnly enjoins, in Hebrews xii. 24, to “follow after”—or *pursue earnestly*—after holiness, or “sanctification”—“without which no man can see the Lord.”

Throughout this chapter the Apostle, in a number of the most weighty and pointed exhortations, urges to the practice of the duties of true godliness and genuine morality ; and then he concludes with a fervent and most comprehensive prayer—“May the God of Peace Himself sanctify you wholly !” This is tantamount to his saying—“Let the God of Peace Himself do *for* you and *in* you, by His own power, what *I* cannot do by all my monitions, nor *you* by all your efforts ! May He sanctify you—give you real holiness—do this wholly, and in every part—and bring you, unblameable and irreprehensible, to the stature of perfection in Christ !”

The Apostle looks for this great blessing from God Himself—the God of salvation. He here styles Him beautifully—as in Hebrews xiii. 20—“The God of peace.” On various grounds, this illustrious designation is given Him. He framed the “Covenant of peace” before the world was, for man’s salvation. He is now reconciled and at peace with the sinner through the atonement of Christ. He is the Author of peace and concord in the Church and in the world. He confers internal peace upon His people in life and death. He gives them “abundance of peace” in the way of holy obedience here (Is. xlviii. 18) ; and peace eternal hereafter, as their rich recompense of reward. From Him alone the great blessing of sanctification is to be sought. He can and will confer it upon the heirs of salvation. Let us begin and end with this solemn and weighty petition,

and earnestly seek—while we speak and hear the Word—that He—the God of peace—may sanctify wholly him who speaks and those who hear, and may take a revenue of glory to His great Name! We shall consider—

I.—THE GREAT WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED, and ITS LEADING PROPERTIES. II.—HOW IT IS EFFECTED. And, III.—RECENT ERRONEOUS VIEWS on the Subject of Sanctification.

#### I.—THE GREAT WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.

There are essential and important differences between Justification and Sanctification, though God is the author of both, and they are fruits of His sovereign grace. The former is an *act* perfected at once, the latter is a *work*, gradual and progressive. Justification is the *forensic act* of God as a Judge, and is a *change of state*; Sanctification renews and *changes the nature*. The ground of the one is Christ's righteousness imputed; Sanctification, on the other hand, is subjective—wrought within by the Holy Spirit—the effect of what God graciously does in us. In justification, we are wholly passive; in sanctification, we are active—working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, while God “works in us, to will and to do of His good pleasure.” In this, we obtain a *meetness* for heaven—as in justifying the sinner God confers the *title*.

The description of Sanctification given by the Westminster Divines in our SHORTER CATECHISM is comprehensive and exact. “*Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God; and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness.*” This plainly teaches that the power which effects this great change is of God—that it is consequently supernatural—and that it is altogether matter of Divine sovereign favour. None are naturally holy, nor can any human being make himself holy. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.” The God of peace alone can sanctify.

1. Sanctification is *the work of God's free grace*. Grace is God's sovereign free favour. “By grace”—in every part—“ye are saved.” (Eph. ii. 8.) “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. v. 21.) We were “from the beginning chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” (2 Thess. ii. 13.) The term *sanctify* has a threefold meaning—1. To separate; 2. To consecrate to a holy purpose, as the ancient priesthood, and the vessels of the sanctuary; and 3. To make internally holy and pious. In the case of God's people, all these three are of distinguishing grace. They come out and are separated

from the world lying in wickedness. One of a family and two of a city are taken and brought to Zion. They are dedicated to God, and become a royal priesthood. Their nature is changed, and they are made holy and brought to heaven.

2. Sanctification consists in *renewing the whole man after the Divine image*. The Apostle prays that the Thessalonians may be "sanctified wholly;" and, farther, as exegetical of the expression, that their "whole spirit and soul and body" "may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The sanctification desired is to be complete in all its parts, and to reach its end in respect to quality. It is often represented as "the putting off" or "laying aside" of the "old man and his deeds." This is the corrupt nature, which is brought with us into the world, and the remains of which continue with the sanctified as long as they are on the earth. The "new man" which is put on is a new principle of grace and holiness. It is the "renewing of the mind" in righteousness—"the renewal of the Spirit," which is "shed on us abundantly." (Titus iii. 5.) It is "the transformation by the renewing of the mind" by which we "may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. xii. 2.) Sanctification is uniformly represented in Scripture as an inward conflict between the principle of grace or life implanted, and the principles of the corrupt nature that remain in the regenerate. It is "the mortification of sin in the members"—the "crucifying of the flesh with the affections and lusts"—and, at the same time, the working of a new living principle in the soul. Believers through the Spirit "mortify the deeds of the body that they may live." The principles of evil infecting their nature are gradually overcome and destroyed, and the new life implanted by the Spirit is expanded and strengthened "until it controls the thoughts, feelings, and acts, and brings the whole soul into conformity to the image of Christ." The Divine image, after which the believer is renewed, consists "in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness." It is seen in the Scriptures, which have been justly said to be an imprint of the moral likeness of God. If we are subjects of the work of sanctification, we are cast into "the mould of the truth," and are gradually becoming like the Divine Word in thought, judgment, affections, and the whole life. The Saviour's prayer for His people is:—"Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." (John xvii. 17.) The Divine image is eminently displayed in Christ. (Heb. i. 8; Col. i. 15.) If we are being made holy, we have "the mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil. ii. 5.) We walk as He also walked; and follow His blessed example. We were "predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the First Born among many



brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) Thus we are enabled to "grow up to likeness to Him in all things." If we are among the sanctified, our assured hope and joy are that we shall one day be perfectly like Christ our glorious Head. We shall be holy as He is holy. "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 Pet. i. 16; John iii. 2.)

3. Sanctification, begun in regeneration, consists in *holy principles and holy actions*. The germ of holiness—"the root of the matter"—is implanted in the new birth. This has been properly styled "*initial*," or begun sanctification; that which is commonly designated by the name is *progressive*; and the saints' state in glory is *perfect* sanctification. In the renewal of the nature in regeneration, a holy principle is implanted in the heart; and the 'good work' is begun, which He that originated it will perform till "the day of Christ Jesus." (Phil. i. 6.) The principle infused in conversion is differently designated in the Word; but all the terms employed denote vitality and increase. It is the "incorruptible seed"—"truth in the inward part"—"the hidden man of the heart"—"oil in the vessel," designed to feed the lamp, which throws forth light upon the path—and "the leaven" implanted, for the purpose of leavening the whole lump. This living principle is manifested in its actings *towards God*—in holy fear and reverence—in love and submission—in desire and longing towards Him—and complacency and delight in Him. It acts toward *Christ* in faith, trust, and entire subjection to His authority—in constraining love—and constant aiming after conformity to Him. Its actings toward the *Spirit* are seen in cherishing His motions—yielding to his leading—walking in the Spirit, and realizing fellowship with Him. In relation to sin in themselves and others, those who are the subjects of sanctification mourn for sin and hate it; they mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts; and they constantly and earnestly desire to be freed from all remains of indwelling corruption. A growing spirituality of mind, and increasing love to holiness, are sure indications of the power of grace and of the advancement of the new life. Believers are active in sanctification. While God the Spirit efficaciously purifies the heart, and transforms the moral nature, they "wash their robes," and "make them white in the blood of the Lamb." "They cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." They "earnestly follow after holiness, without which no man can see the Lord." (2 Cor. vii. 1; Heb. xii. 14.)

4. Sanctification is distinguished by *special properties*. If it is inquired who are, in the Scriptural sense, the sanctified—saints of God—the answer can only be—Not all; but only the elect—the redeemed—believers. (Rom. viii. 29, Eph. i. 4; Titus ii. 14; 2 Thess. ii. 13. "They shall call them, The holy people,

the redeemed of the Lord." (Is. lxii. 12.) All those who, from eternity, were chosen in Christ, were "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son;" those for whom the Saviour died are redeemed from all iniquity; and the faith that is saving purifies the heart, and renews the life according to the moral likeness of Christ. Sanctification is:—1. *Imperfect in the saints in this life.* Scripture testimony on this point is very full and explicit. "There is not a just man on earth." "There is none righteous; no, not one." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John i. 8.) Saints, the most eminent, whose record is in the Book of life, have disclaimed sinless perfection, and have confessed manifold pollution in their best services. The melancholy falls under temptation of distinguished believers are recorded for solemn warning to others. Indwelling sin remains in believers while they are in the body; and they are ever called to give evidence that they are Christ's, by crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts. 2. *It is progressive.* The saints are represented as first "babes," then "young men," and afterwards "fathers"—as grace in the heart is likened to "the blade—then the ear—then the full corn in the ear." The regenerate grow up to "the stature of perfect men in Christ." Spiritual light imparted "shines more and more to the perfect day." (Prov. iv. 18.) He that begins a "good work" in the saints "will perform it" to the day of Christ. (Phil. i. 6.) "The righteous shall hold in his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger." (Job xvii. 6.) The saint's confidence is that "the Lord will perfect that which concerneth him." (Ps. cxxxviii. 8.) He who laid the foundation of the building of mercy will "likewise finish it, and will bring forth the Headstone with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." (Zech. iv. 7, 9.) 3. *Sanctification is indispensable to salvation in all its parts.* It is needed for all acceptable prayer and praise. We must "lift up holy hands without fear and doubting;" we are enjoined to praise God "in the beauty of holiness." It is required for the whole way of Gospel worship, and for all spiritual fellowship with God. We can only draw near into the holiest of all "in the full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed as with pure water." (Heb. x. 22.) "Without holiness we cannot see the Lord." Holiness constitutes our *meetness* for heaven, as in justification we obtain a title to glory. It is, indeed, the grand element of the happiness of saints here and hereafter. Sanctification is of primary importance in the whole matter of salvation; and may, indeed, be regarded as inseparably connected with all its privileges and blessings. It is the *end* of election—a chief promise and eminent blessing of the New Covenant—a

precious fruit of redemption by the blood of Christ—the principal design of God in our regeneration—the primary intention and great evidence of our justification—the scope of our adoption into the family of God. In the fullest, largest sense, our complete sanctification is absolutely necessary to admission to heaven. The pure in heart alone see God. For the beatific vision and full enjoyment of God—for all the work and all the happiness of the saints in glory—the holiness which the Spirit begins, carries on, and perfects, is indispensably required. The redeemed that come home to heaven as conquerors “have all washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. vii. 14.) “There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (Rev. xxi. 27.)

## II.—HOW SANCTIFICATION IS EFFECTED.

1. The Author of sanctification is *God in Trinity*. Its efficient cause is the blessed Godhead—the “very God of peace.” It is ascribed throughout the Word to each of the persons of the Trinity; and, while they all co-operate in the renewal of the sinner in holiness, each acts a distinct part in the great process. By the will of the Father we are sanctified (1 Thess. iv. 3); and it is He on whom we call who says, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” Christ Jesus is made of God unto us “sanctification”—the foundation and perfect model of our holiness. And the third Person of the Godhead—the “Spirit of holiness”—is the almighty Agent of our sanctification, who quickens and renews the whole nature, implants all saving graces, draws them forth into lively exercise, and brings them to perfection. That the great efficient Cause of the sinner’s sanctification is “the God of all grace,” is full of the highest encouragement and hope. He whose glory is concerned in His people’s sanctification will, despite of all opposition from within and without, perfect what He has begun, and present them to Himself, “not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

2. Through the *instrumentality of the Divine Word*, we are made holy. The Saviour’s continual intercession for the redeemed is—“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth.” (John xvii. 17.) Every part of the Scriptures is holy, and when rightly used is adapted to promote holiness of heart and life—all is given that “the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. iii. 17.) The Word preached, accompanied by saving power, is the grand means of holiness in the world. “He sent forth His Word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” (Ps. cvii. 20.) The leaves of the Tree of Life are “for the healing

of the nations." Whether for the moral and spiritual elevation of communities, or for the sanctification of individuals, the Word written and preached is the grand instrumentality; and, while we diligently and constantly employ it, we should earnestly pray that it may be accompanied with living, transforming influence.

3. *By the blood of Christ* we are sanctified, and in the *exercise of the graces of the Spirit*. The blood of atonement shed as a ransom cancels the sinner's guilt, and, applied by the Spirit, cleanses the conscience and purifies the life. It is a "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness"—(Zech. xiii. 1)—ever accessible and inexhaustible. Saints, who come to glory, "wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. vii. 14.) These robes are all that distinguishes them; their whole character and spirit—their thoughts, words, and actions—even their tears for sin—need washing, and their prayers cleansing by atoning blood. It is through the exercise of the graces of the Spirit that the Word is rightly applied, and that the blood of Christ cleanses the heart and life. Faith, believing the Word, and looking to the pierced Saviour, purifies the heart. Like the hyssop which of old sprinkled the blood of the slain bird to cleanse the leper—(Levit. xiv. 6, 7)—so faith, ever coming to the blood of atonement, cleanses from all impurity of the heart and spirit. Thus is graciously answered the penitent's prayer—"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Ps. li. 7.) The exercise of every other grace of the Spirit tends to advance the believer's sanctification. "Every one that hath this hope in Him purifies himself, as God is pure." (1 John iii. 3.) Love, meekness, patience, are themselves elements of the principle of holiness implanted, and their habitual exercise promotes the victory over corruption, and conducts to moral perfection. By the indwelling and operation of holy graces, we become "temples of the Holy Ghost," and "a habitation of God through the Spirit."

4. *Divine ordinances and afflictions*, sent by the Redeemer, and in the hand of the Spirit, are appointed means of sanctification to the redeemed. The fellowship of the Church is designed for their separation from the world lying in wickedness. The assembling together of Christians in the sanctuary—God's tabernacle with men on earth—the place whereon they stand, is "holy ground." Prayer, praise, the Sacraments—when rightly observed—are for holy persons, and they are provided for their advancement in holiness, and their preparation for perfection in glory. Providence, under the dispensation of the Mediator, tends to promote the sanctification of the saints. "All things," even now, "work together for good" to them—as in their mutual relations and combined action they promote God's glory, and minister to their growing conformity to the likeness



of Christ. Especially are afflictions, in the hand of the Spirit, an appointed means of their moral purification. They are to them as “the refiner’s fire and fuller’s soap”—whereby is purely purged away their dross. The afflictions of the saints, of whatever kind, are tokens of the Father’s love, and the discipline of the Covenant. Under them, they become “partakers of His holiness.” (Heb. xii. 10.) To each subject of sanctified affliction, the God of peace, in condescending love, says—“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory to another.” (Is. xlviii. 10, 11.) Finally, we have the strongest grounds of assured confidence that the sanctification of believers will at length be *perfect*. It is secured by the infinite love of God—and by the engagements of the everlasting Covenant, and by precious promises exceeding great. United to Christ the Head, the saints can never be separated from Him, and they must reflect His moral image, and grow up into likeness to Him in all things. The Spirit that dwells in them will completely renew their nature. He seals them to the day of redemption, and leads them to the land of uprightness. All Divine assurances guarantee to the saints a portion in the riches of grace here, and hereafter an inheritance in light and glory. At death, the disembodied souls of believers are numbered with “the spirits of the just made perfect;” at the resurrection, their bodies are fashioned like Christ’s glorious body. In heaven, the saints shall shine forth for ever in the resplendent lustre of holiness, satisfied with God’s likeness, and “beholding His face in righteousness. (Ps. xvii. 15.) This shall be their ineffable and eternal felicity. “The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.” (Is. lx. 19.)

### III.—RECENT ERRONEOUS VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT OF SANCTIFICATION.

Proportioned to the intrinsic value and great importance of the Scriptural doctrine of Sanctification, have been the manifold attempts of the adversary to corrupt and pervert it. The awakened conscience of men who have any sense of religion will readily admit the necessity of moral purity in some form in order, to the enjoyment of fellowship with God, and future happiness; but, through the temptation of Satan, they substitute inventions of their own for the Divine provision which the Gospel reveals. They satisfy themselves with “a form of godliness,” while they “deny the power thereof.” The doctrine of the grace of God in the matter of the sinner’s sanctification especially—as its whole tendency is to humble the sinner, and ascribe all the

glory to God, and to excite to the earnest and constant pursuit after universal holiness—is the object of determined opposition ; and in many ways men labour to discard it and set it aside. Numbers, who are ignorant or careless, consider freedom from gross transgressions, or a “negative holiness,” all that God requires ; and many, both in ancient and modern times, make sanctification consist in mere outward observances.. The legal spirit of those who, in Apostolic times, “went about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting to the righteousness of faith,” is still manifested by multitudes in our day. Rome’s damning error is the bringing in of a system of salvation by human works. Hence, it inculcates the doctrine of human merits, and canonizes some as perfect saints, teaching not only that they can perform fully all the requirements of the law of God, but that, besides, they have a store of good deeds, which, as works of supererogation, are available for the benefit of others.

The doctrine of *perfection in holiness*, as attainable here, has been taught in various forms, in former and later times ; but, in every instance, it is irreconcilably opposed to the Scriptural doctrine of sanctification, as well as to the creeds of the Reformed Churches on the subject.

The views of Perfectionists aim to bring down the holy and unchangeable law of God to the level of the sinner, instead of bringing him up to conformity to the law. And it is surely contradictory and absurd to maintain that a person is in a state of perfection whose mistakes and infirmities need expiation and forgiveness from God.

The Plymouthist and Revivalist errors on Sanctification are mainly Antinomian. They are a confused jumble of anti-Scriptural sentiments—strongly antagonistic to the doctrine of the standards of the Protestant Churches—and yet misleading and seductive, as they are zealously propagated, under high pretensions to spirituality and peculiar sanctity. A brief notice of the more prominent parts of the system may be presented.

First of all, they err at the foundation, in maintaining that believers are *sanctified as well as justified by the imputation of Christ’s work to them*. Referring to 1 Cor. i. 30, they say that Christ is made to us “sanctification,” and they understand by this that He is reckoned to us as all our sanctification. But the Apostle’s expression cannot possibly mean that Christ Jesus is our sanctification by imputation—for then would He be also our “wisdom” and “glorification” in the same sense. Imputed sanctification is a plain and palpable absurdity in terms. God can and does impute to us what is another’s in justification. He can pardon and accept us on the footing of the merits of the Surety. But sanctification, being a moral, internal change, is personal, and cannot possibly be imputed. Again, these

errorists maintain that our sanctification is *perfect* when we believe, and they deny progressive sanctification. They are thus to be classed among Perfectionists, though their views have shades of difference from those which have been maintained by Arminians in former and later times. It may be admitted that we are sanctified in believing, in the sense of being *consecrated* to God. Christ Jesus, like the ancient High Priest, who had inscribed on his mitre, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD," is the basis of His people's holiness. We are consecrated by his blood, that we may be purified by the Spirit. The admirable, comprehensive statement of our venerable Westminster Confession—(Ch. XIII., Sec. 1)—presents this in the clearest light:—"They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Furthermore, Plymouthists mistake and entirely misrepresent the Scriptural doctrine of Sanctification, in what they teach concerning the "*old*" and "*new man*" in believers. The flesh or old man, according to them, exists the same in a believer as in an unbeliever—at the end, as at the beginning—at death, as throughout life. The whole of this view is most unscriptural, and crude and dangerous error. According to the Apostle Paul, the old man in the believer is crucified with Christ and laid aside: the "*inward man*" is renewed day by day; and, beholding the glory of Christ, we are gradually assimilated. Regeneration, which is *initial* sanctification, is not simply a new state of feeling, but a radical change of nature. And progressive sanctification brings forth the actings of the spiritual principle implanted, until all corruption is wholly subdued; and the heart and life are completely conformed to the image of Christ.

The dangerous errors of Plymouthism and recent Revivalism are, moreover, seen in their heterodox views of *saving faith*. According to these teachers, faith is a mere intellectual belief in the testimony that Christ died to save sinners; and we are certainly saved when we believe that God loved us in particular, and that Christ died to save us. It need not be said that such a view receives no countenance from the teaching of our Lord or his Apostles. In no instance did they, in offering salvation to sinners, tell them that God loved them and that Christ died for them in particular, and that by simply believing this they

would be saved. They declared to them the mission of the Saviour into the world—His ability and willingness to save—and the warrant for sinners, as such, to rely on Him for salvation. No Divine promise or offer is addressed to any sinner in particular, or by name, and therefore there cannot be true faith, which always rests on a Divine testimony, in the Plymouthist view. This confounds the *direct* act of faith, which embraces Christ as our Saviour, with the *reflex* act which, arising from the Spirit's witness to faith wrought in the heart, believes that Christ loved us and died for us. This confounding things that are essentially different is most delusory and ruinous. The author of the "TOUCHSTONE OF SAVING FAITH" judiciously remarks:—"A person may be *fully persuaded* in his mind that he has an interest in Christ, and yet be destitute of saving faith. There are some who make such a persuasion as this to be the very *essence* of saving faith; and so conclude that every person who can persuade himself or be persuaded to believe Christ to be his, is a true believer, and that those who fall short of this persuasion are void of faith. This is a very *discouraging* and *dangerous* opinion." As "sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" are so closely conjoined in the Word, it is evident that erroneous views of the nature of faith must lead to fundamental error in relation to the doctrine of the sinner's sanctification.

The consequences of such errors cannot but be injurious, and in many cases fatal, alike to the church and to individuals. They lower the requirements of the Divine law, and so weaken the obligation to universal holiness. Those who hold the Perfection scheme in any form are not duly sensible of the power of indwelling sin, and are in danger of proud boasting, and of sinning presumptuously. As opposed to all this, the recorded petitions of saints in the Word, instruct believers to plead that the Lord would blot out their iniquities and hide His face from their sin—that He would pardon their iniquity as being great. In the language of the English Liturgy, we need often to supplicate—"O God, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners." Whatever system of doctrine relaxes the obligation of God's law, and propounds erroneous views of sanctification, opens the floodgates of wickedness, and is justly chargeable with gross evils in the church and in civil society. When these are so extensively diffused, need we wonder that spiritual fruits from many recent revivals are so evanescent; and that large numbers, who boasted of superior attainments, speedily turn back, and disgrace a Christian profession by gross immoralities?

#### CONCLUSION.

This subject solemnly calls us—

First—To consider the *absolute necessity* of sanctification to



ourselves in particular, and to inquire seriously whether it has been already begun. The sentence of the Righteous Judge is positive and universal—"Except any one be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Our personal sanctification is the only evidence to ourselves and others that we were chosen, redeemed, and justified, and that we shall inherit life eternal. Let us see, above all, that we are not resting satisfied with the outward form of godliness, but that we have that holiness of heart and life which consists in entire consecration to God, and in growing conformity to the image of Christ.

Secondly—It concerns us to come near to *God as the Author of sanctification*, and to the *Word, blood, and Spirit of Christ, as the only ordained way of holiness*. We should set our love on His Word, because it is pure. We should read and hear the Word, that we may be sanctified by the truth. The blood of Christ is a Fountain—ever open and accessible, "for sin and uncleanness." We should come often to the Spirit, that He may renew our nature, implant holy principles and dispositions, and cleanse us from all corruption. The *example of Christ* should be our constant, as it is our all-perfect model. We should seek to have the mind that was in Christ also in us, and should study to walk as He also walked. We can only come at last to be with Him when we are made fully like him. This should be our constant aim—this the grand object of our diligent and most ardent pursuit.

Thirdly—Let us unite in heart in offering this fervent petition—"May the God of Peace sanctify you wholly"—for one another.

Lastly—In a time of religious awakening and excitement it behoves all to hold fast all Scriptural truth, and to guard against the entrance of error, however specious. We are to buy the truth, at whatever cost—as by it alone the Spirit works to sanctify and bring to glory; and never should we sell it for any advantage, however promising. Our great duty is to "stand in the way and see, and to inquire the good old way, and we shall find rest to our souls." While reproving sharply the erroneous, and warning others of their errors, be it our one grand aim and end, "speaking the truth in love, to grow up into Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ." (Ephes. iv. 15.)

# APPENDIX.

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## No. I.—DOCTRINAL ERRORS, AND UNSCRIPTURAL NOVELTIES IN RECENT REVIVALS.

IN the First Part of the Pamphlet on "*Plymouthism and Revivalism*," and in the Discourses contained in this Part, we have shown that errors of the most serious and fundamental kind are taught by Plymouthists, and propagated by certain classes of Revivalist preachers—errors which are diametrically opposed to the received creeds of the Reformed Churches, and constituting "another Gospel" than that which is taught by the Apostles. In the recent popular Awakening, which has extensively spread throughout these countries, and which is yet in progress, *modes of procedure* are adopted that strongly resemble the ways resorted to by Sectaries and teachers of error; and doctrines are taught as fundamental which are not accordant with the system of grace revealed in the Bible. It is, we think, every way to be deplored that Presbyterian ministers, who, by the most solemn vows, are pledged to maintain a defined Scriptural order and worship, and to "follow no divisive courses," and not in any particular to depart from Evangelical Standards, should sit at the feet of self-constituted teachers, and should lend their sanction to the teaching of erroneous doctrines, and to human inventions and disorder in worship.

Of *Modes of procedure* of the American Revivalists and their admirers, the following may be briefly referred to, in connexion with the principles taught. Persons in large public assemblies are called to stand up to be prayed for as converted, or to present themselves as Christians. Again, it is strongly insisted on that the Methodist practice of making public confession of spiritual experience should be generally adopted; and it is taught that a person cannot be a proper Christian worker unless he is assured of his personal salvation—in fact, that no work can be done for Christ unless the individual has this full assurance of hope. *Silent prayer* is recommended and practised in the daily public meetings—the *open prayer meeting*, in which any person present is invited and encouraged to recite his experience and to offer exhortation, is resorted to—and the practice of *sitting in prayer* has become common. It may suffice to say that these are expedients of mere human wisdom or folly, and that they are without countenance either from the precepts or examples of the Word. The practice of *silent prayer*, if it means anything, must mean *secret prayer*. Our Lord's direction is that this should be offered in the *closet*, instead of being paraded before a public assembly, so as to attract attention. The *open prayer meeting*, in which any one is at liberty to speak, is plainly opposed to the Scripture precept, that in worshipping assemblies all things should be done "decently and in order;" it opens the way for persons who are ignorant or conceited to utter their crude fancies, in connexion with a solemn approach to God in prayer—and even for the free vending of doctrinal error. The American practice of *sitting in prayer*, recently imported into these countries, irrespective of the irreverence of the posture, receives no support from Scripture example. Standing and kneeling in prayer are frequently mentioned in the Word; but the cases are exceptional, indeed, in which persons are said to engage in social prayer sitting.

Presbyterian teaching and order are at times condemned, and that in the presence of distinguished Presbyterian ministers and elders. For instance, it was strongly declared by the Revivalist Leader that the youth of the Church should not be taught by means of Catechisms. Organised Churches were, on one occasion, spoken of as "first-class mobs;" and the "nine lepers" cured by the Saviour, who returned not to give Him thanks, were represented as finding their proper place in a Presbyterian congregation! The doctrines taught and extensively diffused through this Revival movement are, in cases not a few, plainly opposed to the Scriptural system of sovereign grace. This may, in part, arise from the Revivalist teachers not having early enjoyed careful religious instruction in the truths of Scripture. They err through ignorance, and while at times declaring precious Gospel truth, they injure or set it aside by bringing in grievous error. These teachers prove themselves to be unsafe guides to the young and the awakened by defect in their instructions, as well as by inculcating positive error. The doctrine of Sovereign Grace, which assigns all the glory of salvation to God, is not distinctly taught; and not a few of those who profess to be converts of the present Awakening, and are most zealous in promoting it, openly contend that the cardinal doctrine of Election should not be taught, as this would mar the work of gathering speedily multitudes of converts. It is noteworthy that in a book written professedly for "the Anxious," and which is very strongly recommended by Mr. Moody, the American Revivalist, from the beginning to end there is no mention made of the doctrine of repentance unto life.\* Are we to understand by this that these parties endorse the Plymouthist error, that Repentance is "legal trash," and that to insist on the necessity of it is to mar the work of sinners coming to Christ?† However this be, it appears to us very plain that such teaching is contradictory to that of the Saviour and His Apostles, who constantly preached that men should repent as preparatory to their entering into the Kingdom of God. It amounts to a denial of true faith, whose inseparable fruit is godly sorrow for sin; and it is calculated to lull men in a delusive peace, and in a fatal indifference to the claims of universal holiness.

The teaching of these modern Revivalists on the subject of *Saving Faith* is, to a large extent, unscriptural and misleading. This is presented in various ways. Faith is represented as regenerating. When the question is put, "How am I to attain the change of regeneration?" the answer is given, "You believe, and then you are regenerated." It is assumed that persons under condemnation, and dead in trespasses and sins, have power of themselves to believe unto life—for it has been explicitly taught that "God would not call men to believe unless they had the power to do so." This is a plain denial of the great Scriptural truth that faith is a supernatural grace of the Spirit—that it is in every case the sovereign gift of God. By making saving faith, in any sense, a natural gift—which is done by the Oberlin School and other classes of American Revivalists—we utterly subvert the Gospel of the grace of God, and introduce instead a system of salvation by human works. Then, in no proper sense, does faith regenerate the sinner. This were to put the *effect* for the *cause*. True faith is the act of the soul quickened by the Spirit, and can by no means be said to be that which imparts spiritual life. Consistently with the leading error on this subject, it is declared that all that is required to bring salvation to the awakened, or to give them assured peace, is to believe the

7 \* "Grace and Truth," by Rev. W. P. Mackay, M.A., Hull.

† A leading Revivalist teacher said publicly to professed converts—"Why raise up your sins again, to think of and confess them—for were they not disposed of nearly two thousand years ago? Just believe this, and go home and sing and dance."

testimony of the Word—that God loved them from eternity—or to believe that Christ died for them in particular. Such persons are instructed by the Leaders that they may dismiss trouble about their sins, by believing that as God “so loved the world” as to give His Son for the world’s salvation, and as they belong to the world, He certainly loved them from all eternity—thus believing, they are certainly saved, and may, without doubt, rest assured of their final felicity !

Again, it is asserted that saving faith is simply believing that Christ died for me in particular. Christian workers, in the *inquiry room*, are directed by these Evangelists to go forth to the streets, and tell the drunkards with whom they meet that God loves them, and that Christ died for them, and that thus in a short time (“in 48 hours”) they may expect that no unconverted drunkards will remain ! The grand error involved in all this teaching is that faith is an operation of the will of man, and not the gift of God’s sovereign grace ; and that it is simply belief in the testimony of the Word concerning Christ, instead of the appropriation of the Saviour, and trusting in Him with the heart, or “resting on Him alone for salvation, as He is offered in the Gospel.”

Again, this teaching about faith, and the way of salvation, evidently proceeds upon the cardinal error of confounding God’s love of benevolence with His special love to elect sinners, and plainly holds forth a universal atonement—that God loved and Christ died for them that will perish for ever, equally as for such as will be eternally saved. A writer, who speaks favourably of the present awakening, thus justly speaks of the “short and easy” method of holding out peace to the anxious:—“The plan of salvation,” these persons say, “is the simplest and easiest way in the world. You have only to believe in Christ, and you are safe ; and there is nothing more to do than to go out and tell others only to believe.” The writer to whom we refer exclaims—“Why, this is enough to kindle the scorn of an angel ! Safe ! Is that all you have been pardoned for ? Believe and be safe ! Is that all you have to say to sinners ? Do you degrade the Gospel into a mere proclamation of impunity ? A Gospel that makes unchanged sinners safe is no more conceivable than a heaven where unchanged sinners are safe. Such a Gospel would be a curse ; such a heaven would be hell.”\*

*Assurance* of final salvation is represented as being of the *essence* of faith, or as the *direct result* of faith. This is plainly opposed to the teaching of Scripture, which speaks of children of light walking in darkness, and enjoins believers themselves to “give all diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end,” and declares that they only who “endure to the end shall be saved.” The tendency of such doctrine is, on the one hand, to undervalue the hope that arises from the attestation of faith by works, and thus to encourage a dead faith ; and, on the other, to make weak believers sad and despondent. The law of God is thus ignored as the rule of Christian life ; and, while the principles assumed are, in one aspect, Arminian, they lead in their practical application to Antinomian error and delusion.

The Plymouthist error in relation to the old and new man in believers in sanctification is fully taught in “Grace and Truth,” and has been publicly declared on some occasions by the leading American Evangelist. The exposure of such defects and errors is not made with the design of discrediting or opposing any genuine revival of religion ; but for the purpose of warning Christians of all names against the spread of insidious and dangerous error, and of leading all to seek unity in the Church, and the prevalence of the power of godliness, by means of the wide diffusion and faithful maintenance of the truth as it is in Jesus.

\* “The Missing Certificate,” by the Rev. Chas. Sandford.



No. II. — "SACRED SONGS AND SOLOS AND OTHER HYMNS,  
SUNG BY IRA D. SANKEY AT GOSPEL MEETINGS."

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In the wide-spread Revival movement which has of late been introduced into these countries, or greatly advanced by the two American Evangelists, hymn-singing occupies a very conspicuous place. Its friends and admirers do not hesitate, on fitting occasions, to declare that the Sacred Songs and Solos of Ira D. Sankey, with the accompaniment of choirs and harmoniums or organs, have been an immense power for collecting and keeping up large meetings, and for furthering the work of awakening sinners, and of multiplying converts.

Presbyterian ministers, in their eagerness to fall in with a popular movement, readily consented to use these sacred songs in the revival meetings. Without showing any regard to ecclesiastical order, and waiting to make proper inspection whether the new hymns were in accordance with Scriptural truth, or adapted to the service of praise, they threw aside the inspired Psalms, and gave the sanction of their example to the general use throughout the Church of what we shall show to be one of the worst collections of sacred songs and hymns that has ever been presented to the Christian public. We have thus another painful instance of what has not unfrequently occurred in former revival movements—religious men, in their eagerness to do good, adopting means which the Word of God condemns, and which mar the peace and unity of the church, and corrupt its worship.

When it has been objected that these Songs and Solos are, in many cases, not suited for the praise of a congregation, Mr. Sankey and his friends allege that they do not employ them for praising God, but that in using them they "sing the Gospel." This, to say the least, is a novelty unheard of hitherto. We read of the primitive disciples, when scattered by persecution, going everywhere, and preaching the Word. The commission to the Church is to "preach the Gospel to every creature;" but we have neither Scripture command nor example for *singing the Gospel*. When assembled hundreds or thousands join in these "Sacred Songs," then, according to Mr. Sankey's profession, this must mean that all these are—every one by song—preaching at the same time to all the rest! What Babel-confusion must this produce! Notwithstanding this pretence, it is undeniable that the vast majority of those who use these hymns employ them simply as the medium of praising God. They are sung, often exclusively, at the meetings which are expressly convened for prayer; they are extensively employed by congregations on the Sabbath; and they are resorted to in all the Evangelistic services, as the most popular and effective means of keeping up excited feelings, to the exclusion of inspired Psalm—the Divine manual of praise in the church. Then, it may be at once pointedly denied that these Songs and Solos contain the Gospel of sovereign grace; and, consequently, the use of them is anything but singing the Gospel. Several of them are mere *naturalistic* effusions. Throughout the whole collection, we search in vain for some of the precious fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, such as the covenant of grace, election, repentance, &c. Others contain noxious error; and even on the testimony of some of the friends and admirers of the American Evangelists, these Hymns are unfit for praise. Dr. Horatius Bonar, in defending the theology of the Revival movement against the objections of Dr. Kennedy, of Dingwall, says:—"As to the Hymns, I admit that many of them are feeble enough—some worse than feeble." And Dr. Eadie, speaking of the hymn, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," says:—"It is a

brief discourse, and not suited for public praise;" he advises its expulsion from the new Hymnal of the United Presbyterian Church.\*

What is meant by "*Solos*" in the praise of a Christian assembly, I am unable to understand. If the whole plan of Mr. Sankey's performances is designed for a "*musical entertainment*," these solos may have some place, and their singing will naturally enough attract crowds, just as an opera or an oratorio will; but to employ them in meetings which are expressly convened for devotional exercises, and to claim that people in using them are *singing the Gospel*, is to travesty all right ideas of praise, and to bring in extravagant human inventions in God's worship.

We give:—

I.—Some specimens, taken at random, of the *literary defects*—violations of rhyme, grammar, and taste—mixed metaphors—"art of sinking," &c.—contained in these pieces. In the hymn, "The Gates Ajar"—

"There is a gate that stands ajar,  
And through the portals gleaming  
A radiance from the cross afar  
The Saviour's love revealing."

Here, it is plain that "gleaming" and "revealing" cannot possibly rhyme; and the grammar is sacrificed to the bungling attempt at rhyme—for "revealing" should obviously be "reveals." A verse or two farther on, "open" is made to rhyme with "token"—as in another hymn of the collection "path" is made to jingle with "chaff." The chorus, though admired by some, is every way objectionable in style. The expressions which are *slang*, or which border upon it, are numerous, such as the following, which fully exemplify *bathos*, or the "art of sinking." Song 9:—

"There is a land that is fairer than day,  
And by faith we can see it afar,  
For the Father *waits over the way*,  
To prepare us a dwelling-place there—  
In the sweet *by-and-bye*."

Observe, *afar* and *there* are made to rhyme. The words which we have italicised are a choice specimen of American slang. Again, Song 29:—

"Brightly beams our Father's mercy  
From *His lighthouse evermore*;  
But to us He gives the keeping  
Of the *lights along the shore*.  
  
"Let the *lower lights be burning*,  
And a gleam across the wave,  
Some poor fainting, struggling seaman  
You may rescue, you may save."

The expressions in the following lines are characterized at once by irreverence and lowness of style, and a mixture of poisonous error:—

"The dear Holy Spirit with mine doth agree,  
When I just tell Him that Jesus loves me."

The impropriety of expression and mixing of metaphor in the following are worthy of notice:—"Hear, now, accents tenderly say." Again:—"The shadows are piled"—"Beneath the crowned hat." Whether understood or not by such as sing these words, they are ill adapted to express intelligent

\* It were easy to show that the leading sentiment in this hymn—"Jesus passing by"—is not in accordance with the Scripture representation of assemblies for Gospel worship, which uniformly exhibit Him as being in the midst of them, and as standing at the door of the sinner's heart, knocking.

praise. The following is evidently designed for effect, but must be pronounced a failure. Song 19:—

“Knocking, knocking; who is there?  
Waiting, waiting; oh! how fair!  
'Tis a pilgrim strange and kingly—  
Never such was seen before;  
Ah! my soul, for *such a wonder*  
Wilt thou not *undo the door*?”

The following lines in No. 4 of the collection contain such a jumble of metaphors as would be difficult to find in the productions of the lowest poetaster in the land:—

*figures* “Go, work in my vineyard—there’s plenty to do:  
2 The harvest is great, and the labourers are few;  
- 3 There’s weeding, and fencing, and clearing the roots,  
4. 5 And ploughing and sowing, and gathering the fruits.  
*of es kind, up? or vines?* 6. “There are foxes to take, there are wolves to destroy;  
All ages and ranks I can fully employ:  
I’ve sheep to be tended, and lambs to be fed—  
The lost must be gathered—the weary ones led.”

Mark, all this is to be done in a vineyard: sheep tended—wolves destroyed—lost gathered—weary ones led!

The hymn, No. 8—“Have you on the Lord believed?”—which appears to be a favourite one with Mr. Sankey and his admirers, from the frequency with which it is sung at the meetings, is weak in expression and extremely trashy:—

“Have you on the Lord believed?  
Still there’s more to follow;  
Of His grace have you received?  
Still there’s more to follow.  
Oh! the grace the Father shows,  
Still there’s more to follow;  
Freely He His grace bestows,  
Still there’s more to follow.  
More and more, more and more—  
Always more to follow;  
Oh! His matchless, boundless love!  
Still there’s more to follow.”

II.—It may be easily shown that these “Sacred Songs” are, both in their *matter* and in the *manner of singing* them, wholly unsuited for the praise of God. The language, in instances not a few, expresses nothing of the spirit of adoration. The manner is characterized by levity and rant, rather than gravity and reverence. The measures have been not unsuitably styled “jog-trot,” and the expression “bombast.” Let any person with due composure of mind, and a proper sense of holy awe and reverence in the Divine presence, listen to the performance of such pieces as “Jesus loved me,” “Still there’s more to follow,” “As I am sweeping through the gates,” “Hold the fort,” “Pull to the shore,” “Through the Valley of the Shadow, &c., I must go,” &c., and he will be forced to the conclusion that there is a lowness, irreverence, and familiarity in the matter, and a levity in the manner, that entirely unfit such pieces to be in any way employed in praise.

We give two specimens from Mr. Sankey’s book of mere *naturalistic sentimentalism*, and would seriously ask any thoughtful Christian reader are these in any respect suited to be offered in praise, or should the book

which contains them be adopted in the hymnology of the church? The one is from the hymn entitled, "Scatter seeds of kindness":—

"Strange, we never prize the music  
Till the sweet-voiced bird has flown ;  
Strange, that we should slight the violets  
Till the lovely flowers are gone !  
Strange that summer skies and sunshine  
Never seem one-half so fair  
As when winter's snowy pinions  
Shake the white down in the air.

"If we knew the baby fingers,  
Pressed against the window-pane,  
Would be cold and stiff to-morrow—  
Never trouble us again—  
Would the bright eyes of our darling  
Watch the frown upon our brow,  
Would the prints of rosy fingers  
Vex us then as they do now?"

The second is from "When the dewy light was fading," &c. This is said to be taken from the following incident:—A mother was preparing some flour in a dish when her little daughter pulled down the dish and spilled the flour. Her mother, in a passion, struck her, saying "she was always in the way." Soon after, Mary sickened and died. When she was delirious, she asked her mother, "Would there be room for her among the angels?" and added, "I was always in your way, mother: shall I be in the angels' way?" Here are two verses of this piece of silly sentimentalism:—

"Mother, raise me, just a moment :  
You'll forgive me when I say,  
You were angry when you told me  
I was always in your way.  
You were sorry in a moment—  
I could read it on your brow ;  
\* \* \* \* \*  
But you'll not recall it now.

"When my baby-sister calls me,  
And you hear my voice no more,  
When she plays among the roses,  
By our little cottage door,  
Never chide her when you're angry—  
Do it kindly and in love,  
That you both may dwell with Mary  
In the sunny land above."

Comment on such trash is unnecessary. But, is it not humiliating to think that so many ministers and leaders of the people give any sort of sanction to the use of it in public praise?

III.—By far the most serious objection against these "Sacred Songs, Solos, and other Hymns," is that they contain *doctrines contrary to the Scriptures*. Instead of being, as is claimed, the "Gospel in Song," they are, in numerous instances, directly opposed to the fundamental truths of the Gospel. The grand objection against the bringing in of mere human Hymns in worship— that they insidiously introduce the distinctively erroneous views of sects and parties, and thus effectually hinder the unity of the Church—lies with full force against this collection. In several of these



Songs and Solos, the sentiment is in full harmony with Plymouthist errors ; and the doctrines of Universal Atonement—of faith as being simple belief in testimony—of Assurance as being of the essence of faith—and other errors, are undisguisedly taught in them. Thus, in Song No. 3 : —

“ Wonderful things in the Bible I see :  
This is the dearest—that *Jesus loves me.* ”

This statement is palpably untrue, as nowhere in the Bible does any one find that *Jesus loves him in particular.*

Again, in Song 18, Universal Atonement is plainly taught : —

“ If you cannot speak like angels —  
If you cannot preach like Paul,  
You can tell the love of Jesus—  
You can say *He died for all.* ”

Without waiting to advance other instances of erroneous doctrine from Mr. Sankey's Sacred Songs—of which there are many—it may suffice to point out the heterodoxy of one of the most popular of these hymns—“ THE GATES AJAR.” If the American *ajar* has any proper meaning, it teaches that the gate is a little open, and that the radiance shining partly through it reveals the Saviour's love. The sinner can only come to behold the full radiance, and enjoy this love, by himself pushing the gate open. This suits well Arminian error, but is wholly opposed to the doctrine of sovereign efficacious grace. The gate either of acceptance or of glory is not ajar—it is fully open. The radiance of the Cross is not concealed, by shining through half-open doors. Christ has not performed a small part of the work of redemption, and left the sinner to do the remainder, as this hymn implies. Such a view limits the freeness of Divine mercy, and effectually tarnishes the beauty of the glorious Gospel. If the gate be not set wide open—if the man must remove some hindrance which the Saviour has not taken away—then His work is not finished, and the sinner may despair of obtaining eternal life.

The erroneous teaching of “ The Gates Ajar ” has been publicly pointed out on several occasions. When it first appeared in America, a hymnologist published a piece for the purpose of counteracting its injurious effects. The “ gate ” is in this taken to refer to an entrance into heaven : —

“ Not ajar !—the gates of glory,  
Leading to the realms of light !  
For the Holy Bible tells us  
They are open day and night.  
And the prayers of countless millions,  
Wafted to that land afar,  
Reach it through the gates eternal,  
Standing open, not ajar.”

Others, who understand by the “ gate ” the receiving of salvation, have strongly objected to the expression of the hymn, and proposed emendations. One characterizes it as having “ serious defects ; ” another says its language is “ unhappy and unscriptural ; ” and a third speaks of the infidelity of “ the gate ajar for me.” In the “ *Spiritual Songster*,” published by Yapp & Hawkins, London, the hymn appears with several amendments. Instead of the lines—

“ There is a gate that stands ajar,  
Was left ajar for me”—

It reads—

“ There is a gate *that open stands,*”

And—

“ That gate is *open wide* for me.”

Again, instead of *gate*, it is proposed to substitute *door*, and to make several other alterations. Accordingly, after no little tinkering, the following is emitted, with the heading—“ The Open Door ” :—

“ There is a door *stands open wide,*  
 And through its portals gleaming  
 A radiance from *the throne of light,*  
 The *God of love* revealing.  
 Christ is the *door to heaven*  
 For all who seek through Him salvation :  
 Oh ! depths of mercy, can it be  
 That door *was opened wide for me ?*”

It is worthy of special remark, that after all these attempts to make “ The Gates Ajar ” acceptable to Evangelical Christians, Mr. Sankey has not expunged the piece from his collection ; but, on the contrary, has continued to sing it at the Revival meetings, even since its errors have been exposed. Can this be regarded as aught else than a fond clinging to error in doctrine, and as a deliberate insult to orthodox ministers and people, who have been most eager in according to him their countenance and support ?

There are several others of these “ Sacred Songs ” on whose errors, extravagances, and futilities we had designed to animadvert ; but our space forbids us. Let any person calmly consider the purport and expression of one of the most popular—“ The Life Boat,” with the chorus, “ Pull to the shore ”—and we venture to say that he must fail to show any consistent meaning in many of the expressions ; and that for bombast, drivelling, and senseless talk, this piece is unequalled by aught written by the most miserable poetaster of the day. The piece, “ Hold the fort,” sung to a rollicking tune—is, in several parts of it, very little better—and to employ either of them in a solemn devotional service, is to make a burlesque of praise.

At times, in Sankey’s Collection, some of the best Hymns of several of our most famed poets—as Newton and Watts—are taken, to be spun out and applied, so as to be thoroughly weakened and spoiled. Thus, in John Newton’s hymn the following fine stanza occurs :—

“ Though troubles assail, and dangers affright,  
 Though friends should all fail, and foes all unite,  
 Yet one thing assures us, whatever betide—  
 The Scripture assures us the Lord will provide.”

This would not do for sensationalism in the hands of Ira D. Sankey, without the following doggerel lines :—

“ In some way or other the Lord will provide ;  
 It may not be my way,  
 It may not be thy way,  
 And yet in his own way the Lord will provide ;  
 Yes, we’ll trust in the Lord, and he will provide.”

And, again, Dr. Watts’s hymn, containing this stanza—

“ Give me the wings of faith to rise  
 Within the vail and see  
 The saints above, how great their joys—  
 How bright their glories be” .

Is chorused by the American Revivalist in this fashion:—

“Many are the friends who are waiting to-day,  
Happy on the glorious strand;  
Many are the voices who are calling us away—  
To join the glorious band.  
Calling us away, calling us away—  
Calling to the better land!”

These specimens may suffice to show the character of this collection of “Sacred Songs, Solos, and other Hymns,” that has been confessedly a chief instrumentality for swelling the number of converts, and stimulating to evangelistic effort in the present Awakening, and that are employed by Presbyterian ministers and their congregations to supplant God’s inspired Book of praise. When the present excitement shall have abated, and men have come to serious reflection, the effect will be, we trust—as it is now, to some extent, in the Church in America—that Christians will become thoroughly disgusted with “*namby pamby*” hymns, and other human inventions in the worship of the sanctuary, and will, with earnest desire and firm resolution, return to the Scriptural model.

☞ Should the above exposure of Sankey’s “Sacred Songs and Solos” be objected to as unjust and severe, we may only say, in the words of one of the pieces—

“*There’s more to follow.*”

