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MODERN DOCTRINES RESPECTING  
SINLESSNESS CONSIDERED.

Extracted from "Thoughts on Scriptural Subjects,"

BY

BENJAMIN WILLS NEWTON.

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LONDON:  
HOULSTON AND SONS,  
PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS.

*Price 6d.*

1873.

WERTHEIMER, LEA AND CO., PRINTERS, CIRCUS PLACE, FINSBURY.



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# Modern Doctrines Respecting Sinlessness Considered.\*

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## § I.

To oppose any who seem desirous of aiding the progress of God's people in the way of holiness, is a painful duty. Yet it *is* a duty, if in such efforts any deflexion from God's revealed Truth be traceable. The Spirit of holiness is also the Spirit of Truth. He cannot swerve from that which He has Himself spoken. The Scripture is *His* testimony; consequently, the authority of the Scripture, and the authority of the Holy Ghost, are co-equal. Every divergence, therefore, from the testimony of the Holy Ghost, must be anxiously withstood. Bunyan's Pilgrim found that paths which seemed at first to run almost parallel to the king's highway, became utterly divergent at last. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." If we use not that Word with subject hearts, we shall soon find ourselves surrounded with the snares and entanglements of darkness.

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\* This paper more particularly refers to the writings of Mr. R. Pearsall Smith, which, of late, have been extensively circulated in this country. The titles of the pamphlets to which I shall refer are, "*Through Death to Life.*" "*Is Romans vii. to be the continued experience of the Christian?*" "*Holiness through Faith.*"

That the Gospel-light graciously vouchsafed to Protestant Christendom has not produced, even amongst those who have truly received it unto salvation, the effects that might justly have been expected, I fully acknowledge. There has been often great worldliness, slumber, adulteration of Truth, and compromise, even amongst those who have truly received the Gospel of the grace of God. Whilst standing within the circle of light, our desire seems to have been, not to draw nearer and nearer to the brightness of its centre, but rather, to keep as close as possible to its verge; as if we were unwilling to be too decidedly separated from the surrounding darkness. Many who would be miserable if they did not think, that, through God's grace, they stand before Him "*uncharged*" (*ανεγκλητοι*, 1 Cor. i. 8) do, nevertheless, show little anxiety to be "*unblamed*." (*αμεμπτοι*, 1 Thess. v. 23)\* Thankful to be, through faith, children of God, we may show little anxiety to be "*obedient children*." Satisfied with being on the one foundation, we may care little whether we build on it things precious as gold, or worthless as stubble. Priestly garments may have been given to us; yet they may not have been kept unspotted. I freely admit that there is need amongst God's own children of self-judgment and repentance in many things. That condition of "*blamelessness*" of which the Scripture speaks, should earnestly

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\* See the difference between the meanings of *ανεγκλητος*, *αμεμπτος*, &c., considered in "Notes expository of the Greek of the first chapter of the Romans."

be sought after by those who desire to be found in well-pleasing before Him. His mercy and grace are our encouragement to seek it. He can "heal the backsliding." He upbraideth not for the past, but restoreth and giveth liberally. "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mightest be feared."

What then is blamelessness? In order that God might be able to regard our practical condition as one that He blames not, is it needful that that condition should be one of sinlessness? In order to answer this question, we must first determine what sinlessness is. God's definition thereof cannot vary; because it is founded on the principles of His own unchanging holiness. There must be no known or wilful transgression—no sins of ignorance—absolute perfectness in the inner man—absolute perfectness in developed character—full, perfect, unreserved devotedness to God in all things. In a word, there must be no tendency towards evil: there must be all tendency towards good. And this tendency must be efficacious in result. It must reach perfectly the end proposed.

Christ was all this. In Him, every tendency was towards good and against evil. His holiness (seeing that it was unchangeable) was the same on earth as it is now in glory. Feet comparable to "fine brass as though they burned in a furnace," (Rev. i. 15), must be intolerant and repellent of all defilement—His feet on earth as truly answered to this symbol as they now do in Heaven. He placed Himself, indeed, in the midst of the taints and defilements of earth; but feet of fire could not be affected

by any contiguity of evil. Fire is repellent of corruption. The full power of the Divine holiness was in Him. His feet, therefore, at the end of His sojourn on earth, were worthy of being anointed: and they were anointed with ointment—costly and fragrant. His disciples, even after they had been made clean through the word that He had spoken unto them, yet needed that their feet should be washed; and they were washed. But His feet were *not* washed; they were *anointed*. Is there no designed contrast in this?

Christ was tempted; but *externally*, by Satan: not internally, as we are. There is something in us, yea, even in the regenerate, that entices and allures away from God. “The mind of the flesh (*φρονημα σαρκος*, Rom. viii.) is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be.” “Every one is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.” James i. 14. This is a deeply important passage. It teaches us that there is in us, a living, active principle of evil, which, even when not acted on by external agency, does of itself, *proprio motu*, entice from good and draw towards evil. This principle, even if resisted, is *in virtue of its essential bias against God*, SIN. To entice and allure away from good, is one of the great characteristics of Satan as the Tempter: and this, SIN *within* us is able to do, and does do internally, as well as Satan externally. In the millennium, Satan will be bound. Those who will people the earth during the millennium will not be tempted externally by him; yet SIN (however repressed by grace) will still dwell in all who are yet in their

natural bodies, and will still struggle against God. This will be one of the great lessons of the next dispensation. Sin within us, if not resisted, "bringeth forth sin;" that is, developed sin or transgression. No such principle was in Christ. On the contrary, there was in Him essential holiness—the bias of which was as determinately *towards* God, as the bias of SIN within us is systematically *against* God. The temptations, therefore, which Satan dared to present to the Lord, were wholly external in their origination. Satan presented them to His holy soul; but as regards response, they were as sparks struck upon the ocean. The susceptibilities, indeed, of His holiness painfully felt their heinousness; but the feeling was one of horror, hatred, and repulency. There was no susceptibility to temptation in Him; no liability to sin. But it is far otherwise with us. Besides our "new man," there is in us an opposed nature, which, however it may be mortified, exists: and its feelings and sympathies are with Satan. Its affections are towards that by which Satan tempts. Accordingly, in our case, external temptation comes like a spark struck upon tinder; or rather, it comes as fire meeting fire. It finds something congenial to itself within us, and with that it mingles; bringing to it added strength. We may be on the watch: through the presence and power of the Spirit, the fire may be prevented from spreading. There may be no conflagration. But still, effects have been produced—effects that make manifest before God, and before our consciences (if sufficiently sensitive), that there is something within

us that does not withstand, but aid, the temptation presented by the external Tempter. There is no thorough, absolute, instant, repellency. It was not so with Christ—the Sinless One. If, therefore, we pretend to sinlessness, we must either raise ourselves to the level of His condition, and say that we have no tendency—no bias towards evil, but that all our tendencies are towards good: or else, we must bring Him down to the level of our condition, and say, that there was no essential difference between temptation in His case, and temptation in ours.

Temptation is not sin, if it arise exclusively from an *external* source. In that case, “it is no sin to be tempted.” But if the temptation arise from the activity of a principle of evil within, or if there be even a dormant principle of evil within, whose sympathies and tendencies, when aroused, are with that which externally tempts, then, none, so circumstanced, can speak of sinlessness. It is true, indeed, that *for Christ’s sake*, the guilt attaching to this principle of evil is not charged on us to condemnation; but the fact of its existence remains, and constitutes *one* most marked contrast between the condition of our sinless Substitute and our condition—however matured in grace such condition may be. This, the Scripture declares; this, the orthodox Protestant Confessions do, with one voice, affirm.

The author, however, of the pamphlets whose titles are prefixed, is differently minded: otherwise, he could not have written the words that follow:

“The soul surrounded by temptation and defilement, feels itself somewhat as a dead miser would be in the presence of a bag of

gold : not indeed without liability to sin, yet with an actual deadness of soul towards it. In such a condition, how sin can be a temptation, I leave. My Lord was tempted, and in 'Him was no sin.' Temptation is not sin, though by consenting to it we may follow the temptation. My object is not metaphysical analysis," &c.

At present, I merely quote these words to show that the writer has drawn no clear distinction between the temptation of Him, in whom no sin was, and the temptation of those in whom sin is. Yet, without the recognition of this distinction between Christ the Holy One and ourselves, it is impossible that any right conclusion can be arrived at on the question we are considering.

## § II.

NOTHING can be more obstructive of progress in true holiness than statements that obscure the difference between the personal condition of Christ, and the personal condition of believers. In the words just quoted, that difference has been more than obscured. At present, however, I will not pursue this branch of the subject.

The author thinks that believers may, and should be, brought into such a relation to sin, that their condition in the presence of temptation (in whatsoever way the temptation may come) would be that "of a dead miser to a bag of gold." In other words, evil would produce no effect upon us at all; for that which is dead cannot feel.

But where does the Scripture speak of such an extinction of sin in me, that Satan and the world find in me the insensibility of death? If that be so, why should I be commanded to "*mortify*" my members that are on the earth? We cannot mortify that which is already dead.

Again, the Apostle, in a passage in which he is avowedly describing the condition of all believers whilst they are yet in the body, says: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Gal. v. 17. The Apostle speaks of a constant antagonism, and of a constant conflict. "The flesh LUSTETH." Is that death?

Because of the strength and vigour of the flesh, we have to fight against it. What should we think of a soldier who, instead of going forth to battle against his enemies, persisted in declaring that they were all dead! Surely, we should mistrust his soldiership.

Again, we find in the Epistle of James these words: "in many things we all offend. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." James iii. 2. Shall we reject these words of the Apostle? Shall we say, that although the standard by which the practical attainments of God's people are to be measured, has been in this passage appointed by God Himself, He has, nevertheless, erred and fixed it too low? Shall we say, that none ought to be considered practically perfect except those who have so *slain* SIN that it remains no longer in a condition capable of being "*bridled*?" Shall we further say, that God has misrepresented the fact of our condition when He says of us all, that, viewed according to the perfectness of His holiness and purity, "we all offend?" This is God's sentence. He proved its truth in the case of Job. Shall we venture to reverse it?

"Bridle" is a word that implies forcible restraint. In Heaven, there will be nothing to be bridled. In Christ, there was nothing to be bridled. Perfectness needs no restraint. It rejoices in development. To "bridle" perfectness would be sin.

In this passage, therefore, we find the testimony of the Holy Ghost to two great truths:

I. That in many things we all offend.

II. That he who effectually bridles his tongue does thereby evidence that he has reached as high a measure of practical perfectness as is attainable here.

Consequently, to affirm that we can ever, whilst in the body, attain to a state in which no evil that requires to be bridled remains in us, is expressly to contradict the Scripture.

Again, we read that after the Apostle Paul had been caught up into the third heavens, there was danger of his being lifted up with pride. Consequently, in the Apostle, the root of evil was not dead. Shall we say, that it ought to have been dead? Shall we say, that if he had walked in the higher path in which we walk, and if his faith had been as strong, and as rightly directed as ours, all evil in him would have been dead; and in that case, whatever the temptation, he would have found himself in its presence "as a dead miser in the presence of a bag of gold?" Shall we elevate ourselves into a condition of holiness which he, who was caught up into Paradise, knew not? If any should do this, it would very convincingly prove that in *them*, at any rate, evil was not dead.

### § III.

THE inaccurate rendering of the aorist tenses by our translators in Romans vi., and elsewhere, has, to many minds, thrown an obscurity over this subject, which needs to be removed. See, for example, the eighth verse of Romans vi. "If we died (*ει απεθανομεν*) with Christ"—that is, if we (as is certainly true) passed *representatively* through judicial death when He died in our stead, we believe that we shall also live with Him. See also Col. iii. 3. "Ye died (*απεθαυετε*) and your life is hid with Christ in God." And 2 Cor. v. 14. "If one died instead of all [all believers], then did the whole die." Not one of these, and like texts, speak of our being *in a state of death*. They refer to the great accomplished fact of our having died (not personally but representatively) when our Substitute passed through judicial death in our stead; and they speak also of our being alive unto God in Him. If we were regarded as being in a state of death, we should neither be commanded to mortify any thing, for he who is personally dead cannot mortify; nor can that which is dead be mortified; nor should we be commanded to reckon ourselves dead, for we do not say to a person who is actually dead, "reckon thyself dead;" though to a person who has representatively died, but is personally alive, we may, and should say this. We must be very careful,

therefore, not to misquote the Scripture, and to represent it as saying, "*ye are dead*" when it does not say this, but says, "*ye died*." Believers, though they have never died personally, and though they are not in a state of death, either spiritually or otherwise, can nevertheless say, "we died" when Christ our Representative died in our stead. "If one died instead of all, then did the whole die." Every conclusion, therefore, that is founded on the supposition that the words "*ye died*" mean "*ye are dead*," necessarily fails.

Nor is this a point of secondary moment. We have jealously to watch that no text which speaks of the substitutional work of our God and Saviour be diverted from its proper meaning. When the Scripture says, "*ye died*"—*απεθавετε*, its great object is to direct our souls to that one moment when our holy Substitute bowed His head in death, and said "It is finished." Every believer has a title to say that he then passed (not indeed personally but representatively) through judicial death. "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Our Substitute (not ourselves personally) was baptised with that baptism of suffering; yet we, as having been represented by Him, are regarded as having been baptised therewith. "With the baptism wherewith I am baptised withal shall ye be baptised."\* See Mark x. 39.

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\* The baptism of His suffering under the power of wrath we know nothing of *personally*: we have passed through it *representatively*. The cup of His joy we are personally to share with Him. Such is the appointment of grace.

Blessed to all who had believed in Jesus was that hour, when, in their Substitute, they emerged from that judicial death. They left it encompassed by all the preciousness of that incense-like fragrance that had ascended from that sacrificial death: and when He was received up in glory, they too entered (still representatively, not personally) those heavenly places where He took His seat as their Forerunner, Representative, and Head. And what was true of them, becomes true of us the moment we believe. The family of faith are they of whom these things are spoken; and whensoever, through personal faith, we enter that family, *then* the blessings that pertain to that family becomes personally ours. Thoughts, bright with heavenly radiancy, encircle the words, "ye died;" but they are quenched by the words, "ye are dead." No *representative* thought can be rightly connected with the words "ye are dead," as denoting a present condition: for *representatively* we are not in a state of death but of life, and seated in heavenly places in Christ. "In that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." To reckon myself to have a title to act according to that which pertains to my *representative* condition, is a very different thing from saying that my actual condition is in all respects identical with my representative condition. Moreover, the Holy Ghost in sanctifying, or causing a practical death to the *service* of sin, effects this by leading our souls to an apprehension of the work of our Substitute—especially His great sacrificial work on Calvary. Our advance in the path of practical sanctifica-

tion will greatly depend on the manner in which we apprehend that which God has effected for us by the death and resurrection of our Head. The Holy Ghost was sent to glorify Christ, and Christ's work. The words, "*ye died*," direct our souls to an hour of victory and triumph over all our enemies—over all that separated us from God: and they speak of results that associate us, even now, with glory; whereas the words, "*ye are dead*," dim, if they do not destroy, our apprehension of the blessings which representatively pertain to us in our Head, and divert us from those constituted objects of faith whereby the soul becomes comforted and strengthened for its service.

We have also to remember that the words, "*ye died with Christ—ye are alive unto God in him*," are not restricted to any special section or class of believers: they are avowedly used of *all* believers *as such*. They are as true of the babe in faith as of the father in Christ; as true of Mark as of Paul; of the erring believers at Corinth as of the unblamed Thessalonians. The power of Scripture exhortation, as addressed to believers, is founded on the fact that the grace of God has already brought them *in Christ* into that condition to which they are exhorted to be practically conformed. "*Ye died with Christ*;" therefore walk as those who so died. "*Ye are alive unto God in him*;" therefore walk as those who are alive unto God in Him. "*Ye are alive in the Spirit*;" therefore walk as those who are alive in the Spirit. The exhortation is grounded on that which grace has already inalienably bestowed.

Accordingly, Baptism (which is the constituted sign that we are regarded as those who died when our Representative died, and were raised when He was raised) is, by God's own appointment, administered to believers at the very first moment they believe. The Pentecostal converts; the eunuch in the wilderness; the jailor at Philippi; believed and were baptised instantly. They were baptised before they could have had any practical experience of that which Baptism on the part of God signifies and seals. But we must say that the Apostles were wrong in doing this, if we adopt that exposition of the sixth of Romans which requires that the words, "ye died with Christ," should be altered into, "ye are dead;" and be explained as meaning that a state of absolute practical death to sin has been attained. By the author's own showing, such a condition is not attained by *all* believers. Baptism, therefore, could not be administered to *all* believers; but only to those who have attained this perfect practical death to sin. Baptism would no longer refer to that which God has made *all* believers to be in Christ; but it would denote a supposed state of practical death to sin which is attained by *some* believers only. Moreover, seeing that it is alleged that sin, after having been slain, may (if there be not watchfulness and faith,) revive, it would be needful to say, that in every case in which sin did so revive, the condition denoted by Baptism must be lost. We should cease to be entitled to the sign. For, seeing that Baptism denotes a condition *held by us, and recognised by God as held by us*, if the condition ceases to belong

to us, we must, as a consequence, cease to be entitled to the sign. Our right to the sign must depend on our possession of the condition which the sign was appointed to indicate. We should virtually become unbaptised persons. Should we then, in case of recovering our lost condition, be rebaptised ?

I would not intentionally misrepresent the opinions of Mr. Pearsall Smith. That I have not done so, the following quotation will, I think, sufficiently show. In the 14th page of one of his publications entitled, "Through Death to Life, the lesson of the sixth of Romans," he writes as follows :

"You need not, as do some, be all your life dying and yet never dead ; always on the Cross, yet never crucified to the world ; the process of spiritual surgery progressing joint by joint, member by member, yet never finished ; handing over your old life to death, and yet resuming it again ; consigned to burial, yet refusing to die. Oh, what a life-time of suffering some insist upon enduring in spiritual hospitals, when, if they *would* but be 'planted in the likeness of Christ's death,' they would find 'also the likeness of His resurrection'—the 'life . . . more abundantly ;' for which the Son of God came, suffered, died, and rose again. When on the battle-field a man is wounded, he limps away, or is carried off to hospital, to recover his vital power again ; but if he throws up his hands suddenly into the air, every one knows that the bullet has reached his heart, and that he is a dead man. The centre of his existence has been reached, and as life once radiated thence through all his frame, so now death extends thence to all his members. Death is sudden, but the death is over. There are no lingering agonies, no weary days, months, and years of half-life, no amputations,—death is the accomplished thing. It is thus, dear Christian, that I desire death in you. Not so much by the process of a gradual, never accomplished crucifixion of the flesh ;

not so much by a severing of this and that and the other member ; not so much by the cutting out of the cancers,—though this otherwise might be needful,—but by dying in the centre of your existence to self ; that is, to that bundle of passions, selfishnesses, ambitions, uncleannesses, and idolatries, which constitute the many members of ‘the body of death’ which is to ‘be destroyed.’ What this means the Holy Spirit alone can explain to your experience ; but I cannot doubt that He *will* define it to the honest, God-fearing inquirer after God’s highway of holiness.”\*

Now, inasmuch as the Apostle declares that the condition described in the sixth of Romans is one that

\* In a note at the foot of page 14 Mr. Smith adds : “ In using this figure [that of a dead man] it is possible that more may be inferred than is intended. No simile is perfect, and this fails in that, although there has been a death to sin and a resurrection in newness of life, yet all the avenues of temptation through the senses and the motions remain open ; and a want of continuous faith and watchfulness on the part of the believer would be followed by the resuscitation of the old life ; as in chapter vii. : ‘sin *revived* [or became alive again] and I [as to this full resurrection-life] died.’ The word ‘revived,’ in the original, is only used in one other place : ‘My son was dead and is *alive again*.’ The flesh is *liable* at any moment to ‘revive’ or become ‘alive again,’ though through faith it may unvaryingly be kept in the place of death.”

If sin could revive so as for the state described in the sixth of Romans to be forfeited, that state could never be recovered. But this cannot be. Sin can never again assume that relation towards believers which the power of God’s grace in Christ has for ever taken from her. Mr. Smith has evidently not observed the contrast between that part of the seventh of Romans (from verse seven to twelve inclusive) which describes Paul’s condition *as a man*, and the subsequent part of the chapter (from verse thirteen to end) which describes his experience *as a believing man*. See this treated of in Tract entitled, “Romans vii. Considered.”

pertains to all believers *as such*, whereas Mr. Smith restricts the condition to those believers who become practically dead to sin like men slain on a battle-field, it is obvious that the teaching of the Apostle and that of Mr. Smith essentially differ ; and we have to elect which we will follow.

Mr. Smith also says, page 16 :

“‘The likeness of his resurrection’ is elsewhere expressed by the words, ‘*working in you* that which is well pleasing in His sight ;’ and by the words, ‘for it is God that *worketh in you* both to will and to do of His good pleasure.’ The natural will being dead, the agony of a divided life and purpose is gone ; for now our glorious motive-power, God’s own will, works in us, freed from internal opposition,—even though still subject to external assaults, and, through want of watching unto prayer, liable to a revival of the old slain will.”

Here again it is obvious that, according to the teaching of Mr. Smith, none could rightly apply to themselves those blessed words, “ye died ;” nor rightly receive in Baptism the sign of that past death, unless *their natural will was dead*, and God’s will worked in them “*freed from internal opposition.*”

Further, it is evident that the state described in the sixth of Romans, and indicated in the rite of Baptism, is a state that attaches of necessity to all the justified. They to whom that state attaches *not*, cannot be numbered among the justified. Consequently, if we adopt the principles of Mr. Smith, we must say that they in whom God’s will does not work “*freed from all internal opposition,*” have not attained the state described in

the sixth of Romans and indicated by Baptism ; and therefore, must be numbered among the unpardoned.

Thirdly, it is manifest, that if the state supposed by Mr. Smith to be indicated in this chapter could be attained, the practical commandments of this chapter, and of Scripture generally, would, the moment such a state was attained, cease to be applicable ; for we could not use such expressions as “mortify,” “bridle,” “keep under,” “bring into subjection,” and the like, of any in whom the natural will was *dead*, and in whom God’s will worked “*freed from all internal opposition.*”

#### § IV.

THE object of the sixth of Romans is not to teach us that our conflict with indwelling sin can cease whilst we are yet in the body. There is nothing there that tells us that God's own will works in us "freed from all internal opposition." What we learn from that blessed chapter is, that in virtue of what our Representative has done, we, *according to the judicial sentence of God* (a sentence already pronounced over us, though not yet carried out into its final results), stand in a relation to Sin and to God, similar to that in which our Representative stands. When Christ as our Representative died, we (representatively) died: when He as our Representative rose, we (representatively) rose. He passed through judicial death in our stead. That terrible hour is past; and He has borne us through wrath into glory. In Him we live unto God. Our life is hid with Christ in God. Hence, when the hour of resurrection comes, full participation in the glory and perfectness of our risen Lord is secured to us. We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Then no longer shall we have to contrast, as now, our representative and our personal condition.

In the meanwhile, however, our personal and practical relation to Sin is essentially and for ever changed. Our natural relation to Sin is clearly defined in the fifth

chapter of the Romans. Sin is there personified. In consequence of Adam's transgression, Sin is described as entering like a mighty monarch into the world, there to reign in the power of death. See Rom. v. 21.\* As a penal infliction of the hand of God in consequence of our first representative's transgression, we are delivered over to the sovereignty of Sin. Sin reigns around us, and over us, and in us. We are amenable to the curse of judicial death, which she is entitled to inflict on all who are her subjects. She has become the mistress of all our powers, outward and inward. In a word, we are altogether in her hand. It is, as I have already said, a penal infliction of the hand of God because of our first representative's transgression.

The governmental appointments of God are not like those of men—*arbitrary*. They are all founded on principles that necessarily emanate from the requirements of His essential holiness. Men may enact arbitrarily, and as arbitrarily reverse what they have enacted. But it is otherwise with God. He can only act (whether in punishing or in forgiving,) in consistency with the claims of His own essential holiness: and as He only is able, so He alone has the right, to determine what the claims of that holiness demand. Accordingly, when Adam, after having been constituted the representative of others, did in that character transgress, the holiness of God appointed that "judgment unto condemnation,"

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\* Εβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ. The Law is similarly personified in the commencement of the seventh chapter.

founded on that one transgression, should go forth. And when judgment had gone forth with all its penal consequences (and of these consequences, the establishment of Sin's empire was one), God's holiness required that before the action of judgment was intercepted and supplanted by the action of mercy and grace, a second Representative should be found, to supply, by His compensatory obedience, a ground on which the action of grace might be founded, even as the action of judgment was founded on our first representative's transgression. Before the power of penal death, wherewith Sin had been empowered to smite us, could be taken from her, it was needful that the penalty should be met by One able to bear it—able to die under it; and having died, to live.

Bearing these things in mind, we can have little difficulty in understanding the words, "in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Our Substitute, in all the power of heaven's own holiness, came into the midst of Sin's empire; lived in it; glorified God in it; advanced, as it were, to her throne, and demanded the release of His people. Yet, in order to effect this, it was needful to meet the curse which Sin had a title to inflict on *them*: a title nullified once and for ever by His substitutional death. "In that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."

In no other sense than this could the Holy One die unto sin. Sin had no claim against Him personally. She had never had *Him* for her subject. In the power of

heaven's own holiness and light, He moved through her dark empire, ever glorifying God. In taking on Himself the curse and penalty due to our "sin in the flesh," He did not incorporate with Himself our "sin in the flesh." Our sin, whose punishment He bore, remained as much contrasted with Himself, as does a burden with the person who bears it. Laden, however, with responsibilities removed from us sinners to His own most Holy Person, He met that penal death, under the power of which Sin held us because of Adam's transgression, and because of our corruption, and because of our personal offences against God's holy Law. "The strength of sin is the law." Meeting the penalty, and at the same time presenting the perfectness of His own obedience unto God, our Surety did thereby supply the ground on which grace hath established her throne and reigns for evermore; that as Sin reigned in the power of death, even so might grace reign THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Atonement having been made to God, and full satisfaction rendered to all the claims of His holiness, grace could proceed to dispense the blessings that become the heritage of those over whom she reigns.

Our natural relation to Sin is this :

I. We are in her empire.

II. In that empire we are her lawful subjects.

III. Sin dwells within us.

IV. She *rules* in us.

V. She holds us under the power of judicial death and everlasting curse.

Such is our natural relation to Sin ; but through redemption, that relation is changed—and changed for ever. Although still personally in her empire (for we are in an earth over which she reigns), yet, representatively, we are “stablished” in the heavens, where our Head and Forerunner is. Moreover, although *in* her empire, we *belong not to* her empire, but to the kingdom of our God and Saviour ; having Him for our Sovereign ; His laws for our guidance ; His Spirit for our strength. A circle of light has been drawn in the midst of the black darkness of earth ; and over it heaven is opened in complacency, and peace, and love. Grace, by the preached word of the Gospel, gathers all who believe within that circle, and reigns over them there. We are “translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God’s love.” And although Sin is permitted still to  *dwell* in us, yet she no longer  *reigns* in us. She is deposed from her throne  *within* us. Her power, though not destroyed, is “nulled.” Lastly, she no longer holds us under the power of judicial death and curse. The snare is broken, and we are delivered.

And to what are we indebted for this deliverance ? To the work of our God and Saviour. Thereby has been provided the ground on which grace has established its throne, that it might reign over us for ever. Reigning by means of the righteousness supplied by the obedience of Jesus, grace delivers us from the curse, because He hath borne it in our stead. It delivers us from the authority of sin (even whilst we are yet locally

in Sin's empire), and brings us into another kingdom, uniting us with One who is its Head in glory above the heavens. It enables us to withstand the power of Sin within us, by creating in us "the new man," and sending down the Spirit from above; that so, whilst Sin is yet in us, we might confront it, and resist it, and refuse to obey it in the lusts thereof. These are some of the blessed present consequences of redemption. The ground on which judgment operated against us having been removed, and a new basis constituted from which grace operates, the *penalties* (and all those relations to sin to which I have referred came as penalties) are cancelled, and instead thereof, blessings come.

Some may perhaps say, Is it then a blessing to be left in the midst of Sin's empire? For a season only we are left here, with a mission entrusted to us from above. We are left here as subjects of a heavenly kingdom—a kingdom of grace, and glory, and strength, and power; that we might, in the midst of the fierce rebellion of earth, uphold the banner of Truth, and fight the battle of the Lord God of Israel. Is this no honour—no blessing?

And if it be further asked, whether it be a blessing that Sin should still dwell within us, we answer, that, in result, it is a blessing. Is it not meet that such as we, debtors to grace alone, should well understand what Sin is? Was not Hezekiah, after many years of faithful service to God, allowed to fall, that he might be taught what was in his heart? See 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. Was it not meet that Job should be caused to know that there

was a principle of latent evil hidden within him, which, as soon as temptation in sufficient strength came, developed itself, and caused him, in seeking to justify himself, to impugn God? It would not be well that Job, or any other servant of God, should form an utterly wrong estimate of his actual condition. It were, indeed, no blessing, if it were appointed that Sin should dwell in us for ever : but it is not so appointed. On the contrary, one of the reasons why it is left in us is, that it may quicken the expectancy of faith, and enhance the joy of the coming hour of deliverance. Nor would it be a blessing if Sin were left in us as a mistress whom we were compelled to serve. We serve her not. We have "crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." We resist and fight against her indwelling power; and in the conflict we learn many a lesson. Our faith is exercised, and it may be, we earn for ourselves praise. "He that ruleth well his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city"; and such greatness is ever estimated in God's sight.

Seeing, however, that in this conflict there may, and will be from time to time, failure (for "there is no man that sinneth not," 2 Chron. vi. 36) it is possible that on such occasions, especially if the failure should be great, Sin may in the ear of our conscience loudly re-assert her ancient claims. She may say that we have broken the link that had bound us to the service of God, and that consequently He has delivered us over to her that we should be her servants as before. But we have an answer. God hath supplied it. He has said, "Sin shall

not [whatever be the circumstances] have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace." If we were under the law, failure would be ruin. " He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all " : but grace having brought us, *on the ground of Another's righteousness*, into new paths, preserves us in those paths. We are " preserved in Jesus Christ," as well as called. Grace sometimes preserves by upholding, so that we fall not : but it can also preserve by *restoring* after we have fallen. Whatever claim, therefore, may be advanced by Sin with the view of re-constituting those relations to herself which grace has cancelled, *all* believers are, through God's unspeakable mercy, entitled to reply, It shall not be. " We died "—died according to the power and efficacy of that death which our Substitute died in our stead : and he that *so* died, has been justified from every claim which Sin, his ancient mistress, can possibly urge against him. Such is the meaning of the words, " he that died (representatively died) hath been justified from sin." No valid plea remains to Sin. She can substantiate against us no claim, either in respect of curse to be inflicted, or servitude to be exacted. Her ancient power over us is gone—and gone for ever. Associated at present with all the results of the death of Christ in respect of everything from which that death was intended *at present* to deliver, and associated in prospect with all its results in respect of every thing from which it is *finally* to deliver, and associated with other results that flow from our union with Him in resurrection, it is impossible that we can be removed from a condition into

which grace, by no less means than the death and resurrection of the Holy One, has brought us. "Our old man," therefore, cannot *revive* out of the condition into which it has been brought by that death to which the sixth of the Romans refers. Our present question, let it be remembered, concerns that chapter. The advocates of the system we are opposing, contend that after ourselves and SIN have been brought into that relation one to the other *which the sixth of Romans describes*, that relation, through failure on our part, may be set aside, and the original condition be fallen back into again. Whereas this chapter, as indeed all Scripture, declares the very reverse. It teaches that our relation as believers, through redemption, to SIN and to God, being founded on the death and resurrection of our Substitute, is fixed and unalterable. Because of what we are through and in Christ, the new man is created in us, and the Holy Ghost abidingly given to us, whereby we stand in a practical relation of deliverance from *servitude* to sin which is fixed and unchangeable. If all this could be reversed, and we could fall back into the state from which redemption has raised us, it would be a fall more terrible in its results than Adam's; for seeing that God has in reserve no second redemption, the fall would be final and irrevocable.

## § V.

IN considering these subjects, it is of the deepest possible moment to recognise that there are certain practical relations to sin and to holiness, that are necessarily held by all believers as such. One of the blessings pertaining to all who stand under the New Covenant of grace is, "I will write my laws upon their hearts." This is effected the moment "the new man" is created in them. All the impulses, tendencies, and desires of "the new man" are perfect according to God. Its creation in believers is a result of that quickening power of life that is in Christ; for He was, and is the Life-giving-One. (*ὁ ζῶν διδούς*, John vi. 33.) We know that every one who has looked believingly on Him is quickened with new and heavenly life. The Holy Ghost comes to dwell in all such; so that the life that is in them is sustained and directed by His agency. It could not be supposed that God, who is described as our "Stablisher in Christ," (*ὁ βεβαιῶν εἰς χριστόν*, 2 Cor. i. 21) would bestow on us in the heavens in Christ, that marvellous fixity of condition which is expressed in these words, without also planting in us certain equally fixed habits of thought, feeling and action, so that we might practically become, radically and essentially, distinct from all who know not Christ. Accordingly, the relation in

which we stand to God by the creation of "the new man" in us, and by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, is a relation as fixed and unchangeable, as that which grace has given us above in Him in whom our life is hidden. We may confidently say that there is not any moral characteristic that will finally attach to us in heaven, of which the seed-principle is not found in the new man already created in us.\* Moreover, through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, "God's own divine power hath been given us in all things that pertain unto life and godliness." Such is the fixed essential condition into which grace has brought all believers. I am not now speaking of development, but of radical condition.

Accordingly, the difference between believers and unbelievers as regards the relation which they respectively hold to good and to evil, is carefully marked in the Scripture as being essential and abiding. This may be especially seen in the first Epistle of John. "He that is a doer of sin is of the devil." "Every one that hath been born of God is not a doer of sin." The Apostle does not mean that a believer never sins. On the contrary, he says, "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And again; "if any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father." What he means is, that no believer does, or can *habitually* tread the same path that the world treads. None

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\* Even as the seed-principle of every evil that ever has been, or ever will be developed in the world, is in our flesh.

who *habitually* tread the world's path of darkness belong to Christ. There is a path of light, and to it believers belong; and there is a path of darkness, and to it the unregenerate belong. There is a difference between the two classes: and that difference is radical and essential.\* Again and again, in various forms, John reiterates the truth that *πας ὁ ἁμαρτανων*—"every one who is a *sinning-one* [in that essential, habitual sense which this form of expression denotes †] hath not seen him [Christ] neither known him." Do we marvel at being told this? Do we say, What need is there that we should be taught a truism? Can any one doubt that he who habitually serves sin belongs not to Christ? It *was* doubted. The habit which has since made Christendom what it is, had even then begun—the habit of placing the sanctifying name of Christ on those who were habitually, and with full purpose of heart, treading paths of darkness. It was needful, therefore, to proclaim in ears that were becoming dull, the elementary and self-evident truth

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\* "The regenerate," says Bishop Davenant, "may fall into sin; but they do not habitually walk, nor can they live in sin. For *he* walketh in sin who sinneth by his hearty choice in his constant course, and with the full consent of his will."

† See this considered in "Occasional Papers," Number II., page 99. Nothing can be more dangerous than the habit that some have, of explaining these, and similar pages, as meaning that the new man in the believer does not sin. Could Peter excuse himself for his sin at Antioch by saying, "my new man did not do it." Such a system would assign to the believer two personalities. Peter, though having in him "the new man" and "the old," was one person; and to him as a person, responsibility for his actions attached.

that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all ;" and that, consequently, none who were habitually walkers in darkness could belong to Him. Hence the contrasts reiterated in this Epistle. "We are of God"—"they are of the world." "He that loveth (*ὁ ἀγαπᾷ*) is born of God." "He that loveth not hath not known God." 1 John iv. 8.

It is true, indeed, that in this dark and evil day, when the flock of Christ are scattered, and often fed on fouled pastures, and caused to drink polluted streams, the *development* of some of their most essential characteristics may be so feeble as to be almost hidden from the eye of man. But He who searched the hearts seeth deeper than we, and marks characteristics that we fail to discern. "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you," are words true of every believer from the first moment he believes. He is thus taken out of the class of those who are "not obeyers of the truth, but obeyers of unrighteousness," and is numbered among those who "by enduring continuance in well-doing are seekers of glory, and honour, and incorruptibility." He is by a power that comes from above, and that abides with him, set in antagonism against Satan, and the flesh, and the world. This is a state not attained by our efforts. It is one freely given to us of God, when first He brings us within the bonds of the New Covenant.

To us, therefore, as believers, the question is not respecting the attainment of this state: the question is whether the power belonging to that state into which

grace has brought, be duly developed. Simon Peter, the moment he had known and confessed Christ, was on the Rock. Christ was the Rock (*πετρα*), and Simon with all his weakness was brought into association with that Rock, so that all its strength was his. He had, therefore, become a Rock-man (*πετρος*)—Peter, Cephas. All the characteristics and accompaniments of that Rock-condition pertained to him for ever. Yet the question still remained, whether, in these new circumstances of abiding strength, he would manifest that which savoured of Satan, or of God.

Fully and unreservedly I admit the infinite importance of development. Our one object in life should be, that we might manifest every day, more and more, the characteristics of those who, having been washed and clothed in priestly garments, have also been anointed with the holy oil, that our ways might be redolent with a fragrance recognised as fragrance in the sanctuary of God. And there is the greater need of anxiety as to this, because it is possible that believers may savour of the world and of Satan, in many of their ways. There may be much worldliness, pride, and wilfulness; insubjection of mind to Scripture and to truth. We must seek to keep very close to Scripture, if we would have our own steps guided, or if we would guide others, into the ways of peace.

Suppose, then, that we should be asked to point out to any one the character of the path which a pilgrim to the heavenly City should tread. Suppose we were asked what personally should characterize him who would tread

that path acceptably. Would our reply to this last question be, SINLESSNESS ?

Next to misrepresenting the way of access unto Christ, the great desire of the Enemy of souls is, to misrepresent and miscolour the character of the path in which the saved walk. Yet, in either case, he can speak as an angel of light. If the attainment of salvation be in question, he says, seek holiness—perfect holiness. By personal holiness, salvation is reached: and then he draws a vivid, and, in many respects, not untrue picture of what holiness is, and says, “that do, and thou shalt live.” The question of our ability to attain this holiness he hides; and hides with it, the way of grace—the only way that God hath opened for the weary and heavy laden sinner. So, as regards the path of Christian service, Satan is able to sketch, and to present to our imagination a picture of sinless and unhindered service according to a perfectness that finally will be ours in heaven; but the question is, can it be ours now? Is it a picture which has the substantive reality of truth, or is it one which our excited and deceived imagination has pourtrayed?

The way of life is narrow: it is entered by a strait gate: and there are many dangers. Apollyon is there: and there is many a pitfall, and many a bye-way. Discouragements, too, may abound. Solitude may depress, or society ensnare: activity may exhaust, or undue rest enfeeble. Success may intoxicate, or failure unduly daunt. In a world like this, where good and evil, truth

and falsehood, God and Satan, are in unceasing conflict, it is not easy to hold steadfastly the exact relation to good and to evil that God desires that we should maintain. In entering on such a conflict, what can be more important than to know whether or not we have a foe within our own bosoms; whether it be possible for God's own will to work in us "freed from internal opposition." There may be to some a certain fascination in the thought that we need but exercise faith, and that we should find SIN within us fall dead like Goliath before the sling of David. There may be a certain fascination in the thought, but is it true? Scripture only can supply an infallible answer.

But will Scripture be really submitted to? I cannot but think that there lingers in many minds a kind of half-formed thought that there may be granted to one who walks closely in the Spirit, a rule which, though not contrary to the written word of God, is yet higher and fuller than it. Some say, Was it not intended that there should be in the Church of God growth and development? In the Scripture we have the record of the Church's infancy; but since, we have advanced to years of strength. Does not the Spirit dwell in the Church; and if He taught it certain things in its infancy, is He not likely to teach it other things in its manhood? Millions in Christendom are perishing under this lie. Yet even in minds that repel this poison, there may still linger a notion that the practical attainments of the early Churches, and it may be of the Apostles themselves, may be exceeded by greater faith and greater

watchfulness than was by them exhibited. If this thought finds entrance into our heart, the Apostles of our God and Saviour will soon cease to be our guides.

I am led to say this, partly by observing that Mr. Pearsall Smith in his remarks on the seventh of Romans (although admitting that that chapter supplies the experience of a true Christian—nay more, that it supplies the Apostle's own experience) does, nevertheless, maintain that it is not *right* Christian experience. He thinks that the Apostle had for a season backslidden ; that he had sought to carry out in the flesh what he should have carried out in the Spirit ; that there was found in the Apostle a kind of Galatian failure ; and so, Sin, which once had been dead in him revived. Hence the experience detailed in the closing part of the seventh of Romans.

Now, if the seventh of Romans is to be regarded as the Apostle's own experience indeed, but an experience caused by unfaithfulness and declension, it is obvious that I may be told the same respecting other parts of Scripture in which the presence of Sin in believers is in like manner recognised. Thus, when I read in the Epistle to the Galatians—"the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary (*αντικειμενα*, set in hostile array) the one against the other," I may be told that it was so indeed with the Galatians, but that it was a wrong condition—a condition into which they had lapsed. Thus I may be forbidden to regard this as the normal condition of all believers, although the Apostle tells me that it is.

And when I further read that there was a root of pride in the Apostle's heart that needed peculiarly to be watched against, and that therefore a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure, I may be told that this ought not to have been, and would not have been if he had exercised faith aright—that if his faith had been more vigorous, he might have extirpated that and every other root of evil from his heart, and been in the presence of temptation “as a dead miser in the presence of a bag of gold.”

I must be permitted to say that I refuse to take one step in the path thus opened. In the course of a somewhat lengthened life I have had, through circumstances, more opportunity than has fallen to the lot of most persons, of observing the course and the end of many who have (unconsciously perhaps at first) abandoned the Scripture as their alone rule, in the hope of treading a higher and better way. I have watched the course of such. I have witnessed not unfrequently its end. I have seen it delusion, darkness, and sorrow. I remember the words of the Apostle: “if any man be a prophet or spiritual, let him remember that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” I know how insubjection of soul to Scripture is one of the most terrible evidences of the practical power of Sin. “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?”

Well would it be for us if we could say in the same power of *practical realization* in which the Apostle said

it, "I delight in (or rather I delight with) the Law of God after the inner man." None but one walking in close communion with Christ could *experimentally* say that. Yet these words are found in the seventh of Romans.

## § VI.

“The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth unto envy.”  
James iv. 5.

“The mind of the flesh (*φρονημα σαρκος*) is enmity against God.” Rom. viii. 7.

“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” Gal. v. 17.

THESE three texts are so plain and decisive, that it seems wonderful how any one who receives the Scripture, can deny their conclusiveness in respect of the subject we are considering. God has promised ultimately to relieve us ; but He has not yet relieved us from the presence of that which lusteth against His Spirit. He has relieved us from its condemnation, and also from its dominance ; but He has not yet relieved us from its presence. The three texts I have quoted, are God's own description of our present condition as respects the indwelling of sin ; and it is a description which must, by His appointment, continue to apply to us until we depart to be with Christ, or until the hour of resurrection comes. Whilst I am yet in the body, the *φρονημα σαρκος*—“the mind of the flesh,” must remain in me ; and seeing that it is enmity against God, it has, in itself, the very essentiality of sin.

But there is in believers not only “the mind of the flesh ;” there is also “the new man,” and the indwelling

presence of the Holy Ghost. We delight in the law of God after the inner man. All the desires and tendencies of "the new man" being absolutely perfect, it necessarily seeks to love and to serve God with the perfectness of heaven. It can be satisfied with nothing less. According to "the new man," we desire that there should be nothing in us that thwarts or obstructs the leadings of His Spirit. We cannot be satisfied with anything less than the consecration of our whole being. But these desires are not gratified. We are obstructed by something that yet attaches to our personal condition. There is something in us that is enmity against God—something that cannot be consecrated to Him. Our new desires, therefore, are frustrated as to the attainment of perfect and unhindered service. We have to struggle against ourselves whilst we serve, and we feel it to be a bondage. That is what experience teaches us: this is what the seventh of Romans describes. It describes holy and perfect desires obstructed. It details an experience which must, of necessity, be found wherever the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit co-exist.

It is true, indeed, that the seventh of Romans does not give us the *complete* experience of the believer. We must conjoin with it the eighth chapter. But the eighth chapter does not neutralize the seventh. The truths of both harmonize. The seventh chapter teaches me of that which obstructs my new desires: the eighth teaches me of that which at presents counteracts, and finally removes all obstructions. At present, I am so far "held

in captivity by\* the law of sin in my members," that I am unable to carry out the desires of "the new man" in two respects. First, I cannot serve God with unhindered service; for there is something in me that draws backward and obstructs. Secondly, I cannot serve God with absolutely perfect service; for the same evil power that obstructs, does also, more or less, mar. Our best services have not the perfectness of heaven. I desire, in the new man, to serve God without one counteracting feeling: I begin to serve God, and instantly, I find within me a counteracting feeling, from which I cannot free myself. I am obliged, therefore, to say, "that when I would do good, evil is present with me." Yet, although the liberating power of redemption which has been brought to bear on me, in and through Christ, has not yet freed me from *the presence* of the law of sin in my members, nor from its power to mar as well as impede my services, yet, ultimately, it will free me perfectly. In the *pronounced sentence of God*, I am a freed man, although that sentence is not yet fully carried into effect; and I have, therefore, to wait for the full development of its results. In the meanwhile, I am thus far liberated—I am enabled, though with obstructed service to serve God truly; and though my service has not the perfectness which, in the new man, I desire, yet it is accepted by Him *through Jesus Christ*. Not only, therefore, am I free from condemnation, but I am free also

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\* See corrected reading *Ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τῶ ὄντι ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν μου*. Tregelles.

to serve God. This is the blessed truth taught in the eighth chapter. The truths taught in the seventh and eighth chapters respectively do not neutralize each other. They are to be held in combination. In the one chapter I see what I am, because of Adam, in the flesh : in the other, what I am, because of Christ, in the Spirit. These two most contrasted conditions do, at present, co-exist in my one person ; consequently, I have to contemplate them both.

It is very evident, that if the three texts prefixed to this section be true—if “the mind of the flesh,” and “the new man,” do co-exist in us, then the experience detailed in the seventh of Romans *must* be a necessary part of the experience of every one in whom evil and good are so permitted to co-exist.

The only way of avoiding this conclusion would be, by saying, that the principle of evil is, or should be, utterly extinguished in us ; (in which case, we should have nothing to mortify, and nothing to bridle :) or else, by saying, that although it exists, yet its existence is, by God, ignored ; and that we, in faith, should ignore it too. But neither of these things are true. “The mind of the flesh” does exist in us ; and until we depart to be with Christ, it must, by God’s appointment, continue to exist. As respects its existence being by God ignored, it is sufficient to say that its existence is a fact, and that God never ignores facts. If He had ignored it, He would not have sent the messenger of Satan to buffet Paul. The existence, therefore, of a living principle of evil within us which God recognises, and which we are com-

manded to recognise, must produce, in hearts where the perfect desires of the new man are, certain experiences : and these experiences the seventh of Romans details. It does not give a *complete* picture of Christian experience. It does not profess to do this. It gives a phase— a part of our experience only : but it is a necessary, and an abiding part, whilst we continue below. Although our standing as believers is in the Spirit, and not in the flesh ; yet our connexion with the flesh has not ceased ; and we have to know and to consider what that connexion involves. On the other hand, we have also to consider what our connexion with “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ” involves. There are two sides to the picture: two parts in the lesson.

I do not here enter further into the interpretation of the seventh of Romans, because I have fully considered it in another publication, to which I may be permitted to refer. Here I am concerned with it no further than to observe, that since it is essential to Mr. Smith's system to regard it as the record of a state into which the Apostle had lapsed,\* I think it will be admitted by most, that a system which requires for its sustainment such an admission stands self-condemned.

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As it may not, perhaps, be convenient to all to obtain

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\* Mr. Smith's words are—After “having begun in the Spirit, he [the Apostle] had sought to be made perfect by the activities of the flesh.” page 13.

my Tract on the seventh of Romans, I subjoin the following extract :

“The Law is still spoken of in this passage as ‘holy, just, and good,’ but it is not spoken of (this should be most carefully observed) as that which is shunned or dreaded, but as that which is ‘consented to’ (verse 16) ‘desired’ (verse 19) and ‘delighted in’ (verse 22). ‘The new man,’ seeing it is ‘created according to God in righteousness and true holiness,’ must, by the very necessity of its nature, rejoice in that which is ‘holy, just, and good.’ ‘I delight in the Law of God after the inner man,’ are words that may be truthfully used (and where there is much practical grace they will be realized) by every one in whom ‘the new man’ is. Yet the very fact of these new ‘desires’ and ‘delights’ being in the believer, is made the means of teaching him one of his deepest experimental lessons, respecting the Sin that dwells within him. However intense may be our desire, in ‘the new man,’ to love God perfectly and to serve Him perfectly—however we may long to banish from our bosom every desire and every tendency that is contrary to His will, yet there is found in every regenerate heart an antagonistic principle of evil that meets every claim of God with unvarying, habitual resistance. The energy of this evil may in different hearts be developed in different degrees : but as to its essential character, it is alike in all. It acts *for* evil and *against* good. It obstructs and impairs every desire and every action that is directed towards God. None of our counsels—none of our deeds, are found to have the perfect-

ness which the Law of God requires, and which we, in 'the new man,' desire. Our desire in the new man is toward *absolute, unmixed* good : for *unmixed* good is the only thing that the Law, in the strictness of its righteousness, can recognise as good. But, however truly we may, in 'the new man,' long after it, we cannot do it. Unmixed good is beyond us.\* We are obliged, therefore, to say, 'the good I desire, I do not.' And when we further consider, how (notwithstanding all our watchfulness) elements of infirmity and evil mingle with everything we feel, or think, or do, we are obliged to add, 'the evil I desire not, that I do.'

"To this many, perhaps, will be disposed to refuse their assent. 'A Christian,' they will say, 'does not habitually do what 'the new man' hates. To say that he did, would make him practically the servant of iniquity ;

\* I beg it may be especially noticed that I use the expression, "*unmixed* good" ; by which I mean, that absolutely perfect good which was once found on earth, when the Holy One was here, but now is known only in heaven. This passage, therefore, does not speak of that kind of good which believers, through grace, may and do perform—good which, though not perfect, is accepted through Jesus Christ. It does not say that I can perform no good ; what it asserts is, that I cannot perform *that perfect good* which the Law commands, and in which I, in the new man, "delight." "Good" in this passage is to be understood only of that which is perfect according to this perfectness : and "evil" is that which falls short in the least conceivable degree of such perfectness. It is the not observing the *kind* of good spoken of in this passage that has mainly caused the difficulty in understanding it.

It must be remembered too, that Sin throughout this passage is personified. It is regarded as a living agent with whom we,

and this, we are expressly told in the sixth of Romans, he is not.'

"It is indeed true that a Christian is not the servant of iniquity. A doer of sin (*ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*) says' the Apostle John, one, that is, who habitually walks in the path of evil, does thereby prove that he hath not seen Christ, neither known Him. Such an one does not resist, but indulges and follows, and that habitually, the impulses of Sin that dwells within him. To say that a Christian thus yields himself up to Sin, and that he cannot help so obeying it, and that the words, 'the evil I would not, that I do,' mean that he does, in this sense, serve Sin, is no doubt antinomianism: and that antinomianism has been taught from this passage, I do not deny. But are the words 'to do evil' capable of no other meaning than that in which we apply them to the habitual service of sin? Does the eye of God, judging

naturally, are identified. The first result or *act* of sin in us is evil desire, or concupiscence, which can be no more separated from Sin, than heat from fire: and which concupiscence, being in itself an inward *act*, precedes the deliberate choice of the soul and all developed action. Indeed, concupiscence may be resisted and never go on to a deliberate intention or choice. Yet evil has been DONE by us, the moment a wrong desire has been excited. This is well expressed by Calvin. "*Multum inter deliberatam voluntatem interest et appetitus, quibus titillamur. Hoc igitur ultimo præcepto (viz. non concupisces) tantam a nobis integritatem Deus exigit, ut nulla nos vitiosa cupiditas ad malum sollicitet, utcunque non accedat consensus.*" Unless therefore we can say that there is no Sin in us, we cannot say that there is no wrong desire (concupiscence)—and wherever there is concupiscence, there, there is a "deed" of Sin.

according to the strict holiness of His Law, detect sin only in such developments of it as are outward and palpable, and have in them that character of *unmixed* evil which is found in the actions of the unregenerate world? Is there no inner man—no inward world of thought and feeling which His eye scrutinizes? Is not a thought of foolishness sin? Is not the slightest bias to evil, the slightest tendency towards anything false or wrong, or the slightest want of readiness or of capacity in *perfectly* following the path of holiness, sin? So the Scripture teaches. If, therefore, when a Christian seeks to serve God, it be found that Sin within him puts forth the slightest power to obstruct the action, or to mar the mode of its performance; if it puts forth one desire or causes one momentary feeling that is contrary to or falls short of, the perfectness of God, that desire, or that feeling is, in the sight of God, *an act*. Sin has wrought something in us, and by us: and we are identified (and but for grace should be identified for ever) with that which is thus wrought in us; for Sin is, naturally, a part of ourselves. We have therefore *DONE* something, which, in 'the new man,' we hate; and although the world will refuse to call it '*a deed*,' and will persist in extenuating human frailty (as they term it); and although they will not allow that evil desire is, if resisted, sin; yet the Law of God determines otherwise. Nor can there be a truer form of antinomianism than to say that the impulses and strugglings of Sin, are, if resisted, *not* Sin. Grace indeed does not impute them to a believer as Sin. That is a different question. We are

not now speaking of the pardoning power of grace; but we are speaking of what that is which grace pardons. If then there be an active power in us, that hinders, mars, and taints our efforts after all good, and renders the performance of perfect good hopeless; and if we cannot, though we would, free ourselves, either from the presence of this evil power, or from its workings, then are we, in a very intelligible sense, subject to the doings and actings of an evil principle within us, which, in 'the new man,' we hate.

"But again, as we must beware of understanding the word 'do' in this passage ('the evil I would not, that I do,') as denoting that habitual willing service of evil that is seen in the world; so we must also remember that it is not to be understood of such sins as believers *may* indeed fall into, but which by greater faithfulness and watchfulness they might have avoided. When Peter temporized at Antioch, and virtually surrendered the truth of the Gospel, his sin was one which watchfulness and faithfulness would have prevented; and consequently, he had no title to say of his transgression, 'it was not I that did it, but Sin that dwelleth in me.' To attempt to shelter deliberate transgressions (whether they be habitual as in the world, or occasional as in the case of believers) by bringing them within the scope of this passage, is antinomianism. The workings of sin contemplated in this passage, are such as no watchfulness can hinder, no faithfulness avoid. The existence of Sin within us entails on us certain consequences which we have no more power to evade, than

the idiot has power to change his look of idiocy; or the palsied hand has power to free itself from its torpor. The transgression of our first parent brought on us, not only the imputed guilt of that transgression, but has also entailed on us the hereditary possession of a depraved nature. There are certain effects of that deprivation which are beyond the power of our control; and it is of such effects that this passage treats, and not of transgressions which the believer, by watchfulness, could avoid. Any manifestation of evil to which we cannot truthfully apply the words, 'So then it is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwelleth in me,' is not to be included among the deeds referred to in this passage." ("Romans vii. Considered," pp. 14—20.)

## § VII.

THE tendency of the system we are considering (and it is true of all like systems), is to direct the mind far more to the thought of death to sin, than to that of life toward God. It could scarcely be otherwise, for who that realized what life toward God involves, could dream of SINLESSNESS ?

He who asserts that he lives sinlessly, must be prepared to show that he renders to God all that is due to Him in Heaven ; and all that is due to the claims of His service on the earth. He must sustain towards evil and towards good, towards Truth and towards falsehood, towards the Church and towards the world, towards the systems of men and the operations of God, relations that are perfect according to the perfectness of Heaven. There must be no sins of ignorance. On the contrary, there must be such a full comprehensive apprehension of that which is written in the Word of God, as for its light to be received and followed with a heart at once understanding and *faithful*. There must be no shrinking from the light of Scripture ; no attempt to qualify its statements ; no refusal to bow to its declarations ; no disposition to reply against God. The conventional arrangements of society and of the professing Church must be faithfully tested by God's Word ; and if they fail to answer to that test, they must be repudiated and

renounced. There must be a withdrawal from every thing that is not perfect ; and such withdrawal must be effected and sustained in the wisdom, and stedfastness, and meekness of the Spirit of Christ. In a word, there must be a complete cessation of fellowship with all evil, and a perfectly sustained fellowship with all good ; and that, without any let, opposition, or obstruction from any tendencies or feelings within. If such be our condition, we may speak of SINLESSNESS. Such was Christ's condition when He dwelt on earth. Such will be our condition in Heaven, for we shall be changed into His likeness. But it is far otherwise now. Our consciences, if rightly exercised, would tell us always that which, because of our dull ear, the Scripture reiterates, that "in many things we all offend."

To contradict the true testimony of our conscience must be sin. To contradict the declarations of the Word of God must be sin. To make ourselves like unto Christ the Holy One, must be sin—and very heinous sin. It takes from Christ personally, His characteristic distinctiveness as the alone Sinless One ; and refuses, as unneeded, that most precious and peculiar relation of grace which He now holds towards His people, in that He receives and owns them as His servants, and as His friends, even whilst evil yet dwells within them. Therefore we read of "having access into that GRACE wherein we have been made to stand." (*εστηκαμεν*). Has that grace no value in our sight ? Certainly not, if we be sinless ; for in that case, we need it not.

To take from Christ's people the apprehension of the

grace, mercy, and forbearance which He abidingly exercises towards them, whilst they are yet serving Him with sin in them, is to take from their souls the very knowledge by which faith is nourished, and holiness promoted. We should little apprehend the depth of that love which passes knowledge, if we did not prove its forbearance and graciousness in dealing with our spiritual decrepitudes. He who deems that he has no stain to be washed from his feet, will neither prize, nor seek unto the love that washes it away. He who has no sin for the Accuser of the brethren to present before the throne, will neither dread the Accuser, nor value the Intercessor. To be told of One "who ever liveth to make intercession for us," can be of no comfort to those in whom "God's will freed from all internal opposition works." He in whom sin is dead, can need no such intercession.

Israel never thought of entering the Courts of their typical Tabernacle, save under the protecting and sanctifying efficacy of the altar-sacrifice. They stood under the efficacy of a High Priest's service, and that efficacy was based wholly on SACRIFICE. Is it otherwise with us? We draw nigh into the Courts of our unseen Tabernacle, and we serve whilst sin is yet in us. We know that we have something to watch against, and resist, and bridle, when we draw nigh, and when we serve. Moreover, our services, however watchfully rendered, are not, even in the judgment of our own consciences, perfect. Yet God receives both us and our services. But how? Because the guilt of the sin that we carry within us has been borne, once and for ever, by our

Substitute in death: and we draw nigh under the acceptableness of His once offered sacrifice. Its acceptableness rests abidingly on our persons. And as to our services, they too, though imperfect, are offered through the sacrificial efficacy of Christ's name. We offer "spiritual sacrifices *acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*" 1 Pet. ii. 5. Our prayers need the efficacy of the fragrance of His name to be imparted to them. Therefore, in vision, John saw an angel come forth, having much incense "that he might give it to the prayers of the saints" (*ἰνὰ δωσῆ τὰς προσευχὰς τῶν ἁγίων*) that they might be heard and answered. Rev. viii. 3. These things tell us not of perfectness in us, but of grace in God. And it is the knowledge of this grace through the Spirit, that sanctifies the soul and knits it unto God in love.

It seems marvellous that any one who apprehends even a little of the holiness and purity of God, should affirm that he is altogether dead to every thing in the earth that is contrary to God, and that he lives wholly and *perfectly* unto God. We would desire to think that they who say such things, have not reflected on the meaning of the words they use; and that they speak of sinlessness, without really understanding what sinlessness is. But if any should deliberately persist in saying that they are sinless, and appeal to the consciousness of their own hearts in confirmation of the truth of their statements, let them remember that the soul never affords a more decided evidence of its own unhealthfulness, than when its consciousness is at variance with the declarations of Holy Scripture. The heart, if it keep

not very close to the Word of God, is sure to form a false estimate of its own condition. The Laodiceans thought themselves "rich and increased in goods, and having need of nothing," just at the very moment when Christ was about to spue them out of His mouth, because they lacked every thing in which, as saints, they ought to have abounded, and yet were self-complacent and self-satisfied.

There may be, and no doubt there are occasions in the life of a believer, when he may find it needful "to cut off the right hand, or pluck out the right eye," for Christ's sake. The struggle may be great : the trial bitter : yet he may look in faith to Christ respecting it ; and may be strengthened to overcome and to triumph. There is such a thing as victory. "I have written unto you young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." I am far from denying that there are many conflicts in the walk of faith ; and there may be, and should be, to the servants of Christ, victory. But victory in such conflicts is not sinlessness. It is possible, indeed, that the soul, after having successfully resisted some giant evil, or besetting sin, may deceive itself into the thought that it has overcome *all* evil : but such a thought would be the mere offspring of excitement, and is utterly delusive and false. To overcome one specific form of evil is not to overcome all evil : and even the overcoming is a victory over a repulsed, but not an exterminated foe. To resist sin, is not to extinguish it.

I fully admit that the Church of God have slumbered

grievously, and have not girded on their armour as they should. Even they who are holding fast to "the Pauline doctrines of grace" (as they are contemptuously called), have fallen, not unfrequently, under the condemnation of the words, "unskilful in the word of *righteousness*." As priests of God's sanctuary, we should put a difference between clean and unclean; holy and unholy. But this has been done feebly and imperfectly, if at all. Evils that ought to have been judged, we have, not unfrequently, tolerated in ourselves and in others. Fully I admit that we have to exhort and encourage one another to the attainment of higher, holier, and more separate paths than we have been wont to tread. We have need to remember the prayer of the Apostle for the Thessalonians: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v. 23. This blamelessness we have to seek; but such blamelessness is not sinlessness.

In Exodus xxviii. 36, we read as follows; "Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord." These are blessed words. They should make

our hearts glow with thankfulness and joy. Are they abrogated, or are they still true of us? If they be true of us, if we too have a great High Priest appointed "to bear the iniquity of our holy things," it is very evident that the blamelessness which may attach to us under such circumstances, cannot be the blamelessness of SINLESSNESS.

The blamelessness of which the Apostle speaks, is a condition which *grace* has assigned to those, who, if judged according to that which the eye of holiness discerns both in their persons and their services, would be cast out for ever; for in their persons there is sin; and in their services blemish. If there be not an habitual recognition of this, there can be no blamelessness. There must be a deep, heartfelt, habitual recognition of our condition; and of the provision of God's grace in Christ, whereby the need of that condition is met; or else, there can be no rightness of thought respecting God—no rightness of thought respecting ourselves—no right communion with God—no right prayer, and, consequently, no blamelessness.

God may so guide and strengthen us, as that the "counsels" (that is, the deliberate purposes) of our heart may be according to His will. In that case, there might be blamelessness. But where a deliberate purpose has been rightly formed, there must have been a right exercise of the understanding on the circumstances. But if the circumstances have been estimated wrongly, there can be no right purpose, and therefore no blamelessness. Is not this the case with every one

who says that his purpose is to be one in whom God's will shall work "*freed from internal opposition.*"

God never deals with His servants as if they were, or could be, here, sinless like Christ. On the contrary, He requires that they should know, and prove, and acknowledge, that they are personally altogether unlike Christ; and that they are debtors every moment to the grace which has appointed Another to be the bearer of the iniquity even of their holiest things. Though we are not under the Law but under grace, yet God's holiness as taught in the Law is not altered. Weakness and evil are, in His sight, weakness and evil, wheresoever, and in whomsoever, found. Confession, therefore, and an habitual recognition of the truth taught in the words "His blood cleanseth us from all sin," is as needful to a condition of blamelessness, as is a walking in paths of light. The petition, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," can never be taken from the lips of God's people whilst they remain in the body.

## § VIII.

THERE are few texts which we have to watch over with more vigilant anxiety, than that which I have just quoted from the Epistle of John; "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." It is a passage important in itself; important also in its contextual connexion; and it is one whose true meaning is necessarily evaded or perverted by the advocates of the system we are considering.

The Apostle had been speaking of walking in the light. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." To an exercised heart—a heart taught to know itself, the question instantly occurs: How can any one who has sin within him, and who, therefore, when brought into the presence of light in which there is no darkness, is sure to manifest more or less ignorance and obliquity—how can such an one abide in the light? Will holiness forbear from acting against him in the power of wrath? The answer is; It will forbear: not, however, on the ground of there being no sin, but on the ground that the sin is not imputed, because of the blood once shed. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from ALL sin," that is, even from such sin as is manifested in paths of light; where, consequently, its

heinousness and inveteracy become most recognised and felt. It is such knowledge that causes us most deeply to appreciate the words, "My blood is drink indeed." The fact that the same lips that at one moment said to Peter, "Blessed art thou Simon Barjonah," did the very next moment find it needful to call him "Satan," must have taught Peter a lesson respecting his inward tendencies, that he would not otherwise have known. Afterward, no doubt, he restrained those tendencies more: but they were still within him.

It must, however, be remembered, that the words of John, although applied by him to the specific case of sin found in those who are walking in the light, do also declare a more general truth. They speak of a condition that attaches to every believer (whatever his circumstances) from the first moment he believes. They who do not come strictly and fully under the description given in this passage—in other words, they of whom it cannot be said, "The blood of Jesus cleanseth them from all sin," are unreconciled to God. They are as yet aliens and enemies. All the justified are abidingly brought under the efficacy of that blood which cleanseth them from all sin. If they are not so cleansed, they are not justified. It is most important, therefore, to determine what "*cleansing*" means. If it mean cleansing *from the presence of sin*—if it indicate the bestowment of sinlessness, then none can either be pardoned or justified while sin is yet in them. It is vain, therefore to represent the question we are considering as one restricted to a certain class *among* the justified. It is

not so restricted. It is a question that affects *all* the justified. If "cleanse" in this verse means, cleanse *from the presence of sin*, then it necessarily follows that only the sinless can be pardoned, justified, or saved.

That the words, "cleanse from all sin," do not mean cleanse *from the presence of sin* is sufficiently proved by the verse that immediately follows: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." We must of necessity say that we have no sin, if sin be so effectually extinguished in us that the will of God works in us "freed from all internal opposition."

The words, "cleanse from sin," have in Scripture a fixed and unalterable meaning. And it is a meaning which we have to guard with unceasing vigilance; for if it be once destroyed, the foundations of our faith are overthrown. Mysticism, Socinianism, Neology, and every other system that refuses to give to the Cross the place that is assigned to it in Scripture, struggle against this verse, and seek to pervert the meaning of the words, "cleanse from all sin." The word "cleanse," when applied to the blood of Jesus, is always used in the same *sacrificial* sense in which it is used of the typical blood of expiation in Leviticus, and throughout the whole of the Old Testament. Take Leviticus xvi. 30, and Leviticus xiv. 7 as examples. "On that day [the day of Atonement] shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." Here the cleansing is expressly declared to be an immediate result of an external work

performed for them by the priest. See also Lev. xiv. 7. "And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him *clean*." All defilement involved punishableness; but defilement, when expiated by blood, was not imputed. Consequently, the person who was brought under the efficacy of the expiatory blood, had no defilement imputed to him. Therefore he was clean; and subject no longer to that which otherwise he would have been subject unto, viz., wrath. It is in this sacrificial expiatory sense, and in this sense alone, that the word "cleanse" when applied to the blood of Jesus, is used. Nor can we use it in any other sense without subverting the faith, and destroying all that God reveals respecting the methods of His grace in our justification.

It is true, indeed, as I have again and again observed in the preceding pages, that the blood of Jesus is the meritorious and procuring cause of all those subsequent agencies by which God practically sanctifies and preserves all the redeemed; and finally brings them, perfect according to the perfectness of Christ, into His own presence in glory. Because of the blood of Jesus, and because of our being counted precious according to its preciousness, an agency is brought to bear on us through the Holy Ghost, whereby we are freed from the *dominance*, though not free from the presence, of Sin within us. Because of the blood of Jesus whereby we have been purchased, a power will be brought to bear on us at His appearing, whereby corruption in us shall in every sense give place to incorruption. But it would

be an abuse of language, and a perversion of Truth, to ascribe to the blood of Jesus which is ever placed before us in its sacrificial and expiatory aspect, effects which are produced by the Holy Ghost given in consequence of that expiation, or effects produced by the glorious power of Christ Himself acting in the title of His finished redemption.

To "cleanse from sin," therefore, in the passage before us, means to free from the imputation of the defilement that necessarily, in God's sight, attaches to sin; and consequently, to free from all the penal results of such defilement, whereof exclusion from His house and service would be one. The thought is not different from that presented to us in Rev. vii. 13. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." In another place, we read of "the fountain opened for sin and for all uncleanness." In all such passages, our minds are directed solely and exclusively to the sacrificial and expiatory power of the blood whereby the non-imputation of defilements, which otherwise would be imputed to us, is secured.

The moment we are brought in faith to Jesus as the Lamb slain, we are placed by God under the abiding efficacy of His blood; and are said to be *by God* "sprinkled," "cleansed," "washed." In the fixedness of the New Covenant, He undertakes to regard us in perpetuity

as washed and cleansed persons who need not to wash again, save our feet. "He that hath been washed (*ὁ λελουμένος*) needeth not save to wash (*ῥιψασθαι*) his feet, but is clean every whit."\* Our persons, therefore, are regarded as preserved in cleanness, because of the continuously applied efficacy of the blood once offered, under which God continues to regard us. Hence too, our consciences are (or should be) purged. For though we have still a *consciousness* of sin, yet being worshippers once and for ever purged by a sacrifice enduring in its efficacy, we have (or should have) no more conscience of sins; that is, our conscience testifies no longer to sin imputed to us in its guilt and consequences, but it testifies of sin expiated—and that for ever. And this cleanness, and the consciousness thereof, continues, even when we detect sin in us whilst walking in paths of light. Still we say, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth † us from all sin."

That this, and all other passages of Scripture which speak of the blood of Jesus as cleansing from sin, do refer to it solely and exclusively in its expiatory relation to God, is a truth hateful to all who hate the Gospel of the grace of God. Mystics, (than whom few more effectually subvert the Truth) resist, just as much as do the Neologians, the testimony of the Scripture as to this. They speak of "the blood" being "the life" (for "the

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\* See this subject further considered in a tract entitled "Jesus washing His disciples' feet."

† *καθαρίζει*—for the force of the present tense as here used, see Occasional Papers, No. II., p. 96.

life," say they, "is in the blood") and affirm, that we are saved, not by the life of Jesus having been laid down atoningly, but by the life that is in Jesus being diffused through the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost, whereby the soul becomes purified, and so saved. Among the followers of Mr. Irving, it was taught, that the Lord Jesus, at His resurrection, resumed not "blood;"\* but that in His resurrection body the Holy Ghost was to Him in the stead of blood; whence some of them in prayer were accustomed to say, "Thy blood which is the Holy Ghost." Thus, in their minds also, the doctrine of Scripture touching the cleansing by the blood sacrificially shed on Calvary was undermined. Others have

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\* In a passage cited by me elsewhere, the writer after stating that Christ "rose triumphant in the power of a new life to which righteousness as distinctly attaches itself as did sin to that life which He gave up on the Cross," proceeds to say: "This will help us to an understanding of an expression used by our blessed Lord after His resurrection, 'a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.' He did not say, 'flesh and blood,' because in resurrection He had not assumed into His sacred Person the blood that He had shed out upon the Cross as an atonement for sin. 'The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls, &c.'" Lev. xvii. 11. Mackintosh Notes on Genesis, p. 64.

The doctrine that our Lord rose without blood cannot be too earnestly resisted. The life that He had as man was as pure and holy as the life that He had as God; and nothing that penally came on Him whilst bearing the imputation of our guilt, took from that life its recognised essential excellency. It was offered as perfect; was laid down as perfect; was accepted as being perfect, and was resumed as being perfect. His human life ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ ) was part of His sacred Person. It is of this life that we speak when we

gone further still. A Deistical mystic, well known in America, writes thus: "They who dwell in God, dwell  
 "in love, and they are constrained to walk in it, and  
 "they walk in it: they have fellowship one with another,  
 "and 'the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us  
 "from all sin.' But what blood, my friends? Did  
 "Jesus Christ, the Saviour, ever have any material  
 "blood? Not a drop of it, my friends, not a drop of it.  
 "That blood which cleanseth from all sin, was the life  
 "of the soul of Jesus."

I do not for a moment suspect Mr. Smith of accepting such heresies as these. He would, no doubt, repudiate them utterly. Yet I cannot but say that his interpreta-

apply to Him the words, "the life is in the blood." Now we are told by the Lord Himself that He took again the very same life ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ ) that He laid down. (See John x. 18.) He rose in the very same body in which He died: nor did any of the circumstantial changes that attended its resurrection (*important though they were*) give to it additional holiness, seeing it was holy, and regarded as holy: nor did they destroy its character as a body of flesh. When our Lord bade His disciples handle His body after His resurrection, it was in order that they might satisfy themselves that He had really a body of flesh. "Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." Luke xxiv. 39. He used the word flesh in its ordinary physical sense; and "flesh," when so used, always includes "blood." "Flesh," in the sense in which the Lord then used it, cannot exist without blood. What the exact character of that wonderful change was which took place when the Lord was "received up in glory," it is not for us curiously to enquire. We know that His body is now spiritual; but the nature of a spiritual body we do not know. His humanity is now glorified according to the glory of God. But we are not now speaking of His *glorified* body, but of that body which He resumed

tion of the verse before us is altogether subversive of its true meaning, and opens the way for a flood of dangerous error. He affirms that the Apostle teaches that the blood of Jesus cleanseth "not only from the stains of sin, or the punishment of sin, *but from Sin itself*."\*

The conclusion that seems necessarily involved in this statement is that all sin is eradicated. Yet such an inference Mr. Smith repudiates, for he adds, "This, however, must not make us think that all sin is eradicated." Yet how, with the words of the Apostle before us interpreted in the manner in which Mr. Smith interprets them, can we escape this conclusion? Does not the Apostle say, "cleanseth us from ALL sin?" *Must* not

when He left the grave—which body He resumed with everything essential to a body of flesh, still attaching thereunto.

The blood which the Lord Jesus shed was as holy as His Person. It was not the blood of guilty condemned life, (as some of apparently Irvingite tendencies have said,) but of holy life. Therefore, in the Levitical types, the blood was to be presented *on the altar* after it had been shed—its presentation there being indicative of its acceptableness. Moreover, we have to remember that it was the blood of Immanuel—One who was God manifest in the flesh. Christ died as man; but into His death, the efficacy of that which He was as God, entered. Hence we read of "the Church of God which He purchased by His own blood."

"Christ was exalted in His resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death, (of which it was not possible for him to be held,) *and having the very same body in which He suffered, with the essential properties thereof* (but without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life,) really united to His soul, He rose again from the dead the third day by His own power," &c. Larger Catechism of the Church of Scotland, Q. 52.

\* "Holiness through Faith," p. 58.

indwelling sin be included under the words "ALL sin?" If it be included,—to say that we are inwardly cleansed from "ALL sin," must mean that indwelling sin is eradicated. The only remaining alternative is, to say with the Papists and other like enemies of the Gospel, that indwelling sin, if resisted, is not sin. Shall we say this? The Scripture teaches far otherwise.

The illustration subsequently employed by Mr. Smith does certainly imply that all sin is eradicated. He says :

"Let us suppose that here is a spring of water which is poisoned in its very source, and which can of course therefore send forth none but poisoned waters. But a remedy is found which counteracts the poison, and makes the waters pure and sweet. That remedy is applied in the very source of the spring itself, and the waters *flow* out therefore pure and sweet. But they do so only so long as it is applied. The moment the remedy is stayed, that very moment the poisonous waters flow out as foul as ever. Now this is what the blood of Christ does for us—it reaches the very spring itself, 'purifying our hearts by faith,' cleansing us 'from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,' and enabling us by faith to realise that wondrous statement that 'every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' We purify ourselves, not by effort, but by faith, not by works, but by the precious blood of Christ. This, however, is the case only while the blood is applied by faith, for the very moment faith ceases to apply it, the same old bitter waters flow out." "Holiness through Faith." page 59.

If Mr. Smith had stated, that in all those who are brought under the cleansing efficacy of the atoning blood of Jesus the Holy Ghost dwells, and by leading to the apprehension of the fulness of blessing freely given

of God, doth hereby practically sanctify and purify the purposes and ways of God's people, no one who receives the Scripture would have objected. But the doctrine taught in the illustration just given is far different from this. In the first place, it has in it the latent poison of mysticism; for that poison is present whenever the practical purification of our inward counsels and habits of thought (which is the work of the Holy Ghost) is substituted for *the purging away of sin from before God*, which is the work effectuated by the Lord Jesus by the oblation once offered on the Cross. Whenever these two things are confounded, the foundations of our faith are endangered; and they are certainly confounded in the extract just given.

But further. The illustration not only speaks of waters flowing out from us, "pure and sweet" (words which if read with the context evidently mean *perfectly* pure and sweet), but it ~~says~~ more than this. It states that the reason of the waters thus flowing out pure and sweet, is that they are made pure and sweet at the fountain-head. "A remedy is found which counteracts the "poison and makes the waters pure and sweet. That "remedy is applied in the very source of the spring "itself, and the waters flow out therefore [observe this "word] pure and sweet." In that case no corruption can remain in us during the time that this marvellous transformation lasts. Indwelling sin, therefore, *must* for the time be eradicated. If not, the illustration must be abandoned; for it distinctly states that every thing that is naturally foul in us, becomes, in the fountain-

head, pure and sweet. This, evidently, is that which Mr. Smith believes. Does it not seem strange that we find no example of such a condition in the Scripture? If we read the concluding verses of the second chapter of Acts, we certainly cannot say that the Pentecostal Church as there described were deficient in practical grace. On the contrary, great grace was upon them. Certainly, if there were ever any of whom it could be said that their hearts were purified by faith, the Pentecostal saints were they. Yet what was the type appointed in the Scripture to indicate even *their* condition? Loaves consecrated by sacrifice, but having in them leaven: and leaven is the symbol of bitterness and corruption. We therefore, if we are brought into a state in which there remains in us nothing bitter, nothing corrupt, must be exalted into a condition far higher than that of the Pentecostal Church—and the Pentecostal Church included the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. Shall we say that we are better than they?

I by no means wish rigidly to bind down Mr. Smith to the exact meaning of expressions that he may perhaps have adopted hastily. Yet certainly to liken the blood of Jesus, in its relation to the evil that is in us, to a remedy applied to a poisoned fountain, and producing a physical change therein, is a comparison open to the gravest objection. The atoning blood of Jesus, the moment I believe, produces an infinitely important change in my legal relation to God; but it does not *in itself* produce any change in my inward evil; although, as a consequence of my acceptance under it, changes are

effected in me, and will be effected on me, that ultimately result in my being made like Christ in glory. If it should be said, that all that is intended by the illustration is, that the blood of Christ apprehended by faith produces *certain* inward effects in us—this is not denied : but it does not produce the effect of so changing the nature of sin in us as for nothing to remain in us except that which is pure. Nor could any faith be exercised towards Christ or towards God in respect of the effectuation of any such change ; because it is not the will of God that our evil nature should be so changed, or that it should be removed from us until the time comes for us to depart and be with Christ. And as regards the resisting and mortifying of the evil that is in us, it is not true that such mortification is effected simply by an act of faith similar to that by which we cast ourselves on God's free grace in Christ for salvation. In believing unto salvation we do not ourselves act, but repose altogether on that which Another has done in our stead. We repose, rest, lean, rely, entirely on the accomplished work of Another. It is strict passivity of reliance. But in resisting the evil that is in us, and in advancing in the walk of faith, there is not mere passivity. Action on our part is required. The Scripture does not say that we can advance in that path, or conquer our evil, simply by an act of faith towards God. On the contrary, the Apostle says, "*giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue ; and to virtue knowledge,*" &c. It is true indeed that we cannot show that diligence, or take one step forward in the way of holiness without looking in faith.

to God. It is He who works in us to will and to do. He must strengthen, guide, sustain. But that for which He strengthens is *action*. David did not slay Goliath by an act of faith merely. He took his sling; chose out the pebbles from the brook; and slung the stone. His diligence would indeed have been vain, if he had not looked in faith to God to guide the stone that he slung; but David did not only look to God in faith; he *acted* also. Results attained apart from all action on our part are not to be confounded with results whose attainment, under God, are made dependent on the employment and development of power which God has, through the Spirit, placed in all His regenerated people.

And we have further to remark, that Mr. Smith has, after all, drawn a very incomplete picture of a believer's condition. He omits to state that there is in every believer something that is essentially and everlastingly pure and holy, for there is in him "the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. iv. 24. This is not our old nature changed. It is a new creation. The words of the Apostle are, "CREATED according to God (*τον κατα θεον κτισθεντα*) in righteousness and true holiness." Besides this, there is also the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost—the Paraclete, sent to guard, and preserve, and strengthen. Now suppose that, in addition to this, all our natural evil were (as Mr. Smith imagines) transformed into good, what would remain in us but absolute perfectness? A resurrection-condition might be more glorious, but it could not be more perfect. There would be seen in

earth the absolute perfectness of Heaven, and that sustained by the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost. Could then any one in whom the new man is, and in whom the Holy Ghost dwells, and whose carnal nature has become (according to Mr. Smith's supposition) perfectly pure and holy, ever fall from this condition if it had been once attained? Is the Holy Ghost unable to sustain a perfect being in perfectness? If such a condition were reached, it certainly would be retained; and practically, results of pure, unqualified, heavenly, perfectness would be unceasingly developed. Have we ever seen this? Have we ever beheld any one walking in resurrection-perfectness here? Yet where there is not absolute perfectness, there is not sinlessness.

Nevertheless, grace has already pronounced us to be clean. "Ye are clean," said Jesus to His disciples. John xiii. 10. "Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you"\*—that word which had guided to Himself as the Lamb appointed to be slain. In the Hebrews, we read of His "having by himself purged our sins," Heb. i. 3: and of being "sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus once." Heb. x. 10. Thus we have, even on earth, a *perfect* cleansing, and a *perfect* sanctification; but it is *sacrificial*. It is the result of the one oblation which has removed from us all imputation of defilement, and has left in its room the imputation of its own perfectness. It is of this *sacrificial* cleansing, and of that alone, that the passage in John

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\* ἡδη ὑμεῖς καθαροὶ εἰστε διὰ τὸν λόγον, &c. John xv. 3.

speaks. It speaks of a cleansing that must pertain, in all its completeness, to all who belong to God. To be without it would mark us as being aliens. If in the words, cleanse "from all sin" as applied to the blood of Jesus, the sacrificial meaning is to give place to the other—if the words are intended to describe the condition of those from whom nothing bitter does or can flow, because everything bitter in them has been changed into sweetness, then it follows that none except those in whom this transformation is wrought, can be numbered among the justified. All in whom "the old man" is, must be excluded. The only other alternative would be to say that "the old man" is not corrupt.

None knew better than the Apostle Paul what it is to live unto God. He could truly say, "to me to live is Christ." He fought, as we certainly have never fought, the fight of faith. He fought with his loins really girded about with truth—God's own pure, full, sincere Truth. Yet it was he who said, "in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." And again; "so then with the mind [the mind of the new man] I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Nor was he, as Mr. Smith imagines, speaking of himself as a backslider when he described himself thus.\* On the contrary, it was the very knowledge

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\* It is scarcely possible to speak in too strong terms of condemnation of Mr. Smith's tract on Romans vii. He speaks of the Apostle "falling from grace and coming under the law in his practical ways" (p. 23). He says, also, that the Apostle "having begun in the Spirit had sought to be made perfect by the activities of the flesh," (p. 13) and much more to the same effect.

that his carnal nature was incurably corrupt, that roused him to action. He fought against it through the Spirit, and effectually resisted ; so as to present his body and all his powers, " a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." Rom. xii. 1. " I keep under," said he, " my body, and bring it into subjection." He did not say, I have attained a state in which there is nothing in me to " mortify," or " subdue," or " bridle," or " crucify." On the contrary, he knew that part of his appointed warfare was to resist himself. Therefore, like Nehemiah, whilst with one hand he laboured, with the other he held a weapon ; for foes were around him, and a foe was in him. The weapons which he used were " mighty through God to pulling down of strong-holds," both in himself and others ; " casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." His thoughts were held in subjection to the declarations of God's Word.

Yet, though eminently victorious in all his conflicts he pretended not to have attained the perfectness of Heaven, either in his person, or in his services. He despised not the peace-offering altar. He desired to feed therefrom ; but he knew that blessing was accorded to none save those who were willing to approach that altar with *leavened* bread in their hands as an emblem of their own personal condition.\* He knew that unquali-

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\* See this considered in " Thoughts on parts of Leviticus," (Chapter on Peace-Sacrifice).

fied perfectness has, on earth, belonged only to One, and that *He* has, because of our unlikeness to Himself, been appointed a High Priest ever living to make intercession for us, as those who in many things "fall short" and "offend." That Priest, and that intercession, Paul despised not. He knew that he needed a High Priest to bear the iniquity even of his holy things. He would not have deemed himself blameless, nor would God have esteemed him blameless, if any thought of personal sinlessness had obtruded itself into his mind, and quenched the apprehension of the Person, and meritoriousness, and intercession of his great High Priest. Yet Paul trod with steadfast step the true way of holiness. And there is no other. We may devise for ourselves other ways: but they are by-ways; and will be found to be so at the last.

## NOTE.

SINCE the preceding paper was written, I have seen in the April number of "The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy," 1871, edited by Dr. Horatius Bonar, an article on the same subject. It is one of great doctrinal value. Its character may be judged of from the following extracts :

"We regard Mr. Smith's book on the 7th of Romans as a most mournful example of how far a man may go, under delusion, or under a determination to wrest the Scriptures to suit his own views. He asks, on the title-page of this book, 'Is Romans vii. to be the continued experience of the Christian?' We answer, Yes assuredly, until the very last dregs of sin are purged away, and its last shadow has departed from the being of the believer. Mr. Smith most strongly objects to Paul's exclamation, 'O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' But we have to ask Mr. Smith a question: Suppose that a glorified saint, after the resurrection, should one day discover that there remained about him, in some real though mysterious way, not involving his standing before the throne,—we do not say even so much of the remains of sin as Mr. Smith admits to be possible,—but just one faint shadow of it coming at intervals across the bright and holy horizon of his spirit, could his exclamation be anything less than one of the bitterest, most agonised anguish ? And if he further recognised the terrible shadow as unmistakably belonging to his former self, can Mr. Smith not imagine that the cry would become intensely more agonising and personal ? Then how much

more may not Paul, notwithstanding his great attainments in holiness, when brought into close contact with the 'holy, just, and good,' the spiritual law of God, exclaim, on turning from his glance at the law to look on himself, 'Alas, I am carnal!' And when he finds the presence of sin lurking about him, and ever coming across his holy 'delight in the law of God after the inward man,' how natural does his cry seem, 'O wretched man that I am!' especially as 'the body of death' is in a real sense his own. The holier the man the more sensitive must he be as to the terrible incubus. Mr. Smith, however is another stamp of saint altogether. He calls the exclamation of the apostle 'a God-dishonouring and bitterly humiliating' experience, and shelters himself from this, 'bitter humiliation' of the apostle beneath the notion of a perfect holiness 'up to the measure of his consciousness!' Surely this is, to take the kindest view of it, deplorable delusion. Surely it is an utter misuse of words to talk of anything as perfect holiness except such as will bear the scrutiny of Jehovah's searching eye. Mr. Smith tells us he is conscious of perfect holiness—unconscious of sin. Hence he writes down the apostle's experience, and, indeed, cannot account for it at all, except that for a time, as he supposes, Paul must have been 'falling from grace, and coming under law in his practical ways,' and so got into darkness. But we ask Mr. Smith and those who follow him: So long as sin in any form or under any conditions remains about the believer, is it safe, nay, must it not suggest something seriously wrong if at any single moment he can be unconscious of it? What! the enemy lurking within, and he believing it dead and gone! Impossible! But if conscious of it, how can the consciousness of the believer take any other form than that so touchingly expressed by the apostle, 'O wretched man! who shall deliver me?' p. 182.

The writer again observes:

"The Lord, indeed, answers our prayers for holiness, but he does so, not in Mr. Smith's, but in His own most blessed way. Mr. Smith seems to expect an answer in the way of immediate

miraculous interposition. He tells us, in relating his *first* experience of his new way of holiness, that, 'with the act of faith, there distilled into my heart, like the gentle dew, the sweet consciousness of the presence and power of Jesus.' Then he proceeds to tell us of 'full-hearted obedience,' 'purified affections,' a '*re-adjustment* of the whole nature—spirit, soul, and body,' and the experience already quoted, of being tempted like our Lord, yet, like Him, not sinning. All this, we are told, followed at once upon that one act of faith, after his previous seven or eight years of 'wilderness experience.' But is this the Lord's way? We read of no such results, either described or promised to the Church, with a view to the attainment of personal holiness. Do we ask for cleansing? He at once refers us to His Words, and warns us to 'take heed' to our way according thereto. Would we build upon our faith a superstructure of 'gold, silver, precious stones?' He tells us to give 'all diligence' still according to the Word. Do we ask for enlightenment? He still sends us to the 'commandment of the Lord.' Would we be advanced from the state of infancy, out of which Mr. Smith would have us believe he was rescued at once by the 'act of faith,' after trying the progressive way in vain? The Lord sends us to 'the sincere milk of the Word, that we may *grow thereby*.' Although, as we have said, the reader of Mr. Smith's works will find many very orthodox passages, yet he will not fail to perceive that, whatever purpose such passages may be designed to serve, the really new and distinctive doctrines advanced by Mr. Smith point to something quite at variance with the idea of gradual growth in personal holiness, which the Word of God, in so many different ways, sets before us as being His plan and purpose with regard to His people." p. 180.





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