

# THE NEW DEVELOPMENT.

1890.

Urged from all sides to say a little on this painful question, I hesitate not to speak plainly. Had it been dealt with in the Spirit and not without righteous indignation, when it first oozed out, it might as it ought to have been judged and repudiated. But seeing that souls are everywhere perplexed and grieved by the long tampering and diligent debates of partisans, and even by the palliation of some who were at first as shocked as any; and yet more, now that a world-wide separation ensues of those who refuse a lie of the enemy, it is charity to speak out the truth for the Lord's sake and His own. One can sympathise with unwillingness at first to suspect ill, especially as the language (from whatever motive) was obscure, and many a reader wholly ignorant of oral statements less guarded which helped to disclose a system of error underneath. Indeed one of the unhappy moral features of the case, which soon appeared even to those not directly conversant, was the dropping of offensive clauses without the least acknowledgment of error, any more than adequate grief felt and expressed.

To a Christian nothing is so near the heart as Christ, nothing so offensive and evil as His dishonour. Where then are those whose speculations led them to say in substance, whatever the variation of phrase, "Fancy a helpless babe an expression of eternal life"? The unbelief and the irreverence of such a speech seem to have been by no means confined to one; but it was laid, not

without ground at the door of perhaps the boldest in the new school. The coolness with which he denied the imputation made one tremble for the zealous brother, who characterised the affront to our Lord as it deserved. But it comes out long after, without confession or apparently intention but by the evident hand of God, that the actual words were "Think of a helpless infant being the exhibition of eternal life."

Now the former report (avowedly hearsay) imputes less than what in fact was written. Yet the writer, when appealed to, said he was satisfied he never used these words! Was this Christian candour? or even common honesty? But so it is ever: the truth of Christ lost for one who bears His name is the loss of truthfulness. Nor this only: the brother who resented the reported dishonour of Christ was challenged to produce the letter containing it, in the very place where the letter was, and was known to be unless destroyed! Now what can one think of concealing it deliberately, not only to shield the evildoer, but to subject the brother jealous for the glory of Christ to the charge of unrighteousness, and to threats of more or less discipline? Shame on such as conspired in the Name against that Name! If honest once, to what have error and party spirit and a bad conscience degraded them? Is this the holiness of God's house? It is not Greenwich only: the same fellowship was at work to the same ends at Ealing, and in how many other spots we know not. It is Christ flouted by all such, with moral wrong flowing directly from it as flagrant as the doctrinal error, leaven in both ways.

Did Park Street then stand for Christ? It has been forward, in the face of the most solemn protests from without as well as within, not only to excuse or explain away, but to accept as its own what has drawn out the holy abhorrence and

gravest warning of many choice servants of God (one may say perhaps) all over the world no less than in Great Britain. After indulging throughout London and elsewhere in grievous discussions about the person of the Incarnate Word, utterly inconsistent with faith in or at least true reverence for His inscrutable glory, they are not ashamed to turn round and claim credit for charging those already compromised to beware of this unworthy prying and profound disrespect. Alas! the worst mischief is done, and by none outside Greenwich and Ealing more decidedly than by Park Street, so as to influence similarly all it can in town and country. No scruple hitherto where the unhallowed analysis of the Holy One could win light and daring spirits. As this was known to repel the pious and godly, souls are now gravely dissuaded from it! It is high time indeed, after so long and incessant and rude handling, but rather strong that it should be by the same guides. Is there then repentance at last? Sad to say, each step seems but a turn for party and a fear of further losses; whilst some appear grieved and ashamed, who, if truly so, will allow of no excuses or shams.

It is no mere fault of expression, however serious. The life, the service, and the testimony of Christ are no more spared than His infancy. It is His Person that has been so wantonly divided. Will it be believed by sober saints that Jesus at the well of Sychar was denied to be a manifestation of eternal life? It was said "that eternal life never wept," "never eat nor drank," nor "commended His mother to the care of His loved disciple," etc., etc.

Let us weigh these flippancies in the light of the scriptures referred to.

The total absence of spirituality and holy intelligence is apparent in thus treating the Lord at Sychar. It is as a whole the most striking opening

out of the new thing thus far in the Gospel of John. Hence His Person shines in it peculiarly to all save the blind. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and *Who* it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water," not eternal life as in the chapter before, but the Spirit as its power, a fountain of water within, springing up into eternal life. But this school, bent on self-justification, will say that they do not deny He expressed eternal life in some things He said to the Samaritan; they only exclude it from His sitting wearied with His journey at the spring, and saying, Give me to drink! Thus they take the line, not of open infidels, but of the rationalistic sceptics who allow Divine inspiration in the theological element, but can see only what is human expressed in history of facts, &c. Now, if we scout such dishonour on the unity of holy scripture, how much should saints resent this base and perilous handling of our Lord. Undoubtedly there was infinite grace in stooping so low as to ask the woman (and such a woman!) for a drink of water in His thirst and weariness; but oh! the infatuation that severs from that act and those words the Son of God thus expressing the Father and seeking a worshipper in spirit and truth, even in one so untoward and far off.

Again, kindred blasphemy (for another person figures) lays its defiling hands on that most touching scene, the Creator a Man, weeping at the grave of Lazarus, just after uttering the words "I am the Resurrection and the Life," and about to express Himself in the deed of raising the dead and buried man. It was a scene, as even the Holy Spirit says, for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Yes, it is our solace and joy and thanksgiving that the Saviour Son of God did shed tears; but what were these not with His sighs and groans

to God! They were *not* the expression of eternal life, says this unworthy school. Ah! let them weep over their sin, and hate themselves for putting the *Son of God to shame*, where *trueness of heart* would have been the more at His feet. God forbid that any should think their purpose was to dishonour the Saviour any more than E. Irving so meant. But they have been so inflated that they have blindly fallen into the fault of the devil. And where are they that allow unity, or the fear of division, to quench their hatred of this evil? or even to apologise for it, as three or four Irish brothers have done, to say nothing of English partisans? Yet I give them credit for better feelings in their hearts, or privately expressed. But how then their printed essays to defend what is indefensible? Was this in the faith and love and honour of Christ?

Alas! even now, we have not done with all the vileness of some in their eagerness to push their "high truth." For they have dared to say (what one shrinks from repeating even to refute its shallow irreverence) that "eternal life never eat nor drank." Let those guilty of what is either silliness or the grossest carnal licence with the Son of God read to their own censure Luke xxiv. 42, 43, Acts x. 41. Our Lord partook of food expressly in the risen state, where He was manifested as the Eternal Life even as to the body, the Firstborn from the dead "exhibited" in that final and blessed condition which is according to God's everlasting counsels. Yet this libel on Christ is said to have come first of all from a chief man who is not known to have repented in dust and ashes.

Need one recall the reality of Jesus from the cross entrusting to John His bereaved mother? For here too the new school pursues its heartless way. We know that some of them have taught, and taught falsely for many years, death to nature.

Does that unjudged error induce them now to think and speak so slightly of His perfection? of His filial feeling, and of His confidence in the beloved disciple? How can they overlook in that very same action His infinite superiority to all the circumstances which would have absorbed and governed all others but Himself? Avaunt, spirit of error: no longer darken God's children. Let them learn what they ought to have known, and to have ever held fast, that Jesus is never more manifestly God than when He shows Himself the perfect man. Distinguish, if you can, rightly; but dare not to split asunder that holy and indissoluble union. These evil speculations tend to divide His person recklessly.

But another of these errors it is well to expose for the sake of the weak. It is alleged that John, among the Gospels the great witness of eternal life, does not give the Lord's birth or early days. In vain the argument. Mark does not any more, though each for reasons wholly different from the insinuation. But the fact is that of all the Evangelists none makes so much of the Incarnation as John, and so in the First Epistle too. This we see in i. 14 ("The Word was made flesh, &c."), in the Sent One often, above all in chapter vi. 33 to 51. Luke gives the wondrous birth fully as a fact.

Indeed the theory traverses the truth of both Old Testament and New. For nothing is laid more deeply in the structure of both than the jealousy of the Holy Ghost, when treating of His Deity to bring in His humanity, when treating of His sufferings to introduce unmistakably His divine glory (see Ps. xlv. 6, 7; Ps. cii. 23-27; Isa. ix. 6; l. 3, 4; Zech. xiii. 7). Of the New Testament something has been said already. But it may be added here that, although Matthew has it for his allotted province from God to present Jesus as the Messiah, the utmost care is taken from the first chapter to show

that God's Anointed (whatever fallen Jews might dream) was God, Emmanuel, yea Jehovah. Mark, again, though presenting Jesus in His service, was led to give us the healing of the leper ere chap. i. concludes: "I will; be thou clean." Now, Who could say "I will," if He was not "I am?" And the Man who was the true God was also the Eternal Life: in Him they are together inseparably. The reasoning from the absence of any description of His birth in John is good for nothing save to deceive oneself, and to mislead the unwary.

On the same principle eternal life, or rather the exhibition of that life, must be eliminated both from Christ's birth and from His death! Where then is His person? Where His work? It is only made manifest for the first time as such to human eyes in resurrection! as a northern victim of this heterodoxy has the hardihood to affirm. It is a grief to answer that these are not "the teachings of wisdom" but the depths of Satan. Indeed it would be difficult to show where there is a brighter manifestation of Eternal Life than in the birth of God's Son if it be not in His death and resurrection. Before that the life was in the Divine Word, but it was not manifested till He partook of blood and flesh. Then and there according to 1. John i. the manifestation was made. And manifestation to chosen witnesses is *added*, in order to authenticate the truth to others. But even the apostles, how far did they spiritually discern till He died and rose and ascended, and the Holy Spirit was given? As to all this there seems nothing but confusion through overlooking what is written and importing what is not. His very "emptying" and "humbling" Himself was the manifest witness of Eternal Life, as was His laying down His life to take it again. He and He only is or could be said to have "delivered up His spirit" as in John xix. 29.

In the destructive departure from truth we had to face more than forty years ago it would be hard to find any more insolently false, though one forbears to repeat what is still more outrageous because now "withdrawn," as was also done then. But "withdrawal" under pressure and with some shame cannot inspire confidence. One looks for sorrow, self-judgment, and even horror at thus pouring contempt on Christ's glory. Is the root yet reached? Which of them will affirm this? If not, it will assuredly spring up again, and worse than has yet appeared.

Is it said that more than one have given utterance to these varied aspersions of Christ? This is exactly what proves the active working of the leaven, the energy of an evil spirit. They have a common source and character, and not so recently heard of. No one imputes to them the intention of wounding our Lord afresh; but what does it all mean? How did Satan gain such opportunity to do what *he* meant? *He* intended, and succeeding in using *them* to Christ's personal dishonour.

Humanly it is a highly pretentious school, as fully confident of their own intelligence as scornful of others. The form the evil has taken is systematic slight of the Lord of glory, under plea of asserting the dignity of eternal life. For the substantive and distinctive truth of Christianity evaporates for this school in their utterances. They have lost the constant objective fact of the Eternal Life manifested in Jesus, the Word made flesh and dwelling among us. They will have the manifestation or "exhibition" only occasional. This is in effect to give up and do away with the plainest scripture.

How refreshing to turn to the grand safeguard against the antichrists of the last time! "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we contemplated, and our hands handled, concerning



the Word of Life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and report to you the Eternal Life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us)" (1 John i. 1, 2). Observe that the Holy Spirit carefully begins with the infinite truth as it really is, an actually subsisting fact here below, before a single chosen witness had heard or seen. This is of the utmost importance; because it lays as a foundation the reality concerning the Word of Life in this world before John or any other apostle heard Him. Here is the foundation; not Adam, but Christ. It is the Word made flesh, the Person of Christ. His work comes in afterwards, vindicates God as to sin, lays the ground of reconciliation (though for this we have to hear the testimony of Paul), whether of things or of persons, and displays His righteousness toward all and upon all that believe. But the Person was there on earth in all moral and divine perfection, yet true man, to be attested (as was meet and as sovereign love willed) in the fullest and most familiar way. It was Jesus Christ come in the flesh.

It may be noticed too that in ver. 1 "that which we have heard" precedes "that which we have seen." This cannot be said to be the order of the senses; and it strikes the more, both because we are just about to have minute witness in this kind detailed to us, and because the latter is the order followed in ver. 3 ("that which we have seen and heard"). The reason I apprehend to be, that the Spirit would give the basis of divine authority as the starting-point, not their sight, but His words (and they were the words the Father had given Him) for them to hear. Thus was it hearing the Good Shepherd's voice and believing, as we read in the deeply interesting latter half of John i. But then they did see, contemplate, and handle. This it is which the petty activity of man's mind would now sever from the manifestation

of the Eternal Life, to the unutterable loss of those that allow it; what is such unbelief in the Father's eyes and in Christ's? What to Him Who is here to glorify Christ?

Again, it is to be remarked that in ver. 2, where the manifestation of the life is asserted (and I trust that here at least there will be no sickening equivoque, but an unhesitating acknowledgment that "eternal" life is in question), the hearing of faith found in ver. 1 is *not* stated, but simply "and we have seen and bear witness and report." No doubt there was good reason to speak only of the great personal and apostolic witnesses in the context. But there is no ground to limit ἐφανερώθη, as in fact it is stated even here absolutely. It is just what Incarnation covers. It applies to the person of Christ right through His course on earth, and gives the flattest negative to the statement "that life was manifested by overcoming death." Had it been said defined in power by resurrection, there would have been truth. It is not "having suffered death, He appeared among His own;" nor does *the Holy Ghost* add in the first instance "manifested unto us." In the beginning of the verse He says and means *only* that the life was manifested; He adds at the end the manifestation "unto us" after the momentous clause that precedes, and before ver. 3. It is not at all the mistake of confounding "appearing" with manifestation (though who really is guilty of it?): what strikes one is the shutting of the eyes to scripture, the missing and perversion of God's mind apparent in this dear brother's "Brief Account." He certainly is not the originator of the evil. Yet it is an awful proof of the havoc wrought by a theory not only unwarranted by God's word but directly antagonistic. And notoriously it was here as elsewhere put forth as new and higher truth, an advance on all; till the manifest errors made the defence

necessary that it was the old truth (!) we were familiar with, notably in the writings of J.N.D.—a defence which is as unfounded as the previous boast.

It seems plain that manifestation is misunderstood by all who defend these speculations or deny their heterodoxy. They confound it with faith's apprehension and hence would restrict it to believers. Now its true force is simply that what existed but was hidden has come to view. Faith of course profits by it, and in some cases for testimony to others; but the manifestation is complete independently of its effects. This is true even where the object is expressed to whom the manifestation was made, as is certain from John i. 31. For our Lord was manifested to Israel; yet they, His own, received Him not. God brought Him to light for the very people that refused Him.

So it is with the great standing fact of God's righteousness by faith of Jesus Christ. It has been and is manifested. Rom. iii. 21, 22. It is apart from law, and being God's, not man's, it is for all, though it only takes effect upon all those that believe.

"Who saw it" is not the question in manifestation but is implied in "appearing." Still less correct is the confusion which these misleaders make of "revelation" with "manifestation." Everyone however, cannot be expected to understand delicate shades of expression like these. Only such utter ignorance is not of God's Spirit, especially when combined with great pretension and self-complacency. Manifestation may be absolute on God's part in Christ. Discerning is by faith and the power of the Spirit in us. Still more distinct is my being able to say in truth of heart and ways, "for me to live is Christ."

Note also that, whatever the different views of commentators old or new, nobody of weight among orthodox men denies that the preposition  $\pi\rho\delta\varsigma$  is

intended to indicate the distinction of the Persons. But it is quite a fallacy that this would make the Eternal Life all that the Son is, any more than that the Spirit is no more than the Comforter or Paraclete. This seems to be the favourite plea; but it quite fails. Christ is also once called Paraclete or Advocate, so that infrequency does not disprove or even render doubtful. Nor is it more personal than the Eternal Life in 1 John i. 2., as to which some affect strange difficulty. There is difficulty where there is will.

Nor is it John only who is so distinct and full and peremptory on the Divine personality of our Lord, and the Eternal Life in Him which is bound up with it. Not only had the apostle Paul for his work to bring out the righteousness of God and His purpose and counsels in Christ, but none was more jealous of His intrinsic glory, none more unsparing of those that lowered His honour. I am not prepared to accept the late Dean Burgon's decision on the disputed reading of the received text in 1 Tim iii. 16. But, even if that preferred by most stand, how bright is the witness to Christ! "He Who was manifested in flesh." His Deity is pre-supposed, if not asserted; and what can be stronger than that? No mere man could with propriety be described as manifested in flesh. To be a man is necessarily to be so born, or made like Adam. But a Divine Person is not so conditioned. The Son might, if He pleased, have been manifested in angelic guise or otherwise. In love, and to accomplish redemption, He became man. He was manifested in flesh; but He Who was thus manifested was God, even if here it be only implied and not expressed. And He Who was manifested was manifested in flesh: so it is written absolutely. He, in love beyond all thought of man, deigned to become incarnate. Before Incarnation He was not manifested thus. And if He the true God was manifested in flesh, assuredly eternal

life also. For scripture binds the two together in His Person, and in the most unrestricted way. It is true that in resurrection He was seen and heard, touched and handled; but he who so reads 1 John i. 1, 2, misinterprets God's word and risks the subversion of foundation truth to sustain his heresy.

Not that there is the smallest ground to think that the Greenwich doctrine was meant to oppose Mr. Darby's writings. On the contrary, the tracts or letters which have issued thence are a manifest cento of Mr. Darby's words. But the Spirit of truth characterises the one, as that of error distinguishes the other. It would be difficult to match these papers in the absence of unction, simplicity, reverence, and edification. Cold and lifeless, they abound in errors on the most fundamental truths, while pretending, in a degree most unusual, to minute accuracy. The very broaching of such and so strong statements on the nicest and highest matters of Divine revelation was highly unwise and presumptuous. The strange doctrine at Witney, subsequently modified and dropped, ought to have been a danger-signal to himself and his friends. But what has been disseminated, in papers written and even printed pieces, proves that the evil spirit is in no way exorcised by prayer and fasting, but that there is a root of deep and systematic evil, which (every now and then, and all over the land in persons who may have no direct communication) breaks out in profanity, even as to Christ Himself. It is idle to imagine that this open antagonism (all the worse because unconscious and of course unintentional) to Christ's glory has no source in error and falsehood. It appears plainly to spring from unhallowed speculation as to eternal life, the more confidently followed up because the faith of these men, assuming to be and accepted as intelligent teachers of the first water, has been founded on J. N. D. (what horror

this would have been to him!), not on a Spirit-taught subjection to Gōd's word.

And it is quite a dream that one is safe as to the doctrine of Christ, if kept from speculating on the union of the Deity and the humanity, like Nestorius and Eutyches of old, or before them like Apollinaris, friend though he was of Athanasius. A prophetic theory drew its devotee into anti-christian error, without any direct assault on the truth of the Person; for it was rather an overthrow of Christ's true relation to God. In that which now troubles saints of God, the error is nearer still, quite as subtle, and no less real, as is now evidenced by the slights, according to common report, put so widely on our Lord, mainly, if not altogether, flowing from the mist and malaria of the novel system as to eternal life.

An effort has been made by more than one to relieve the heterodoxy, and indeed to place the seceding protesters in the wrong, by extracts from Mr. D.'s Synopsis on Joshua iii., especially in its latest edition. Now the distinction of pilgrimage on earth from the heavenly communion and warfare with spiritual wickedness is certain, and, though by no means seized by all saints, of great moment for the Christian to enjoy, as not of the world. But Mr. D., while thus wholly separating them in character, as is necessarily true, carefully said that Christ's life among men, however distinct, was the ever perfect expression of the effect of His life of heavenly communion and of the Divine nature. Obedience and suffering here below are wholly different from the outflow of grace and truth, and the display of Divine love to man and the like. What we repudiate is that the Eternal Life was not always exercised in the earthly lines as well as the heavenly. But this, though the clear truth of scripture, is forbidden by this anti-christian theory. That heaven

is the congenial and destined "sphere," is true for the Christian: how much more for Christ! But there He (the Son) might have been for ever, but for the love of the Father that sent Him, and His own grace that came down at all cost. Otherwise there had been no such Divine manifestation.

But He was manifested *in flesh*. The Eternal Life that was with the Father *was* manifested: how this was, the preceding verse carefully declares. No one denies that Christ is the true God and Eternal Life in resurrection glory. But it is false that 1 John v. 20 limits to this, or even gives that condition prominence. He was so always, equally from His birth till He rose from the dead and went on high. Indeed the emphasis of John is on His manifestation on earth: so utterly opposed to the current of the word and the Spirit of truth is this system of error. And the apostle Paul, as we have seen in 1 Tim. iii. 16, though habitually presenting Christ in heavenly glory, declares that the manifestation was in flesh, not in the risen and glorified condition, not therefore in heaven but here below. No one says He was manifested to be the Person *save* to faith. Still He was manifested in the broadest and most absolute manner, if we believe the Word. Mr. D. treats of quite a different truth in Notes ii. 386. He is opposing the prevalent error of a spiritual second coming of our Lord, and labours to prove that, rightly viewed, His first coming was really the spiritual one, i.e., the Son seen then in moral fact only, as we see Him now; whereas every eye shall see Him personally returning in power and glory. What has this to do with the question of His true manifestation in manhood, true God and the Eternal Life as He was? It is well for dear brethren to understand before catching at quotations.

On the other hand, even when dealing with a sys-

tem of exaggeration and onesidedness, it is well to steer clear of exaggeration. "The life to which sin attached" is a phrase of J.N.D.'s and only distinguishes His life in flesh from that in resurrection which can have nothing to do with death for sin.

Take another of those audaciously false statements—"to talk of a person having eternal life without the Spirit is absurd." Is this "substantially the truth as to Christianity in its proper heavenly character?" Our blessed Lord is in His own person its refutation; for while undeniably He was ever the true God and Eternal Life, yet even He on earth was not sealed till, baptized of John, He entered on His ministry, the Father Himself bearing witness of Him. And so it was with the apostles as well as the disciples in general. They had been children of God but were not baptised with (*év*) the Holy Spirit till Pentecost. That this gift was sure is true; that the former precedes the latter is no less true; and therefore so scornful a denial is a fresh proof of opposition to revealed truth. John iv., v., xx., Rom. viii., and Gal. v. lend no support to the error, but are quite consistent with the rest of scripture. This perhaps may be said to be now dropped. But the prefatory reason assigned for omitting the last paragraph is anything but an honest confession, and nothing seems said why the questions and replies disappear. Further, it is too strong to volunteer that F. E. R. holds firmly that Eternal Life is Christ, when he notoriously has changed all this, and emphatically denies, as do most of his supporters in England, what J.N.D. did not scruple to write (Letters iii. 171). Was he inaccurate? or did he in this slight the Deity of Christ? No believer holds that Christ was not more than Eternal Life.

But again, in the part reiterated, what is the meaning of the hazy, ambiguous clause, "he [the



believer] having been born of God to receive it" ? The testimony ? or the life ? One or other it must be ; and either is flagrantly false. It is the testimony God has testified of the Son which gives life. To be born of God to receive one or other supposes another life from God to prepare the way for eternal life. If this is not really meant, though it seems also fully confirmed in the last existing paragraph, can we escape the conclusion that there is the most painful inability to convey what is even intended, right or wrong ? One, not less self-confident, ventured to pronounce that on this issue of eternal life God is with him who is now before us ; but he had soon to acknowledge himself no true prophet. Would that the evil were really discerned and judged ! It is to deceive oneself, and perhaps others, to speak of an unguarded and unbalanced way of writing, or to take advantage of the fact that some things obscurely said have been misapprehended. Further, is it not false in the face of 1 John v. 11. ["God hath given to us eternal life"], to state that "Scripture does not, I think, speak of our having had eternal life imparted to us ?" If God has given it to us, we surely have had it imparted to us. It is fully owned that we have life only in the Son, and the all-importance of not severing the stream from the source. But woe to him who enfeebles that we have what God has in this way given to us. Not a word in the verse about "life in the power of the Spirit," "a well," &c. God declares positively what we hear now, not so positively but withal daringly, denied. Conscious enjoyment is in the Spirit, but this is an added privilege. Life, eternal life, precedes that gift, as does known remission of sins.

Indeed there is a fatality of error in what is laid down ever so guardedly on this subject. Thus, in one letter it is said, "He gives the Spirit as the

capacity ;" whereas eternal life is the capacity, and the Spirit given is the subsequent power. In a much later one (March 20, 1890), "power is an essential of life," which is essentially erroneous, for "life" exists in dependence and conscious weakness: "power" is in the Holy Spirit given (2 Tim. i. 7, and indeed all scripture). And when the writer said in his earlier letter, "the Spirit in the believer is life," what can one hope at best but that this was blank ignorance on a question of eternal life? For the allusion must have been to Rom. viii. 6. But this is "life" solely in the practical sense, as the connected "peace" is of the heart, not of the conscience with God as in Rom. v. 1. It was therefore lack of intelligence, if not sophistry. Where was and is divine teaching? John vi. 45.

Every unbiassed mind may see that there is of set purpose only a single truth, but of the deepest account, here pressed. It would have been easy to have exposed a vast deal more of important bearing both for the truth and to the saints; as the title of believers now to divine righteousness as well as eternal life. So too the unsettling of faith's absolute language because of our mixed condition is an inexcusable error, which no tinkering, on the part of the maker or his journeymen, can mend, still less justify. Nothing is farther from the mind of the Spirit in 2 Cor. v, 21, than qualifying *His* absolute statement of grace in Christ, because of the believer's mixed condition for the present. Nor is it in the least true that future glory is here spoken of. Efforts at explanation are but a cloak of pride, where humiliation in the fear of God is due and befitting. And the mitigations of others who know better are conscienceless party-work. There might be said not a little on the weakening of simple subjection to the word. One simply warns souls against a thrust at the foundation which no added truth can alter, but rather make

the error more insidious, though one may mourn over men of God drawn by one means or another to apologise for error which may soon inveigle them, even if quite free now and only blind to its virus.

B.W.N. was no less full of his recognition of Christ's deity, and of other truths. But like him the new school insinuate what saps it, and is incompatible. To all such the Christian must say that "no lie is of the truth."

How then can any spiritual mind venture to say before the Lord, on weighing all this on one truth only in question, that he sees nothing beyond what might have been profitably discussed in brotherly confidence? Research had better not be shirked if this were that "pretending to accuracy which destroys reverence and leads to infidelity." The Holy Spirit can and does give an accuracy in heart and conscience that deepens reverence and strengthens faith; and Mr. Darby was a bright sample of it. The fact is, one of the most offensive and unfailling traits of the new school is this very pretension; yet, strange to say, along with it goes a solemn and misplaced deprecation of criticism! This one does not wonder at. They have every reason to dread criticism, and they have had it honestly and ably, and in general fairly, from some who ought to be above suspicion on the score of either hostile or unworthy feelings. On the other hand, it cannot be said that a single defence which has been set up faces the real question at issue.

The system before us, in my judgment, so clouds, lowers, and undermines the truth of eternal life (and thus far Christ's person) that it is to me inconceivable for any child of God to learn the truth from the Greenwich papers or those akin. Even those who have known the truth more or less fully can only have the eyes of their heart darkened by accepting them. They can but mislead, defile, and

destroy. Can one doubt that the righteous souls among the five hundred brethren who met on the 7th Oct. at Park St. loathed the profanities so strange and startling among Brethren? But their resolution betrays too much irritation against such as have served the Lord in exposing sad and shameful evil long trifled with, and too little willingness to believe that so malignant a symptom implies a deeply seated malady or an active poison. It will soon be seen whether the meetings holily judge the more open offenders. If common rumour be true, they are far too many, and not far to seek. Not a few of the most prominent men are more or less so committed that it is difficult to suppose the local meetings will purge out the evil. Only one of the five hundred is reported to have spoken with a just sense of what is at work; and he, it is said, is not actually breaking bread: who can wonder, save that he was there? For they have dealt pretty summarily with a poor man who protested, and boast of no charge even before Greenwich! Mr. R. yielded to the entreaty to withdraw in a way the sentence that most shocked his brethren; but he reserved the latter part! so much so, that he would go out of fellowship rather than give up *that*! And a colleague protested against giving up the first part, as this would compromise the truth! Another again denied any root of error to all the profanity! allowing no more than a low moral state. The low state is true, of course, and the most distressing highmindedness to boot; but not to see Satan in this wide and deep stream of unjudged evil, some of the worst kind against Christ, is spiritual darkness. I have only glanced at the report since this tract was written and in type. The good Lord guard and guide His sheep.

W. K.