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A SUBSTITUTE FOR HOLINESS

OR

ANTINOMIANISM REVIVED

By

Daniel Steele, S.T.D.

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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Daniel Steele

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FOR
HOLINESS**

OR

Antinomianism Revived

The Theology of the so-called Plymouth Brethren Examined and Refuted.

BY

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"Question 19: What is Antinomianism?

Answer: The doctrine which makes void the law through faith."—Minutes of Wesley's first Conference, 1744.

"I dread every approach to Antinomianism; I have seen the fruit of it over the three kingdoms."—John Wesley, 24 years later, 1768, letter 193.

"The great hindrance to the inward work of God is Antinomianism, wherever it breaks in. I am glad you are aware of it."—John Wesley, 45 years later, 1789, letter 515.

"Antinomianism is a monster which can only live in darkness; bring light on it, and it expires."—Robert Hall, pastor of Baptist Church, Bristol.

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EDITOR'S NOTE.

The works of Daniel Steele are well-known to American readers who are interested in the spread of full salvation. His books, however, are difficult to obtain in England, and consequently his literature is little known in our own land.

Recently a Christian friend passed on to me Steele's book entitled "A Substitute For Holiness," a book which I had not heard of previously. Its message stirred my heart, and the thought came to me that an abridged edition would carry a needed ministry to English readers.

A word of thanks must be tendered to the Christian Witness Association of Chicago, the publishers of Daniel Steele's books, who kindly consented to my publishing an edition in Great Britain. I have been so grateful also to Miss E. Hudson and Miss W. M'Caw, both of Manchester, who helped in preparing the manuscript for publication, as well as to Mr. S. E. M'Caw of Llanfairfechan, who read through the proofs.

My motive in bringing the book to the notice of Christian readers in our beloved land is that of attempting to noise abroad the truth of inward holiness.

M.W.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

It is no secret that the author of this book believes in a large Gospel, an evangel co-extensive with the present needs of the depraved offspring of Adam; yea, more; he believes that where sin hath abounded, grace doth here and now much more abound to those believers who insist that Christ is a perfect Saviour from inbred sin, through the efficacy of His Blood, in procuring the indwelling Comforter and Sanctifier. He unhesitatingly proclaims and testifies to all the world that Jesus Christ can make clean the inside, as well as the outside of His vessels unto honour; that heart purity is real and inwrought, and not a stainless robe concealing unspeakable moral filthiness and leprosy. He believes with St. John against the Gnostics, that if any man asserts that he has by nature no defiling taint of depravity, no bent towards acts of sin, and hence that he does not need the Blood of atonement, that he is self-deceived, and the truth is not in him; but if he will confess his lost condition, God is faithful and just, not only to forgive, but also to cleanse from all sin, actual and original. He is bold to assert that we are living in the days when Ezekiel's prophecy is fulfilled: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from ALL your filthiness and from ALL your idols will I cleanse you: I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," a case of evangelical legalism,— "and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses"; and in the days when the words of Jehovah, by the lips of Moses, are verified in the experience of a multitude of believers; "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with

all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." He finds St. Paul's inspired unfoldings of the Gospel germs, dropped by Christ, to be the exact fulfilment and realization of these predictions, when the apostle asserts that "our old man is crucified with Him"—that is, in the same manner and with as deadly an effect—"that the body of sin might be destroyed"—"put out of existence" (Meyer); so that every advanced believer may truthfully assert, "it is no longer I that live" (Amerc. R.V.).

D.S.

**A SUBSTITUTE FOR HOLINESS?
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**CHAPTER 1.
ANTINOMIANISM DEFINED.**

Rev. J. Fletcher says, "An Antinomian is a professor of Christianity, who is *antinomos*, against the law of Christ, as well as against the law of Moses. He allows Christ's law to be a rule of life, but not a rule of judgment for believers, and thus he destroys that law at a stroke, as a law; it being evident that a rule by the personal observance or non-observance of which Christ's subjects can never be acquitted or condemned is not a law for them. Hence, he asserts that Christians shall no more be justified before God by their personal obedience to the law of Christ, than by their personal obedience to the ceremonial law of Moses. Nay, he believes that the best of Christians perpetually break Christ's law; that nobody ever kept it but Christ Himself; and that we shall be justified or condemned before God, in the great day, not as we shall personally be found to have finally kept or broken Christ's law, but as God shall be found to have, before the foundation of the world, arbitrarily laid, or not laid, to our account, the merit of Christ's keeping His own law. Thus he hopes to stand in the great day, merely by what he calls 'Christ's imputed righteousness'; excluding with abhorrence from our final justification, the evangelical worthiness of our own personal, sincere obedience of repentance and faith,—a precious obedience this which he calls 'dung, dross, and filthy rags' just as if it were the insincere obedience of self-righteous pride, and Pharisaic hypocrisy, Nevertheless, though he thus excludes the evangelical, derived worthiness of the works of faith, from our eternal justification and salvation, he himself does good works, if he is in

other respects a good man. Nay, in this case, he piques himself on doing them, thinking he is peculiarly obliged to make people believe that, immortal as his sentiments are, they draw after them the greatest benevolence and the strictest morality." This reminds us of the testimony of a Universalist woman, "That she had come three miles to attend this prayer meeting, so as to show that the Universalists are as pious as the Orthodox."

But there are multitudes carelessly following the stream of corrupt nature who are crying out, not against the unholiness, but against the "*legality*, of their wicked hearts, which still suggest that they must do *something*, in order to attain eternal life." They decry that evangelical legality which all true Christians are in love with—a cleaving to Christ by that kind of faith which works righteousness—a following Him as He went about doing good, and as showing by St. James' *works* that we have St. Paul's faith.

The consistent Antinomian—that is, one whose practice accords with his theory—is loud in his proclamation of a finished salvation, the blotting out of his sins, past, present and future, on the Cross nineteen hundred years ago, without respect to his own conduct, character, or works. His salvation is so finished that no sins can ever blot his name out of the book of life. He thinks that the Son of God magnified the law that we might vilify it; that He made it honourable, that we might make it contemptible; that He came to fulfil it, that we might be discharged from fulfilling it, according to our capacity. He has no sympathy with David's confession: "I love Thy commandments above gold and precious stones: I will always keep Thy law, yea, for ever and ever: I will walk at *liberty*, for I seek Thy precepts." In short, the creed of the Antinomian is this: I was justified when Christ died, and my faith is simply a waking up to the fact that I have always been saved—a realization of what was done before I had any being; that a believer is not bound to mourn for sin, because it was pardoned before it was committed, and pardoned sin is no

sin; that God does not see sin in believers, however great sins they commit; that by God's laying our iniquities upon Christ, He became as completely sinful as I, and I as completely righteous as Christ. Moreover, I believe that no sin can do a believer any ultimate harm, although it may temporarily interrupt communion with God. I must not do any duty for my own salvation. This is included in the new covenant, which is all of it a promise, having no condition on my part. It is a paid up, non-forfeitable, eternal insurance policy, Since the new covenant is not properly made with us, but with Christ for us, the conditions, repentance, faith, and obedience, are not on our side, but on Christ's side, who repented, believed, and obeyed, in such a way as to relieve us from these unpleasant acts. Hence it is folly to search for inward marks of grace, and it is a fundamental error to make sanctification an indispensable evidence of justification—an error which dampens the joys of him who takes Christ for His sanctification, and plunges him into needless alarms and distresses.

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**CHAPTER 2.
ANTINOMIANISM—HISTORICAL SKETCH.**

Theological errors move in cycles, sometimes of very long periods. They resemble those comets of unknown orbits which occasionally dash into our solar system; but they are not as harmless. Often they leave moral ruin in their track. Since all Christian truth is practical, and aims at the moral transformation of men, all negations of that truth are morally injurious; they not only obscure the truth and obstruct its purifying effect, but they positively corrupt and destroy souls. This is specially true of errors which release men from obligation to the law of God. After St. Paul had demonstrated the impossibility of justification by works compensative for sin, and had established the doctrine of justification through a faith in Christ which works by love and purifies the heart, there started up a class of teachers who drew from Paul's teachings the fallacious inference that the law of God is abolished in the case of the believer, who is henceforth delivered from its authority as the rule of life. Hence they became, what Luther first styled Antinomians (Greek *anti*, against, and *nomos*, law). We infer from Romans III, 8, 31; VI, 1; Ephesians V, 6; 2 Peter II, 18, 19, and James II, 17-26, in which warnings are given against a perversion of the truth as an excuse for licentiousness, that Antinomianism, in its grossest form, found place in the primitive church. All along the history of the church, a revival of the cardinal doctrine of justification, by faith only, has been followed by a resurrection of Antinomianism, which Wesley defines as, "The doctrine which makes void the law through faith." Those who aver that ultra-Calvinism is the invariable

antecedent of Antinomianism, would be unwilling to accept the necessary inference that the apostle to the Gentiles was an ultra-Calvinist; yet it is true that the doctrines of Calvinism can be logically pushed to that conclusion. It is also true that other forms of doctrine which emphasize faith in Jesus Christ, as the sole ground of acceptance with God, are more or less liable to have the tares of Antinomianism spring up in their field.

The root of this error lies in a false view of the mediatorial work of Christ, that He performs for men the obedience which they ought to perform, and that God can justly demand nothing further from the delinquents. It is claimed that Christ's perfect virtues are reckoned to the believer in such a way as to excuse him for the absence of obedience; His chastity compensating for the absence of that moral quality in the believer. Hence, adultery and murder in King David, being compensated by the purity and benevolence of Jesus imputed to him in the mind of God, did not mar David's standing as righteous before God.

Theologians who state the doctrine of the atonement with proper safeguards, are careful to limit its vicarious efficacy to the *passive* obedience of the Son of God, His sufferings and death. His *active* obedience constitutes no part of His substitutional work. The germ of Antinomianism is found in the inclusion of the latter in the atonement. It is true that the God-man was actively obedient to the Father's will, but this obedience was personal, and not mediatorial. Hence, every one justified through faith in the shed blood of Christ, is under obligation to render personal obedience to God's law. In this respect Jesus cannot be his proxy or representative.

Says Bishop Hopkins: "Though Christ's bearing the punishment of the law by death does exempt us from suffering, yet His obeying of the law does not

excuse obedience to the law. He obeyed the law as a covenant of works—we only as a rule of righteousness."

It should be said that the Gnostic sects were Antinomian on other grounds. They held that their spiritual natures could not contract moral pollution, whatever their moral conduct might be, sin inhering only in matter. As a piece of gold retains its purity while encompassed by the filth of the swine-sty, so the soul keeps pure amid the grossest sins. This species of Antinomianism was not limited to those who professed faith in Christ. It was adopted by all who held that all evil inheres in uncreated matter.

Modern Universalism is only another form of Antinomianism. It is the expectation of salvation through Christ, without obedience to either the law or the Gospel.

Christianity was very early disfigured by Antinomianism, a doctrinal and practical error which opposes itself to God's law even in the evangelical form in which it was defined by His Adorable Son, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." This has been the burden of Christ's preaching with the hint that His own life was to be given, as a ransom for many, and to secure grace to enable them to fulfil God's law. The apostles, by precept and example, powerfully enforced their Lord's doctrine and practice. Their lives are true copies of their exhortations. It is hard to say which excite men most to believe and obey, their seraphic sermons or their saintly lives. Success crowned their labours. Both Judaism and paganism heard the thunder of their words of faith and fell prostrate beneath the lightning of their works of love. But before all is lost, Satan hastens to "transform himself into an angel of light." In this disguise he instills speculative faith, instead of a saving faith which works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world; he pleads for loose living, puts

the badge of contempt upon the daily cross, and gets multitudes of Laodiceans and Gnostics into his snare. Sad and sure is the result. Genuine works of faith are neglected; idle works of men's invention are substituted for those of God's commandments; and fallen churches, gliding downward through the smooth way of Antinomianism, return to the covert way of Pharisaism or to the broad way of infidelity.

Such was the distressing outlook upon the church when Luther arose. True faith was dethroned by superstitious fancy, and works were well nigh choked by the thorns of the baneful error. Luther swung the sharp scythe of reform over northern Europe, and he might have mowed a broad swath through Italy and Rome itself if he had not at the same time scattered the dragon's teeth of Antinomianism, which sprang up around his German home like an army of armed men. The balance of evangelical precepts had not been preserved in preaching the forgiveness of sins by faith only, without adding that this faith is genuine only when it buds, blossoms, and bears the fruitage of holy character.

Our Lord's sermon upon the mount, was explained away, and St. James's Epistle was whisked out of the Bible as an "epistle of straw," and not of the precious stones of Gospel truth. The practicable *law of Christ*, styled the law of liberty, because of the ease with which it could be kept by a regenerate soul entirely sanctified through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, was perpetually confounded with that impracticable Christless law of Edenic innocence; and the avoidable penalties of the former were injudiciously represented as one with the dreadful curse of the latter, or with the abrogated ceremonies of Mosaism. Then the law of Christ demanding purity and love was publicly wedded the devil, and poor bewildered Protestants were taught to defy and scoff at both. From such a seed-sowing the dreadful harvest waved over Germany. Lawless believers, under the name of Ana-Baptists,

arose fancying themselves the dear elect people of God, reasoning thus: "First, the earth belongs to the saints, and, secondly, we are the saints." All things were theirs. They were complete in Christ, and absolutely sure of salvation by reason of their standing in Him. They went about in religious mobs to deliver people from legal bondage, and bring them into Gospel liberty,—a liberty to despise all laws, Divine and human, and to do every one what was right in his own eyes. Luther was alarmed and shocked. He hastened from his concealment in the castle of the Wartburg, to check a movement which was disgracing the Reformation. But the mischief was done; the thistle-seed had been broadcast over Germany. The only proper remedy, he did not perseveringly apply; salvation, not by the merits of works, but by works of faith, as a condition, and as proof of its genuineness in the great day. Men are now justified from the guilt of sin by a work-producing faith. They will be justified in the day of judgment only on the testimony of faith-produced works. Nevertheless, Luther learned wisdom enough to abandon the root of the mischief when he drew up, or, rather, endorsed, the Augsburg Confession, in which are these remarkable words: "We teach touching repentance, that those who have sinned after baptism may obtain the forgiveness of sins as often as they are converted," etc. Again: "We condemn the Ana-baptists, who say that those who have been once justified can no more loose the Holy Spirit."

This antidote of Gospel truth clearly and frequently enforced might have stopped the spread of Antinomianism. But Luther did not insist upon it, vacillated, and sometimes even seemed to contradict it. When Calvin arose, though he seldom went the length of some of his followers in the next century in speculative Antinomianism, yet he laid excellent foundations for it, in his unscriptural and unguarded doctrine of absolute decrees, and of the necessary, final perseverance of backsliding believers.

We have hinted that, Antinomianism has had its cycles in the history of the Church. Its full development, since the Reformation, is due to John Agricola (1492-1566 A.D.), one of the early coadjutors of Luther, some of whose expressions, as to justification and the law, in the heat of his great controversy with Rome, were hasty, extravagant and quite Antinomian. These utterances Agricola developed into a system so extreme and so subversive of Christian morals, that he published in 1537 A.D. these words: "Art thou steeped in sin—an adulterer or a thief? If thou believest thou art, in salvation. All who follow Moses must go to the devil; to the gallows with Moses." This was the kind of tares sown in Luther's field by a professed friend. Luther attacked him violently, calling him a fanatic and other hard names. After Agricola's death, Armsdorf and Otto advocated his doctrines, and maintained that good works are an obstacle to salvation. Similar sentiments were preached in England in the days of Oliver Cromwell. But it remained far Dr. Crisp, (1600-1642 A.D.), a rector of the Church of England, to give this error its full development in Anglican theology, from the seed-corn of high Calvinism. The following sentiments abound in his sermons: "The law is cruel and tryannical, requiring what is naturally impossible." "The sins of the elect were so imputed to Christ, as that, though He did not commit them, yet they became actually His transgressions, and ceased to be theirs. The feelings of conscience which tell them that sin is theirs, arise from a want of knowing the truth. It is but the voice of a lying spirit in the hearts of believers that saith they have yet sin, wasting their conscience, and lying as a burden too heavy for them to bear. Christ's righteousness is so imputed to the elect, that they, ceasing to be sinners, are as righteous as He was, and all that He was. An elect person is not in a condemned state while an unbeliever; and should he happen to die before God calls him to believe, he would not be lost. Repentance and confession of sin are not necessary to forgiveness. A believer may certainly conclude before confession, yea as soon as he hath committed sin, the interest he hath in Christ, and the love of Christ embracing Him."

This doctrine completely destroys the distinction between right and wrong, and removes all motives to abstain from sin. It boasts in the perseverance of the saints, while it believes in no saint but one, that is, Jesus, and neglects to persevere. Several vigorous theologians opposed this baneful doctrine, the chief of whom were Baxter and Williams, who after heroic efforts and no small suffering finally triumphed.

The next revival of Antinomianism in the Church of England and among the dissenters, was in the eighteenth century and was met most courageously by John Wesley, the apostle of experimental godliness and of Christian perfection, and by the seraphic John Fletcher, whose writings, says Dr. Dollinger, "are the most important theological productions which issued from Protestantism in the latter part of the eighteenth century." His reasoning is cogent, his imagination vivid, his style clear and incisive, and the momentum of his arguments is so irresistible that he swept the field, driving Antinomianism out of England during, at least, two generations. His "Checks" stand today unanswered and unanswerable. No man can read them with candour and continue to deny the obligations of believers to strict obedience to the law of God; that inwrought holiness is the requirement of the Gospel, and that there is no sharp contrast between it and the law.

A thorough study of these "Checks," by the ministry in our times, would wonderfully stimulate their spiritual life, tone up their theology, and furnish them with the weapons for the conflict with the cycle of Antinomianism error which is now upon the church.

The agency through which this heresy entombed by Fletcher, has had its resurrection, is the so-called Plymouth Brethren, whose peculiar tenets will be described in the next chapter.

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**CHAPTER 3.
THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.**

What are the Plymouth Brethren? This is a question which many people are asking. The Plymouth Brethren originated in Dublin, Ireland, about the year 1830 A.D., and almost simultaneously in Plymouth, England. In the latter place they increased so rapidly that they once numbered 1,500. Hence they are called by outsiders Plymouth Brethren. Although they do not repudiate, the word "Plymouth," they style themselves "The Brethren." Their leading mind, if not their original founder, who died a few years ago at an advanced age is John Darby. Hence they are, sometimes called Darbyites. The movement was at first a protest against ecclesiasticism, like that of George Fox, the first Quaker. Darby, a clergyman in the Church of England, renounced the Church, and assumed that all existing church organizations are a detriment to Christianity, and obstructive of regeneration and the spiritual life. His little band of adherents claim to be a reproduction of the primitive disciples—the only genuine specimens on earth. They refuse to take any distinctive name, and disavow that they are a sect. They call themselves The Brethren, as if they were the only persons in the bonds of Christian brotherhood. They are all priests and all laymen. They insist that in Christianity there, is no specially called or ordained ministerial order. In this they resemble the Friends; but, unlike them, they lay great stress upon ordinances, especially the Lord's Supper. This they celebrate alone by themselves every Lord's day, and it constitutes the chief part of their worship. To find out whether they are a sect, i.e., a fragment cutting itself from the

general church of Christ, I once asked Mr. Darby whether I would be permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper with them if I should present myself. He replied that I would be allowed to partake, if I should correctly answer certain doctrinal questions. The other "Brethren" present strongly dissented from such liberality, and intimated close communion. Hence, while denouncing all schisms and sects, they are a sect of the straightest and most exclusive kind. They baptise by immersion only. Meetings for worship including only believers, are entirely different from meetings for preaching where the unregenerate are permitted to be present. They talk much about separation unto God, by which they mean abandonment of ecclesiastical organizations; and politics even, refraining from voting, insisting on deadness to the world and on entire devotion to God, by going forth and preaching Christ wherever they can get a hearer. They make constant use of the Bible in private and in public, or, rather, of a certain line of texts, interpreted to sustain their peculiar tenets. Professing to rely only upon the word of God, you will find them all equipped with the commentaries of McIntosh, Darby, and others. To propagate their doctrines they scatter many tracts and small expository books.

Their primal error seems to be in their conception of the Atonement. They teach that sin, as a kind of personality, was condemned on the cross of Christ and put away for ever. Whose sins? Those of the believer. All his sins past, present, and future, are "judged" and swept away for ever in the Atonement, and the believer is to have no more concern for his past or future sins, since they were blotted out nineteen hundred years ago. Here is their most mischievous tenet respecting faith and its relation to the Atonement and to eternal life: the first momentary act of faith renders the Atonement *eternally* available, and without any further conditions infallibly secures everlasting life. Hence the, younger Dr. Tyng, in a recent sermon odorous of Plymouth, declared that in that act of faith the believer's "responsibility ends." This

must mean that his probation ceases, his eternal salvation being absolutely secured.

The object grasped by faith is not so much Jesus Christ, a present Saviour, as His finished work of condemning and putting away sin on the cross. "Faith grasps only past and finished acts." Intellectual assent to these historical facts, the Atonement of Christ judging my sin, and His resurrection as the proof thereof, constitutes saving faith.

Their view of the Atonement is the old and exploded commercial theory—so much suffering by Christ, equals so much suffering by the sinners saved by Christ. With this theory of the Atonement, they cannot proclaim its universality without teaching Universalism. So they make a distinction between the death of Christ for all, and the blood of Christ shed only for those who are through faith sprinkled and cleansed thereby. By this means God saves believers, and presents "'an aspect of mercy" toward all mankind.

Their idea of justification is not that it is a present act, taking place in the mind of God in favour of the penitent believer, but it is a past, completed, wholesale transaction on Calvary ages ago. Faith puts a man into the realization of the fact that all his foreseen sins were then cast behind God's back forever, and that he has a through ticket to heaven.

In regeneration, the new man is created in the believer, and the old man remains with all his powers unchanged. Mr. Darby asserted to the writer that after more than fifty years of Christian experience he found the old man in himself worse than he was at his regeneration. Says McIntosh: "It is no part of the work of the Holy Spirit to improve human nature,"—that seems to be past praying for,—but to make a brand-new man to dwell in the same body with the old man till physical death comes and luckily kills the old Adam

who has successfully defied all power in heaven and earth effectually to crucify him. Henceforth the new man has the entire possession of the disembodied soul. How different this from a holiness bearing its heavenly fruit this side of the grave (Luke I, 74, 75; Romans VI, 6, 19, 22; 2 Corinthians VII, 2; 1 Thessalonians III, 13; IV, 7; Hebrews XII, 10, 14; Colossians II, 11 (R.V.); 1 John IV, 17). The only Scripture cited for this doctrine of death sanctification is Romans VI, 7: "He that is dead is freed from sin." This evidently means (see verse 6), he who has died unto sin is freed or justified (R.V.) from sin. This text, found by the "Brethren," escaped the keen eyes of the whole Westminster Assembly, who could find nothing in proof of this point better than Hebrews XII, 23: "the spirits of just men made perfect." assuming the point in proof that they were made perfect in death. The Greek scholar will know that the text reads, not "perfected spirits," but, "the spirits of perfected just men," implying perfection in this life. Yet the old man is to be quite vigorously choked down and kept under till death comes to the rescue and brings that, good riddance which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, could not bestow. He is to be reckoned as dead by a kind of pious fiction, though he is as lusty and vigorous as ever. The Scripture which says, "that the body of sin might be destroyed" is explained to signify, "be repressed" and "rendered inactive;" and those scriptures in which the old man, or the flesh, is to be crucified, mortified, or killed, are all understood to imply a life-long torture on the cross—a killing that continues through scores of years. Says J. Denham Smith, a conspicuous Plymouth theologian, in a standard theological tract: "The two natures remain in him unchanged. His old nature is not modified or ameliorated by the impartation of the new; nor, on the other hand, does the new nature become soiled or corrupted by reason of its co-existence in the same being with the old. They remain the same. There is no blending or amalgamation. They are essentially and eternally distinct. The old nature is unalterably and incurably corrupt, while the new nature is divinely pure in its essence."

This doctrine of the two natures is not completely stated till the fact is brought out that neither is regarded as responsible for the acts of the other. For they are conceived of as persons. If the flesh of the believer behaves badly, that is none of the believer's business. He does not live in that department of his being, and hence has no responsibility for its evil deeds. The "flesh was condemned on the cross and is under sentence," why should I worry about it? This reminds us of the story of the English bishop and his servant, who reproved him for profanity. The bishop, who was a member of the House of Lords, replied, that he swore as a lord and not as a bishop. "But," queried the servant, "when the devil gets the lord, what will become of the bishop?"

The favourite method of exegesis of 1 John III, 9, is to substitute "whatsoever" for "whosoever," and to say, "that part of our nature that is born of God does not commit sin," the unregenerate part will continue to sin. This is the style of exegesis: "We have a right to read the text thus: 'Whatsoever is born of God doth not sin.' We are double creatures all the way through. That part of us that is born of God does not sin; sin is decreasing, righteousness is growing. So we need not feel discouraged if we find ourselves going astray, if the purpose of our heart is toward God. We are confident of constant progression—sure of being better in the other life than here. It is always first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. The Apostle tells us that religion brings us great assurance. We know we shall be like Him—how little like Him now! We are a long way from the perfect pattern of Christ, of being like Him in character, with not a stain upon the soul's whiteness. Feed your soul on the thought of better things to come. Look for the hour when He shall appear and we shall be like Him."

At this point the following questions are pertinent:—1. Have we any right to lower the standard of character required in the scriptures to suit the state

of "those who are called Christians?" Is not such an expounder guilty of a perversion of the Holy Scriptures?

2. How high a rank is that theology entitled to which discrowns man in order to save him; which changes him from a "who" to a "what," from a person to a thing, in order to keep him from sinning? Does such a theology emphasize the sacredness and dignity of man? Does it honour the Holy Spirit to teach that He begets impersonal "whatsoevers" instead of personal "whosoEVERs?"

3. In the light of this exposition, what becomes of St. John's sharply defined line separating "the children of God" and "the children of the devil?" For in the next verse to the text he says: "in this"—the fact of not sinning—"the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil"—in the fact of their sinning. This exposition not only "tears down the fence between the Lord's garden and the devil's common," but it actually binds up the child of God and the child of the devil in a single personality, impossible to be classified either with the righteous or the wicked.

4. Is the human being of such a double nature that a part of him may be holy, and a part commit sin?

5. Is not the action of the free will an element of every moral act, and can the will at one and the same time sin and abstain from sin?

6. If such a moral philosophy is good in the pulpit, would it not be at the bar? Could not the lawyer plead that the part of the accused which is born of God is innocent of the crime, and that it is only the unregenerate part that has done the mischief, and therefore the regenerate part should be acquitted?

Would not any judge, endowed with average common sense, sentence the unregenerate part to the gallows, and tell the regenerate part to look out for itself? The soul that sinneth—the undivided soul—it shall die.

7. Is there any analogy in the natural world for a partial birth—a part being born at one time and a part forty or fifty years afterward? A hearer of this exposition very properly asks me the question: "What if a person should die before he gets wholly born?"

8. Is the expounder right in his interpretation of assurance, that it does not relate to present knowledge of forgiveness and of entire sanctification, but to the final perseverance of the saints? Does it not always relate to a knowledge of our present acceptance with God, except this one expression, "the assurance of hope?"

9. Is freedom from sin ever presented as an object of hope in the future? Is entire sanctification ever classified with the good things to come, such as the second coming of Christ, the resurrection and glorification of the body, and the rewards of heaven?

10. Does not St. John, in this very epistle, declare, that as Jesus is, so are Christians in this world? Does the likeness of Christ which believers shall have when they shall see Him, consist in the fact of their being then sanctified, or rather in the fact of both soul and body then glorified?

11. Our last question is this: Is Antinomianism getting up out of its grave? For the innermost essence of this error is, that it destroys human responsibility for sin, by saddling it all upon the flesh, "the old man," who turns out at last a mere mythical person who cannot be found in the Day of Judgment.

We are impressed, in reading the Plymouth writings, with the perpetual confusion of the term, "sinful flesh," with the body, as though sin could be predicated of the material part of man. Some even speak of the hand and the foot as committing sin. Thus the old error of Oriental philosophy and of Gnosticism, that inherent and unconquerable evil lurks in matter, lies at the bottom of the Plymouth theology.

Of course they strenuously antagonize inwrought and personal holiness as an utter impossibility, since the old man has a lease of the soul which does not expire till death. Yet they insist that they are perfectly holy in Christ "up there," while perfectly carnal and corrupt "down here" in their moral state. They dwell *ad nauseam* upon the distinction between the *standing* in Christ and the state. The standing in Christ attained by a single act of faith is the great and decisive thing; the moral state is a small affair, having not the least power to damage the standing. David in Uriah's bed, and with hands red with his blood, was in a sad moral predicament indeed, so far as his moral state was concerned, but his judicial standing in Christ was not in the least impaired! All that he lost was his communion with God; all that he sought for was restored joy—"Restore Thou unto me the joy of Thy salvation." God did not see his adultery and murder! These were covered with the blood of the atonement shed in the Divine purpose before the foundation of the world, and put away forever before David was born! A favourite proof text for this abominable dogma, which lays the axe at the root of the whole system of Christian morals, is Numbers XXIII, 21: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel," correctly rendered by Rosenmuller: "God cannot endure to behold iniquity cast upon Jacob, nor can He bear to see affliction, vexation, trouble, wrought against Israel." Some such must be the meaning of this text. The Plymouth exegesis makes it positively deny the omniscience of God, and flatly contradict His declaration: "Because these men which have seen My glory, and My miracles which I did

in Egypt and in the wilderness, have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it" (Numbers XIV, 22, 23). God not only saw the sins of Israel, but He kept accurate account of their number, and so indignant was He that He purposed to smite and disinherit the whole nation, and raise up a better one from Moses (Numbers XIV, 12).

The doctrine that the believer is seen only in Christ, and is regarded as pure as Christ Himself, is founded on his incorporation into the glorified human and Divine Person in heaven. The first act of faith is the occasion on which the Holy Spirit eternally incorporates the believer into the risen and glorified body of Jesus Christ. "Since," as Mr. Darby said to the writer, "Jesus does not walk about in heaven dropping off fingers and toes," it follows that every believer incorporated into Christ is absolutely sure of ultimate salvation. The certainty is forever beyond contingencies. No act of sin, even murder, can remove us from our standing in Christ! Sin may obstruct communion, and leave the soul in sadness and darkness for a season; but since, as Shakespeare says, "All is well that ends well," sin in a believer is well since it ends in eternal life. For a proof of this doctrine, Ephesians V, 30, is quoted: "For we are members of His body." The clause, "of His flesh and of His bones," which is rejected by the Revised Version as spurious, is strongly emphasized as a proof of a literal incorporation into the person of Christ. A little attention to the context will show that literal embodiment in Christ cannot be meant without implying the actual incorporation of the husband and wife in "one flesh." If it be said, this is just what marriage produces, we reply, that the "one flesh" of wedlock becomes two through infidelity to the marriage vow (Matthew V, 32). Sin destroys the soul's marriage with Christ, and brings about a divorce which may become eternal (James IV, 4-6, Rev. Ver.). Another favourite proof-text is Ephesians II, 6,

which is understood as teaching that all believers are, in their judicial standing, literally "sitting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Another proof-text is found in the oft-recurring words, "in Christ."

It may be safely said that the Plymouth doctrines find their basis in a literalizing of figures, ingenious allegorizing of facts, and a straining of types. The best specimens of typology run wild, are found in the Plymouth commentaries. For instance: In order to prove that it was not the mission of the Comforter to sanctify the pentecostal Church, and to destroy sin in the hearts of full believers, this is the line of argument which is thought to be unanswerable: Leaven always stands for sin. In Leviticus XXIII, 16, 17, is the command to put leaven into the bread for Pentecost. Therefore there was sin in the Pentecostal Church after it was filled with the Holy Spirit, whose office is not to cleanse believers from all sin, but to incorporate them into Christ up in the sky. This is the argument of their greatest annotator, M'Intosh, whose exegetical skill and spiritual insight are by some of "the Brethren" attributed to an inspiration almost plenary. Says another writer, J. R. C.: "We know that Moses in the law spake of Christ. These ancient enactments were shadows, in many, if not in all cases, of good things to come." Then from the Mosaic requirement that "the man who hath taken a wife shall not go out to war, but shall be free at home one year to cheer his wife," he gravely argues that this signifies that Christ will not go forth to battle until He has remained with the saints a certain period at home in a kind of honeymoon. Here is a specimen of Major Whittle's typology, whose doctrines are all drawn from the Plymouth Brethren: First, he assumes, without a particle of proof, that the ark is a type of Christ. Secondly, all who went into the ark in the old world came out in the new; none died, none were lost. Hence all who are once in Christ will be infallibly saved!

Admit the premises, and the demonstration is irresistible.

These are only a few specimens of the logic of types when handled by an ingenious man, eager to find Biblical proofs for unscriptural doctrines. The great master of this fallacious treatment of God's Word, the wizard who can give a scriptural flavour to tenets most repugnant to the sacred oracles, is Andrew Jukes. Whether one of the "Brethren," I know not; but he is unexcelled in their typological sleight of hand, even going beyond his teachers and demonstrating the ultimate restoration of all the wicked in hell to holiness and heaven. Evangelical minds should be on their guard against this subtle method of instilling dangerous theological errors. There is a large class of minds which are easily captivated by types which are purely fanciful, the cunning inventions of men.

**A SUBSTITUTE FOR HOLINESS?
OR
ANTINOMIANISM REVIVED
Dr. Daniel Steele, S.T.D.**

**CHAPTER 4.
THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN (continued)**

A Cardinal Plymouth tenet is the necessary continuance of the flesh, or the old man, and his abiding, unchanged, with the new man, till death. Regeneration has no effect on the old man by way of improvement or extinction. He is incapable of becoming better, and has a life-lease in the believer's soul. The personality, or what says I, may put itself under the leadership of either the new nature or the old for an indefinite period without detriment to the standing, only the communion is obstructed when the old Adam is at the helm. The best illustration of the Christian soul is, that it is a tenement with two rooms. The spiritual apartment faces the sun, and the fleshly room is in the rear, turned from the sun. The believer, once sure of his standing in Christ, may live in the front room and bask in the sunshine, or he may retire into the back room and live in the shade. He is exhorted to live in the front room, and to keep the back room locked, if he would have unbroken happiness through cloudless communion with God. But if he should disregard the exhortation, and owl-like, should dwell amid the darkness all his days, he is just as sure at last of the inheritance of the saints in light, though he was not partial to the light while dwelling in his double tenement on the earth.

These teachers have a special hostility to the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian perfection, against which they oppose perfection in Christ. They are very shy of the term "perfect love," since this, as used by St. John, evidently refers to our love to God: "Herein is our love made perfect." This is not God's

love to us, as some say, "for," says Alford, "this is forbidden by the whole context." Inwrought personal holiness is denied, as ministering to pride, while a constant declaration of inward vileness, and of a fictitious purity, by the imputation of Christ's purity, is supposed to conduce to our humility and Christ's exaltation.

The Plymouth idea of entire sanctification is exceedingly complex and contradictory. First, in our standing we are holy as Christ; secondly, in our flesh we are perfectly vile, the old man being incapable of improvement; thirdly, the new man is perfectly pure, being a new creature by the Spirit, and hence, not needing sanctification. This statement is highly suggestive of the celebrated kettle plea: (1) Our client never borrowed the kettle; (2) It was cracked when he borrowed it; (3) It was whole when he returned it.

But, nevertheless, there is an exhortation to practical holiness in most of the writings of the Brethren, on this wise: "Be holy down here because ye are holy up there" (in Christ). "Strive to make your state correspond with your standing." Yet this motive, to Christian purity is neutralized by the assurance that the believer's standing in Christ is eternal anyhow, just as the exhortation to sinners to repentance by a Universalist is a motive of no force, since ultimate salvation is certain. Says M'Intosh: "God will never reverse His decision as to what His people are as to standing." "Israel's blessedness and security are made to depend, not on *themselves*, but on the faithfulness of Jehovah." "We must never measure the standing by the state, but always the state by the standing. To lower the standard because of the state is to give the death-blow to all progress in practical Christianity." This is to say, the fruit must be always judged by the tree: to judge the tree by the fruit, is to give the death-blow to practical pomology.

The opening verse of 2 Corinthians XII, speaks of visions and revelations of the Lord; the closing verse condemns uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness not repented of. "In the former," says M'Intosh, "we have the *positive standing* of the Christian; in the latter the *possible state* into which he may fall if not watchful." Yet he keeps his Christly standing amid all his swinish wallowings. This is Plymouth Brethrenism in a nutshell. Here is another: "In John XIII the Lord Jesus looks at His disciples and pronounces them 'clean every whit'; although in a few hours one of them was to curse and swear that he did not know Him. So vast is the difference in what we are in ourselves and what we are in Christ—between our positive standing and our possible state." (Notes on Leviticus)

These theologians make a nice distinction between *conscience* of sin and *consciousness* of sins, where neither the Bible nor moral science affords the least ground for this distinction. "The former," say they, "is guilt; the latter is the normal experience of all believers. They even feel the motions of sin within their hearts." Whereas conscience is nothing more than consciousness when the question of right or wrong is before the mind. Here is another distinction vital to the Plymouth system: "It is of the uttermost importance that we accurately distinguish between sin *in the flesh* and sin *on the conscience*. If we confound these two, our souls must, necessarily, be unhinged, and our worship marred." Then follows the scriptural distinction in 1 John I, 8-10: "'If we say that we have *no* sin (in us), we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.' In the next verse we find the sin *on* us—"The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from *all* sin.'" What becomes of the sin *in* us when *all* sin is cleansed, the writer does not deign to say; but he does say that, "Here the distinction between sin *in* us and sin *on*, is fully brought out and established."

It is so "fully brought out" that it took 1,800 years for Bible readers to discover it, and then only through Plymouth eye-glasses! From Augustine to Darby this has been a standing proof-text against entire sanctification, which is as plainly taught in the passage as the sun in the heavens. Let any candid mind read the context, and he will see that the clause, "If we say we have no sin," means, if any unregenerate man denies that he has any sin Which needs the atonement, or that he has ever sinned, as it is in verse ten, he deceives himself. No writer would so stultify himself as to say that he who is cleansed from all sin in the seventh verse, is a dupe and a liar in the eighth verse, if he testifies to the all-cleansing blood. John must be written down as utterly self-contradictory to say that he that is born of God sinneth not, and then brand with deception and falsehood the man who should profess that by grace he was kept from sin. Yet this passage, wrenched from its context, is the proof constantly reiterated, that there is no salvation from sin in this life. The absurdity of this text as a proof of indwelling sin, as the highest attainable state of the Christian, and of self-deception on the part of the person who professes entire inward cleansing, is akin to that of advertising a complete cure of cancer, and then branding as false every testimony to such a cure.

Another text constantly urged by them, in utter disregard of the context, is Galatians V, 17, which, by that fallacy in logic called "begging the question," they assume to be descriptive of the most perfect specimen of the Spirit's work in a human soul, whereas St. Paul is writing to a backsliding church. "I marvel," says he, as translated by Dean Alford, "that ye are so soon removing from Him that called you in the grace of Christ, unto a different Gospel." Again: "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now being made perfect in the flesh?"

In believers, in this mixed moral state, a struggle is going on between the flesh and the spirit. The fallacy lies in the assumption, that the best Christians

are in this state, against the positive testimony of St. Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me."

The doctrine of assurance is strongly emphasized by these Christians as the privilege of all who are in Christ. They are very earnest in their condemnation of the "hope-so" experience, and they insist on a clear and undoubted knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and adoption into the family of God. But this truth, when joined with the pernicious doctrine of eternal incorporation into the glorified body of Christ, removes the Safeguard against sin, which old-fashioned Calvinism set up, in the uncertainty which every Christian was taught that he must feel respecting his acceptance with God.

Both Calvinism and Arminianism have checks which deter believers from sin. The Arminian is told that the holiest saint on earth may fall from grace and drop into hell. The Calvinist is restrained from abusing the doctrine of unconditional election by the consideration, that no man may, beyond a doubt, know that his own name is on the secret register of God's chosen ones. This ignorance inspires a healthful solicitude promotive of watchfulness and persevering fidelity in the Calvinist, just as the possibility of total and final apostacy tends to conserve the purity of the Arminian. The Plymouth Brethren drop both of these safeguards by uniting, with eternal incorporation into Christ, a present and absolute assurance of that fact. There may be a few souls who would not be put into imminent peril by the revelation, that their eternal salvation is secured beyond a peradventure; but the mass of believers would become dizzy, if suddenly lifted to such a height, and many would fall into sin. Human nature at its best estate can never be safely released from the salutary restraint of fear. Hence we predict that great moral disasters will follow the general prevalence of the teachings of Mr. Darby and his school.

In this matter of assurance, how much more guarded are the utterances of John Wesley, who teaches the certain knowledge of justification by faith, with appropriate safeguards, "Let none ever presume to rest in any supposed testimony of the Spirit which is separate from the fruit of it." This, translated into the Plymouth idiom, would read thus: "Let none ever presume to rest in any supposed *standing* in Christ while his actual *state* of character is not radiant with all the excellences of Christ." "Let no one who is in a state of wilful sin, imagine that he has a standing in Christ pure and clear before the throne of God, for his standing in heaven is the same as his state on earth."

In perfect accord with this absolute assurance of final salvation, is the denial of the general judgment as taught in all orthodox creeds. If the saints have a through ticket for heaven, why should they stand before the judgment seat of Christ? The favourite proof-text, ever on the lips of the Brethren, is John V, 24, with the comment that "condemnation" should be translated "judgment." To show how far this fails to prove the doctrine for which it is quoted, I will adduce Alford's note Anglicizing the Greek: "The believing and the having eternal life are commensurate; where the faith is, the possession of eternal life is; and when the one remits, the other is forfeited. But here the faith is set before us as an *enduring* faith, and its effects are described in their completion (See Ephesians I, 19, 20)." "He who believeth" (perseveringly) "comes not into, has no concern with, the separation (*krisis*), the damnatory part of the judgment." All the texts which teach the simultaneous judgment of all the human family are ingeniously explained away by partial judgments strung along through the future, after the doctrine of Swedenborg, in order to make way for this new doctrine, that the saints will not be before Christ's judgment tribunal in the last day.

THE SINS OF BELIEVERS ARE NOT REAL SINS!

This is a necessary inference from the assured exemption of believers from condemnation, however deep their fall into gross sins. For this exemption implies the absence of guilt. Those acts which entail no guilt cannot be real sins. If they appear to be sins, their appearance is deceptive. Hence, a distinguished English doctor of divinity could say in the pulpit, "A believer may be assured of pardon as soon as he commits any sin, even adultery and murder. Sins are but scarecrows and bugbears, to frighten ignorant children, but men of understanding see they are counterfeit things."

The author has heard a famous preacher assert that the sins of believers materially differ from the sins of unbelievers, hinting that they are not real sins in God's eyes, because He sees the believer and all his acts only in Jesus Christ. This is the logical conclusion from the premises that character is transferable, that Jesus Christ on the cross became a sinner, and was punished, while we, by a single act of faith, assume His righteousness by an inalienable incorporation into His glorified person in heaven, and are afterward viewed by God as possessing all His moral excellences, among which is sinlessness.

What an opiate to the accusing conscience! What a weakening of the divine safeguards against sin, set up in man's moral constitution, is manifest on the very face of such a theological tenet! The chief barrier against sin is removed and sinning is made easy. With ordinary human beings, even after regeneration, facility for sinning with impunity becomes a tremendous temptation, and to most men an irresistible incentive to sin. If God has solemnly pronounced "woe to them that call (moral) evil good, and (moral) good evil," what must be His sentence against those who entirely rub out the broad boundary line between them by teaching that the wilful violation of the

known law of God is only a seeming, but not a real sin? Yet this is the inevitable outcome of the doctrine that there never can be condemnation to them that are in Christ. The case is aggravated by the denial of the possibility of entire sanctification in this life, and by the assertion that the flesh, the sinward bent of the soul, must remain until it is eradicated by physical death. Broadcast these twin doctrines throughout Christendom, that believers are incapable of real sin, and that the sin principle is a necessity in every human heart in this life, defying the blood of Christ to purge it away, and the Christian Church will need myriads of patient toilers to grub up these seeds of immoralities, more baneful than the Canada thistle is to the farmers of the western world.

This whole question of the believer's relation to God's law has been discussed by the theological giants of past generations. I quote from Baxter's Aphorisms on Justification, an epitome made by John Wesley: "As there are two covenants, with their distinct conditions, so there is a twofold righteousness, and both of them absolutely necessary for salvation. Our righteousness of the first covenant (under the remediless, Christless, Adamic law) is not personal, or consisteth not in any actions preferred by us; for we never personally satisfy the law (of innocence), but is wholly without us, in Christ. In this sense every Christian disclaimeth his own righteousness, or his own works. Those only shall be in Christ legally righteous who believe and *obey* the Gospel, and so are in themselves evangelically righteous. Though Christ performed the conditions of the law (of Paradisaical innocence), and made satisfaction for our non-performance, yet *we ourselves must perform the conditions of the Gospel*. These (last) two propositions seem to me so clear, that I wonder that any able divines should, deny them. Methinks they should be articles of our creed, and a part of children's catechisms. To affirm that our evangelical or new-covenant righteousness is in Christ, and not in ourselves, or performed by Christ, and not by ourselves, is such a monstrous

piece of Antinomian doctrine as no man, who knows the nature, and difference of the covenants, can possibly entertain." (Baxter's Aphorisms Prop. 14-17). Thus speaks this pious, practical, well-balanced dissenter against the fatal errors arising from confounding the Adamic law with the law of Christ, the first demanding of a perfect man a faultless life, the other requiring an imperfect man, inheriting damaged intellectual and moral powers, to render perfect, that is, pure love, to God his Heavenly Father, through Christ his Adorable Saviour, with the assistance of regenerating and sanctifying grace.

It was the clearly discerned distinction between the two covenants which prompted good Bishop Hopkins to make this paradoxical resolution: "So to believe, so to rest on the merits of Christ, as if I had never wrought anything; and withal so to work, as if I were only to be saved by my own merits." To give each of these its due in practice, is the very height and depth of Christian perfection.

MODERN ANTINOMIANISM EXAMINED.

The new Antinomianism does not make Calvinism prominent by any formal statement. It is rather implied than expressed. Nothing is said of sovereign decrees and of unconditional election. For this reason it does not specially offend Arminians, while its doctrine of the final perseverance of all believers is a tenet very pleasing to those who hold to Calvinism. For these reasons this great error is well adapted to become widespread in both these great branches of orthodoxy.

There is a class of people who are specially pleased to see the Gospel set in antagonism with the law, and they breathe more easily when they are assured that God's law, as the rule of life, is abrogated by the Gospel. This

repugnance of the Gospel to moral law is one of the primal errors of all Antinomians. But the form which this antagonism takes, is peculiar to the modern Antinomianism. This is the difference between the believer's standing in Christ, and his actual moral state. These bear no relation to each other. The state may be utterly bad, while the standing be perfectly good. Like the first brick in a row, Jesus only is seen by the eye of God, the defects of the others, covered by Him, are not seen; the perfections of Jesus being seen instead. This standing, attained by the first act of faith, is inalienable and everlasting.

The influence of this doctrine of an eternal and inalienable standing in Christ, and of exemption from the day of judgment, must, in many cases, be disastrous. The removal of the wholesome safeguard found in the fear of being morally shipwrecked and cast away, must tend to looseness of living in not a few cases. It is possible that a few might suffer no detriment from embracing such a theory, but they would be exceptions. Most people live below, not above their creed. How can a man, amid the fierce temptations of life, sing the following verses, and be just as watchful against sin as before? Especially, how can one in whom the old man exists in full strength?

"Rejoice, rejoice, my soul,
Rejoice in sin forgiven;
The blood of Christ hath made thee whole;
For thee His life was given.
Rejoice in peace made sure:
No judgment now for thee;
Thy conscience purged, thy life secure,
More safe thou canst not be."

Heaven itself can afford no greater safety! Is there no moral peril in preaching such a doctrine to men in the furnace of temptation? In all my

study of human nature, I have found that the removal of barriers against sin is a tremendous incentive to its commission.

REPENTANCE SLIGHTED.

At another point, the Plymouth system is open to criticism—its neglect of, or very slight emphasis on, the need of repentance. This is in keeping with its Antinomian tendencies. I quote from Dr. Robert Anderson's book—"The Gospel and its Ministry," to verify this criticism, and to show that this defect is not an oversight, but a part of the system, the justification of which is attempted in this quotation: "The soundest and fullest Gospel preaching need not include any mention of the word (repentance). Neither as verb or noun does it occur in the Epistle to the Romans,—God's great doctrinal treatise on redemption and righteousness,—save in the warnings of the second chapter. And the Gospel-book of all the Bible will be searched in vain for a single mention of it. The beloved Disciple wrote his Gospel, that men might believe and live, and his Epistle followed, to confirm believers in the simplicity and certainty of their faith; but yet, from end to end of them, the word 'repent' or 'repentance' never once occurs." This proves nothing. It is manifest to every student, that the synoptic Gospels, which are full of repentance, present a different phase of Christ's teaching from John's Gospel. Again, it would not be natural to look for exhortations to repentance in epistles to believers, whether John's epistles or Paul's. To find these, let us turn to the reports of the Apostle's sermons to the unconverted, in the Acts, and we will find repentance preached in due proportion to other duties. See the concordance, in which these words will be found in the Acts eleven times. It must be carefully remembered that, though the word "believe" occurs about a hundred times in John's Gospel, and "repent" is not found even once, John's "believe" is so large in its meaning that it comprehends conversion, or turning from sin, as well as trusting in Christ. This fulness of meaning must not be neglected,

but must be magnified by him who would get John's deep meaning. He can never be quoted to support Antinomianism. The preaching of repentance in no way belittles faith in Jesus, the sole condition of forgiveness, but it is the indispensable prerequisite to its exercise. Hence, repentance must be earnestly preached.

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**CHAPTER 5.
ANTINOMIAN FAITH.**

We look in vain in all these writers of the Antinomian school, whether ancient or modern, for any adequate definitions of saving faith. After a faithful and patient study, extending through ten years, I can find in these writings no better notion of faith than a bare intellectual assent to the fact that Jesus put away sin once and forever on His cross. There is no preliminary to this mental act, such as a heartfelt conviction of sin and eternal abandonment of it in purpose and in reality. Nor is there any test of this faith in the genuineness of its fruits. The evangelical definition of saving faith is utterly ignored,—that it has its roots in genuine repentance, its bud and blossom in joyful obedience, and its fruitage in holiness of heart and life; that in addition to the assent of the intellect,—the fruitless faith of devils (James II 19),—there must be the consent of the will, the Christward movement of the moral sensibilities, and an unwavering reliance on Him, and on Him alone, as a present Saviour. Nor do the Antinomians teach that faith is continuous—a life-long outgoing of the heart in glad obedience—but rather that its efficacy is concentrated into a single act of assent to a past fact, an act which forever and forever justifies. We can easily predict the character of the edifice built upon a foundation so defective. On such a corner-stone we do not expect to find a love which purifies the heart and overcomes the world, a hunger and thirst after righteousness, an eager pursuit of holiness, and "pressing on unto perfection" (Heb. VI 1. Rev. Ver.) and that "perfect love which casteth out all fear that has torment." We find rather a dry, intellectual

religion, tenacious of its speculative theory, indifferent to inward and outward holiness, and revelling in imaginary graces, or, rather, in the perfections of Christ falsely imputed to themselves, and preferring to keep the old man alive rather than his summary crucifixion, in order "that the body of sin may be destroyed." We find a system which is a great comfort to the backslider in heart and life, and a pleasant refuge to those who have lost their inheritance among the sanctified, into which they once entered when under better religious instruction.

We have thus far spoken of an indefinite Antinomian faith; we now proceed to speak of

FAITH VERSUS FEELING.

"The power of God," says Fletcher, "is frequently talked of, but rarely felt, and too often cried down under the despicable name of *frames* and *feelings*."

"If I had a mind," said the, eloquent George Whitfield, "to hinder the progress of the Gospel, and to establish the kingdom of darkness, I would go about telling people they might have the Spirit of God, and yet not feel it," or which is much the same, that the pardon which Christ procured for them is already obtained by them, whether they enjoy the sense of it or not.

This is the kind of faith which multitudes of souls in utter spiritual barrenness are resting in for eternal life. They are exhorted to beware of looking for any changed feeling, that feeling is inconsistent with true faith. Says John Wesley, "It is easy to satisfy ourselves without being possessed of the holiness and happiness of the Gospel. It is easy to call these (holiness and happiness) frames and feelings, and then to oppose faith to one and Christ to the other. Frames (allowing the expression) are no other than heavenly

temper, the mind that was in Christ; feelings are the Divine consolations of the Holy Ghost shed abroad in the heart of him that truly believes. And wherever faith is, and wherever Christ is, there are those blessed frames and feelings. If they are not in us, it is a sure sign that though the wilderness become a pool, the pool is become a wilderness again." (Note on Peter III, 18).

This is the process of inculcating this kind of faith. The religious teacher sits down in the inquiry room, by the side of the seeker, opens his Bible at Romans X, 9, and reads: If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus (Jesus as Lord, Rev. Ver.), and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Do you confess that Jesus is your Lord? Yes. Do you believe that He arose from the dead? Yes. Well, praise the Lord, you are born again! You have found eternal life. But I do not experience any inward change. Never mind that; you are to believe without any feeling. If you look for feeling as the ground for your faith that you are now a child of God, you dishonour the Word. The Word says that you are saved, and you ought to believe the Bible. It is weak and childish to be looking for any change in your feelings. I strongly advise you to be baptized and join the Church. You have fulfilled the conditions of salvation. You are henceforth to count yourself a Christian, and by a resolved will to crush out all doubts, respecting your conversion, whenever they arise. For they will arise. All true Christians have doubts of this kind. It is an evidence that they have a good hope in Christ. But, dear pastor, is this all there is in the new birth? I expected I should have unspeakable joy, arising from a sense of burning love. I thought I should be sure that I was saved by some inward impression by the Holy Ghost. Oh, says the pastor, you are not to expect a miraculous conversion. That kind is limited to the Apostolic age.

SIN "IN," AND SIN "ON," THE SOUL.

Through all their books and innumerable tracts runs a distinction between the prepositions "in" and "on." It is the aim of the Gospel to deliver from sin "on" the soul, but not from sin "in" the heart, till we pass through the gate of death. In other words, justification is affirmed, but entire sanctification in the present life is denied. The blood of Jesus Christ is efficacious for the removal of actual sins, but it fails to eradicate the sin principle, or inbred sin, till physical death comes to the aid of atonement, and completes its saving power. Thus the penalty of sin becomes its destroyer. "Death, that foul monster, the offspring of sin, shall have the important honour of killing his father," says Fletcher. "He alone is to give the great, the last, the decisive blow." In vain do we call for Scripture proofs for death sanctification, and for the important distinction between "in" and "on." When those scriptures are cited which teach immediate perfect cleansing from all sin, as in 1 John I, 7, 9, we are assured that the verb "cleanse" here means judicial clearance, or justification; and not inherent purification. But this involves St. John in the Romish doctrine of good works as a condition of justification—"If we walk in the light," This is certainly, a course of good works prescribed as a condition of cleansing. If this is pardon, we have a condition unknown to St. Paul. But we have as great a difficulty in passages which urge us to cleanse ourselves, as 2 Cor. VII, 1. Here we have a cluster of absurdities. (1) Self-justification: "Let us cleanse ourselves." (2) Justification is divided and distributed into two parts, "flesh and spirit"—a piecemeal pardon! (3) "Filthiness" is a state. How can a state be justified, or have judicial clearance or acquittal?

It is easy to see that sin "in" the believer, who has been adopted into the family of God (2 Cor. VI, 18), or inbred, original depravity, is here intended,

and the Corinthians are exhorted to seek its entire purgation as a condition to "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

NOT UNDER THE LAW.

"Free from the law, oh, happy condition!"

This is a verse which should never be sung except with those safeguards which the author of the hymn has not been careful to set up.

(1) It is true that all mankind are, by the atonement, forever freed from the necessity of pleading that we have perfectly kept the law, in order to acceptance with God. We are freed from the necessity of legal justification. Such a necessity would shut up a sinful race in eternal despair. We are freed from the law *as the ground of justification*. Our ground of justification is the blood of Christ shed for us.

(2) Nor are true believers, who have received the Spirit of adoption, under the law *as the impulse to service*. They are not spurred on to activity by the threatened penalties of God's law. Love to the Law-giver has taken the place of fear of the law as a motive. This is specially true of those advanced believers, out of whom perfect love has cast all servile, tormenting fear. Before emerging into this experience, there is a blending of fear and love as motives to service. In this state the believer is not wholly delivered from legalism. But the law is put into the heart of the full believer, and its fulfillment is spontaneous and free. "I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart." The Septuagint Version, used by our Lord Jesus, reads: "I have run . . . Since," etc. "Without the law," says St. Paul, as an outward yoke laid upon the neck, "but under law to Christ." Love to Christ absorbs into itself all the principles of the moral law,

and prompts to their glad performance. Hence, "Love is the fulfillment of the law." This is the meaning of Romans VII, 6, as translated in the Revision which corrects the blunder of King James' version from a faulty MS., making the law of God die, instead of the believer's dying to it; that is, ceasing to be actuated by its terrors, and becoming obedient from the new principle of love. "But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden; so that we *serve in newness of the Spirit*, and not in the oldness of the letter."

(3) We are free from the law *as the instrument of our sanctification*. Christ has become our sanctification by purchasing with His blood the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is called "holy," not as a peculiar attribute, distinguishing Him from the Father and the Son, but because it is His great office to make men holy. We are "elect through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

(4) Christ has freed us from the *ceremonial* law.

(5) Believers in Christ are not delivered from the moral law, *as the rule of life*. The form of this law may change, but the essence is as immutable as its Author, out of whose bosom it goes forth. If believers were free from the law, as a rule of life, we should be obliged to change the verse—

"Free from the law, oh, wretched condition!"

A moral intelligence, whether man or angel, thus freed from his proper form, would dash into ruins like a locomotive of an express train freed from the rails. As the rails give direction to the mighty momentum of the train, so is the law designed to direct our moral progress to a destiny of unspeakable blessedness. Disobedience derails and destroys. Hence the law is a blessing

of unspeakable value. The soul that despises it is in imminent peril. The theology which teaches that men mount to a "happy condition," by ridding themselves of the beneficent guidance of the moral law, merits the condemnation of all Christians. Jesus is a Law-giver to control, as well as a Redeemer to save.

THE SINNER HAS NOTHING TO DO.

"Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus died and paid it all,
Long, long ago."

All that Jesus has done for the sinner will do him no good till he personally appropriates, by a faith which requires the highest effort to exercise, and which prompts to a continued course of good works. "This is the work of God—which He requires—that ye believe in His Son." In all cases there must be repentance and its fruits, forsaking wicked ways, and turning to God. In the case of the unbelieving Jews there were two severe preliminary works before they could believe. They must conquer their love for human honour, and through the use of prevenient grace, rise to the position where they were swayed by the honour that comes from God only, or the only God. *Hic Labor, Hoc opus est*—this is work, this is toil. Jesus sets another task before the Jews before they can believe in Him. They must believe in Moses. Men cannot indolently neglect inferior light, and, at a single bound, spring up to the highest exercise of faith in Jesus, the Light of the world. They must be of the truth before they can come to Him who is the Truth. They must so love the truth already within their reach as to be willing to search for it diligently, and to follow wherever the truth leads. This implies self-denial and cross-bearing, even before Jesus is apprehended as their Saviour. Then having

found Him, they must consecrate all their powers of service to do His will; they must work while the day lasts. These works are rewardable, though not meritorious, in the sense of putting God under obligation to compensate the doers. In the light of these truths the following verses have an Antinomian sound—

"Cast your deadly 'doing' down—
Down at Jesus' feet;
Stand in Him, in Him alone,
Gloriously complete."
"Cease your doing; all was done
Long, long ago."
"'Doing' is a deadly thing—
'Doing' ends in death."

There is a call in this latter quarter of the nineteenth century for St. James to go through the world preaching from his favourite text: "Faith without works is dead." Sinners are not saved by works, but they must work to be saved. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Ye are workers together with God."

THE FLESH REMAINS FLESH.

Two natures co-existing in the believer in his best possible earthly state, is proved by John III, 6, which is amended to read thus: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and *remains flesh*, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This is quoted to prove that the single nature is untouched in the new birth, while an entirely new nature, or, rather, new creature, is created, and associated therewith.

This view assumes, without proof, the following—

1. That John uses the term "flesh" in the Pauline sense, which as Meyer says, "is strange to him"; while Cremer, in his *Biblico Theological Lexicon*, quotes this passage as an instance of John's use of *sarx*, flesh, to signify merely that which "mediates and brings about man's connection with nature." He finds six shades of meaning to this important word, the last only embracing the idea of sin. He excludes from this meaning all passages in the four Gospels in which the word occurs.

2. It is assumed that such writers as Weiss, and Julius Muller, are in error when they say that the meaning of Jesus is, "the corporeal birth only produces the corporeal sensual part."

3. There is a confounding of birth with creation out of nothing. "For as generation," says Dr. Whedon, "is a modifying of substance or being, imparting to it a new principle of life, conforming it, as living being, to the likeness of the generator, so regeneration is a modification of the human spirit by the Holy Spirit, conforming the temper of the human to the Holy."

So that which is born of the Spirit, is the same person as is born of the flesh. He is henceforth endowed with the new quality of spiritual life, instead of spiritual death. The indetical man, soul, body, and spirit—"for in the term flesh," says Alford, "is included *every part* of that which is born after the ordinary method of generation"—is born again by the endowment of spiritual life.

What is born again in the view of the imputationist? Not the fallen nature,—that must remain fallen; nothing is born again; but a new man is created *de nero* and put into the believer, who is henceforth to live a dual life,

his personality sometimes dwelling under the sway of the old man, and sometimes under the rule of the new. This is not a birth at all. For in a true birth there is a communication of life to non-living matter. So in the spiritual birth there is the impartation of life to a spiritually non-living soul.

4. Our best philosophers say that the only safeguard against materialism is the theory that the soul is created by a direct act of the Creator. This theory would seem to lie at the base of the reasonings of the imputationists on this text, and to afford them an analogy for the absolutely new creation of a spiritual man at the new birth. Now it is well known in the theological circles that there are three theories for the origin of the human spirit, (1) pre-existence from the date of the creation, and waiting to be incarnated, (2) traduction, or derivation from parents, the same as the body, and (3) direct creation at the time of birth, or of generation.

It is not incumbent on me to show which is the true theory. But he who builds on any of these hypotheses must first demonstrate its truth. We assert that the declaration of the imputationists, that a new man is created, not by a transformation and renewal of the old man, but by an immediate creation, rests analogically upon a misunderstood theory respecting the first birth. For this theory is not that of creation absolutely independent of all antecedents, but each soul is created as part of a system which has been dislocated by sin. The Adamic matrix, though marred by sin, being still used in the creation, and not the matrix of a new race.

Well does Augustine say, "Where the Scripture renders no certain testimony, human inquiry must beware of deciding one way or the other."

Let us emerge, then, from this region of speculation into that of common sense. Nicodemus was surely right when he understood that the new birth was

a second birth of the same subject. The same man born of the flesh must be born again.

Jesus Himself fully explains the meaning which St. Paul puts into the words, "in Christ," in that wonderful discourse of Christ, in the sixth chapter of John, about the spiritual appropriation of the benefit of His atonement, by sacramentarians erroneously interpreted as the reception of the Lord's Supper, Christ explains what is signified by being in Him: "He that eateth (continuously) my flesh, and (persistently) drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." Eternal blessedness is in Him, and is imparted to all who by faith continually appropriate it. With such souls there is a mystical union with Christ, an inter-penetration of Spirit. So long as Jesus abides in the believer, he abides in Him: "Christ in you the hope of glory." This union excludes wilful sin. When this is committed, the union is dissolved. If Christ should continue to dwell in the heart which persists in a course of voluntary transgression of the known law of God, He would become what St. Paul styles, "the minister of sin," and not a destroyer of the works of the devil.

In Mr. Wesley's day, when an un-Scriptural view of the doctrine of imputed righteousness was much preached, he not unfrequently met men who, while claiming to be "perfect in Christ, not in themselves," affirmed that their faith cancelled their obligations to obey the Divine law. They might, as they wickedly claimed, violate any or all the ten commandments without being guilty of sin, so long as they maintained faith in Christ. No wonder Mr. Wesley wrote of such men: "Surely, these are the first-born children of Satan."

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OR
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**CHAPTER 6.
THE PLYMOUTH VIEW OF THE ATONEMENT.**

The basis of the doctrine of imputed holiness is that theory of the atonement which represents that Christ Jesus, the sinless Son of God, in whom He was well pleased, was literally identified with sin so as to be "wholly chargeable therewith, that we might be identified and wholly charged with righteousness." This quotation is from Dr. George S. Bishop, who proceeds to say, "The atonement which we preach is one of absolute exchange, that Christ took our place literally—that God regarded and treated Christ as a sinner, and that He regards and treats the, believing sinner as Christ. From the moment we believe, God looks upon us as if we were Christ We then are saved, straight through eternity, by what the Son of God has done in our place Other considerations have nothing to do with it. It matters nothing what we have been, what we are, or *what we shall be*. From the moment we believe in Christ, we are forever, in God's sight, AS CHRIST. Of course, it is involved in this that men are saved, *not by preparing first*, that is, by repenting, and praying, and reading the Bible, and then trusting Christ; nor the converse of this, that is, by trusting Christ first, *and then preparing something*—repentance, reformation, good works—which God will accept; but that sinners are saved irrespective of what they are—how they feel—what they have done—what they hope to do—by trusting on Christ only, that the instant Christ is seen and rested on, the soul's eternity, by God's free promise, and regardless of all character and works, is fixed."

We would call attention to the following points in the above quotation—

1. Repentance is not necessary to saving faith.

2. Good works, as the fruit of saving faith, and proof of its genuineness, have no place in this scheme of salvation, and are distinctly repudiated; and well they may be, since by the first act of faith, as a bare intellectual, impenitent apprehension that God punished His Son for our past, present, and future sins, "the soul's eternal salvation, *regardless of conduct and character*, IS FIXED." "What we shall be matters nothing" since we have a through ticket for Heaven. St. James is an impertinence in this scheme of salvation, and his epistle may well be called "strawy."

3. That "God regarded and treated Christ as a sinner"; in other words, that He actually punished His Son because he was guilty of our sins. There was a time in the life of Martin Luther when he sowed the seeds of this error, which produced a sad harvest of antinomianism. He used words which seem not blasphemous, merely because the intention was wanting. "The prophets did foresee in Spirit that Christ would become the greatest transgressor, murderer, thief, rebel, and blasphemer that ever was or can be." "Whatsoever sins I, thou, and we shall have done, or shall do hereafter, they are Christ's own sins, as verily as if He had done them Himself."

We once heard a layman assert in a public evangelistic service that "Jesus Christ on the cross was the greatest sinner in the universe!" Such statements are usually attended by the portrayal with terrific distinctness, of the Almighty Father in the act of hurling His thunderbolts, in blasting shocks, down upon the defenceless head of His shrinking and suffering Son.

We indignantly repudiate the monstrous idea that Jesus on the cross was a sinner overwhelmed with the bolts of the Father's personal wrath. What we do affirm is that His sufferings and death were in no sense a punishment, but *a substitute for punishment*, answering the same end, the conservation of God's moral government and the vindication of His holy character while He pardons penitent believers.

The chief proof-text of the doctrine that Christ on the cross was a gigantic sinner, is 2 Cor. V, 21. "For He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." This is styled "the sublime equation." Jesus becomes guilty of our sins and suffers their punishment, and His righteousness is henceforth forever reckoned as ours. The exchange of our sin for Christ's righteousness is "absolute."

The common sense exegesis of this text is, that Jesus became of His own free will a sin-offering for us, and that this is the meaning of sin in the first clause. This is the interpretation of Augustine, Ambrosiaster, Erasmus, (Ecumenius, Vatablus, Cornelius a Lapidis, Piscator, Ritsche, Wolf, Hammond, Michaelis, Rosen-muller, Ewald, Raymond, and others.

It is a remarkable fact that the Hebrew word, *chattath*, is used in the Old Testament by actual count one hundred and sixty times for sin, and one hundred and twelve times for sin-offering. It is very natural that such a mind as Paul's, saturated with the Hebrew Scriptures, should sometimes use the Greek term for sin, *hamartia*, in the sense of sin-offering. So obvious is this usage in Paul's Epistles, that the Revision has twice, at least, translated this term by "sin offering"—Rom. viii, 3; Heb. xiii, 11. We contend that it should be thus rendered in 2 Cor. v, 21.

4. We have insuperable philosophical and ethical difficulties in the way of receiving the statement that the guilt of the race was transferred to Christ. Character is personal, and cannot be transferred. Sin is not an entity, a substance which can be separated from the sinner and be transferred to another and be made an attribute of his character by such a transfer. Sin is the act or state of a sinner, as thought is the act or state of the thinker. Neither can have an essential existence separate from their personal subject, any more than any attribute can exist separate from its substance.

5. If sin cannot exist in the abstract, it cannot be punished in the abstract. If it cannot be transferred to another, it cannot be punished in another, though one man may voluntarily suffer to save another from punishment.

Hence we repudiate in the interest of sound ethical philosophy and clearness of thought, the following proposition of Dr. Bishop:—

"If the sin of the believing sinner is taken from his shoulders and laid upon the Son of God, then justice, still following after sin, must strike through sin and the person of the Son of God beneath it."

It is a moral axiom that only the guilty can be rightfully punished. If Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, to punish Him would be, not only contrary to all human law, but it would outrage all those God-given moral sentiments on which human law rests. It is in vain that Dr. Bishop seeks for analogies to sustain the monstrous injustice of punishing innocence. He says, "When a father commits a crime, his whole family sink in the social scale, though innocent." Here he confounds the natural consequences of sin with the punishment of sin. Dr. Bishop should show that society universally hangs the innocent family on the same gibbet with the guilty husband and father. Then the case would be analogous.

Many persons use the expression "Christ in the stead of the sinner suffered the punishment of his sin," without subjecting this proposition to that rigid analysis which theological accuracy requires. While it is true that Jesus is our substitute, He is our substitute truly and strictly only in suffering, not in punishment. Sin cannot be punished and pardoned also. This would be a moral contradiction. Sin is conditionally pardoned because Jesus has suffered and died. There is no punishment of sin except in the person of the sinner who neglects so great a Saviour. Sin was not punished on the Cross. Calvary was the scene of wondrous mercy and love, not of wrath and penalty.

Says Dr. Whedon, "Punishment in the strict sense implies the guilt of the sufferer as its correlative. Whenever the sinner and the sufferer are not the same, it is only by an allowable inaccuracy that the suffering can be called punishment. It follows that it is not strictly accurate to say that Christ was punished, or that he truly suffered the punishment of sin."

But this inaccuracy is no longer "allowable" when it is made the basis of the doctrine of imputed holiness, which tramples the holy law of God under foot, and flings its obligations to the winds on the plea of an inalienable standing in Christ, in whom, despite my wallowing in fleshly lusts, I am seen to be as holy as He is holy.

6. But the ethical difficulties thicken as we continue our examination of this view of the atonement.

A LIMITED ATONEMENT

is the inevitable outcome of the doctrine that sin was punished on the cross. Whose sin? If it be answered, that of the whole human race, then universalism emerges, for God cannot in justice punish sin twice. It must be,

then, that the sins of the elect only were punished. Hence at the bottom, this system of doctrine rests upon the tenet of a particular, in distinction from a universal atonement. The fact that this basis is not avowed, and that the terminology of hyper-predestinarianism, such as "the elect," "the reprobates," "perseverance of the saints," and salvation by "Divine Sovereignty," is studiously avoided, makes this system of doctrine still more dangerous, because these offensive features are concealed with Jesuitical cunning. We cannot resist the suspicion that this is designed, so as to make it palatable to those educated in the Arminian faith, in order to catch them with guile. Some unreflective Arminians are thus unawares entrapped into the reception of that unmitigated scheme of doctrine which Christendom is almost universally shaking off.

In our first interview with Mr. Darby, we asked what was his view of election founded on the foreseen, free, acceptance of the conditions of salvation, repentance toward God, and faith in Jesus Christ. His reply was that "an election, grounded upon reasons, would destroy the sovereignty of God, and that no act of the creature, no foreseen faith in Christ, conditioned election."

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**CHAPTER 7.
ETERNAL LIFE NON-FORFEITABLE.**

In two instances Jesus speaks of everlasting life as a present possession: "He that heareth (continually) my words hath everlasting life" (John V, 24); "He that believeth (perseveringly) on me hath everlasting life" (John VI, 47).

The reader of the Greek Testament sees at a glance the condition expressed in the present tense of the verb "heareth" and "believeth." If these conditions are fulfilled; the new life inspired by the first act of evangelical faith becomes everlasting. This is the common sense view. If this faith, at any point of probation, lapses, the life expires. That everlasting life once begun can be lost, is no more a contradiction in terms than the Jew's forfeiture of the land which God gave to them for "an everlasting possession" (Gen. XVII, 8), nor the seed of Phineas losing "the everlasting priesthood," nor the Israelites breaking "the everlasting covenant" (Isaiah XXIV, 5), and finding out Jehovah's "breach of promise" (Num. XIV, 34). Hymeneus and Philetus forfeited the everlasting heritage of believers by "making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience."

We infer, therefore, that the words "hath everlasting life," were never designed as a non-forfeitable insurance policy, giving an unconditional and inalienable right to the rewards of Heaven. They are a compendious expression for the spiritual life already inspired, which is destined to become

everlasting life if its conditions are fulfilled through the whole of our probation.

A SOUL BORN OF GOD CAN NEVER BE UN-BORN.

An abuse of figurative language is a strong-hold of religious error. Antinomianism seizes upon "the new birth," "the being born again," "a child or son of God," and presses these phrases into a proof of an unchangeable acceptance with God, however grossly sinful the once regenerate person may afterwards become. J. Fletcher thus points out the fallacy in this reasoning: "According to the oriental style, a follower of wisdom is called "a son of wisdom"; and one that deviates from her path, "a son of folly"; a wicked man is called "a son of Belial, a child of the wicked one, and a child of the devil." But when he turns from wicked works, by faith, he becomes a child of God. Hence the passing from the ways of Satan to the ways of God was naturally called *conversion* and a *new birth*, Hence some divines, who, like Nicodemus, carnalize the expressions *new birth*, *child of God*, and *son of God*, assert, that if men who once walked in God's ways turn back, even into adultery, murder, and incest, they are still God's *dear people* and *pleasant children* in the Gospel sense of the words. They ask, "Can a man be a child of God to-day, and a child of the devil to-morrow? Can he be born this week, and unborn the next?" And with these questions they as much think they have overthrown the doctrine of holiness, and one-half of the Bible, as honest Nicodemus supposed he had demolished the doctrine of regeneration, and stopped our Lord's mouth, when he said, "Can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

The question would be easily answered, if, setting aside the oriental mode of speech, they simply asked, "May one who has 'ceased to do evil' and learned to do well *to-day*, cease to do well and learn to do evil *to-morrow*?"

To this we could directly reply, If the dying thief, the Philippian jailor, and multitudes of Jews, in one day went over from the *sons of folly* to the *sons of wisdom*, where is the absurdity of saying they could measure the same way back again in one day, and draw back in the horrid womb of sin as easily as Satan drew back into rebellion, Adam into disobedience, David into adultery, Solomon into idolatry, Judas into treason, and Ananias and Sapphira into covetousness? When Peter had shown himself a blessed son of heavenly wisdom, by confessing Jesus Christ, did he even stay till the next day to become a son of folly by following the "wisdom which is earthly, sensual and devilish?" Was not our Lord directly obliged to rebuke him with utmost severity, by saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan"?

A SHEEP CAN NEVER BECOME A GOAT.

Here is another Antinomian abuse of figures. In the day of judgment the human race stand separate—the sheep and the goats. It is said that since a sheep can never become a goat, because of the law of invariability of species, so one once called by Christ a sheep can never become a goat. But this logic proves too much. Can a goat ever, by any power divine, become a sheep? Can a sinner ever come a saint if it is impossible for a saint ever to become an incorrigible sinner? Yet multitudes, who live in open sin, build their hopes of heaven upon this palpable mistake. "Once I heard the Shepherd's voice," says these apostate souls, "I *followed Him*, and received His ear-mark, water baptism, and therefore I am one of His *sheep*; and now, though I follow the voice of a *stranger* who leads me into all manner of sins, into adultery and murder, I am undoubtedly a sheep, for it was never heard that a sheep became a goat."

"A washed sow is no sheep," said Mr. Darby to the writer, with an air of logical conclusiveness. Says Fletcher, "Such persons do not observe that our

Lord calls 'sheep' *those who hear His Voice*, and 'goats' *those who follow that of the tempter*. Nor do they consider that Saul, a grievous wolf, 'breathing slaughter against Christ's sheep,' and 'making havoc' of His little flock, could in a short time be changed into a sheep and a shepherd; David, a harmless sheep (and shepherd of Israel), could in a short time commence a goat with Bathsheba, and prove a wolf in sheep's clothing to her husband." Fletcher shows the superlative fallacy of this style of logic by quoting the metaphors of John the Baptist and Jesus, who style the Jews a "brood of vipers and serpents." Christ afterwards compares this vipers' brood to a brood of a hen! Had the vipers become chickens To convince the reader that this is

ANTINOMIANISM UNADULTERATED,

we quote the following from Tobias Crisp, D.D., eminent preacher and writer of the Anglican Church in the seventeenth century, that our readers may understand the logical outcome and immoral tendency of this pernicious doctrine:—

"Though a believer does sin, yet he is not to be reckoned as a sinner; his sins are reckoned to be taken away from him. God reckons not his sin to be his; he reckons it Christ's, therefore he cannot reckon it to be his. Christ does justify a person before he believes; we do not believe that we may be justified, but because we are justified. The elect are justified from eternity, at Christ's death; and the latest time is before we are born. It is a received conceit among persons that our obedience is the way to heaven; but I must tell you, all this sanctification of life is not a jot the way of that justified person to heaven. To what purpose do we propose to ourselves the gaining of that by our labour and industry which is already become ours before we can do one jot? The Lord does nothing in His people upon conditions. He intends not that by our obedience we shall gain something, which in case of

our failing we shall miscarry of. While you labour to get by duties, you provoke God as much as in you lies. We must work from life and not for life. Love to the brethren, universal obedience, and all other inherent qualifications, are no signs by which we are to judge of our state ("standing" is the modern term). Every elect vessel, from the first instant of his being, is as pure in the eyes of God from the charge of sin as he shall be in the glory. Though such persons do act rebellion, yet the loathsomeness and hatefulness of this rebellion is laid on the back of Christ; He bears the sin, as well as the blame and shame; and God can dwell with such persons that act the thing, because all the filthiness of it is translated from them upon the back of Christ. It is the voice of a lying spirit in your hearts that says 'you that are believers (as David) have yet sin wasting your conscience.' David indeed says, 'My sins are gone over my head,' but he speaks from himself, and all that he speaks from himself was not truth. There is as much ground to be confident of the pardon of sin to a believer, as soon as he has committed it, as to believe it after he has performed all the humiliation in the world. A believer may be assured of pardon as soon as he has committed any sin, even adultery and murder. God does no longer stand displeased, though a believer do sin often. There is no sin that even believers commit that can possibly do them any hurt. Therefore, as their sins cannot hurt them, so there is no cause of fear in their sins committed. Sins are but scarecrows and bugbears to frighten ignorant children, but men of understanding see they are counterfeit things. If we tell believers, except they walk thus and thus holily, and do these and these good works, God will be angry with them, we abuse the Scriptures, undo what Christ has done, injure believers, and tell God lies to His face. All our righteousness is filthy, full of menstruousness, the highest kind of filthiness;—even what is the Spirit's must be involved within that which is man's own, under the general notion of *doing*."

It is a soft and easy doctrine to bid men sit still and believe, as if God would translate them to heaven upon their couches! Christ expects that those who have grace should put forth the utmost power thereof in labouring after the salvation He has purchased for them. So work with that earnestness, constancy, and unweariness in well doing, as if thy works alone were able to justify and save thee; and so absolutely depend and rely upon the merits of Christ for justification and salvation, as if thou never hadst performed one act of obedience in all thy life. This is the right gospel frame of obedience, so to work as if we were only to be saved by our own merits; and withal so to rest on the merits of Christ, as if we had never wrought anything. It is a difficult thing to give to each of these its due practice. When we work, we are apt to neglect Christ; and when we rely upon Christ we are apt to neglect working. But that Christian has got the right art of obedience who can mingle these two together; who can with the one hand 'work the works of God,' and yet at the same time, lay fast hold on the merit of Jesus Christ. Let this Antinomian principle be forever rooted out of the minds of men, that our working is derogatory to Christ's work. 'He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar people, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.'"

MODERN ANTINOMIANISM.

We quote from modern writers essentially the same doctrines as those taught by Dr. Crisp, only there is apparently a shrinking from the frank statement of their logical outcome. There is rather an attempt to draw a veil over those inferences which old Antinomianism plainly avowed. In this particular, the old is less dangerous than the new.

We turn to McIntosh's Notes on various books of the Bible: "The very moment in which a soul is born again,—born from above and sealed by the

Holy Ghost,—he is incorporated into the body of Christ. He can no longer view himself as a solitary individual—an independent person—an isolated atom; he is a member of a body, just as the hand or foot is a member of the human body." "There are two grand links in Christianity, which though very intimately connected, are perfectly distinct; namely, the link of eternal life, and the link of personal communion. *The former can never be snapped by anything*, the latter can be snapped in a moment, by the weight of a feather."

It seems that a sin as light as a feather can suspend communion, while the violation of every one of the ten commandments, over and over again, can never snap the link of eternal life! Comforting indeed to the backslider! His fears that he may at last be filled with his own ways, are groundless. "Beholders many faults may find; but as regards our standing, our God sees us only in the comeliness of Christ; we are perfect in Him. When God looks at His people, He beholds in them His own workmanship; and it is to the glory of His holy name, and to the praise of His salvation, that not a blemish should be seen on those who are His—those whom He, in sovereign grace, has made His own. His character, His name, His glory, and the perfection of His work, are all involved in the standing of those with whom He has linked Himself."

Thus it would seem that David's workmanship, in making himself an adulterer and a murderer, is utterly ignored as a blemish. While in Uriah's bed his standing as perfectly holy is absolute! "We must never measure the standing by the state, but always judge the state by the standing. To lower the standing because of the state, is to give the death-blow to all progress in practical Christianity." That is, we must never judge the tree by the fruit, but always the fruit by the tree. If a crab scion, grafted on a golden pippin, still produces crab apples, we must aver that they are golden pippins, because the crab has a golden pippin standing. "The people of God are seen only in 'the

vision of the Almighty'—seen as He sees them, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—all their deformities hidden from view—all his comeliness seen upon them." "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." The enemy may say, "There is iniquity and perverseness there all the while." "Yes; but who can make Jehovah behold it, when He Himself has been pleased to blot it all out as a thick cloud for His name's sake?" "God will never reverse His decision as to what His people are as to standing."

This is the comment on the shameless licentiousness of Israel on the plains of Moab, with the women of Midian. Their standing is still the same as it was when the prophet stood on Pisgah. "It reminds us of the opening and close of 2 Cor. XII, In the former we have the *positive standing* of the Christian; in the latter, the *possible state* into which he may fall if not watchful. That shows us a 'man in Christ' capable of being caught up into Paradise at any moment. This shows us saints of God capable of plunging into all manner of sin and folly." Of course the plunge into the cesspool has not the least damaging effect on their clean standing in Christ! These quotations are from McIntosh on Numbers.

**A SUBSTITUTE FOR HOLINESS?
OR
ANTINOMIANISM REVIVED
Dr. Daniel Steele, S.T.D.**

**CHAPTER 8.
HOLINESS IMPUTED.**

There is much confused and erroneous thinking and teaching on the subject of imputed righteousness and imputed holiness. Some are confounding the two, and teaching that the only holiness possible to us in this world is the robe of Christ's righteousness thrown around hearts inherently impure. In the interests of clear thought and Christian purity, we invite the reader to a discussion of the radical distinction between imputed righteousness and imputed holiness. The term "impute" literally signifies "to think to," to reckon one thing belongs to another when it really does not. In the Revision it is superseded by the word "reckon."

We define righteousness in man to be conformity to the Divine law, and holiness conformity to the Divine nature.

Jesus Christ is both righteous and holy. These qualities are personal, inherent, and untransferable. But in addition to His personal righteousness, He has a mediatorial righteousness, the merit of His passive obedience, labours, and sacrifices, sufferings, death, and high-priestly intercessions. Now, although the phrase, "the imputation of Christ's righteousness:" or "Christ's imputed righteousness," is not found in the Bible, the doctrine itself is found in the epistles of Paul unfolded extendedly, and it is hinted at in the Gospels when Jesus speaks of giving His life for the world, or as a ransom for many. But it is always His mediatorial, and not His personal righteousness.

The absolute necessity of this imputation in the scheme of redemption, arises from the fact that one past sin produces an eternal disconformity to the Divine law, so that the Lawgiver cannot treat us as if we had never sinned without violating the truth of history, and cheating the law of its demands. Hence pardon and salvation would be impossible under the reign of strict and unbending law. But here comes in the mediatorial righteousness of Christ to all who plead it as the ground of justification, so that God can be just and the justifier of him who believeth. In other words, there is a constructive, not to say fictitious, conformity to the law, now possible through faith in the merits of Christ. Otherwise, law would be forever against us. The necessity of this scheme of imputation lies in the fact that God Himself cannot change the past. It is a record absolutely inerasible.

But when God wishes to make men holy, or bring them into conformity to His own nature, there is no such inerasible record in the way. Justification is a work done for us, and has reference to the past; sanctification is a work wrought in us, and always has respect to the present. Hence imputation of holiness is not necessary. In fact, in the very nature of things, it is impossible. There can be no such thing as vicarious character, for character is the sum total of what we ourselves are. There may be a vicarious assumption of another's character. Hence, holiness must be personal, inherent, inwrought and imparted by the power of the Holy Spirit, procured by the same atonement by which it is possible for us, through faith, to be conformed to the Divine law, or savingly adjusted to an inerasible, sinful record.

IN CHRIST.

The phrase "in Christ" is perpetually quoted as a proof-text to sustain the doctrine of imputed holiness, a quality not imparted to us, being inwrought by the Holy Spirit and ever afterwards existing inherently in the believer; but

an attribute of Jesus Christ regarded by God as belonging to Christians, even when they are unholy in character and wicked in conduct. The theory is that Jesus Christ is standing to-day in the presence of the Father as a specimen and representative of glorified humanity, and that faith in Him so intimately unites us with Him, that all His personal excellencies become ours in such a sense as to excuse us if we lack them. It is said that the first act of faith eternally incorporates us into the glorified person of Christ, so that whatever sin we may commit afterwards we incur no condemnation.

Says Fletcher: "People, it seems, may now be 'in Christ,' without being 'new creatures,' and 'new creatures' without casting 'old things' away. They may be God's children without God's image; and 'born of the Spirit' without 'the fruit of the Spirit.'"

The favourite proof-text of this piece of rank Antinomianism is Rom. VIII, 1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," with special attention called to the omission by the critical MSS. and the Revised Version, of the limiting clause—"who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Over this omission the imputationists rejoice, as if it unanswerably demonstrated the truth of their doctrine, that God, seeing the believer only in Christ, beholds no sin in him, even when he has wilfully and flagrantly transgressed the known law. They fail to note that the same limiting clause stands in the fourth verse unquestioned by the critics.

Hence their assertion that the flesh is a sinful state which does not in the least damage our perfect standing in Christ, in whom the carnally minded believer is as holy as the Son of God Himself. It is said that "the standing is never to be judged by the state, but the state by the standing." The New Testament Scriptures relied on as proofs of this doctrine are those in which

our faith is imputed for righteousness. The error is in failing to notice that this refers to the forgiveness of sins, and not in the character after justification.

Another mistake is in not distinguishing between the sum total of Christ's merits, called His mediatorial righteousness, and His own personal righteousness, which is not transferable. Character is personal and unimputable.

Another constantly recurring Scripture is the expression, "in Christ"—used to prove an actual incorporation into His Person. We take up our pen to examine these words. They are not found in the four Gospels nor in the Acts of the Apostles. They are Pauline, being used only by Paul, except in 1 Peter III, 16; V, 14. The words "in the Lord" are peculiar to Paul also. Elsewhere they are found only in Rev. XIV, 13. What does Paul mean by these phrases?

(1) He does not mean incorporation into the glorified Person of Christ, for he always (except in 1 Cor. XV, 18—"asleep in Jesus") avoids His purely personal name, Jesus, never saying "in Jesus," but he always adds one of His titular names, Christ, or Lord. "In Christ," or "in the Lord," must mean, then, some intimate relation to His official work.

(2) What this relation is will be seen when we observe that while *Luke* and *Peter* use the term "Christian," Paul never used it, but uses the more vivid phrase, "in Christ." Let us now examine a favourite text of the imputationists—1 Cor. I, 2.—"To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus." We heartily endorse the comment of Meyer, "the greatest exegete of the nineteenth century": "In Christ—namely, in His redemptive work, of which Christians have become, and continue to be, partakers, by means of justifying faith (Eph. I, 4; Heb. X, 10)." In the fourth verse, Meyer's note on "in Christ," is "in your fellowship with Christ." His paraphrase of the thirtieth verse, "But

of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," is the following: "But truly it is God's work that ye are Christians, and so partakers of the greatest Divine blessings, that none of you should in any way boast himself save only in God." Rom. XVI, 7; "In Christ before me"—Christians before me. Rom. XVI, 10; "Approved in Christ"—i.e., says Meyer, "the tried Christian." 2 Cor. V, 17, "If any man is in Christ" a Christian, says the same annotator.

Cremer, in his *Biblico-Theological Lexicon*, enumerates forty-eight texts where this phrase is used with the above meaning, such as "weak in Christ" and "babes in Christ," for feeble Christians; "growing up in Christ," for an advancing Christian; "perfect in Christ," for a believer fully sanctified, or, in the words of Meyer, "perfect as a Christian, in respect to the whole Christian nature." "Holy in Christ" is a phrase foreign to the New Testament diction. The general meaning of the words, "in the Lord," is discipleship to the Lord Jesus, as in Rom. XVI, 2, "which are in the Lord"; 1 Cor. VII, 39, "To be married in the Lord"; i.e., to a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

The expressions "in Christ" and "in the Lord" are the Pauline way of denoting a saving relation to the Son of God, a union with Him by faith, a union which ceases when the faith decays. It is quite probable that St. Paul's use of this peculiar idiom is an amplification of the words of Christ, "If ye abide in Me," in His parable of the true vine, John XV, 1-7. That He does not here speak of an inseparable and eternal incorporation into His person, is evident from these words: "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away." That this taking away is no mere temporary break in the saving relation to Christ, but an eternal cutting off, will be seen by reading the sixth verse: "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." This solemn and expressive language is utterly meaningless, if the phrase "in Me,"

or "in Christ," means an inalienable standing in Christ wholly independent of one's real character. Those modern champions of imputed holiness, and opponents of inwrought personal purity, the Plymouth brethren, find their air-castle rudely swept away when these words of Jesus are directed against it. A branch in the true Vine may die and be sundered and burned.

This is a complete answer to the words of John N. Darby to the writer, that "believers are parts of the glorified Person of Jesus Christ, who does not walk about in Heaven dropping His fingers and toes by self-mutilation, but retains every part and particle of His body forever." The revised version, in Eph. V, 30, omits "of His flesh and of His bones," and thus removes a seeming proof-text for the incorporation theory.

(3) This paper would not be complete if we did not refer to the objective use, by St. Paul, of the phrase "in Christ," as representing, not the peculiar union of the believing subject, but the blessings of redemption included in Jesus. In this Apostle's writings, the idiom, "in Christ," has a Godward, or objective meaning, when he describes the provisions for salvation embodied in the Person and work of the Son, and a manward, or subjective meaning, when he speaks of the believer as appropriating those provisions. As a specimen of the objective use, we quote Rom. VI, 23: "But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (R.V.). See also Rom. VIII, 2, 39; 1 Cor. I, 4. (R.V.); 2 Cor. V, 19; Gal. II, 4; III, 14 (R.V.); Eph. I, 3; II, 6, 7. (R.V.); Eph. III, 11; IV, 32 (R.V.), Phil. II, 5; 2 Tim. II, 10. In all these passages Jesus Christ is presented as God's treasury of grace and salvation. In examining these texts the reader will be impressed with the superior precision of the revisors in their translation of the preposition "*en*," in. There are instances in which this Pauline idiom embraces both the subjective and the objective, notably Rom. VII, 11: "Alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (R.V.). Here the believer appropriates the life that exists in Jesus.

Writers in classical Greek exemplify only the objective use of "*en*." Thus Sophocles: "I indeed am saved wholly in thee"; Hesiod: "Whether Athens shall be enslaved or freed is now in thee"; says Homer: "Complete victory is in the immortal gods."

But St. Paul's use of "in," as expressing the activity of the subject appropriating Christ, from the very nature of the case, has no verbal parallels in profane Greek.

In conclusion, we aver that it is just as reasonable to interpret 1 John V, 19, "The whole world lieth in the evil one" (R.V.), as meaning that the whole world is in itself inherently saintly, but by imputation is wicked in the evil one, as it is to say that the best estate of believers on earth is to be inherently impure, while by imputation they are spotless in Christ. According to the testimony of that cosmopolitan evangelist, Wm. Taylor, imputed holiness, enrobing cherished vileness, is a favourite fiction of the pagans of India. A fakir in his presence professing spotless holiness, was rebuked by the crowd as a liar, a cheat, and an adulterer. Admitting the truth of these charges, the fakir triumphantly exclaimed. "I am vile in myself, but perfectly holy in Vishnu."

To be holy with a retention of the old man, would be an untruth and a flat contradiction (Meyer on Eph. 5, 21).