

implies no more than to free them from the guilt and the dominion of sin.

But why not quote such other passages in this connection, as "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit," "He that is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God?"

Is it because these and similar Scriptures directly contradict his assertions concerning the powerlessness of the newborn child of God to refrain from sinning that he passes them by? If he claims the passages he quotes as authoritative, he cannot deny the same authority to the ones we quote, nor can he claim any special authority for himself to modify their utterance which any other writer may not claim. Can that be called exhaustive or even fair argument which only selects and comments on the Bible passages seemingly favorable to his doctrine, and ignores those which seemingly contradict it? Is that not the essence of special pleading?

But, having paid this slight homage to Scripture authority, he hastens to the secondary proofs which the formulated opinions of the founders of his branch of the church afford, as if conscious that they were his chief support.

Now, we do not here intend to raise the ponderous question as to the relative value of this kind of proof when compared with the teachings of Christ and His apostles, especially, at this juncture, when his church is in the throes of a wide-spread controversy concerning the need of *revision*.

However, this much we think he will admit, viz., that the Westminster Confession of Faith is accepted as authoritative, on the understanding that it rightly interprets Scripture, and that, therefore, in the nature of the case, it is a standing challenge to all who have opportunity to compare its deliverances with Bible teaching to substantiate this fact.

Well, it is not our design to take up this challenge just now, even in part, or to insinuate by word or act that there is a decided discrepancy anywhere.

Our admiration for the great and mighty work which the founders and

defenders of this creed have accomplished, and still are accomplishing, is too profound to permit us even to wish to magnify them should they exist. And, moreover, if the contention of the abovewriter was as plainly and as unequivocally taught in this *credo* as, for example, baptism by *emersion* is taught in the creeds of the Baptist churches, then we would have to admit that no Presbyterian, who testified that for any given period of time he walked worthy of God unto all pleasing, or that, being born of God, he did not commit sin, could conscientiously remain a member of his Church, necessity would be upon him to depart from its communion.

But if, upon examination, we find the same apparent contradictions — paradoxes, if you please to call them — that exist in Scripture, only in a more expanded and pronounced form, then we maintain that it ill becomes those who emphasize one part of the Confession of Faith to dogmatize to those who emphasize another part, and, least of all, should one party undertake, under such conditions, to anathematize the other.

We shall not, then, undertake to weaken the force of the quotations of Dr. Middlemiss, taken from the Confession of Faith; we will leave them untouched, even acknowledging, in the meantime, their great force and aptness for the purpose he evidently has in view, viz., to prove the impossibility of any Christian living, for even the shortest period of time, without committing sin, but will turn our attention to this same Confession of Faith to see if its framers utterly ignored the Scriptures we have already quoted, and others like them, in their deliverances, or distinctly pronounced against them; or if, on the other hand, they adopted them as true, and gave them, in an expanded form, a place in their formulated creed, with the contention that, if they adopted this latter course, then Dr. Middlemiss and all others who, like him, emphasize one set of deliverances, can, at least, entertain the judgment of charity for those who emphasize another set of their deliverances. Nay, it would not ill become that humility described in his former writings to admit that possibly this