

"Is it," said the Scotchman, and his voice grew full-toned and his eye kindled with emotion, "Is it a new idea which enters the Divine mind, or is it from eternity?"

"Oh!" said his doubting neighbour, "I see where you would lead me—I decline answering that question."

"Reader, have you a neighbour, a good man, who, from habit or defective education, or want of familiarity with God's word, ever indulges in depreciating remarks concerning the covenant of grace and the wisdom, power and love of the Eternal as manifested in God's electing love, perhaps it would do him no harm to ask him these four questions?"

"PILGRIM."

Such is the anecdote and its accompanying exhortation, and it is our purpose to make a few remarks upon its various details for the benefit of those *who, from habit or defective education or want of familiarity with God's word, ever indulge in depreciating remarks concerning the covenant of grace and the wisdom, power, and love of the Eternal, as manifested in God's electing love:—* And we cannot do better than take the questions with their answers as they come to hand.

Question 1st.—"Will you tell me then, in what state man is born?" Ans.—"In a state of sin." We have no particular objection to the terms here used, farther than that they are rather ambiguous, man is born "*in a state of sin.*" This may mean either that man is born with *sin in him*, or simply that he is born in sinful circumstances. If the former be the meaning intended, then we object with all the moral energy we possess. What is sin? It is the transgression of the law. But every man does not come into the world a transgressor of the law. To affirm that he does is to bring a serious charge against his Creator. The soul of man *must come direct from the plastic hand of God, but if that soul comes into existence a transgressor of the law, its Maker must be the Creator of moral evil.* But there are those who hold that sin is *coiled up* somewhere in the soul, like the worm in the chrysalis, in an inactive, undeveloped state. But sin is never inactive.—Inactive sin is no sin; inactive hate is no hate; inactive lust is no lust. But suppose we were to admit that sin does exist in the soul of the new born infant in the anomalous state referred to, the question would still recur, "Who put it there?" He who made the soul must have deposited therein that germ of sin, to be developed in uncleanness in all its forms, and to entail misery and un-