

to be desired, but it is far more satisfactory to base it on the practical evidence of a godly life than on an intangible inward feeling, however positive and exalted. The name "Witness of the Spirit" as applied to that feeling is moreover a most unfortunate and misleading one. St. Paul's language in the eighth of Romans lends no countenance to it as thus employed. For he is not discussing there the question of assurance, but the subject of adoption; and he adduces the universality of the childlike spirit which calls God Father as a proof, not that A. B. or C. are true believers, but that all true believers are God's children. The confusion of these two things

is perhaps not an unnatural one, but it has wrought only mischief in Christian experience, unduly uplifting those of emotional temperament who easily persuaded themselves that they had what they called the witness of the Spirit, and crippling with doubt many a pious soul that was too honest to pretend to an inward testimony which did not really exist. It would have helped both classes to a higher spiritual life if they had understood that whether present or absent the inward feeling had no great significance either one way or the other.

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