

LIFE IN CHRIST,
AND
SEALING WITH THE SPIRIT.

By F. W. Grant

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609 SOUTH THOMAS STREET
BEDFORD, PENNSYLVANIA 15522

INTRODUCTION.

I DESIRE to take up afresh, and in more detail, the subject of a previous paper, viz., the life we have in Christ, and its connection with the forgiveness of sins, with justification and the sealing with the Spirit. The paper in question was a meagre statement of certain things, designed for those only who had a certain measure of competence to judge of the parts presented. Printed, not published, it was circulated for the most part privately among these. It was felt very generally, and I believe rightly, to be unsatisfactory, and liable to misapprehension (as it was in fact in some things misapprehended), too negative in its character, and with defects and omissions which excited alarm in the minds of some. These were partly the result of being written for a certain class of readers who were expected to be able to connect and supplement it with truth on all sides happily acknowledged, and to its being a statement of differences from views held by others, and not of agreements. Still there were one or two positions taken which were in fact too extreme and unqualified, and rightly calculated to prejudice the mind against views they were brought to support, but which stand more firmly and reveal more consistency without them. I believe that these things will be found corrected in the

present tract ; omissions supplied, and the positive side lacking in the other brought forward ; and I trust that many will now recognize truth in that which before they rejected, for the doctrine remains substantially the same.

Whatever may be its reception, it is none the less a sense of responsibility to the Lord and to His own which constrains me thus again to put forth what I hold for truth as to these points ; with the examination also of what is urged by those who hold views conflicting with it, not in desire for controversy, as I trust He who knows my heart knows, but that all may be before us which will help souls to a true and godly judgment in the matter. Truth is, if I am not much deceived, what I have sought, and seek. To find myself in any discordant judgment with brethren beloved and esteemed, such as are many who differ from me here, is only pain, and has been cause of anxious searching of heart ; but this has only ended in firmer conviction than ever, so that it would be mere cowardice and unfaithfulness not to utter it.

To the one whose views especially I have to examine I am not only myself personally under the deepest obligation for truth which gives clearness and precision to all I know, but the whole Church of God is his debtor, as one specially raised up of Him to put us again in possession of what had been lost well-nigh from apostolic days. Multitudes are now enjoying by his means truth which it would startle them to realize they owe to one whose name is perhaps by them unknown, or even ignorantly vilified. There is no need for me to praise him. Nothing that I could say would add to, nor anything lessen, for those who know the work God gave him to accomplish, the honor in which all must hold his name. But it was subjection to the word of God only which made him what he was, and which will alone enable us to receive aright what we receive

from him. Flawless accuracy belongs only to inspired men. With all others, something, little or much, has ever been allowed to distinguish, healthfully for our souls, that which only is authoritative from all else. The Bereans tested by Scripture the words of an apostle, and are commended for it.

Only by the word, then, let all be tested. Nothing but good can come from an appeal to Scripture which will raise the question wherever it can be raised, How far has what I have learned been learned of God? The danger we are in just now, is one to which the second generation in every divine movement is especially exposed,—the danger of building themselves upon traditions of that the freshness of which is departing, and substituting a creed for the living power of the Holy Ghost. This may be done as well with an unwritten as with a written creed. If done, we may write “Ichabod” upon the whole.

It may be that God is allowing these questions, to make us realize more deeply our whole dependence to be upon Himself. Unspeakable happiness in result, for all who know this!

It will be well to seek first clearly to apprehend what is in question, and separate it from that about which there is none; for in some minds the strangest misapprehension exists.

Whether for the kingdom or the Church, all is founded upon the actually accomplished work of Christ, and His ascension-place at the right hand of God. There alone He has received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is come down to us because Jesus is glorified.

While from the beginning every true saint of God had divine life as born of God, we alone have it in Christ after His work accomplished, are redeemed, justified, and at peace with God, are in the place of sons with the Spirit of adoption, the Holy Ghost

dwelling in us, and uniting us to Christ on high. All this is ours distinctly, as well as, of course, the Church-place, which is the effect of union.

It is not in contention that quickening and sealing are entirely distinct things, nor even whether they are distinct in *time*: they surely are. As so often stated, it is the sinner who is quickened, the believer who is sealed. Moreover, the interval might be, as we see in Acts it has been, one of some duration, although the cases in Acts have really no representative in the present day.

Thank God, there is abundance of blessed truth beside, in which I am entirely agreed with those for whom I write, and which makes the actual difference (although all truth is of inestimable importance,) seem very little in comparison.

The first point of difference concerns our place as Christians in Christ, which many take — on the authority, as they suppose, of Rom. viii. 9,—to be ours by virtue of the indwelling of the Spirit. It is maintained in this paper to be the inseparable accompaniment of eternal life in the believer, and his, therefore, from the first moment of quickening. Of course this applies only to the present time, or since the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. But if life be only now in Christ, since it is only as risen and ascended He is made Lord and Christ, yet “in the Son” it was ever, because He was the Son ever. Here there is a division of opinion among those who dissent from me, some agreeing that life was ever in the Son, some seeming to assert that in Old-Testament times it was the Father quickened, and that in the Son is only true since Pentecost, some maintaining that quickening and eternal life are even now distinct.

But if, then, life is for us in Christ from the beginning of it, forgiveness of sins and justification attach necessarily to this also. The life is the life of

Christ, the last Adam, after resurrection, His work accomplished,—life beyond death, a death in which the whole question of sin and sins, of nature and practice, has been settled for us. As having life in Christ, we are dead with Christ, dead to sin and to law, and not in the flesh: all which things are, by most of those who dissent from me, connected with the gift of the Spirit, and not with life simply. Even to be quickened with Christ, they urge, is union, or implies it, and for new creation (some add) there must be union too!

Yet, while the quickened man possesses these things necessarily—and *possesses*, not is in the purpose of God to possess them merely,—they have nevertheless to be ministered to him by the gospel, and received in the divine way and order, so that the holiness of God and his own blessing have to be conserved. The fact and the apprehension of what is his are different things and never to be confounded. To make one the measure of the other is to cloud the grace of the gospel.

As to sealing with the Spirit, the doctrine here maintained is that in Scripture it is connected with the faith and confession of Christ risen and glorified, rather than with appropriating faith in His blessed work. It is necessary to remark here that it is not meant that Christ's work must not necessarily be believed in order for any to be accounted a Christian; surely it must; but that it is *God* who appropriates the work of His beloved Son to him who believes in His name; and that the Spirit is the seal of the value of the work itself in behalf of the believer, rather than of the fullness and simplicity of his faith in it.

While yet neither justification nor deliverance from the law was revealed, the Spirit was received, as the history of the Acts assures us; and while it is surely true that the Spirit is the witness to us of

sonship and of the place in Christ, as He is of all our blessing, and the power of the whole Christian life, yet it is as the Spirit of truth He acts, and only in the reception of the truth are these made good to us; while, even after attainment, they are still capable of being lost, if the walk is not with God, though the Spirit still, however grieved, abides.

A third point, of much practical interest, connects itself with these two. I believe that the experience of the seventh of Romans is the break-down, not of a sinner seeking peace and acceptance with God, but of a saint seeking holiness—power over sin, and fruit for Him, and that this alone gives it its full significance.

We may now proceed to take up these questions; and may He, who only can, teach us Himself effectually.

LIFE IN CHRIST,

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I.

MY first proposition, then, is, that we are "in Christ" by virtue of the *life* we have in Him. It is plainly stated, "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God *in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. vi. 11, *Gr.*); and again, "The gift of God is eternal life *in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (v. 23).

This is Paul's doctrine; John's is parallel, but different: "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son*;" and again, "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God, and *eternal life*." (1 Jno. v. 11, 20.)

The parallelism of these expressions it is hardly possible to doubt. In the same sense in which Paul affirms that we have life in Christ, John affirms that it is in the Son. It is of course the same Person; the difference is that while the Son of God He ever was, "Christ" is what He has become; and become not simply as man born into the world, but rather as risen and ascended after His work accomplished, as Peter announced at Pentecost, "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36). Of this the Spirit poured out then was witness.

At the present moment, therefore, he who has life in the Son has it in Christ, because the Son is Christ; but before this, life might be in the Son when as yet in Christ it could not be. I say only "might be:" it is denied by some that it was. We shall have to see how Scripture speaks about this.

The advantage of first considering John's doctrine is that it was first announced, and by the Lord, during the time He was yet on earth with His disciples; and also that it is connected by Himself with similar expressions as to His own relation to the Father. Thus, in His prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel, He says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall *believe on Me through their word, that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one† in Us." This is a direct and conclusive statement. It warrants, nay, necessitates, our saying that *as* the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father, so are we "in the Father and in the Son." And this very expression we find in the epistle of John (ii. 24): "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall abide‡ in you, ye also shall abide‡ *in the Son and in the Father.*"

This word "abide" has also its significance. It is what the Lord uses where He is speaking in answer to Philip's request to show them the Father: "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou, then, 'Show us the Father?' Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, but the Father that abideth‡ in Me, He doeth the works.

*The editors read "those believing," instead of "which shall believe;" but the sense is not affected.

†"One" is generally omitted by recent editors.

‡The same word, μένω, variously rendered in our version.

Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the very works' sake." (Jno. xiv. 9-11.)

Now here it is evident that it is the practical identity in nature and character between the Father and Himself that the Lord is insisting on. In Him they should have seen the Father. They were the Father's words that He was speaking in the world,—the Father's works that He was doing. In the fifteenth chapter of the gospel, the Lord speaks in a similar way of His disciples' relationship to Himself, illustrating it by the figure of the branch in the vine. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me." The branch must abide in the vine, that the sap, the vine-life, the essence of all fruitfulness, may abide in the branch. There is a common life, which in the branch is dependent and derivative, illustrating a practical life of faith, with real community of life and nature underlying it. He can even say, comparing Himself and His people, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." (Jno. vi. 57.)

As is most suited, when He speaks of the day in which the Father is no longer working through Him as a man on earth, but He is returned again to Him that sent Him, He speaks no more, as to Philip, of the Father in Him, but says only, "At that day ye shall know that *I am in the Father.*"

Community of life and nature, realized in dependence, and manifested in community of word and work,—this is what the terms we have been looking at imply. They are the Lord's own words moreover, as we have seen, which affirm their similar meaning when applied to Himself and the Father or to His people in the Son and in the Father: "*as*

Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us."

This cannot be position, for our standing cannot be in the Father, clearly. It is really just as clear that "in the Son" does not express standing either. We cannot be before God as is His only begotten Son. It is as man only that the Son of God can represent men. On the other hand, participants in the divine nature we can be and are; and thus it is that we have true eternal life, and are children of God. The apostle speaks negatively, but not the less plainly, when he says, in the manner with which we are familiar, "No murderer hath *eternal life* abiding in him" (1 Jno. iii. 15). Life it is, we are assured every way, of which such language speaks.

"Ye shall abide in the Son and in the Father," says the apostle; and the order here is significant. "Life is in the Son," and thus it is only that we are in the Father.

So the apostle speaks of Him who "in the beginning was the Word,"—thus the expression of the mind and will of God, and who as such created the worlds,—that "in Him was life" (Jno. i. 4); and so in his epistle, of "that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (Jno. i. 2). Always was He this then, before His manifestation; and upon earth, when here as man, could say, "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, so the Son quickeneth whom He will. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live; for as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." (Jno. v. 21, 25-27.)

It is not surely possible, therefore, to deny that

life from the beginning was in the Son. The hour then was in which He was quickening, before ever He had finished the work which was in His hand to do. And the everlasting life He was ever, "the Word of life," as John says (1 Jno. i. 1). Some would make a distinction, as it would seem, between the "Word" and the "Son;" but it was the same blessed Person who was at the same time both Son and Word of God. *Now*, because He is Christ also, life is necessarily "in Christ." And the saints of old, who were one and all of them quickened by the Son, with the life in Him, have it now in Christ, *not by any new communication*, but simply by the fact of what through His work accomplished He in whom their life is has become. Other quickening, other spiritual life than this, can no man show.

It has been asked, "Does not this militate against the *Father* quickening?" But surely it cannot be contended that the Father quickens, *apart from the Son?* If men are born again of the *Spirit*, as it is plain they are, does this necessitate another special class, whom the Son does not quicken? Rather, is it not true that in all divine acts the Father, Son, and Spirit unite; but that the Son in all acts that involve a mediator has necessarily the mediator's place?

If life before Christ's being upon earth were not "in the Son," how then? It is vaguely said, "From God," or that the Father quickened, but this will not do. "In the Son" implies dependence: had they *independent* life? or what? or was it in the Father, without being in the Son to be so?

And as to quickening now being other than this, if quickening be giving *life*, I read, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath NOT life" (1 Jno. v. 12). So the quickening together with Christ is *directly* out of being "dead in sins."

The fifteenth chapter of John's gospel speaks also,

as we have seen, of relationship existing before the cross. As another has said,—

“Here it is not that which He will be after His departure. He was this upon earth, and distinctively upon earth . . . The subject here is not that relationship with Christ in heaven by the Holy Ghost, which cannot be broken, but of that link which even then was formed here below, which might be *vital* and eternal, or which might not. Fruit would be the proof.” (*Synopsis*.)

Where, then, fruit was found,—where there was abiding,—the link of eternal life already existed, the Son of God had already quickened with the life that was in Himself. They were “in the Son,” although not yet had the Spirit of God come, to give them the proper consciousness of this wonderful blessing.

It is vain, then, to appeal to the Lord's promise, “At *that day*”—when the Spirit of truth is come,—“ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you” (Jno. xiv. 20), to prove that this “ye in Me, and I in you” was a yet future thing. As well might it be contended that Christ being “in the Father” was a future thing. Does not the association of these together rather prove that it is a future *knowledge* of a present thing? But the other passages we have looked at conclusively show this.

To be “in the Son” was to be identified in life and nature with the Son. “In the Son” means “*life* in the Son,” and correspondingly “in Christ” means “*life* in Christ;” but of this more presently.

Life they had then, and in the Son; they were to have it yet in a new power and fullness. Not yet was the work accomplished by which death, and he that had the power of it, was to be annulled, and the life eternal manifested in its own proper character. He had come that not only they might have life, but might “have it abundantly” (Jno. x. 10). This we have now to consider. It will involve the distinction between life in the Son simply, and life in

Christ, for us now inseparable, not two things, but one, even as Christ and the Son are one.

In reality, except through death, life for fallen man there could not be. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jno. xii. 24). This was what was involved then in the gift of it from the beginning. Life must spring out of death, always out of death at least foreseen, as now it does out of death accomplished.

The ages hitherto had been ages of probation, in which man's condition was being displayed to him. While these lasted, the grace he needed could not be yet shown out. Not yet was he concluded dead, so as to need life. Not yet was it seen that what was born of the flesh was merely flesh. All the precious truths of divine grace were therefore under a veil, to faith not wholly impenetrable, yet a most real thing. At the cross the darkness began to pass, for at the cross the trial of man found its full end. Not only was the mind of the flesh hopelessly insubject to the law of God, but the reason of this was fully declared: it was "enmity against God." Thus with the cross in view the Lord says, "Now is the judgment of this world;" and He who should come into the world, the witness of the glory of Him whom men had crucified, would, by the very fact of His coming, convict the world of sin, because they had not believed on Him; of righteousness, because He went to the Father, and they saw Him no more.

Man's trial was over; but therefore God could bring out now the riches of His grace; and being glorified, could and must glorify in turn Him who had accomplished this. Raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, He becomes "last Adam," head of the new humanity, endowing with the value

of His accomplished work those who are linked with Him in the life He gives. They with Him have come through death. Life in Him, the resurrection and the life, begins with resurrection. With Him, fruit of His work, they are sharers in all that into which He comes,—“quickened together with Him; raised up together.”

It is objected that although the apostle does undoubtedly, in Ephesians ii. 5, 6, and Colossians ii. 13, use this language, we must not press it as true of every divinely quickened soul. The Holy Ghost is come and characterizes the Christian's condition at every point. The doctrine of Ephesians ii. involves union with Christ in the fullest way; and it is only from the stand-point of that union that life can now be described as that of those who have been quickened together (Jew and Gentiles once, no longer either now, but quickened out of death together,—this “together” implying union) with Christ: associated with Him in the highest way and place.

But this is a mistake. “Quickened together with Christ” is not what is properly called “union.” Union is by the Spirit. “He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit” (1 Cor. vi. 17). This “together,” if it mean union, would assure us of the possession of the Spirit by every quickened soul *from the first moment of life*; for it is plain it speaks not simply of possessing life “together,” but of having *received* it “together.” This doctrine would carry us farther than it is meant to do. But, as I have said, it is a mistake: “quickened together” speaks of a common reception of life, and that is all, but “with Christ” adds to it features of the very greatest significance.

But “with Christ” does not imply union, otherwise “dead with Christ” would imply union in death, which is impossible. And if quickened with Christ means union, why does the apostle drop this expression just as he carries us to the height of the place

where union alone is possible and enjoyed, and say, "Seated together in heavenly places *in* [not "with"] Christ Jesus"?

For "in Christ" is certainly not union, as "in the Father," whether applied to the Lord or to us, is certainly not, and as "in God"—which we are said to be,—*cannot* mean. These all speak of identification in life and nature, as already shown, and not of union.

But "quickened with Christ" and "risen with Him" are rather said because these things are true of us as well as of Him, whereas "seated with Him" we are not as yet, but only "in Him." Whereas, if with Him meant union, is it not plain we should be with Him in the heavenly places too?

And if to say *now* of every divinely quickened soul, that he is quickened with Christ is "to enfeeble the truth," of whom, then, can this be said? for it speaks definitely, as I have said, of *reception*, not simply *possession*, of life.

Again, quite a different interpretation of these passages has been made. Speaking of Colossians ii. 13, one says,—

"The apostle is writing to saints who had heard the word of the truth of the gospel (i. 5). They had redemption, the forgiveness of their sins, and could thank God for it. They shared in it consciously. So the apostle could tell them of God's purpose now carried out, *viz.*, they had been quickened together with Christ, *i. e.*, when He rose."

This is quite another thought from that just presented. In this case, the passage would apply to every quickened soul now, but would only say that in God's *purpose* the raising Christ from the dead involved the giving of life to all His predestined people. And surely it did; but has this nothing to say to the character of the actual quickening when it arrives? If this is viewed as part and parcel of that resurrection of Christ which declared the ac-

ceptance of His work, does not this also declare the acceptance of the one so quickened? Is he not fruit of Christ's work by that fact?

But then this cannot be the whole matter; for, once more, this quickened *with* and seated *in* Christ, from the exactly parallel passage in Ephesians, comes to assure us that, were it purpose, it would be *with* Christ in the heavenlies too.

Let me quote here the words of another, as exactly conveying what I believe to be the truth as to these passages:—

“Christ was raised from the dead; and when we are in question, we are told that all the energy by which He came forth from death is employed also for our quickening; and not only that: *even in being quickened we are associated with Him.* He comes forth from death; we come forth *with Him.* God has imparted this life to us. It is His pure grace, and a grace that has saved us; that found us dead in sin and brought us out of death, even as Christ came out of it; and brought us out with Him by the power of His life in resurrection; with Christ, who left behind Him the sins which were connected with the old man, and which He had taken on Himself, in order to set us in the light and in the favor of God, according to divine righteousness, even as He Himself is there.” (*Synopsis.*)

As to the passage in Colossians ii. 3, he says explicitly,—

“It is the power of God Himself as it wrought in Christ, which works in us to give us this new life which implies, —by the very fact of our receiving it—that we are forgiven perfectly and forever. We were under the burden of our sins, and dead in them. This burden Christ took upon Himself and died for us. Raised up with Him, inasmuch as partaking of that life which He possesses as risen from the dead, we have—like Him and with Him,—left all that burden of sin and condemnation behind us, with the death from which we have been delivered. Therefore He says, ‘*Having forgiven you all trespasses.*’” (*Synopsis.*)

Assuredly this is the truth as to the meaning of these weighty passages. They assure us that from the moment of quickening we are linked by the life we receive from and in Christ as last Adam with all

the value of the death through which He has passed. It is as alive in Him we are dead with Him,—“dead,” therefore, “to sin,” and alive to God in Christ Jesus,” “for he that is dead is justified from sin.” (Rom. vi. 11; 7, *Gr.*)

The death which Christ has come through is not simply death, but the death of the cross,—the death of One who gave Himself a substitutionary sacrifice for others. His blood shed, the sign of completed atonement, of full penalty endured, justifies in so absolute a way that nothing can possibly be henceforth laid to their account. Death is the end of human responsibility. The judgment to come is simply for the deeds done in the body,—not in hades. And death, substitutionally endured, is the entire, eternal removal of penalty from those for whom it avails. “Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Rom. v. 9). Death endured,—dead with our Substitute,—our Adam-life is ended, ended in righteous judgment, yet in fullest grace. And we, partakers of this life which has come through death, have justification attaching to the life we have received: “justification of life” (Rom. v. 18).

Quickening with Christ involves this justification; for if, on the one hand, we are “justified by His blood,” on the other, “He was raised again for our justification” (Rom. iv. 25). This was God’s open attestation of the acceptance of His work, and of course on our behalf for whom it was accomplished. Quickened with Christ means, then, participation in this acceptance: “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. ii. 13). “He has quickened” involves this, that He has forgiven. You are sharers in that divine work which attests your acceptance. You are fruit of that corn of wheat which has fallen

into the ground and died that it might not abide alone. Death and judgment are behind you. You have eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but are passed from death unto life (Jno. v. 24).

This is what, I believe, is meant by "justification of life." We have on the one hand a life true and divine, which itself needs none; but on the other hand, as given to those by nature and practice sinners, it is the sign and assurance of guilt for them removed. This does not, it is plain, distinguish it from justification by faith, for it is he that believeth in Christ who is passed from death unto life. Faith is the expression of this life, as we have seen.

Another view that has been given asserts, however, a distinction. It is said to be—

"*a righteous title to life as his condition who before had to face condemnation as his condition for eternity. I need justification by faith—meritoriously by blood,—to clear me consciously from the consequence of my acts. I need justification of life to deliver me from being involved forever in Adam's one act of disobedience. By what the Lord has suffered for me I am cleared from all charge of guilt. As in Christ I am delivered from condemnation, for He will never be in that condition.*"

Now, without going into detail unnecessary for our present purpose, surely it is Christ's death for us which equally delivers from our connection with Adam as the head of a fallen race, and from our own personal guilt. It is strange how many overlook Romans v. 16, which asserts this: not only justification from *sin*, but *sins* also, by our connection with the last Adam: "the free gift is of *many offenses* unto justification." It is in Christ only that either the one or the other of these is ours. In the view I have just quoted, what creates the confusion is that connection with the Head of the race, or the place in Christ, is stated to be "by the indwelling of the Spirit." If this be so, either the Old-Testament saints must at some time or other receive the Spirit,

or can never be connected with the Head of the race, nor be freed from condemnation in the first Adam! The question raised here we shall however better consider at a future time. In the meanwhile it is sufficient to show, as I believe has been fully shown, that justification is necessarily the accompaniment of the life received, that, in this sense, "justification of life" is a truth of Scripture.*

* Let me quote (for the sake of truth which seems already to be slipping away from us.) from one of the earlier writings of him whom I have already quoted more than once in this connection:—

"The life of the Church is identified with the resurrection of Christ, and therefore the unqualified forgiveness of all its flesh could do, for it was borne and borne away. The justification of the Church is identified with living grace; for it has it because quickened together with Him as out of the grave, where He buried all its sins. Thus are necessarily connected regeneration and justification," etc. (*Operations of the Spirit*, p. 14.)

It is true that in other writings he says that quickening with Christ involves union, and the impossibility of holding both views is fast causing the disappearance of the former one. In my former tract I said, "'With Christ' . . . associates the quickening with Christ's own deliverance from death, which was the justification of all connected with Him. *This quickening (so identified) is then itself, as it were, our justification.*" This did not, as I thought would be obvious, confound the truth of justification with quickening, any more than the language before quoted confounds the "life of the Church" with "forgiveness." But it was objected to by many, although the doctrine of John v. one would have thought to be known to be entirely similar. The world lies in death and under condemnation, Christ quickens out of it, and those thus quickened are *quickened out of the sphere of condemnation*, have eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but are "passed from death unto life."

It was objected that "in Christ" is "new creation," which assuredly it is, our new-creation place, and surely he that is brought into that is brought *out of* the condemnation of the old.

But again, it has been argued that Romans does not give the new creation, and *Christ's headship in chap. v. is not even connected with this!* And why? Because union is necessary to new creation, and Romans does not give union!

I need not dwell upon this, I trust. It shows sadly how intelligent and godly men, in attempting to think out an inconsistent doctrine, can fall into confusion. But there is one objection yet remains, which has more in it, and may cause difficulty. Abraham, it is said, is the pattern of a justified man; but if one must be in Christ to be justified, Abraham could not then have been in Christ. That is true, but the objection is easily met and removed. For justification was *not* the condition of saints of the Old Testament, as Romans iii. 25, 26 shows, while Abraham, to *make* him a pattern for us, is pronounced righteous by an *exceptional sentence* upon God's part. For us, Christ was raised for our justification, and, as soon as we believe, we come under this sentence, and need no other.

And now we are brought fully to consider the place in Christ. It is as risen from the dead that He is "made," as Peter witnesses, "Lord and Christ." It is in this way that He becomes also the last Adam. The two things are inseparably connected. It is in Christ that God is to "*head up* all things which are in heaven and which are on earth" (Eph. i. 10, *Gr.*); and to be in Christ is, as we have seen, a question of "nature and life."* "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God *in Christ Jesus.*" "The gift of God is eternal life *in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" These passages, and indeed the whole of the sixth and seventh chapters, are corollaries to the doctrine of the two Adams in Romans v. Nothing would seem more evident than that the possession of the life involves that of the place, as life in One who has accomplished His work in behalf of His people. The doctrine of Scripture seems every where plain as to this.†

The text,—the one text,—that is produced as in opposition to this consistent doctrine is Romans viii. 9.

"You ask me on what ground it is I state that connection with the Head of the race, the being in Christ, is by the Spirit. Roman viii. 9 is the positive scripture about it."

* "We are *in Him.* That is more than union, but not the same thing. It is *nature and life.*" (*Synopsis*, Jno. xiv. 20, note.)

† It is this that is the error in a recent tract put forth to teach that "in Christ" is not place or standing at all, but rather state. The writer does not see this difference, that while it is state—"nature and life"—to be "in the Son," the expression "in Christ" brings in the value of that work in virtue of which He is "*made Christ,*" and attaches this value to us—identified with Him who has done the work. But also the doctrine taught is a direct corollary of that that we are "in Christ" by the indwelling of the Spirit: for he argues *this* cannot have to do with standing; which is true, and applies equally to the truth of being quickened with Christ. Standing is implied in both: "quickened *with Christ*" as definitely connects life and position as "*life in Christ;* both speak of a new sphere into which we are brought by the value of His work *out of* the old one, to which judgment attached.

Let us look, then, at this passage, and see carefully whether it does indeed necessitate a new reading of all the many texts that we have been considering hitherto. The verse, with its context, reads,—

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

Upon this the brother just now quoted remarks,—

“In Christ, and Christ in us, are concurrent, and both from being indwelt by the Spirit. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not His,—not Christ’s, *i. e.*, not *in* Christ, as Galatians iii. 28, 29 shows, where both the terms “Christ’s” and “in Christ” are used to express the same truth. As to the Old-Testament saints, I believe with you that they are in Christ, but that was not dispensationally true of them. So I could not say they *were* in Christ. In God’s purpose of course they were so viewed; but just as you could not have said of them dispensationally that they had everlasting life, so you could not say they were in Christ. For us, it is true that if we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are not His, or not in Him. Having the Spirit of Christ, we are brought into connection with the Head of the race.”

Now, first, as to Old-Testament saints: if we, having life before, are only in Christ as having the Spirit indwelling, then they too, surely, must have it in the same way. But Scripture is silent as to this, and what is said is a mere escape out of a very grave difficulty. With the doctrine which Scripture teaches, there is no difficulty at all. Of course they could not be in Christ before Christ had come, but they were in the Son as having life in Him; and having this, when the Son of God in fulfillment of the divine purposes became Christ, they were *then* in Christ necessarily. There is here no difficulty at all.

As to eternal life, they had it, although uncon-

scious that they had it; just as they were children of God, and knew it not. In Christ they were not yet, and thus there is a plain distinction which the question of dispensation does not affect. We are speaking now neither of dispensation nor of divine purpose, but of the actual fact.

But "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not His," or, as it is argued from Galatians, "not in Him." Does the passage in Galatians make these two equivalent? "Not His" seems plain enough English, as it is plainly also the sense of the Greek.* It cannot be contended that either in English or Greek the expressions *mean* exactly the same. Each has its own well-defined force. Why, then, in Galatians or any where else, are we to take them as equivalents? All that can be urged, then, really from Galatians is that it is they, and only they, that are "in Him" that are "His." But that would in no wise contradict the doctrine we are contending for: it is quite what I believe. But for "in Him" to cover all "His," it must be applicable to all quickened by Him, or are these really in no wise "His"?

The passage in Galatians asserts that "ye are all sons† of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized unto Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, . . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Nothing here would teach us that to be "in Christ" was only true of those who were Christ's in a

* The genitive of possession is at least as common in the New Testament as the dative, so that objections on this score can hardly be maintained. See Matt. v. 3, 10; 2 Cor. iii. 21-23; 2 Tim. ii. 19, etc. But taken as the genitive of origin, who could deny that those quickened by Him are thus "His"? "He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one [ἐξ εὐοῶ], for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren."

† See afterward as to "sons" and "children."

narrower sense than would include all born of God. To make these expressions to this extent equivalent would not narrow the meaning of being Christ's in the way required. It is simple enough that if the Spirit of Christ in fact be His seal put upon those that are "His," or "in Him," then where this seal is not, we cannot conclude them to be in Him or His; but it does not show that we *become* His or in Him *by* receiving the Spirit. A seal affirms what already exists.

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God:" they are affirmed to *be* sons, not *made* sons, in this way.

It is not yet the place to inquire as to the time or conditions of sealing; but if we are to take "he is none of His" in the simple, straightforward way in which all would naturally understand it, then it is here declared that all Christ's people are recipients of the Spirit, and there is practically no middle class that have not yet received it. That some brief interval may exist between new birth and sealing would not, I think, be denied by it, and that is why I say "practically," but no such large and now preponderating class such as is by some contended for, and of the existence of which Scripture gives us no hint.

Take "none of His" in the simple, natural sense, and the whole difficulty of the passage vanishes, and the connection with the Head of the race remains the simple obvious one which the parallel with the first Adam implies, viz., *birth*-connection,—with the last Adam, *new* birth.

But there is another point connected with this passage and with the position we are taking: What is it to be "in the flesh"? and who are "in the flesh"? Again there seem to be different utterances as to this. Referring to the verse before us, it has been said,—

“Though the flesh is in us, we are not in it, *not in that standing before God*, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us; not, if born of God; that they were when undelivered.” (*Synopsis*.)

Here, to be in the flesh is said to be a question of standing before God; and so the same writer says,—

“In this sense, what is it to be in the flesh? It is to be in relationship with God on the ground of our natural responsibility as men, as children of fallen Adam.” (*Sealing*, p. 14.)

And elsewhere he says,—

“Being in the flesh is being in the standing of the first Adam before God, and *not in Christ*.”

In this way, then, the question supposed settled returns upon us. Here, one born of God is stated to be, if not indwelt by the Holy Ghost, still on the ground of natural responsibility as a fallen creature, the standing of the first Adam before God. But that, then, is under condemnation, clearly. It *is*, I believe, what “in the flesh” infers; but can, then, a child of God be really in the flesh thus? “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, but he that believeth not the Son, . . . the wrath of God abideth on him.” Is not the possession of life here contrasted with being under the wrath of God? may one have this life, and still the wrath of God abide?

“Hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.” “Quickened together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses.” Surely it is in vain to bring forward texts, if these are not decisive.

To be in the flesh *is* to be in the standing of the first Adam before God; it is to be under condemnation as a fallen and guilty creature. For what is its plain meaning, but that such an one is a living accountable man, over whom the law hath dominion as long as he liveth. A dead man is not in the flesh. He that is dead is justified from sin. He that is thus dead with Christ has passed necessarily from

under condemnation. He that is quickened with Christ shares in His death, and is dead with Him. Dead indeed unto sin, he is alive unto God *in* Christ Jesus.

Thus the one born of God can never be in the flesh; and thus we obtain additional confirmation of the truth of our interpretation of Romans viii. 9. If you are not in the Spirit, you are in the flesh, you are none of His. This must be taken in the largest sense: you are not His at all.

But there is another interpretation of what it is to be in the flesh. One several times before quoted remarks,—

“I could not say a quickened soul was under wrath, or liable to condemnation. That would be wrong. But Scripture would lead me to say that such an one, unless indwelt by the Spirit, was still in the flesh, as Romans viii. 9 distinctly teaches, and Romans vii. 5, 14 (when the latter is rightly read, *σάρκινος*) intimates. Such an one, quickened, but in the flesh still, is *σάρκινος*, not *σαρκικός* of course, the contrast to being spiritual, *πνευματικός*, *i. e.*, one indwelt by the Spirit. Old-Testament saints, I take it, were in the flesh, or fleshly. But since being in the flesh is not now the normal condition, dispensationally, of a saint of God, (indeed such an one, in the flesh, would not, according to Scripture, I think, be called a Christian,) the apostle, while he owns there is such a state, does not contemplate those to whom he writes as really in it. Of course we must distinguish between one under wrath and one in the flesh. The former is true only of one not born again. The latter is not a condition necessarily foreign to a saint.”

Now one who considers that those Corinthians to whom the apostle could not write as unto spiritual (*πνευματικοῖς*), yet surely had the Spirit, may well doubt whether “spiritual” and “in the Spirit” (in the sense of Romans viii. 9) are in Scripture equivalent things. And this would suggest a question as to whether *σάρκινος*—fleshly, and in the flesh, are equivalent really. Our brother must allow that the Corinthians were not “in the flesh” (or, as he thinks,

and rightly, they would not be called Christians), and yet they are not only *σαρκινοί* (1 Cor. iii. 1), but *σαρκικοί* (v. 3), fleshly in the fuller sense! Is "in the flesh," then, a moral condition simply, as he makes it?

Yet a moral condition associated with a fleshly standing must be admitted. We can well understand how "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." And not only so, but until deliverance from the standing is consciously experienced, power will not be found to live to God. But we shall look at this better at a later stage of our present inquiry. In the meanwhile it is enough to say that "in the flesh," when used in the simple every-day sense, and also commonly in Scripture, denotes the condition of a living man. Remembering that a Christian is dead with Christ, and that it is this that the apostle is all through applying, the inevitable consequence will be that the phrase "in the flesh" denotes the condition of one who is still, in the divine estimate, a living accountable child of Adam,—in other words, a sinner in his sins.

II.

THE question of sealing has now been fairly raised, and it will be as well to examine it before we go further.

A seal is for confirmation or affirmation of what is one's own, with the collateral idea of security. The one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed of Israel illustrate both these things. The result of the sealing appears, in chap. 14, in their having the Lamb's and His Father's name written on their foreheads. This seal is their preservative from the power of the locusts (Rev. vii. 3; xiv. 1; ix. 4).

"Seals were employed, not for the purpose of impressing a device on wax, but in place of a sign manual, to stamp the name of the owner upon any document to which he determined to affix it." (*Kitto.*) Here, in Revelation, the seal is evidently a stamp, and it is given to mark to whom they belong.

Christ Himself is sealed (with the Spirit) by the Father, as He Himself says (Jno. vi. 27), the Father's voice affirming Him to be His beloved Son.

With us, the Spirit is the witness of sonship, the Spirit of adoption sent forth into our hearts, because we are sons, to affirm it (Rom. viii; Gal. iv.).

No one will, I suppose, question statements which the word of God so clearly supports. But then it follows that the Spirit is not the seal of any special faith apart from that which constitutes "sons." "*Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.*"

True, it is answered, but that is a "special faith:" "the gift of the Holy Ghost is God's seal of acknowledgment set upon him, the moment he believes himself, on the ground of God's own testimony, to be His 'child,' or

(what is equivalent) believes in the forgiveness of his sins for Jesus' sake." "When a man believes, on God's testimony, that Jesus is the Christ, and yet doubts if he himself is born of God, he still 'makes God a liar' as to one half of His testimony. God cannot seal him thus. When he credits the full testimony, making application of it to himself, and (believing his sins forgiven and himself to be a 'child,') takes his rank as a 'son,' God immediately owns him as such (Gal. iii. 26; iv. 6), and seals him with His Spirit, who thenceforth witnesseth with his spirit that he is a 'child' of God."

The question of forgiveness of sins we must yet reserve. That of sonship seems simple. It is true that there is a difference between "son" and "child,"—*υἱὸς* and *τέκνον*,—the latter speaking of birth-relationship, the former of acknowledged place with the father; but acknowledged *by whom?* By the father, surely. And this we shall find in fact the key to the whole difficulty. How can it make us "sons" to acknowledge ourselves? or where does Scripture say that *our* acknowledgment must precede God's acknowledgment? The texts appealed to prove the opposite: "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." It is thus the time dispensationally in which God is acknowledging His children—taking them for sons. And just as it is said that "he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is *born* of God,"—is His *τέκνον*, "child,"—so is it said that "ye are all the *sons* of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

Sad indeed is the unbelieving doubt where God has spoken; but God has another way of dealing with it than that asserted to be His; and the Galatians are the poorest possible witnesses for the principle alleged. *Why* had the apostle to press on them this fact of their sonship? Why, if the fact of their having the Spirit forbade a doubt? Scripture at least does *not* declare the doctrine contended for,

and least of all the texts appealed to for it. The truth as to what we are does not, thank God, depend upon our apprehension of it.

But to this we must return hereafter. One text as to sealing we must look at now, the only one that remains, in which we have positive, direct statement on the subject. It is of course Ephesians i. 13, which literally reads,—

“In whom ye also, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also having believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of your inheritance.”

“In whom ye also”—what? It surely is to be connected with “in whom we also have obtained an inheritance,” of verse 11; but it makes no great difference. The gospel of their salvation is that upon the hearing of which they learned to believe in Christ; and believing in Him, they were sealed. This is the whole Scripture-statement.

The gospel they heard saved them; but it does not say, When they believed their salvation. How easy to say it, if such were the fact! and how decisive! It does not say so; and it is surely perfect: it says, “Believing in Him.”

Faith in Christ is uniformly what is emphasized. The effects which follow from this, while fully testified to, are never confounded with it.

But not only so; not only was it in Him they believed, but *upon* believing, they were sealed. There is no “after” as in the English version. The simple prerequisite to sealing was faith in Him. This is the plain sense; and it harmonizes fully with all else that we have found in Scripture.

But it is not our faith even that would warrant the Holy Ghost’s dwelling in us. None but the Lord was ever sealed in testimony to what was in Himself; and He, therefore, without bloodshedding. Upon us must already be the value of His work, or

seal us He could not. Let this be noted well. It is not to the value of our faith He witnesses, but of *Christ's work.* Even in the old economy circumcision was the seal of the righteousness of faith, not of the faith itself. How much more when the seal is the Spirit indwelling!

This brings us to another consideration. In speaking of the gift of the Holy Ghost to us as "sealing," we are apt to characterize it by what is only *one* aspect, and that a secondary one. "Sealing" speaks of the effect for us: it is acknowledgment of *us*, security for *us*, and blessed all this is; but when we speak of the coming of the Spirit and of His witness as thus come, what is that witness essentially? Surely it is to Christ Himself,—to Christ risen and glorified; to Christ as Lord of all. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." "He shall glorify Me." "He shall testify of Me." "He being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth that which ye now see and hear."

There is no Christian surely who would deny this. The only question is, has not the blessedness for *us*, the personal effect, necessarily and rightly insisted on, obscured a little the well-known and evident truth? If so, the best corrective will be to take up the narrative of the Acts, and look fairly and fully at the history of the early Church.

We have the books of the New Testament bound up in one volume, and we read them rightly as one consistent whole. But then we are apt in this way to forget that the actual revelation of divine truth was in fact more or less gradual, the transition from Judaism to Christianity effected by degrees only. This indeed has ever been God's way, not only to give partial disclosures, but by various instruments.

Although surely all consistent, yet Paul's doctrine is not John's, nor John's Peter's, nor Peter's James'; and there is profit in observing the distinctions, as well as in realizing the actual harmony. And with each of these we should err if we did not allow for growth of knowledge and development of doctrine.

As those for whom I now write are accustomed to such thoughts, I need not dwell upon them at length; but a great deal as to our present inquiry depends upon the apprehension we have of the development of the New-Testament doctrine.

We shall find a broad distinction thus between the teaching of Paul and of the twelve in general. Paul we have learnt indeed to recognize as in a special sense the "minister of the Church," as his claim is, in Colossians i. 25, "Whereof I am made minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill [give the fullness of] the word of God." But in the same chapter he claims also, in similar words, to be "made minister of the *gospel*," surely in some special way. In 1 Corinthians i. 17, he says, similarly and emphatically, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:" it was in his special commission, as baptism was not. In fact, as is well known, the secret of the divine power in the gospel, on account of which he says he is not ashamed of it, he alone proclaimed, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; for therein is the *righteousness of God* revealed." This is doctrine that Paul alone declares to us, God's righteousness revealed in good news to men. Salvation, therefore, as a present thing, and justification,—a sentence which the righteousness of God alone can pronounce: these are essential features of what he calls, "My gospel."

If Paul, then, is minister of the Church and of the gospel, the twelve are surely ministers of the king-

dom and of its special line of truth. To Peter, chief among these, the "keys of the kingdom" are, though not exclusively, committed. The proclamation of Christ as Lord, of remission of sins through His name, administrative, baptismal remission, as he proclaims it on the day of Pentecost,—these things are what we find in the opening of the Acts. Not a word of Paul's themes: you will look in vain for any announcement, much less doctrine, of the Church; the Spirit is come, but we have no word of sealing, of adoption even. It is what is spoken of by the prophet Joel. No hint of deliverance from the law; they zealously keep it for long after; Peter has to have a vision to make him go to men uncircumcised, and a special meeting of apostles and elders has to determine, eighteen years after Pentecost, that the Gentiles are free.

Yet the Spirit of God had come! How significant that fact should be to those who would antedate Paul's doctrine by all these years! and make the possession of the Spirit carry one necessarily into the eighth of Romans! Let us trace, then, as it is most interesting and instructive to do, the development of the truth in this way, briefly of course, but sufficiently to make clear the points of our inquiry.

The first chapter settles one point that has been questioned. In the Acts we read not of sealing or indwelling, but of the Holy Ghost being poured out and coming or falling upon men. Are these, then, the same thing? No doubt there is a difference corresponding to the difference of terms used. One could not say that one upon whom the Spirit of God fell was necessarily sealed or indwelt. On the contrary, it was possible for him to be an unsaved man. So much, both Old Testament and New assure us of. Yet this first chapter declares expressly that at Pentecost the "promise of the Father" was fulfilled and the baptism of the Holy Ghost took place.

Here we have the needed witness that both the indwelling of the Spirit began, and also the body of Christ to be formed, for "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13). The history gives, naturally and necessarily, the outward sign only of this, and which did not absolutely certify that every one receiving it had the inward corresponding grace; yet where there was real faith in the heart, and at first almost universally, the two went together. There is but one history for both: if the Acts be not this, then there is none at all.

I do not doubt, then, the correctness of quoting the history here as evidence with regard to sealing; and it has been freely quoted on all sides. It is evident, indeed, that it cannot be a full account, but it will be a just and a *sufficient* account, and perfectly fitted to give us the true impression. We are entitled to search it, as all other scripture, and to build with implicit faith upon all its statements.

Now that which is in question here is this: In what way is it that we find in the history that the Holy Ghost is given? in what connection with the remission of sins? and as to this also, in what way is it proclaimed? Is appropriating faith in Christ's blessed work shown to be the necessity for its reception? or what *is* shown?

Let us first of all consider the doctrine already reached. Quickening is by the voice of the Son of God, divine power working upon the basis of atonement, the only ground of all possible blessing for man; that atonement now wrought out, and life now received from and in the last Adam, involving of necessity as its accompaniment forgiveness of sins and justification of life. But these things need yet to be ministered to souls that they may have them in *conscious* possession; and in this ministration, holiness and the true blessing of souls must be preserved. There will be an order of apprehension,

therefore, of things which are from the first our own. And this is the way in which, generally speaking, the types and parables, as well as the gospel in its address to men, speak of them.

In the closing commissions of the three synoptic gospels, we find separately what in the Acts we must expect to find together. In Matthew, we have the commission to disciple to the Lord by baptism and teaching; in Mark, to preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized to be saved, and signs to follow faith; in Luke, the *terms* of the gospel, repentance and remission of sins to be preached in the name of the risen Christ.

In the second of Acts, the Lord being now ascended and the Holy Ghost come down, we find in considerable detail the first preaching of the gospel.

Peter is here the preacher, and he takes for his text, as I may say, the prophecy of Joel. This is what is spoken of by the prophet Joel, he says; the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh in anticipation of the great and notable day of the Lord, and salvation for all that call on the name of the Lord,—that is, bow in truth of heart to His authority.

He then declares to them the terrible fact that Jesus of Nazareth, to whom God had given unmistakable witness by signs and wonders done among them, they had crucified and slain by the hands of lawless men, God fulfilling, however, His own counsel in it, and now having raised from the dead One impossible to be holden by it. David had spoken of this in spirit, personating One greater, that God would not leave His soul in hades, nor suffer His holy One to see corruption. This declared the resurrection of Christ, which God had now accomplished. Nay, He had set Him in the heavens at His right hand, in accordance with another prophecy, till His enemies should be made His footstool. "Therefore," concludes the apostle, "let all the house of

Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

This is thus far the proclamation of the name and authority of Him to whom as Lord they must bow for salvation, whom (terrible news!) they had rejected and crucified. It is the gospel of the kingdom, the announcement of One upon the throne of heaven, upon the acceptance or rejection of whom salvation depends. God’s controversy now with man is for the rejection of Christ, but upon submission, grace is still ready to interpose and save. The *work* which saves is not yet declared; but they are called to receive as Lord and Christ (Messiah) the crucified, dead, risen, and exalted Jesus.

They are pricked to the heart, as well they might be, (but it was divine love and power working,) and cry out in conviction and alarm, “Brethren, what shall we do?” “Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.’” He preaches the repentance and remission of sins of Luke’s commission, but he connects this with the discipling to the Lord by baptism of the commission in Matthew, “Be *baptized* in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.”

What does this connection mean, then? Does it mean that they were to be baptized in order *afterward* to receive remission of sins? or does it mean rather that they should receive it in the baptism? We must answer, Without doubt, the latter. This should be plain, at least in Ananias’ words to Saul, as he gives them (xxii. 16), “Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord.”

So great an abuse has been made of such scriptures, that it is no great wonder if Christians are sensitive upon the subject, but the remedy will not be found

in denying the plain force of the words. It has been attempted to be shown, or rather, it has been asserted, that "washing away sins" here even did not refer to baptism, but was the result of calling on the name of the Lord. There is no doubt that it all goes together; but let any one put together "be baptized for the remission of sins" and "be baptized and wash away thy sins," and say, if he can, that remission of sins is not by baptism.

Of course the Romanist remission of sins this is not, but the natural recoil of Protestants from this error has carried them into extreme on the other side. Ask them what the Lord means by saying to His disciples, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them" (Jno. xx. 23), they will tell you that it refers to the preaching of the gospel! And to this some from whom one would expect more still cling or have gone back. In a recent publication I find—

"This is the general commission of the disciples to bear the testimony of remission of sins to the world He sends them forth to proclaim it to others—to 'whosoever' would accept it."

Now it should be plain that that is just the opposite of what we have in the Lord's words. It is *not* a general announcement which people were to appropriate for themselves, but a definite conveyance of forgiveness to particular individuals: *those* whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven. Whose sins do *I* forgive, when I preach the gospel? This is not an interpretation of the words, but an evacuation of their meaning.

So far we go with the Romanist, but it is but a little way; for what kind of remission is this which men are authorized thus to convey to men? Such as to make them fit for heaven, so that the "keys" shall be the "keys of heaven"? forgiveness in absolute grace, plenary and unconditional? Surely not:

this could in no way be put into the hands of man; the keys are not the keys of heaven, but the "keys of heaven's kingdom" upon earth; forgiveness administrative, governmental, conditional only. Take the parable of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew xviii, and you have the Lord's own illustration of it. The one there forgiven all his debt, but not manifesting the spirit of forgiveness, forfeits what he has received. He is "delivered to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due." "So likewise," adds the Lord, "shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Notice that it is in this very connection that He gives to the disciples at large the power to bind and loose, which in the sixteenth chapter He had given to Peter, *connecting it there with the power of the keys*: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Now if baptism be for the remission of sins, we have a plain instance of this administrative forgiveness. A man baptized takes his place as a disciple and subject of the Lord, and comes from the outside world of Satan's rule into a place where (*if it be a reality in his soul,*) forgiveness of sins attaches to him. He has this definite conditional (not absolute) forgiveness. It is all that men can convey, but this they can and do.

As I have already said, it is with the kingdom that the twelve are clearly connected in Scripture, even to sitting finally upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28). There is no room here for Paul, to whom a very different testimony is committed. Thus we find Peter on the day of Pentecost announcing Christ as Lord, telling them that they shall find salvation, calling on the

name of the Lord,—*i. e.*, by submission to His authority, and baptizing them in His name for the forgiveness of their sins. So Ananias also exhorts Saul to be baptized and wash away his sins, *calling on the name of the Lord*: it is thus that these things are connected together.

Remission of sins, then, in Acts ii. 38 is by baptism, the authoritative assurance to the soul of this, if only the bowing to the authority of the Lord be real,—if it be truthful discipleship. We have seen that if life be there, forgiveness is its necessary accompaniment. Here it is appropriated *to*, not *by*, the believer,—a most important distinction, as we shall realize if we now look elsewhere through Scripture to ascertain in general its doctrine as to remission of sins.

Under the law it was universally connected (save in one case only that I know) with *sacrifice*. “Without shedding of blood was no remission.” This being offered, the sin in question was pronounced forgiven (Lev. iv.).

There were cases, however, in which no sacrifice was provided or could avail, which the law offered. Here, as in David’s case, God could yet come in: “The Lord hath put away thy sin.”

In the exceptional case above referred to, God provided for the poverty that could not bring the offering required. Here, a meat-offering of flour was permitted and accepted as a sacrifice would have been. This, in type, is significant, and should be helpful to us. Christ trusted in before God, where yet the soul has never grasped the meaning of His cross, (*I do not say, denies it*)—Christ trusted in, I say, as a Saviour from sin, avails for its remission. And poor as this state of soul is, we may thank God that seeing what really avails to put away sin He can forgive still. Surely this bears upon the point before us. It shows distinctly that

forgiveness there can be, apart from the apprehension of the *ground* of forgiveness.

Confession of sin, on the other hand, was evidently and necessarily implied wherever there was sacrifice for it, and with this all Scripture agrees. Thus the Psalmist: "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said, 'I will confess my transgression unto the Lord,' and so Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. xxxii.). When the confession is wrung out of Isaiah, "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts," then the seraph lays upon his lips the live coal from off the altar, and says, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Again, when Joshua the high-priest stands in the filthy garments of his iniquity before the Lord, the angel of the Lord says unto those who stand by, "Take away the filthy garments from him;" and then unto him He says, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

Thus, upon confession of sins, through sacrifice, God remitted sins; declaring, at the same time, that He did so, that faith might rejoice in the gracious declaration. *Faith in the forgiveness was never made the condition of the forgiveness, but sprang out of the certification of the forgiveness itself.*

So in the gospels, to one sick of the palsy the Lord says, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sin be forgiven thee;" and to the woman in the Pharisee's house,—where indeed, I doubt not, there was already the sense of forgiveness in the soul,—"Thy sins are forgiven thee."

John preaches the "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;" and the Lord, after His resurrection, commands that "repentance and remission

of sins should be preached in His name." And the apostle John says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In all these passages one consistent doctrine is declared, and a perfectly simple and intelligible one. Remission is declared upon repentance,—*i. e.*, the taking true ground before God in the confession of sins. Faith in the forgiveness is never proclaimed as the condition of forgiveness, but springs out of the divine declaration itself.

How plainly, then, does Acts ii. 38 connect with the teaching of Scripture at large, appropriation *to*, not *by*, the soul, upon the warrant of which the soul is now to appropriate it! And if even it be slow and unbelieving as to this, "the *gifts* and calling of God are without repentance." In days when to the unbelief which clings so much even to the believer is added the general clouding of the gospel of grace, no wonder if souls are robbed of their portion. The remedy is not to deny it to be theirs, but to teach them to appropriate what God "without repentance" appropriates to them.

But we have not yet got at the full meaning of Acts ii. 38. We must yet connect with the Scripture-doctrine of baptism as we have already connected it with that of the remission of sins. Peter's teaching we must above all connect with his words here. I quote from a more correct version than our common one:—

"Which figure also now saves you, even baptism, (not a putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the demand as before God of a good conscience,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being subjected to Him."

The "figure" is water, used as such in baptism, and which, as used there, saves us now. We see at

once that he is speaking of the kingdom, and the *administration* of salvation, as we have before heard him speak of the *administration* of forgiveness. Baptism puts where, if we are really disciples, salvation is ours. But how? "By the resurrection of Christ," he answers, "who is at the right hand of God." This gives us clearly the connection with the second of Acts: it is the calling on the name of the risen and exalted Lord which is salvation, and of this baptism is the expression; but there is another thing—"not a putting away of the filth of the flesh"—not any reformation on man's part,—“but the demand as before God of a good conscience,” *i. e.*, the *seeking* of one: and this too baptism expresses. It is in Acts such a "seeking" on the part of guilty and convicted men. And how are they to find this? Here surely again the "resurrection of Christ" comes in, but as manifesting the completion and acceptance of His work for our sins, so that forgiveness (we must not speak of justification yet,) becomes a possibility.

Here, then, comes in the work of the cross. It could not be left out where the forgiveness of sins is ministered. "Know ye not," asks the apostle, "that as many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto His *death*?" This indeed is Paul's question, but it is a question which evidently refers to what was universally acknowledged among Christians. We may not go on indeed to his further doctrine, but we cannot but go so far. Here, then, the work of atonement *is* recognized as that through which alone forgiveness comes. The blessed work for sinners is applied *to* sinners in the symbol of baptism, and they are made to know that the blood shed on the cross *they* gave the Son of God avails to save them from their sin.

This, too, unites with what we have seen before. "Without shedding of blood is no remission," and

the testimony of this was given to Israel continually in those sacrifices which as individuals they brought for sin, as well as in those which year by year on the day of atonement put away their sins as a whole. In baptism, the one great sacrifice which had taken the place of all other sacrifices was now ministered to those who believed in Christ,—but was ministered to them, their interest in it assured to them, *not assurance of their interest required from them*, and thus remission of sins is made their own.

Had any refused baptism, they would have refused at once submission to the Lord's authority and the efficacy of His precious death. So if faith in the work of Christ be not, it would be impossible to count a man a Christian at all; but more—much more—than this is meant when it is contended that for forgiveness, appropriating faith in Christ's work must be found. Forgiveness belongs to every quickened soul, but is authoritatively to be assured to every soul that, convicted of sin, owns Christ as its Lord and looks to Him as Saviour. Have we not dwelt too much upon our appropriation, and dared too little to dwell upon *God's* appropriation of Christ's precious work to those that believe on Him?

We have not come yet to Paul, but Paul in the tenth of Romans is on common ground with Peter at Pentecost. Hear him (*rv. 6-13*):—

“The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth

unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, 'Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.' For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Who can fail to recognize the similarity? The only difference is that Paul speaks of *righteousness*, and Peter of the forgiveness of sins. But this is the same gospel of the kingdom, even to the quoting Joel, as Peter does. Baptism is not mentioned, for it did not find place in Paul's commission; but that which it expresses does—the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord. Faith in the glorified Person is what is insisted on.

Paul, as we know, went every where preaching the kingdom (Acts xx. 25; xxviii. 31). Here, we have evidently the form in which he preached it, and in which it was received among the Gentiles, but we may have to return to this further on.

Let us examine now the statements made as to sealing and the day of Pentecost (*Sealing*, p. 10). It is said,—

"God sets His seal on those who believe, on the ground of the perfect work of Christ, and His being glorified in consequence. Of this, John vii, Acts ii, and the day of Pentecost are witnesses. They were believers and for a good while, and they were to wait at Jerusalem to be inducted with power from on high. They believed on Christ as One dead, risen, and glorified, *and that faith was sealed*; but the work was fully accomplished and Christ fully glorified, or the Holy Ghost would not have been there. The effect was to follow. They belonged to God according to the perfect work of Christ, and were sealed as such."

So far, all is absolute agreement. The tract goes on:—

"The presence of the Holy Ghost was the immediate consequence of Christ's work and glory, *where faith in it was*, without any question of experience or a work within,

save that they believed. It was the seal of faith. As a seal, it had nothing to do with experience."

Here there is only one expression which needs attention. "Where faith in it was"—in what? In Christ's glory? in His work for sinners? in its effects for them? and what effects? How many questions may be asked of that which these words cover! Do those who accept this so unhesitatingly believe that every truly converted man who has no question that Christ has died for sinners, and that God has accepted it, and Christ is in glory, and whose dependence is upon Him for salvation too, is sealed or has the faith that can be sealed? Assuredly they do not. Let us have the terms fully defined, and we shall be better able to appreciate what is in question.

But further, in a loose way we may speak of the Holy Ghost being the "seal of *faith*." If it be meant only that it is believers—not unbelievers—who are sealed, there can be no great objection; but if it be meant for a strictly accurate statement, then one must question. It is *we*, not our faith, that are sealed. And this is a great practical difference. For God's seal, assuredly, the seal of the Holy Ghost, is the witness of the perfection which alone God can approve. So the Lord's own words in John vi. The Son of Man gives, and is, the meat that endures to everlasting life—has no element of corruption in it,—"*for Him hath God the Father sealed.*" Has any one of us a *faith* that thus God could seal? No, assuredly. But how much more clearly still is this seen, when this seal is the *indwelling* of the Spirit! This can only be the witness to the perfection of the one in whom he thus can dwell: Christ's personal perfection, ours *in Him*. Let this be solemnly weighed. The Spirit of God is the seal of the believer as one who is in the value of Christ's work before God, *not in the value of his apprehension of*

that work. This seen, the whole matter assumes another aspect.

In page 18 of the tract from which I am quoting, Acts ii. is again appealed to:—

“If we look into details, and build on Scripture-statements, we find there must be faith in the work of Christ as well as in His person in order to a person being sealed. Thus when the terrible conviction was produced in the minds of the Jews, that Jesus was the Christ, and that they had rejected Him, but God exalted Him, they say, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Peter says, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.’ They are to believe in the exaltation of Christ, of which the gifts were the present proof, but they were to *partake in the effects of His work* in order to receive the Holy Ghost.”

True: who could deny it? but how does this prove what is maintained? They were to be “*baptized for the remission of sins.*” Submitting to the authority of Christ, they received the assurance of the remission of sins, the effect of His work. Every soul that in faith owned Christ, was entitled to the baptism by which his sins were forgiven. His baptism was the seeking, the request of a good conscience. It did not assert that he had found it, but was seeking it; and yet *in that same baptism which expressed this*, he was assured that, if this were truth of heart with him, his sins were washed away. Nothing could be much more opposed to what the tract quoted seeks to prove.

Now if this be so, the doctrine of Scripture is unmistakably shown already. There is no need, of course, to question the simplicity of these early converts in receiving the assurance of forgiveness so made to them. We should have to build upon conjecture if we made the completeness of their faith or otherwise any ground of argument. The point is, in what way, according to the inspired testimony, were these things presented to them? and here the apostle's words are plain, that repenting and being

baptized for the remission of sins, they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Is it a true representation of the matter to insist upon that as the essential point which the word of God absolutely omits altogether? Believers in Christ, repenting and being baptized, received the Holy Ghost! Who can deny that that is the Scripture-statement? Only let us adhere to it, and the underlying doctrine is clear and unmistakable.

Now we may pass on more rapidly, for we have but to note the agreement or differences in cases which cannot be fundamentally at variance. In chap. 8 we find Philip in Samaria "preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ," and the Samaritans believing "were baptized, both men and women." Here we find no change of order, but a delay in the receiving of the Holy Ghost. Apostles' hands too are here used to convey it, but we do not know that they were even as yet always needed. Ananias' hands seem to have been used with Paul, and he himself at Ephesus thus lays them upon the twelve disciples of the Baptist. The delay at Samaria is certainly not due to any defective faith on the part of those baptized, and as far as our present question is concerned has no significance that we can speak of.

The next case is that of *Saul of Tarsus*, and here again there is a delay. Three days and nights he is without sight, and neither eats nor drinks, then receives his sight and washes away his sins in baptism, calling on the name of the Lord—entering the kingdom in the appointed way. So far, all is according to the order we have already remarked. But it is to be noted that Paul learns from the Lord's lips, when He appears to him in the way, of "forgiveness of sins . . . by faith in" Christ simply (Acts xxvi. 18). Baptism did not, as we

know, come into his commission; yet he himself receives the Holy Ghost apparently after baptism, in the Jewish order. As to the three days of darkness, it is hard to understand how he, after the commission already received, and the terms of it just noted, could doubt the grace to himself, or to believe therefore that he was during this time learning the gospel in the words which had been spoken to him. Whatever he may have known—and we shall not speculate,—the Holy Ghost is given to him after baptism, in which authoritatively his sins are washed away.

In Cornelius' case, we come to the first pure Gentile. He was already converted, already knew of Jesus, and had heard of peace preached to Israel by Him. Peter announces Him as Lord of all men, hanged on a tree, raised up and shown openly to chosen witnesses, ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead: "to Him give all the prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth on Him should receive remission of sins."

Here God comes in, at once giving the Holy Ghost apart from baptism or the laying on of hands. Peter, guided of God in a manner evidently beyond his own intelligence, has omitted to speak of baptism as a prerequisite to its reception. No doubt he would have gone on to it, for in the account he gives at Jerusalem he says, "And as I *began* to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning." The reception of the Gentiles is thus declared by God, and baptism cannot be denied to those who have already received the Holy Ghost.

"It is the testimony to the remission of sins that is sealed by the Holy Ghost coming," says the tract before quoted. But are we at liberty to speak thus, in fact, in such different ways? But suppose it be allowed that the Holy Ghost seals the testimony of this, how different is this from what is sought to be

proved, that without appropriating faith in this testimony, the Holy Ghost cannot seal! The apostle's own account is, "God gave unto them the like gift as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ" (chap. xi. 17).

The character of the preaching is the same as before, repentance and baptism being both omitted; the work of atonement is not what is pressed, (though its effects are,) but faith in the risen Lord, baptism with its testimony coming *after* the reception of the Holy Ghost. Thus, while there is a difference, there is nothing in the least *contradictory* to what we have seen already, nor can there be. All falls readily into place, and harmonizes with the general doctrine. Peter, clearly, is in his own mind preaching what he elsewhere preaches, God breaking in upon it and introducing the Gentiles in His own sovereign grace.

Paul has in the meanwhile been raised up as the apostle of the Gentiles, and in the thirteenth chapter we find the gospel as preached of him among them. For the first time, here we find justification as well as the forgiveness of sins, and "from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Now justification, as has been already said, is Paul's own doctrine, and the gospel does not get its completeness until justification is proclaimed. Forgiveness is, in a certain sense, the very opposite of justification. Forgiveness is goodness and mercy acting; justification, *righteousness*. Forgiveness only preached, implies the work of Christ not yet in its full character revealed,—propitiation perhaps, but not substitution, thus not the depths into which Christ descended. Thus man's full need is not met, the question of nature is unsettled, dead with Christ, quickened with Christ, are things unknown. The doctrine of the two Adams and the place in Christ are all unknown.

But more; the *righteousness* of God in the cross for men is unknown also, and therefore, in the proper Pauline sense, salvation (Rom. i. 16, 17).

Dead to the law is of course also exclusively Paul's doctrine, because dead with Christ is. Eighteen years after Pentecost, it is decided at Jerusalem that the law is not to be bound upon the Gentiles; the Jews observe it still, and nine years later, it could be said of the thousands of Jewish believers there that they were "all zealous of the law."

I leave this to be weighed at leisure. One only testimony from the Acts remains.

In the nineteenth chapter, Paul finds certain disciples—clearly Jews—and says to them, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They answer, "We do not so much as know whether the Holy Ghost is." What urged him to put that question? It is not hard to understand, because signs every where indicated His presence then. And mark his next question. "And he said unto them, 'Unto what then were ye *baptized*?' " It was upon owning the name of the Lord in baptism, as we have seen, that Jews received the Holy Ghost. "They said, 'Unto John's baptism.'" Then it is all explained, *not* by any state of soul such as we are taught to look for now; and Paul proceeds, not even to speak of justification or a place in Christ, but to put before them simply the person of Christ Himself. "Then said Paul, 'John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him who should come after him,—that is, on Jesus.'" They are then baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; "and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

It seems scarcely credible that some should con-

ceive of these as already believers in Christ, needing only to know, and receiving from the apostle, the knowledge of His work! All this must be put into the passage—cannot be taken from it. Let my readers only judge.

This closes the record of the Acts; does it leave doubtful the conclusion?

III.

BUT there are objections which we must now look at, and which involve the difference already stated between the *possession* of such things as peace with God, forgiveness, justification, liberty, and the place in Christ, and the *apprehension* of what we possess. The view I am maintaining is, that while every believer has these things in Christ from the first moment of his being such, he has nevertheless to receive them, for the most part, gradually, as ministered by the word, and in such a manner as that he shall enjoy them holily, or not enjoy them. Moreover, that while the Holy Ghost is the witness to us of all our blessings, and the power of the Christian life, it is by the word that all is made known to us: error in doctrine, and unholiness, may to almost any extent hinder His witness and our realization.

On the other hand, we have such statements as the following:—

“Acts ii. 38 gives us the plain declaration that it is in having part in the forgiveness of sins that the Holy Ghost is given (So Eph. i. 13). Hence liberty is there at once for the forgiven soul. It has remission of its sins, is conscious of it, and is before God with a purged conscience in peace. Romans v. is the expression of this—the general normal state of a redeemed soul.” (*Deliverance*, p. 2.)

“There are three great privileges which result from the presence of the Holy Ghost. First, we cry, ‘Abba, Father’ (Gal. iv.),—we know we are children (Rom. viii.); next, we know that we are in Christ and Christ in us (Jno. xiv.); thirdly, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. v.).” (*Sealing*, p. 20.)

“‘The prodigal’ had not reached his father, nor knew his mind, could not cry, ‘Abba, Father,’ nor had he on the best robe which made him fit to enter the house. It is in

vain to say, 'He was not conscious of it;' he had not got it. Christ was delivered for our offenses, but though He made peace by the blood of His cross, we have it not till we are justified by faith. . . . Indeed, to say that we have peace with God and are not conscious of it, is nonsense. It dislocates, too, the connection of the Spirit's presence and Christ's work. To be free and at liberty, liberty with God, crying, 'Abba, Father,' and freedom from the law of sin and death, and not be conscious of it, has no sense, though we may not be able to explain how it is; but we have the joy, and know it." (*Sealing*, p. 35.)

"Has he the Spirit? is he sealed? I answer, Decidedly not; he is captive to the law of sin, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and in chap. viii he is made free, and not in the flesh. And if one is led of the Spirit, he is not under law, but that is exactly what is described in Romans vii." (*Sealing*, p. 30.)

This will suffice to give us the general thought. But it does not seem consistently maintained nevertheless:—

"If a soul can in truth before God say, 'Abba, Father,' that soul is sealed. If a person really knows that he is in Christ, and Christ in him, he is sealed. If the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, the man is sealed." (*Sealing*, p. 38.)

Now may not one of these things be found without another? They are put singly, as if they might, and I think it is clear that they might; but in this case,—if he be conscious that he is a child of God, and yet does not know that he is in Christ, the witness of the Spirit is not in that respect found in him, although he has the Spirit. And why? Surely because the truth has not been yet apprehended from Scripture. Again, think of what is here said:—

"A few in whom the Spirit of God made it a felt need, do realize forgiveness as a present thing, and even that of attainment, consequently being sealed, cry to God, 'Abba, Father,' but *remain in the spirit of bondage after all*, thrown back on their self-examination and the judgment they can form of themselves, not here fully seeking to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, in true holiness and divine life, but *turn even this*

into a question of fitness—i. e., of righteousness, and true holiness is lost, as is divine righteousness. ACCEPTANCE, SAVE AS A THING IN THE AIR, IS NOT KNOWN. And such is the state of the Christian world"! (*Sealing*, p. 46.)

But if such is its state, how shall we reconcile this with what was just now told us? Here are justified souls, unconscious of their justification; men indwelt of the Spirit, yet under the law; people in whom the Spirit of the Lord is (and so liberty), who are in bondage; and this confessed in the very tract that tells us it cannot be!

As to Galatians, it says, as explaining their condition,—

"They had got, *not into a bad spiritual state* as Christians, they had in their minds *given up Christianity*"! (*Sealing*, p. 16.)

Were they not then Christians? and did not giving up Christianity in their minds involve a bad spiritual state for such? It is plain the apostle treats them as such when he exhorts them, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." He thought they could be entangled again, though made free.

So the writer of this tract says elsewhere,—

"Yet we find those who avow they are sealed, and have the consciousness of the effect of the Spirit's dwelling in them, are *not* delivered from that law of evil which works in the flesh." (*Deliverance from the Law of Sin*, p. 1.)

Again, in another place, in answer to the question, "If 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God,' as you say, and as I know Scripture says, I have not peace with God; and how, then, can I be justified?" he replies,—

"You have not the true *knowledge* of justification by faith. *I do not say you are not justified in God's sight*, but your conscience has not possession of it. The Reformers, all of them, went further than I do. They all held that if a man had not the assurance of his own salvation, he was not justified at all. Now whoever believes in the Son of

God is in God's sight justified from all things. But till he sees this as taught of God,—till he apprehends the value of Christ's work, he has no consciousness of it in his own soul; and of course, if in earnest, as you are, he has not peace." (*How to Get Peace*, p. 2.)

I do not think that it is possible to make one consistent doctrine out of these various statements. But then what says Scripture? Which of them is true, if both cannot be?

As to forgiveness of sins, we have already examined the Scripture-doctrine. Apart from the knowledge of justification, of the place in Christ, and of deliverance from the law, it might be questioned how far the baptismal remission of sins carried possessors of it. Romans v. and Hebrews x. 2, appealed to in one of the tracts quoted, but now (*Deliverance*, p. 2) may be well doubted as fully applicable. The first is the fruit of justification known; the second was written by the same apostle at a much later date to deliver these Jewish believers from that system of inefficacious sacrifices which they up to that time were zealously observing. No doubt there was power of the Spirit working which practically made up for many deficiencies of knowledge, yet this does not justify the statement which levels all so absolutely. Surely, if true, the truth of justification and of our standing in Christ would seem dispossessed of the place that the epistle to the Romans assigns them. But suppose, with forgiveness of sins known in this way, "liberty is there at once for the forgiven soul," it is still another thing to say that every forgiven soul has it. We, at least, thank God, may say that liberty is for the forgiven soul.

How and in what way forgiveness of sins is preached we have fully seen; and while it is true, if souls were simple it could not fail to be received at once, much, alas! in us, and now also what is

presented for gospel, may hinder, and long hinder, assurance in souls. To say they are not forgiven unless assured, is to speak far otherwise than Scripture; and to believe one's self to be, *in order to be*, really has no sense.

Now, as to justification.

Justification before God is God's own act. It is by the blood of Christ as the meritorious cause, by the resurrection of Christ as public sentence, by faith in Christ as that by which it becomes ours; and surely not faith in it, therefore, as already ours. Yet the letter from which I just now quoted goes on to say,—

“No one is justified by faith, (and it is that of which Romans iv. 24, 25 treats) except he believes God's testimony set before him. Believing that, as Abraham did, we believe on God, put confidence in Him (*πιστευειν επι τον θεον*) who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. A man justified by faith must believe *something*, to be so justified; and surely he will be conscious, in some degree, of what it is that he believes.”

Surely. He must believe in Christ, as the apostle says (Gal. ii. 16), “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ.” No one could deny that there must be faith in Christ without the grossest contradiction of Scripture.

But much more than this is in fact contended for; viz., that one must be justified by the *assurance of one's own justification*, as the letter goes on:—

“But of course the being reckoned righteous and knowing it are two different questions. Abraham was justified by faith in Genesis xv. When he knew he was justified we know not, for both must have depended on divine revelations. With us, the revelation of both is contained in the same written word; and we have what we are to believe and the effect of it stated together. To Abraham, the two may have come at different times. With David, as with us, they synchronize.”

There is here a strange lack of appreciation of the difficulties which beset souls. Granted that the testimony to Christ and the testimony to the blessedness of those who believe in Him go together. In Scripture they do ; and, of course, in a scriptural gospel ; but in how much that is preached for gospel are they found thus together ? and when declared together, how different a thing do many find it, to believe in Christ, and to believe in their own blessedness !

But the point is, that Scripture links faith *in Christ* with justification, and not faith in one's own blessedness ; and to this Romans iv. 24 is assuredly no contradiction. To us, says the apostle, "it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ;" and then he adds, "who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification."

Now, if it were meant by this that people were not justified except they believed the Lord's resurrection *to be* for their justification, I suppose that for many generations the faith that is reckoned for righteousness could hardly be found among men. It is with most Christians of the present day, perhaps, if known at all, known only as part of the erroneous teaching of the "Plymouth Brethren." If, on the other hand, the twenty-fifth verse is added, as it surely is, to show *why* the faith of the twenty-fourth should justify, then indeed the faith in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord is necessary for justification. Nor is it to be questioned that where belief in the Lord's resurrection is, some measure of *trust* there will be in Him who has accomplished this ; and that is what *πίστευειν ἐπι* means. Further than this the passage cannot be fairly pressed.

The example of Abraham's faith is brought forward for the express purpose of illustrating the faith which justifies. Of that there can be no doubt.

But what then does the apostle say about it? He does indeed say of him that "being not weak in faith, he considered not his body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and believing that what He had promised He was also able to perform; and *therefore* it was imputed to him for righteousness." But *when* was it that in fact all this took place? "*When he was about a hundred years old.*" But that is in Genesis xvii, and it is *in Genesis xv, at least fourteen years before*, that "he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness." But what had intervened? Why, that account of Hagar and Ishmael which shows that not yet had Abraham's faith acquired the strength which afterward was so manifest! Yet God pronounced as to the germ as if it were the fully developed thing. He imputed it to him for righteousness on account of what He foresaw it would be. And this is the example the apostle gives us.

All is of a piece, then, with regard to justification. The *real sentence* as to it was when Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; *under which we come* when we believe in Him so risen, and thus trust in Him who raised Him; and the example given shows that God accepts a faith in its weakness, foreseeing its future strength: He calls, in this way, the things that be not as though they were. Justification by faith and justification of life are not really other than different aspects of the same thing. As another has said, "whosoever believes in the Son of God is in God's sight justified from all things. But till he sees this as taught of God,—till he apprehends the value of Christ's work, he has no consciousness of it in his own soul, and of course . . . has not peace."

And now as to peace with God itself. The same writer from whom I have just quoted says,—

“Christ was delivered for our offenses; but though He has made peace by the blood of His cross, we have it not till we are justified by faith Indeed, to say that we have peace with God, and are not conscious of it, is nonsense.”

Surely it is, too great to be credited to any, if it mean that *the person* who can say he has peace with God, is at the same time not conscious that he has it. But putting it in another way, I cannot see it to be such, but very simple and sober truth. “Christ has made peace, but we have it not till justified by faith:” that is absolutely true. “Christ has made peace, but we have it not till we are conscious of it:” that is not the same thing at all, and only made to appear so by an ambiguous use of this term “peace with God;” or else an ambiguity of thought as to our “having” it. Of course, if conscious having is meant, there can be no dispute, but is it really impossible to possess what we are not conscious of possessing? If peace with God be a feeling in the soul, of course conscious possession is the only possible possession. But was it a feeling in the soul that Christ made by the blood of His cross? Surely it would be impossible to maintain that! Is it not possible in itself that God may in reality have nothing against one who may yet fear His having something, and who may himself be yet no longer at enmity or in rebellion against Him?

All, then, depends upon the meaning we attach to “peace;” and all I am concerned for here is that “being justified by faith, we have peace with God” in the sense just given to it. This must be allowed by all who accept the truth of what has just now been shown as to justification, and results clearly from the statements just quoted from him who seems to deny it here.

A word now as to the prodigal's “best robe.” It is always dangerous to argue from parables. We have rather to use doctrine to explain these than take these to prove doctrine. In the parable, it is clear the prodigal has not the robe till he has met his father; but surely it should be clear also that from first to last we have the human side of these things and not the divine. From the divine, who would be the ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance? These were the Pharisees, who, from *God's* side, above all needed it! It is human consciousness—apprehension—that is all through in question. In this sense, until he had met his father, “he had not got” the best robe. Beyond this it cannot be rightly pressed.

And now as to the fruits which are said to be invariably found where the Holy Ghost is present. There is no contention, except as to the word “invariably;” and, as we have seen, this is in fact, by those who contended for it, given up. That “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” is fully owned as *characteristically* true; and nothing more can be maintained by those who can accept as consistent with it the fact that those who are sealed may “remain in the spirit of bondage after all, thrown back on their self-examination and the judgment they can form of themselves, and turn even this into a question of fitness—*i. e.*, righteousness, acceptance, save as a thing in the air, being unknown”! This admits fully all that is contended for. In another passage, by the same writer, the consciousness of sonship, and the knowledge of being in Christ, are given up:—

“I do not doubt that many sealed ones remain in this true but indefinite sense of grace, and count on divine love; for you have more than forgiveness, you have the riches of His grace, and you have redemption through His

blood,—and not merely forgiveness,—a rescue from a state you were in, and introduction into eternal blessings. *But it is not, after all, conscious sonship, and being consciously in Christ and Christ in us.*"

Thus, though "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," sealed ones may be in bondage."

Though "in that day ye shall know that . . . ye are in Me and I in you," they may *not* be consciously in Christ and Christ in them.

Though "the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God," they may *not* have "conscious sonship."

What, then, *is* maintained? That "the love of God" must be "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, that is given to us"? Apart from liberty, or conscious sonship, and where "acceptance, save as a thing in the air, is unknown," this must be a very dubious thing, to say the least, and to admit it, would have little effect in deciding the present question.

Yet "faith in the *work* of Christ" is said to be a necessity to receiving the Holy Ghost!—

"Our faith must rest, not only on His person, but on His work, to find ourselves in that place. And this is what the truth of the matter is as to delay. It is not delay in sealing, when faith in Christ's work is there—I see no ground for that,—but delay in the heart's believing in its efficacy, *appropriating* faith in Christ's work."

When I put all this together, I own fairly, I know not what is meant. *Can* there be appropriating faith in Christ's work with "acceptance *unknown*"? And these two quotations are from opposite pages of the same tract! To me, appropriating faith in Christ's work without the knowledge of acceptance would be the worst dishonor that could be done to His work. He surely would honor Christ more who, believing the infinite acceptability of the work, doubted his interest in it, than he who, believing his interest in it, doubted the acceptance of the work itself. And

this last is supposed to admit of a person being sealed; the other, not!

We have examined this matter with some care, and need not re-enter upon it. The differences and inconsistencies here are such as necessarily connect with the maintenance of an untenable position. If we take the scriptural ground, there is no inconsistency, and no real difficulty. That there are characteristic fruits of the Spirit's presence is surely none, and that Scripture speaks of the Christian in his normal and proper condition without always bringing in the limitations which flow from man's own folly and failure, need be none. God is entitled, surely, thus to speak according to the nature of the gift He has given. It is of the gift of the Spirit the Lord is speaking, when He says, in a more absolute way than perhaps any where else, "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall *never thirst*; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him, a spring of water springing up to everlasting life." But who would argue from this that if a man ever "thirsted," he had never received the Holy Ghost? And yet this might be more consistently maintained than what has been asserted. But here we all recognize, and rightly, limitations, not of God's putting, but of man's: why must we not do this in other passages far less absolute than this?

Or again, take this passage, from the same lips of truth:—

"My sheep hear My voice, . . . and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers."

Look around, then, and ask, in such a day as the present, How many are Christ's sheep?

No one forces these passages as others much less positive are forced.

Again, the apostle John tells us,—

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his

brother, is in darkness even until now." "He that abideth in Him sinneth not; he that sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him."

But why quote further passages? Is it not plain that they are all *characteristic*, not absolute, and that the question is not here raised of how far Christians may fall short of Christian character. Is it to be expected or desired that when God is giving us the picture of Christianity He should draw in the fruits of the flesh also?

If, normally, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God," does it follow, by any fair consequence, that where He is therefore the witness must be? May not that which grieves the Spirit silence this witness where it has once been known? On the other hand, to *be* known, must there not be the reception of the truth as to this? Does He witness apart altogether from the testimony of the word which He has inspired?

If He be the Spirit of adoption and of liberty, is He not also the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of holiness? Is sanctification not "by the truth"? Yet may not believers fail sadly, terribly, startlingly, in both respects?

And does not the apostle affirm, and when writing to those who possessed the Spirit, "These things have I written to you that believe on the Son of God, that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life"?

While Peter, in view of the possibility of one becoming blind, and not able to see afar off, and forgetting that he was purged from his old sins, urges us "to make our calling and election sure to ourselves" (for that is the force of the middle, *ποιεῖσθαι*).

Here, then, I may close, I think, as to this point. We have yet before us the examination of Romans vii, viii, and to this we may now proceed.

IV.

IN taking up the doctrine of these chapters for consideration, I cannot forget that he whom I am reviewing is the one by whom God has restored, in the main, this doctrine to us. Any one who has known the confusion of commentators upon this subject, and compares the view of the "Synopsis" and other kindred expositions, will surely realize, if he has the least spiritual perception, the unspeakable difference. It is like coming out of twilight darkness into sunlight, and out of the spirit of bondage into liberty; nay, more, it is the exchange of self-occupation—*i. e.*, occupation with the flesh, for joy in Christ, and in our place in Him. One may own this fully, and yet believe that all is not perfectly consistent even here. Our words need ever testing. Scripture alone is perfect, and the test of every thing else.

I may be permitted to refer to a fact that will not be disputed by any who have competent knowledge. According to the tract so often referred to, "to connect the second part of Romans with the first as a continuous process is a mistake."¹ Which means that Romans v. 12–viii. is contemporaneous with iii.–v. 11; or that the question of deliverance from the law of sin and death is settled for the soul when the question of justification is. "If I am asked, Has he the Spirit? [the man in the seventh chapter] is he sealed? I answer, Decidedly *not*; he is captive to the law of sin,"² etc. And yet it has to be faced that, somehow or other, this is notoriously contrary to the fact that "we find those who avow they are sealed, and have the consciousness of the

(1) *Sealing*, p. 12. (2) *Ib.* p. 30.

effect of the Spirit's dwelling in them, are *not* delivered from that law of evil which works in the flesh."³

This accounts for the obscurity which in the minds of many rests upon the doctrine. It was remarked by the same writer again and again, in readings among those who certainly had no doubt of forgiveness and acceptance with God, "If we begin with Ephesians, we get into the seventh of Romans before we have done." Thus, what, if this view of it be true, should be the theme of the evangelist is in fact *scarcely ever taken up by him*, as we are all aware, but is almost universally left to the teacher coming afterward. Nay, it may well be disputed that many a successful preacher of the gospel knows even the doctrine, much less has the spiritual apprehension of it in his soul. Facts of this kind are themselves decisive against the theory. And so far is this from being the result, as some allege, of the confusion which prevails, and the perverted gospels which are so often preached, that I venture to assert that it is the very opposite, and that it is only the prevalent confusion as to the gospel which makes the theory in question even plausible. Let us examine this, and see if it is not true.

The question in chap. iii.-v. 11 is clearly that of justification and peace with God, a question which in the seventh chapter the apostle does not again take up, but that of power to live to God. This is allowed, and yet in such a way as really does away with the effect of the admission.—

"The chief point here is not condemnation, (although the law does leave the soul under judgment,) but the entire want of strength to fulfill it, *that it may not condemn us.*"⁴

This brings us back almost to the same thing. But surely this is by no means the thesis of these chapters, which start with the doctrine that we are

(3) *Deliverance*, p. 1. (4) *Synopsis*, iv. 168 (2d ed.).

“under grace,” and ask, Is, then, sin of any consequence? Nay, “shall we continue in sin, that *grace may abound?*” or “shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?” And while it is true that Romans vii. takes one back under the law, it is now no longer to show that we are not justified by it, which has been conclusively settled, but that it is the practical “strength of sin.”

The two questions are indeed mixed up together by those half-gospels which make fruit to God the basis of conscious peace with God; but where the gospel is clearly preached, it is certain that the discovery of the evil in our nature is not ordinarily made until after forgiveness of sins is known. Moreover, it is quite a different thing to realize what the flesh is in us as sinners seeking peace, and what it is in us as saints and children of God realizing themselves such; quite a different thing to learn impotency to work out *righteousness*, and to learn our impotence even as Christians in the working out of *holiness*. It should be clear that the first of these belongs to the first part of Romans, and is decided there, and that the second belongs to the second part, and is quite distinct.

To confound these is to confound the passover with the Red Sea, which are types of these two deliverances. At the passover, as in Romans iii.-v. 11, the question is between God and the people, a question of *wrath*, which in both is answered by the blood of atonement. At the Red Sea it is between the people and the power to which they have been captives, and here the answer is by *change of position*. They are taken out of Egypt, type of the fleshly state, through the sea of death, its limit, and outside of the territory of Pharaoh, the sin that reigns there. “Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” It is bondage, slavery, that ends at

the sea; and just this it is in Romans. The whole is a type of progress,—of realization,—of attainment; but deliverance from wrath is settled at the start, and *God is really with them* in the pillar of cloud and fire, before they reach the sea at all, although until then they know not really the blessedness of this. The type of the Spirit's presence is thus with them, before and in spite of their despairing cry at Migdol.*

The first and second part of Romans are thus plainly continuous, and it is not contrary to this that in chap. vii. "neither Christ nor the Spirit is mentioned until the question of deliverance comes in."⁵ Too much, surely, has been made of this. There is no *doctrine* of it, and it is easily accounted for, without the need of one. Alas! in how much of the experience of a Christian is there as little of the Spirit's proper testimony to Christ and what we have in Him! Sad would it be to us if this were proof that we had *not* the Spirit!

In chap. viii. also, where of course the Spirit is spoken of, a distinction is made which needs to be examined now, and which is of considerable importance to what is sought to be maintained.

"In speaking of the Spirit of God, it is spoken of up to verse 11 as being *life*, and after that as distinct from one's life in Christ, as a present Person, as dwelling in us and witnessing with our spirit: see how strikingly these two points of view are brought together in verse 27. It attributes the thoughts and feelings which God searches out to my heart, because it is in my heart that the Spirit works, but it goes on to the source: in my heart it finds the mind of the Spirit according to the doctrine of verses 5 to 7, what is wrought by the Holy Ghost, and lastly it is the Holy Ghost Himself who maketh intercession in the saints We have the new nature given to us, and the Spirit is the source, nor is the stream separated from it: this is the teaching up to verse 11, but the Holy Ghost dwells in us."⁶

*See, for a full exposition, a paper on "The Passage through the Sea," in "Helps by the Way," vol. iii.

(5) *Synopsis*, iv. 168, note. (6) *Notes on Romans*, p. 122-3.

Now the only point that needs question here is, Are these two things,—the Spirit as the power of life and as dwelling in us, to be found practically separate? That He should be the power of the life which He communicates is what is simple enough, and I certainly have no thought of questioning it. If the Spirit is the source of the new nature, and the stream is not separated from it, that would seem to argue that from the first moment of divine life the Spirit must be there; but that would not be admitted as a right application of the passage in question. In all the saints of the old dispensation this must, then, also be. A very different application of this distinction seems in fact to be made, and I quote here from a letter which gives more fully than any thing that I can find in print this application.

“There is a connection of the Holy Ghost with life,—short of the indwelling as the seal of the faith that rests on God’s testimony to the work of the cross, that must not be passed over. ‘The last Adam was made a quickening Spirit.’ Hence the moment He takes His place as the Head of a race, when His work was finished in righteousness, (as Adam took his when his work was finished in unrighteousness,) He breathes upon those already quickened and says, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost;’ for thus they were brought in power into all the new and wondrous associations of life in a risen Christ come out of death, when their sins had been borne under God’s judgment, and the end of all flesh come for faith, in that judgment. Now, for the first time, they were in Christ, and the Spirit of life, the Spirit as the power of life in Him, had carried them in power into a wholly new creation for man, developed in Romans viii, (first part,) *as made free from the law of sin and death*. And this as distinct from the second part of Romans viii, where He is looked at as a distinct Person, dwelling in us. It was important that immense truths such as these, exercising so important an influence on our condition, and bringing out that which is only recognized as the full and proper Christian condition, should be recognized in their distinctness. Hence, I believe, the action of the risen Lord in John xx, before the Holy Ghost was given at Pentecost; though for us, now that He has

been given, the first part of Romans viii. could not be without the second; or in other words, *we* are brought by the Holy Ghost into our new position in Christ described by verse 2, when we receive the Holy Ghost on the remission of sins."

Much more briefly elsewhere I find,—

"I do not doubt that, speaking historically, the Spirit here is distinguished from Acts ii, inasmuch as here it is a breath of inward life, as God breathed into the nostrils of Adam a breath of life. Thus Christ, who is a quickening Spirit, imparts spiritual life to them, according to the power of resurrection."

Now I accept fully, as precious and important truth, that the risen Lord, in John xx, is taking as such the place of the last Adam, and that this significant action—His breathing on them—is a reference, by way of contrast, to the first. But there are some points of doubt, nevertheless, as to which one may inquire.

(1.) Is it of the Spirit *as life*, or as "*power of life*," that the Lord speaks? The latter quotation states that the Spirit here is "a breath of inward life," which would seem to convey the former thought, and this is plainly stated in the first quotation,— "The Spirit of God is spoken of up to verse 11 [Rom. viii.] as being life." Still it might be doubted if it be really meant that they can be taken as equivalents. Certainly there is no idea of an incarnation of the Spirit, but only, at most, that they are practically one, as the "source and stream" thus mentioned. "The Spirit is life, because of righteousness," is doubtless said in this sense.

The source too is (in a certain sense) the power; and the two expressions may be identified. Yet, if taken in this way, it will conflict with what is argued, very manifestly. For in this way it would apply to all born of God from the beginning, and not this, but a very opposite doctrine, is intended.

Even if applied to Christians now, it would surely conflict. The Spirit is life to us from the beginning of it, and of course this is far different from indwelling; but it is said now for us to be the fruit of indwelling only. It is power, rather, which is deliverance from the law of sin and death according to the first part of Romans viii, the letter quoted says. But then, if so, in what way is this connected or identified with life from the last Adam of which the inbreathing speaks?

Identified it cannot be: they are not for a moment the same, save as stream and fountain may be considered so, as before said; but then, if this be now the result of indwelling, either indwelling must be the accompaniment of life from the beginning, or life must be of two kinds, and one succeeding the other; as, say, life simply at the beginning, and resurrection-life afterward, as that alone of which the Spirit is the source! And if you say, “connected,” this must still be the connection, and life from the last Adam must be another birth later than new birth!

Any identification or necessary connection of the Spirit with life, (as an *indwelling* Spirit,) is thus a fatal contradiction to the view maintained; but—

(2.) Does not the Lord’s action in fact separate between the two? Had He said, first, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” and then breathed on them, it would have been natural to take the latter as the expression of the former. As it is, surely it is the very opposite of this. The words, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” come after the sign of life, as the reception of the Holy Ghost comes after and consequent upon the life itself. But the former is surely thus marked out as the fitting and divinely intended accompaniment of the latter; and this is completely accordant with all that we have seen already.

But (3.) clearly the disciples were already before this quickened. This breathing upon them was not, then, quickening, however much it was significant of it, and in fact accompanied with the new position. Is it any more necessarily to be supposed that the Spirit was actually here given and received? The words do not assert this; they may as well mean that now, in virtue of their connection with the Lord as last Adam, they were put in a place where the Holy Ghost could seal them, and this necessitates no violence to truth, and no uncertain inferences such as the meaning contended for requires.

(4.) "The Holy Ghost" is here without the article; it is *ἅγιον πνεῦμα* simply. It is thence argued that it is not the Holy Ghost personally, but a power or condition. But in Acts viii. 15, 17, 19, xix. 2, the article is absent also; and here there is no question that, if a condition, it is the result of the Spirit's actual presence. But more than this, *in John vii. 39* it is also without the article, and here, if it be a condition, declares that that condition *could not be before the Lord's ascension*; therefore in xx. 22 must look forward to Pentecost, and cannot be before.

(5.) The notion of the Holy Ghost in power carrying them now, apart from the consciousness of sonship or His actual indwelling, into what for us are the results only of indwelling, needs surely some support from Scripture in order to be received. Do "all the wondrous associations of life in a risen Christ" consist with zealous Judaism such as in fact for many years after Pentecost they maintained? Does the fact of even the Spirit's presence in men of necessity infer their freedom from the law of sin and death? Surely this, in view of all that we have seen, and so much as has been admitted, can no longer be maintained.

Let us now go on to look at these chapters, so far as there may be any question as to them.

I have said already that the theme of these is power for fruit and service, and that it is for this that the death of Christ for us is applied to deliver us from that law which though it be "holy, just, and good" in itself, is none the less in result the "strength of sin."

Chap. vii. 1-6 gives us the doctrine, of which the rest of the chapter to viii. 4 is the practical working out.

In this doctrine justification is not mentioned: "But ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be to Another,—to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions [or passions] of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, having died in that in which we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, not in oldness of the letter."

Here, two states, and only two, are spoken of. On the one hand, a responsible child of Adam, in whom the passions of sins, roused by the law, are bringing forth fruit unto death: which is sin's wages, and to which it necessarily (if not hindered) leads. Such an one is a man in the flesh, and it shows who alone is reckoned "in the flesh." "Fruit unto death" is what the apostle speaks of as brought forth by them when they were slaves to sin: "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness: what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the *end* of those things is *death*" (chap. vi. 20, 21). This, then, is the man spoken of as being "in the flesh."

On the other hand, the Christian—or, if that term be equivocal, he who has life in Christ—is by that

fact, as we have seen, no longer in the flesh. In Christ's death he has died, and by the sentence of the law, to law: this is his deliverance, he does not say yet by the power of the Spirit, but by the death of Christ; and this every Christian has. God has set him free, but has to teach him also his liberty. The end is, "that we should serve in newness of spirit, not in oldness of the letter."

In the estimate of God,—the application of the work of Christ to all,—there is but one class among Christians; in their own estimate of that work there may be, and are, many. Scripture would not lead us to confound these so different sides. What God has done for us He makes known and commends to us that we may realize in our souls the effect of what He has done. Here, alas! come in our objections and reasonings as we find them follow in this chapter, and want of self-knowledge and of simplicity, the result of unbelief, may shut us long out of the blessedness into which God would give an open door. Nay, here by His apostle He anticipates and answers these reasonings, making them only the occasion of displaying more the power and value of His deliverance.

The first objection arises from this apparent identification of sin and law, from both of which alike, (and the one as necessary to the other,) we have to be delivered. "What shall we say, then? Is the law sin?" to which he replies by showing their entire opposition,—“Nay, I knew not sin but through the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, ‘Thou shalt not lust;’ but sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of lust.” But thus in this conflict there was no victory for the soul, no bettering of its condition: “For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, [not help for me came, but] *sin* revived,

and *I* died; and the commandment, which was for life, I found to be unto death; for sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good."

Here, then, is the use of the law,—to bring one to a present apprehension in the soul of "death" which is to be the death of self-confidence and self-occupation. If only "while there is life there is hope," "death" is a strong word, implying the giving up of that from which I have no longer expectation. I shall be ready then to turn away to Another, whose death for me is the seal upon this death of mine, and my way out of this conflict into the joy beyond.

If we are simple, this end would soon be reached. Alas! we are not, and this lengthens the road we travel. In what is "eleven days' journey," we may spend forty years. Again, the question comes, "Is then that which is *good* become death to me?" This seems impossible, and the apostle hastens to relieve the difficulty. "It is sin, that it may appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

The sin dwelling in my nature,—in the flesh,—is thus the bottom of the whole condition. To expose it in its hopelessness and evil the law was given. The purpose of the law is vindicated, as well as its character therefore; but no deliverance for the soul is accomplished or possible, on this very account, under the law: to prove which fully, the experience of a soul, quickened *but* under law, (and of course a stranger to what the place in Christ really is,) is now brought forward.

"For we know that the law is spiritual, but *I* am carnal [*σαρκινός*], sold under sin." It is an example, as often stated, not the general experience of

Christians,—*I*, not *we*. The man too is fleshly, in bondage to sin. Observe, he does not now say, “in the flesh,” but “fleshly,”—it is not of standing that he speaks, but *state*: two things which the expressions ἐν τῇ σαρκί (v. 5) and σαρκινός clearly distinguish.

It is true he is not *consciously* a dead man yet, or otherwise than ἐν σαρκί, for we are now gone back of “I died” (v. 9), to trace the process by which under the law sin slays. But it is not standing that is the point with him yet, nor would he realize what it had to do with helping him out of his miserable condition. The law is what he clings to for help, as many a Christian does at the present day in similar case, while quite clear nevertheless that it is not by its deeds he is to be justified. It is power over sin he wants,—a practical right state, which many an evangelical Christian congratulates himself upon being able to separate widely from the question of morals, though a living faith of course will have its fruits. But it is power over sin, I repeat, a practical right state, he wants, which does not necessarily raise in his mind any question of his justification. Just because he is justified, this “carnal” state may be the more utter misery to him, and in real earnestness of heart he works away under a law which day by day only makes him groan out in his wretchedness, “For that which I do I allow not; for that which I would not, that I do, but what I hate, that do I. But if I do that I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”

That is a relief, but no deliverance. If he is overmastered, (which is true,) it is none the less self which overmasters self: “For I know that in *me* (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not; on the contrary, the evil

that I would not, that I do. But if I do that I would not, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then the law to me, willing to do good, is, that evil is present with me." This is the discovery of a "*law of sin*" within him, which characterizes his state: not sin indwelling,—that is true of us all, but a "*dominion*," a ruling power, of sin, which grace delivers from. The way of deliverance is not yet reached, but it is nearing. The discovery of a bondage so hopeless will turn the eyes away for deliverance from elsewhere.

And yet the next words seem rather the cry of despair.—"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

There the struggle is ended. Death is reached; but a death which oppresses and overwhelms with its horrors a consciously living man. He is powerless, and where is there elsewhere any power that shall avail? It is not that he has given up God; but He, in the way expected, has not come in. Like Israel at the sea, the vivid type of all this, who are led by the pillar of cloud itself just where, "between Migdol"—a watchtower in hostile hands—"and the sea," a more impassable barrier—Pharaoh, their old master, is upon them with all his hosts: "And they said unto Moses, 'Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us to carry us out of Egypt?'"

And yet God's salvation is now just ready to be revealed: "And Moses said unto the people, 'Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again

no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.'"

And so here God's salvation is revealed as suddenly, as unexpectedly, and as wholly from Himself: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." The way of deliverance is indicated in these words, which are but the first emphatic outburst of praise as it is seen. It is not yet properly the explanation, which is detailed for us in what follows till chap. viii. 11, the last verse being an appendix to the rest, to carry on the deliverance here enjoyed to its full completion in the eternal state.

But here we need to consider the right division of the chapters, which not being seen has brought in the strangest and most disastrous confusion. Even J. N. D.'s and W. K.'s versions both make a break corresponding to the ordinary division at the end of vii. 25. The consequence is, I venture to say, a total misapprehension of the last part of this last verse, which immediately follows the joyful exclamation of praise just uttered, while the true significance of the opening of chap. viii. seems obscured in measure also.

Yet one would think it plain that chap. viii. 2 was in direct application to vii. 21, 23. No where else has a "law of sin" in a quickened man been asserted at all; and in the same way do the third and fourth verses apply the principle of vii. 5, 6 to the case in hand. If this be not the actual deliverance detailed, where is it? It cannot be denied, in fact, that it details it, but it is considered to be a fresh statement from viii. 1, summing up the doctrine of the preceding chapters from v. 12. That it does, in fact, sum them up in applying the principles to the case before us, I have no wish to deny. But a restatement of the deliverance it is surely not. The exclamation of verse 25, it is admitted, is not really a statement; and it needs yet to show explicitly *what*

delivers from the law of sin and death. Every sentence here will be found to fall into its place as we look at it, in this way, and find its meaning in connection with this design. Let us examine the passage, then, with care and see.

“I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve [*δουλεύω*, am bond-servant to] the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

In this, it is said, we find “conflict *after* deliverance.”

“Now a godly person might suppose, having come to the deliverance there is in Christ Jesus, that conflict then was entirely over. Now that is not the case, as it is after the soul has known deliverance by Jesus Christ that this great principle comes clearly out,—‘With the mind I serve the law of God.’ But this last verse states the abiding general principle, flesh remains in us after we have known deliverance, and hence the conflict to keep it down; therefore in this twenty-fifth verse of chap. vii. we see there is conflict after deliverance as before, because there are conflicting principles of nature contrary one to another; but we are no longer under the law after deliverance, we belong to *Another*. Moreover the power of the Spirit is there in us.”⁸

And elsewhere I find,—

“The last verse of chap. vii. speaks of the abstract mind and character of the opposed natures; one, the mind, however, and purpose of heart in the renewed man; the other, the fact of flesh being there; one, ‘I myself,’ the other, ‘my flesh.’ So the ‘I’ is right; only it is not considered *under* the law or the contrary.”⁹

Take the last extract first. If I myself am *bond-servant* to the law, am I not “*under* the law”? Who can question that it must be so?

Again, if “I with the flesh am *bond-servant* to the *law* of sin,” is this only the character of a nature?

Does not the narrator of this experience take the ground all through that he consents to the law and delights in it, and that this is “the law of his *mind*”?

(8) *Notes on Romans*, p. 105. (9) *Synopsis*, iv. 173, note.

Is it not "the law of sin" which he is at the same time, being carnal, in bondage to? How does this differ from "with the flesh I am bond-servant to the law of sin"?

As to the first extract, where is it seen here that "the power of the Spirit" is in the experience described?

There is one striking difference where the *power* of the Spirit is really found. Look at the real "conflict" of a delivered man in Galatians v. 17. First, it is not "I with the flesh," but "the *flesh* lusteth." And then, what is in opposition to the flesh is not "I myself with the mind," but "the Spirit".of God. It is the sign of the break-down of self going on in Romans vii. now achieved, that this is so. It is, then, no longer two parts of myself that are in conflict, but my new man finds its rest in the guidance and power of Another; and so it is from verse 4 in Romans viii. that the Spirit takes the place of power.

It is added in Galatians, "But if ye are led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law;" how then can it be that "it is *after* the soul has known deliverance by Jesus Christ that this great principle comes clearly out,—with the mind I serve the law of God"?

For these reasons, I take it as absolutely clear that the closing sentence of Romans vii. is but a rehearsal of the old experience of a soul practically not yet delivered from the law, and still in bondage to the law of sin.

But why return to this after the thanksgiving for deliverance?

If the subject ends with the seventh chapter as now it stands, all does indeed seem perfect darkness as to this; and it is no doubt consideration of this kind which has led to the view we have been just now looking at. If on the other hand it be in connection, and close connection, with the next chapter,

then it will be the preface to the detail of the deliverance—a going back to the condition preceding this, in order to show more clearly the way in which the deliverance comes.

Let us put these presents a little more vividly as the Greek tenses clearly justify our doing, and take the verses in connection thus:—

“So then with the mind I myself am serving the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. There is, then, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit, of life in Christ Jesus, hath freed me from the law of sin and death.”

In all the misery of the experience we have briefly looked at, a more powerful law comes in to deliver him. It is the law of the *Spirit*,—a law of His action who has come into the world to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us; a holy law in contrast with the law of *sin*. It is the law “of the life in Christ Jesus,” in contrast with a law of *death*.

But what then, if it be, as it is, in Christ Jesus that I live to God? Then “there is *no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus*.”

Let us see what we have come to here. Is it after all justification? and has the fundamental question been after all one of acceptance and peace with God?

It is clear that the apostle has elsewhere met that question in a different way. It is of the blood of Christ he has spoken, and of justification by it. He does not there speak of a place in Christ alive out of death, but of the cross. Here he speaks, not of the cross—the work, but of the living Person Himself in whom, before God, I live.

But if then in Him, believing in Him, identified with Him,—if my true life, my true self, be there,—with *what* (if mine were the experience just now so painfully recounted)—with *WHAT* was I occupied? The answer is plain: *Not with my true self at all.*

As in a moment, (if this be indeed the Spirit's testimony to my heart,) I am lifted out of all my wretchedness. Instead of the body of death, here is life indeed. And here is infinite eternal acceptance and the power of holiness. "No condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" means not merely wrath gone, judgment removed, but also that which just now could not but associate itself in my mind with God's just abhorrence of it. My eye on Christ, my heart and conscience are satisfied together. There is nothing to mend, nothing to make, but only complete perfection to enjoy, where God Himself rests with absolute unqualified satisfaction and delight: "there is *no* condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." If then the law of "*life in Christ Jesus*" be the Spirit's law, it is indeed one that *delivers* me: "it has set me free from the law of sin and death."

As for the flesh, still in me, and all that belongs to it, to it, if divine condemnation of necessity attaches, yet where does it attach? "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned *sin in the flesh*." We see here that it is not wrath upon a person that the apostle is thinking of: that is not the question. It is the condemnation of a nature, of which he speaks. But thus having put away all that with which the law could not effectually deal, I am free to turn from all this miserable and fruitless self-occupation, to fulfill the *righteousness* of the law as I "walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

I am not expounding the doctrine. For those to whom I write I trust it needs not; I am only showing how these verses link together. I think I have succeeded in establishing their harmony with each other and with the subject. Disconnect the last verse of chap. vii. from chap. viii. 1; take "There is no condemnation" as referring simply to justification and peace with God; and, finally, connect the

"Spirit of life" in the usual way, and you may find still the doctrine, by the aid at least of other passages, but the harmony is every way impaired, and the significance at least diminished greatly.

In the verses that follow, we find the opposition of the Spirit and the flesh, with the assurance which we have already, in part at least, considered, that "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you." And this is clinched by the emphatic statement, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

It should be clear that here "the mind of the flesh" being stated to be "enmity against God," it is for this reason that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Standing and state are thus connected together, and the man who is in the flesh is not considered as a possibly converted man. And all are then addressed as not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, with this necessary caution so often in one shape or another repeated in these epistles, written to those some of whom nevertheless might be mere professors, that this supposes that indeed the Spirit of God dwells in them. Neither here nor elsewhere is there a hint of a *third*, intermediate state: "If any one has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

How clear that if the Spirit is the seal of God's own, the mark of whose they are, if there is not this mark, we may not conclude that such they are!

It should be seen too that it is not said that we cease to be in the flesh *by* the Spirit of God dwelling in us, but are *in the Spirit*, if the Spirit of God dwell in us. Of course in this case we are not in the flesh either,—and much more. But being in the flesh, we could not be delivered by the seal of the Spirit, which is said to give us our new standing before God in Christ. *It could not deliver us*; and I beg my readers to mark this well, for in this case *it would be flesh the Spirit sealed*. If, then, the man in

the seventh chapter be in the flesh, he could not be delivered in the way contended.

How often have we heard, what is most just and conclusive, that the Spirit could not come to dwell in a habitation not fit, and that therefore while a sinner it is that is quickened, it is a saint alone that is sealed! All true; but if we be in Christ by the Spirit, and that be standing, the man in the flesh would be still an unfit and impossible dwelling-place for Him. Even circumcision was the seal of righteousness by faith, a righteousness existing before it; how much more the Spirit, of perfect righteousness in Christ before the seal, which *seals* or attests this righteousness! Let this be weighed, and the position of the man in the seventh chapter cannot admit a doubt.

Thus it is true, although not in the way that many take it, that being in the Spirit is the practical equivalent of not being in the flesh, while if this third state drops out there is no assertion whatever that it is only *by* the indwelling of the Spirit that we are delivered from the standing of the first Adam before God. No person could possibly find such a doctrine here who had it not in his own mind before finding it.

In fact, so far from its being this passage which gives the doctrine in question, it was for long the hindrance in the mind of him who first promulgated it, and the text quoted for it by him as conclusive is rather 1 Corinthians vi. 17. His own note upon Romans viii. 9 in the Synopsis shows this:—

“Note here, we are said to be in Christ in the beginning of the chapter, and in the Spirit here; so, to have the Spirit of Christ, and then, ‘if Christ be in you.’ *Because it is by the Spirit we are in Christ. ‘He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.’* (Compare John xiv.)”

It was thus really the misconnection of identification with union, which there can be little doubt led

to the doctrine.* For union is undeniably by the Spirit, and there is an identification too which results from it. From the union between husband and wife, identification in certain respects results; but it is very far from being the case that there must be union for identification. I have already quoted the Synopsis for what in fact seems a very different statement. "We are *in Him*. That is more than union, but not the same thing. It is *nature and life*." (Jno. xiv. 20, note.) If, then, it be "nature and life" (as it surely is), the whole matter ought, one would think, to be easily settled. Does nature and life in a Christian *spring out* of union, or necessarily *precede* it? And this question I may safely leave every reader of this paper to settle for himself.

F. W. Grant.

P. S.—Since this was written, an answer to my former unpublished paper has been put forth in a recent number of "*Words of Faith*." I regret to say it is full of misconceptions of what it professes to meet, as well as (I doubt not) of Scripture also. This paper, written before the other was issued, will, I trust, save further controversy, for which I have no taste. There are two things, however, that strike me painfully:—First, the way in which the simplicity of Scripture is (almost in plain terms) given up for a style of interpretation which it seems only some among Christians are expected to have the key to; and secondly, how, instead of saying as Scripture says, that having Christ you have all, experiences are brought in to supplement Him in a

* As see at the bottom of p. 238 of Coll. Writ., Doctr., vol. i. On p. 291 he even says, "By our union with Christ the divine nature is communicated to us."

really legal way. Intelligence as to the cross seems really often to supplant the cross itself.

A paper by another, also in review of me, is founded entirely upon the supposition of two communications of life, *two new births*, for every person: only he will not permit us to call the second this; it would too completely expose the fallacy.

F. W. G.

